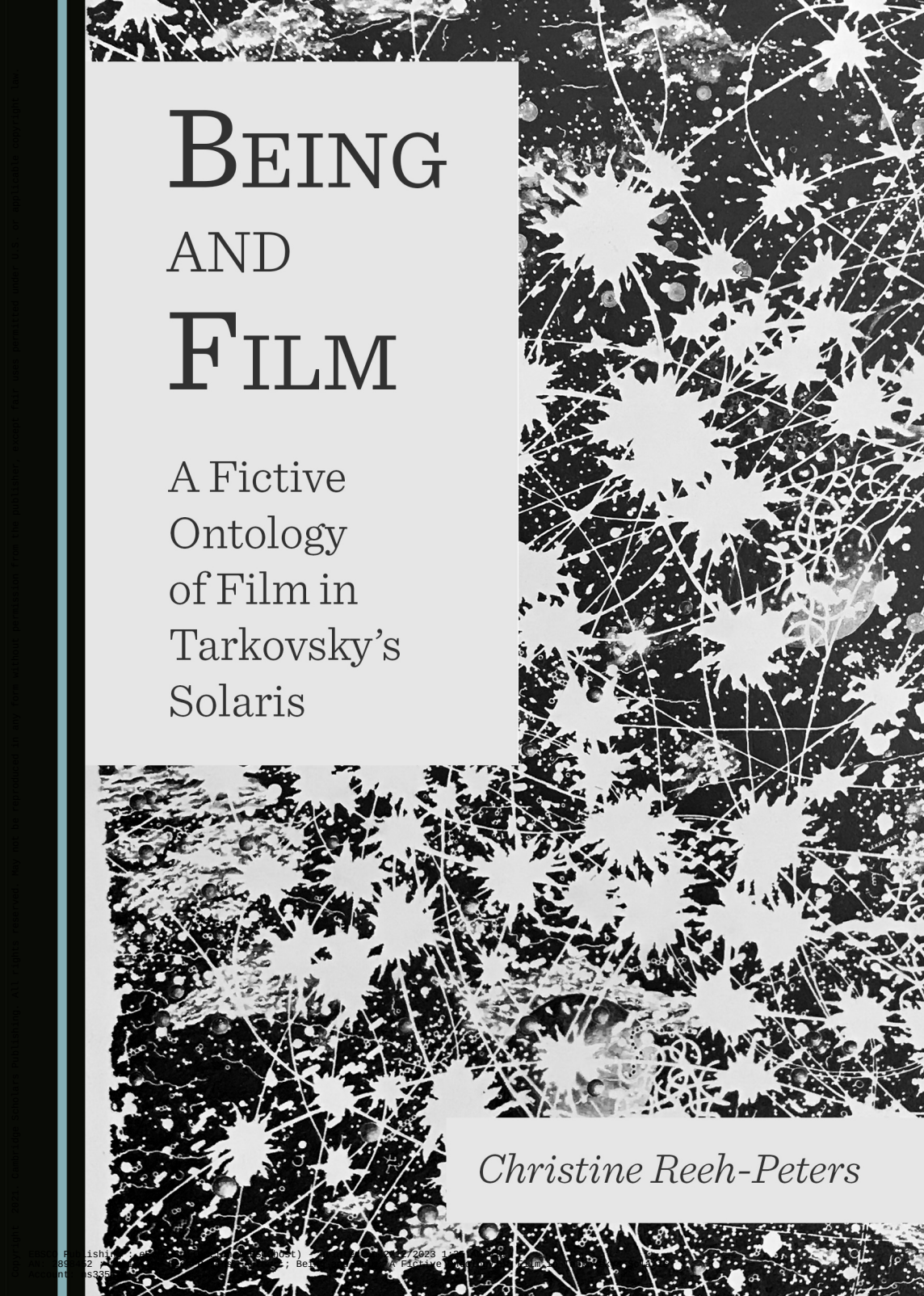

Being and Film

A Fictive Ontology of Film in Tarkovsky's Solaris

Christine Reeh-Peters

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PART 1:

EARTH – THE EMERGENCE OF THE SOLARISTIC SYSTEM

I. The Proposal of the Solaristic System

Film and real-image-based media in general are ubiquitous constitutive elements of our globalized world in which reality appears as contingent, mobile, and multiple. Our reliance on reality-grounded media in entertainment, culture, art, communication, science, and even our social lives has transformed everyday life into a technological phenomenon of global proportions. However, the ontological consequences of these posthuman techno-capacities have not thus far been grasped to their full extent in the context of philosophy. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, photography and, in particular, film have pioneered the rise of complex questions about real-image-based media by inquiring into the ontological nature of both film and reality. Yet, the nature of the reproduction of reality through these media constitutes an ontological puzzle. As Stanley Cavell famously claims about the photographic image, "[w]e do not know what a photograph is; we do not know how to place it ontologically."[1] Cavell thus regards the photographic image as the basis of the film image and applies the ontological features of one to the other. In this book, I propose an ontological-epistemological analysis on the nature of the film image and its relation to being, reality, and the real. In this context, I understand film as a placeholder for real-image-based media in general, a claim which I hope will become clear in what follows. What aspects of reality and being are exactly reproduced by film? This question cannot be phrased without presenting a more radical, ontological inquiry into reality and being: If reality is reproducible, what then is its ontological nature?

Being and reality are two different terms, which are usually distinguished because they stand for different ideas in the history of philosophy: "ontology" and "metaphysics." Yet in the context of film and the photographic image as its smallest unit, André Bazin famously mentions a "transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction."[2] He thereby presupposes an interdependency of being and reality when he argues that by this transference of reality "the photographic image is the object itself."[3] Therefore, I will refer throughout this analysis to both reality and being as

[1] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 17–18.
[2] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 14.
[3] Ibid.

entangled, encompassing categories.

By inquiring into the fundamental nature of the being and reality in film, I will not stress what has changed as film has evolved from using analog, photographic technology to exploring new digital possibilities. The difference seems striking at first sight: while a photographic image is necessarily reality-based, a digital image can easily transform or completely create what is depicted. Yet, we need to step back in order to understand that both digital as well as the photographic film deal with the very nature of the same reality and being, and that we depend on an underlying definition of these terms when we regard digital and photographic film.

What is the ontological nature of reality if it is reproducible or even producible in image and sound? As German filmmaker Hans-Jürgen Syberberg claims, film is the "continuation of life with other means"[4]; or, as Pier Paolo Pasolini argues, the spectator can be "right inside reality."[5] Neither the continuation of being nor the inwardness into reality is different in digital or nondigital films, because the common denominator of computational and photographic elements lies in "the instrumentality of a non-living agent"; that is, since "an image of the world is formed automatically,"[6] both the photographic and the numerical image are *technical images*,[7] as Vilém Flusser suggests. Furthermore, this "production by automatic means has radically affected our psychology of the image," because "we are forced to accept as real the existence of the object . . . set before us."[8] Even films that are composed of entirely computer-generated sequences still try to imitate the photographic image to prove its continuity with reality and being in the worlds they create: the "reality effect" of the film image relies on its origin in photography. Or, as D. N. Rodowick emphasizes, digital media "emerge from similar genealogical roots with photography and film."[9] Conversely, "for the moment, [cinema] remains the baseline for comprehending the varieties of new media."[10]

Therefore, in the scope of this analysis, I understand film as a placeholder for real-image-based media in general. Following Rodowick

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[4] Syberberg, "Film als Musik der Zukunft," 12 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[5] Pasolini, *Pasolini on Pasolini*, 29.
[6] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 13–14.
[7] See Flusser, *Into the Universe of Technical Images*; Flusser's concept of the technical image constitutes this image as relying on science and as the substitute of the traditional handmade image; he furthermore emphasizes its invention as a revolution as incisive as the invention of writing.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*, 85.
[10] Ibid., 87.

and Flusser, I will further argue that in film we face images that are presented by a technological apparatus, a term which goes back to Walter Benjamin. This apparatus does not integrate with but, in its own way, penetrates into that which has been the subject of natural human perception; it *re-produces* reality and being of the object "freed by the conditions of time and space that govern it"[11]: the apparatus selects and records fragments in image and sound and shapes them into a web of assembled pieces of being, producing a visible and audible fabric of reality. Such a fabric of assembled pieces does not mean we are all submitted to an illusory appearance, but, as Alain Badiou suggests, it means we are building a new relationship to the real: "Cinema is a new relationship to the Real itself. . . . It is the absence of the Real but as a new form of knowledge."[12] What could this new form of knowledge be?

These are the kind of reflections I explore in this book through what I call "the solaristic system." My proposition consists developing a specific ontology of film dedicated to an inquiry on the nature of film, being, and reality. The neologism "solaristic system" designates the development of an ontological system which appropriates the aesthetic ideas and principles of thought present in the 1972 sci-fi movie *Solaris* by Andrei Tarkovsky. I have chosen this movie as the center of analysis because it is highly symptomatic of the medium's philosophical self-reflexivity and its intriguing correlation with reality and being. The word "solaristic" is deduced from the term "solaristic science" or "solaristics," a fictional science introduced in the movie's diegesis. This science is dedicated to the investigation of the planet Solaris,[13] which constitutes an unattainable challenge for human knowledge in the film. The solaristic system is the philosophical attempt to complement this solaristic science and to confront the enigma of the planet Solaris with philosophical tools. The system constitutes a complex allegory for what I will call the "real of reality" or "being without being"—one of the book's key concepts that will be gradually developed throughout.

Furthermore, the planet Solaris is reminiscent of an apparatus comparable to the cinematograph, but as an organic device; that is, it is suspected to be a giant brain, which (re)produces fragments of reality in the form of objects and beings. To better understand this allegory, I will briefly introduce some elements of the movie's storyline.

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[11] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 14.

[12] Alain Badiou, "Cinema and Philosophy."

[13] The film *Solaris* differs from the fictive planet Solaris, which gives the film its name. I distinguish the one from the other by using italics when referring to the movie, and no italics when referring to the planet.

After some decades of nonconclusive investigation on and of the enigmatic planet Solaris, the solaristic science has fallen into crisis. Disturbing reports have arrived from the last three scientists remaining there, so the main character, psychologist Kris Kelvin, is sent from Earth to the decaying space station orbiting Solaris. The film then centers on the so-called "visitors," who are present on the space station and the cause for the disturbing reports: their existence is inexplicable. They appear as copies of humans whom the protagonists (Kelvin and the other scientists) know from Earth. Like ghosts, the visitors simply "are there"; they emerge out of nowhere, referred to as a mysterious "stabilization of neutrinos." They are the somehow materialized energy of human thought processing, an interface for communication between humans and the planet, which is a transformer: an organic apparatus able to materialize cognitive processes.

Solaristic Self-Reflexivity

Hopefully, the aforementioned claim that the choice of *Solaris* as the main object of analysis as based on its outstanding potential of philosophical self-reflexivity on the nature of film as a medium, as well as on reality and its reproducible being, has become clear by regarding the film's diegesis. Stephen Mulhall has observed such a self-reflexivity in some of the movies he has investigated, a self-reflexivity that establishes these films as a form of philosophy of film, since they reflect upon the cinematic medium:

> These questions, about the nature of the cinematic medium, are perhaps those which we might expect any philosophical book on film to address—they are what is typically referred to when philosophers refer to 'the philosophy of film'; . . . these films . . . themselves address such questions—because . . . in their reflections on human embodiment, they find themselves reflecting upon what makes it possible for them to engage in such reflections, upon the conditions for the possibility of film. In other words, a fundamental part of the philosophical work of these films is best understood as philosophy of film.[14]

A closer look reveals the self-reflexivity of *Solaris* as philosophy of film in a triple sense.

First, *Solaris* is self-reflexive insofar as it reflects upon the essential features of any given example of a film; film in general is hereby

[14] Mulhall, *On Film*, 5.

understood as a medium that has raised discussion as to its ontological and epistemological conditions ever since its emergence. The solaristic system attempts to give this reflection a new shift. It works closely on a definition of the nature of film by analyzing one specific film within a delineated context. The solaristic system thereby claims that this analysis leads us to new philosophical insight, in particular, an insight into the very nature of reality and being.

This brings us to the second aspect of the self-reflexivity in *Solaris*. Its aesthetic principles, mise-en-scène, dramaturgy, and diegesis work as an allegory for the apprehension of the real of reality and the confrontation with its reproduction by nonhuman intervention. To preview two examples: *Solaris* holds as a main aesthetic principle a form of existence we shall call "being without being," which refers to the form of the existence of the visitors. This concept reminds us of the principle of "presence of absence," often referred to as one of the main principles of film regarding its self-reflexivity.[15] As I mention above, the planet Solaris is reminiscent of an apparatus comparable to the cinematograph, although it is not a technological but, rather, an organic device. Solaris is the reproducer of beings who resemble humans, but who are puzzling in their material as well as ontological status, similar to photographed people or film characters.

Building on that, the third aspect of self-reflexivity from the movie is based on the idea of self-reflexive characters, which I will call throughout "conceptual personae." This neologism is a term borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari: they directly refer to "conceptual personae,"[16] the English translation of "personnages conceptuels," designating subjects in philosophy who convey movement of thought: "The conceptual persona is the becoming or the subject of a philosophy. . . ."[17] In the context of the solaristic system, the concept derives from the term "dramatis personae" in film and theater studies as well. Dramatis personae encompass all the characters involved in the dramatic conflict of a piece. The conceptual personae (CPs) in the solaristic system encompass all the characters of the movie *Solaris*. In any case, these characters will not only function as archetypes and dramatis personae, but during the philosophical analysis of the film, they disclose themselves as nodes of a network of conceptual philosophical questions, tenets, and principles of thought. I hope to show that their inner and outer dramatic conflicts, tensions, and relations process

[15] "Objects projected on a screen are inherently reflexive, they occur as self-referential, reflecting upon their physical origins. Their presence refers to their absence, their location in another place" (cf. Cavell, *The World Viewed*, xv–xvi).
[16] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 61.
[17] Ibid., 63.

the solaristic key concepts as philosophical concepts by evolving their specific conceptual potency. The existence of such CPs evokes an ontological reflection on being, referring to Martin Heidegger's musing on being, which will also be considered as central in my analysis. Since Heidegger is a philosopher reflecting on the presence and absence of being and time, his work conceptually overlaps with some of the most crucial questions for our context: What can we say about the being of and in film? For example, his concept of "being-in-the-world" will become a "being-in-film" of the CPs from *Solaris*.

Solaristic Groundings

In addition to Heidegger, the solaristic system refers to and is based on a wider range of theoretical positions. Some representatives of classical film theory like Rudolf Arnheim and Hugo Münsterberg hold clearly nonrealist positions.[18] In opposition to them stand the so-called ontological realists like Erwin Panofsky, Siegfried Kracauer, André Bazin, and Pier Paolo Pasolini, who literally claim that film is a reproduction of reality outside any system of representation. For example, Pasolini affirms that in film "there is no symbolic or conventional filter between me and reality, as there is in literature."[19] Both Bazin and Kracauer argue for the photographic basis of film and its privileged position among the arts as it records physical reality. Thereby, Bazin is interested in the ontogenesis of the cinematographic image. Bazin is of decisive importance for our scope of analysis, since he is the first film theorist to expressly refer to an "ontology of the photographic image"[20] as an ontogenesis of the cinematographic image; by doing so, he develops the transition from film theory to ontological questions. Therefore, Stanley Cavell (the first philosopher to inquire into the nature of film) refers to Bazin as a central figure in the context of philosophy. In any case, the solaristic system develops some of its principles of thought based on the realist claim that "film is a reproduction of reality," precisely by analyzing what the idea of the photographic reproduction of reality and its being through film means *ontologically*.[21]

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[18] Münsterberg was followed by Jean Mitry and finally Christian Metz, who used semiology to analyze film; their positions are too representationalist to be fruitful for the solaristic system, which argues for film beyond symbolism.
[19] Pasolini, *Pasolini on Pasolini*, 29.
[20] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 14.
[21] I feel the need to point out that also in the context of the digital film image, there is a contemporary "refresh" of Bazinian theories. In addition to D. N. Rodowick, William Brown (*Supercinema*, 2017, and *Non-Cinema*, 2018) and Shane Denson

Walter Benjamin proposes a special claim on film as well as on technology, commenting on film in one single, yet famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproduction" (1936). According to Benjamin, cinema is the reproduction of reality (which is a realist position), but cinema does so by taking slices of reality from the inside, then assembling those pieces. This "reality montage" of cinema is just a manner of aesthetic perception raised by the emergence of film, which I call "cine-perception"[22]: an assemblage of reality, giving access to what Benjamin calls "immediate reality"[23] composed by the very elements of reality obtained by "permeation of reality with mechanical equipment."[24] Not only has this cine-perception completely transformed the nature of art, it also has changed our relation toward reality. Reality is in permanent competition with a potential other reality, the filmed one, which pretends to be a reality free of any technical equipment, as Benjamin stresses. As a result, nonfilmed reality loses its "authentic-reality-status." The consequent virtualization of reality, which anticipates what is later designated by Gilles Deleuze as "the world as meta-cinema" (actually a Bergsonian proposal famously quoted by Deleuze), is another implication of the solaristic system. Thinking in a larger scale, Benjamin's argumentation supports the idea of a shift in perspective of human thought through cinema: "The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope as much for thinking as for perception."[25]

However, the aforementioned positions of film theory share a clumsy definition of the word "reality," which is often reduced to physical reality. What of reality is exactly reproduced by film? Its being? The real? By now we have already received several hints that reality is a key term conditioning our inquiry, and we must establish a more consistent conceptual framework. In the first place, what do we actually understand by "reality"? Its definition is one of the most complex and oldest endeavors of the history of philosophy, and it has been receiving an update by the realist turn in contemporary philosophy.

This recent rise of various forms of realism are grounded on a

(*Post-Cinema*, 2016, and *Discorrelated Images*, 2020) are examples. Although a detailed discussion of the specificity of the digital image does not fit our scope of analysis, the existence of these positions strengthens an approach which includes Bazin among the central authors in our context of analysis.

[22] The terms "reality montage" and "cine-perception" are my interpretative resumé of Benjamin's main concepts.

[23] Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 233.

[24] Ibid., 234.

[25] Ibid., 223.

debate in which the role of the subject, i.e., the fundament of idealism, has been challenged. Although their individual approaches are rather heterogeneous, the "speculative realists" share the rejection of so-called *correlationism*. This stance was established by Quentin Meillassoux, who designates it as "the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other."[26] What is considered problematic is that the examination of reality itself is given up in favor of the investigation of the mere correlation between subject and object (following the Kantian tradition). However, speculative realism in its attempt to conceptualize reality independently from the subject and subjectivity, or humans all together, has often ignored the field of visual art[27]: the most developed exception is Graham Harman's object-oriented ontology (OOO). Here, "aesthetic reflection and judgment are employed in metaphysical speculation into what a mind-independent reality might be like."[28] In the second part of this analysis, I will delineate the underlying understanding of reality in the solaristic system by referring to some positions of speculative realism.

In particular, Harman's approach plays a pivotal role, which is set out in the last part of this book: his development of a "quadruple object" coins our quest for a "solaristic fourfold." As we will see, the solaristic system actually unfolds a fourfold structure, a disclosure based on Heidegger's fourfold (gods, sky, mortals, Earth),[29] as well as on Harman's OOO. The latter provides the idea of transposing "fourfold thinking" into new contexts—an idea that Harman grounds on an unusual reading of Heidegger's analysis of the tool, by relating it to his late work, namely the fourfold. Such a fourfolding method—to develop a network of relations based on four poles—sparked the structure of the solaristic system as a fourfold. Earth, Planet, Visitors, and Humans are the main groups of CPs—conceptual personae—from the movie *and* they elegantly match the Heideggerian fourfold: Earth, sky, gods, and mortals.

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[26] Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 5.

[27] I am aware of the reflections on literature by Meillassoux (*The Number and the Sirene*, 2012, and *Science Fiction and Extro-Science Fiction*, 2015), as well as the anthology *Aesthetics After Finitude* (edited by Baylee Brits, Prudence Gibson, Amy Ireland, 2016), which includes perspectives of various possibilities for thinking about art from a speculative realist perspective.

[28] Halsall, "Art and Guerrilla Metaphysics," 383.

[29] See Heidegger, "The Thing."

Film as Philosophy

By now, the first premise of building the solaristic system, the most important underlying aspect, becomes quite tangible: the intrinsic relation of film and philosophy. Thus, the two pioneers of philosophy of film who emerge in the field of *philosophy* (and not in the context of *film theory*) must be mentioned.

First of all, Gilles Deleuze: he surprised many of his followers when in the 1980s he came up with a systematic attempt to integrate film into philosophy by investigating how cinema creatively produces concepts, which change our perception and relation to the world and which innovate philosophy itself. He designs an intrinsic relation between film and thought, which is reminiscent of Jean Epstein's position, a filmmaker from the beginning of the twentieth century, with strong theoretical engagement and for whom cinema is a thinking machine. Curiously, both Epstein and Deleuze are influenced by the theory of knowledge of Henri Bergson in which "image equals matter." Deleuze famously reassesses Bergson: "it is the universe as cinema in itself, a metacinema."[30] The solaristic system establishes a set of key epistemic notions of a world like a metacinema, which somehow alludes to Deleuze's central interest in film: the concepts of cinema "which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices."[31] Philosophy itself is such a practice for Deleuze.

Second, we also have to mention Stanley Cavell. Already in the 1970s he pioneered the issue of film as a philosophical concern, as I have already mentioned, by building on the realist claim of film theory. Some of Cavell's reflections on the ontology of film are crucial for the constitution of the solaristic system. He explicitly argues the following: "Film is made for philosophy; it shifts or puts different light on whatever philosophy has said about appearance and reality, about actors and characters, about skepticism and dogmatism, about presence and absence."[32] His position also evokes Epstein, who argues very early that film will raise a new philosophy:

> Animated images bring out the components of a general representation of the universe, which tends to modify thought as a whole in various ways. Hence, very old, perennial problems—antagonisms between matter and mind, continuity and discontinuity, movement and stasis, or the nature of space and time, and the existence and inexistence of any reality—come into view under a brand new light. A philosophy may then emerge from

[30] Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 61.
[31] Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 280.
[32] Cavell, *Reflections on a Life of Philosophy*, 19.

this play of light and shadow.[33]

This is to show that the link between philosophy and film is so deeply embedded in the nature of film that not only does it change the way we philosophically deal with reality, but also, as Epstein and Cavell independently from one another claim, albeit in different terms, film may be ultimately linked to the complex plane of reality in terms of reproduction. I therefore propose to make a list of these pairs of terms for which film could change thought and even philosophy, fusing the positions of Epstein and Cavell: appearance and reality; presence and absence; actors and characters; matter and mind; continuity and discontinuity; movement and stasis; nature of space and time; the existence and nonexistence of any reality.[34] In the fourth part of this analysis I will explicitly pick up these pairs of antagonisms and develop them to finally lay out the fourfold structure of the solaristic system.

The philosophical reliance on a film or any kind of work of art is often underestimated as a device for reasoning; yet, works of art can potentially be a unique tool of thought. By what has been said up to now, I would like to propose solaristic philosophy as a complement to the preexisting framework of philosophy of film. As such, solaristic philosophy is neither set as a philosophical interpretation of film, nor as an exemplification of philosophy through film; it aspires instead to new philosophical insights and consequences for the ontological thinking of both film and reality. Cavell and Deleuze have laid the foundation for philosophy of film and still today their efforts must be mentioned in any further attempt. However, the solaristic system aims to step beyond the projects of these two philosophers, and, like them, it intends to make philosophy of film a project for philosophy. In general, since the beginning of the new millennium, the entanglement of film and philosophy has been growing, and philosophy of film has been established as an academic (sub)discipline in the fields of aesthetics and philosophy of art especially in the United States (relying on Cavell) and as a branch of studies for Deleuzian scholars in France and worldwide.

Yet, in what ways has cinema altered the discipline of philosophy? The solaristic system builds on Deleuze's proposal to engage the concepts of cinema in philosophy. Yet, instead of using a catalog of film examples as Deleuze and many others do, the solaristic approach relies on one special movie alone, which carries out a significant level of self-reflexivity. The solaristic system proposes to appropriate principles of thought and concepts

[33] Epstein, *The Intelligence of a Machine*, xi.
[34] I have left out the pair "skepticism and dogmatism," because in my consideration it seems too specifically linked to Cavell's project of philosophy.

from this movie and to base a philosophical system on them, metafictional in its expression and philosophical in its character.

Many philosophers today rely on films to illustrate philosophical problems, and film theorists have increasingly searched for a philosophical interpretation of movies, or have been alerted to their philosophical potential. Against this background, the creation of the solaristic system intends to draw a consequence from the claim that films are a form of *doing philosophy*, just as Mulhall proposes: "films are not philosophy's raw material, nor a source for its ornamentation; they are philosophical exercises, philosophy in action—film as philosophizing."[35] Sharing such a position, this book goes beyond the mere repetition of a preformulated thesis and then taking *Solaris* as an example of it. Instead, the solaristic system is to be understood as a contribution to the ongoing philosophical debate on the nature of reality, disclosing new insights only possible through philosophy of film and by treating *Solaris* as a work of philosophy.

Some parts of our analysis will function as a ground to sustain the appropriation of the movie and its fictional principles as an expansion of the philosophical questions I have introduced so far. In this way, I seek to establish philosophy as a form of art. The solaristic system might be understood as an artistic approach, a form of conceptual art, just in the sense that Graham Harman mentions:

> For centuries, philosophy has aspired to the conditions of a rigorous science, allying itself at various times with mathematics or descriptive psychology. Yet what if the counter-project of the next four centuries were to turn philosophy into an art?[36]

Some Remarks on the Terminology

At this point I should give some further remarks clarifying the most important terminology I am using throughout this book. First of all, consider the term "ontology" and its use throughout: What is ontology in general and what is it in our specific context, the proposal to develop an ontology of film? Ontology is generally understood as a branch of philosophy concerned with the fundamental nature of being and the being of everything that may exist. An ontology of film proposes then to analyze the specific nature of film's being; but such an analysis cannot be separated from the challenge of dealing with reality: the being of film is also of, dependent on, and entangled with that which is called "reality" (recall the "unknown variable")—because

[35] Mulhall, *On Film*, 4.
[36] Harman, *The Third Table*, 14–15.

the being of reality is that which film reproduces, its raw material. Therefore, an ontology of film is always also an impossible ontology of reality with epistemological and metaphysical features: What is the being of reality—a "real of reality"? What makes the film images real if not their being? A film is somehow a metaphysical unity in which each filmic frame reproduces the same metaphysical domain called reality however we define it, as fluid and multiple, or not.

Furthermore, we need to distinguish the terms "film" and "cinema." Gilbert Cohen-Séat pioneered this distinction in the 1940s with the following definition:

> The filmic fact consists of the expression of life (the life of the world, the spirit, the imagination, of beings and things), through a system of combined images (visual—natural or conventional—and auditory—sounds and words). The cinematic fact, instead, consists of social circulation of sensations, ideas, feelings, and materials that come from life itself and that cinema shapes according to its desires.[37]

It is according to this definition of both filmic fact and cinematic fact that I will use the word film or cinema throughout this book, although with some slight modifications. With "film," I mean any kind of audiovisual reproduction of being and of reality in general, whether structured in a cinematic form or not, whether recorded digitally, by video, or on celluloid. The singular form of film is "a film," which designates one specific single piece of audiovisual reproduction to be described in its unique characteristics. With "cinema," I mean the kind of audiovisual reproduction of reality that is structured through certain characteristics like storytelling, affection, dramaturgy, and mise-en-scène, whether fictional or not. Cinema is the general term of which "a movie" is the single form: one piece of audiovisual reproduction of reality structured through the above characteristics. I regard movies as representatives of film, since they present the general audiovisual features that define film, therefore I also use the form "a film," for example, the film *Solaris*.

The term "philosophy of film" has become established as the substitute for "philosophy of cinema": film embodies both cinema and other forms of audiovisual reproduction. This distinctive terminology is of contemporary relevance, as cinema has become expanded, first through video in the 1980s and later through digital media and postcinematic forms in the new millennium. Therefore, as I have previously mentioned, the most

[37] Cohen-Séat, *Essai sur les principes d'une philosophie du cinéma*, 57 (translation mine – C.R.P.).

correct expression would be "technological-apparatus-based media of real images in movement" in order to include all forms of technological, visual reproduction of reality. It is evident to me that cinema has been the first such medium and is thus a representative for all technological-apparatus-based media of the real image in movement that followed, even those that dominate our perception and relation to reality with much more power today, as McLuhan describes: "Today after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned."[38] Cinema was the first form of a filmic medium to abolish natural space and time by replacing them technologically.

Toward a Solaristic Fourfold

This book is divided into four parts just like the fourfold structure of the solaristic system, carrying out different layers and stages of reflection. In each layer, I have associated one of the four poles: EARTH to the emergence of the solaristic system, PLANET to the presentation of solaristic twists, VISITORS to reflect on the solaristic implications, and finally HUMANS to come to the solaristic conclusions. These groups of CPs—Earth, Planet, Visitors, and Humans—are conceptually introduced in the last part, yet established in a subliminal way throughout the book.

Earth

The first part, "The Emergence of the Solaristic System" (consisting of chapters I and II), functions as an introduction, the base from which this thought experiment starts. After some preliminary interrogations, the idea of the solaristic system is briefly heralded, and some developing thoughts necessary to justify its methods and emergence are outlined, such as the self-reflexivity of the movie *Solaris*, justifying it as especially apt to be the base for developing a philosophy of film called the solaristic system.

Then, by pointing out the relevance of previous positions of film theory and of philosophy of film, I further justify *Solaris* as a piece of philosophy and sketch its main philosophical interrogations. Moreover, I discuss Gilles Deleuze and Stanley Cavell as the two main philosophers to have introduced philosophical reflection about film, although each with their own scope of approach. The solaristic system is an attempt to go beyond the projects of these two philosophers. Moreover, in chapter II, I

[38] McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 3.

give a detailed description of the plot and mise-en-scène of the film *Solaris* to provide readers the opportunity to immerse themself in the depth of the movie, which is the main object of analysis.

Planet

In the second part of the analysis, entitled "Solaristic Twists" (chapters III and IV), we take the first steps toward the solaristic system, projecting its object of thought and collecting the first signals of what this book aims for.

Chapter III, "What Happens to Reality in Film?," proceeds from Cavell's statement that a photographic image presents us "with the things themselves"[39] and not with any kind of representation, and therefore concludes that we "do not know" how to "place a photograph" "ontologically."[40] Our analysis starts with what Cavell refers to as "magic" and "mysteriousness": What is the being of a photograph? Cutting back to Bazin, we recall that there is "transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction,"[41] from the model to its image. Bazin thus concludes that "the model *is* the image."[42] I propose a reading of this claim that reaches beyond the indexical.

Although we started with a question about reality, we have now turned to a reflection on being: How can being be shared and how does it do so through the photographic image? Moreover, how can we even pose this question without asking about being in the first place? At this point, the investigation relies on the Heideggerian concern that we do not know what being is. Yet, being is time for Heidegger. Film is often described as time-based art, and, for Tarkovsky, filmmaking is best described as sculpting in time, as film enables the possibility of bringing time back. Film is reproduced being. This kind of time-based "film-being" or "cine-being" (a term that will be introduced as *the presence of something, which is absent*) is characteristic of the being in and on the planet Solaris.

Chapter IV, "Twisted Reality and its Reproduction," further develops the concept of reality, referring to different models of multifold reality. Starting with Karl R. Popper's pluralist character of reality as well as Bergson's theory of the world as an aggregate of images, its main focus lies in the contemporary speculative turn, the comeback of realism and materialism, presenting a new speculative twist concerning the knowledge of reality and the problem of human access. The common aim is to

[39] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 16.
[40] Ibid., 16.
[41] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 14.
[42] Ibid., 14.

overcome "correlationism," the claim that thought cannot get outside itself, but the positions in materialism and realism differ from each other. Graham Harman (OOO) and Markus Gabriel (new realism) are mentioned as examples. In both cases, we are confronted with complex and multifold models of reality: What of reality is shared and reproduced in film that transmits multifoldness?

Visitors

The third part, called "Solaristic Implications" (chapters V, VI, and VII), consists in facing the philosophical challenges caused by setting up the solaristic system and, furthermore, giving some of the groups of CPs a corpus, delineating its implications.

In chapter V, "Asking for the Real of Reality," I elaborate a definition of what aspect of reality is being reproduced in film, proceeding from Alain Badiou's claim that "cinema is a new relationship to the Real itself."[43] What is it of reality that makes film reality be as real as reality? And how can this real of reality be transferred from life to film? In *Being and Event*, Badiou fuses the set theory of mathematician Georg Cantor with Heideggerian ontology. Following Cantor's set theory, an absolutely infinite multiplicity is designated as inconsistent.[44] This inconsistency refers to a pure nonbeing and represents the idea of the unthinkable, and Badiou therefore names it "the void."[45] Transferring this concept to the solaristic system, CP Hari is then the embodiment of being as a void. Grounded in Cantor, thinking the Real for Badiou presents a way to think the impossible,[46] and film may be one possible tool for thinking such an "impossible Real" in terms of its of reproduction.

Chapter VI, "The Solaristic Apparatus," approaches the idea of setting the planet Solaris as a techno-organic device and thereby evokes Walter Benjamin's cine-apparatus as well as Karen Barad's intra-actively entangled apparatus. Barad's theory is transposed into the context of film and the solaristic system, and Benjamin's cine-apparatus is developed with

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[43] Badiou, "Cinema and Philosophy."

[44] Badiou quotes Cantor: "On the one hand, a multiplicity may be such that the affirmation according to which all its elements 'are together' leads to a contradiction, such that it is impossible to conceive the multiplicity as a unity, as a 'finite thing'. These multiplicities, I name them absolutely infinite multiplicities, or inconsistent" (ibid., 41–42).

[45] Ibid., 52.

[46] "I think that the impossible is precisely the name of the Real," (Badiou, "The Critique of Critique").

a brief look at his conception of technology. According to Barad, mind and world, meaning and matter, are intra-actively entangled by diffraction, a position actually based on Niels Bohr's quantum physics. In *Solaris*, reality is reproduced while a mysterious process is taking place in which the reproduced reality starts to interact in the form of the visitors, who materialize by "intra-action," a neologism introduced by Barad on entangled relations. Benjamin's apparatus is defined as a mechanical device penetrating into reality, further producing "immediate reality,"[47] which is more real for the viewer than the reality it depicts. Benjamin's technological apparatus anticipates a reconcilement between technology and nature, which becomes explicit in the planet-brain Solaris, further tending toward the realization of a universal "worldbrain."[48]

Chapter VII, "The Real, the Virtual, and the Subjective Side of Knowledge," departs from Plato's Cave, which insinuates that we are deluded by our perception, and follows the skeptical tradition in philosophy. René Descartes famously questions whether we can distinguish actual reality from dreaming. Descartes's position reflects what I summarize with the term "virtuality of reality," alluding to a dominant postmodern idea, questioning whether we can distinguish at all between reality and fiction and alluding to new computer-generated "virtual realities." For contemporary philosophers like Deleuze, the term "virtual" has a completely different meaning and refuses dualism. Building on his position, Slavoj Žižek reverts the hypothesis of "virtual reality" into the "reality of the virtual," which is, according to Žižek, isomorphic to the Lacanian Real. The chapter further analyzes Nick Bostrom's "simulation hypothesis," which asks if we could be living in a computer simulation, a question we apply here to *Solaris*. This hypothesis would emphasize the emotional and indirect approach between Kelvin and visitor CP Hari, which occurs through love. Anticipating Harman's hypothesis of approaching that which cannot be known, namely the real object, other than indirectly, for example, by love, we can name an allusory principle of solaristic philosophy, relying on a deliberately subjective method to access the real. We then invoke Žižek's claim that the "thickness of objectivity resisting the subject's grasp is precisely the subjective moment"[49] that completes reality.

[47] Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 233.
[48] Degoutin and Wagon, *World Brain*.
[49] Žižek, Less Than Nothing, 807.

Humans

The fourth part of the analysis, called "Solaristic Conclusions" (consisting of chapters VIII and IX), unfolds the fourfold structure of the solaristic system.

Chapter VIII is titled "Raising a Solaristic Fourfold" and traces the development of such a fourfold model to summarize the solaristic system. I therefore introduce Heidegger's fourfold and then rely on Harman's OOO as an example of how to transpose this fourfold thinking into new contexts. Such a fourfold method—to develop a network of relations based on four poles—can then be applied to the solaristic system. Heidegger's fourfold is thereby not only the point of departure but also the point of arrival in this chapter. Its four poles are especially apt to be applied to the movie *Solaris*: Earth, sky, gods, and mortals become in the solaristic system Earth, Planet, Visitors, and Humans, and the mortality of the latter in fact plays a major role. Harman gives a new reading of Heidegger's analysis of the tool and develops an object-oriented approach relying on a fourfold structure. The four poles are linked through a network of relations, from which allusion, causation, and allure are of special importance. The last part of the chapter focuses then on the hypothesis that we can transpose Heidegger's fourfold into the solaristic system by clarifying the concepts of the entities constituting the fourfold.

Chapter IX, "Conclusions and Cardinal Tenets of the Solaristic System," summarizes the solaristic system as a fourfold structure, naming its links and relations between the four poles to be projected into four dimensions. These poles, although relying on Heidegger and Harman, integrate the oppositional pairs defined by Epstein and Cavell (mentioned in this chapter), on which film would automatically philosophically reflect. These pairs are then complemented by additional topics raised during the analysis and divided into four groups. The structural outline of the solaristic system thus consists of a catalogue of 46 theses, an attempt to systematically embody what has been said so far on the solaristic system. The chapter concludes by briefly reflecting on the meaning of the solaristic system as well as on perspectives for further analysis.

II. The Plot of the Movie *Solaris*

With this chapter, I aim to give a detailed description of the narrative plot and diegesis of *Solaris*, as well as some thoughts on the dramaturgy. Although I recommend the reader to have seen the movie before engaging with this analysis, I want to guarantee the accessibility of my writing to those who do not know the movie at all or who have seen it many years ago. Also, it is necessary to clarify my underlying understanding of the narrative meaning of the movie. I will also include, as part of the detailed plot description, some observations on the mise-en-scène, the kind of framing and montage Tarkvosky uses, as well as some other relevant aesthetic choices regarding image, sound, framing, and camera movement.

Part 1

The film opens on Earth. It is summer. Floating seaweed and leaves appear in a stream of water. Lingering on their rhythm smoothly moving in the water, their flow is meditative. As the camera goes up, it passes over reeds, bushes, and very tall grass, and we meet the middle-aged protagonist Kris Kelvin during a walk in this nature. We can almost feel the heat and the smell of green trees and grass, the flowers, and the insects, suggested by zooming in and long panning camera movement, extremely close to the subjects, and a tactile use of sound. A beautiful black horse walks nearby.

Kris Kelvin, now shown in three-quarters scale, is revealed to be immersed in his thoughts; he walks near his father's home (as we understand later), an old-fashioned, big, wooden countryside house, but with a modern country road nearby. Kelvin observes from far away how a visitor (named Berton) accompanied by a child arrives by car and is welcomed by a man we later learn to be Kelvin's father. They wave and call for Kelvin, who doesn't seem willing to speak and would rather be alone.

The father and the visitor are conversing, and we understand that Kelvin is a "solaristic scientist," who now takes daily morning nature walks for at least an hour, because sometimes he works for the whole night. We enter the house. The fact that it is wooden and full of small objects indicates an homage to classical human culture, a balanced harmony between knowledge and nature: old measuring instruments, a cage with birds, white busts of admired people from the past, graphics of hot air balloons, selected

wooden furniture, and flowers and tree branches from the countryside in vases reinforce the peaceful, harmonic ambience. The photo of a woman with long blond hair, looking right into the camera, also receives some attention. Her intense gaze makes her very present.

