Heidegger, Loht & the French Avant-Garde: Envisioning a Practical Cinematic Phenomenology

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Introduction

In Henri Chomette's 1926 avant-garde film *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* (lit. '*Five minutes of pure cinema*'), the audience is presented with complex networks of bright light beams as they pass through various mobile crystalline structures. The beams of light and the intricate glass mechanisms that shape them eventually give way to a black forest set against an overwhelmingly bright sky, and the frame becomes wrapped in a system of overlapping silhouetted branches. As the film's title implies, *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* is a purified cinematic experience that is stripped of character and narrative, solely depicting the visual phenomenon of refraction and light exposure as it appears on film. With his work, Chomette was developing on the impulses and attitudes of the wider avant-garde filmmaking landscape in 1920s France, fostering a belief that films have, as film theorist and historian Patrícia Branco writes, "the capacity to disrupt ordinary habits of perception and to free the viewer from the cliché relation to the world" (Branco, 2020, p.126). Indeed, alongside his avant-garde filmmaking peers such as Germaine Dulac and Jean Epstein, Chomette's ultimate pre-occupation with cinema was with exploring the powerful sensory dimensions of cinematic images as they were disclosed to a viewing audience through the playing of a film. As Branco illustrates, such a conception of cinema placed Chomette and his peers on one side of a fierce debate that took place in French literary periodical *Cahiers du mois,* wherein concerned parties contributed to the competing cinematic philosophies of 'cinema as sensation' - proponents of which included Chomette, Dulac, and Epstein - and 'cinema as sentiments' (Branco, 2020, p.128). In foregrounding the sensory experience of motion itself, as it occurs within and relates to the world around us, and meditating on the surreal and novel visual structures that the cinematographic camera reveals, Chomette's sensory and perceptual approach to the cinematic subject appears to embody a distinctly phenomenological encounter with filmmaking heavily reminiscent of the works of philosopher Martin Heidegger. However, Heidegger's robust analysis of the work of art as developed in his seminal essay *The Origin of the Work of Art*

(1950) - which examines art as a phenomenon intimately linked to truth in a fundamental sense – appears to implicitly exclude cinema within the context of his negative stance on the state of modern technology as written in his later work *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954). In the essay, Heidegger accuses human beings of appropriating modern technology – of which cinema is inextricably apart of - in a fashion that reduces an infinitely complex world to ordered 'stock' fit for exploitation, rendering a Heideggerian phenomenological approach to filmmaking a seemingly impossible endeavour. Indeed, cinema's origins in illusions and misdirection as ushered in by the Lumière brothers through its aesthetic features of editing, visual effects, and camera trickery – referred to by film theorist Tom Gunning as the *cinema of attractions* (Gunning, 1982) - only serve to further complicate matters insofar as the notion of 'truth' is concerned.

In this thesis, despite the aforementioned frictions, I argue that a Heideggerian approach to the task of filmmaking is both possible and highly valuable to the philosophical and practical dimensions of the cinematic enterprise. Drawing from Heideggerian scholar Shawn Loht's *Phenomenology of Film* (2017) and using his framework of phenomenological *film-viewing* as a lens through which to examine the pioneering cinematic theories of the filmmakers of the early French avant-garde, I put forward that such a task has already been undertaken by these filmmakers. As Loht focuses on a phenomenological approach to the *viewing* of the moving image, it is my intention to respond to his work in a fashion that extends his approach to the *making*, or *creation of*, the moving image through the active work of filmmaking. As such, concluding this thesis is a case study of Germaine Dulac's *La Fête espagnole* (1920), wherein I will demonstrate that the filmic output from this era of cinema had been carried out to such a degree of success that these films represent a fully realised envisioning of a phenomenological filmmaking framework, fulfilling the demands of Heidegger's concept of *Dasein;* that is, a particular way of conceiving of the nature of existence with strict respect to the world that it occurs in.