We further understand from the dialogue that soon Kelvin will have to leave Earth for a mission on a space station and that his first report will be of crucial importance for the continuation of the station. Berton expresses his concern that messages from the station have seemed confusing or even incomprehensible, and if Kelvin confirms this impression, the space station will be taken out of the Solaris orbit. Berton came to speak with Kelvin to convince him to not prematurely rush into a regretful decision. He also admires the house, and Kelvin's father explains that he actually rebuilt his grandfather's home, since he despises modern culture. Rain starts, a heavy, warm summer rain, illuminated by the sun.

Kelvin stands outside on the terrace of the house in a melancholic mood. The rain is soaking his clothes and hair, but he enjoys it, to feel nature. On the table lies apples, the leftovers of a tea session, and bread in a bowl. The tea set is old-fashioned, from the nineteenth century; it is made of traditional white and blue porcelain. The rain soaks everything on the table. For a moment, Kelvin gets cold. The rain stops; the countryside gurgles from the plants absorbing the water. Here, as well, the camera frames details on an extremely close scale making the sound seems tactile.

Back inside, Kelvin's father leaves the scene, saying that he has seen what Berton has brought with him too many times before. In the presence of Anna, who is the father's sister, Kelvin and Berton watch an old black and white video report. The report shows Berton many years ago, visibly younger, while he testified before a kind of military court that also consisted of scientists. Berton had worked on the Solaris space station as a pilot. When he became part of a rescue team in search of a lost aircraft, he got lost himself, swallowed by an odd and uncanny fog. Before the court, Berton claims to have observed how part of the ocean surface of the planet began to change, transmuting into a gardenlike island. The assembled court members seem shocked and unwilling to believe him: a garden millions of miles away from Earth? Berton evokes the evidence of the video recording he made during the flight. Surprisingly, the camera tape only shows clouds and fog, and Berton has no explanation for the discrepancy. His confusion shows. He continues to report the incident as he experienced it, in spite the increasing disbelief of his audience. After the garden, he saw a living being: an oversized, rightfully gigantic child, covered by a slimy skin, swimming naked in the ocean. He had never seen this child before and felt disgusted by the sight of it. All of the specialists who testify, except one, discredit

Berton. They accuse him of suffering from hallucinations due to the different climate conditions of the planet.

Berton stops the videotape. He is upset and confused by his own memories. He is still convinced of the truth of his experience. He asks Kelvin for a private conversation, so they go out the garden.

Outside, the boy who came with Berton has spotted the black horse in the stable but is afraid of it, because he doesn't know what it is that is "staring at me from the dark!" Anna goes with him to the stable, explaining that the horse is gentle and beautiful.

Kelvin also discredits Berton, categorizing him as one of those who have helped to create the impasse of "solaristics" (the fact-based science about the planet) by excessive fantasizing. He explains that he will officially declare the failure of solaristic science by removing the station, or, if necessary, take extreme measures and bomb the planet with high intensity beams. Berton, again humiliated, protests and distances himself from this kind of knowledge obtained "at any prize." Knowledge, he says, has to stay connected to the foundations of morality. Kelvin thinks that morality is a human-made category and closes with the remark that Berton has to admit that he cannot be sure himself that the being he saw was not a hallucination. At this point, Berton gets so furious that he puts an end to the fruitless conversation and announces his departure. Kelvin's father then gets upset, scolding Kelvin for being so arrogant to Berton. "It is dangerous to send men like you to the cosmos, which is so fragile," he claims. "Even on Earth the damage would already have been too big!" But Kelvin is not convinced at all.

Inside, Kelvin's father and Anna watch a TV report about the space station at Solaris. The planet is suspected to be an enormous brain or at least the ocean covering it is thought to be a "thinking substance." In any case, neither of the promising hypotheses could hitherto be substantiated. Although Solaris has been under scientific investigation for nearly a century, its nature, structure, and logic are considered to be beyond human comprehension. Solaristic science is both scientifically and logically refuted on human terms, but some continue to "believe." Out of all eighty-five scientists who have been brought to the space station for investigation, only three have remained: the astro-biologist Sartorius, the cyberneticist Snout, and the physiologist Gibarian. The TV news report shows portraits of each of them.

The program is interrupted by a video call from Berton on his way back into town to see Kelvin's father and Anna. He says he must add something he has never talked about, and which he should have told Kelvin, but didn't. The child Berton had seen on Solaris looked the same as the son

of a former Solaris scientist who had died on that mission. The peculiar thing was that Berton met the real child later on Earth, in his natural, biological size. When Berton had seen the oversized child on Solaris, he had not yet met the child on Earth. He asks Kelvin's father to give some consideration to this occurrence. He says that Kelvin need not think about it before he leaves, but it might matter when he is there. The camera turns away from the monitor, and we see that Kelvin had been standing in a corner of the room and heard the conversation between Berton and the father.

Then, some outlandishness things occur: Berton calls from the car and we see him driving on a big, crowded highway. Tarkovsky places a huge emphasis on filming the movement and speed of the car and contrasts the over-crowded outside with the solitude inside Berton's car. At times, the image switches to black and white, as if we are suddenly immersed in memories; then, the last shot of the sequence shows an intersection of several highways, some raised on bridges. One highway in the middle of the image dissolves into another highway; again, it is as if we are seeing something remembered rather than really being there in the present.

That night, Kelvin burns some old documents in his father's garden. A photograph of a young woman is shown, whom we later know to be his deceased wife Hari. In this photograph she is looking with a serious expression right into the camera, as if she's questioning the person watching her through the lens. It gives the photograph a strange and vivid presence, also characteristic of the photograph of Kelvin's mother, which we have seen before in the house. Her absence suggests she is also dead. Kelvin mentions to his father a film with a campfire that he plans to take with him on his journey. Anna steps away because she cannot hide her tears. The night landscape seems to comfort her.

Kelvin leaves for outer space. The cosmic journey is filmed with merely the juxtaposition of two shots: Kelvin's face in a helmet, which then turns upside down. From a radio transmitted voice offscreen, we learn that the journey to Solaris is not free of trouble. Then we see the dark cosmos with the planet and the station finally being approached. Kelvin calls for an acknowledgment that his message has been received, but there is no answer from the station. When he gets out of the ship (which we never see), carrying just one big bag, nobody receives him at the disembarking hall. He calls out, but again, nobody answers. The door to the inside of the station opens automatically.

The first thing Kelvin sees in the station is a corridor with walls covered in vein-like cables. He passes more and more cables hanging from the walls that are in complete disorder, as if some violent act had taken place there. Other strange garbage lies around. One cable sparks electricity.

Kelvin snaps the cable down to prevent a fire. An alarm noise sounds, and Kelvin goes to follow it.

At a long, curved corridor, he finds a door bearing the name of Dr. Snout. He knocks and opens the door, but nobody is inside. When he closes the door, he hears some jingling bells from behind. Kelvin looks back and sees the foot of a girl disappearing behind the corner of the corridor. She has thrown a colored plastic ball into his direction. As he kneels down to catch the ball, he hears somebody singing nonsensically. He gets up and turns around. The door of Snout's cabin is open now. Snout stands near the entrance and appears to signal to someone outside the frame in the back of his cabin room. Surprised, Kelvin calls for Snout, who now turns around. We can see that he is scared by Kelvin's presence and can hardly speak. Kelvin enters the room and introduces himself as the psychologist Kelvin. Snout stares at him, as if doubting that the other man is real. Kelvin asks whether Snout has received the radiogram announcing his arrival. Snout, who has a bandage at his wrist, sits down and confirms. His voice is husky.

Kelvin moves closer, but Snout reacts aggressively. Kelvin asks him why he is so antsy, to which Snout apologizes. Kelvin wants to know about the other two, Sartorius and Gibarian. Snout answers that the first had locked himself up and that the other is dead. He explains that it was suicide, and we can see how much it has affected him. Kelvin is shocked, knowing that Gibarian would never have acted that way under normal circumstances. Snout explains that Gibarian was in a profound state of depression and mentions a mysterious disorder. He then recommends that Kelvin have some rest, and that he find a room and come back in one hour. Kelvin insists on speaking with Sartorius. Snout doubts that Sartorius would receive anybody, reiterating that he locked himself in the laboratory.

Kelvin says he is beginning to understand that something truly extraordinary has happened, and he believes that he can help. He pauses mid-sentence, because something seems to have emerged behind Snout; there are hanging bed sheets shaking rhythmically. Snout quickly pushes Kelvin toward the door. He tells Kelvin to come back in one hour, and that if he sees someone or something other than Sartorius or himself, he should not lose his head. When the horrified Kelvin asks what he could possibly see, Snout mysteriously answers that this depends on himself. Most importantly, Snout reminds Kelvin that whatever he sees is not a hallucination and also that they are not on Earth. Snout gets visibly nervous as the noise from the moving sheets gets stronger. He obviously does not want Kelvin to see the source of the noise. Kelvin sees the head of a boy emerge from behind the sheets when Snout closes the door in his face.

Kelvin walks around the corridor and finds an empty room. He takes his bag in when he hears a noise. He steps out again and finds Gibarian's cabin. On the door hangs a child's drawing of a man, titled "human being." Inside Gibarian's cabin, there is a big mess, with peculiar decorations arranged seemingly without purpose. A note is stuck on a big monitor: "for K. Kelvin." Kelvin switches on the tape recorder near the monitor, and he hears Gibarian tell him about his intention to commit suicide. Gibarian defends himself and says he is not insane; it merely is a question of conscience. The problem is that nobody could explain what had happened to him. At least here (on Solaris), "it" could happen to anyone. Gibarian also claims to share the opinion of Sartorius: it is advisable to bomb the plasma of the planet with high-powered x-rays, because there is no other way to stop what is going on and to get in touch with "this monster."

Kelvin pauses the tape as he hears somebody at the door who makes their presence known by jingling bells. It is the girl with the ball he had seen earlier. Kelvin presses himself against the door and waits for her to leave. He then takes the tape and a revolver he has found among Gibarian's scattered personal things. He leaves the room. In the corridor, Kelvin thinks about returning to Snout, but sees him through the door, standing and looking out like he is afraid of someone entering. Kelvin decides instead to explore the station. As he explores, we get the feeling of the presence of a strange energy, which is suggested through hollow electronic sounds and which makes Kelvin sweat and feel uncomfortable. He knocks at the door of Sartorius, who has installed himself in another part of the station.

Sartorius comes out only after some convincing, though he is insistent on not letting Kelvin into the laboratory. We can sense something moving inside. Sartorius is arrogant, judgmental about Gibarian's suicide and Kelvin's "overemotional" response, because the only thing that interests him is his duty toward science. A peculiar dwarf suddenly bursts out of the room, but Sartorius manages to catch him and put him back inside the lab. He recommends Kelvin adapt to being on the station before they talk. Sartorius then locks himself in the lab again. Kelvin goes back to one of the big, round windows nearby, but the outside view, one of total darkness before, is now such a bright white light that it hurts his eyes.

Outside the window we see the strange ocean-covered surface of the planet, a blue-gray, like slowly moving soup with sparkling lights and an emanating yellow fog. In the soundtrack, we hear again the hollow sound and then the girl's bells. She passes by, and Kelvin decides to follow her.

She leads him to a freezing cold room, where he finds Gibarian's body, wrapped in transparent plastic blankets.

Kelvin then goes back to Snout, who this time seems to be expecting him. Kelvin wants to know who the little girl was, whether she was human, and whether Snout also saw her. But Snout doesn't like this questioning, and, scandalized, asks Kelvin: "And you, how will I know who you are?" The girl passes by the door, and in the conversation that follows, the rules of space continuity are broken. Kelvin begs Snout for an explanation, but things prove too difficult for Snout to explain. The camera turns in slow circles, and Kelvin and Snout appear and disappear, but in unexpected positions. Since Snout doesn't give him an explanation, Kelvin goes back to his cabin. He closes the door, and the color of the film fades to black and white.

Kelvin makes sure the door is closed and even puts two heavy metal boxes in front. Then he switches on the tape from Gibarian once more. The girl who Kelvin had just seen in the corridor steps into the frame. She obviously is familiar with Gibarian and is dressed exactly the same way as she is dressed now. Gibarian doesn't explain her unexplainable presence in the recording; he just asks if Kelvin can see her. He repeats that he is not insane, and that "it" is connected to his conscience. After watching, Kelvin lies down, exhausted, the revolver at his side; again, he feels disturbed and this feeling is enhanced by a hollow sound. He falls asleep.

At dawn we notice the presence of a young woman with long brown hair. The film is now back to color. After staring a while into the emptiness without moving, the woman approaches Kelvin, who is lying on his bed. His eyes are open. His expression suggests that he doesn't know whether he is sleeping or not. The woman lies down next to Kelvin, kissing him in a way that implies a familiar romantic relationship. Kelvin now is horrified, but he tries not to show emotion. He seems to know his visitor and calls her Hari. He asks how she got here, but at the same time he feels threatened by her, groping secretly for the revolver. They get up, and she acts naturally, looking for her shoes, as if she had already been there yesterday. She finds the photograph we saw earlier in the film, on Earth—it is of her. She looks at the photograph without recognizing herself, but then she sees her reflection in a mirror behind and says: "Kris, it's me!" She doesn't understand and says she doesn't seem to remember anything about herself. She only knows she is Kelvin's wife. Hari believes she has forgotten all the rest of her memories because of a strange illness, and this feeling leaves her unsettled.

We understand that she also has no awareness that she just appeared out of nothing, and that she is not supposed to exist. It seems she

is the double of the woman from the photograph; yet, she claims to be in love with Kelvin. When Kelvin tells her he has to go to work, she insists on coming with him. She doesn't know why, but she feels like she must always be with him. Kelvin gives her a space suit and dresses himself in another one. To get her out of the clothes she is wearing, Kelvin has to cut her dress, which has no zipper or even a seam.

To get rid of her spooky presence, Kelvin sets a trap for Hari at the disembarking hall: he tells her to enter a space shuttle and that he has something to do first, but he would follow her. As she enters, Kelvin quickly presses the button to close the spaceship's door and then another one to launch the ship. Hari is sent into outer space; we can hear her scream inside the rocket as it takes off. Kelvin forgets to leave the room in time and gets hurt by the rocket's ignition, as he has to extinguish a fire burning his suit.

Part 2

Snout joins Kelvin in his cabin room; he wants to know what happened because he heard voices. Snout laughs out as Kelvin confirms what happened. He cynically asks how many attempts of violence were necessary? But he seems relieved now that Kelvin has the same problem as the other scientists on the station—at any rate, he becomes more friendly and helpful, taking care of Kelvin's wounds. Kelvin explains that the woman was his wife who had committed suicide a few years ago. Snout recounts that the phenomenon began after the scientists had struck the ocean with x-rays. Apparently, the planet reacted by scanning the humans' minds as they sleep. As a result, humanoid beings materialize out of their memories: they are the so-called "visitors," and each visitor is individually shaped, depending on the life and conscience of the human they are attached to. Snout says that Kelvin's visitor will come back as soon as he sleeps, but as another visitor, not knowing about the first. His prediction is correct.

Kelvin falls asleep, and in the dark room Hari suddenly is there again, searching for him: "Kris?" He tenderly calls for her to come to him, and she approaches him while undressing. She already knows she must tear the dress. Lying calmly down with him, she doesn't seem to remember she has been there before. In the morning Kelvin wakes up earlier than her and sees the dress of the first Hari lying on the table. He grabs the clothes quickly and leaves the cabin to hide them in a corner outside. From inside, we hear Hari scream, and something begins to pound at and press against the cabin door with violent force. It is Hari. Within seconds she has smashed the door and falls to Kelvin's feet, bleeding, losing consciousness from the effort. Shocked, he carries her to the bed, as she remains unconscious.

Seconds later, he returns to her with first aid materials, but he realizes her wounds have already healed nearly completely. The phone rings. Snout invites Kelvin to join him and Sartorius at the laboratory.

To their surprise, Kelvin brings Hari with him and introduces her as his wife. Snout seems undecided, but Sartorius is distrustful and talks about the "visitors" without shaking hands with Hari. He then reveals his most recent insights: the visitors are made of neutrinos, which stabilize through the force field of Solaris. Snout leaves angrily, because he cannot stand Hari's humanlike behavior or Kelvin's acceptance of her, very much in contrast with Sartorius's cynical, emotionless approach to the situation. Kelvin takes a blood sample from Hari and discovers her blood always regenerates, even if mixed with acid—she is immortal! Sartorius asks then in a cold way if Kelvin intends to take the examination of Hari as a serious scientific procedure. Kelvin protests: Hari has emotions and feelings. Besides, she is his wife, and he condemns any kind of experiment on her as inhumane. Sartorius warns Kelvin that he has established emotional contact. They separate in dissension, Kelvin proclaiming himself "guilty."

The ocean of Solaris is turning in circles, forming a vortex. Kelvin shows Hari the film he brought from Earth, the one with the "campfire" he mentioned to his father. In the film, we see Kelvin as a child and adolescent, his mother, his father, and finally Hari, dressed like she is now, waving to the camera operator. Both his mother and Hari stare directly into the camera, staying motionless for several moments.

When the film ends, Hari goes to the mirror and looks at herself. She claims that she doesn't know herself, that she cannot even remember her own face when she closes her eyes. She asks Kelvin if he knows himself. Kelvin's answer, "Sure, just as any human being," which sounds cruel. Hari then insists on having some memories of her own, but we get the impression they are invented; they don't match with Kelvin's, who finally gives up correcting her. He tells her instead a lie: that she didn't want to go with him to another town and they never saw each other again. We know this is not even half of the truth, but Hari agrees as though she remembers it.

In the next scene, Hari sleeps, while Kelvin is thoughtful. Snout knocks on the door and Kelvin opens it. Snout tells him that in the next three or four hours the regeneration will be slowed down, and the arrival of visitors will be suspended. They continue to talk about Snout's idea to try to send bundled x-rays of thoughts to the planet, to suggest to the planet to stop the visitors. The conversation is heard off screen, while we see Hari's sleeping face. Suddenly she opens her eyes, and thus hears the conversation. Snout suggests that Kelvin should be the one transmitting his thoughts, but Kelvin has doubts. He asks what would happen if in his subconscious he

wants Hari to disappear and how they could trust "this strange soup out there." Sartorius's second proposal, which Snout communicates, is to activate an annihilator, which would destabilize the neutrino systems. Kelvin refers to this choice of two unpleasant actions as extortion. Snout then invites Kelvin to come with him to see Sartorius, as Hari seems to be sleeping: "she already sleeps, this will end badly."

Kelvin accepts and leaves with Snout. We see Hari struggling in her bed, trying to calm down and not to run after Kelvin. Apparently, she has heard the conversation. Kelvin suddenly has doubts and runs back to her. He finds Hari half-conscious and asks her for forgiveness while she recovers. Again, the planet's ocean changes surface color, continuously turning in vortices.

In the middle of the night, Hari cannot sleep and urges Kelvin to talk to her. While he has been sleeping, she has had a talk with Sartorius. He has told her that she is the double of a woman named Hari, who was married to Kelvin and killed herself on Earth. She has concluded that she is not Hari, but "something else." As she grasps now the peculiar circumstances of her existence, she says: "I feel as if somebody is fooling us around." She insists on knowing the story of Hari's death. Kelvin tells her about the separation and that he had accidentally left vials of poison in the fridge. He had been worried, but not enough, because when he came back after three days, he found her dead. Hari asks why she had done it, and Kelvin answers that maybe it was because she felt he hadn't loved her enough. But he assures Hari that now he is truly in love with her. Hari believes him and calms down.

In the library, Hari, Kelvin, and Sartorius wait for Snout, who had announced the celebration of his birthday. The library symbolizes the apex of human knowledge and classical culture: wood paneled walls, thousands of old books, busts of certain admired figures, old globes, instruments, vases, and paintings on the wall from before the rise of modern art. When Snout finally shows up, he is in quite a state: his suit has a big scratch through it as if from a fight; he is emotionally irritated, and probably drunk. The conversation again revolves around Hari's condition of not being human, a condition Sartorius despises, and he accuses Kelvin of lying in bed with his ex-wife instead of doing serious scientific investigation.

Hari defends herself, claiming that she is becoming human: she has her own feelings and memories. She has learned to be alone and has started to sleep. She also says that Kelvin is better than Sartorius and Snout because he is worried about human aspects that appear in nonhuman conditions; whereas Sartorius and Snout ignore their visitors and hate them. She claims the visitors would just be themselves, and what they hate about the visitors

is in truth their own consciences. Sartorius leaves disgusted, and Snout gets drunk. As Kelvin keeps him company, he announces that at 5 p.m. there will be thirty seconds of zero-gravity on the station. In a sudden panic, Kelvin runs back to the library and finds Hari in a contemplative state, smoking a cigarette and looking at Peter Bruegel's painting *Hunters in the Snow*.

Tarkovsky films the painting with tactile movement that is accompanied by a soundtrack evoking an impressive realism, as if Hari had the power to awaken the painting when she looked at it. Kelvin and Hari celebrate the moment of zero-gravity together and float through the library.

However, the desire to commit suicide is part of Hari's process of becoming human: she knows she is not supposed to exist, at the same time understanding that in order to really be human she has to become mortal. Hari therefore tries to kill herself by drinking liquid oxygen. Of course, she fails—it doesn't matter how much she hurts herself, she will always resurrect. The next scene opens as Kelvin finds her frozen body lying in the curved corridor. Snout passes by as she resurrects, and he reacts in disgust, while Kelvin tries to comfort her with a blanket.

When she comes back awake, she is in a nervous state. She doesn't know who she is, she feels horrified, she has doubts about Kelvin, about who he is (is he like her?), and about how he can love her. Her suffering has reached its peak at this point of the story.

Time passes by. Hari and Kelvin have recognized the depth of their love, and he proposes that they don't return to Earth: they could live at the space station forever. But Hari is afraid. She is also concerned about Kelvin, who has visibly gotten sick. Half delirious, he walks around in a fever. In the corridor he meets Snout, who is at a window, staring at the ocean's surface. Snout says: "The ocean's activity is increasing. Your encephalogram may be the cause." But Kelvin is mentally not present. His speech is not coherent, and he circles around in pain. Then suddenly, as if something is attacking him inside his head, he says: "No, I don't believe that, I cannot accept that . . ."

He looks at the ocean, which is in high activity, changing its color to green and violet again, swirling in its continuous vortex movement. Off screen we hear his voice: "Let's suppose I love you. Love is something we can feel, but never explain. One can only explain the idea. You love that which you can lose. Yourself, a woman, your country . . . until today, humanity, the world, had no way to reach love. There are so few of us! Perhaps the reason we are here is to understand, for the first time, human beings as a reason to love?"

It seems as if the intent and meaning Tarkovsky wants to share by making this film is concentrated in this statement, and the theme of love deserves further attention throughout.

Kelvin continues his feverish walk through the corridors of the space station, asking why Gibarian committed suicide, claiming that he did not die of fear but of shame and that the salvation of humanity would lie in its shame. Snout and Hari support him while he walks. As they pass by the windows, the light coming in is so strong that from time to time it merges the whole image into white. These white flashes get stronger and longer until we enter a universe of fever dreams, where logic has become subjective.

Short shots of Kelvin's father's house on Earth appear in sepia tone. Then, back to color, Kelvin lies on his bed on Solaris, which is located in a chamber made of mirrors; further away, a vase with Earthly flowers is at his bedside. Hari comes in, caresses Kelvin's head, and then she looks up directly into the camera. It is a look so emotionless that she does not seem human. It is a look as much out of time as the one in the photographs (taken on Earth).

The camera turns around and we see several versions of Hari and Kelvin's mother, and even the dog from Earth. We are now in Kelvin's cabin room on Solaris, decorated with flowers and fruits from Earth. Then, in a black and white sequence, Kelvin meets his mother in a room decorated with items from Earth as well as from the space station. His mother seems younger than him. He apologizes for being two hours late; she asks about the trip. He says it was ok, just a bit tiring.

We learn he doesn't feel happy and is very lonely, which she feels sorry about. She reproaches him for not having phoned. We have the impression that the conversation is not only absurd for it being a dream; the mother is dead, and she doesn't seem conscious of that fact. She tells Kelvin to take better care of himself, since he seems out of shape and neglected (he wears a pair of pajamas). She discovers that his arm is covered in dirt, and she brings water and washes it off. She kisses him as if he were a child. He starts crying, but she leaves. He wakes up. He lies in a room on the space station. Snout is taking care of him. Kelvin asks for Hari.

Snout reads a farewell letter from Hari to him. While he has been hallucinating in his fever dreams, Hari conspired with Sartorius and Snout. She writes that it was her own decision and asks him not to blame anybody: it would only be for the best. Snout explains that she did it for him. Kelvin now has to process the shock.

In the room there are remnants from the fever dreams, like the jug his mother had brought water in to wash Kelvin's arm, the flowers in the

vase, and Hari's scarf. In a voiceover, Snout and Kelvin have a philosophical conversation about losing their minds in the cosmos. Snout says that after they sent Kelvin's encephalogram to the planet, no more of the visitors have shown up. Something new, beyond their understanding, is happening to the planet, because small islands have begun to form on the surface. Outside the room, we see Sartorius listening to the conversation, lacking the courage to enter. Then he fades out.

In a scene at the library, Snout and the recuperated Kelvin are in a melancholic mood, thinking about the meaning of life, and a voice over says: "Yet to preserve all the simple human truths, we need mysteries. The mystery of happiness, death, love." The conclusion is that when humans don't know their date of death, they feel immortal. Kelvin does not know what to do next and hesitates whether to go back to Earth or to wait for Hari's unlikely return. We hear his continuous voiceover as the image pans over white Solaris fog.

The film ends similarly to how it began: on Earth, in nature, at the exact same place as the opening scene, with the only difference that it is winter now. The lake is half frozen, the grass is ugly, gray, and wet, and the trees are without leaves. Kelvin advances to his father's home; his dog welcomes him. When Kelvin approaches the house, he stops at the window, astonished by what he sees inside: his father is dusting books, but it is raining inside the house, a hot and fuming rain. His father looks up, spots Kelvin, and comes outside. Kelvin kneels in front of him, and the father lays his hand on his son's head. As the image zooms out into a perspective from outer space, we understand that we are not on Earth. The scene we just saw has happened on the surface of the planet Solaris, which has produced one small Earthlike island out of the memory of Kelvin.

PART 2:

PLANET – SOLARISTIC TWISTS

III. What Happens to Reality in Film?[50]

"What happens to reality when it is projected and screened?"[51] asks Stanley Cavell right at the beginning of *The World Viewed*. In the text preceding this question, Cavell interprets the claims of André Bazin—"The cinema [is] of its essence a dramaturgy of Nature"[52]—and Erwin Panofsky—"The medium of the movies is physical reality as such"[53]—as not to be taken literally, but rather as referring to film's reliance on the photographic medium. Cavell thus says that the question of photography and film has to be a question of reality:

> What Panofsky and Bazin have in mind is that the basis of the medium of movies is photographic, and that a photograph is of reality or nature. If to this we add that the medium is one in which the photographic image is projected and gathered on a screen, our question becomes: What happens to reality when it is projected and screened?[54]

To start with this inquiry into what happens to reality in film, let us examine this idea that "a photograph is of reality or nature." What exactly does it mean that a picture is of the same as that which it depicts, the same as its model? Cavell certainly is right when he explains:

> A photograph does not present us with 'likeness' of things; it presents us, we want to say, with the things themselves. But wanting to say that may well make us ontologically restless. [55]

What lies behind this "ontological restlessness," which is derived from equating the thing itself with its photographical other or double? The equating must appear as a contradiction, because these two—the thing and its photographic double—cannot be considered identical; indeed, their being equal appears as a paradox. Cavell finds an elegant escape from this

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[50] Parts of this chapter have been published as parts of the text "The Being of Film" in *The Real of Reality—The Realist Turn in Contemporary Film Theory*.
[51] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 16.
[52] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 110.
[53] Panofsky, "Style and Medium," 31.
[54] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 16.
[55] Ibid., 17–18.

paradox when he characterizes the problem of photography as provoking an ontological restlessness, further describing its connection to reality as a human limit of epistemic capacity:

> Such troubles in notating so obvious a fact suggest that we do not know what a photograph is; we do not know how to place it ontologically. We might say that we don't know how to think of the connection between a photograph and what it is the photograph of. The image is not a likeness; it is not exactly a replica or a relict, or a shadow, or an apparition either, though all these natural candidates share a striking feature with photographs—an aura or history of magic surrounding them.[56]

However, Cavell has not attempted to describe this characterization of the photographic image in terms other than "magic." Ontologically, as well as epistemologically, it is surrounded by "mysteriousness." Cavell thereby aptly formulates the sense in which the photographic image is mysterious:

> [T]he mysteriousness of the photograph lies not in the machinery which produces it, but in the unfathomable abyss between what it captures (its subject) and what is captured for us (this fixing of the subject), the metaphysical wait between exposure and exhibition, the absolute authority or finality of the fixed image.[57]

It is this "unfathomable abyss" that we will try to understand better in what follows.

The Ontological Puzzle of Being in Reproduction

Cavell starts his reflection relying on Bazin, claiming that Bazin mistakes the identity between the thing and its image in photography, while actually wanting to call attention to the fact that we are not facing a representation. For Cavell it is obvious in this context that the thing in the photographic image "is not actually present to us either (anyway, obviously not present with us) when it appears on the screen."[58] But is that so, and is the problem, which Bazin raises, one of a mere miscasting? To better approach this question, I propose to look back at Bazin's writing in detail. What does Bazin claim exactly about the relation between the photographic image and its model? I have already mentioned a proposed interpretation of the claim

[56] Ibid., 17–18.
[57] Ibid., 185.
[58] Ibid., 166.

that "the photographic image *is* the model,"[59] which I will elucidate in what follows.

I will argue that Bazin's assertion is to be understood beyond the indexical interpretation, which has become established in film theory. A close look at his formulations can cast some light onto the "mysterious" problem Cavell describes, exactly because Bazin does not emphasize a relation of indexicality when he sketches the perplexing relation between the photographic image and its model. In my view, the widespread indexical interpretation relies on a certain misunderstanding, which goes back to the English translation of Bazin's writing. Actually, Bazin's ontology of the photographic image was interpreted for the first time as an indexical reading by Peter Wollen in 1969, two years after Hugh Gray's English translation was published. Wollen refers to Bazin in the context of semiology, grounded in Charles Sanders Peirce's indexical class of signs, drawing a physical connection between objects and their photographical representation: "we know that in certain aspects they are exactly like the objects they represent."[60] Thus, Wollen claims that Bazin's "conclusions are remarkably close to those of Peirce"[61] and points out:

> Time and again Bazin speaks of photography in terms of a mold, a death-mask, a Veronica, the Holy Shroud of Turin, a relic, an imprint. Thus Bazin speaks of 'the lesser plastic arts, the molding of death-masks for example, which likewise involves a certain automatic process. One might consider photography in this sense as a molding, the taking of an impression, by the manipulation of light.'[62]

The English translation of Bazin quoted here by Wollen has dropped the word "reproduction," which is found in the French original. "Un certain automatisme dans la reproduction"[63] has been translated into English by Gray as quoted above: "a certain automatic process." Yet, Bazin clearly names here what he is interested in: the automatic reproduction of the dead and not just any automatic process. The word "reproduction" designates a specific kind of process. Dropping this term is a symptomatic example of the change in meaning that the English translation provokes, thus favoring Wollen's indexical understanding.

Let us look closer at the context in which Wollen quotes Bazin. In order to engage photography as an imprint, Wollen has actually quoted a

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[59] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 14.
[60] Peirce, "What is a Sign?" (1894), quoted in Wollen, *Signs and Meaning*, 103.
[61] Wollen, *Signs and Meaning*, 105.
[62] Ibid., 105.
[63] Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, 12.

footnote of Bazin, which, in Bazin's text, was meant to complement an observation on photography as a "psychological fact." Thereby, for Bazin, "the solution is not to be found in the result achieved but *in the way of achieving it*."[64] This reinforces the reading that Bazin's emphasis lies not in the obtained "imprint" (per Wollen), but in the manner of automatic reproduction by which it has been achieved: "le moulage de masques mortuaires qui présentement, eux aussi, un certain automatisme dans la reproduction,"[65] says Bazin.

Therefore, I argue that Gray's translation reduces the ontological dimension of Bazin's proposal as well as its philosophical complexity. This will be clarified even further through the example I will give in what follows. The reason behind Gray's translation might have been a theoretical simplification, because the philosopheme presented by Bazin appears as paradoxical, as Cavell has observed, "the model is the image," whereas the indexical interpretation cannot provoke any kind of "ontological restlessness," and therefore stands against what Cavell emphasizes in Bazin.

Consider again Bazin's manner of argumentation. In the French version, he starts with the following affirmation:

> L'objectif seul nous donne de l'objet une image capable de 'défouler,' du fond de notre inconscient, ce besoin de substituer à l'objet *mieux qu'un décalque approximatif*.[66]

This statement says that only the photographic lens can satisfy our profound need to substitute the (depicted) object in a better way than an "approximate decal." It means the photographic lens gives us something more than a decal, as the latter is merely an approximation. However, this "something more" is not named. Yet, Gray's translation suggests the opposite: he names the something more as the decal, which already is "more than a mere approximation" and thus satisfies the deep human need for the substitution of the object. Let me quote his translation:

> Only a photographic lens can give us the kind of image of the object that is capable of satisfying the deep need man has to substitute for it something more than a mere approximation, *a kind of decal or transfer*.[67]

Indeed, this English translation can provide a ground for an indexical reading of Bazin's argumentation, in which the decal becomes

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[64] Ibid.; emphasis added.
[65] Ibid., 12.
[66] Ibid., 14; emphasis added.
[67] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 14; emphasis added.

"something more" than an approximation. Yet, this is not emphasized in the French original, where Bazin in fact asserts that the photographic image must be more than an approximate decal. And this he says immediately before he claims that "the photographic image is the model"—"elle est le modèle."[68] This clearly favors my reading that Bazin's emphasis lies on the word "being."

Yet, what does it mean—to be the model? This sentence, in English and quoted out of context, wrongly evokes the identity of the object with its photographic existence. Rather, we should consider the problem Cavell emphasizes by reflecting further on Bazin: "The photographic mystery is that you can know both the appearance and the reality, but that nevertheless the one is unpredictable from the other."[69]

If Cavell had considered the French original of Bazin, would he have taken into consideration that the English version reduces and hides the full meaning of the question of the being of the photographic image, which cannot be found elsewhere just as in the ontological status of being itself? I ask this because in my view it is exactly this ontological status of the being of the image that matters for investigation. Since philosophical analysis is a rather new way to look at film, a film theorist like Gray, as a translator, may not have considered this kind of question, evoking paradoxes that are particularly fruitful in the context of philosophy. Regarding what has been said in this chapter so far, I propose to center further reflection on the question of being. It is thus my hypotheses that by further reflecting on the being of film, we can grasp reproducibility as a property of being instead of seeing it as a paradox, or an "unfathomable abyss" between the thing and its reproduction.

The Being of Reality

Obviously, it has not been Bazin's intention to reflect on the ontological meaning of being and its conceptual entanglement with reality or its reproduction; that would clearly have gone beyond the scope of his intention to define film for theoretical use, not to unfold its philosophical complexity. Yet Bazin—perhaps without noticing—has unexpectedly stepped into the realm of the most complex questions of ontology and epistemology. Therefore, in defining the ontological status of the being of the photographic image, from a philosophical point of view, being itself is at stake.

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[68] Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, 14.
[69] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 185–86.

By reassessing the ontological sense of the being of the model present in Bazin's original text, an unexpected ontological quality of being is brought forth, namely its infinite shareability in reproduction. But where does this reproducibility of being in the form of the image come from? How can being be reproduced and how does it do so through the image? Bazin evokes the origin of the photographic image, and of art in general, by referring to the Egyptian mummy "as a defense against the passage of time":

> The religion of ancient Egypt, aimed against death, saw survival as depending on the continued existence of the corporeal body. Thus, by providing a defense against the passage of time is satisfied a basic psychological need in man, for death is but the victory of time. To preserve, artificially, his bodily appearance is to snatch it from the flow of time, to stow it away neatly, so to speak, in the hold of life.[70]

The power of photography to stop time and of film to reproduce it indicates that something about the nature of being is for it to be shared; something that unfolds in time, but affects us through the photographic image in a special way, is different from all the other arts, namely, by the instrumental and automatic intervention of "a nonliving agent":

> For the first time, between the originating object and its reproduction there intervenes only the instrumentality of a non-living agent. . . . All the arts are based on the presence of man, only photography derives an advantage from his absence. The production by automatic means has radically affected our psychology of the image . . . we are forced to accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually re-presented, set before us, that is to say, in time and space. Photography enjoys a certain advantage in virtue of this transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction.[71]

This transference of reality is done in the absence of human intervention; therefore, we can call it a transhuman or even posthuman ability—an aspect to be developed later. Additionally, the "transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction" implies an equivalence of being and reality. A similar point is made by Louis-Georges Schwartz, when he claims that in Bazin, for the French reader, "reality and appearance are brought very close together, almost conflated,"[72] and this doesn't happen for the English reader. Remarkably, Schwartz also fiercely defends disconnecting Bazin from any reading of indexicality, through the example of the Egyptian "mummy complex":

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[70] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 9.
[71] Ibid., 13–14.
[72] Schwartz, "Deconstruction avant la lettre," 99.

> Bazin calls the mummy—the preservation of appearance in the medium of reality—the first statue. The mummy is already a plastic art, already an image, already somehow an aesthetic production. This short sentence shows us that what interests Bazin is not the index, whatever both his supporters and detractors claim. The mummy as an image ontologically connected to its model, the mummy is its model in flesh and bone. It prefigures the photograph of which Bazin will write that it is its model. Index describes neither mummy nor photograph. The word never appears in the essay for an index may be caused or inscribed by what it expresses, but is an entity different from what it expresses. The mummy and the one who might survive are one being.[73]

Obviously I agree with Schwartz on this point; it is my understanding that the idea of an ontology of the image as a relation to its model identifies the being of the image with that of its model, a relation that Bazin claims originates in Egyptian mummies: the survival of being is at stake and in film it is achieved. Such an idea is clearly opposed to the understanding of the image as an index of the model and goes beyond being mere historical evidence of something that factually "has been."

Furthermore, the fact that something *is* or *has been*, does not say anything about the nature of its being. I will argue that the conclusions about the nature of the film image are to be sought in the being of reality, which is not different from physical reality or its filmic reproduction. This being of reality becomes multifold, shareable, and reproduceable in film. It is a condensed being and out of time and space. It is neither virtual, nor actual, but folded together, waiting to unfold its being anew in time and in whatever space.

Being in Time as Film

Considering the described entanglement of being and reality, which has been unfolded by analyzing Bazin's chain of argumentation, Cavell's question, "What happens to reality when it is projected and screened?"[74] can be transformed into, "What happens to being when it is projected and screened?" Whether in reality or in film, it is always being we are referring to, and this can be developed throughout the solaristic system by asking: What happens to being on the planet Solaris? Thus, I propose to grasp the solaristic visitors as cinematic protagonists, since they share the same being as their "models" on Earth; the visitors are unfolding in time, and in space, which is on Solaris. Therefore, this being on Solaris is to be understood as

[73] Ibid., 99.
[74] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 16.

a self-reflexive *film-being* or *cine-being*: that which we can assert about the planet and its relation to the scientists is applicable to gain insight on the nature of film, a network of self-reflexive relations of the movie's dramatis personae who become "conceptual personae" (CPs) in the solaristic system, a term to be introduced later in this book.

The question of being was famously reintroduced into modern philosophy by Martin Heidegger, who claimed that it had never been resolved in a proper way. Right at the beginning of his major work *Being and Time* he asks:

> Do we in our time have an answer to the question of what we really mean by the word 'being' [Sein]? Not at all. So it is fitting that we should raise anew the question of the meaning of Being. But are we nowadays even perplexed at our inability to understand the expression 'Being'? Not at all. So first of all we must reawaken an understanding for the meaning of this question. Our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the meaning of Being and to do so concretely.[75]

Such an approach toward being sheds new light on Cavell's affirmation that "we do not know what a photograph is; we do not know how to place it ontologically."[76] Cavell, it seems, ignores the question raised by Heidegger: we are puzzled already by the ontological condition of being itself. We do not know what being is! This is the reason why we feel puzzled by its reproduction, and even more so its reproduction in time by film, which shares the temporal-ontological condition of being. "Within the horizon of time the projection of a meaning of Being in general can be accomplished."[77] Indeed, Heidegger's conception of the inseparability of being and time sets being in time, that is, *being is time* for Heidegger. And this is reflected in film's being, unfolding in time.

It seems now that the special status that being has in relation to film becomes more graspable when thought through the Heideggerian tools of thinking, and vice versa. The fact that being can be reproduced by film means that Heidegger's "being-in-the-world"[78] becomes "being-in-film." This adds a new characteristic to being and opens new ground for ontological consequences, which can expand Heidegger's appreciation of being and time. Of crucial importance in this context is Heidegger's theory of death and his "not-yet" projection of the possibilities of being. Both are consequences of this idea of associating being and time, of Dasein's

[75] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1.
[70] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 17.
[77] Ibid., 278.
[78] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 78.

temporality, that is, its being conditioned by time. We will apply this to film generally and to *Solaris* in particular in the fifth chapter of this book.

Here, it is important to emphasize that the dimension of time receives a special treatment in the movie *Solaris*. This was likely intentional, as director Andrei Tarkovsky's underlying understanding of film or cinema has a special perspective on time: according to Tarkovsky, making a film is literally "sculpting in" or "of" time. His aesthetic theory further matches with some of our concerns regarding the nature of reality, and is connected to the idea of a *factuality of time*. Already, Bazin has stressed that the temporal dimension that cinema adds to photography reveals an "objectivity in time,"[79] as film is an "image of their [the depicted things'] duration."[80] Similarly, Tarkovsky refers to time as a factual form—a moving state in which the filmed objects manifest themselves and can be recorded and returned to through film:

> In what form does cinema print time? Let us define it as factual. And fact can consist of an event, or a person moving, or any material object; and furthermore the object can be presented as motionless and unchanging, in so far as that immobility exists within the actual course of time. That is where the roots are to be sought of the specific character of cinema. [81]

For Tarkovsky, this factuality of objects is the natural state of things in the flow of real time, an idea reminiscent of Henri Bergson, for whom the world moves in a constant flow of becoming. As an example of the impact of the factual form of time in film, Tarkovsky refers to a famous sequence of early cinema: the shot of the approaching train by Auguste Lumière. When it was screened for the first time, the spectators had been so frightened that they fled out of the room. Not only was it remarkable that they did not distinguish between the screen and the physical world; but also, for Tarkovsky, a completely "new aesthetic principle" was born:

> For the first time in the history of the arts, in the history of culture, man found the means to take an impression of time. And simultaneously the possibility of reproducing that time on screen as often as he wanted, to repeat it and go back to it. . . . He acquired a matrix for actual time. Once seen and recorded, time could now be preserved in metal boxes over a long period (theoretically forever).[82]

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[79] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 14.
[80] Ibid., 15.
[81] Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 63.
[82] Ibid., 62.

It seems that this factuality of time conveys the reality-dimension of film for Tarkovsky. That is, because of how it plays out temporally, and because of the way it is recorded in photographic image and sound, cinema is real and interferes with reality—as an artwork and simply as a moving image. Tarkovsky further relates the factual time of film to the concept of the rhythm of passing time.[83] This rhythm relies on a certain pressure of time,[84] and therefore it does not derive from film-editing (which is the juxtaposition of shots); rather, the rhythm already exists within the shots, it is *life*. In this sense, Tarkovsky writes, on the opening sequence of *Solaris*:

> Rhythm in cinema is conveyed by the life of the object visibly recorded in the frame. Just as from the quivering of a reed you can tell what sort of current, what pressure there is in a river, in the same way I know the movement of time from the flow of the life-process reproduced in the shot.[85]

Tarkovsky describes how film appropriates the actual life of different beings and objects in their observable motion in time, their rhythm. Film as a continuation of reality then prolongs the life of the spectators, in a way, as an experience of condensed time, because it gives back time in compressed form: Tarkovsky points out that a flower can perish in film in a minute.[86] Therefore, film has a different status among the arts concerning its relation with reality and often is considered like a (bodiless) continuation of reality. It conveys this continuation in such a hypnotic way that the spectator merges into it as if it were equal to their lived reality.

Furthermore, according to Tarkovsky's understanding of time, the past (memory) is more consistent and real than the present, which permanently flees and decomposes. Film gives this possibility to imprint and reproduce time; thus, film is recorded memory and, as such, provides us with memories as if they were coming from real life experience. That is, film images are memories of memories, metamemories.

Solaris operates with this mechanism going even one step further: human dreams are a transformative processor of memories and serve as a

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[83] "The dominant, all-powerful factor of the film image is rhythm, expressing the course of time within the frame" (cf. ibid., 113).

[84] "The distinctive time running through the shots makes the rhythm of the picture; and rhythm is determined not by the length of the edited pieces, but by the pressure of the time that runs through them" (cf. ibid., 117).

[85] Ibid., 120.

[86] ". . . cinema, like no other art, widens, enhances and concentrates a person's experience—and not only enhances it but makes it longer, significantly longer. That is the power of cinema" (cf. ibid., 63).

threshold between memory and matter: memory literally becomes life on the planet in material form. In this sense, the main aesthetic and conceptual principle of cine-being in *Solaris* can be described as an actualized form of past being or *the presence of something, which is absent*. Thus, the idea arises that the being of reality, which is grasped by film, is the same as in memory while we are in the act of remembering. It is a being of memory images in a Bergsonian sense: for Bergson, the world is composed of images that interact. A memory-image or an "image-remembrance" is, for Bergson, a registered form of "pure memory."[87] As I will show in the fifth chapter of this book, this transcendent and displaced form of being reflects the very characteristics of photography and film. It evokes its spectral and death-driven character, relying on cinematographic imaging to transcend matter and preserve time.

But before doing so, let us try to complete the evolution of the being of reality, which becomes shareable and reproducible in filmic reproduction. After now having drawn some first considerations on being and time, I propose to reflect on what we mean when we refer to reality: How can we reflect on film and its relation to reality if we have not clarified the use of the concept "reality"? And regarding film's intra-active engagement with reality (evident in reality's transference by film), this inquiry seems to be a promising project of reflection for a simple reason: in philosophy we have to describe reality and translate it into another system, the one of words, relying on symbolic order; whereas film directly operates with reality by automatically recording images and sounds of being in time. Thus, we are automatically facing the reproduction of reality in the form of its being.

[87] See: Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, chaps. 2 and 3.

IV. Twisted Reality and its Reproduction

Let us proceed with the reflection on Bazin: he draws an inseparability between being and reality and claims that in a photographic image, the depicted object *is* the model, ontologically. Hereby, I suggest stepping back for a moment from Cavell's interpretation of Bazin that film is *of* reality and propose instead that film is reproduced reality—because the being of reality is what is shared in filmic reproduction. Reproduction is thereby twofold. On the one hand, it consists of recording (grasping and preserving) reality; on the other hand, by this doubling it is in continuity with reality and substituting reality. Yet, this fact can only be understood if we presuppose and seek a multifold model of reality. Therefore, I propose in this chapter to develop the concept of reality we are talking about. What the word "reality" refers to—when we speak of the reproduction of reality or distinguish film from reality— seems to belong to general and universally held knowledge. However, I will argue that such an understanding is as problematic as an unconscious use of the term "being": we do not know what reality is; it withdraws when we try to grasp it. Its intelligibility presents one of the biggest challenges in the history of philosophy: How can we know or grasp what reality is if we only experience it from the inside, by being-in-reality? And which kind of reality is film, since, as we have learned so far, reality is transferred into it?

Multifold Models of Reality

Since the time of the pre-Socratics and Plato, the potential of illusion to befall sensory perception has been considered, and the problem of the distinction between reality and its perception has been established. In the further course of the history of philosophy, subjective and relative idealism has been established on one side, and direct or scientific realism/materialism on the other, as the main opposing positions, in all possible facets and variations, regarding our grasp of reality and access to reliable knowledge and truth. In the context of this book, I propose to conceive a multifold model of reality out of which the solaristic system emerges and which I claim is reproduced by film.

Although this analysis is referring to the dichotomy of idealism and materialism, its main focus lies in the contemporary return of materialism and realism, which has been presented with a new, speculative twist on the knowledge of reality and the problem of human access to it. This new twist has been little explored in the context of aesthetics, and even less in the context of film. It is thereby worth mentioning that the recent speculative turn in materialism and realism seems to have been anticipated by Henri Bergson's twofold stance abrogating the contradiction between realism and idealism. His position is often referred to as "partial realism," a term Bergson himself uses in a letter to John Dewey.[88] It is further fruitful to take into account the appropriation of the Bergsonian "world as image" by Deleuze in the area of philosophy of film.

Karl R. Popper has claimed that reality has a pluralist character, which he argues to be composed of three worlds: 1) physical entities and events, 2) consciousness and mental objects such as thoughts or feelings, and 3) objective knowledge and socio-cultural infrastructures.[89] His "threefold realism" is often compared to the Greek division into physis, psyche, and logos.

According to Popper, world 3 presents the abstract objects and products of thought like scientific theories or works of art, which also gain an existence in world 1 after they are created, yet their importance lies in their content, not the physical form they manifest:

> World 3 and world 1 overlap: world 3 encompasses, for instance, books, it contains statements; it contains above all human language. These are also physical objects, objects, events, that take place in world 1. Language consists, we may say, of dispositions anchored in nervous structures and therefore in something material; of elements of memory, engrams, expectations, learnt and discovered behavior; and of books. You can hear my lecture today because of acoustics: I am making a noise; and this noise is part of world 1. . . . At the same time I would like to show that the immaterial aspect of world 3 not only plays a role in our consciousness – in which it plays a major role – but that it is real, even apart from worlds 1 and 2. . . . there is something immaterial here, namely the content of our statements, of our arguments, in contrast to the acoustic or the written, and hence physical formulations of these statements or arguments.[90]

Whereas world 1 and world 2 interact, world 2 (consciousness) functions as the mediator between the physical world (1) and the products

[88] See: Mullarkey, *The New Bergson*, 7.
[89] See: Popper, "Knowledge and The Shaping of Reality."
[90] Ibid., 22.

of human thought (3), for example, the experience of listening to a piece of music. What interests me in Popper's approach is that he names a common denominator of worlds 1, 2, and 3: their realness. They are equally real, and this level of realness I suspect to be the realm of the real of reality: somehow a variable with a property that unites the material, the immaterial, and that which pertains to consciousness. In any case, Popper does not give an example of a product belonging to the three kinds of worlds at once; according to him there is a feedback interaction going on, in which world 2 emerges from and changes world 1, and world 3 emerges from and changes world 2.

Film is not mentioned by Popper (who prefers to refer to computer programs), but I will argue that film is the union and recreation of worlds 1, 2, and 3 together; it is different from music, paintings, or books, different from stories or theater plays, and different from scientific theories. On the one hand, film clearly belongs to world 3, being a product of thought, gaining existence of its own, acting on worlds 1 and 2. On the other hand, this existence is far more complex than the usual products of thought, as not only is it to be grasped by consciousness and emotional experience, but it also directly enters and even substitutes the physical world; it is not the same kind of physical existence a book has, in its carrying words that suggest worlds of ideas. Since film is the reproduction of reality, it is also a continuation of physical reality: different from a book and different from noise, the physical reality of film carries world 1 and world 3 and encompasses several levels of world 2—the psyches of the film characters and the consciousness of the spectator. This means that film's reality is even more complex than the three worlds, because it encompasses all the three at once, it creates a world 3 which is also worlds 2 and 1; even if its materiality is light and soundwaves, it is a physical existence to be seen and heard.

Following Popper, the solaristic system combines, in its understanding of reality, physical reality, sensory perception, and the inner processes of the mind as well as their products; yet the solaristic system seeks a bigger entanglement of the three kinds of worlds and adds infinite possible worlds, that is, an infinite multifold model of reality, as many worlds as there are films. Popper's model could also be compared to how Maurice Merleau-Ponty would describe "the world." Physical reality is complemented by "the natural setting of, and field for all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions."[91] For Merleau-Ponty, perceptions are how humans relate to the outer world (the interaction of world 1 and world 2 in Popper), which is accessed by humans as appearances, composed of perceptual objects and by

[91] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xii.

consciousness as a projective activity of the mind. Therefore, the appearance of objects can conceal their reality and is distinct from reality. Merleau-Ponty further fuses together the perception and the perceived object when he argues:

> Perception is precisely that kind of act in which there can be no question of setting the act itself apart from the end to which it is directed. Perception and the perceived necessarily have the same existential modality, since perception is inseparable from the consciousness which it has, or rather is, of reaching the thing itself. Any contention that the perception is indubitable, whereas the thing perceived is not, must be ruled out. If I see an ashtray, in the full sense of the word see, there must be an ashtray there, and I cannot forego this assertion. To see is to see something. . . . How can we possibly dissociate the certainty of our perceptual existence from that of its external counterpart?[92]

I propose to read Merleau-Ponty in the following realist sense:[93] perception discloses certain properties of reality, even if I can only sense some part of the object, conditioned by my senses, at least the object's existence is disclosed. Similarly to his contemporary Bergson, Merleau-Ponty gives perception and the perceived "the same existential modality": the object does exist external to the mind, because the perceiver is part of the same world. This does not mean, for Merleau-Ponty, that the perception corresponds to the whole reality of the perceived object.

The World as Image

Bergson affirms the necessity to overcome the dualism of "the reality of spirit and the reality of matter,"[94] a position between idealism and realism, relating and fusing the spheres of the conception and perception of reality in an unexpected way. Instead of distinguishing appearance and reality, Bergson speaks of image. For him, the world is image—it is composed of images that interact (again similarly to the interaction of world 1 and world 2 in Popper): "All these images act and react upon one another in all their elementary parts according to constant laws which I call laws of nature."[95] These images exist independently of being grasped by the human mind. They are "images perceived when my senses are opened to them, unperceived,

[92] Baldwin, *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*, 173.
[93] Further analysis of this assumption goes beyond the scope of this project.
[94] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, vii.
[95] Ibid., 1.

when they are closed."[96] The body is thereby an image, which is different from other images, because the body filters images via the brain, which is itself "only an image among other images."[97]

Therefore, the brain does not contain nor create the other images, but is contained in the material world, itself an image: "images themselves, they cannot create images."[98] All images continue to exist, even without the brain perceiving them. Images are matter for Bergson. Perception is thereby defined as follows: "I call matter the aggregate of images and perception of matter these same images referred to the eventual action of one particular image, my body."[99] But Bergson does not distinguish the reality of these "perception-images"[100] from those "matter-images," which exist even unperceived. They are the same images, although they belong to different systems:

> Here is a system of images which I term my perception of the universe, and which may be entirely altered by a very slight change in a certain privileged image – my body. This image occupies the centre. . . . Here, on the other hand, are the same images, but referred each one to itself; influencing each other no doubt, but in such a manner that the effect is always in proportion to the cause: this is what I term the universe.[101]

The main distinction between these two kinds of systems is that the perception-system contains matter-images, which have been reacted upon the body/brain; they are "movement-images"[102] or perception-images, but not images created by our mind. Ultimately Bergson suggests a conflation between images inside and outside the human mind. Similarly to the conception of Popper's three worlds, for Bergson, mind and matter are equally real, in the sense of both being images, composed by certain kinds of images, inner ones and outer ones:

> Every image is within certain images and without others; but of the aggregate of images we cannot say that it is within or without us, since

[96] Ibid., 1.
[97] Ibid., 2.
[98] Ibid., 10.
[99] Ibid., 7.
[100] The perception-image I refer to here is extrapolated from Bergsonian thought and is to be distinguished from the perception-image in film, which Deleuze introduces in *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*.
[101] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 12.
[102] The movement-image I refer to here is, too, an extrapolation from Bergsonian thought and is to be distinguished from the movement-image in film, which Deleuze introduces in *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*.

> interiority and exteriority are only relations among images.[103]

Reality is then defined as a multifold of images. This idea of image would unify the three worlds of Karl Popper, since interiority and exteriority are not distinct worlds, but mere relations among images. Therefore, Bergson's theory has a high potential to be applied to the kind of reality that film (re)produces. Images for Bergson belong to what Merleau-Ponty refers as "the same existential modality," although for Merleau-Ponty they are distinct from reality. For Bergson, on the other hand, appearance is not to be distinguished from reality, but every image is to be seen as part of a bigger whole:

> My consciousness of matter is then no longer either subjective, as it is for English idealism, or relative, as it is for the Kantian idealism. It is not subjective, as it is in things rather than in me. It is not relative, because the relation between the 'phenomenon' and the 'thing' is not that of appearance to reality, but merely that of the part to the whole.[104]

Yet it is Deleuze who attempts to classify with the help of cinema—but not only cinema—all the possible kinds, systems, and layers of images, integrated in a rhizomatic model of thought. I will come back to the Deleuzian approach later. For now, let me address the current resurgence of realism and materialism, which scrutinizes so-called Kantian or idealist correlationism in much the same way as Bergson.

Overcoming Correlationism

In contemporary philosophy the discussion of reality and its perception has taken an ontological turn; speculative realism in particular has given a new realist or materialist twist on reality, by delineating an ontological framework to its epistemological implications. The contemporary French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux has thereby coined a stance against "correlationism," which is the Berkeleyian-Kantian idea that:

> Thought cannot get outside itself in order to compare the world as it is 'in itself' to the world as it is 'for us,' and thereby to distinguish what is a function of our relation to the world from what belongs to the world alone.[105]

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[103] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 13.
[104] Ibid., 306.
[105] Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 3–4.

Meillassoux criticizes this interplay between man and world, which reduces the access to reliable knowledge of being and reality to human thought; philosophical anthropocentrism is typically correlationist. His position requires a renovation of our relationship to reality and thereby evokes, from the solaristic point of view, the achievements of film. I will argue that in film (and on Solaris) thought actually gets outside itself, and we finally can think *x* from outside *x* (an assertion I will further explain later). Through its reproduction, the world can be postulated as it is in itself. According to Meillassoux, correlationism is furthermore "the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other."[106]A pertinent question in our context, therefore, is whether *Solaris* is a correlationist proposal or not: I will argue that it is not.

First, the planet is too big a mystery—it is a nonhuman intelligence, beyond human intelligibility. And second, visitor Hari quickly gains independence from Kris, her projector; that is, she is a thought of Kris who then becomes an independent being, an image that becomes matter. Further, the planet is able to let the humans sense the limits of classical scientific knowledge versus the unlimited entanglements of reflection, which is distinct from correlationism and, above all, from representationalism (I will come back to this later). Solaris answers to human thought with nonhuman thought, delineating man's best human qualities as relying on his perceptions, memories, and intuition.

The rejection of correlationism is the lowest common denominator, uniting rather different positions within speculative realism, which is fractured into currents like transcendental materialism, new realism, and object-oriented philosophy. Bergson would have also rejected correlationism. He avoids it by refusing the idealism-materialism dualism as he tries to integrate subjectivity (perception) in his approach toward reality: "the relation between the 'phenomenon' and the 'thing' is not that of appearance to reality, but merely that of the part to the whole."[107] As has been mentioned, the challenge in our context consists in the fact that speculative realism has widely ignored film and given little consideration to art in general. A detailed exception is Graham Harman, for whom "aesthetic reflection and judgment are employed in metaphysical speculation into what a mind-independent reality might be like."[108] In fact, he directly claims that

[106] Ibid., 5.
[107] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 306.
[108] Halshall, "Art and Guerilla Metaphysics," 383.

"aesthetics is first philosophy."[109] Harman himself does not consider film separately from other forms of art. However, since his position can be considered an "aesthetic turn"[110] in speculative realism, I will engage the solaristic system with his thought. In this regard, I will focus on the central concept of allure, as well as Harman's four-poled structure and reading of Heidegger's tool analysis.

The history of film theory has persisted in using a clumsy definition of reality, mostly referring to physical reality, without further reflecting on what that means. An exception might be Deleuze, whose reflections on film are integrated into an original system of thought characterized by a rhizomatic way of thinking that establishes multiples of assemblages. Deleuze at least avoids the term "reality," instead developing the concept of "virtuality," which for him is just as real as physical presence or actuality. Instead of "reality," Deleuze uses the concept of a complexly constituted plane of immanence consisting of all sort of objects, particles, relations, planes, and beings, somehow echoing the Bergsonian ideas of different kinds and systems of images and movements:

> There are only relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness between unformed elements, or at least between elements that are relatively unformed, molecules, and particles of all kinds. There are only haecceities, affects, subjectless individuations that constitute collective assemblages. . . . We call this plane which knows only longitudes, speeds and haecceities, the plane of consistency or composition (as opposed to the plan(e) of organization or development). It is necessarily a plane of immanence and univocality. We therefore call it the plane of Nature, although nature has nothing to do with it, since on this plane there is no distinction between the natural and the artificial. . . . Its number of dimensions continually increases as what happens, but even so it loses nothing of its planitude. It is thus a plane of proliferation, peopling, contagion. . . . It is a fixed plane, a fixed sound plane, or visual plane, or writing plane etc. Here fixed does not mean immobile.[111]

To come back to the contemporary ontological turn: Markus Gabriel develops a new ontological realism, which is also marked by the idea of multiple reality: it is multilayered but without a totalizing unity. According to Gabriel, that which is perceived of an object is a property of the object, whether we perceive it or not. Perceptions are "world involving," but will not change the actual object. Gabriel further argues for a

[109] Harman, "Aesthetics as First Philosophy."
[110] Halshall, "Art and Guerilla Metaphysics," 383.
[111] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 293–94.

multilayered reality and "recognizes the existence of perspectives and constructions as world-involving relations"[112] and therefore part of "reality." In the solaristic system, perceptions and thoughts are actually properties of the objects as well: we only can perceive and think what lies in the nature of the objects. In this sense, that which actually happens on Solaris is an anomaly of interaction: inner images switch into physical reality, the reverse of perception.

Yet Gabriel goes one step further in the understanding of "reality" or "world," which he completely rejects as categories: they are "non-existing" in the domain of "metaphysical totalities" and to be denounced. Gabriel is against "the idea that there is or ought to be a unified totality of what there is, whether you call it 'the world,' 'being' or 'reality.'"[113] Therefore, he claims a position, which he defends as ontological, rather than metaphysical. In his theory there is no such thing as one unifying domain of one reality, nor even of realities, whether they are mind-independent or not. Realities belong to different contexts, which Gabriel elaborates on, designating them as "fields of sense." Some of these fields can be intersecting or overlapping, as well as interacting. However, in contrast to Deleuze, there is no fixed plane of immanence for this interaction, and no field that encompasses all the other fields.

Although I find the idea of intersecting fields, which I would call in my context "fields of images," attractive, it does not matter to my analysis whether these fields belong to one all-encompassing domain or not, whether they together constitute multifold reality, or, rather, are to be designated as fields. What matters for the solaristic system is the interaction in the reproducibility of these different fields. In this regard, reproducibility is set as a domain where the fields of images are constituted by frames in movement. What parts of reality, or which kind of bearers of movement, are reproducible fields? Or can we reproduce all the fields of sense? The answer is probably that we cannot reproduce them all at the same time, but they are all reproducible. Furthermore, it is likely that we can reproduce several fields at once. Does this common feature of reproducibility, or of "being real," put them in a unifying domain? And if "all there is" is an infinity of fields of sense, where is this "there"? For what does it stand? The answer to this kind of question goes beyond the scope of this analysis and must in our context remain without a conclusive answer.

However, the input we can grasp from Gabriel's approach is that in order to be real or to belong to reality, to be a field of sense, it is not

[112] Gabriel, *Fields of Sense*, 11.
[113] Ibid., 5.

necessary that this field represents all the other fields or a totality: each field only presents itself as a piece among infinite other pieces and layers of reality; therefore, the word "reality" cannot not refer to a totalizing category. Furthermore, an allegorical comparison to the cinematographic frame is tempting: each frame is a field of sense, yet they all belong to one film, another field of sense, containing other fields of sense and overlapping with other fields of sense. A film is then more than its duration; it increases with the minds of the spectators and with their reflection on it. On the other hand, film can also be seen as closed in itself, as a metaphysical unity, one field of sense. Any film has a beginning, and it has an ending—a fundamental structure of closure that deserves further reflection.[114]

The Reproducibility of Multifold Reality

Let me go back to the beginning of this chapter, to the idea of defining an understanding of reality, in order to draw a conclusion on its mechanical reproduction. Film involves a privileged relation toward reality, as it records and doubles reality directly, but we have not yet considered the full consequences of setting reproducibility as a unifying property of reality. As we have seen with the example of Gabriel's fields of sense, integrating the reproducibility of reality into the idea of reality's multifoldness is complex. What makes thought, fantasies, imaginary objects, and inner movements like affects and perceptions part of reality and its being, and thus reproducible? Since film records image and sound, is there a reproducibility besides that which we can see and hear, besides the field of sense called physical reality?

Some may oppose this hypothesis and argue as follows: "Obviously in film only what is visible/audible can be reproduced, therefore we cannot reproduce thought, fantasies, inner processes or relations, because their expression in image and sound would be a mere translation, a transfer into another area, and therefore an approximate construction." This objection is similar to a scientific realist view, where the concept of reality only refers to that which is measurable.

One possibility to refute this objection would be to recall Popper's model of threefold reality, in which one world emerges from the other: world 2 from world 1, and world 3 from world 2. This could mean that by reproducing world 1, world 2 will emerge, and by this world 3, automatically. We cannot consider reality in its multifoldness if we only isolate physical qualities. Also, we only can reproduce emotions if we reproduce the physical entities from which they emerge. Bergson's approach to images

[114] See: Reeh-Peters, "The World as Film and Dasein's Being-In-Film."

would especially strengthen such a proposition: images are all there is in action, reaction, and interaction, and this complexity of moving images is not lost in their reproduction.

Furthermore, different approaches in philosophy of film that I have explained in the introduction of this book have shown how much film is a stream of consciousness or thought (according to Deleuze but also Epstein, or, more recently, Frampton), which could not have been drawn into the recorded material had it not been already there in the recording. The editing merely molds and shapes by assemblage that which is recorded, catalyzing its possibilities of thought. It is this inherent thinking capacity of film that makes it so similar to reality and constitutes the reason for it having such a strong impact on our mind. This reason consists in the fact that inner fields are entangled with outer worlds and never exist on their own. We cannot create a withdrawn inner world without reference to the exterior, and vice versa. Furthermore, even if we assemble the recorded images and combine them into something "new," we are always making an appropriation of reality: even the most elaborate film montage and the most skilled editor cannot change the basic attributes of the recorded material. Although one can do some construction work in the editing room, one cannot construct any kind of film out of any kind of material. One cannot change the foundational bricks, the fields of sense. There always remains a direct connection of continuity with that field of sense which has been recorded, a factuality (Tarkovsky) or a "presence of what is present" (Heidegger), the latter one to be explored in the next chapter.

Let me briefly in this context raise the thought of filmmaker Jean Epstein: According to Epstein, the cinematograph reveals the true nature of reality; namely, that it does not exist as such, because it is composed of a "sum of unrealities,"[115] deriving from continuity (time) and discontinuity (coexistence in space), the two different "interchangeable modes of unreality,"[116] which he also calls perspectives:

> The cinematograph . . . shows time to be merely a perspective resulting from the succession of phenomena, the way space is merely a perspective of the coexistence of things. Time contains nothing we might call time-in-itself, no more so than space comprises space-in-itself. . . . Thus, after having taught us about the unreality of both, continuity and discontinuity, the cinematograph rather abruptly ushers us into the unreality of space-time.[117]

[115] Epstein, *The Intelligence of a Machine*, 15.
[116] Ibid., 15–16.
[117] Ibid., 24–25.

It is remarkable that this character of "unreality" of space and time does away with the totalizing concepts of "space in itself" and "time in itself" and that this conclusion, for Epstein, has become graspable through the rise of film: the existence of a nonhuman agent. Film explores and thereby discloses a "sum of unrealities,"[118] the possibilities of the unreality of reality itself; that is, film unconceals features of reality which otherwise would have remained withdrawn. This example shows well how complex the reproduction of reality is and how much the appearance of cinema has shaped our understanding and thereby perception of reality. It has become multiple and stretchable, beyond a totalizing domain: there is no time in itself, no space in itself, no reality in itself, but rather there is unreality.

In everyday life we get an insight into this multifold unreality of reality, the "sum of unrealities,"[119] through the omnipresence of audiovisual reproduction, which expanded from cinema and TV to include the mobile internet and recently the technique of 3D video mapping. In the Deleuzian universe of rhizomatic thought, this notion of image in which "matter = movement = image = perception"[120] is integrated into the plane of immanence constituted by an infinitude of images in constant movement and interaction: "This infinite set of all images constitutes a kind of plane [plan] of immanence."[121] To reconnect this again to Gabriel's ontological realism, we are constantly switching between an infinity of image sequences or fields of sense.

The above means that we have very different kinds of images and that, in film, an image is never just an image of reality's surface but is as complex as reality itself. It reproduces all the complexities of the plane(s) of immanence, different fields of sense, images of all kinds, continuing what they reproduce, interacting with each other. Despite the factual objectivity of the photographic lens, which shows that something has factually "been there" and done work, the filmed image is as little neutral or objective as our perception is, or as multiple, unreal, and nonexisting as reality itself.

Let us think further about the recording process of the cinematograph. It is a very complex procedure, as there is an infinity of choices as to how

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[118] Ibid., 15.

[119] Ibid., 15.

[120] "An image is the expression of matter, its consistency in movement, and not the re-presentation of that matter; indeed, when Bergson speaks of an image, the connotation is not of an illusion but of an affective intensity. Matter is tantamount to perception and Bergson maintains that images themselves are the expression of this confluence: matter = movement = image = perception" (cf. Flaxman, "Cinema Year Zero," 92).

[121] Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 61.

the image is to be recorded, its framing and mise-en-scène. We can largely vary perspective, which is composed by scale, angle, position, height of camera, inclination, and camera movement. All the possible different images that can be captured are equally real and equally reproducible. And although the recording is an automatic act of a machine, the choice of the images is highly subjective and the result of a human mental operation. This mental operation will always be reflected in and will shape the recorded image, which will be a result of a choice out of an infinity of possible perception-images related to the same matter-images. The operator of the camera, the cinematographer, by choosing a way of perception chooses bits of reality—whether of a fictional performance or not—which are subsequently assembled.

But why is this so? Even knowing about the multifoldness of (un)reality being reproduced, we have, until now, presupposed the reproduction of reality, rather than actually defined the *what* of reproduction. What is it that makes the reproduced real? Why do we even think a reproduction of reality is taking place? Why is there a transfer of reality from the thing to its reproduction? In the following chapter we will elaborate a definition as to *what of reality* is being reproduced in film: the real of reality will be introduced and its cine-being further characterized.

PART 3:

VISITORS – SOLARISTIC IMPLICATIONS

V. Asking for the Real of Reality

Philosophy, since its very beginning, has been relying on allegories to present the elusive character of reality, easily withdrawing from the grasp of intelligibility. The most famous example is Plato's allegory of the cave, reflecting on the limitation of our access to truth and frequently employed as philosophy's preferred metaphor of film as an illusionary reality. Yet in my view, the allegory of the cave is not the best example to describe the nature of film: the reproduction of reality is far more complicated than the projection of shadows on a wall set up as an illusion, because it is the only thing the chained cave dwellers discern and know at all. By contrast, the film spectator knows there is another reality beyond the projection. As mentioned in the introduction of this book I agree with Badiou, who claims:

> Cinema is not a false reality. Cinema is a new relationship to the Real itself. . . . cinema is an illusion, which says that it is an illusion, naturally. So it is a completely different situation from the prisoners in the cave who are of the conviction that the images are the only form of the Real.[122]

This statement brings a new perspective into our analysis. The development of the solaristic system proposes to explore this "new relationship to the Real itself" by asking for the *real of reality* in film, a key solaristic concept that I will define in this chapter. We have already argued that film is a privileged medium for reproducing reality, and we have introduced multifold models of reality, stating the nonexistence of one ultimate reality. However, we have not been able to answer in satisfying terms what of reality (or of its being) exactly is reproduced by film to be recognized as such or where this idea comes from.

The myth of total cinema and the real image

The common ideas of "a whole" and "a totality" lie close together, yet with a closer look they reveal themselves to be two distinct terms differing in

[122] Badiou, *Cinema and Philosophy*. Compare to: "Cinema becomes the motion of what is real, much more than its representation" (Nancy, *L'évidence du film: Abbas Kiarostami*, 26) and: "The reality of images is the access to the real itself" (ibid., 16–17).

their meaning. A totality imposes a completeness which is an absolute: it can neither be escaped nor reached; it substantially differs from a whole—holos in Greek. The whole refers to a unity, which is reached by the composition of its components, for example, several parts of one body or the world as a whole. Wholeness is often conveyed through narrative: every whole has a beginning, a middle, and an ending, just as Aristotle emphasizes in his *Poetics*. Both life and films reach wholeness in this sense, to be completed by their ending, which is death. Only the infinite does not end. According to Georg Cantor, the infinite is conceived as an absolute, and as such it is "unthinkable," yet, it is as much unthinkable as the finite in the sense of a totality is. This kind of absolute infinite is to be found in the origins of cinema as the wishful thinking of a reproduction of reality itself (the one that does not exist), the idea of a simultaneous presence of all possible images. Bazin calls it the myth of total cinema, which he introduces as a film, which would substitute and recreate the world in its integrity:

> The *guiding myth*, then, inspiring the invention of cinema, is the accomplishment of . . . an integral realism, a recreation of the world in its own image, an image unburdened by the freedom of interpretation of the artist or the irreversibility of time.[123]

Let me try to understand this quote by transposing Bazin's thought into the solaristic system. His idea of an image so absolute that it is "unburdened by the freedom of interpretation of the artist" presupposes a fusion between the real as absolute—"the integral realism"—and the human subject. This fusion happens in the form of an image: not an image of the real, but the real image; the real of reality in its totality as an image; a film of all possible images; the white whole of all possible images, not as a possibility, but as an actuality. This real image, to be integral, must be composed by an infinite number of images (as defined by Henri Bergson) and naturally resembles Cantor's absolute infinite. Furthermore, as a moving image it tends toward the infinite in terms of time as well. As Bazin points out, time becomes reversible in the image of "integral realism." We can visit the past "just as it was," in all its images of actualization, or slow it down, changing our natural perception. Such a total real image is conceived as an ideal possibility of cinema according to Bazin, who has emphasized that cinema's origin, rather, is to be considered as a primordial idea than as a technical invention: "The cinema is an idealistic phenomenon. The concept men had of it existed so to speak fully armed in their minds, as if in some platonic heaven."[124]

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[123] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 21.
[124] Ibid., 17.

Furthermore, for Bazin, "cinema has not yet been invented,"[125] which means the idea of cinema, put into the terms of his description of the myth of total cinema, is not fulfilled by what had been technically invented as cinema; the myth depicts the recreation of the whole of reality and is experienced similarly to how phenomenological reality is. These are very high expectations for a medium, whose most intriguing characteristic consists in its mesmerizing, hypnotic possession of the spectator's mind. In fact, even contemporary digital media like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR)—or the many digital forms of what is more recently designated as "post-cinema"[126]—are still on their way to total cinema and can be considered the next steps of cinema.

In the movie *Solaris*, we are faced with an actual possibility of the total real image of cinema mentioned above. The visitors announce that which the islands of memory later achieve: "the recreation of the world in its own image" and freedom from "the irreversibility of time." In fact, time is reversible on Solaris. The planet has sensed the human real of reality through human memories, implying projections and desires. The planet thus tends toward a Bazinian total cinema, corresponding to the human longing to overcome linear perception. The visitors are the humans' own images in their total potential, whereas the planet contains the whole of all possible images becoming actual.

Walter Benjamin must also be referred to at this point, as he anticipates a contemporary phenomenon of the reception of moving-image media. Who hasn't had the experience of seeing a film's sequence that has remained with them for the rest of their days, sometimes more persistent, more real, than the memory of a sequence from life? Memories of life and images from film scenes mix in our mind and our affects, a consequence of the assemblage between spectator and screen. How has this patchwork of images of reality called cinema so powerfully imposed on our natural view and aesthetic perception? In accordance with the given context, I propose to read Benjamin's "immediate reality" as a synonym for the real of reality, which becomes graspable through film in a concrete way:

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[125] Ibid., 21.

[126] In the Bazinian sense of total cinema, post-cinema would mean an extension of the technological possibilities of the cinematic medium. According to Shane Denson and Julia Leyda, "the post-cinematic perspective challenges us to think about the affordances (and limitations) of the emerging media regime not simply in terms of radical and unprecedented change, but in terms of the ways that post-cinematic media are in conversation with and are engaged in actively re-shaping our inherited cultural forms, our established forms of subjectivity, and our embodied sensibilities" (cf. Denson and Leyda, *Perspectives on Post-Cinema: An Introduction*, 2).

> In the studio the mechanical equipment [Apparatur in German, a word kept in other English versions as "apparatus"] has penetrated so deeply into reality that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of the equipment [again Benjamin refers here to an "apparatus"] is the result of a special procedure, namely, the shooting by the specially adjusted camera and the mounting of the shot together with other similar ones. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology.[127]

Since this understanding of film is a special catalyst for the manifestation of the real of reality, it reflects the idea of the solaristic claim of the real image. This claim runs as follows: *the real of reality manifests itself in film and becomes graspable for human knowledge through film*.

Benjamin further argues that filmic reality "diminishes the distance"[128] (is thus more present in the Heideggerian sense of "lying-before-us") and indulges the significance of contemporary mass society, "namely: the desire of the present-day masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly"[129] as well as their "bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality [Überwindung des Einmaligen in der Gegebenheit] by accepting its reproduction."[130] The filmic reproduction of reality then becomes convenient for a mesmerizing substitution of reality and provokes a reliance on the virtual reality of film, a tendency that has been increasing during the last one hundred years. On Solaris, the equipment of interpenetration is the planet itself, its capacity of sensing the remembered human past—the consistent, more real side of time. According to Tarkovsky:

> Time is said to be irreversible. And this is true enough in the sense that 'you can't bring back the past,' as they say. But what exactly is this 'past'? . . . In a certain sense the past is far more real, or at any rate more stable, more resilient than the present. The present slips and vanishes like sand between the fingers, acquiring material weight in its recollection.[131]

Therefore, the planet can literally materialize the weight of the past, just as cinema can, and, necessarily, this past then appears as more real than the present. In this sense the film is strikingly in the spirit of Heidegger, who even uses the word "facticity" to describe the having been, which constantly forms the "is" of Dasein:

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[127] Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 233.
[128] Ibid., 233.
[129] Ibid., 233.
[130] Ibid., 233.
[131] Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 58.

> Dasein never 'finds itself' except as a thrown Fact. In the state-of-mind in which it finds itself, Dasein is assailed by itself as the entity which it still is and already was—that is to say, which it constantly is as having been. The primary existential meaning of facticity lies in the character of 'having been.'[132]

However, why should we still choose the reality of natural perception if the real of reality lies elsewhere, in the infinite of the image, and even becomes more graspable there?

The Concept of the Real of Reality

Let me go back now to the idea that a film is composed of images and that for Bergson the world is image. But what is an image? Isn't it exactly that which bears and carries the real of reality? Is the film-image just a machinic perception of this real image, detached from its preceptor, an image in itself? Or is the reproduced image we see in film the same as its original? I propose to examine in detail how Bergson argues when he defines what an image is. According to him, an image lies somewhere between the thing itself (in the materialistic sense) and its representation (in the idealistic sense). He therefore defines matter as an aggregate of images:

> Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of 'images'; and by 'image' we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than that, which the realist calls a thing—an existence placed half-way between the 'thing' and the 'representation.'[133]

Furthermore, as Bergson continues his argument, the perception of matter and the image of matter coincide in the sense that "it is really in P, and not elsewhere, that the image of P is formed and perceived."[134] Yet this image differs from perception: "It is true that an image may be without being perceived," says Bergson, "it may be present without being represented."[135] The presence and representation of an image are two different things, just as matter and perception are. But this means, and here Bergson holds a position different from classical materialists as well as from classical dualists, that matter (and its movements) is not isolated from the rest of the world, and neither is perception.