Chapter 1: Exploring a Cinematic Phenomenology

In addition to Shawn Loht's reading of Heidegger which, as will later be demonstrated, achieves a satisfactory and functional merging of Heidegger's phenomenology and the film-viewing experience, there are several general characteristics of Heidegger's philosophy that are useful for conceptualising the cinematic process within the context of the avant-garde. Primarily, his insights into how human beings interact with tools and objects promise a lucid angle with which to approach the technology of cinema and its convergence with its practitioners; it is my contention that by viewing this form of technology through the lens of Heideggerian phenomenology, one can begin to explore the ways in which interfacing with this technology changes how one sees the world. Therefore, though a full reading of Heidegger is outside of the scope of this discussion, a brief account of the history of phenomenology and a basic coverage of his philosophy is necessary for establishing the basis of this thesis.

Phenomenology, as both a field of study and a specific methodology within philosophy that principally deals with perceptual experiences (i.e. *phenomena*) and how they affect structures of consciousness, appears well-suited and aptly equipped for approaching the work of art. Largely popularised in the West by Edmund Husserl in the early 1900s, phenomenology on a wider front assumes the position that phenomena provide sufficient means with which to approach the question of human existence (i.e. *Being*); if questioned and analysed appropriately, our personal experiences with and relationship to the world reveal fundamental truths about reality. Western phenomenology would undergo a significant developmental shift with the publication of Heidegger's magnum opus *Being and Time* (1927), in which an intricate and wide-spreading phenomenological account of Being is presented. For Heidegger, Being is disclosed to us as *Dasein* (from the German '*da-sein'*, literally '*being-there'*): a relational model of existence that attempts to uncover the essence of Being through its perceptual

experiences of the world and the conceptual frameworks it utilises to sensibly apprehend them. A somewhat radical reframing of Husserl's phenomenology, Dasein represents an inversion of the Western philosophical tradition that preceded it. Up until *Being and Time,* a vast amount of philosophy had been dedicated to describing a reality that is ultimately external to us and our senses; a purified and unadulterated world that is inevitably morphed and insensibly reshaped by our subjective interpretations of experience and is therefore principally inaccessible. This is evident within the dominant ontologies across philosophy's history: Plato's theory of transcendent Forms, Descartes's mind-body dualism, and Kant's transcendental idealism (the search for "*the thing in itself*") all place a metaphysical barrier between the human being and the world, framing the former as an isolated subject such that we are 'outside' of reality. Inversely, Heidegger places the human subject (referred to as Beings, or Dasein) and the world and its objects (beings, with a lower-case 'b') on the same ontological plane, on the basis that they are all *in-the-world* as a precondition. Heidegger scholar Michael Inwood, reflecting on *Being and Time*, summarises this aspect of Heidegger's philosophy as such:

> We need to consider ... not simply the being of entities within the world, but the being of their surrounding context, and ultimately the being of the world as a whole. We also need to look at beings as such, to see how and why it branches out into different varieties.
>
> Inwood, 1997, p.18

The primary quality of Dasein, then, is its *Being-in-the-world;* its *worldliness.* In Heidegger's words: "Dasein ... is 'in' the world in the sense that it deals with entities within-the-world, and does so concernfully and with familiarity" (Heidegger, 1927, p.138). Heidegger insists that Dasein is necessarily situated within the world, indeed it is *always already* in the world (Heidegger, 1927, p.378), and takes upon itself the task of creating relations between beings and concepts. Symbiotically, the world that Dasein finds itself in is itself constituted of these relations; it is Heidegger's contention that "Being-in-the-world shall first be made visible

with regards to that item of its structure which is the 'world' itself" (Heidegger, 1927, p.91). Here, Heidegger stresses that Dasein is woven into a matrix of commonsense relations with which it can use to sensibly encounter things like tools, furniture, and buildings, as well as more complex and nuanced systems of language, social interaction, and interpersonal relationships. This matrix is itself the world that Dasein inhabits – a world of beings that do things, that have operations and purposes, and can be interacted and interfaced with – and the two are therefore inextricably linked: Dasein cannot exist without the world, and the world would be nothing without Dasein's innate sensibilities to comprehend it. It is from this that Inwood makes the observation that Dasein and 'world' are not merely linked but actively complement each other with their respective qualities (Inwood, 1997, p.37).

To demonstrate how such a framework is both applicable and strongly relevant to the filmic practices of the French avant-garde, one must first recognise the two critical questions that form the ontological core of Heidegger's project: How does the human being interact with and act upon the world, and how does the world interact with and act upon the human being? In other words, what is given to Dasein through experience, and what is it that Dasein gives back? In approaching these questions phenomenologically, Heidegger places a primary importance on the direct lived experience of Dasein with respect to its existence in space and its movement through time. In essence, Heidegger is closely examining the ontological mechanisms of perception and the myriad ways in which consciousness shifts in response and does so holistically by uncovering the reciprocity between World and Being. The French avant-garde movements of the 1920s, with their focus on abstract forms and surreal or otherwise entirely absent narratives, were preoccupied with seemingly comparable goals; in Patrícia's Branco's paper *Film as Sensation* (2020), which details the history and philosophies of the various avant-garde filmmakers of this era, it is pointed out that "one of the main aesthetic values of the first French avant-garde was the ability of cinema to act directly on the body and the senses of the public" (Branco, 2020, p.126). Indeed, it was the prerogative of avant-garde

filmmakers such as Henri Chomette, Renée Clair, and Jean Epstein to delve into the raw perceptual qualities of cinema – qualities that precede the *logos* of the image such as narrative and characters – with the view that cinema "depended upon its capacity of creating "perceptual shocks"" (Branco, 2020, p.132), envisioning the perceptual processes of the audience as a complex medium for the film to enlighten and enrich the prosaic inner experience. This approach is salient in the popular techniques that characterise the era; extreme close-ups, bizarre and off-kilter framing of banal situations, and the employment of double exposure, among many other spatially and geometrically distortive techniques, form the aesthetic backbone of a movement that, reminiscent of Heidegger, ultimately asks the questions: How does the human being interact with and act upon the moving image, and how does the moving image interact with and act upon the human being? In this way, what the camera offered avant-garde filmmakers was not a framing device with which to construct a logical sequence of entertaining images, but rather a tool with which to do philosophy; a device that afforded these practitioners an opportunity to closely examine the inner experience of perception and its interaction with cinema.

Furthering the philosophical implications of this approach was the insistence on cinema being able to impart brand new experiences to its audiences. Far from meditations on existing spaces and objects, films such as Chomette's *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* (1926) and Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924) use the perspective of the camera to awaken new forms and geometric structures within objects that are otherwise dormant in the object's everyday context. Chomette was particularly vocal in his appreciation of this aspect of the moving image, writing in literary journal *Cahiers de Moir* (1925):

> ...the cinema is not limited to the representative world. It can create ... [T]he cinema can draw from itself a new potentiality which, leaving behind the logic of events and the reality of objects, engenders a series of visions that are unknown – inconceivable outside the union of the lens and the moving reel of film.
>
> Chomette, 1925, p.372

It is necessary to point out that, as a filmmaker, Chomette is of course extending his appreciation beyond the filmic material itself (i.e. the final product that is seen by an audience; the complete film) to the technology that facilitates its creation; if the art of cinema lies in its synthesis of images that are "inconceivable outside the union of the lens and the moving reel of film," the filmmaker is implicitly operating with technology that is capable of genuine discovery at the perceptual level, and the film therefore becomes a showcase for an uncovering of new phenomenological ground. This is a crucial aspect of avant-garde filmmaking that readily invites a Heideggerian perspective: through cinema, the French avant-garde filmmakers interfaced with their tools in a fashion that resembled a sensorily investigative approaching of reality, intent on deciphering and embellishing pure concepts such as form, movement, and geometry with a goal to reveal these concepts to an otherwise unenlightened audience; a cinema that, to reiterate Heidegger, "deals with entities within-the-world, and does so concernfully and with familiarity" (Heidegger, 1927, p.138).