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[132] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 376.
[133] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 7.
[134] Ibid., 102.
[135] Ibid., 27.

There are movements of the material world and movements of perception, and they interact. On the one hand, there is a mind-independent reality for Bergson, yet on the other hand, perception is part of that very same reality. "Of the aggregate of images we cannot say that it is within us or without us, since interiority and exteriority are only relations among images."[136] Therefore, in Bergson's theory, mind and world, subjectivity and reality are entangled. Such a position is solaristic and describes well the fluid nature of what is meant by the real of reality; this fluidity recalls that the surface of the planet Solaris is covered by a liquid substance, which changes and shapes itself into beings and islands by the influence of the human mind. I will come back to this crucial point later on. The film image is again only one possible image out of an aggregate of (infinitely many) images.

Let us turn now to another reference. We have already mentioned that Pasolini has been advancing considerably the theoretical reflection on film. His main contribution lies in analyzing the language ("linguaggio" in Italian as opposed to "lingua," based on words) of film and reality as based on action and its shots and images composed by objects, which he calls "kinemes." This language of film, so Pasolini claims, is the same language as that of life itself, and he therefore grounds his theory on the difference between film and the other arts: namely, by claiming that film is not, like the other forms of art, based on mimesis. For Pasolini film, rather, is an art, which expresses reality by directly reproducing reality:

> Cinema does not evoke reality as literary language does; it does not copy reality like painting; it does not mimic reality like theatre. Cinema reproduces reality: image and sound! In reproducing reality, what does it do? Cinema expresses reality with reality.[137]

This statement reveals itself as extremely intriguing if one inquires into its further implications: What does it actually mean to express reality and to do so with reality? Is this expressed reality, which Pasolini calls cinema and which demands a more exact definition and delimitation, different from reality after all? Or should one suppose that the expression of reality called cinema is already found inside reality—in such a way that it would not be distinct from it? But then, how is reality to be expressed with itself? Pasolini further expounds:

> By studying the cinema as a system of signs, I came to the conclusion, that it is a non-conventional and non-symbolic language [linguaggio] unlike

[136] Ibid., 13.
[137] Pasolini, *Pasolini on Pasolini*, 29.

> the symbolic written or spoken language [lingua], and expresses reality not through symbols but via reality itself. . . . So the question is: what is the difference between the cinema and reality? Practically none. I realized that the cinema is a system of signs whose semiology corresponds to a possible semiology of the system of signs of reality itself. So the cinema always forced me to remain always at the level of reality, right inside reality.[138]

I agree with Pasolini's statement that cinema expresses reality with reality and that cinema withdraws from the symbolic order by operating with "the system of signs of reality itself." Cinema is a reality-based language in the sense of the Italian linguaggio. Pasolini says "There is no symbolic or conventional filter between me and reality, as there is in literature."[139] As we will reflect on later, the Lacanian Real is also described exactly as withdrawing from the symbolic: "The real is that, which resists symbolization absolutely."[140] Similarly, the real of reality, which film reproduces, is to be described with a "discernible presence"; by this, I refer to an immanent presence impossible to be sensed: one cannot necessarily touch, see, hear, or smell it, yet it is there. It is beyond image and sound, although transported by it and in-between, positioned somewhere at the interstice between time, matter, spirit, mood, or other imaginable dimensions. By what has been said, it is my claim that this real becomes only graspable through film by the reproduction of reality. Without film reproducing reality, we would not have any ontological notion of this real of reality.

I therefore agree with Pasolini that in cinema we are *in* reality; the spectator has the impression of being "right inside reality"[141]—but where are we actually? Why is the reality of film, of cinema, "always at the level of reality"?[142] What is it of reality that makes film reality be as real as reality? How can the real of reality be transferred from life to celluloid? I will argue that this apparent paradox of cinema and the real of reality is symptomatic of the character of reality: the real of reality lies beyond reality's physical side and is independent of time and space. As I have mentioned before on the being of reality, the real of reality is neither virtual, nor actual, but folded together, waiting to unfold anew in time and in whatever space. It is multifold, shareable, and reproduceable in film. It is that of reality which persists in reproduction and turns film real—although

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138 Ibid., 29.
139 Ibid., 29.
140 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II*, 66.
141 Pasolini, *Pasolini on Pasolini*, 29.
142 Ibid., 29.

it is a different kind of reality—or just a different field of sense, to recall Gabriel. From that perspective it is a field of sense with special properties, a *transfield* of sense.

The real of reality is thus conceived as a fluid modality, being integrated in a multifold model reality of special characteristics; it is a model permeable enough to let this fluid to be transferred from one layer of reality (or field of sense) to the next and thereby to become another one, although the same. I recall Bergson: matter (and its movements) is not isolated from the rest of the world, and neither is perception. There is a mind-independent reality, yet perception is part of the very same reality—both are images. The real of reality shares this "existential modality" of the Bergsonian images, which allows it to belong to the system of perception as well as to the one of matter. If we further think of Popper's threefold model, we must appropriate this real of reality as that which unites the three worlds, makes them equally real, and is the corresponding entity designated when we use the word "reality."

Being without Being

In epistemological and ontological terms, we can grasp the nature of the real of reality as it is present in cinema (with different insights) better than we could have described it as present in reality (which withdraws and does not exist). The main reason is that through reproduction we have gained a nonhuman viewpoint of reality and thereby embodied a new perspective for thought: we look at reality from outside human experience. We have already mentioned, but it is worth emphasizing here, that this shift of perspective for human thought is probably one of the most incisive since the Copernican revolution. We can consider some of the consequences by analyzing the events on the planet Solaris: looking at our own memories in a doubled state of being creates an interactivity. This fluid interactivity ultimately reflects the mystery of Hari's existence, who is not supposed to exist independently of Kelvin's mind, yet she transfielded. Thus, Hari embodies an alluring presence of an absent bit of reality, a dislocation which is, according to Stanley Cavell, characteristic of film itself:

> Objects projected on a screen are inherently reflexive, they occur as self-referential, reflecting upon their physical origins. Their presence refers to their absence, their location in another place.[143]

[143] "Objects projected on a screen are inherently reflexive, they occur as self-referential, reflecting upon their physical origins. Their presence refers to their absence, their location in another place" (cf. Cavell, *The World Viewed*, xv–xvi).

This idea of the presence of objects, which simultaneously is an absence, reminds us of Badiou's aforementioned "absence of the Real," which simultaneously "says something new concerning the Real itself" and thus evokes the Real. The reason for this negative subsistence of presence is determined by the ontological essence of film, which is entangled with the real of reality. The special characteristic of the reproduced real of reality in film, to be absent although present, evokes a kind of negation of negation of the Real: film is real by negating the presence of what is real, which is again negated. It is referring to an absence, which negates its absence, as it simultaneously evokes presence.

The main conflict in *Solaris* reflects this absence-referring-presence, a condition which I will call a "being without being," deriving from the negation of negation of the Real and which will become clearer throughout. This condition is embodied and carried out as a principle by the central character Hari: she is the dramatis persona whose aberrant existence is the film's main conflict, and, thus, she is the film's most important "conceptual persona" (CP). As I mentioned in the introduction, this term is borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari (who base the concept on Nietzsche): the "conceptual personae"—the English translation of "personnages conceptuels"—conveys for Deleuze and Guattari movement of thought and "is the becoming or the subject of a philosophy."[144] It is to be understood as the embodiment or personified image of a philosophical concept. The concept in our context derives as well from the term "dramatis personae" in film and theater studies. Dramatis personae encompass all the characters involved in the dramatic conflict of a piece. Therefore, the conceptual personae—the CPs—in the solaristic system encompass all the characters of the movie *Solaris*. Through the dramatic conflicts of CPs in *Solaris* we can establish a conceptual field of solaristic tensions between the concepts raised by the movie and actualized and embodied by the CPs, becoming nodes of a network of concepts and principles of thought.

One may argue against Cavell that any pictured object, even in a painting or a drawing, provokes this referred presence of absence. Cavell therefore suggests: "the world of a painting is not continuous with the world of its frame; at its frame, a world finds its limits. We might say: A painting is a world; a photograph is of the world."[145] Yet, we can argue with the main CP Hari, who is the conceptual embodiment of cine-being, transferred by the real of reality, that film generates this presence of absence, giving it the same impact as reality because of the special ability that film has. This

[144] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 63.
[145] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 24.

ability is a reinforcing condition for both being real and being taken from reality, therefore making the film image a continuation of reality, but one that is present in a quality other than physical matter. This presence of Hari is the key to the real of reality.

But before going further into the presence of CP Hari, let me recall Bazin, who claims that "the photographic image *is* the model" and assumes a "transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction."[146] As I have previously argued, Bazin indirectly suggests an ontological interdependency of being and reality, presupposing reality as something that gives being its frame of existence or, in other words, as a necessary property of being or even its primary condition—there is no being without reality, just as being is a necessary property of reality. Consequently, I will claim for an intra-active reciprocity of being and reality.

This reciprocity reminds us of Heidegger: Dasein's mode of existence is conceived as a "being-in-the-world," unfolding in temporality. But the term is still more complex, even in its relation to cinema, or reproduced being. As we will see later, the word being—in German "sein"—implies the meaning of dwelling[147] for Heidegger, who therefore sets Dasein's being as an existential "being-in," and, further, its essential structure as "being-in-the-world."[148] For Heidegger, Dasein and its environment are inseparable in their coexistence, whereby the world is "a characteristic of Dasein itself."[149] This correlationist perspective of Heidegger implies at the same time a way for thought to try to grasp the sense of being, which is not limited by Dasein's perspective, although it is accessed by it.

The German word Dasein literally translated means "being-there," whereby the "there" ("Da") of Dasein refers to the "world." Dasein and world cannot be grasped separately, which implies that being-in-the-world is not meant as a spatial condition of being, but an ontological one. I propose to transfer Heidegger's being-in-the-world, which entails a multiplicity of possibilities for Dasein (again, we are facing a multifold model), into the neologism "being-in-film"; it designates a possibility of being that Dasein enters when watching a movie. This neologism will be further elucidated in the third part of this treatise.

However, on the planet Solaris reality is transferred from being-in-the-world to being-on-Solaris. We could even claim that the whole film is

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[146] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 14.

[147] "'Being' [Sein]—is the infinitive from I am [Ich bin], which also means 'to reside alongside . . .' or 'to be familiar with'" (cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 80).

[148] "'Being-in' is . . . the formal existential expression for the Being of Dasein, which has Being-in-the-world as its essential state" (cf. Ibid., 80).

[149] Ibid., 92.

the being-in-the-world as being-on-Solaris of protagonist Kris Kelvin: Solaris is a characteristic of Kelvin's Dasein, a world in which reality and being are entangled, in which even immaterial being becomes real, like in film—a phantasmagoric scenery. Film is in this sense not representational, but, as Cavell claims, re-presentational, a characteristic causing "ontological restlessness," a state of mind CP Hari and CP Kelvin are haunted by. Let us recall:

> A photograph does not present us with 'likeness' of things; it presents us, we want to say, with the things themselves. But wanting to say that may well make us ontologically restless. . . . We do not know what a photograph is; we do not know how to place it ontologically.[150]

Hari is like a moving photograph—she *is* her deceased model on Earth. We have already traced Cavell's statement back to Bazin and now forward to Heidegger. As we have mentioned, the answer to Cavell must be that the puzzling part of the question already lies in the ontological condition of being itself: we do not know what being is nor "how to place it ontologically," which is why Heidegger never stopped reflecting on being. And that is also why Heidegger's philosophy, and building on it, can give us some guidance regarding this question raised by Cavell, which again demands an extension of Heidegger's reflection on being in an unexpected way.

Film as Death

To put it, therefore, in Heideggerian terms: what significantly changes when one supposes film as world and world as film is the nature of time and of Dasein. However, by inquiring deeper into this change of Dasein, I would like to introduce the following condition of film: as CP Hari shows, death has been transcended by film. The reproduced image outlives its depicted object, and there are ontological consequences to consider. In film it is no longer clear what life and death are, given that the nature of time has been altered: in film I step beyond time—into film-time. Film-time can condense and expand, it is relative and does not exist in itself. However, the question in this context maybe should not be whether the nature of time has changed; rather, it is more likely that film discloses the true nature of time, which withdraws from natural perception.

Furthermore, the hypothesis of film-as-death reassesses Heidegger's concepts of being, time, and death. As a being-no-more, death for Heidegger

[150] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 17–18.

is bound to Dasein's being-in-the-world, he even designates death as "a phenomenon of life."[151] Film-as-death would thus be a possibility for a doubled Dasein experiencing a being-in-death: through film I glide into a spectral world. The film-beings (usually called "characters") are somehow like ghosts to us, specters.

Roland Barthes develops in his theory of photography the concept of the death of the photographed subject-object, when he tries to assimilate the essence, or that which he calls the noema, of photography. According to Barthes, the photograph anticipates and saves the instant of a premature death: the picture turns the photographed subject into an object. The subject feels this transformation thusly, "I then experience a micro-version of death . . . : I am truly becoming a specter"[152] or "I have become Total-Image, which is to say, Death in person."[153] Barthes refers further to the transformation of an object into an image, calling it a ghost, since the word "specter" comes from "spectrum" in Latin, which means "image" or "apparition." By adding the word "spectacle," which has together with "spectrum" its origin in the Latin verb "specere"—"to see"—Barthes conceptually describes a show of specters, as "spectacle" in French designates "show." What is a specter? It is a ghost, also defined as an "apparition of a dead person that is believed to appear or to become manifest to the living, typically as a nebulous image."[154]

The contact with death in the form of specters is a principle of cinema. The anticipation of death in photography, when applied to cinema, happens 24 times per second, a serial phantasmagoria, which is set in motion. This movement, in cinema, is the transcendence of death itself, accomplished through constant dying, just as being constantly dies. The spectral aspect of photographic reproduction is further evoked by the visitors in *Solaris*: they are specters, which somehow have entered matter: an embodiment coming from memory. The very fact that some of these specters still have living models on Earth, like the giant boy that Berton had seen decades before Kelvin's arrival on Solaris, means that an anticipation of death has taken place.

We can call this ongoing materialization on Solaris "reification," or even reincarnation. It corresponds to a transformation from an imaginary into an immaterial and projected reality. Movie characters are brought to life, mortality is denied to them, and infinity is their destiny. At the same time, they embody death: if the movie is playing, the character's actor may

[151] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 290.
[152] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 14.
[153] Ibid., 14.
[154] Definition found in *Oxford Dictionaries*, available online.

already be dead and the filmed reality no longer exists, but its replica does. This feature fits the CP Hari in *Solaris*; later in the film, entire pieces of memory materialize, like the Earthlike island where we find Kelvin in the closing part of the movie with his father: Solaris becomes *total cinema* for its own characters, a *metacinema*.

For Heidegger, death conditions the temporality of being, but Dasein raises the question of its being from this temporal point of view. Ontologically we cannot understand our real existence, our being as a whole, because Dasein is mortal: "When Dasein reaches its wholeness in death, it loses simultaneously the 'being' of its 'there.'"[155] Death is that which transforms the being of Dasein into a closed entity: Dasein becomes complete, as death is its closure. Being-in-the-world becomes a being-toward-death, which is always a being-not-yet. Dasein is thus open in its condition of permanent incompleteness.

This openness of Dasein itself lies in *its* "*being-toward*" *its own possibilities*. Dasein "'as long as it is,' right to its end, it comports itself towards its potentiality-for-Being [Seinskönnen]."[156] The openness makes Dasein always "ahead-of-itself" [Sichvorweg],[157] as an item in the structure of care. In Dasein there is always something still outstanding.

Regarding what has been said, death becomes the vehicle of the constant not-yet of cinema, which reveals its ontological status as a not-yet-cinema—a projection, the realization of which costs us our lives. In cinema we are constantly dying and being resurrected, just as the visitors in *Solaris*,

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[155] "But if it gains such 'wholeness,' this gain becomes the utter loss of Being-in-the-World" (cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 280). The translators have chosen a description here, because Heidegger, literally translated, states that "If Dasein reaches this wholeness it simultaneously loses the being of its there" (translation mine – C.R.P.).

[156] Ibid., 279.

[157] "Sichvorweg" is a proper term of Heidegger's, composed by the words "vorweg"—anticipating or ahead, and "sich"—the reflexive form of yourself; but "vorweg," as well, is composed of "vor"—before or in front of, and "weg"—absent, be it a person, a lost object, or someone who died. In a further reading, the German noun "der Weg" would add the meaning of "pre-path"; "Vor-Weg" is a path, which we can predict or which still lies ahead, or even of being toward a path. Considering all these interpretations, we should translate literally the Heideggerian term as "ahead-of-yourself" or "being-on-the-way-in-front-of yourself," though those do not immediately include the missing mortal sense of the term that Heidegger sets for use in this context: "even when it still exists but has nothing more 'before-it' and has 'settled [abgeschlossen] its account,' its Being is still determined by 'the-ahead-of-itself'" (cf. ibid., 279).

as we learn with Hari: she revives after suicide attempts several times. Her nature is immortality, but her true desire is death.

In order to be "ahead-of-itself" Dasein projects itself (entwirft sich auf)[158] in possibilities, a condition in which Dasein is thrown (geworfen) into being.[159] *Solaris*, as well as cinema in general, is a carrier of this condition, which is implicit to its existential nature: death-drivenness. Dasein also projects itself into the (im)possibility of death as being inevitably thrown into it[160] and offers the potentiality of Dasein as being-toward-death. This being-toward-death is "the possibility of authentic existence,"[161] the possibility of Dasein to understand itself, because "anticipation becomes the possibility of an understanding of ones ownmost (eigensten) potentiality-of-Being."[162] Heidegger describes something always still outstanding in our existence, "But to that which is thus outstanding 'the end' itself belongs. The 'end' of Being-in-the-world is death."[163] Death or the "end" of being-in-the-world is for Heidegger linked to Vollendung—perfection.

From there derives a continuing need for Dasein to close or conclude this "permanently unsolved" mode of being—to understand itself

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[158] Heidegger uses in his own way the terms "entwirft sich auf" and "Entwurf," which is commonly translated "projecting yourself" and "projection," containing the nature of projection, of project, as well as of draft: something is drafted and thrown/projected as a possibility by a projector (which is Dasein). As I have mentioned in other texts of mine, this projection principle is of cinematic nature and processes time itself for the future and film for the screen: both are thrown in the sense of the Heideggerian "Geworfenheit," frequently translated as thrownness. To-be-thrown (in Heidegger, of Dasein into being) is of the same family, deriving from throw—"Wurf." Hence, film, being itself is being processed, is a principle that is based on throwing.

[159] "But thrownness, as a kind of Being, belongs to an entity which in each case is its possibilities, and is them in such a way that it understands itself in these possibilities and in terms of them, projecting itself upon them" (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 225). "Die Geworfenheit aber ist die Seinsart eines Seienden, das je seine Möglichkeiten selbst ist, so zwar, daß es sich in und aus ihnen versteht (auf sie sich entwirft)" (Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 181).

[160] "On the contrary, if Dasein exists, it has already been thrown into this possibility" (cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 295).

[161] My translation of: "Möglichkeit eigentlicher Existenz" (cf., Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 263).

[162] My translation of: "Das Vorlaufen erweist sich als Möglichkeit des Verstehens des eigensten Seinkönnens" (ibid., 263).

[163] Quote in German: "Zu diesem Ausstand aber gehört das Ende selbst. Das 'Ende' des In-der-Welt-seins ist der Tod" (Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 234; translation mine – C.R.P.).

as "being-as-a-whole" (Seiendes im Ganzen). This will to understand causes in Dasein an existential desire for death, an anticipation of the realization of that which is still pending: as if it could make us connect with ourselves and with the world, create an object-object relationship or a subject-subject one. As we have seen, in cinema this relationship happens to be actual: death becomes a possibility from which we simultaneously can resurrect; as Dasein has doubled we simultaneously die and reawake. In cinema, death implies its own transcendence constantly, a double negation of Hegelian character: it is precisely our finitude that makes us look for transcendence of any kind and at any instant—our ticket to the future, the principle of life. As Slavoj Žižek points out, this assertion of finitude can be found in Heidegger's thought:

> [The] assertion of finitude as the unsurpassable predicament of being-human: it is our radical finitude, which exposes us to the opening of the future, to the horizon of what is to come, for transcendence and finitude are two sides of the same coin.[164]

This future is, for the present, the projection of the possibilities yet to come, of this still-unsolved mode, which death solves. The not-yet-cinema constitutes this human condition and leads to a temporality in which *total cinema* is always the future, which returns from death; and conversely, the future is this cinema, the full realization of projected possibility. This openness for the future corresponds to our constant motivation to risk going on living, as well as longing to reach a conclusion. Therefore, projection and conclusion present themselves as equiprimordial principles.

The scientists in *Solaris* discuss the question whether Hari is to be called a human being or not, which mirrors this duplicity: we only have a human future if we die. Hari's nonhuman body—consisting of neutrinos instead of atoms—contradicts her identity, which is becoming more and more human. Death is literally her only way out; only through death she can humanize herself and let her existence become a whole. She uses death as the possibility to come to the "very being" of her Dasein.[165] "The 'end' of Being-in-the-world is death."[166] For Heidegger it is linked to *Vollendung*—perfection; it "limits and determines in every case whatever totality is

[164] Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 866.

[165] "Death is Dasein's ownmost possibility. Being towards this possibility discloses to Dasein its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, in which its very Being is the issue" (cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 307).

[166] Quote in German: "Das 'Ende' des In-der-Welt-seins ist der Tod" (cf. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 234; translation mine – C.R.P.).

possible for Dasein."[167] Hari's plan to die becomes an obsession to accomplish being-as-a-whole. She is the resurrection of a dead person and constantly tries to kill herself. The longing for death is thus an active leitmotif of the movie, nearly a natural consequence, a way to come to being as a whole.

Hari's voluntary liquidation of herself is furthermore a cinematographic act to overcome anxiety. It stands for the doubled Dasein of any spectator who wishes to die and dies through film. The very meaning of life is at stake here—as a narrative as well as an ontological principle. Anxiety, which is the dominant mood present in *Solaris*, is for Heidegger the state of mind par excellence in which Dasein can unfold itself in anxiety [Angst]: "As one of Dasein's possibilities of Being, anxiety—together with Dasein itself as disclosed in it—provides the phenomenal basis for explicitly grasping Dasein's primordial totality of Being."[168] Anxiety is for Heidegger anxiousness about "Dasein's potentiality-for-Being,"[169] in particular about Dasein's "ownmost" possibility, which for Heidegger is death. I suggest that being-in-film as one potentiality of Dasein is then the ownmost possibility: Dasein comes to an end, experiences the end, and continues afterwards; the one possibility which doesn't lack a whole and in which Dasein dies and resurrects permanently. It implies death as well as its negation, since Dasein in the world as film is doubled: it can experience death and even being-in-death, as it is both spectator-being and being-in-film. As spectator-being, it accesses film from outside and is toward-film. But as being-in-film, it goes inside and can project itself into being-in-death.

Presence on Solaris

Cavell brings up yet another point: "That the projected world does not exist (now) is its only difference from reality."[170] This idea of a displacement in time meets the already mentioned aesthetic theory of Tarkovsky, for whom filmmaking is sculpting in time. As we have seen, Tarkovsky further refers to film as time in factual form—a moving state in the "actual course of time"

[167] "Dieses Ende, zum Seinkönnen, das heißt zur Existenz gehörig, begrenzt und bestimmt die jemögliche Ganzheit des Daseins" (cf. ibid., 234; translation mine – C.R.P.)
[168] Ibid., 227.
[169] Ibid., 295.
[170] Here, Cavell is close to Pasolini who asserts: "So the question is: what is the difference between the cinema and reality? Practically none. I realized that the cinema is a system of signs whose semiology corresponds to a possible semiology of the system of signs of reality itself" (cf. Pasolini, *Pasolini on Pasolini*, 29).

in which the real objects (or beings or events) manifest themselves[171] and which can be recorded and brought back. In the context of our analysis, it seems that this factuality of time transfers the real of reality in film, which we will call the real of reproduction. In what follows, this real, the aforementioned presence of CP Hari, her being, will be compared to the idea of presence (of absence) in Cavell and Heidegger. To be precise: Cavell's idea of being or presence is actually based on Heidegger, whom he quotes: "The word [being] says: presence of what is present."[172] But what exactly does this mean? The Heideggerian interpretation of being as presence is actually an ambiguous and even misleading concept: he distinguishes the "present" and "the presence of what is present."

Heidegger's idea of being is based on the ancient Greek par/ousía, translated into German as "Anwesenheit" (presence), originating from a preontological sense, for Heidegger consisting in a "Being-at," or "Da-Sein" (not to be confounded with Dasein from *Being and Time*). The translator of *Being and Time* explains in this context:

> The noun ousia is derived from one of the stems used in conjugating the irregular verb eimaí ('to be'); in the Aristotelian tradition it is usually translated as 'substance,' though translators of Plato are more likely to write 'essence,' 'existence,' or 'being.' Heidegger suggests that ousia is to be thought of as synonymous with the derivative noun parousia ('being at,' 'presence'). As he points out, parousia has a close etymological correspondence with the German 'Anwesenheit.'[173]

The being-at of parousía means a quotidian comprehension, being present in the sense of being at your disposition, "lying-before-us,"[174] being there as a practical use for now. For the ancient Greeks, says Heidegger, "entities are grasped in their Being as 'presence'; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time—the 'Present; that is they are conceived as presence.'"[175] This being present also means being close: "The Greeks do not conceive of being present and abiding primarily in terms of mere duration. . . . To be present is to come close by (an-wesen), to be here in contrast and conflict with to be away (ab-wesen)."[176]

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[171] Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 63.
[172] Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 235.
[173] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 47.
[174] Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 236.
[175] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 48.
[176] Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 236.

However, Heidegger still distinguishes another type of presence: the "presence of what is present."[177] This is the presence of CP Hari, which goes beyond the present moment. This kind of presence is for Heidegger to be distinguished from the presence in the present, because presence cannot be reduced to one mode of time: "It would be a mistake, . . . for us to take the view that Being of beings meant merely, for all time, the presence of what is present."[178] This "presence itself" is a concept, which Graham Harman develops further by referring to a withdrawing real object ("the third table"[179]), by relying on Heidegger's "readiness-to-hand."[180] As a matter of fact, Heidegger sets the presence of what is present as something withdrawing from thinking. We cannot even be sure of its disclosure:

> It is no assurance that such thinking will also clothe the presence of what is present, in words, with all possible clarity and in every respect. Even more, it remains undecided whether in the 'presence of what is present' there will appear That which constitutes the presence of what is present."[181]

Even so, according to Heidegger the "presence itself" always remains:

> Presence itself is precisely the presence of what is present, and remains so even if we specifically stress its various traits. . . . The other traits in the Being of beings—the objectivity of the object which we mentioned, the reality of the real—are nonetheless still constituted in the fundamental character of presence.[182]

At another point in his work, Heidegger explains that "Anwesenheit" as parousía also includes in it the word "Anwesen," which is literally translated as possession or house, evoking a sense of permanence. "Presence means: the consistent dwelling [Verweilen], concerning Man, reaching him, handed for him."[183] This claim evokes a sense of being permanently present in time, different from referring only to the present, but to time, which in Heidegger's understanding is threefold, consisting in the unity of three

[177] Ibid., 235.
[178] Ibid., 235.
[179] See Harman, *The Third Table*.
[180] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 99.
[181] Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 237.
[182] Ibid., 237.
[183] Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 13 (translation mine – C.R.P.).

ecstasies:[184] "We . . . call the phenomena of the future, the character of having been, and the Present, the 'ecstases' of temporality."[185] Therefore, even in the present, the two other ecstases remain, although absent—a presence of absence. Yet Heidegger calls attention to the fact that "what is characteristic of the 'time' which is accessible to the ordinary understanding, consists, among other things, precisely in the fact that it is a pure sequence of 'nows,' . . . in which the ecstatical character of primordial temporality has been leveled off."[186]

Presence of what is present evokes time in its threefoldness (or, better, a dwelling in time) for Heidegger, and thereby also the opposite of "Anwesen," which is the "Abwesen"—which can be translated into English as the process of perishing as much as absence. But this absence, just as Cavell has been observing for photography, still contains a presence it refers to—to come back to Tarkovsky's term "factuality." Heidegger argues in this sense: "this not-present-any-more is immediately present in its absence [west in seinem Abwesen unmittelbar an]."[187,188] We can only conceive something as absent if we know what its presence is like, and that is why its "Wesen" (essence) remains in "Abwesen" (decaying) as well as in "Anwesen," but as a dynamic relationship.

Being as presence itself thus implies the possibility of its own not-being-any-more, which in film is a permanence, corresponding to Heidegger's sense of dwelling presence and implying its absence. Being-in-film is this dwelling of that which is not-being-any-more, just as being-on-Solaris is a transcendental locus of those who are absent. This dwelling in film we will call *the presence of what has been present*—a central characteristic of the real of reality.

Again, being-in-film is being-in-death, which is a being-without-being. Heidegger stresses that the signification of being-in-the-world entails completeness; "[a] structure that is primordially and constantly whole."[189] A fundamental problem for Heidegger is grasping being-in-the-world as a

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[184] "Temporality is not, prior to this, an entity which first emerges from itself; its essence is a process of temporalizing in the unity of the ecstases" (cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 377).
[185] Ibid., 377.
[186] Ibid., 377.
[187] Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 13 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[188] The next step for Heidegger, as time and being are threefold to him, is to recall the sense of future presence in the absence. This aspect of not-yet-being will play a role in the solaristic system when it comes to the principle of projection, but this goes beyond the scope of this chapter.
[189] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 225.

whole: death is also that which transforms Dasein's Being into a whole, in the sense of concluding it. Heidegger further points out that this being-as-a-whole can never be ontically experienced by Dasein: "When Dasein reaches its wholeness in death, it simultaneously loses the Being of its 'there.'"[190] Film thus conveys the impossible death-vision of Dasein as a whole: the romantic longing for death may have helped concretize the technical invention of film, as will be further elucidated.

Our inquiry into the presence of the absence evoked by film can thus be read as the presence of Dasein's being after death: the whole of being as a "being-after-death" emerges as a possibility of Dasein, unique to the filmic device. Death and being-toward-death are central in the narrative of *Solaris*: Hari embodies a being-without-being, but all her aspiration is to change her being into a being-toward-death, a being involved with the possibility of its own absence, and not being an absence referring to the presence itself: she wants to change her presence to correspond with the present mode of time. Similarly to Tarkovsky, filmmaker Hans-Jürgen Syberberg claims that film is the "continuation of life with other means and not the mirror of life,"[191] and in this sense we can understand the material transcendence of film, not by referring to an otherworldly entity, but by being inhabited by the factuality of life (beings, objects, or events) which is not anymore.

In conclusion, the aforementioned principle of presence of absence refers to a spectral and death-driven characterization of film. It also describes the filmic principle of the transcendence of matter. The idea of the presence of that which is not anymore thereby evokes a transcendental materiality of film, "as light as light."[192] The Latin word "solaris" means "of the sun" and although covered by a fluid and waterlike surface, Solaris is the planet of light, which beams beings and being. In *Solaris* the visitors embody a materiality different from humans, although rematerialized.

Before inquiring further into the idea of transcendence of matter and the material quality of light, let me draw an allusion to transcendental materialism. As I will demonstrate, the reflection on and through film may reveal an aesthetic perspective, which has not yet been explored: to access a transcendent mode of reality in film through an immaterial kind of being, residing in the real of reproduction, unfolding the aforementioned "new

[190] Ibid., 281.
[191] "Der Film ist die Fortsetzung des Lebens mit anderen Mitteln und nicht der Spiegel des Lebens" (cf. Syberberg, "Film als Musik der Zukunft," 12).
[192] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 24.

relationship to the real itself," which Alain Badiou, who has inspired this chapter so far, finds so promising.

From Badiou's Ontology of the Void to the White Hole of the Whole of Images

How can the idea of a transcendental real of reproduction, simultaneously present although absent and immaterial in its being, best be verbalized? And what exactly is the real that Alain Badiou is referring to and which has led us to think about the real in film?

In the context of this treatise, it is not possible to do justice to Badiou's ontological materialism, which he develops in the two volumes of *Being and Event*. I will therefore raise two central yet (cor)related concepts in his thought, which are important for our context: the ontology of multiplicity and the void of Lacan's concept of the Real.

Performing a radical step, Badiou fuses the set theory of mathematician Georg Cantor with Heideggerian ontology[193] and claims that "mathematics = ontology."[194] He thus transforms the ontological question of being into a matter of mathematics, an ontological thinking in which "the mathematico-logical revolution of Frege-Cantor sets new orientation for thought."[195] Badiou suggests that the mathematics of set theory rules out the paradox of being as both one and multiple and finds a way to postulate multiplicity as an axiom, a condition of being itself. Being is, for Badiou, not "one" and also not "one multiple,"[196] because "one" simply is not. The number "one" functions as an operational idea to count, a point of reference, but not as an absolute entity.[197] Therefore, the idea of "multiple" is to be understood not as one entity but rather as "a multiple of multiples."[198] Being

[193] "Along with Heidegger, it will be maintained that philosophy as such can only be re-assigned on the basis of the ontological question" (cf. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 2).
[194] Ibid., 6.
[195] Ibid., 2.
[196] "Being is neither one (because only presentation itself is pertinent to the count-as-one), nor multiple (because the multiple is solely the regime of presentation)" (cf. ibid., 24).
[197] "The decision can take no other form than the following: the one is not. . . . What has to be declared is that the one, which is not, solely exists as operation. In other words: there is no one, only the count-as-one. The one, being an operation, is never a presentation. It should be taken quite seriously that the 'one' is a number" (cf. ibid., 23–24).
[198] Ibid., 29.

thus is infinite multiplicity for Badiou, an idea grounded in Cantor's set theory, where absolutely infinite multiplicity is designated as inconsistent.[199]

Badiou stresses that this inconsistency, according to Cantor, refers to an absolute or pure nonbeing and further represents the idea of the unthinkable, which for Cantor evokes God. Like God, "the Absolute can only be acknowledged but never known."[200] Therefore, Badiou argues, the multiplicity of being is to be named as the void,[201] and consequently ontology "can only be theory of the void."[202]

Transferring this concept of being into the solaristic system means that the multiple being as a void reflects the being-without-being on Solaris, as well as the death-driven being-in-film. That being is multiple and nonbeing, or better, that being is not and it has no structure, which further means that there is no difference between being-in-the-world and being-in-film. The void of being-in-film is just a more obvious void, as it is immaterial and infinitely multiple. Nonbeing in film is thus a possibility of the multiplicity of being, and so is the reproduction of being: infinite reproducibility is not a contradiction with multiple being as a void. CP Hari is then the embodiment of being as a void.

Why is this conception of being as an unthinkable infinite multiple void further relevant for our context? Because, grounded in Cantor, thinking the real for Badiou presents a way to think the impossible:

> I think that the impossible is precisely the name of the Real. . . . We can perfectly have the conclusion that something of the Real can be known under the condition of a displacement concerning the limitations of possibility and impossibility. Part of what is impossible can be known if the separation between what is impossible and what is possible changes.[203]

As I have been arguing, film may be one (im)possible tool for thinking such a real in terms of its of reproduction: the reproduction of reality through film "opens a new access to the Real as such," as it gives a new relation "between what is impossible and what is possible."

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[199] Badiou quotes Cantor: "On the one hand, a multiplicity may be such that the affirmation according to which all its elements 'are together' leads to a contradiction, such that it is impossible to conceive the multiplicity as a unity, as a 'finite thing'. These multiplicities, I name them absolutely infinite multiplicities, or inconsistent" (cf. ibid., 41–42).

[200] Cantor, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen mathematischen und Philosophischen Inhalts*, 205.

[201] Badiou, *Being and Event*, 52.

[202] Ibid., 57.

[203] Badiou, "The Critique of Critique."

As it is widely known, Badiou's approach to the real is anchored in Jacques Lacan's writing, who has coined a widespread contemporary reflection on the real in philosophy. Yet, the real was a popular term among philosophers at the beginning of the twentieth century, such as Émile Meyerson, who is mentioned in a 1936 paper by the early Lacan. Meyerson referred to the real as "an ontological absolute, a true being-in-itself."[204] Lacan himself changed his positions on the real throughout his thinking, and in this first brief approach, I will start with the best-known position. Lacan has also called the real "the impossible," because imagining or grasping it symbolically is impossible: "The Real is that, which resists symbolization absolutely."[205] Further, it is a void because "it is the world of words that creates the world of things."[206] This void, as we have seen before, has been set by Badiou as "the proper name for being."[207] An equivalence between being and the real is thereby drawn. The real of reality or the being of reality is then what is conveyed by the "transference of reality" in film, as mentioned by Bazin, "from the thing to its reproduction."[208]

The idea of Cantor's absolute infinite might have had an influence as a parallel contemporary current to the theoretical rise of the real at the beginning of the twentieth century: both the infinite and the real are impossible to think but evoke the absolute and can be grasped as a void (this is again Badiou's reading of Cantor). Lacan even suggests a mathematical formalization, the "matheme," as a way to reveal the real, although integrated in the subject. As Badiou summarizes: "Lacan, whose obsession with mathematics did nothing but grow with time, also indicated that pure logic was 'the science of the real.' Yet the real remains a category of the subject."[209]

The Lacanian idea maintained by Badiou to set the real inside the subject indicates one more reason why film is especially suitable for this inquiry on being and reality: film is the pure being of subjectivity (which is a void), but in objectified form; it is recorded and reproducible; its material quality discloses an immateriality under very specific conditions of projection. When this reproduction as projection occurs, we are immersed in the screened reality (which might be digital or not). Based on mechanical reproduction, film thus constitutes a posthuman way to simultaneously be

[204] Evans, *An Encyclopedia of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 162.
[205] Lacan, *Seminar*, 66.
[206] Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," 65.
[207] Badiou, *Being and Event*, 52.
[208] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 14.
[209] Badiou, *Being and Event*, 4–5.

inside reality and being and stand outside them, a way to think x[210] from outside of x, a shift for human thought.

The happenings on the planet Solaris reflect this techno-ontological possibility: in a cosmic dimension, we are simultaneously inside and outside Kelvin's being. The solaristic principle of being without being, or of that which is not there now, describes film's immanent transcendence of matter. Being remains without structure and as a multiplicity that is a void, in the same logic as Lacan refers to the real—it is there without being there. Simultaneously, this transcendent nonbeing of film reveals the transcendental condition of being: the void of being, its pure nonbeing. In this void of being resides the real of reproduction, a filmic and solaristic form of being that transcends matter and is reproducible as a void.

However, let me briefly sketch another approach to that which is reproduced by being in film, also based on the idea that the Lacanian "real remains a category of the subject,"[211] yet going one step further than Badiou by assuming a material side of being, whose transcendence can be compared to the immateriality of film. Adrian Johnston speaks of a "more-than-materiality" of the subject, which not only fits the being-in-film but also the visitors on Solaris, regarding their presence-of-absence as a condition of being. As Johnston puts it: "Transcendental materialism posits, in short, a self-sundering material ground internally producing what (subsequently) transcends it."[212]

This definition given by Johnston can be applied to a characterization of film as a medium grasping that which transcends the material ground of being or reality, although is produced by it. Let us thereby think of film not as a reproduction of being but as a grasping of that which material being has produced and which transcends it. This materialist reading would argue that it is not being which is a multiple void and therefore reproducible, but rather propose that there is an immaterial and subjective part of being which transcends the material side, although is produced by it, and which can be grasped by film. In this case, being in film would not be the same as being in the world, the latter understood in a material way, whereas the former as a transcendent entity.