Indeed, phenomenological discovery appeared to be at the heart of this era of the avant-garde movements, with the camera and the film reel bringing about integral turning-points in the fields of aesthetics and philosophy; Jean Epstein went as far as to suggest that the camera and the cinematographic image allowed us to discover "the cinematic property of things" (Epstein, 1923, p.315), implying a quality of reality that had not been available to us before the invention of these technologies, which is understood by Epstein in terms of *photogénie*. Between Chomette and Epstein's writings on cinema, which reflect the wider attitudes of their filmmaking peers of the time, it is evident that French avant-garde cinema was predicated on a deep curiosity towards a novel and emerging technology that they regarded as an *extension* of our perceptive capabilities and, furthermore, opened up brand new spiritual and philosophical frameworks of beings through the visual experience of motion. This spiritual and phenomenological connection between the practitioner, their tools, and their creations is highlighted once more by Epstein with his claim that "only mobile aspects of the world, of

things and souls, may see their moral value increased by filmic reproduction" (Epstein, 1923, p.315). This statement forms the basis of my contention that cinematic technology, when engaged with in this way, evolves beyond a mere means to an end (i.e. the means with which to create the cinematographic image) into a series of devices that are capable of spiritual enrichment and philosophical inquiry, such that the sole act of interfacing with these technologies fundamentally changes how one sees the world.

Presently these preliminary linkages between Heidegger's *Dasein* and avant-garde filmmaking appear auspiciously intuitive, but therein lies complicated frictions when one considers the wider scope of Heidegger's solution to what he called *die Seinsfrage (*lit. *the question of Being).* Though *Being and Time* represents a substantial portion of Heidegger's thinking on this question, his project is fully realised across a range of subsequent publications wherein *Dasein* is examined under the context of specific human activities such as technological development and artistic practice. These topics are covered in his *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954) and *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1950) respectively, with both texts behaving as an extended practical application of Dasein as it is disclosed to us in the modern era. In the former, Heidegger expresses a deep existential concern with the direction that modern technology has steered the human condition into, harrowingly stating that technology in the modern era increasingly threatens to "slip from human control" (Heidegger, 1954, p.5), whereas the latter examines the ontology of the work of art as characterised by *poiesis* (a term that Heidegger appropriates from Greek to mean a *revealing* or *unconcealment* of World aspects). Whilst Heidegger takes no stance on cinema whatsoever, his discussions on what he considers ideal works of art - when read alongside *The Question Concerning Technology* - appear to implicitly erase cinema from his notion of 'art' altogether. Nevertheless, film scholars such as Robert Sinnerbrink and Shawn Loht have resisted these apparent incompatibilities in the Heideggerian framework and insist through their writings that cinema can be both satisfactorily read through Heidegger and substantially enriched by it.

In *Phenomenology of Film* (2017), Loht examines *Being and Time* in order to develop a framework of viewing the moving image (*film-viewing*) that is predicated on phenomenology. Loht's focus on Heidegger arises from the two aforementioned characteristics of the philosopher's body of work: a strong critical focus on the state of art and technology in modern society, and an almost total absence of discourse on cinema. As Loht points out, the former and the latter are deeply connected; Heidegger's neglect of cinema discourse stems from his overwhelmingly negative (and generally technophobic) outlook on the modern technological revolution as put forward in his *The Question Concerning Technology*, of which cinema and its related technologies are inextricably apart of (Loht, 2017, p.76). Robert Sinnerbrink, addressing the same conflict of ideologies, emphasises the difficulty in cohesively merging the two:

> At first glance, the idea of a Heideggerian thinking of cinema seems unthinkable. Heidegger's rare remarks on the subject make it clear that he considered cinema and photography to be forms of technical representation signifying the 'end of art' in modernity.
>
> Sinnerbrink, 2006, p.27