Concerning such transcendent immateriality of film we can speak in the materialist approach of a "more-than-material negativity" that is

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[210] Here we refer to the Kantian transcendental subject of thought, the unknown = x, "on which the understanding depends when it believes itself to discover beyond the concept of a predicate that is foreign to it yet which it nevertheless believes to be connected with it" (cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B14, 143).

[211] Badiou, *Being and Event*, 4-5.

[212] Johnston, *Žižek's Ontology*, 61.

either of film or possibly disclosed by film; a negativity, which, in Johnston's words, "subsequently remains, at least in part, separate from and irreducible to its material base/ground."[213] This negative being, which fits CP Hari in *Solaris*, presents further characteristics which provide a deeper characterization of Hari's being-without-being: "There are indeed facets of more-than-material subjectivity entangled in reciprocal oscillating configurations of movement with material being . . . as well as facets of subjectivity that subtract themselves from and achieve autonomy in relation to being . . ."[214] Although removed from its context of reflection, Johnston's position describes aptly the state of affairs on the planet Solaris, thereby evoking a subjectivity or being which, although displaced from its material ground, is graspable through film.

The material quality of film—"as light as light"[215]—becomes then next issue. How does the idea of a more-than-material negativity of film fit the quality of light? What is light? And how are light and the photographic (moving) image related? Solaris is a sunlight-beaming planet generating beings from memory, or dream images via radiation. Common sense grasps light as different from matter yet dependent on space, which carries light in the form of images. Space is dependent on light, in the sense that light makes space appear and disappear. In physics, imagery or radiation is only one property of light—light that has this property is called "visible light" and is to be distinguished from "invisible light" that constantly travels all around, a void entity comparable to the Lacanian Real or the multiple being referred by Badiou.

Constant movement of invisible light evokes radiation or visible light, exactly when light beats matter: visible light or an image thus is an event or fissure of the invisible light. Invisible light thus implies an infinity of possible images. It is a void that at the same time is multiplicity. To the event of the image, the visibility of matter is immanent. Light confronting matter thus constantly beams images and is to be understood as a fractural event: it is only possible to perceive the image in space and time from one point of view at one certain moment. Its being lies in permanence, while it becomes real in the fracture. Every image is just a single slice, a fissure, out of the whole of all possible images, which is a void whose fissure with materiality causes transcendence, that is, image. The void of invisible light is then the potential of all possible images, not a black hole of dark, but a white hole of the whole of possible images, the void before the invisible

[213] Ibid., 280.
[214] Ibid., 280.
[215] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 24.

photons, which when fissured by matter, transform into images, perceivable from one subjective point of view and negative toward being. As Žižek says: "The flow of light 'in itself' is nothing actual, but, rather, the pure virtuality of infinite possibilities actualized in a multitude of ways."[216] I will follow up with this statement in chapter VII by introducing the Deleuzian concept of the virtual into the scope of the analysis.

In a Bergsonian sense of "image = matter," it is possible to assert that matter becomes a quality of light, which is constantly creating new matter or new images out of an aggregate of images, an absolutely infinite set of possible images: a white hole of the whole of images. This white whole of invisible light can be understood as a transcendental field, comparable to a more-than-material infinite, or as a void. This whole is not a totality, but if the images would become one, they would all be visible.

In this sense, like on the planet Solaris, light can make physical reality appear and disappear, and it is first the photographic and then—even more complicated—the filmic image, which grasps this contingent and virtual character of an infinitely multiple reality.

[216] Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies*, 4.

VI. The Solaristic Apparatus

With this chapter I want to conceptualize the planet Solaris as a techno-organic apparatus—based on Benjamin's cinematograph as well as Karen Barad's agential realism. It is my aim to deepen Benjamin's conception of cine-apparatus with a brief look at his idea of technology. In respect to Barad, I aim to transpose her theory of material-discursive apparatuses into the context of film. By bringing both theoretical approaches together, I will apply them to the solaristic system and develop the idea of the planet Solaris as an organic machine, tending toward Bazin's total cinema. Only an organic machine, in which cosmic cine-technology and nature are merged, can fulfill the necessary conditions to reproduce reality in its integrity. As I will argue throughout, Solaris thus forms a new type of apparatus, the brain-apparatus, which is machinic-organic, a cine-apparatus of cosmic origin. Machinic thereby alludes to the technological device as well as to the Guattarian meaning, referring to an interplay of unshaped forces, yet structured as a system of relations, as I will develop further.

The machinic brain-apparatus, which is the planet itself, becomes a conceptual persona (CP) within the solaristic system: it transposes and expands Barad's principles of *intra-active entanglement* by *diffraction* within the context of film. "Intra-action" is a central concept for Barad's new materialist theory. This neologism means the inseparability of phenomena or objects, which she calls "agencies." These do not precede their interaction, instead they emerge through their intra-actions entangled with each other. Film is thus not only an organic part of reality, but film is worldmaking; it changes and shapes reality—just like the planet Solaris. In this context as well, the aforementioned diffractive approach seems adequate to follow a solaristic kind of reasoning. Barad argues "that a diffractive methodology is respectful of the entanglement of ideas and other materials in ways that reflexive methodologies are not."[217]

However, before delving with more detail into Barad's diffractive approach, let me briefly present an earlier attempt to transpose Barad's quantum ontology into the context of cinema. Patricia Pisters, in her essay "Temporal Explorations in Cosmic Consciousness: Intra-Agential Entanglements and the Neuro-Image," tries to analyze her proposal of the

[217] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 29.

neuro-image based on Deleuze's thought,[218] in light of Barad's position. However, Pisters does not attribute a special cinematographic relevance to the concept of apparatus. Rather, her proposal implies a transposition of Barad's thought into the area of film in a Deleuzian sense: "Both Barad and Deleuze have . . . proposed a more complex understanding of the connections between the world, science and philosophy."[219] Furthermore, Pisters emphasizes that according to Deleuze, "in the classical cinema of the movement-image relations between body, brain, world and screen are organic."[220] She argues then that by transferring Barad's method to the Deleuzian topology of cinema "we can see that Deleuze's conception of images is fundamentally intra-agential in this new materialist sense."[221] We have seen how much Deleuze's concepts of cinema and different type of images are inspired by Bergson's thought where image = matter. In what follows, I therefore propose to begin with recalling Bergson's concept of the universe as an aggregate of images, as a way to integrate Barad's thought into our scope of analysis.

On the Entanglement of Mind and Matter

As we have mentioned, the rejection of correlationism is the lowest common denominator, which unites the different positions within speculative realism, including new forms of materialism, such as Barad's. We have further suggested that Bergson can also be considered a premature pioneer of speculative realism/materialism as he withdraws from correlationism by refusing the idealism-materialism dualism and by trying to integrate subjectivity (perception) in his approach of reality.

Recall that for Bergson the world is image, and thereby he defines matter as an aggregate of images.[222] He further argues that the perception of matter and the image of matter coincide in the sense that "it is really in P,

[218] Pisters summarizes the idea of the neuro-image based on Deleuze as follows: "Following from Gilles Deleuze's distinction between classical film as movement-images and modern postwar film as time-images, I propose calling contemporary cinema of the digital age 'neuro-images'" (cf. Pisters, "Temporal Explorations in Cosmic Consciousness," 120).
[219] Ibid., 121.
[220] Ibid., 122.
[221] Ibid., 125.
[222] "I call matter the aggregate of images and perception of matter these same images referred to the eventual action of one particular image, my body" (cf. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 7).

and not elsewhere, that the image of P is formed and perceived."[223] Yet this image differs from perception: "It is true that an image may be without being perceived," says Bergson, "it may be present without being represented."[224] Therefore, for Bergson, presence and representation of an image are two different things, just as matter and perception are. This means—and here Bergson holds a position different from the classical materialists as well as from the idealists[225] and the dualists—that matter (and its movements) is not isolated from the rest of the world and neither is perception. There are movements of the material world and movements of perception, and they interact.[226] On the one hand, there is a mind-independent reality for Bergson, yet on the other hand, perception is part of the very same reality. Both are part of the universe of images, in which a distinction between images of the mind and those exterior to it does not make sense: "Of the aggregate of images we cannot say that it is within us or without us, since interiority and exteriority are only relations among images."[227]

Therefore, in Bergson's theory, mind and material world, subjectivity and reality are *intra-actively entangled* and cannot be separated. His position is solaristic (therefore cinematographic) in this sense and describes aptly what I propose to call "fluid reality," reminiscent of the surface of the planet Solaris, covered by a liquid substance which is moving and thereby changing reality, transferring what I have been calling the real of reality. This model can also be called an "intra-actively entangled model of reality," and I will argue in what follows that Bergson's theory can be correlated with Barad's diffractional approach on matter and meaning. According to Barad, mind and world, meaning and matter, are intra-actively entangled by diffraction. In *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, she describes diffraction as follows:

> Diffraction is a material-discursive phenomenon that challenges the presumed inherent separability of subject and object, nature and culture, fact and value, human and non-human, organic and non-organic, epistemology and ontology, materiality and discursivity. . . . Diffraction is

[223] Ibid., 38.
[224] Ibid., 27.
[225] "My consciousness of matter is then no longer either subjective, as it is for English idealism, or relative, as it is for the Kantian idealism. It is not subjective, as it is in things rather than in me. It is not relative, because the relation between the 'phenomenon' and the 'thing' is not that of appearance to reality, but merely that of the part to the whole" (ibid., 306).
[226] "All these images act and react to upon one another in all their elementary parts according to constant laws which I call laws of nature" (ibid., 1).
[227] Ibid., 13.

> not merely about differences, and certainly not differences in any absolute sense, but about the entangled nature of differences that matter. . . . Diffraction is a material practice for making a difference, for topologically reconfiguring connections. [228]

What is argued here has huge consequences for scientific and ontological thought, as well as for ethics and politics, because: "We are not merely differently situated in the world; 'each of us' is part of the intra-active ongoing articulation of the world in its differential mattering."[229] Such a view creates a network of responsibility toward the world—it means that any kind of thought has material consequences within a large topology of elements, similar to the images in the Bergsonian system of thought. The happenings on Solaris, such as the materialization of the visitors, become a symptom of Barad's diffractional entanglement of mind and matter, which is based on Niels Bohr's quantum physics. Barad relates to Bohr by stressing his position as being nondualist and adding perception to realism, which is a position close to the Bergsonian theory:

> While Bohr's understanding of quantum physics leads him to reject the possibility that scientists can gain access to the 'things-in-themselves,' that is, the objects of investigation as they exist outside human conceptual frameworks, he does not subscribe to a Kantian noumena-phenomena distinction. And while Bohr's practice of physics shows that he holds a realist attitude toward his subject matter, he is not a realist in any conventional sense, since he believes that the interaction between the objects of investigation and what he calls 'the agencies of observation' is not determinable and therefore cannot be 'subtracted out' to leave a representation of the world as it exists independently of human beings.[230]

However, the following thoughts are not meant as a comment on Barad's very complex theory but as an attempt to apply some aspects of Barad's quantum-ontology to the context of film and thus expand it through the solaristic system. Such an endeavor means to reassess cinema as an apparatus-based art and as a form of intra-active entanglement with reality; a concept going far beyond that of the cinematographic apparatus of mechanical reproduction, which Benjamin refers to.

In *Solaris*, reality is actually reproduced while a mysterious process is taking place, in which the reproduced reality starts to interact in the form of the visitors, who materialize by intra-action. The planet Solaris processes the reproduction and should be considered an active conceptual

[228] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 381.
[229] Ibid., 381.
[230] Ibid., 30–31.

persona, as I will argue from now on: the planet acts with its own purpose, even if in puzzling ways. As I have mentioned, Solaris embodies the being of a giant brain, a processor of past human reality that is apparently reacting to x-rays. However, I suggest that the planet is a cosmic apparatus, an unknown form of cosmic organic machine, analogous to the cinematograph: in its original form it has been recording as well as projecting, and later these mechanical functions were separated. I argue that we should think about the planet and of cinema as an "intra-active apparatus," entangled with the scientists—filmmaker/spectators—via the agency of the visitors—film characters. Yet in one aspect the planet extends the cinematograph: Solaris (re)produces fragments of reality in the form of objects and beings by sensing the minds of the humans, where a sort of prerecording has taken place. In any case, this dynamic situation strangely resembles Barad's agential realism, which also operates with the term apparatus, although the concept emerges within a different context:

> Apparatuses are specific material reconfigurations of the world that do not merely emerge in time but interactively reconfigure space-time matters as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming.[231]

Solaris is literally "reconfiguring space-time matters as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming." Yet to elaborate a solaristic relation between Barad's apparatus and the one of film and cinema, it is necessary to further distinguish both concepts. I will therefore start with inquiring into the concept of the technological cine-apparatus, stemming from Walter Benjamin. Then I will extend the term to refer to specific technological equipment, to encompass any instrument that interpenetrates reality, and briefly analyze Benjamin's relation to technology.

From Benjamin's Apparatus to the Solaristic Brain

So far, I have referred to Benjamin's position that in cinema and film we face the images of a technological apparatus in the sense of a device, which does not integrate but penetrates into that which is the subject of natural human perception. The cine-apparatus is selecting, recording, and shaping a sort of fabric of reproduced and assembled reality, thus producing "immediate reality," more real for the viewer than the material reality it depicts. However, the term "immediate reality" is used by Benjamin in a positive sense of seeing technology as a utopian device (I will follow up on this idea later) to access something we would not have accessed without.

[231] Ibid., 142 and 146.

> In the studio the mechanical *apparatus* ["Apparatur" in German, a word which we will keep although the translator suggests "equipment"] has penetrated so deeply into reality that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of the apparatus [again Benjamin refers here to the "Apparatur" in the German original] is the result of a special procedure, namely, the shooting by the specially adjusted camera and the mounting of the shot together with other similar ones. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology.[232]

However, Benjamin's concept has evolved into a different reading: during the 1960s, the so-called apparatus theory,[233] which inquired critically into the technology of cinematographic reproduction, described the construction of the "impression of reality" as an ideological illusion. Jean-Louis Baudry introduces this idea based on a special reading of Plato's allegory of the cave, which he proposes to reassess "from the special perspective of the cinematographic apparatus":[234] "Plato's prisoner is the victim of an illusion of reality, . . . he is the prey of an impression, of an impression of reality."[235] Thereby, Plato

> is careful to emphasize the artificial aspect of reproduced reality. It is the apparatus that creates the illusion, and not the degree of fidelity with the Real: here the prisoners have been chained since childhood, and it will therefore not be the reproduction of this or that specific aspect of that reality, which they do not know, which will lead them to attribute a greater degree of reality to the illusion to which they are subject.[236]

According to apparatus theory, the illusory effect of cinema is based on the invisibility of the cine-apparatus and functions due to a subject-centered effect, which satisfies an archaic need or desire[237] and is "more-than-real"[238]: "the cinematographic apparatus is unique in that it offers the subject perceptions 'of reality' whose status seems similar to that of presentations experienced as perception."[239]

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[232] Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 233.
[233] Apparatus theory was introduced by Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean-Louis Baudry; it emerged in France and Germany in the 1960s and 1970s.
[234] Baudry, "The Apparatus," 303.
[235] Ibid., 303.
[236] Ibid., 305.
[237] See, ibid., 314; Jean-Louis Baudry appropriates here the concept of desire from Freud.
[238] Ibid., 314.
[239] Ibid., 314.

The idea of this apparatus intervention and "reality-effect" seems constitutive for the solaristic system at first sight, as the planet Solaris seems to be such an apparatus creating a "Solaris-effect." Yet the comparison fails if we think about the illusion of reality that Solaris would provide: the cave dweller in Plato's cave is chained and has no reference to outer reality, which is known to the spectator of cinema. In a more contemporary reading, the cinema spectator is actually the one who seeks the light out of the cave, as Colin McGinn suggests:

> It is our experience of the empirical world outside the movie theater that is analogous to Plato's cave dwellers (as he himself supposed), and our experience within the movie theater is analogous to the escapee's experience outside the cave. That is, we gain a special insight into reality by watching movies that we don't obtain by means of our ordinary empirical experience. To put it in Platonic terms, we can gain access to Truth, Goodness and Beauty by watching films—they give us a conduit to those 'higher' realities.[240]

This reading of the allegory in the context of film philosophy is actually much closer to Benjamin's reasoning: the apparatus gives us access to "truth" or to that which we have called the real of reality, the ground for the "solaristic claim." This claim says that *the real of reality manifests itself in film and becomes graspable for human knowledge through film* (see chapter V). I will argue for this by taking Benjamin's "immediate reality"[241] as a synonym of the real of reality. In this sense film, in the solaristic philosophy, is regarded as the representative of how apparatus-produced images of reality and reality itself are correlated, inquiring into the real of film (a placeholder for ontological truth—a conception of truth that withdraws from the area of the symbolic).

In contrast to the advocates of apparatus theory, for Benjamin, the special characteristic of the cine-apparatus does not constitute an illusion. The reality of the cine-apparatus is just of a different kind than natural perception and eventually brings "things 'closer.'"[242] It presents reality on the basis "of the thoroughgoing permeation of reality with mechanical equipment."[243] This penetration of reality by technology is, according to Benjamin, just like that of a surgeon at work, a penetration "deeply into its web."[244] This enables the idea of a real image from the inside of reality,

[240] McGinn, "A Multimodal Theory of Film Experience," 156–57.
[241] Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 233.
[242] Ibid., 223.
[243] Ibid., 234.
[244] Ibid., 233.

which only film can provide and which Benjamin calls "immediate reality" or "an orchid in the land of technology."[245] Cinema is more-than-real, as Baudry claims, but for reasons opposite to those he gives: it is so because we are confronted with something, which lies in the deep ground of the paradox of reproduction. Again, I recall my grounding question of inquiry: What from reality is exactly reproduced? It is this *more-than-real or immediate reality*, which I have named "the real of reality" and introduced as a cardinal concept of the solaristic system.

Integrated into a different tradition of thought, Barad refers to a concept of apparatus independent from film, as an agent of intra-active entanglements, relying on Foucault's concept of "dispositif," which is frequently translated as apparatus and defined as "a system of relations that can be established between . . . [its] elements."[246] I will show in what follows that in addition to Benjamin's apparatus, which clearly is a techno-machine, Solaris is the carrier of such a system of relations at another layer: the planet as apparatus is both a device and dispositif in one. The solaristic system may even be regarded as the attempt to clarify the intra-active entanglements of the cine-apparatus, which on Solaris has a nature similar to Epstein's question: "Will images created from this other optical system, this kind of robot-brain that is the cinematographic apparatus, have as great an influence upon the evolution of culture and civilization?"[247]

Benjamin's filmic apparatus is actually the conceptual result of an approach, which grounds the conception of a special relation between technology and humans. The apparatus has the characteristic that it can be operated by human intervention, but there is no such necessary condition. In order to better understand this apparatus, I propose to briefly inquire into how Benjamin relates the human being and "Technik"—translated as technics—in general.[248] Technik is for Benjamin divided into two.[249] The first only exists "in fusion with the ritual."[250] It is still related to magic rituals

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[245] Ibid, 233. Note: in German, Benjamin refers to the blue flower (instead of an orchid), which is a symbol of the era of German romanticism, symbolizing the metaphysical aspiration of eternity.
[246] Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh," 194.
[247] Epstein, *The Intelligence of a Machine*, xi.
[248] I refer here to Hyun Kang Kim, who inspired me with her essay "The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology." Her essay emphasized the need to understand Benjamin's theory of film in the larger context of his work; his concept of technology linked to a utopia of an interplay between nature, human being, and technology thus came to my attention.
[249] This division is present in the second edition of the Artwork essay, see: Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften VII*, 350–84.
[250] Ibid., 359 (translation mine – C.R.P.).

and the human body, thus apparently "underdeveloped" when compared to the one of machines, while the second Technik[251] is best translated as "technology." The difference between the two is explained by Benjamin in the following: "the first Technik completely relies on the human, whereas the second one as less as possible."[252] Here, Benjamin describes the switch from human to posthuman. Yet he emphasizes that the objective of technology (the second Technik) is not the domination of nature. This is indeed the "perspective of the first Technik,"[253] whereas the second Technik (technology) involves art and is not opposed to nature, but rather constitutes "an interplay between nature and the human being."[254] Furthermore, according to Benjamin:

> The function of art today to be socially decisive is the practice of that interplay. This is especially true for film. Film is there to train the human being in those apperceptions and reactions, which are conditioned by the handling of an apparatus, and whose role in his life increases nearly daily.[255]

Benjamin anticipates here not only the contemporary tendency of our increasing reliance on apparatus-generated realities, but also emphasizes a switch of perspective, in which film constitutes the artistic practice. As a footnote in the Artwork essay shows, Benjamin believes that the utopia of the first Technik concerning the human body, love, or death will be "discarded in favor of the ones [the utopias] concerning society and technology"[256] but later be retaken; Benjamin somehow anticipates a reconciliation between technology, which is "as little human as possible," and the human being, who is the operator of the first Technik. It is important to emphasize in this context the switch of perspectives from the human to the posthuman or even the nonhuman—all to which the human suddenly has access. It means a possibility of overcoming the subjective condition, as well in the new speculative sense of contemporary philosophy. As Hyun Kang Kim evokes,[257] Benjamin has anticipated the concept of cyborgs, which were much later introduced into theoretical reflection by Donna Haraway.[258] Kim further points out: "Technology makes precisely this

[251] Ibid., 359 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[252] Ibid., 359 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[253] Ibid., 359 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[254] Ibid., 359 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[255] Ibid., 359–60 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[256] Ibid., 665 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[257] Kim, "The Blue Flower," 131.
[258] See: Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs."

change of perspective from in-itself to for-itself possible. According to Hegel, this change in perspective means the truth. In this spirit, technology is for Benjamin the place of truth par excellence."[259] What this change means for human thought is emphasized in this book, as I consider it one of the most important philosophical consequences of the emergence of film. The change of thought enables a new reliance on philosophy of film in order to take a perspective beyond the human.

This is probably also the reason why it has become so popular in the last two decades to use movies for philosophical reflection—as a complement or as a device for thinking. The attraction of film for philosophers consists in this very fact that we can finally see what we see through the eyes of a nonhuman apparatus, which penetrates into reality in a way that human perception cannot. Benjamin describes, as we have seen throughout, the apparatus being a device to enable the "equipment-free aspect of reality," providing through the procedure of "interpenetration of reality" the "vision of immediate reality." This sets the cine-apparatus as a philosophical device to access truth. Although it may seem like a contradiction, the invisibility of the technical apparatus in the resulting images is a posthuman vision, a perspective, which is not purely human anymore, achieved through the fusion of human perception and technological possibilities of a machine: a cyborg condition in the sense of Haraway.

What are the consequences of this overcoming of the human condition? Film can be designated as a posthuman extension, a technological tool of such a nature that it extends human consciousness in the manner in which Marshall McLuhan addresses technological media in general:

> Today . . . we approach the final phase of the extensions of man—the technological simulation of consciousness, when the creative process of knowing will be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society, much as we have already extended our senses and our nerves by the various media.[260]

In our context, I want to stress that the invention of film has been the pioneer of the technological media-extension of senses, nerves and, so I must add, thinking. Let me make this last point clear. It is crucial to close the first step of this chapter's musing: the cinematic extension deeply affects the entangled human relation between reality and mind, such that the recorded and reproduced sense transports the subject outside itself and becomes a

[259] Kim, "The Blue Flower," 130.
[260] McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 3.

new device for cognition. The implicit shift for human thought is based on a change of the subject's stance toward reality.

As I have mentioned, there is a link between Benjamin's vision of apparatus and his utopia of reconciliation between technology and the human body. The concept of apparatus for Benjamin is not just the filmic apparatus, but a technological device to enable posthuman capacities. Thereby the filmic apparatus performs an interpenetration with reality and records reality, making it reproducible and thus accessible to human perception. Film is considered by Benjamin a practice to deal with the new and nonhuman perspective of technology provided by the apparatus. The apparatus can even lead us to undertake time travel and to access new potential. Benjamin describes, at another point in his work, a vision of a new cosmic dimension for humankind, achieved through technology at the service of humanity:

> For it [humankind] a physis is emerging in technology, in which its contact with the cosmos takes a form, which is new and different from that in nations and families. Enough to remind the experience of speed, to give energy for readying humankind for unforeseen travels into the interior of time, to find the rhythms at which those deemed incurable would recuperate like in former times in high mountains or southern shores."[261]

This cosmic dimension and these travels exploring time are for Benjamin a further stage of technology. Cinema, as we have seen, by subscribing to Bazin's utopia of total cinema, is a certain substitution of nature. At the same time, now following Benjamin, this substitution is a conflation with nature, the reconcilement of technology and nature in a further developed stage. Yet, are we not already, in a certain sense, time travelers when we watch movies? What makes the apparatus develop into a time travel machine?

Most fascinating to mention in this context is Barad's idea of intra-active time, incorporating a truly cinematographic dimension:

> Space and time (like matter) are phenomenal, that is, they are intra-actively produced in the making of phenomena; neither space nor time exist as determinate givens outside of phenomena. As a result of the iterative nature of intra-active practices that constitute phenomena, the 'past' and the 'future' are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through one another: phenomena cannot be located in space and time; rather, phenomena are material entanglements that 'extend' across different

[261] Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften IV*, 147 (translation mine – C.R.P.).

> spaces and times. . . . Neither the past nor the future is ever closed.[262]

This implies of course that "the past is open to change. It can be redeemed, productively reconfigured in an iterative unfolding of spacetime matter. . . . The 'past' was never simply there to begin with, and the 'future' is not what will unfold, but 'past' and 'future' are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through the world's ongoing intra-activity."[263]

Maybe the movie *Solaris* can give a further answer, because the planet Solaris is somehow intra-actively nonhuman: it is beyond the human, but with capacities humans acquire through technology. Benjamin's idea of contact with the cosmos is further reminiscent of *Solaris* in a completely unexpected way. Time is restituted in a new yet iterative way on the planet: the past has been changed by Hari's second existence on Solaris. Whether she is different from the first Hari or not, it is the meaning of this second existence that changes the first one. I will argue that Benjamin's reconciliation between technology and the human body/nature establishes Solaris as an apparatus of a new kind: a nonhuman yet organic apparatus, which dominates the relation between the human beings and nature/reality in a way that puzzles the humans, because their control is lost. Nature is presented through the planet in a completely new way, just as Benjamin's apparatus does.

In this context, let me recall the opening scenes of *Solaris* on Earth: the camera penetrates into nature, thus achieving a beautiful portrait. Here, the camera movements are organic, slowly floating along with what is filmed. A bit later, the conflict between Kris Kelvin and his father specifically represents the conflict between nature and humans: "the cosmos is too fragile" says the father, being concerned about the technological devices that Kelvin is planning to use to destroy the planet. Yet, at the end of the film, the cosmic brain Solaris has reconciled Kelvin through love with nature: Kelvin must accept how things go and that science is powerless to understand Solaris. He loves Hari, and later he kneels before his father, asking for forgiveness. He does so on Solaris; on Earth, in his past, he would not have acted this way.

In this context, I propose to consider contemporary digital and postcinematic worlds as apparatus-produced and therefore as a logical consequence of film and cinema, part of the tendency toward an actualization of Bazin's total cinema. As I have mentioned before, Bazin's myth indicates

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[262] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 383.
[263] Dolphijn and van der Tuin, "Matter Feels, Converses, Suffers, Desires, Yearns and Remembers," 67.

the desire of a total re-creation of the world. I recall that this idea, according to Bazin, has only partly been fulfilled by film: "cinema has not yet been invented,"[264] he argues, and the contemporary evolution of digital computation has shown him right. Following this line of thought, if we comprehend film's reproduction as an extended sphere of human perception, of reality—a technological doubling of reality, and constituting a reality of its own—then film is the first medium to provide us with posthuman capacities. Photography and, as a second stage, film are the first apparatus-based media that have made us think on their techno-ontological consequences. Film permits us to look at human perception from the outside, a perspective of thought until then considered impossible. "Technology makes precisely this change of perspective from in-itself to for-itself possible."[265] The consequences are intra-active.

The described tendency is of special contemporary pertinence, as film and technology-based media in general are constitutive of our techno-globalized world in which reality appears as multifold, extended, and exchangeable by apparatus-like machines: we can switch from one reality to the next one. The resulting permanent switch of reality contexts, which absorb our mental and sensory attention, has deepened as a contemporary phenomenon: the omnipresence of a mobile cyberspace has changed everyday life; the continuous and ever-increasing reliance on virtual media's presence in entertainment, culture, social and professional life, as well as information has become a mobile reality of global proportion, grown out of our sci-fi imaginations in the shadow of a society of control.

However, our conscious thinking about this change is slowed, and our contemporary, technological condition of being is a process we like to ignore in deeper reflection. The underlying need for discursive intelligibility underpins solaristic philosophy as a necessary tendency. However, our reliance on technology-generated virtual media worlds is constantly growing: they have a physical connection to our fingertips as a prolongation of our thoughts received by an apparatus-based device. In *Solaris* the apparatus senses the mind directly and confronts humans with their subconscious desires, the most characteristic part of human beings. Solaris is not human, but it creates posthuman and transhuman circumstances, tending toward Bazin's total cinema, in the form of a super-intelligent, organic machine, in the posthuman cyborg sense mentioned before. The planet Solaris may be claimed as the achievement of the myth of total cinema, as mysterious and entangled as cinema itself.

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[264] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 21.
[265] Kim, "The Blue Flower," 130.

A solaristic precursor might be the idea of the internet of the mind, the "total brain" which would link humans, nature, and machines in one stream of consciousness, and which would share feelings as well as information and thoughts, a human utopia thought of since the eighteenth century (mesmerism, telepathic communication, etc.). The essay-film *Worldbrain*[266] by Stéphane Degoutin and Gwenola Wagon approaches this total utopia, which lies not only at the origin of cinema, but also of the internet:

> The idea of a world brain can be understood as the interlacing point for all sorts of ways of considering the world: . . . information conceived as a universal matter, running through everything; the central nervous system seen as the most important organ defining the human itself; the desire for a universal means of communication which would bypass the limitations of existing means (what we would call 'universal connectivity'); last but not least, the promise to communicate directly through the inside of the brain, bypassing the filter of consciousness. What if we push the logic of our times to an extreme? We could keep our bodies, but each cell would be connected to each grain of sand in the world, each atom in the universe. . . . The perspective of merging with the whole universe is indeed scary.[267]

Solaris is such a universal brain. Its origins are unknown but its reactions to the human condition are beyond the human grasp of intelligibility—it reacts to x-rays and energy waves in the most unexpected ways. It is an organic, living machine, a quickly mutating cyborg and producer of replica worlds. There even might be the possibility that Nick Bostrom's claim that we live in a computer-simulated world preconceived by the character's ancestors finds its application on Solaris (I will follow up on this in the next chapter). Indeed, the main character Kris Kelvin could very well be a posthuman visitor without being conscious of his own condition. It would then be a world where the human being is dispensable—a total cinema in which not only the world but also its habitants are a re-creation, so perfect that it is as organic as film images are, yet stimulating our tactile as well as our visual and audible senses.

Worldmaking Measurements

I have argued so far that we can understand Barad's quantum-ontology as a way to reassess cinema as an apparatus-based art and a form of intra-active

[266] Degoutin and Wagon, *Worldbrain.*
[267] Degoutin and Wagon, "World Brain."

entanglement with reality, going beyond the concept of apparatus and mechanical reproduction that Benjamin refers to. In what follows, I attempt to deepen Barad's theory by expanding on how the filmic apparatus and the Solaris apparatus will conceptually extend each other. I will thereby deepen the intra-active apparatus nature of the planet Solaris: it refuses to be measured by the human methods of science, but the planet is, inversely, an agent that measures the humans in its own way. Two aspects are important in order to conceive the apparatus of intra-active agentialism.

First, Barad develops her concept of an intra-active, dynamic apparatus by interrogating and expanding the concept of Foucault's "dispositif," designating an organized "system of relations" between the elements of a "heterogeneous ensemble" (all kinds of possible thoughts and forms).[268] Second, to this concept of apparatus Barad critically proposes the necessity of delivering an explanation of the nature of the established relations between matter and thought. Here, she criticizes Foucault's notion of biopower as antiquated:

> . . . Foucault does not articulate, including the precise nature of the relationship between discursive practices and material phenomena; a dynamic and agential conception of materiality that takes account of the materialization of all bodies (nonhuman as well as human and that makes possible a genealogy of the practices through which these distinctions are made); and the ways in which contemporary technoscientific practices provide for much more intimate, pervasive, and profound reconfigurings of bodies, power, knowledge, and their linkage than anticipated by Foucault's notion of biopower (which might have been adequate to eighteenth-century practices, but not contemporary ones).[269]

Barad searches for a more encompassing, diffractional, and agential kind of concept than the one in Foucault—a concept that would not enter a contradiction or lag behind contemporary techno-science research. That is why she tries to adapt the ontological method of thought from quantum physics, transferring it into philosophy. Barad thus proposes a new form of quantum-ontogical "intra-active" and diffractional thinking, to be

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[268] "What I'm trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions–in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements" (cf. Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh," 194).

[269] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 200.

distinguished from reflection.[270] It calls for a new kind of causality based on Bohr's ideas of quantum physics, wherein measurement plays a central role, yet in a new, nondualist sense:

> Bohr's epistemological framework . . . offers a new understanding of fundamental philosophical issues such as the relationship between knower and known, the role of measurement, questions of meaning making and concept use, . . . the nature of causality, and the nature of reality. . . . He is explicit in stating that in his opinion quantum physics shows that the world surely does not abide by the ontology of Newtonian physics.[271]

What does this contradiction with "Newtonian physics" mean and how does its rejection renew ontology? Let me add one further remark to better understand the context of such thinking within our scope of analysis, which so far engages in a cross-thinking between the entangled condition of film and the philosophical methods of "reflection," although tending toward its limits: the understanding of the real of reality withdraws from intelligible grasp. But should that which I can assume as true in terms of scientific knowledge not be the same as that which is measurable?

The origin of the common claim that we can equate truth (reality) and science goes back to the physician Max Planck, who famously asserted: "That which can be measured exists" ("Was man messen kann, das existiert auch").[272] This sentence is frequently understood by switching "exists" with "is real," as Heidegger famously does 1953 in a lecture in Munich, indirectly quoting Max Planck with the reference: "Real is what can be measured" ("Wirklich ist was sich messen läßt").[273]

Heidegger does so in a critical sense: he is against the claim of natural science that existence or reality are considered to be graspable by measurement. But is that kind of measurement of existence the same kind of being of reality which I grasp by filming? That kind of truth, which I rely on by reasoning? Is the film camera an apparatus of measurement that transforms Max Planck's sentence into: that which can be filmed exists or is real? *Solaris* clearly challenges the usual demand of graspability for objective knowledge put forth by natural science: in the narrative, the planet Solaris is diffractional. It is a brain, which is intra-actively entangled with

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[270] "In contrast to reflecting apparatuses, like mirrors, which produce images-more or less faithful-of objects placed a distance from the mirror, diffraction gratings are instruments that produce patterns that mark differences in the relative characters (i.e., amplitude and phase) of individual waves as they combine" (cf. ibid., 81).
[271] Ibid., 30–31.
[272] Planck, *Wege zur physikalischen Erkenntnis: Reden und Vorträge*, 44.
[273] Heidegger, "Wissenschaft und Besinnung," 54.

the human subconscious. The scientists have no possibility to know or understand the planet or read the mysterious manifestations of its intra-activity. However, Barad's theory seems to enable the understanding of this characteristic of the planet by calling attention to the fact that meaning and matter intra-act: thoughts, emotions, and feeling, according to Barad, have physical consequences.[274] Somehow, the surface of the planet is symptomatic of this intra-action, moving and changing colors, while the emotional density on the planet increases.

Barad's nonrepresentational approach, by enhancing the entangled relation of matter and meaning, words and objects, confirms the endeavor of the solaristic system: the cinematograph as well as the Solaris apparatus could be seen as a "tool for measurement" of the real, understood in the following way.

> Measurements are agential practices, which are not simply revelatory but performative: they help constitute and are a constitutive part of what is being measured. In other words, measurements are intra-actions (not interactions): the agencies of observation are inseparable from that which is observed. Measurements are world-making: matter and meaning do not pre-exist, but rather are co-constituted via measurement intra-actions.[275]

In this sense, the filmic apparatus as well as the Solaris apparatus are world-making and go beyond reflection: films are not mirrors but, rather, the continuation of life (to recall Syberberg). On the one hand, we apparently have the image of reality, but on the other hand, this image dominates reality and tends to substitute it, becoming real itself. Thus film/the planet Solaris enables us to double our being-in-the-world, to overcome the subjective condition by reproducing it: we reach the condition of being-in-film or being-on-Solaris. Mind and world are one, and the cinematographic apparatus furthers this new kind of causality, which Barad claims to be based on Bohr's quantum physics. I recall:

> For example, while Bohr's understanding of quantum physics leads him to reject the possibility that scientists can gain access to the 'things-in-themselves,' that is, the objects of investigation as they exist outside human conceptual frameworks, he does not subscribe to a Kantian noumena-phenomena distinction. And while Bohr's practice of physics shows that he holds a realist attitude toward his subject matter, he is not a realist in any conventional sense, since he believes that the interaction between the objects of investigation and what he calls 'the agencies of

[274] Dolphijn and van der Tuin, "Matter Feels, Converses, Suffers, Desires, Yearns and Remembers."
[275] Barad, *What is the Measure of Nothingness?*, 6.

> observation' is not determinable and therefore cannot be 'subtracted out' to leave a representation of the world as it exists independently of human beings.[276]

Barad's nonrepresentational approach, by enhancing the entangled relation of matter and meaning, words and objects, influences our entire endeavor of analysis: language itself must ultimately be seen as a kind of "tool for measurement," and like any tool of its kind, it conditions its results and produces what it talks about.

In this context, it is worth mentioning Paul Watzlawick, the author of *How Real is Reality?*, in which he speaks of the discoverer of the uncertainty relation, quantum physicist Werner Heisenberg, a contemporary of Niels Bohr, who establishes a link between language and its sphere of reference as an example of how we explore a reality conditioned by our way of exploration:

> The reality of which we can speak is never reality in itself but a 'known' reality, in many cases even a reality we have designed. If it is objected against this latter formulation that, after all, there is an objective world completely independent of our thoughts, which takes place or can take place without our intervention, and which we really mean to approach in [scientific] investigation, so to this first so obvious objection must be hold against that, nevertheless, the very word "there" is derived from the human language and therefore cannot mean something that is not related to our ability of cognition. For us, there is only the world in which the word there is has a sense. [277]

Watzlawick thus grasps reality as a potential, something we do not find but create, merely in the sense of an intra-active entanglement ("measurements are worldmaking"[278]) and comparable to Heidegger's possibilities of Dasein, which are always yet to come. However, this condition is a correlationist one, because it claims that we cannot distinguish between our perception of the world and the world itself; although it offers a way out in that we are a creative part of the world by our perception and cognition, which is part of the world. Further, it refuses the static dualism of representationalism: it would mean that the apple becomes an apple by our meaning of apple. There might be other meanings of the apple we will not explore.

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[276] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 30–31.
[277] Heisenberg, *Ordnung der Wirklichkeit*, 59 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[278] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 6.

Another example might be that we hear sound because we can, that is, we are biologically constituted to hear, and we see images for the same reason. Both are properties of the being of reality and are reproducible in their very being, as measured by certain apparatuses. This would also imply that we are cocreators of the real of reality—understood as a flowing solaristic substance, visible on the surface of the Solaris ocean.

Barad further adds that the exact same real even presents different physical being (in terms of its properties) when measured, because it is the case of light:

> If the measurement intra-action plays a constitutive role in what is measured, then it matters how something is explored. In fact, this is born out empirically in experiments with matter (and energy): when electrons (or light) are measured using one kind of apparatus, they are waves; if they are measured in a complementary way, they are particles. Notice that what we are talking about here is not simply some object reacting differently to different probings but being differently. What is at issue is the very nature of nature. A quantum ontology deconstructs the classical one: there are no pre-existing individual objects with determinate boundaries and properties that precede some interaction, nor are there any meanings that could be used to describe their behaviors; rather, determinate boundaries and properties of objects-within-phenomena, and determinate contingent meanings, are enacted through specific intra-actions, where phenomena are the ontological inseparability of intra-acting agencies.[279]

That the very nature of reality is at stake means that there is a quality of being to be measurable and, consequently, reproducible as that by which it is measured. Film is the example here. Reality becomes image and sound because we measure it as such. This does not make images and sounds properties of our mind, but indicates an intra-active relation of matter and meaning: reality becomes reproducible in image and sound, because we are there to see reality in image- and sound-worlds and because of the cinematographic apparatus. But that does not mean that the transfer of the real of reality from the thing to its reproduction would not take place, for all the reasons we have elaborated so far.

[279] Ibid., 6–7.

VII. The Real, the Virtual, and the Subjective Side of Knowledge

The Virtuality of Reality

Plato's allegory of the cave is frequently associated with film as an ontological principle of the illusion of reality, and we have opposed this reading so far. But what further observations can we still draw from this tale? That which actually is described with Plato's allegory indeed corresponds more to a metaphor of our relation to reality, rather than being a characterization of the principles of film. The narrative puts light and shadow in opposition: we have, on the one hand, the world of shadows, a delusionary reality, which is actually taken to be real by the cave dwellers, and, on the other hand, there is the light of the real or of truth, shining so clear and so bright that the escaping philosopher has to let his eyes adapt in order to see. The one who seeks the truth has to learn how to see. However, the doubting question remains open: Does what the philosopher sees now, after adapting, correspond to the truth?

What if the other people, those who stayed in the cave, would argue the following: due to their habituation, they are able to comprehend the shadows as a key to the real, because the shadows, at least, are a property of reality. But in order to argue this, they would need the notion of their limitation of perception, and this notion fits the one of the film spectators. (Therefore, the only possibility for employing the allegory as a metaphor for film as an ontological principle is if we were to rewrite its ending.)

Plato's cave insinuates that we are deluded by our perception, starting a certain philosophical tradition, which corresponds to a persisting doubt haunting us when facing sensible reality. This doubt is part of the human condition of perception, our way to access the external world. In everyday life we continuously have the impression of the world as a whole, a consistent reality composed by certain characteristics and laws, which we seem to know. But can we be sure of this perception? Could we not, in truth, be sitting in Plato's cave? Let us examine this doubt closer, relying on René Descartes in the *Meditations on First Philosophy* and look at how he argues to resolve it. One argument of Descartes's skepticism questions whether we can distinguish actual reality from dreaming.

In what follows, I will argue that traditional Cartesian doubt can be read as a doubt describing a general "virtuality of reality." I argue so by designating the Cartesian dreamworld as a virtual reality, a term frequently used in contemporary theory to characterize computer-generated realities, but which could also be referring to film. Descartes's dreamworld is, in fact, a strong virtual reality in the sense of depicting an illusionary, mind-generated presence, which cannot be distinguished by perception from actual, physical reality. Therefore, it casts doubt on the true character of reality. Reality could be virtual. Descartes argues:

> At the present moment, however, I certainly look upon this paper with eyes wide awake; the head which I now move is not asleep; I extend this hand consciously and with express purpose, and I perceive it; the occurrences in sleep are not so distinct as all this. But I cannot forget that, at other times I have been deceived in sleep by similar illusions; . . . I perceive so clearly that there exist no certain marks by which the state of waking can ever be distinguished from sleep. . . .[280]

Descartes then assumes that thought can master perception:

> And finally, considering that all the same thoughts that we have when we are awake can also come to us when we are asleep, without any one of them then being true, I resolved to pretend that nothing which had ever entered my mind was any more true than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately afterwards I became aware that, while I decided thus to think that everything was false, it followed necessarily that I who thought thus must be something; and observing that this truth: I think therefore I am, was so certain and so evident.[281]

Descartes assumes here that, although I cannot be sure whether I am awake or dreaming, my thoughts are true and give me a clue as to the truth of my existence. Thinking means reliable existence to Descartes: thinking guarantees being real in the sense of existing, and from there on Descartes can distinguish virtual reality (dreaming) and real reality (being awake). We should know by thinking, so he would argue, that the virtual state (a dream in his case) is a state of delusion. That which is virtual thus belongs to an illusory, unreal domain for Descartes, in clear opposition to the "real domain" he is in when he is awake. In that sense, Descartes stands for what Barad and Haraway would call thinking based on reflection. Descartes sets up the dualist thought of modernity, setting oppositional dichotomies like interior and exterior, body and mind, and the illusional (and fictional) as opposed to true reality and knowledge.

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[280] Descartes, *Meditations 1*, 113.
[281] Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, §1.

Consequently, Descartes is doubting the reliability of sensory perception and questions our sensory relationship with that which is real in order to inquire into our capability of having knowledge. The only way out for Descartes is to trust thought and logic. In that sense, the Cartesian "cogito ergo sum" shows a way to overcome the virtuality of reality by which the difference between the virtual and the real becomes nested in the following sense: we cannot distinguish anymore whether reality is "real" or virtual (dream).

With the term virtuality of reality, I allude to a dominant postmodern idea, which questions whether we can distinguish at all between reality and fiction influenced by the omnipresence of mediated reality. Mediated reality presents fiction and nonfiction with the same kind of language; film is one of the most striking examples, together with cyberspace. Reality and fiction are here entangled in a labyrinth where the truth of reality has a withdrawing nature, seeming to us to be more and more indistinguishable from fictional content. The term virtuality of reality is then based on a notion of the fictional as virtual, as known in the context of the so-called virtual worlds that designate computer-generated, fictional realities. In these contemporary, computer-simulated realities we make use of the mental mechanism described by Descartes: our mind is making the virtual worlds actual for us.

The virtual hereby designates that which does not belong to reality and is thus fictional, although it displays qualities of what we perceive as sensible reality, relying on an artificial stimulation of our sensory perception. The virtuality of reality is a skeptical hypothesis since it is asking whether this kind of sensory perception isn't just part of the nature of reality, i.e., by assuming that reality feels the same way as virtuality. Is reality not itself a virtuality? If we stop demonizing virtuality as something bad, an illusion or deception, which ultimately could be controlled by an evil demon, as Descartes notoriously argues, the dichotomy between the virtual and the real does not make sense. This also applies to the dichotomies between unreal and real, interior and exterior, etc.

However, could we not assume about film that which Descartes claims of dreams, that they are so real we cannot distinguish them from sensible reality? It would mean that I cannot be sure whether I am in a film or in real life, but I can know that my thoughts are true in both states, and so on. I will argue that, regarding film, such an assumption does not apply. In spite of certain currents of film theory arguing in that direction, my claim is that film is different from dreams. Film is not an internal stream of consciousness deceiving our senses. Film is displaced reality, a continuation of reality with audiovisual means and processed by the mind as such. Being-in-film does not mean being-in-a-dream, just as being-on-Solaris does not

mean being-in-a-dream. Rather, regarding the model of multiple reality we have designed so far, film is intra-actively entangled with the multifold of reality it belongs to.

I will then apply an argument for diffraction on film, instead of Cartesian reflection, fitting our scope of analysis so far. Watching a movie does not make me question the reliability of my perception of reality, it is, rather, that the nature of reality is at stake: reality discloses a multifold character through film, and we are facing not illusion but truth, either a part of the real of reality or just a void (see chapter V). Dasein's being-in-film is shaping reality as just one more possibility out of an infinity of films, and this thereby changes our view of what we thought reality was like. For Descartes's chain of argumentation (if we could rewrite it in our sense), this could mean the following: life could be other, because the similitude of the experience of life and of dreams creates multiple potential possibilities of reality—exactly because of the virtuality of reality. Reality and dreams would not be oppositions anymore; instead, reality could become a possibility of dreams, or of virtuality. Put in other words and as a preliminary conclusion, through the experience of dreams or of the virtual, reality becomes a possibility of the virtual, which is not opposed to reality but is the real, because it implies all the possibilities of reality. This thinking leads us to the inversion of the term virtuality of reality and through this into the Bergsonian-Deleuzian universe of the "reality of the virtual."[282]

The Reality of the Virtual

Deleuze does not oppose the virtual to the real; instead, he opposes the virtual to the actual and the real to the possible. For Deleuze, the virtual, rather than aiming for its realization, is fully real and aims for actualization. "What we call virtual is not something that lacks reality but something that is engaged in a process of actualization following the plane that gives it its particular reality."[283] Thus, both the virtual and its actualizations belong to the plane of immanence. The term "reality of the virtual" is then picked up by Žižek as he inverts the hypothesis of "virtual reality" (of computer-generated worlds) into the "reality of the virtual":

> Today, everybody is talking about virtual reality but I think, . . . crucial to understand what goes on today, is the opposite: not virtual reality, but the reality of the virtual. That is to say: reality—by this I mean efficacy,

[282] Compare to Pearson, "The Reality of the Virtual: Bergson and Deleuze."
[283] Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life," 31.

> effectiveness, real effects—produced, generated, by something, which does not yet fully exist; which is not yet fully actual.[284]

Žižek indeed takes the idea of reality of the virtual directly from Deleuze, whom he calls the philosopher of "the Virtual" and assumes that:

> The first reaction to it should be to oppose Deleuze's notion of the Virtual to the all-pervasive topic of virtual reality: what matters to Deleuze is not virtual reality, but the reality of the virtual (which, in Lacanian terms, is the Real). . . . The reality of the Virtual . . . stands for the reality of the Virtual as such, for its real effects and consequences.[285]

In his filmed interview with Ben Wright, Žižek describes this reality of the virtual as isomorphic to the Lacanian triad of the Real—imaginary real, symbolic real, and "real real"—becoming in this specific context an imaginary virtual, symbolic virtual, and a real virtual. The three are interwoven with each other, meaning for Žižek that the entire triad is reflected in each of its elements.[286] In *Organs Without Bodies*, as well as in the filmed interview, Žižek gives an example of the "real real" of the virtual real taken from mathematics. He describes the virtual real as a shape, which does not exist in itself:

> Let us take an attractor in mathematics: all positive lines or points in its sphere of attraction only approach it in an endless fashion, never reaching its form—the existence of this form is purely virtual, being nothing more than the shape towards which lines and points tend. However, precisely as such, the virtual is the Real of this field: the immovable focal point around which all elements circulate. [287]

Could this be what we have been searching for to describe that which is transferred in film (and photography) from the thing to its reproduction? It is there, yet, although virtually real, it does not exist in itself. It has not yet become fully actual, but it does as soon as the film is screened. The attractor is thus the real, which exists in the sense that it is being approached by infinite possibilities of images. But is that the "real real," the one withdrawing from symbolization? Žižek quickly turns to quantum physics and evokes the example of light, describing a hypothesis, which strikingly resembles the white hole of the whole of all possible images we have outlined in chapter V, if we substitute the "possible images" with "virtual

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[284] Wright, "The Reality of the Virtual," filmed interview with Slavoj Žižek.
[285] Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies*, 3.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Ibid., 3.

images" in the Deleuzian sense. Žižek argues:

> Perhaps, the ontological difference between the Virtual and the Actual is best captured by the shift in the way quantum physics conceives of the relationship between particles and their interactions. . . . This brings us to the constitutive ambiguity of the relationship between actual and virtual: (1) the human eye reduces the perception of light; it actualizes light in a certain way (perceiving certain colors, etc.), a rose in a different way, a bat in a different way. . . The flow of light 'in itself' is nothing actual, but, rather, the pure virtuality of infinite possibilities actualized in a multitude of ways; (2) on the other hand, the human eye expands perception—it inscribes what it 'really sees' into the intricate network of memories and anticipations (like Proust with the taste of madeleine), it can develop new perceptions, and so forth. . . . It is the infinite potential field of virtualities out of which reality is actualized.[288]

Moreover, Žižek claims at another point in his work that reality is supplemented with fiction, an idea I will elucidate further. But before immersing in Žižekian philosophy and drawing its meaning for the solaristic system (see page 124), let me step back and resume the unfinished line of reflection on Cartesian skepticism and its contemporary applications. In what follows, I will analyze the question if the model of *Solaris* could be a virtual computer simulation, that is, a virtual reality, which, after all, could provide new clues on the virtuality of the real.

Solaris as a Simulation Hypothesis

Regardless of our line of questioning, the Platonic and Cartesian discussions about human access to reliable knowledge of reality have cast a philosophical tradition, which has found its modern adaptation in the brain-in-a-vat hypothesis[289] considered in the following situation: a conscious brain lies in a vat and a computer is generating neuro-stimulations in such an elaborate way that the brain thinks it is living in a world where it does all kind of things, when, in truth, it is lying in a nutritive liquid and connected to a machine.

This dystopia resembles Plato's cave and is most elegantly transformed into cinema by Lana and Lilly Wachowski with their *Matrix* trilogy, where people think they live in "the real world," while in truth their minds are imprisoned by a computer simulation called the matrix and controlled by evil machines. Of course, these machines bring to mind

[288] Ibid., 4.
[289] Putnam, "Brains in a Vat," 1–21.

Descartes's hypothesis of the existence of an evil demon, who misleads the mind by creating the illusion of an external world, including a body and even other minds. Dissatisfyingly enough, the only way out that Descartes charts is his argument for the existence of a benevolent god. Descartes believes he proves God's undeniable existence in a chain of argumentation, which was afterward criticized as circular (the so-called Cartesian circle).

The first part of the *Matrix* trilogy, *The Matrix* (1999), had a thrilling cognitive impact: a futuristic philosophical tale assuming the apparently irrefutable philosophical hypothesis[290] that we could be living in a very sophisticated computer simulation was received and discussed worldwide by the mass public. At the time, the recent rapid development of the internet and the computer-simulated stimulation of our nervous system seemed to increase the realism of such a hypothesis presented as a dystopia for humanity. Consequently, the film had a wide range of philosophical papers analyzing its multilayered philosophical potential and discussing the nature of reality.

Two years before Chalmers's "Matrix hypothesis," Nick Bostrom came up with his "simulation hypothesis," which is part of a threefold "simulation argument."[291] Although it is related, the simulation argument differs from the aforementioned discussions of skepticism (doubting that we are not dreaming, that we are not a brain in a vat, that we are not in Plato's cave, that we are not living in a film, etc.). The simulation argument is indeed more interesting for our scope of analysis, since it does not proceed from a position of doubt. Instead, we can rely on our empirical experience, scientific explanation, and models of thought, assuming that we have computers in the external world, which are evolving at an astonishing speed. For Bostrom, the inquiry goes into the future development of computers in a civilization characterized as "posthuman" and "technologically mature": "What kind of technological capability would eventually be available?"[292]

This question is also linked to our previous chapter on the planet Solaris as a posthuman organic machine, similar to an all-encompassing, universal or total brain, which is intra-actively sensing the humans. But a new hypothesis comes to mind in light of Bostrom's simulation hypothesis: What if Kris Kelvin's whole trip to Solaris is not just a trip to another planet, but to a world which is entirely simulated by the solaristic brain, which could have emerged exactly from such a future posthuman civilization, following the rules of a superintelligent entity? Kris Kelvin then is reduced

[290] David Chalmers develops this claim, which he calls "The Matrix Hypothesis." See: Chalmers, "The Matrix as Metaphysics."
[291] Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?," 1–14.
[292] Bostrom, "The Simulation Argument," video interview.

to a brain, which somehow connects with his own brain and therefore artificially simulates the visitors and the Earthlike island of memory at the ending. That would then be the reason for the intra-activity and retroactivity of time.

To enrich this line of thought, let me add some further information on Bostrom's simulation argument. Its threefold structure is very simple to sum up, as Bostrom does in a few sentences in his conclusion:

> A technologically mature 'posthuman' civilization would have enormous computing power. Based on this empirical fact, the simulation argument shows that at least one of the following propositions is true: (1) The fraction of human-level civilizations that reach a posthuman stage is very close to zero; (2) The fraction of posthuman civilizations that are interested in running ancestor-simulations is very close to zero; (3) The fraction of all people with our kind of experiences that are living in a simulation is very close to one. If (1) is true, then we will almost certainly go extinct before reaching posthumanity. If (2) is true, then there must be a strong convergence among the courses of advanced civilizations so that virtually none contains any relatively wealthy individuals who desire to run ancestor-simulations and are free to do so. If (3) is true, then we almost certainly live in a simulation. In the dark forest of our current ignorance, it seems sensible to apportion one's credence roughly evenly between (1), (2), and (3). Unless we are now living in a simulation, our descendants will almost certainly never run an ancestor-simulation.[293]

Bostrom's paper in fact does carefully introduce and explain each of the three hypotheses, from which the third is the most interesting for our context. In the case of *Solaris*, possibility (1) seems refuted already as "not true" (the planet is in a posthuman stage of super-intelligent, techno-organic development). Also (2) seems not to be true: the planet is apparently interested in creating "ancestor-simulations," the case (3). It must be mentioned in our context that this kind of simulation would have to be a re-creation of the world, similar to the idealization of Bazin's myth of total cinema. On the planet, Kris is immersed in the solaristic simulation of reality, comparable to such a computer simulation. Alternatively, the Solaris station could be a computer simulated world and the planet the simulation's control center.

Bostrom even refers to the hypothesis of a selective computer simulation, which actually would fit the situation we find in film and on Solaris very well. These selective simulations "include only a small group of humans or a single individual. The rest of humanity would then be

[293] Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?," 14.

zombies or 'shadow people'—humans simulated only at a level sufficient for the fully simulated people not to notice anything suspicious."[294] This description makes the selective simulations comparable to film, where a certain reality is designed in order to focus on a certain story. In *Solaris*, on the space station, only a very few people are left, and the story is built on them.

Furthermore, by applying the idea of selective simulations to the situation designed in the movie *Solaris*, we could come to the following conclusion: that life on Earth, which we get to know in the first part of the movie, is an ancestor computer simulation within another computer simulation, which is the solaristic space station, run by the solaristic posthuman superintelligence. This hypothesis in fact resembles Bostrom's paper: "It may be possible for simulated civilizations to become posthuman. They may run their own ancestor-simulations on powerful computers they build in their simulated universe."[295]

What we see in the film could be a case of a simulation inside a simulation. Solaris aims at measuring the experience in an ancestor computer simulation (Earth) and is therefore making Kelvin change the level of simulated reality: he transfers from simulated Earth into the simulated spaceship; thus, he is repeating a selective simulation on a different level (the Solaris space station). That would mean that the space station had only been designed to upload Kelvin. In fact, the situation between Kris and Hari cruelly resembles the one of mice in a laboratory, which they cannot leave. "I have the feeling that we are being fooled," says Hari during one of the bedroom conversations, when she is asking Kris to tell her the truth about her identity.

It is worth asking how Kelvin actually arrives on Solaris. The passage from Earth to space is in fact not perceived by Kelvin as a flight. "When am I leaving?" he asks, and the answer is: "you already have." We then see a shot of Kelvin's head, covered by a helmet, being turned until he appears upside down, and then he faints. The scene is ambiguous: it might be not a space passage but an uploading of Kelvin's mind (including its conscious as well as unconscious levels) that we are viewing. As soon as Kelvin is conscious, some of the formerly experienced simulation elements are repeated in order to study psychic, emotional, and cognitive response, changing physical laws, etc., because "the posthumans running a simulation are like gods in relation to the people inhabiting the simulation,"[296] argues Bostrom. They are "omnipotent" and "omniscient," they can change whatever

[294] Ibid., 13.
[295] Ibid., 11.
[296] Ibid., 12.

they want and display on the monitors all the necessary information about the inhabitants they would need.

The movie also closes with a selective simulation. Kris has maybe been transferred into another simulation, which this time is Earthlike, but with inverted physical laws: it is raining inside his father's house and the fact that the father does not notice the steaming rainwater as something disturbing makes us suspect whether he is not a solaristic reproduction, like Hari. Yet, Kris does not distinguish between the identity of a true human being and a reproduced or "simulated" one. For him, the affective experience of encountering his father or encountering Hari makes these simulations real.

This situation is like the one of a filmmaker. Tarkovsky would then be the superintelligent posthuman entity, who has set up a nesting of multiple simulations, as multifold as the character of reality. "Reality must thus contain many levels,"[297] says Bostrom. What we have refused before with Descartes—to doubt whether we are in a virtual (dreaming) experience or in a real one—now finds its most intriguing application: the model of computer-generated, nested simulations (onion structure) seems like a film within a film within a film. . . . This idea makes hypothesis (3) of Bostrom's argument the most powerful: "If we do go on to create our own ancestor-simulations, this would be strong evidence against (1) and (2), and we would therefore have to conclude that we live in a simulation."[298] In this sense, the film is telling us that we are living in a reality which is simulated by a superintelligent posthuman structure.

But what would be the consequences of assuming that we live in such a computer simulation? Bostrom stresses that this knowledge would affect our daily life or ambitions in terms of treating the simulators as responsible for laws. The comparison with a god-controlled reality becomes evident:

> If nobody can be sure that they are at the basement-level [of reality], then everybody would have to consider the possibility that their actions will be rewarded or punished, based perhaps on moral criteria, by their simulators. An afterlife would be a real possibility. Because of this fundamental uncertainty, even the basement civilization may have a reason to behave ethically. The fact that it has such a reason for moral behavior would of course add to everybody else's reason for behaving morally, and so on, in truly virtuous circle. One might get a kind of universal ethical imperative, which it would be in everybody's self-interest to obey, as it were 'from

[297] Ibid., 12.
[298] Ibid., 12.

> nowhere.'[299]

In a similar way, the scientists in the space station do worry and speculate about the intentions of the planet Solaris, and their behavior is influenced by what might be the reason for them facing simulated human beings. For example, Kris speculates about the reason they are there:

> Until today, humanity, Earth were simply beyond love. Do you understand what I mean, Snaut? There are so few of us! Just a few billions—a mere handful! Perhaps we are here to feel, for the first time, people as a cause for love, eh?[300]

However, the focus of Bostrom's argument lies in the threefold structure and not in the guess of whether (3) is the case or not. Therefore, for Bostrom, we even "may hope that (3) is true since that would decrease the probability of (1),"[301] although the best hope may still be (2). But what could be the reasons for (2) to happen? Why would such a posthuman and technologically mature civilization lose interest in setting an ancestor-simulation? The point is that they would very likely be different from humans, and the ancestor-simulation is a human fantasy.

The solaristic brain, covered by an ocean, is an unknown superintelligent entity, but it is not human. This could be the precise reason for a solaristic brain creating the simulation of a space station or even Earthlike islands, to get to know and measure what being a human is. Therefore, it is creating the space station as a situation in which a few scientists are confronted with their past and their emotions. This confrontation raises a deep conflict between science, which is helpless in its attempts to explain the planet Solaris, and human ethical and affective values like truth and love. Hari keeps insisting that she is becoming human but that it is an unhuman situation they are all in.

Actually, under this unhuman pressure (exercised by the solaristic brain), suddenly the "truly human" prevails over science. In saying so, a further question remains implicit: Which kind of knowledge can the nonhuman superintelligence take from the humans? What would its research aim be? Which kind of knowledge of reality and human cognitive capability would it like to obtain? As Tarkovsky (who runs the *Solaris*-simulation) says: "My function is to make whoever sees my films aware of his need to love and to give his love."[302] But love, according to Graham

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[299] Ibid., 12.
[300] Tarkovsky, "Solaris," 179.
[301] Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?," 13.
[302] Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 200.

Harman, can be used precisely as a way to approach that which we cannot know, the real. Therefore, in what follows, I will reflect on the human perspective of knowledge.

On Solaristic Love and Subjective Knowledge

Chapter VIII will focus on Harman's object-oriented ontology, but let me do a short preview of some of his concepts here, since it fits our context. For Harman, objects always have a real dimension of their own, a kind of depth remaining inaccessible to the human perspective. Thereby he defines objects as everything there is: living entities and nonliving ones. Further, the determination of an object "must include those entities that are neither physical nor even real. Along with diamonds, rope, and neutrons, objects may include armies, monsters, square circles, and leagues of real and fictitious nations."[303]

In a short essay, Harman explains this central idea of the inaccessibility of the real object and introduces the third table as an example of the real table, lying beyond the grasp of science as well as beyond the "humanist" view.[304] The third table exists independently from us, and I may never know it as it really is. Harman in this context refers to love as a philosophical principle of indirect access to the knowledge of the real:

> By locating the third table (and to repeat, this the only real table) in a space between the 'table' as particles and the 'table' in its effects on humans, I have apparently found a table that can be verified in no way at all, whether by science or by tangible effects in the human sphere. Yes—and this is precisely the point. Any philosophy is unworthy of the name if it attempts to convert objects into the conditions by which they can be known or verified. The term philosophia, possibly coined by Pythagoras, famously means not 'wisdom' but 'love of wisdom.' The real is something that cannot be known, only loved. This does not mean that access to the table is impossible, only that it must be indirect.[305]

"What cannot be known can be loved" is an idea that matches with the storyline of the movie *Solaris* and can therefore be designated as an allusional principle of solaristic philosophy. *Solaris* questions the

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[303] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 5.

[304] "The scientist reduces the table downward to tiny particles invisible to the eye; the humanist reduces it upward to a series of effects on people and other things. . . . The real table is in fact a third table lying between these two others. . ." (cf. Harman, *The Third Table*, 7).

[305] Ibid., 11.

epistemological limits of science, its incapacity to grasp and to deal with that which is real. The movie inquires into existential issues like death, love, existence, conscience, and nature, juxtaposing imagination and actuality, emotion and reason, in order to reflect on what is really going on: the planet withdraws and human existence somehow changes its rules.

Emotions reveal the hidden perspective of things and how an understanding of that which is real becomes graspable even without intelligible knowing. This proposal of Harman not to understand the real but to love it is exactly the kind of thinking that permits fusion between the humans and the planet in *Solaris*. The Solaris brain has chosen an emotional way of discerning and comprehending the humans: the visitor Hari loves Kelvin from the first instant, although he needs a further step to embrace this love, instead of searching for an intelligible explanation for her existence. Hari and Kelvin do not understand each other, but they love each other and grasp the other by intuition. In a climactic monologue, when Kelvin's fever starts and he is wandering down the corridor, he speaks about the power of love withdrawing from explanation: "Well then, I love you . . . but love is a feeling you can experience, but never explain."[306] This reflects our relation to the real as Harman describes it and adds the subjective experience as a key; simultaneously, love closes the gap between object and subject, an idea I will further explain in what follows.

Mary Hesse (who is frequently quoted by Paul Ricoeur in *La Métaphore Vive*) depicts the Kantian-Hegelian premise of subject-object opposition as attached to a presupposed idea of objective reality opposing the subject.[307] The knowing subject is thus separated from natural reality and "supposed to 'reflect' the world in knowledge"[308] when in fact, according to Hesse, the way we grasp reality in the form of knowledge depends on a construction, shaped by our applied model of analysis: "Scientific theory provides constructed models of scientific reality that are distinguished from other types of social and poetic construction by being constrained by feedback loops involving experimentation in the natural world."[309] Hesse further describes our relationship with the world as subjectively interactive and assumes knowledge, just as Barad, not as a

[306] Tarkovsky, "Solaris," 179.
[307] "In a philosophical tradition deriving from Kant and Hegel, this reality has been expressed in terms of the, separation of subject and object' and the consequent ‚objectification' of the natural word" (cf. Arbib and Hesse, *The Construction of Reality*, 159).
[308] Ibid., 158.
[309] Ibid., 159.

reflective description of the world (which she refuses), but, and here Hesse strikingly differs from Barad, as a mental projection on the world:

> There is an essential interaction between the knowing subject and the world, both in terms of linguistic categories brought to the world in describing it, and in the activity of the subject in physical relations with the world. . . . If this is how the subject is in the world, then the attempt to represent the world in knowledge as a neutral independent object is not like a mirror image; rather, it is a projection on the world of a mental model whose framework is given by the schemas of kinesthetic activity and by the categories of language.[310]

Hesse thus delineates an open concept of reality oscillating between inside and outside, interceding at the gap between subject and object, complementing the world interactively by a predefined model of explanation. Although her claim is not based on diffraction, she refuses representationalism and mentions something which resembles Žižek's aforementioned claim (see page 116) that the "human eye EXPANDS perception,"[311] because "it inscribes what it 'really sees' into the intricate network of memories and anticipations (like Proust with the taste of madeleines), it can develop new perceptions, and so forth."[312]

The Bergsonian side of what Žižek formulates, and which we have not mentioned yet, must be emphasized here. Memory is a key concept in Bergson; it induces time as the subjective side of knowledge in the following sense: according to Bergson, time is duration, *la durée* in the French original. It does not designate the mathematical, spatial time of science, but rather describes an individual, contracted time, where past, present, and future are not separated, but coexist; duration, similar to that which we have considered as the "totality of matter" (all interaction of all elements) is for Bergson a concept of qualitative plurality—of moments.[313] Memory is thereby an aggregate of imprinted memory images and enables us to comprehend a "subjective side of knowledge"—a kind of "contraction of the real."[314] This definition of an image as a temporal slice able to contract a plurality is quite close to our definition of an infinite real image,

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[310] Ibid., 159.
[311] Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies*, 4.
[312] Ibid., 4.
[313] "However brief I suppose any perception to be, it always occupies a certain duration, and involves consequently an effort of memory which prolongs one into another a plurality of moments" (cf. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 25).
[314] Ibid., 25.

the one cinema conveys, and which is distinct from perception, although the latter is a part of it:

> As I shall endeavor to show, even the 'subjectivity' of sensible qualities consists above all else in a kind of contraction of the real, affected by our memory. In short, memory in these two forms, covering as it does with a cloak of recollections a core of immediate perception, and also contracting a number of external moments into a single internal moment, constitutes the principal share of individual consciousness in perception, the subjective side of the knowledge of things.[315]

This is how we then select only some images in order to be able to see something: by interacting constantly with our past, combining inside and outside.[316]

At a later point in his work, Žižek deepens his claim that the "human eye expands perception."[317] It is an idea that includes subjectivity in the way we attain knowledge. Žižek's next step consists in assuming subjectivity as an incompleteness and, as such, a part of totality, but an incomplete one. Therefore, Žižek sets subjectivity as a form with which to approach the Absolute, a term he takes from German idealism (relying mostly on Fichte and Hegel). Remarkably he compares his position with the one of Heideggerian correlationism:

> . . . incompleteness [is] already in itself a mode of subjectivity, such that subjectivity is always already part of the Absolute, and reality is not even thinkable without subjectivity (as in Heidegger, where there is no Sein without Da-Sein as its locality).[318]

Heidegger approaches the puzzling question of being by examining the ontological and epistemological conditions of Dasein. For Heidegger, Dasein is the only possible perspective with which to try grasping being as a whole—even if it is an open endeavor: the problem is that in order to experience being-in-the-world as a whole, the ending of Dasein must be fulfilled: "As long as Dasein is as an entity, it has never reached its 'wholeness.' But if it gains such 'wholeness,' this gain becomes the utter

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[315] Ibid.

[316] In film theory, Hugo Münsterberg refers to perception being drawn by subjective attention: "I recognized that, in every case, the objective world of outer events had been shaped and molded until it became adjusted to the subjective movements of the mind. The mind develops memory ideas and imaginative ideas; in the moving pictures they become reality" (cf. Münsterberg, *Hugo Münsterberg on Film*, 110).

[317] Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies*, 4.

[318] Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 905.

loss of Being-in-the-world."[319] The existence of the visitors in *Solaris* shifts this question of subjectivity into an even more complex one. Since Hari claims her subjectivity to be part of the truth of her existence, it still is a doubled subjectivity we are confronted with: How can we truly know an existence or presence of an entity, which is obviously the projection of the subjectivity of another entity?

The Nothing as an Open Concept of Reality

In *Solaris*, the conceptual persona Hari induces a way of thinking that integrates subjectivity in the search for truth, clearly challenging science and the dominance of objective scientific knowledge. Therefore, *Solaris* can be seen as a critique of an absolute belief in modern science, opposing scientific knowledge with intuitive truth and cognition, intelligible for the kind of thought located in the realm of diffraction. Such a critique clearly sets a difference between knowledge and thinking.

In his lecture "What is Metaphysics?" Heidegger questions scientific logic as the dominant instrument in the search of truth: he evinces the limits by defining the term "Das Nichts"—"the nothing." The nothing is hereby introduced as a concept, which science can neither grasp nor understand in theory, because nothing can never be. Rather, the nothing is active for Heidegger, it is in action, it "nihilates,"[320] and it does so incessantly, although in a hidden way. We normally have no awareness of this permanent action of the nothing. Anxiety—which we already have emphasized as the philosophical mood to grasp being as a whole—reveals the nothing as well:

> The nothing reveals itself in anxiety—but not as a being. Just as little is it given as an object. Anxiety is no kind of grasping of the nothing. All the same, the nothing reveals itself in and through anxiety, although, to repeat, not in such a way that the nothing becomes manifest in our malaise quite apart from beings as a whole.[321]

For Heidegger, the question about the nothing also determines our understanding of being. Heidegger concludes his essay with the "fundamental question of metaphysics which the Nothing itself produces: Why are there

[319] Ibid., 280.
[320] Nichten is in German a verb invented by Heidegger to attribute an activity to the nothing: "das Nichts nichtet"—"the nothing itself nihilates," literally translated as "the nothing nothings."
[321] Heidegger, *What is Metaphysics?*, §28.

beings at all, and why not rather nothing?"[322] This question seems to be a solaristic one: Why are there visitors at all?

As we have learned in chapter V, Alain Badiou designates a "void" as a kind of omnipresent nothing, which corresponds to the definition of the Lacanian Real. The Real for Lacan is a void (comparable to the Heideggerian nothing, as I claim) because it is impossible to think: a nothing withdrawing and escaping when I try to grasp it; yet, it is acting in between us and the world. It is making reality open for projection, that is, for the possibilities of Dasein. This is a thought Žižek would complete: "Reality is less than Nothing. That is why reality has to be supplemented by fiction: to conceal its emptiness."[323] I will pick up this last implication: open for projection or supplemented by fiction.

The existence of the visitors on Solaris evokes the Kantian "gap" (between object and subject as Žižek designates it), but in a reverse perspective: How can I reliably measure an existence or presence of being [Dasein in German] which is obviously the external prolongation of our own subjectivity? Žižek emphasizes that the major problem would be to "think the subjective perception as anchored in reality"[324]—the same challenge Heidegger faces when he tries to grasp being—and a principle which fits the solaristic system. Here, Žižek mentions, as a possible way out, a hypothesis formulated by Adrian Johnston (inscribing the line of thought into overcoming correlationism formulated by Meillassoux) that:

> All reality is transcendentally constituted, 'correlative' to a subjective position, and to push this through to the end, the way out of this 'correlationist' circle is not to try to directly reach the In-itself, but to inscribe this transcendental correlation into the Thing-In-itself and for us.[325]

It is thus the proposal to reconsider the subjective gap as a part of the absolute that we have seen: that which is incomplete tends toward completion. Žižek further asks then about the possible structural relation between the subjective and the Real:

> Like thought, the subject (Self) is also immaterial: its One-ness, its self-identity, is not reducible to its material support. I am precisely not my

[322] "Die Grundfrage der Metaphysik, die das Nichts selbst erzeugt: Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?" (cf. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?* 27; translation mine – C.R.P.).
[323] Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 4.
[324] Ibid., 905.
[325] Ibid., 906.

> body: the Self can only arise against the background of the death of its substantial being, of what it is 'objectively.' So, again, how can one explain the rise of subjectivity out of the 'incomplete' ontology, how are these two dimensions (the abyss/void of subjectivity, the incompleteness of reality) to be thought together? I should apply here something like a weak anthropic principle: how should the Real be structured so that it allows for the emergence of subjectivity (in its autonomous efficacy, not as a mere 'user's illusion')?[326]

What Žižek formulates here as a question might be symptomatic in the solaristic system. In *Solaris*, Hari struggles to be mortal—for her Dasein to become human, become a whole, reach completeness—and thereby aims at the "real real," the "absolute" of her existence, paradoxically through death. And that which is questioned by the Solaris scientists is precisely her being, whether it is to be considered Dasein or a void. To Heidegger, death gives Dasein a determination; it completes Dasein as a whole and is the ultimate realization of its potential. This seems to be a fusion of the subjective—even Heidegger claims that we cannot share death—and the absolute, a completeness withdrawing from subjectivity. Žižek further asserts:

> Far from indicating a radical externality resisting the subject, the thickness of objectivity resisting the subject's grasp is precisely the subjective moment, the most elementary 'reifying' illusion of subjectivity, what the subject adds to the real-in-itself.[327]

Here, Žižek claims something impossible to grasp for the subject, but that which is grasped, namely the materiality or "thickness of objectivity," is exactly a "reifying illusion" added by the subject. The subject tries to grasp that which it adds and cannot do so. This fits exactly the idea of reification present in *Solaris*: "I do not want to get to know other worlds, I want mirrors" says Snout to Kelvin in the library. It also grasps the image as real, but this reality is always the real plus the subjectivity of the beholder.

In the movie *Solaris*, the real (in form of the solaristic brain) further resists the attempts to be known, but it acts, it performs, it interacts, and reveals itself in images and materializations, and this in a double sense: as a film projection and as a reality of its own. It is the real of image—image as an event or even an accident in its singularity, the accident of visibility. The real of Solaris, which is active, generates matter in reaction to the humans. The visitors and—as the ending of the film shows—even other islands of memory physically emerge.

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[326] Ibid., 905.
[327] Ibid., 807.

I will argue that such an open concept of reality, whether constructed or supplemented by fiction, is a cinematographic condition sustained by the desire to die, or to enter a film. CP Hari is the embodiment of this projection principle. Just like a film-projection, she is the positivity of the negative, reflected reality, more than material. As we have seen, Heideggerian thought directly relates projection (*Entwurf*) with the possibilities of Dasein: there is always something still outstanding in our existence, namely the possibilities yet to come. This raises a question of projection as a way to process the future, to transform it from the Aristotelian negativity of the now directly into being.

The premise of the "projection of reality" as a cinematographic principle, as claimed before, enables a transformation of Heidegger's being-in-the-world, which entails a multiplicity of possibilities for Dasein, into a being-in-film—itself containing infinite possibilities. It is then the engagement with an arche-principle of projection, which is cinematographic in its praxis, yet "ontokinetic" in its nature. The concept "ontokinetic" is raised by Peter Sloterdijk, who proposes the concept by reassessing Heidegger's thrownness into the world. Dasein is thrown into a movement,[328] the one of the world, and if we substitute with film, the movement of film: the world turns around, just as life, just as a movie does.

Like Deleuze, we must believe in projections (cinema) in order to close the gap (of nothingness) between us and the world, and in order to keep on going—to process the future again and again. The aim is the escape from the constant incompleteness of the world; an incompleteness confronting nihilation—"Nichtung" in German, in the Heideggerian sense—an active nothing, revealed in anxiety just like "Dasein's primordial totality of Being."[329] Projection is needed for Dasein to escape nihilation as it is needed to escape death. The confrontation with such nihilation is to be compared with the constant incompleteness of the world, which we desire to be complete.

In the chapter to come we will stay in the Heideggerian universe and look at a fourfold model of the worlding of the world.

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[328] "Heidegger is the thinker of movement. His original idea or quasi his criminal act is the jump or the 'Letting-yourself-go' (Sichloslassen) into a condition, in which he finds in himself, and 'under his feet' nothing more than motion. For him, kinetics precedes logic, or, if you will tolerate the paradoxical turn: movement is its foundation." (cf. Sloterdijk, *Nicht gerettet*, 29; translation mine – C.R.P.).

[329] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 227.