Indeed, Heidegger's approach to the work of art exclusively concerns 'classical' mediums that have existed since antiquity: painting, sculpture, architecture, theatre, and poetry. Furthermore, his case studies are historically situated in the classical and ancient eras of such mediums: Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes* (1885) and an ancient Greek temple. As such, Loht's project not only endeavours to construct a new method of reading cinematographic images but also attempts to fill a gap in the Heideggerian framework of Being. It is Loht's contention, then, that a phenomenological approach to cinema, Heidegger's 'missing piece', is somewhat necessary, and indeed that something is lost without such an approach:

> I think we overlook the holistic dimensions of our connection to films when we render films and the medium at large as something distinct from the viewer, that is, as independent objects whose being is not constituted in a phenomenological disclosure.
>
> Loht, 2017, p.38

As mentioned, a major hurdle in making such a philosophical move necessarily requires a unification, or at least some uncovering of common ground, between Heidegger's conception of art and his outspokenly critical stance on the modern Being's relationship with technology. Further complications arise when one considers that the core mechanical functions of cinema are fundamentally incompatible with Heidegger's philosophical project altogether; a network of mechanical devices that work to reproduce movement through a sequence of images that are precisely spaced apart and played at specific rates. In cinema, movement is objectively measured, coordinated, and divided, subject to a Cartesian system of thinking - one that Heidegger made concentrated efforts to divorce his own philosophy from – and is therefore removed from the relational and universally reciprocal framework of Dasein. Additionally, the cinematographic image – which tends to be geared towards representing a 'real world', a window into a real space and time - is restricted and boundaried by the frame; portions of the world are sectioned off and divorced from their surroundings, existing in isolation as an object of cinematic study. Though Heidegger's literature on cinema is incredibly sparse, his scepticism of and pessimistic approach to modern technology is thoroughly detailed, and these technologically predicated qualities of the cinematic process therefore create complicated frictions between the Heideggerian notion of 'art' and the concept of cinema altogether. Indeed, as Loht emphasises, the entirety of media (including cinema) and telecommunication technologies are what Heidegger considered to be "a product of modern technology's totalizing conquest of life" (Loht, 2017, p.76), reducing cinema to nothing more than a category of instruments that threaten to destabilize the human condition and, to harken back to Sinnerbrink's insight, represent the end of art in its entirety.

In framing cinema under these circumstances, it is of course Loht's implication that this task has not yet been satisfactorily attempted within a filmmaking context. Though he concludes his book with a number of Heideggerian readings of pre-existing films (including those of Heideggerian scholar and filmmaker Terrance Malick, of which Sinnerbrink takes a

mutual interest in his paper *A Heideggerian Cinema?* (2006)), these readings exist as a retroactive application of Loht's proposed framework in a purely demonstrative capacity. This is by no means a fault of Loht's work; following his detailed encounter with Heidegger's phenomenology – which includes a promising structure with which to approach the use of the technological apparatus of film itself as a function of Dasein's *worldedness* - Loht brings forth a host of questions that suggest interesting new potentials for cinema. Of prime importance to this thesis is the question: How might a phenomenological approach to the use of cinematic technology affect the aesthetics of cinema? Indeed, if one were to produce a film utilising Loht's framework, what would such a film look like, and how might its images behave and interact with each other?

Following on from my earlier statements on the French avant-garde filmmakers and their relationship to their tools, it is my contention that such an approach had already taken place during the 1920s. I further contend that this decade in general, referred to in French cultural history as the *Anneés folle* ('*the crazy years*'), saw the formation and propagation of a range of politically disruptive art movements that ultimately concerned themselves with asking questions of a particularly Heideggerian nature; chiefly: What is this thing we call 'art'? What does it mean for art to '*be*', and what is art '*doing*?' Indeed, the most prominent movements of this era (such as dadaism and surrealism) specifically analysed art from the perspectives of its explicit form, its structure, and its presence in the world as a phenomenon that all human beings engage with through perception and thus experience changes in thought.

These filmmakers, then, wholly conceived of the moving image as something to be beheld, to be witnessed and processed as an external phenomenon that can profoundly affect inner experience. Already, there are parallels to Loht's above claim that many dimensions of the film viewing experience are lost "when we render films and the medium at large as something distinct from the viewer" (Loht, 2017, p.38): the French avant-garde's cinematic framework made efforts to establish a close connection between the film and the viewer – to

the level of direct perception and consciousness – and therefore aimed to produce works in which the space between the viewer and the film is somewhat indistinct. As such, I put forward that one can read the movement through the lens of Loht's principles as laid out in *Phenomenology of Film* with respect to bringing to light a practical, concrete envisioning of such principles. In doing so, it is my intention to establish the French avant-garde as plentiful grounds for discovery, a proverbial launching-off point, that one can look to when attempting to engage in phenomenological filmmaking.

Chapter 2: Developing an Avant-Garde Cinematic Phenomenology

I will begin this development of a Heideggerian approach to the French avant-garde by discussing the contentious merging of Dasein and cinema's unequivocal connection to the modern technological revolution. These seemingly irreconcilable elements present the greatest challenge in forming a constructive and cohesive discourse on this topic, and I will therefore be referring to this ideological conflict as the *Heideggerian gap*. The components that form the Heideggerian gap are twofold: firstly, across the body of Heidegger's literature published towards the latter part of his philosophical career, there is a vociferous expression of an existential fear pertaining to modern technology and human advancement in general; in his essay *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954), Heidegger is unabashedly critical of the form that modern technology has taken and makes the further claim that all technology has adopted the function of ordering the natural world into an unnatural state that is fit for human exploitation and consumption (a state that Heidegger refers to as *standing reserve*), altogether adopting a fatalistic stance towards the culture of modern science and technology. Secondly, in opposition: cinema as an artform *is* modern technology; the means through which cinema is achieved is a direct product of the modern technological revolution, and the cinematographic

camera was born from mechanical engineering and innovations in optics as opposed to a practical solution to forming a material into a desired shape (e.g. the simple hammer and chisel as a solution to creating representations in stone). Due to the intensity of the conflict that forms the Heideggerian gap, it is necessary to resolve it before one can begin to apply an artform predicated on technoscience such as cinema to Heidegger's notion of art.

Heidegger's stance on technology is well-documented and remains frequently researched and debated by contemporary philosophers. Indeed, given the scope of technological development across the 20th and 21st centuries and the power that it has demonstrated over natural forces and the stability of the planet itself, a philosophical approach to the ethics and ontology of technology in the modern age was necessary, and Heidegger's technophobic attitudes are of course not entirely unfounded. As Heidegger scholar Don Ihde writes:

> Among the few philosophers to date to have taken technology seriously, it should be apparent that Martin Heidegger is a pioneer in this field. He was among the first to raise technology to a central concern for philosophy, and he was amongst the first to see in it a genuine ontological issue.
>
> Ihde, p.28, 2010

If we are to take a cohesive approach to cinema under a Heideggerian framework, then, his account of technology must be taken seriously with respect to the cinematographic camera; the camera itself needs to be redefined as a tool capable of phenomenological and existential inquiry, whilst also retaining its stance as a modern technological device that nevertheless comfortably sits within the Heideggerian notion of art, or *poiesis*.