PART 4:

HUMANS – SOLARISTIC CONCLUSIONS

VIII. Raising a Solaristic Fourfold

Point of Departure: Heidegger's Fourfold

Heidegger's fourfold ("das Geviert") is part of his late work and is developed in the Bremen lectures "The Thing" (1950) and "Building Dwelling Thinking" (1951). It describes the oneness of the world and things as consisting of four quadrants named as: Earth, Sky, Divinities, and Mortals. According to Harman, who relies in his object-oriented ontology (OOO) on Heidegger's fourfold as well as Heidegger's tool analysis, the fourfold is frequently underestimated and often neglected within Heidegger's oeuvre, referred to as a vague concept or esoteric expression, too opaque to decrypt. In Harman's understanding, the opposite is the case; for him, the fourfold represents the kernel of Heidegger's philosophy: it completes the tool analysis and has a special impact on the future of philosophy. These ideas of Harman function as a catalyst for the concluding structure of the solaristic system and will be deepened throughout this chapter.

Since Heidegger's fourfold will be the basis for a solaristic fourfold to come, I propose to look at a large part of "The Thing" in detail. Heidegger summarizes the fourfold in a quite poetic way, which we should consider as the basis of this chapter:

> Earth is the building bearer, nourishing with its fruits, tending water and rock, plant and animal. When we say earth, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, by way of the simple oneness of the four.
>
> The sky is the sun's path, the course of the moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year's seasons, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether. When we say sky, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, by way of the simple oneness of the four.
>
> The divinities are the beckoning messengers of the godhead. Out of the hidden sway of the divinities the god emerges as what he is, which removes him from any comparison with beings that are present. When we speak of the divinities, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, by way of the simple oneness of the four.
>
> The mortals are the human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death as death. Only man dies. The animal perishes. It has death neither ahead of itself nor behind it.

> Death is the shrine of Nothing, that is, of that which in every respect is never something that merely exists, but which nevertheless presences, even as the mystery of Being itself.
>
> As the shrine of Nothing, death harbors within itself the presencing of Being. As the shrine of Nothing, death is the shelter of Being. We now call mortals mortals—not because their earthly life comes to an end, but because they are capable of death as death. Mortals are who they are, as mortals, present in the shelter of Being. They are presencing relation to Being as Being.
>
> Metaphysics, by contrast, thinks of man as animal, as a living being. Even when ratio pervades animalitas, man's being remains defined by life and life-experience. Rational living beings must first become mortals. When we speak of mortals, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, by way of the simple oneness of the four.
>
> Earth and sky, divinities and mortals—being at one with one another of their own accord—belong together by way of the simpleness of the united fourfold. Each of the for mirrors in its own way the presence of the others.
>
> This appropriating mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, we call the world. The world presences by worlding. That means: the world's worlding cannot be explained by anything else nor can it be fathomed through anything else. . . . The united four are already strangled in their essential nature when we think of them only as separate realities, which are to be grounded in and explained by one another. [330]

Furthermore, we should keep in mind that for Heidegger the preservation of the fourfold's oneness comes as dwelling, the mode under which "mortals are in the fourfold"[331]: "In saving the earth, in receiving the sky, in awaiting the divinities, in initiating mortals, dwelling occurs as the fourfold preservation of the fourfold."[332] We have seen before how for Heidegger the term dwelling is linked to the Greek *parousia*—being in the sense of "Anwesen" (presence), implying always its own "Abwesen," as well as its decay and absence.

In the "Thing" lecture, Heidegger subsequently emphasizes how the fourfold is present in the thing, which is *thinging*. This neologism designates the active verb associated with the substantive "thing," meaning "becoming thing"; yet, the thing is fourfold in its *thinging*, which simultaneously is a *worlding*. That is, in an analogous way, too, this neologism designates the active verb associated with its substantive, the "world," meaning "becoming

[330] Heidegger, "The Thing," 176–78.
[331] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 148.
[332] Ibid., 149.

world." Also, the world's oneness is fourfold. The "union" of "the fourfold" is present in the experience of things: "If we let the thing be present in its thinging from out of the worlding world, then we are thinking of the thing as thing."[333] To dwell is what mortals do under the sky and on Earth and simply means for Heidegger to let the fourfold be, to stay with things.

Harman stresses that Heidegger's fourfold does not refer to concrete entities, but consists in four poles. The important idea he deduces from the fourfold is that reality is made of quadrants, of four poles in a constant duel, building bonds, tensions, and interactions among themselves; although he laments the vagueness with which Heidegger describes them. Heidegger sets the fourfold as an interplay of relations and bonds, whereby each one mirrors the others:

> Each of the four mirrors in its own way the presence of the others. Each therewith reflects itself in its own way into its own, within the simpleness of the four. This mirroring does not portray a likeness. The mirroring, lightening each of the four, appropriates their own presencing into simple belonging to one another. Mirroring in this appropriating-lightening way, each of the four plays to each of the others. The appropriative mirroring sets each of the four free into its own, but it binds these free ones into the simplicity of their essential being toward one another.[334]

The fourfold is, in my understanding, to be read as a metaphor, an allusive approximation of the real of reality. As we will see, the real is a specific concept for Harman, which plays a major role in his object-oriented approach. Due of the interplay of the fourfold poles with and into each other, speaking about reality and about the real is very complex. Furthermore, what is of special relevance here is the fact that for Heidegger thinking of the world is presupposed, but thinking can never grasp the fourfold as such: "As soon as human cognition here calls for an explanation, it fails to transcend the world's nature, and falls short of it. The human will to explain just does not reach to the simpleness of the simple onefold of worlding."[335]

The fourfold is instead experienced by the mortals in their mode of being as dwelling, which occurs in a state of caring and preserving the fourfold. Furthermore, they try to think about the dwelling, whereby "thinking itself belongs to dwelling"[336] in the following sense: "The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling,

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[333] Heidegger, "The Thing," 178.
[334] Ibid., 177.
[335] Ibid., 177–78.
[336] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 158.

that they must ever learn to dwell."[337] Therefore, the fourfold is accessed indirectly by being as dwelling.

As we will see, Harman, in his fourfold proposal of OOO does appropriate the idea of four-poled structures in constant strife, but he redevelops the four poles. With his reflection on fourfold structures, Harman intends to draw a way for philosophy to move into the future. Heidegger is, for Harman, the example that grounds this approach, as he became more and more poetic with time. Harman says:

> In the present day, Heidegger's fourfold structure appears to be merely a quirky and arbitrary outgrowth of his late system. But imagine a scenario in which, two centuries from now, all ontologies are built of fourfold structures descended from his own. If that were to happen, then the status of the 1949 Bremen lectures would shift from 'isolated and inexplicable oddity' to 'classic ancestral text of quadruple ontology.' The greatest compliment I can pay to our ancestors is not to imitate their words and gestures endlessly, but to turn them into the forerunners of something different.[338]

In this sense, I propose to think of the solaristic system as a quadruple ontology and, consequently, to develop a solaristic fourfold. This proposal not only emerges from Harman's approach but also because Heidegger's model seems to perfectly match the movie *Solaris*. As I have emphasized in the introduction, we are dealing with four solaristic poles quite identical to the ones Heidegger names: Earth, Planet, Visitors, and Humans. In this new context it will be especially interesting to consider the philosopher's musing on the mortals' relation with death, presented as "the shrine of Nothing." It is thus worthwhile to recall the comparison we have established between the Heideggerian Nothing and the Lacanian Real as a void. I will go deeper into this point at the end of this chapter.

To lay out the solaristic system as a quadruple ontology does not mean to simply transpose Heidegger's or Harman's fourfold onto our context. But it does mean that I will try to think about my own solaristic fourfold based on a structure of four poles, taking insights from Heidegger (who already is one of the main references for this treatise) as well as from Harman. By doing so, I propose a closer look at Harman's fourfold. Harman seems to present a consistent approach to what he calls the real of objects, by introducing a completely new way to read Heidegger's tool analysis. While doing so, Harman designates Heidegger as a pioneer for contemporary trends in realism.

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[337] Ibid., 158.
[338] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 94.

Drawing the Idea of a Solaristic Fourfold

In order to picture such a solaristic fourfold arrangement of relations in a sustained way, I will depart from Harman's reflection on fourfold structures. By relying on Heidegger's fourfold, Harman establishes a structure of four poles, interacting with each other in terms of "bonds" and "tensions." Naturally, it exceeds the scope of our analysis to do justice to each aspect of Harman's object-oriented philosophy. I will mainly focus on those concepts that make sense to integrate into our endeavor. To begin with, let me give a short summary of Harman's primary positions.

As I have mentioned before, Harman's approach takes place in the framework of speculative realism. As we have seen so far, in addition to the rejection of correlationism (or the attempt to overcome it), another common denominator of speculative realism is to admit the existence of the real or of a domain of the real, independent from the human mind or presence (even if speculative materialism partly integrates the human perspective into this domain of the real). And, such a real exists whether we can access or perceive it or not. Furthermore, the human ability to perceive reality captures certain features of a whole spectrum of properties *of reality*, and does not suppose properties that the mind reads into reality. Harman seems to start from a correlationist position, defining the domain of the real as sealed off. Yet, he reformulates this position: the real is sealed, but there are ways to access it indirectly, zones where the real becomes manifest. Harman tries to reassess the real via an object-based thinking: he defines reality as composed by objects. As we have mentioned, for Harman, objects—whether elements, living beings like people or animals, inanimate things like tables, or imaginary entities like demons or fictitious nations[339]—are all there is. In an essay, Harman further elaborates:

> By 'objects' I mean unified realities—physical or otherwise—that cannot fully be reduced either downwards to their pieces or upwards to their effects. We know that human and inanimate bodies cannot exist without tiny physical subcomponents. Yet we also know that objects have a certain degree of robust reality that can withstand changes in those components. An object is emergent beyond its subcomponents, and cannot be explained exhaustively by its pieces alone.[340]

As I have mentioned before, Harman explains the core of his approach in a short essay in which he focuses on the inaccessibility of the real object and

[339] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 5.
[340] Harman, "Art Without Relations."

introduces as an example a third table (actually standing for the real table). This table lies beyond the grasp of science as well as the "humanist" approach: "The real table is in fact a third table lying between these two others."[341] Furthermore, this third table exists independently from us, it lies "in a permanent autonomous zone, where objects are simply themselves."[342]

By further immersing in his work, we discover that Harman's theory has a rather complex structure, as he distinguishes between sensual and real objects. An object, according to Harman, either "has reality in the world" (real objects) or "only in the mind"[343] (sensual objects). Real objects are "autonomous forces in the world"[344] for Harman, whereas sensual objects need perceivers; therefore, Harman also calls sensual objects "images": "Sensual objects exist only insofar as some perceiver is occupied with them. These perceivers need not to be human."[345] The domain of the real he proposes is thereby characterized by withdrawal. We may never know reality as it really is, since "we have apparently found a table that can be verified in no way at all."[346] Real objects are inaccessible, sealed off, and they are also deep—deeper than how they appear to the human mind, deeper than their relations to one another, deeper than any theoretical or sensual encounter one can have with them. This "depth" of real objects is the core inquiry of Harman's ontology, which substantially differs from the materialist approach of Žižek or Badiou's Lacanian Real. The most striking difference between Harman's position and speculative materialism is that Harman refers neither to a multiple nor to a void and is mostly interested in the relations between the four poles of the real and the sensual: real objects, real qualities, sensual objects, and sensual qualities. From there, Harman establishes a network of ten possible bonds, dominated by four main tensions, which he designates as time, space, eidos, and essence.

Thus, the solaristic transposition of Harman's fourfold that I propose to explore further is then centered on the difference between real images and sensual images, although Harman never mentions the idea of image other than as sensual: as noted above, he refers to the sensual objects as images. Yet, Harman's idea of "essence," defined as the tension between real objects and real qualities, becomes most interesting for us and will be compared to the solaristic real of reality. In fact, this "essence" manifests a form of access to the withdrawing real and the way it interacts with the other poles.

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[341] Harman, *The Third Table*, 6–7.
[342] Ibid., 10.
[343] Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, 60.
[344] Ibid., 60.
[345] Ibid., 60.
[346] Harman, *The Third Table*, 11.

Contextualizing Harman's Real Object

Within the scope of our analysis, the attempt to access the withdrawing real reflects, once more, what Cavell describes as the "unfathomable abyss" (see chapter III), which lies between the thing and its existence as a photographic image, comparable in our view to the Kantian gap between subject and object (a void in Žižek's approach, or the Real, which must be supplemented by subjectivity or fiction[347]). For Harman, the Kantian opposition or gap constitutes a wrong question: to him there are innumerable relations between sensual objects and real objects, as they both pertain to a network. Therefore, for Harman, it is not that the abyss withdraws from our access to it, but that the real object withdraws.

It is a Heideggerian theme that being implies thinking about being, that to know being as a whole is the impossible perspective of death. Cavell argues that the reason why we watch movies goes back to this desire for knowledge of the world as a whole, or to see reality as it really is. According to Cavell, to see this whole is an impossible perspective. His argument also recalls what we have mentioned before regarding Bazin's myth of total cinema. Cavell says:

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[347] In spite of Harman's explicit dispraise towards the Žižekian line of transcendental materialism, I compare Žižek and Harman here. Even if Žižek gives an apparently antirealist line of argumentation, his inquiries aim to overcome correlationism, as I have tried to show. Harman further criticizes Žižek by quoting him as follows: "The true formula of materialism is not that there is some noumenal reality beyond our distorting perception of it. The only consistent materialist position is that the world does not exist. . . . The notion of the world as a positive universe presupposes an external observer" (Slavoj Žižek in conversation with Glyn Daly [2004], quoted by Graham Harman in *The Quadruple Object*, 61). Ten years later, this very same argument—that the world does not exist because its existence would presuppose an external observer—is transformed by Markus Gabriel into a realist claim. As we have seen in chapter IV of this analysis, Gabriel is against "the idea that there is or ought to be a unified totality of what there is, whether you call it 'the world,' 'being' or 'reality'" (Gabriel, *Fields of Sense*, 5). Instead of a nonexisting reality, for Gabriel there are "fields of sense," which do exist. I have further tried to show that Žižek aims to overcome the Kantian gap between subject and object by his claim that reality is less than nothing, to be supplemented by fiction, and therefore he proposes to think subjectivity as being part of the absolute. Even though these are strikingly different approaches, I believe that Harman's criticism of Žižek's theory reduces it to something like "we cannot think something without thinking it" (Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 62) and should be ignored, because it is reductive and does no justice to a far more complex position.

> I have spoken of film as satisfying the wish for the magical reproduction of the world by enabling us to view it unseen. What we wish to see in this way is the world itself—that is to say, everything. Nothing less than that is what modern philosophy has told us (whether for Kant's reasons, or for Locke's, or Hume's) is metaphysically beyond our reach. . . . To say that we wish to view the world itself is to say that we are wishing for the condition of viewing as such.[348]

For Cavell, film further "recognizes the hard Berkeleyan-Kantian truth that an event in which we participate is not knowable apart from our knowledge of our participation in it."[349] This makes film a confirmation of skepticism, which integrates Cavell's interest in film (he even refers to film as "a moving image of skepticism"[350]) into his broader philosophical reflection. Cavell insists that even if we had a piece of *total cinema* (in the Bazinian sense) in front of us, we would face the same problems: reality as a whole withdraws from our grasp, and so must film. He writes, "In screening reality, film screens its givenness from us; it holds reality from us, it holds before us, i.e., withholds reality before us."[351]

What Cavell argues here does not fit our view; his position in fact opposes Benjamin's claim of the access to "immediate reality"[352] (emerging from the inside of reality), due to the interpenetration of reality with the film apparatus. I have argued, rather, that in film we do access the real of reality. Nonetheless, Cavell's position confirms that we must reassess the core question of this treatise, which we aim to inquire into in this chapter once more but under a slightly different perspective: Which part of the withdrawing domain of the real (or of "the world itself"[353]) is actually accessed when we are watching a movie? Is the subjective part the incomplete part of the real, or can we specify something further?

In what follows, I will argue that this experience of a whole reality in film is one possibility of reality, but not one of all possibilities of reality, because that total reality either does not exist or will have to remain sealed for us: it is a void in this sense. This would mean that film is real to us not because we can access something real, but because it reproduces our very

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[348] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 101–2.
[349] Ibid., 128.
[350] "It is because I see what is not before me, because our senses are satisfied with reality, while that reality does not exist, that in The World Viewed I call film 'a moving image of skepticism.' This version of hallucination is not exactly mad, but it suggests, as skepticism does, my capacity for madness" (Cavell, *Cavell on Film*, 117).
[351] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 188.
[352] Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 233.
[353] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 101–2.

condition; through film we merely have access to a reproduced sphere of the real of reality, but never to the real of reality itself. But what does this mean? And how would Heidegger himself answer this question?

We will see, by unfolding Heidegger's philosophy of the tool in the context of Harman's OOO, that Heidegger supports the aforementioned question by distinguishing in his tool analysis between "Zuhandenheit" (readiness-to-hand) and "Vorhandenheit" (presence-at-hand), where readiness-to-hand, according to Harman's interpretation, corresponds to what we have analyzed so far as "presence itself," and this can be distinguished from presence-at-hand, which corresponds to only part of the tool's properties, the ones that matter for human access.[354]

I recall in this context Žižek's claim that subjectivity is part of reality and therefore integrated in the "Absolute," a claim through which Žižek, too, refers to Heidegger:

> . . . incompleteness [is] already in itself a mode of subjectivity, such that subjectivity is always already part of the Absolute, and reality is not even thinkable without subjectivity (as in Heidegger, where there is no Sein without Da-Sein as its locality). . . .[355]

I propose to integrate Žižek's observation into our context, rather than opposing it, in the following sense: what is present-at-hand shall be understood as what Žižek proposes as "subjectivity," whereas the readiness-to-hand is understood as things as they are in themselves, or "reality." To make this argument, I rely on Heidegger: "Readiness-to-hand is the way in which entities as they are 'in themselves' are defined ontologico-categorically. Yet only by reason of something present-at-hand, is 'there' anything ready-to-hand."[356] This statement, interpreted in the way Harman does (and now modifying his argument), would support Žižek's position that "reality is not

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[354] Harman is conscious that with this reading of Heidegger he inverts the usual interpretation of Heidegger's tool analysis: "The typical reading of tools and presence for Heidegger, sometimes supported by the philosopher's own remarks, is that vorhanden refers to things in their supposed independence from humans, while zuhanden refers to things as wrapped up in human purposes. But in fact the opposite is the case: the ready-to-hand must always be independent, and the present-at-hand must be dependent. If tool-beings are worthy of greater esteem than the images in consciousness, this is not because they are more dependent on human Dasein, but the opposite" (cf. Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 52). We will support in our analysis this view of Harman on Heidegger.

[355] Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 905.

[356] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 101.

even thinkable without subjectivity": according to Heidegger, readiness-to-hand depends on presence-at-hand, and not the other way around.

New experiments in quantum physics seem to confirm again such a position by explicitly asserting that "at the quantum level, reality does not exist if you are not looking at it."[357] Barad's claim that "if the measurement intra-action plays a constitutive role in what is measured, then it matters how something is explored"[358] can give us a clue what this means, as I have tried to show in chapter VI. The most important conclusion is that the intra-active constitution of "reality" and its measurement are one form of intra-active intervention, such as film.

Let me now rethink Žižek's observation in the context of film. The possibility of the completion of a whole, of Heideggerian Being completed by Dasein in death, is what distinguishes the experience of film from that of reality. Dasein's being-in-the-world is deprived (by the destroying nature of death) of the completion of Dasein's "being as a whole." But is this being as a whole of Dasein different from reality as a whole, as a totality, which even in film must remain completely sealed or a void? We have concluded before that film is always a slice of subjectivity tending toward creating a whole, providing the subjective side of knowledge, or a kind of "contraction of the real"[359] similar to memory, as seen in Bergson's memory-image. As I have argued, film is also an intra-active way of measuring reality, in which the world becomes film.

In what follows, I propose to immerse ourselves deeper into some details of Harman's theory. His notorious attempt to analyze the withdrawing and "ghostly" domain of the real, "withdrawing from all human and inhuman access,"[360] though "accessible only by allusion and seducing us by means of allure,"[361] allows us to approach the problem from a different angle. His idea of access through "allusion" and "allure" will be compared to our claim of the real of reality, which we believe is graspable through film. I will transpose Harman's OOO onto the philosophy of film, determining a domain of the "real image" by giving it the following formula: the real of reality manifests itself in film and becomes graspable for human knowledge through film (see also chapter VI). What brings us to the movie theater is the desire to access the real, the world as it is, and to view it as such in the form of image—the real image. But which part of the

[357] Australian National University, "Experiment Confirms Quantum Theory Weirdness."
[358] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 6.
[359] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 25.
[360] Harman, *The Third Table*, 12.
[361] Ibid., 12.

withdrawing domain of the real (or of "the world itself"[362]) is actually accessed when we are watching a movie?

Solaristic Allusion

In order to understand the possibilities for applying Harman's approach to the solaristic system, let me now reflect on Harman's concept of allusion before putting it in the context of the quadruple object. What is most striking about Harman's position is that he tries to deal with the real of objects and suggests an indirect form of encounter, which lies beyond their physical properties and beyond their effect on the human mind. Harman thereby claims an allusion to the real (as we have mentioned in the example of love), which he refers to along with "allure." Since allure for Harman is connected to art, it will become one of the key concepts to focus on in our context. But let me address now the concept of allusion. In *The Quadruple Object* Harman elucidates that with allusion he means to indirectly designate that which lies beyond thought:

> We all know a way of speaking of a thing without quite speaking of it: namely we allude to it. To say 'the tree that lies outside thinking' is neither a successful statement about a thought nor a failed statement about a thing. Instead, it is an allusion to something that might be real but which cannot become fully present. And that is why philosophy is philosophia: love of wisdom rather than wisdom itself. The Philosophy of Access wants philosophy to be a wisdom about thought, when really it is a love of wisdom about that which lies beyond thought.[363]

"That which lies beyond thought" may then correspond to what other philosophers call the unthinkable—the Absolute, the void, the Lacanian Real, and so on. Following this line of thought, allusion would then correspond to the solaristic principle of *being without being*, but in the sense of a presence that is absent because it lies beyond, that is, "it cannot become fully present." Is this the kind of presence that has been designated as an "unfathomable abyss" (Cavell) and that lies between the thing and its reproduction (Bazin) in the form of an image? We have tried throughout to identify the abyss as something which does not split but unites the thing with its photographic depiction; the abyss characterizes that unknown property of reality, which is reproduced in the photographed image, the mysterious transference of reality (Bazin). This real of reality in fact lies

[362] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 101–2.
[363] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, p.68

beyond its presence and is never fully present—neither in the object, nor in its reproduction—yet it belongs to the being of entities.

Photography and film would then put allusion into practice in a special way: they refer to something beyond the presence of the picture and of the object, which is the real of the photographed object and not our sensory perception of it, and this is in contradiction to what is generally thought about a photograph—that it reproduces the visually sensible. This kind of allusion is solaristic: the visitors refer to something beyond themselves, something which lies beyond thought, and which for Kelvin is accessed indirectly by solaristic love—a love of that which lies beyond graspable thought.

Yet, film is also displaced perception, substituting the individual perceiver (the machine's eye) with a collective, thus appropriating this perception. As such, film gains independence from the perceiving subject and is manifest as a real of its own: the domain of the sensual in film becomes object, gaining reality, just as Hari in *Solaris* learns to exist independently from Kelvin. The speculative real of OOO (in contrast to the Lacanian Real) then becomes a solaristic concept in a cinematic way: on the planet Solaris, it is said that the visitors are stabilized neutrinos—in contemporary science these would be called "ghost particles"—a reification of the nothing. Such a mysterious existence challenges the rules of natural science and so is skeptically doubted by the humans in very different ways: as a hallucination, an evil trick, or an illusion. Love is thereby the allusive way of embracing the visitors, and, as we will see, it is motivated by "allure."

In what follows, I introduce in more detail Harman's quadruple structure of objects and their qualities. "Causation" and "allure" are the two concepts for accessing the real, and thus become the most important ones in our context. They will be elaborated in what follows.

Harman's Fourfold

Harman emphasizes that the most important aspect when setting fourfold structures is choosing the two main crossing axes in order to determine the pertinent tensions between them. He shows how, for example, Heidegger very early started to think in opposing poles and dual structures like light and shadow, veiling and unveiling, being as a whole and being something specific to another. Harman's fourfold, which he mostly develops in his book *The Quadruple Object*, is grounded basically on the properties of "things" and "tools," terms which Harman summarizes and extends as "objects." On the one hand, he is relying on Edmund Husserl, whom he calls

a "philosopher of presence,"[364] as he establishes a threefold between sensual objects and real and sensual qualities. On the other hand, Harman refers to Heidegger, whom he calls a "philosopher of absence."[365]

According to Harman, Heidegger establishes a threefold between real objects and real and sensual qualities. Through the example of the hammer, he distinguishes "readiness-to-hand" ("Zuhandenheit" in Heidegger's German terminology) and "presence-at-hand" ("Vorhandenheit," a Heideggerian term as well). "The key difference is that he [Heidegger] replaces Husserl's sensual objects with his own unique model of real ones. But these real objects complement sensual objects rather than replacing them."[366] Harman's step consists in designating the readiness-to-hand of tools (entities) as the real of objects and their presence-at-hand as their sensual properties. He actually refers to the following quote of Heidegger in order to define readiness-to-hand:

> The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw [zurückziehen] in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically.[367]

In fact (and supporting Harman's position here), with this withdrawing of "readiness-to-hand," Heidegger refers to the "Being" of "these entities" (which is not presence understood as the present). He elucidates the way in which he distinguishes the modes of presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand:

> The kind of Being which belongs to these entities is readiness-to-hand. But this characteristic is not to be understood as merely a way of taking them, as if we were taking such 'aspects' into the 'entities' which we proximally encounter, or as if some world-stuff which is proximally present-at-hand in itself were 'given subjective coloring' in this way. Such an interpretation would overlook the fact that in this case these entities would have to be understood and discovered beforehand as something purely present-at-hand. . . . To lay bare what is just present-at-hand and no more, cognition must first penetrate beyond what is ready-to-hand in our concern. Readiness-to-hand is the way in which entities as they are 'in themselves' are defined ontologico-categorically. Yet only by reason of something present-at-hand, is 'there' anything ready-to-hand.[368]

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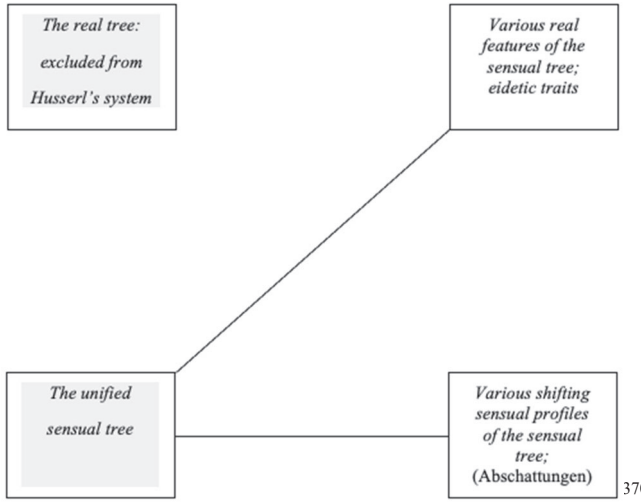
[364] Ibid., 35.
[365] Ibid., 35.
[366] Ibid., 36.
[367] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 99 (quoted by Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 38)
[368] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 101.

This means that Heidegger's inquiry into the "Being" of tools (as entities) reflects his philosophy in an argument against the present of presence, in maintaining that being is not presence in the sense of referring to one mode of time—the present. The Being of entities "as they are in themselves" *is*. They have a mode of being in themselves, and that is why we can compare readiness-to-hand with that which we have elaborated before as "presence of what is present," "presence itself," or as dwelling in the ecstases of temporality. In opposition, their present presence is presence-at-hand.

Curiously, Heidegger sets a relation of dependence between something being present-at-hand and it being ready-to-hand: presence-at-hand conditions readiness-at-hand and not the other way around. This means that readiness-to-hand is completely secluded, so secluded that it is void or nothing; yet, it can come into existence by presence-at-hand. Harman deduces the following: "entities withdraw into a silent underground while also exposing themselves to presence."[369] He emphasizes that this is not only true for tools, and this gives a ground for his signification "objects." Thus, he shows that Heidegger establishes a threefold between real objects and real and sensual qualities, while ignoring the sensual objects (of Husserl). As the following graphic shows, the real object has sensual features (which are present-at-hand), but also real features (and this relation Harman compares to Leibnizian monads).



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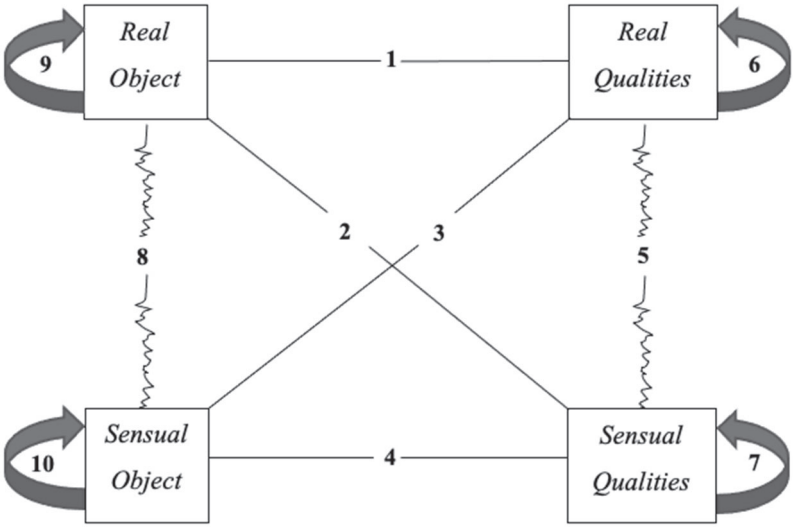
[369] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, p. 39
[370] Ibid., 33.

Yet, for Harman, Husserl's idea of a sensual object complements the notion of Heidegger's real objects. He argues that "while there may be an infinity of objects in the cosmos, they come in only two kinds: the real object that withdraws from all experience, and the sensual object that exists only in experience."[371] The sensual object as Husserl describes it, according to Harman, appears in consciousness. It thereby establishes complementary relations to the relations of real objects, as the next graphic shows: sensual objects have real features ("eidetic traits"), which only can be accessed indirectly, and "various shifting sensual profiles," which are accidental.

In fact, Harman connects real objects and sensual objects and connects both of them into one fourfold structure, relying on a network of relations. Harman then counts four main relations composing this fourfold structure: "time (SO-SQ), as in Husserl's adumbrations, space (RO-SQ), as in Heidegger's tool analysis, essence (RO-RQ), as in Leibniz monads, and eidos (SO-RQ), as in Husserl's eidetic intuition."[372] Altogether, the whole structure is based on ten possible links or tensions:



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[371] Ibid., 49.
[372] Ibid., 99.
[373] Ibid., 78.

In what follows, I will ignore the detailed names and descriptions Harman gives to this network of relations, as it goes beyond the scope of our analysis. Although Harman's system is an interesting example of dynamic tensions and bonds in quadruple structures on reality, the solaristic system relies on those relations and concepts that have been determined thus far. Anyway, I consider it useful to look again at the four main tensions more closely, including the most basic terms, in the following summary, at the risk of becoming repetitive. According to Harman there are:

- Real objects: they are in the world, yet they are mysterious, deep, independent from perception; they withdraw, are secluded, even from each other; they are "devoid of contact."[374]
- Sensual objects or images: they only exist insofar as a perceiver is occupied with them; they are mental and can be even imaginary, like, for example, monsters.

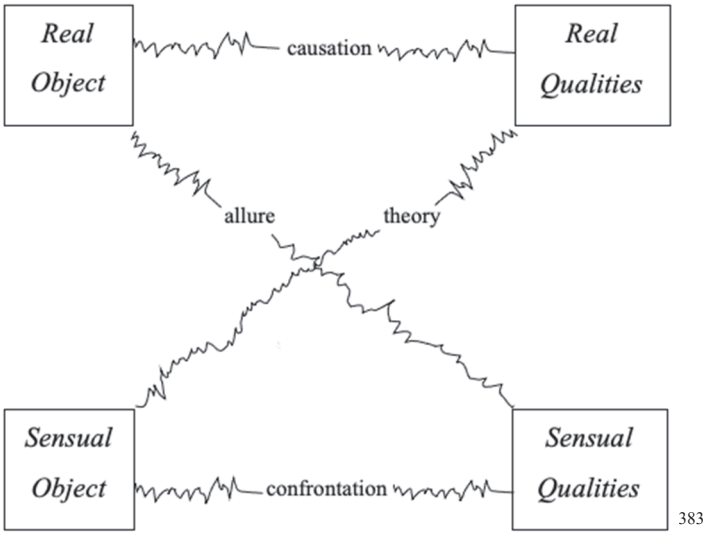
These two kinds of objects, then, have two kinds of qualities associated with them, real and sensual ones, and tensions exist among all four. Harman distinguishes four main tensions:

- The struggle between real things and real qualities is called essence. "Essence is never directly knowable,"[375] and it "happens elsewhere."[376] Therefore, I propose that essence is the kind of real we can never reach, but which is there, the real of reality of the solaristic system. This is, of course, an idea to be followed up on later.
- Sensual objects and sensual qualities "do not withdraw from access."[377] They are part of sensual experience and, as such, they are vacillating. The "fissure"[378] between them is time (guaranteeing stability from one moment to the next).
- The tension between sensual objects and real qualities is called eidos ("Gestalt" in German) and is accessed by allure in the form of fusion.

[374] Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, 63.
[375] Ibid., 62.
[376] Ibid., 66.
[377] Ibid., 63.
[378] Ibid., 65.

- The tension between real objects and sensual qualities is space, described as "tension between the accessibility of things at any distance."[379]

But this is not all. These main links can break, be disturbed or paired; in short, they can become their opposites. Disturbances of the tensions appear in the form of fission or fusion and happen when "a real or sensual object is paired with real or sensual qualities,"[380] for example, when real objects are paired with real qualities. Furthermore, "the disturbance in the bond between a sensual object and its real or sensual qualities can occur only by splitting a bond that already exists—a kind of fission."[381] A disruption to the regular condition of the domain of the real would not be a fissure, then, but a fusion with the domain of the sensual: "Thus, instead of breaking a pre-existent bond between an object and its qualities, we must produce a tension that did not pre-exist its production. I can call this process fusion."[382] Fusion occurs in the kind of links, which have formerly been characterized as struggling with each other.



383

379 Ibid., 78.
380 Ibid., 68.
381 Ibid., 68.
382 Ibid., 69.
383 Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 107.

Fusion occurs for real objects in two different ways:

- In the form of "causation": at another point in his work, Harman also speaks of "vicarious causation,"[384] which has to do with the indirect and allusive access to objects. Harman summarizes causation as the opposite of essence: "When real objects are fused with real qualities allied with it for the first time, we can speak of causation, since this is where consequences unfold for the world."[385]
- In the form of "allure": "As a general term for the fusion of withdrawn real objects with accessible surface [sensual] qualities, we can use the word allure."[386] It is the opposite of essence, defined as the tension between real objects and real qualities, which is beyond of any kind of experience. Allure is the most interesting tension for the solaristic system, as it is described as a seductive power alluding to the mysterious depths of things beyond its sensual qualities and descriptive thought (or the truth beyond thought). It is a kind of fusion, which occurs in works of art. "Allure is the presence of objects to each other in absent form."[387]

In what follows we will see how essence, causation and allure are closely related and how these concepts matter for the solaristic system.

On Essence, Causation, and Allure

So far, two aspects of Heidegger's being-in-the-world are of special importance for the solaristic ontology of film: on the one hand, there is the inevitable finitude of Dasein, and, on the other hand, there is the "mode of sight from which Heidegger begins his analysis of Being-in-the-world,"[388] as Cavell puts it. According to Cavell, this mode of sight, where the "worldhood of the world" would be "announcing itself," is exactly where disruption takes place, for example, when a tool breaks: "The mode of sight then brought forth discovers objects in what Heidegger notes as their conspicuousness, their obtrusiveness, and their obstinacy."[389] This obstinacy

[384] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 169.
[385] Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, 69.
[386] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 104.
[387] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 245.
[388] Cavell, *Cavell on Film*, 2.
[389] Ibid., 2.

of objects, according to Cavell, can be found in film (although not "all cinematic images carry this force"[390] of "the worldhood of the world announcing itself"[391]), and I will consider this aspect from a slightly different angle: I will argue, following Harman, who gives the broken tool a reading opposite Cavell's,[392] the following: what Cavell states concerning objects present-at-hand should be applied to the objects ready-to-hand. Therefore, I would instead compare the "obstinacy of objects" (carrying the force of "the worldhood of the world announcing itself"[393]) to Harman's idea of essence: the tension between real objects and real qualities.

Harman calls Heidegger a monotonous philosopher: "Heidegger has almost no other subject than the constant reversal between absence and presence, or tool and broken tool."[394] Yet, this monotony highlights Harman's ambition to let Heidegger emerge in a completely new light: "Instead of a pragmatist, a philosopher of time, or a thinker who reduces reality to its accessibility to human Dasein, he emerges as a realist metaphysician."[395] This idea frees Heidegger, in the sense that "Heidegger leads us to realism,"[396] from being read as a correlationist philosopher, but maybe Heidegger could equally lead us to transcendental materialism as well? As already mentioned, but I will emphasize here, the crucial point for both hypotheses is that Heidegger's presence-at-hand of the object corresponds, according to Harman, to the Husserlian phenomenon, which is "reducing a thing to its accessibility to consciousness."[397]

However, Harman points out that this is only one side of Husserl's phenomenon. The other is the one designated in Harman's fourfold as the relation between sensual objects and real qualities, called eidos. Yet, as has already been shown, eidos is completely different from allure—the broken link between real objects (readiness-to-hand) and sensual qualities (presence-at-hand)—which is the term Harman uses to introduce aesthetics into his structure.

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390 Ibid., 2.
391 Ibid., 2.
392 "A second scenario that Heidegger describes as present-at-hand is that of the 'broken tool', which no longer functions invisibly but now intrudes or awareness. The broken lamp, desk, or hammer now lying before me are perhaps independent of my invisible practical activity, but in no way are they independent of me" (cf. Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 53).
393 Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 2.
394 Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 51.
395 Ibid., 51.
396 Ibid., 51.
397 Ibid., 52.

According to Harman, the domain of the real withdraws from any possible relation of access: "If there were nothing but real objects and real qualities, there would be no experience and no causal relations at all. Everything would withdraw into private seclusion, devoid of contact."[398] But then he continues: "We know them [the real qualities of real objects] indirectly, allusively."[399] This is why a disruption to the regular condition of the domain of the real is needed, although not as a fissure, but as a fusion with the domain of the sensual. This kind of fusion is what Harman calls allure: "When this occurs between a withdrawn real object and its sensual qualities, we can speak of allure, since there is something allusive about the way the object signals to us."[400]

That the alluring qualities can only be grasped indirectly would then be our way to know the real object allusively: "Allure is the presence of objects to each other in absent form."[401] This recalls, of course, the solaristic principle of being without being and the presence of absence of the objects in film, as mentioned by Cavell. Harman is, in fact, very interested in works of art as a form that produces a special kind of allure; that is, aesthetic perception would then be that which goes beyond thought and is a way to access the impossible. However, Harman does not refer to film in any of his texts. Let us therefore try to understand better what Harman means with his definition of allure that seems to fit so well into the solaristic system:

> What we find in allure are absent objects signaling from beyond—from a level of reality that we do not currently occupy and can never occupy, since it belongs to the object itself and not to any relation we could ever have with it. Allure is the presence of objects to each other in absent form. It is the alpha factor of the universe, found in all objects from the ground up, but gradually built up into increasingly larger and more intricate shapes. . . . Allure is the fission of sensual objects, replacing them with real ones. It is also the principle of all concreteness, insofar as it points to objects apart from all relational impact that they have on us.[402]

This is exactly what happens on the planet Solaris with the visitors: they were sensual objects, perceptive memories, and, by human allure, they have become real images, real objects. This is how Hari emerges. One might speak of solaristic causation here. Indeed, allure and causation are nearly

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[398] Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, 63.
[399] Ibid., 64.
[400] Ibid., 69.
[401] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 245–46.
[402] Ibid., 245–46 (emphasis added).

the same for Harman: "causation and allure are so closely related that they turn out to be one and the same."[403] Harman calls causation the fusion between real objects and real qualities, which normally withdraw in essence. This inaccessible essence, for Harman, "can never come to view."[404] Yet, causation is different from essence, as it is not the withdrawing tension, but the fusion, and thus the disturbance of essence. In this sense, it is an event in a domain, which has to remain eventless, but still occurs: "when real objects are fused with real qualities allied with it for the first time, we can speak of causation, since this is where consequences unfold for the world."[405] Allure and causation as solaristic tenets need further consideration. In what follows, I will claim that the real image (which carries the real of reality) results from an event of disruption, and, thus, I propose to conceive the real image as a consequence of causation. The real image has sensual qualities itself: they are the perceptible part of the real image. In order to transfer *the image as an even*t into Harman's vocabulary, I could argue the following: "invisible light fuses with matter" is equivalent to Harman's formula "the real quality (invisibility) fuses with the real object."