In *The Question Concerning Technology,* as with all his works following *Being and Time*, Heidegger approaches technology using Dasein as a given foundational philosophy. For this reason, a brief explanation of how Dasein interfaces with beings is necessary; crucially for the purposes of this thesis, such insights present a rich account of the human being's relationship to tools and devices which naturally extends to Dasein's relationship to the camera as a tool of modern technology. As discussed in Chapter 1, Heidegger describes the world that

Dasein finds itself in – and the world that Dasein henceforth creates for itself – not as a world of neutral objects that can be usefully broken down into the minutiae of their constituent parts and qualities, but as a world filled with *Things* that have functions and bespoke purposes, of which Dasein innately grasps as *equipment* in accordance to its best interests and intentions (Heidegger, 1927, p.69). Indeed, for Heidegger, it is impossible for Dasein to apprehend the world in any other way; the world discloses Things to Dasein, and Dasein in turn immediately and automatically takes on the task of appropriating Things for a given purpose. In Chapter III of *Being and Time,* describing the moment that one enters a room, Heidegger writes:

> What we encounter closest to us (though not as something taken as a theme) is the room; and we encounter it not as something 'between four walls' in a geometrical spatial sense, but as equipment for residing. Out of this 'arrangement' emerges, and it is in this that any 'individual' item of equipment shows itself.
>
> Heidegger, 1927, p.69

Again, the reciprocity of Dasein and world is foregrounded: the world is fit for Dasein's purposes, and it is such because Dasein makes it so. To expand on this, Heidegger goes on to establish the concept of *ready-to-hand* (*Zuhandenheit*) which will serve as a central aspect of my argument that engaging with cinematic technology alters one's view of the world. In essence, ready-to-hand (or *readiness-to-hand*) ascribes a phenomenological merging of world - as grasped as *equipment* - with Dasein in such a fashion that equipment is 'absorbed' into it, behaving as an extension of Dasein itself (Heidegger, 1927, p.72). Heidegger famously uses the chain of relations between a workman, their hammer, and nails to demonstrate this:

> Equipment can genuinely show itself only in dealings cut to its own measure (hammering with a hammer, for example); but in such dealings an entity of this kind is not grasped thematically as an occurring Thing, nor is the equipment-structure known as such even in the using.
>
> Heidegger, 1927, p.69

Here Heidegger means to describe the phenomenon wherein one becomes absorbed in a task involving equipment to such an extent that the equipment itself becomes 'invisible,' in

the sense that the user (Dasein) no longer needs to account for the spatial and geometric dimensions of the Thing they are holding (its "equipment-structure"). He continues:

> ...[T]he less we just stare at the hammer-Thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is – as equipment. The hammering itself uncovers the specific 'manipulability' of the hammer. Only because equipment has this 'Being-in- itself' and does not merely occur, is it manipulable in the broadest sense and at our disposal.
>
> Heidegger, 1927, p.69

It is in this sense that, in the hammer's use, Dasein encounters the hammer as ready-to-hand. Since *equipment* for Heidegger refers to the activity manifest in the functionality of a Thing (in this case, a hammer's hammering), the Thing's functionality for Dasein is inseparable from its other qualities (its shape, material, colour etc.). As Heidegger points out, Dasein's readiness-to-hand ensures that what we perceive in tools "...is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that which we concern ourselves is primarily with the work [that the tool is functionally related to]" (Heidegger, 1927, p.70); what we see is never a hammer as a mere object, but always a *hammer* for *hammering* (with the 'hammering' being the hammer's *in-order-to;* the hammer is there for Dasein 'in-order-to' hammer). Of key importance to readiness-to-hand, then, is its "*character of inconspicuous familiarity"* (Heidegger, 1927, p.104); Dasein encounters equipment with a familiarity that it itself is unaware of and carries out its given task by unconsciously grasping the equipment's function as an inconspicuous fact. In practical terms, this is how one can operate complex equipment such as cars – that require a huge deal of cognitive reasoning and coordination to safely manoeuvre – as naturally and unconsciously as operating the movements of one's limbs: regardless of its complexity, once sufficient adaption to the equipment has taken place, the equipment 'disappears' into Dasein to be put to use as an activity (in this case, driving) as opposed to a physical piece of technology. Putting aside Heidegger's later views on technology for now, let us first apply Heidegger's notion of ready-to-hand to a camera in place of a hammer. In doing so, I hope to illustrate in

part how the human being's relationship to the camera as equipment consequently changes their perspective of the world.