Through causation, the cinematic image emerges; the cinematic is not, I should emphasize, as Harman's approach suggests, a sensual quality of a sensual object, "reducing a thing to its accessibility to consciousness"[406] (as would be the case for Husserl). If it were such a sensual quality, even of a real object, then no disruption or event would cause its existence. The film image thus conceals essence, and I access this essence allusively by allure. I suggest this claim is not very different from Cavell's that we quoted in the beginning of this passage. I recall: "All cinematic images carry this force" [407] of "the worldhood of the world announcing itself"[408]—a term which, in Heidegger's "Thing" lecture has turned into the worlding of the world.

The Hypothesis of a Solaristic Fourfold

The solaristic system comes from the proposal to establish cinema as a special catalyst to sense the real of reality or the real of objects, a domain that is sealed, but at the same that is carried by the real of film image. This domain of withdrawal is also the domain of the planet Solaris. The reasons for the seclusion of the planet are manifold and lie in the consonance of this

[403] Ibid., 214.
[404] Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, 69.
[405] Ibid., 69.
[406] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 52.
[407] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 2.
[408] Ibid., 2.

thesis with the philosophy of Heidegger, the philosopher of presence and absence, which confers on him a special relevance for film. Yet, Heidegger's fourfold structure stands out as the main reason why I propose to consider the hypothesis of a solaristic fourfold, that is, to consider the possibility of presenting a schematized summary of the solaristic system as a fourfold structure.

Just as in *Solaris*, Heidegger's fourfold is described in an allegoric way: the jug, through which he introduces the thing and its fourfoldness, works like a metaphor for reality, or for "the world's worlding,"[409] which remains inexplicable unless explained by the fourfold, which is onefold at the same time. He writes:

> This appropriating mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, we call the world. The world presences by worlding. That means: the world's worlding cannot be explained by anything else nor can it be fathomed through anything else. . . . The united four are already strangled in their essential nature when we think of them only as separate realities, which are to be grounded in and explained by one another.[410]

The description of mortals, gods, sky, and Earth are the allegoric, the poetic, as well as a narrative outline of the world's worlding. In *Solaris*, this worlding reaches its cinematic version: it is reproduced worlding. However, the film functions as a catalyst of this reflection in the sense that the fourfold recalls the narrative of *Solaris*. Its structure relies on the fourfold of Humans, Visitors, Planet, and Earth, and each object in the film reflects this fourfold.

The solaristic poles which can also be read as CPs (in the sense of an object, human or not) corresponding to the poles of Heidegger's fourfold as follows:

First, Earth: this remains Earth in the solaristic system. It is the dwelling place of the mortals, which are described in Heidegger's "Thing" lecture as being on Earth and under the sky. Simultaneously, Earth "is the building bearer, nourishing with its fruits, tending water and rock, plant and animal."[411] As Harman emphasizes, Earth will always exist without the human presence and therefore its real remains withdrawing. Yet, it is the experience of Earth that permits an indirect grasp or access. I suggest that the CP Earth of *Solaris* corresponds to nature or the cosmos, which is

[409] Heidegger, "The Thing," 175.
[410] Ibid., 177–78.
[411] Ibid., 176.

fragile, as Kelvin's father says, but apparently impossible to be known. Earth reflects the human condition as "being-in-the world."

Second, the sky: in Heidegger's fourfold the sky opposes Earth. The sky is full of sensual objects; we see images in the sky. This is equivalent to the planet Solaris in the film, of which we always see the sensual, liquid surface: "The sky is the sun's path, the course of the moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year's seasons, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether."[412] The sky offers an intra-active entanglement of all these elements.

Third, the gods/divinities of Heidegger's fourfold are the visitors in *Solaris*, not in an individual instance like Hari, but that which all of them (even all the multiple Haris, the girl, the mother, etc.) have in common. In fact, Heidegger's description fits perfectly: "The divinities are the beckoning messengers of the godhead. Out of the hidden sway of the divinities the god emerges as what he is, which removes him from any comparison with beings that are present."[413] The godhead in the movie is the solaristic substance, which is different from the planet: the real of reality.

Fourth, Heidegger's mortals. They are human beings for Heidegger and correspond to the scientists on the space station. But, again, they do not present as individuals, but as the principle of mortality that they exhibit. They tend to complete themselves as being as a whole—and are always driven by a need for understanding; they study the planet and the visitors. Human beings are characterized as those who die, and this is likewise true for the scientists in *Solaris*. Hari has to learn how to die, presence finally "Being as Being," just as Heidegger describes:

> The mortals are the human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death as death. . . . Death is the shrine of Nothing, that is, of that which in every respect is never something that merely exists, but which nevertheless presences, even as the mystery of Being itself. As the shrine of Nothing, death harbors within itself the presencing of Being. As the shrine of Nothing, death is the shelter of Being. We now call mortals mortals—not because their earthly life comes to an end, but because they are capable of death as death. Mortals are who they are, as mortals, present in the shelter of Being. They are presencing relation to Being as Being.[414]

[412] Ibid., 176.
[413] Ibid, 176.
[414] Ibid., 176.

The whole of *Solaris* presents the world's worlding as a film, being as being in a film. Due to its having a deathlike nature, film then becomes the shelter of Nothing, as well as the shelter of being. The complex interaction of four poles has been developed by Harman as a network of bonds between sensual objects with sensual qualities and real objects with real qualities. Yet, the solaristic fourfold of Earth, Planet, Scientists, and Visitors involves bonds and dualities of its own, embedded in the solaristic ontology of film. The main concepts of the solaristic system and what has been described in it so far as conceptual personae will be outlined as a solaristic fourfold structure in the next chapter, concluding this book.

As a conclusion of this chapter, I will give a preview of the solaristic fourfold structure, namely concerning the underlying question that drives this analysis: What happens to objects in film? And, based on the perspective given in this chapter, what happens to Harman's fourfold when it is applied to film? What remains of Harman's objects when they become reproduced as photographic images in motion? The answer that they capture the pure sensual qualities of sensual objects is by far too flat. In accordance with my preceding analysis, I will argue that the image of film is something different and much more complex, but I will still try to retain some of Harman's terminology.

Similar to Harman, I propose to understand objects in the solaristic context as the interface between us as sensory perceivers and reality as it is; objects are all the entities that there possibly are, and their real withdraws from our intelligible grasp. The solaristic real of reality resembles the infinite and real void ("the shrine of Nothing") that this treatise has been dealing with so far—an infinite Being as manifold as the perceptions, sensual properties, or images that we can make of it, inaccessible in its infinity, tending toward the impossible real image (an image of the whole of reality, which does not exist). It is my aim to ground within the solaristic system this withdrawal of the infinite, which composes the real and which changes the concept of image: just as light is, in our comprehension, a dimension of its own that belongs neither to matter nor to time, so is the photographic image in film not just a sensual object or property, but a fusion of the real. In this sense I think it is possible to apply Harman's terminology to our concept of the real image. I thus have proposed to try to think about the real image as a causation as well as an allure.

The real image itself has sensual qualities: they are the part which we perceive. However, not even an image of reality can be reduced, as in Harman's approach, to the sensual object or to the Husserlian phenomenon "reducing a thing to its accessibility to consciousness."

I propose, then, to continue with the following question: What is an image for the solaristic fourfold? I will argue that an image is a pole in the quadruple solaristic structure, that of the messengers, that of the gods or of the ghosts: they are images and they come from the sphere of the real. How does such an idea emerge? From memory, as a contraction of the real (in the sense of Bergson). Hari is an image with all its cinematic, ontological implications.

I further propose that we can think of the visitors not only as neutrinos (ghost particles of nothing), but as photons, also known as particles of light. Experiments in contemporary science point out that photons can be created out of a vacuum or out of nothing. The metaphor of light (as reflection on matter as well as of matter) relies on physical science where visible and invisible light are distinguished. Physics explains visible light as disrupted invisible light, as a kind of accident: the rupture is due to a confrontation with matter. Invisible light is a constant and infinite traveler in time and space. Since it cannot pass through matter, it has to transcend matter: light then bears image. This *image as an event* causes matter to be visible and is a source of truth. It is light hitting matter that creates images, thereby pointing out the existence of matter. An image is nevertheless just a single slice out of an invisible multifold, which in the solaristic system is the whole of all possible images, that is, the real—or a white hole of the whole of images. This brings us to formulate the next solaristic tenet, one regarding image and light: the idea of *the real image as an event*. It complements the solaristic claim of the real image, which has been determined before as follows: *the real of reality manifests itself in film and becomes graspable for human knowledge through film*.

In order to transfer the image as an event into Harman's vocabulary, one could argue the following: "the fusing of invisible light with matter" is to be equated with "the real quality (invisible light) fusing with the real object (matter)." The image would then be the result of causation, and not, as previously stated, as the common understanding proposes, that is, a sensual quality of an object. The image is the object in the solaristic system, which expands its Bergsonian grounding. Moreover, the current analysis has reflected on being in the following sense: the image conveys that which Harman would describe as essence of the real object and its real qualities, but is accessible in form of allure. We know this essence allusively. Artworks operating with the sensual qualities of images would then produce allure.

Cinema thereby possesses this double nature of being real in a double sense: film reproduces the real image made of light, conveying essence, and it alludes, as a work of art, to the real object. Cinema not only

reproduces the sensual qualities of real objects, it searches in its own reproduction of objects for the real of objects, including that which I have called the real of reality. Cinema reproduces essence—the tension between real qualities of real objects—and it seeks to write reality with reality, awakening in the spectator a desire for this essence, the love and desire for the real, the irresistible search for truth, thereby producing allure.

In the history of Western thought, light is often regarded as a metaphor for truth. I understand truth as that which I have called and developed throughout this text as the real of reality. Light as a metaphor for truth and as the material quality of film establishes the solaristic system as a philosophy of light. *Solaris* is literally a radiating film and Solaris is a radiating planet, and the visitors are not neutrinos, as the scientists in the film suggest, but photons, or what I call the real image.

It is at this point and in this sense that solaristic philosophy suggests a completion of Harman's fourfold. The guiding question thereby is this: Does an image need a perceiver in order to exist? The solaristic system, designed by an understanding in which real objects are images, rejects such a hypothesis.

Trying to refute such a rejection, one could argue that Harman describes sensual objects as emanating sensual qualities; he distinguishes certain qualities, which do not vary and which transmit permanence. These are "certain invariant qualities for experience"[415] of sensual objects. Harman calls them eidoses, inspired by Husserl's eidetic reduction: "Thus we can use the term eidos for the tension between sensual objects and their real qualities."[416]

I argue against such an interpretation: if the image would transport eidoses, real qualities of sensual objects, then it would be detached from the real object, and there would be no real image—which in our understanding transports essence. Solaristic philosophy, a thesis I have attempted to give different approaches to throughout this treatise, argues that image is essence (in the sense of Harman)—a tension between a real object and a real quality. Consequently, an image cannot be known in its totality, which echoes Tarkovsky's claim: "The image is an impression of the truth, a glimpse of the truth permitted to us in our blindness."[417]

In the next chapter I will conclude by further consolidating the fourfold structure of the solaristic system by describing the links and relations between the four poles and finally by outlining its cardinal tenets.

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[415] Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, 64.
[416] Ibid., 64.
[417] Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 106.

IX. Concluding Remarks and Cardinal Tenets of the Solaristic System

Philosophy and Fiction

Any fictive system relies on imagined principles but cannot do so in an unstructured or arbitrary way—it must do so intentionally. Even a fictive system requires logical coherence and credibility. It can work in terms of metaphorical connotation as a model to explain reality, just as Heidegger's fourfold does. The solaristic proposal of an ontology of film relies on that possibility; it appropriates a fictional film (the movie *Solaris* by Tarkovsky) to develop a model of explanation of reality as a self-reflexive yet metaphorical system with an epistemological outcome. This idea actually goes back to Paul Ricoeur, who has shown that reality adapts to our models of explanation; that is, concerning reality, the models of science would function like metaphors in poetry. By "redescribing" reality, they modify what they refer to. Ricoeur grounds his theory on the work of Mary Hesse:

> She says that 'the deductive model of scientific explanation should be modified and supplemented by a view of theoretical explanation as metaphoric redescription of the domain of the explanandum.' This thesis incorporates two special emphases. The first applies to the word explanation. If the model, like the metaphor, introduces a new language, its description equals explanation. . . . The second emphasis of the thesis of Mary Hesse focuses on the word redescription. Things themselves are 'seen as'; they are identified, in a way that remains to be specified, with the descriptive character of the model. The explanandum as ultimate referent is itself changed by adoption of the metaphor. One must be willing, therefore, to reject the idea of an invariance of meaning with respect to the explanandum and move towards a 'realistic' view of the theory of interaction. Not just our conception of rationality, but at the same time that of reality is thrown open to question: as Hesse says, 'rationality consists just in the continuous adaptation of our language to our continually expanding world, and metaphor is one of the chief means by which this is accomplished.'[418]

[418] Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 286–87.

What Ricoeur explains here underpins the epistemological viability of our model of analysis. Ricoeur asserts that we actually shape reality by metaphorical models of explanation. What he deduces resembles an intra-active model similar to Barad's proposal of intra-activity of matter and thought (see chapter VI). Yet, Ricoeur's assertion implies that one does not measure but, rather, makes up these explanations, which seem to fit reality as they shape reality, in a metaphorical way, i.e., by fictional input: one creates reality by the way one thinks about it. This hypothesis also recalls Žižek's position (see chapter VII) that the Real is partially fiction because "reality has to be supplemented by fiction: to conceal its emptiness,"[419] and also recalls his claim that "reality is not even thinkable without subjectivity."[420] At the same time, the metaphorical redescription of reality is reminiscent of Harman's concept of allusion (see chapter VIII).

The summary I will present in what follows is grounded on a set of insights from the analysis of the movie *Solaris* carried out so far and is guided by the inherent principles of thought from engaging with the philosophical positions referred to throughout. I will also further develop the link of an ontological perspective on film to Cavell's Heideggerian reflection on being and presence. The insights obtained are to be regarded as complements of the philosophical debates discussed throughout. The solaristic system is thereby—even if indirectly—building on the implications of Ricoeur's assertion, since it is deliberately setting a fictional system as a self-reflexive metaphor for the ontological nature of film and as a model for explaining reality. The method applied here has been a "reading" into a film, which is a piece of fiction with special characteristics, in the same way we would read into a written work of philosophy. This means that the current analysis is raising, in dialogue with other works of philosophy, a new kind of philosophical input, impossible to access without engaging with the film *Solaris*. I have been considering *Solaris* to be self-reflexive on the ontological nature of the film medium and therefore it unfurls questions on the nature of reality and being, which can only be raised by this film. This input especially regards the nature of reality and being and further reflects on the nature of film as a production as well as a reproduction of reality and being. The endeavor therefore has been to process the movie's inherent aesthetic sentiments and principles of thought into an epistemic setting centered on correlated philosophical concepts. So far, this analysis has been reflecting on matter, being, and reality, and thereby on motion, duration, world, objects, time, space, image, light, projection, reflection, diffraction,

[419] Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 4.
[420] Ibid., 905.

perception, death, the (in)finite, the real, the void, and the nothing. Again, these concepts are fundamental for dwelling on the ontological nature of film and simultaneously engage with how certain philosophical currents grasp reality and reflect on being.

What I have pointed out in the introduction of this book makes more sense now. Following Cavell and Epstein, I have asserted that the film medium makes us think about certain antagonisms (I have named eight different pairs), i.e., asking about the ontological nature of film catalyzes certain principles of thought that engage with philosophy, namely: appearance and reality, presence and absence, actors and characters, matter and mind, continuity and discontinuity, movement and stasis, the nature of space and time, the existence and nonexistence of any reality. The existence of film raises questions and generates new insight on these topics of philosophical reflection. Given what has been discussed throughout the analysis, let me add the following pairs to consolidate the list: being and nothing, objects and perception, subject and object, world and thought, image and matter, presence and absence, space and time, life and death.

The Four Poles of the Solaristic System

I would like to conclude this treatise by dividing the listed antagonisms into four major groups, mirroring the four-poled structure of the solaristic system, a hypothesis raised in the previous chapter and to be implemented in what follows. As has been shown throughout the entire treatise, these antagonisms reflect the scope of analysis and help structure the summary outline of the solaristic system.

The first group is focused on being and nonbeing, the second on the opposition between inner and outer reality, the third on reality and appearance, whereas the fourth is based on the opposition of flow and standstill. The four groups of oppositional pairs are as follows:

I. Existence and inexistence of any reality, being and nothing
II. Matter and mind, subject and object, world and thought, objects and perception
III. Appearance and reality, image and matter, presence and absence
IV. Continuity and discontinuity, movement and stasis, space and time, life and death

Some of the pairs could fit into more than one groups, as they are entangled in several senses: “presence and absence,” for example, could be fit in group I or together with “life and death,” and “objects and perception”

could also be placed in group III, and so on. The intra-active connectiveness of the antagonisms is given because *Solaris* conveys a transversal complexity; it is philosophically self-reflexive of the ontological nature of film and its relation to reality and being. *Solaris* further questions the epistemological limits of knowledge and of exact science—as a film and as a narrative work of art, the movie's diegesis emphasizes the incapacity of science to grasp and to deal with what is real—similar to how Heidegger in *What is Metaphysics?* uncovers the inability of science to deal with the nothing. In order to understand what is really happening on this mysterious planet Solaris, the movie *Solaris* inquires into existential issues which are "on the edge," like death, love, existence, nothing, and truth, and entangles thought and factuality, affects and reason. The movie therefore mirrors the purpose of this treatise. Conversely, the treatise itself expands the film's narrative by telling a philosophical story.[421] I will come back to this point later.

It is now pertinent to ask whether the four groups of antagonist pairs just named correspond to the solaristic fourfold, as has been claimed at the beginning of this book and has been developed in the previous chapter by relying on Heidegger's fourfold.

The analysis is already structured into four parts of argumentation, carrying out different layers and stages of reflection. In each layer, I have previously associated one of the four poles. The groups of conceptual personae (CPs)—Earth, Planet, Visitors, and Humans—are being established at this point of the analysis, but have been prepared throughout the analysis by the different stages of reflection.

Here, I propose to assess the aforementioned pairs of antagonisms by providing the following fourfold grouping:

I. *Existence and inexistence of any reality, being and nothing* is attributed to the CP "Earth"; Earth is the dwelling place of the mortals, yet, as Harman emphasizes, Earth will always exist without the human presence and therefore its real remains withdrawing. Yet, it is the experience of Earth that permits an indirect grasp or access. Earth reflects the human condition as "being-in-the world."

II. *Reality and mind, objects and perception, subject and object, world and thought* is attributed to the CP "Planet": a machinic brain-apparatus transposing and expanding what is described in

[421] "Philosophy also tells stories. Stories with concepts" (cf. Deleuze, "What is the Creative Act?").

chapter VI with Karen Barad's principles of *intra-active entanglement* of matter and meaning, "topologically reconfiguring connections."[422]

III. *Appearance and reality, image and matter, presence and absence* is attributed to the CP "Visitors"; the concept is based on the real of reality embodied by the visitors.

IV. *Continuity and discontinuity, movement and stasis, space and time, life and death* is attributed to the CP "Humans" (the scientists on the space station); they are, like Heidegger's mortals, "capable of death as death."[423] Therefore, they tend to complete themselves as being as a whole (in death as the standstill of Dasein)—and are always driven by a need for understanding of space and time.

By establishing these attributions to the CPs of the solaristic system, it must be admitted that the four parts of the books represent the CPs more so in a symbolic way rather than matching the conceptual attributions of the groups as just described. For example, part 2 "Planet: Solaristic Twists" prepares the solaristic principles unfolded later and pre-establishes its intrinsic relation to film (reproduction), but only in chapter VI, already in part 3, is the solaristic apparatus itself discussed profoundly. Why do I propose at all then to transfer these antagonisms into the four poles of the structure of the solaristic system? Well, the chain of argumentation is built on four parts in a linear way, but the solaristic system itself is four-poled in its nature and these four poles are entangled in a multidimensional way. In other words: on the one hand, we have found a "narrative" way to gradually introduce the concept of the solaristic fourfold; on the other hand, we have a structure of connections, tensions, bonds, and conceptual fields as well as their intra-actions, which do not correspond to a linear way of thought but are rather complex and multifold.

In addition to Epstein and Cavell, the choice of applying such a complex four-poled structure has to do with the oppositional structure Harman deduces from Heidegger's tool analysis, opposing readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand, the sealed and the unsealed, the withdrawn real and the sensual actual. The presence-absence dichotomy is also one of the most important concepts for Heidegger, Harman going so far as to defend the claim that it is the "monotonous" principle of Heidegger's whole oeuvre. We have been reflecting on Heidegger's parousia for being as dwelling, and

[422] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 381.
[423] Heidegger, "The Thing," 176.

therefore as conditioning its own presence and absence in various terms. The constantly antagonizing dichotomy is reflected within each of the four poles of the solaristic system. In the solaristic system, reality exists and does not exist, image and matter as well as presence and absence do not oppose one another, death is a part of life (for we are constantly dying) and vice versa, being and nothing shelter each other, and so on.

Furthermore, the fourfoldness of the solaristic system means thinking in a quadruple way or in four dimensions. To give justice to the four-dimensional set of relations and intra-actions between the four poles, in what follows I will elucidate the implicit solaristic principles of each pole of the fourfold structure in the form of a catalog of theses, based on what has been said throughout this treatise, filling in some aspects which emerge in consequence of the fourfold structure. The network of relations originating in this reminds us as well of the network described by Foucault's "dispositif," designating an organized "system of relations" between the elements of a "heterogeneous ensemble" (all kind of possible thoughts and forms).[424] The following 46 solaristic theses constitute a concluding summary of the solaristic ontology of film. What there is to say about it has been said before, yet I will give some final words and further perspectives for future analysis after this catalog of theses or cardinal tenets.

Cardinal Tenets: 46 Theses on the Solaristic System

1. Solaristic philosophy processes the inherent principles of thought of the movie *Solaris* by Andrei Tarkovsky into an epistemic infrastructure, which is centered on film and called the solaristic system; film is thereby understood as a reproduction of reality. Therefore, the solaristic system inquires into what is understood as "reality."
2. It is a property of reality to be reproducible through film; thereby, it does not make sense to speak of reality as a closed entity. It should, rather, be established conceptually as multiple and open, in constant change and expansion by measurement, subjectivity, and fiction. In this sense, the solaristic system defines an open void and multiple real, infinitely divisible in images, also referred to as a white hole of the whole of images. Some images are equal to matter, others remain immaterial, such as the filmic images.
3. Film is a part of reality, as well as a producer of reality. The cinematograph is an intra-active agent of worldmaking measurement, in the sense of Karen Barad's quantum ontology.

[424] See: Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh," 194.

4. The solaristic system is structured as a fourfold.
5. Each of its four poles, which are Earth, Planet, Visitors, and Humans, contains an oppositional tension in itself. Therefore, each of the four poles behaves like a principle rather than a static entity.
6. The four poles correspond to the four main CPs of *Solaris*: they embody and convey the conceptual solaristic key notions.
7. Through the dramatic conflicts between the CPs, we can establish a conceptual field of solaristic tensions. These tensions are oppositional and lie in each of the four poles, which can be regarded as CPs themselves.
8. The pole of the Visitors embodies Hari as a CP. Hari is the presence of that which is absent. Hari is immortal; she cannot die by herself. She is annihilated with the help of the scientists; thus, her condition of being is dissolved.
9. The pole of the Planet is the fluid surface, the solaristic ocean and its foggy emanations and shining radiations, but also the solaristic brain. As a CP it is the antagonist to Kelvin and an organic apparatus machine. Part of the solaristic brain lies in the visitors.
10. The CP, which has not been named so far as such is Earth, another pole of the solaristic system. Earth is nature in the movie, the unknown which is feared and loved: the moving seaweed, the bushes and grasses in the opening, the horse the boy sees in the stables, the rain in which Kelvin gets wet. It is also referred to as "cosmos" and associated with fragility—so Kelvin's angry father asserts in the beginning, by claiming that one has no right to destroy that which one cannot understand.
11. The Humans, who are the fourth pole, apparently come to Solaris to study other worlds. But that which they do not understand is nature, Earth, and that which stands for the world. As Snaut says: "I have to say that we don't want to conquer any cosmos. We want to extend the earth to the utmost frontiers of the cosmos. We don't know what to do with other worlds. We need a mirror. We're struggling to make contact, but never find it."[425] That is why Earth is sealed in the solaristic system.
12. Earth is the place where humans are dwelling, where their being-in-the world unfolds. Humans are driven to understand and to dwell on their dwelling. That is why they go and study the planet Solaris. To live means to prepare for death, to try to know, to understand.
13. As in Heidegger's fourfold, the humans are mortal, their being is a being-toward-death. Only humans die. Visitors cannot die. To die means to achieve knowledge.

[425] Tarkovsky, "Solaris," 172.

14. Kris Kelvin is the CP who embodies this principle of preparation for death. Everything Heidegger has said about Dasein in *Being and Time* is true for Kris Kelvin. What is unsealed is the being-in-the world, the dwelling on Earth.
15. The planet Solaris is the solaristic apparatus, an organic machine sensing the humans, interacting with and defying them. The planet has the character of an intra-active agent of measurement. The planet unites subject and object, it closes the gap in between, since it is the cinematograph.
16. The filmic apparatus as well as the Solaris apparatus are world-making and go beyond reflection: films are not mirrors but the continuation of life (to recall Syberberg). On the one hand, we apparently have the image of reality, but on the other hand this image dominates reality and tends to substitute it, becoming real in itself.
17. This apparatus gives us access to "truth" or to that which we have called "the real of reality," defined by the following solaristic principle: the real of reality manifests itself in film and becomes graspable for human knowledge through film.
18. The real images of film are the visitors. Hari is one image, part of all the real images. Hari's origin is causation, based on what Harman understands as causation (see chapter VIII), which is very close to allure. Hari's causation is only possible because of Kris.
19. The planet holds the real of reality and is the producer of images of a certain kind—the visitors. Therefore, Solaris is already an issue before Kelvin goes there. The planet holds the mystery of reproduction and of the ability to reproduce even that which is past. Deleuze says in *The Time-Image* that all images are set in a plane of immanence where present, past, and future co-exist; linearity is only one possible order.
20. Hari is then an image in the following Deleuzian sense. In Bergsonian terms, the real object is reflected in a mirror-image as in the virtual object, which, simultaneously and from its position, envelops or reflects the real: there is "coalescence" between the two. There is a formation of an image with two sides, actual and virtual. It is as if an image in a mirror, a photo, or a postcard came to life, then assumed independence and passed into the actual, even if this meant that the actual image returned into the mirror and resumed its place in the postcard or photo, following a double movement of liberation and capture.[426]

[426] Deleuze, *The Time-Image*, 71–72.

21. Hari behaves like a living photograph, the one she finds of the human Hari in Kelvin's baggage.
22. The planet beams invisible light, even if its surface seems to be covered by a fluid substance. The planet is the void. Hari embodies a being of the void: a being without being.
23. The planet is the shelter of nothing and the shelter of being, in the sense of "being-as-a-whole" (Seiendes im Ganzen). This makes the planet into that which Heidegger names, in the fourfold, death.
24. Death is then a worldmaking agent.
25. The planet is a transcendent place—as much as film is. It is human finitude which makes the humans look for transcendence. This transcendence is death.
26. Film conveys the impossible death-vision of the world as a whole. The romantic longing for death may have helped to concretize the technical invention of film: the wish to go to the cinema corresponds to a wish for knowledge as well as a wish for death. The spectator meets the dead in film and indirectly experiences death. Film then conceals the "permanently-unsolved" state of being.
27. Death as the finitude of being only exists for the humans. From any other perspective it is the infinite, unamenable to thought, or just the void.
28. Death is the measurement of life—like light is the measuring agent of matter.
29. The two poles of "Planet" and "Earth" are like two sides of the same coin: together they are the real of reality.
30. The two poles of "Planet" and "Humans" are both sensing and worldmaking. Hari would not exist without Kelvin.
31. "Visitors" and "humans" can feel attraction by allure. Hari is alluring for Kelvin and causes love. In other cases, the allure of the "visitors" toward the "humans" may be antagonistic. Harman says: "Allure is the presence of objects to each other in absent form."[427]
32. Being-without-being is a cardinal tenet, which belongs to Hari as allure. It is the presence of something which is absent, something being there without being there.
33. This transcendent characteristic is reminiscent of the spectral and also death-driven character of film itself; it describes the cinematographic principle of transcendence of matter towards immateriality.
34. Solaristic philosophy does not deal with a kind of transcendence which alludes to a divine entity. To transcend in the context of cinema means

[427] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 245–46.

to transform the material into the immaterial and vice versa, and in *Solaris* this happens; yet, both film in general and *Solaris* specifically do not demand that we change reality or switch worlds.

35. In transcendental materialism, Adrian Johnston refers to a negative more-than-materiality[428] of the subject. The difficulty is thus (according to Žižek) in thinking immateriality as a correlate to materiality, as an immanent transcendence. This more-than-materiality is where the real of reality, as well as its cinematographic reproduction, moves. In *Solaris*, Hari is rematerialized. How is the question of such a real, which is simultaneously material and immaterial, to be best rounded up?
36. The real of reality is something which belongs to any kind of object: its being makes things real, whether they are material or not. That is why there is no mystery in the reproduction of reality. We also can think things as many times as we want.
37. The inquiry into the presence of the absent evoked by film and by the planet is the presence of Dasein's being after death: the whole of being as a "being-after-death" emerges as a possibility of Dasein unique to the filmic device.
38. The film image is distinct from the real image of total cinema, which has not yet been invented and which is impossible. The film image is a persistently incomplete part of the real image. It carries the real of reality.
39. The real image is the real of reality thought as image. Bazin's myth of total cinema helps understand this twist.
40. This real alludes to a kind of truth, which is open in its totality, although a whole; it unites object and subject and oscillates between projection and presence, past and future yet to come; it is never absent. The cinematographic image is thereby considered to be a kind of magnifying glass; it frees presence from physical being. Tarkovsky claims: "The image is an impression of the truth, a glimpse of the truth permitted to us in our blindness."[429]
41. Being on Solaris means being on a planet, which constantly beams light and images; it does so in a way that inside and outside, future and past, death and life cannot really be separated.
42. The event of image causes the visibility of matter.[430] Images are the visible emerging from the invisible by rupture or fissure, as an event.

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[428] See: Johnston, *Žižek's Ontology*, 209.

[429] Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 106.

[430] To recall what has been said before: physics distinguishes between visible and invisible light. Visible light is born by accident; it is disrupted invisible light, and

In summary, the image is a fissure of the real and thus differs from sensory perception. The image emerges from the real and should thus always revert to it and be a key to the real. An image is a single slice out of an invisible multifold void. An image is not, as common sense often suggests, a mere sensual object from which the real completely withdraws.

43. This fits with Tarkovsky's take on the image: "what is known as the 'idea' of the image, many-dimensional and with many meanings, cannot, in the very nature of things, be put into words. But it does find expression in art."[431]
44. The image as an event finds an unexpected application in the late Heidegger, who refers to event—Ereignis—in *Identity and Difference* as an appropriation through sight. There is this double etymology to Ereignis: on the one hand, it comes from "to make something your own or appropriate," aneignen, which in German has the root of eigen, own; on the other hand, the eyes come in. The ancient word "eräugen," to regard, is the second root of Ereignis in German, according to Heidegger.[432]
45. The idea of a solaristic ontology of film—experimentally seeking to directly appropriate a fiction film as a system for philosophy—is conceivable itself as a model of conceptual art, or as an artistic gesture.

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the rupture is the confrontation with matter itself; light is hindered by matter from traveling. Invisible light is therefore a constant and infinite traveler in time and space; as it cannot pass matter, it has to transcend matter: light bears the image. To the event of the real image the visibility of matter is immanent. Light confronting matter thus constantly beams images, indicating the existence of matter, and is to be understood as a fractural event.

[431] Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 104.

[432] "The event of appropriation (Ereignis) is a word belonging to common language and means "event." But Heidegger's use of it is more (1) "abstract" in the sense of being infinitely removed from everyday events and yet of being that which is so close to us that we cannot see it, and (2) "concrete" in its use of the very roots of that word: er-eignen (eigen = own, thus to come into one's own, to come to where one belongs) and er-äugnen (Auge = eye. This is the real etymological root of er-eignen), thus to catch sight of, to see with the mind's eye, to see face-to-face" (cf. Tambauch, "Introduction" to Martin Heidegger's *Identity and Difference*, 14); see also: "Das Wort Ereignis ist der gewachsenen Sprache entnommen. Er-eignen heißt ursprünglich: er-äugen, d.h. er-blicken, im Blicken zu sich rufen, an-eignen" (cf. ibid., 100–1). Therefore, the translator has chosen to translate Ereignis with "event of appropriation."

46. The endeavor of solaristic philosophy proposes a philosophy of light and infinity, of image and immateriality, of presence and projection, of absence and nothing in action, and, finally, of death and finitude.

Concluding Remarks and Further Perspectives

Before coming to an end, let me sketch some additional thoughts for further consideration and inquiry.

What does the solaristic system mean?

By writing this book, I have aimed to develop an ontology of film based on setting one single film in equitable dialogue with a range of recognized works of philosophy trying to explore and call attention to the film's philosophical complexity and multifoldness. Obviously, I have thereby not included all that can possibly be said about the film *Solaris*. My perspective is not one of film studies, nor is the endeavor of this book to classify or to interpret the film. My approach is rather to be understood as transdisciplinary: an engagement of the aesthetic sentiments and principles of thought present in *Solaris* with the creative potential of philosophy. Departing thus from a philosophical scope of analysis, I have opted to primarily focus on those aspects of *Solaris* which best disclose new insights into the nature of reality and being, and on those elements to be considered self-reflexive on the ontological nature of film. This is the main proposition of the solaristic philosophy of film.

As I have pointed out in the introduction, the solaristic system might be understood as an artistic approach in a wider sense, a form of conceptual art inside philosophy or what may be called "artistic research" today in the sense of an experimental philosophical practice. From this perspective, it makes sense to argue that the solaristic system (besides its aforementioned self-reflexive and metaphorical potential) expands the film *Solaris* by processing its inherent philosophical principles into the context of written philosophy, yet still relying on a fictional context: in a certain sense, the solaristic system is continuing the film's narrative by telling a philosophical story. As Deleuze expresses: "Philosophy also tells stories. Stories with concepts."[433] This philosophical story begins where solaristic science—the science of studies on the planet Solaris—is not getting anywhere: the understanding of its object of study, the planet Solaris. Therefore, I argue that the solaristic system is a piece of *fictive philosophy*. By doing so, I can finally refer to the subtitle of this book. A second

[433] Deleuze, "What is the Creative Act?," 312–24.

symptom of the solaristic system's artistic potential is the high range of neologisms, of newly created concepts, to underpin the area of thin ice onto which I have partly ventured. Yet, such an attitude is nothing new.

The solaristic system proposes to create consistency in a zone of interference where philosophy and film can meet, as well in a Deleuzian sense. At the very end of his cinema books, Deleuze refers to the interference of various creative practices, including philosophy, which invents and creates concepts. Thereby Deleuze defines film or cinema explicitly as a "new practice of images and signs"[434] and projects a zone where film can become a new means of philosophical expression whose theory must be produced by philosophy "as conceptual practice."[435] Furthermore, he writes that "it is at the level of the interference of many practices that things happen, beings, images, concepts, all the kinds of events."[436] In this sense, the solaristic system constitutes a zone of interference.

If one spins further the Deleuzian regard one may also ask oneself in the given context: "What is philosophy?"[437] According to Henning Schmidgen, Deleuze has been creating "philosophical concept art"[438]; he further speaks of the concepts created by Deleuze as "drawings."[439] And Raymond Bellour points out: "Therein lies the whole, perhaps untenable paradox of Deleuze's thinking: to cling to philosophy, to philosophy as such and for all time; and simultaneously to take from it from the bottom up everything that would make it anything other than an art."[440] The solaristic system approaches this paradox and is a first step for others to come in a direction also pointed out (and mentioned in the introduction of this book) by Graham Harman—even if for different reasons: "to turn philosophy into an art."[441]

What further might be missing?

During my investigation I have been asked several times about the role of the music in *Solaris*, which was perceived as astonishing in its time.

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[434] Deleuze, *The Time-Imag*e, 269.
[435] Ibid., 269.
[436] Ibid., 268.
[437] Ibid., 269.
[438] Schmidgen, "Begriffszeichnungen: Über die philosophische Konzeptkunst von Gilles Deleuze," 26 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[439] Ibid., 26 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[440] Bellour, "Das Bild des Denkens: Kunst oder Philosophie oder darüber hinaus?," 13 (translation mine – C.R.P.).
[441] Harman, *The Third Table*, 14–15.

Composer Eduard Artemiev worked with electronic music, developing his own devices to do so, long before our contemporary time, where a sound effect is a mere computer plug-in. Opting not to undertake my own analysis of the music, I also have avoided any classical film analysis of formal elements to substantiate my reading of *Solaris*. What I did instead was base my philosophical analysis on the movie as an organic whole, where all the elements play together to narrate what I have been describing in the introduction as the plot of the film. This is also the reason why this plot description (part of the introduction) is unusually long.

Solaris is a complex Gesamtkunstwerk, and the solaristic system is to be seen as an open system which has not explored all possible references and cross-connections with philosophy. An important specificity of the solaristic system is the inquiry into the ontological nature of reality through the reflection on the cinematic medium, as well as philosophical insights into the nature of reality and our capacity for cognition. Thereby the solaristic system proposes a form of artistic research in which philosophy becomes a form of concept art, and at the same time it builds on previous results of film philosophy: cinematic works of art are considered independent pieces of "philosophy in action—film as philosophizing."[442]

Many questions for the future of film philosophy but also of artistic research and its relation to philosophy are to be derived from the solaristic system. In other words, how can we apply the solaristic system and its methods to other complex audiovisual works including postcinematic films, as well in nonlinear fields—namely virtual and augmented reality—or expanded cinema? The solaristic system encourages the equitable dialogue with works of art—audio-visual works in particular—not only to open up new forms of thinking, but also to expand and enrich philosophical thinking itself through their media-specific and content-related characteristics. Thus, the solaristic system not only stands in the tradition of Deleuze's reflection on cinema, but continues a long tradition of philosophy in which works of art are approached on the basis of their cognitive value of capacity for philosophical insight. By further focusing on one single film and by expanding this film through written philosophical reflection, the solaristic system forms a new kind of knot between philosophy and film on which other knots may follow, from all the films that contain fictive philosophical systems.

[442] Mulhall, *On Film*, 2.

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