It is convenient for this cinematic application of ready-to-hand that the technological advancements of the 21st century have made camera technology ubiquitous in the form of phone cameras that are easy to use and manipulate. Taking a photograph or a video clip has become as rudimentary a task as driving a hammer to a nail, and the cumbersome mechanical interfaces of legacy celluloid-based cameras have been reduced to simple finger movements and presses on a touchscreen. This is to say that, whilst filmmakers engage with more complex camera devices to a more detailed and intricate degree than the average user of a phone camera, the streamlined user experience of these technologies readily invokes the "character of inconspicuous familiarity" that readiness-to-hand is predicated on. Consider the modern photographic trend of 'selfies', where one engages with the camera in much the same way one engages with a mirror. When taking a selfie, the photographer typically holds their phone (camera) up to their face and gazes into the content of the frame that the camera lens produces. Notice here that during this process, the gaze is not on the camera itself, nor is there much concern given to the elements surrounding the frame; the gaze is solely on the framed representation of the world that the camera receives. Now the photographer is not seeing through their eyes, but the 'eyes' of the camera. Indeed, if the initial framing is perceived as undesirable, one might move and readjust the phone to achieve a more favourable angle, but the reference point for the photographer is always at first the *frame itself,* in the phenomenological sense that they are not so much consciously moving a *camera*, but *the frame that the camera might capture.* In a Heideggerian sense, the camera for the photographer has become inconspicuous, and the photographer is preoccupied with the *work* that the camera carries out as equipment; the camera, for the photographer, is ready-to-hand. I will return to this preliminary exploration of cinematic readiness-to-hand later, as presently the application

is functional but incomplete. A further exploration into Heidegger's views on technology and art are necessary before the Heideggerian gap can be closed.

In *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954), Heidegger espouses an unapologetically critical stance on modern technology and the modern scientific revolution, of which the cinematographic camera owes its existence to. Typical of his phenomenology and in strict keeping with his concept of Dasein, Heidegger does not approach technology as a grouping of objects (of which we might assign the noun *instruments* or *devices,* each belonging to themselves with bespoke purposes), but rather concerns himself with what technology as a concept *does* (Heidegger, 1954, p.04). Across the range of things that we call *instruments,* that we further categorise under the umbrella of 'technology', Heidegger uncovers a ubiquitous feature that allows a more expansive definition of technology to be substantiated: "Technology is a way of revealing … it is the realm of revealing, i.e., of truth" (Heidegger, 1954, p.12). In the essay, Heidegger means to ontologically explore *technology* as a philosophical question in its historical entirety, but the focus of his critique predominantly rests with the developments and applications of the technological enterprise across the 20th and 21st century; Heidegger illustrates a clear contrast between "older handwork technology" with that of modern technology (Heidegger, 1954, p.05), with the historical distinction between them being the advent of electricity and automated industrial systems. Modern innovations such as turbines and generators, aircraft, radar, and "high frequency equipment" (Heidegger, 1954, p.05) are, amongst many other examples, held responsible for being representative of a flaw in the contemporary human condition: it is Heidegger's contention that, as the state and knowledge of Beings has progressed throughout history, our definition and use of technology has become distorted such that "[e]verywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering" (Heidegger, 1954, p.17). Here Heidegger establishes his notion of the *standing-reserve* (Heidegger, 1954, p.17),

an existential state of both the modern world and Beings in which nature is conceived of purely as a resource to be exploited.

At this stage, especially with the retrospective angle one has of human history in the 21st century, Heidegger's concerns do not appear entirely misplaced: the stability of nature and the planet have been adversely affected by the activities of industrial production and widespread depletion of natural resources. But how does such a view of technology extend to that of the camera and the cinematic art it creates? It is crucial to point out that, although Heidegger's technophobic attitudes towards modern technology arise from conspicuous sources of ecological danger such as factories, modes of transport, and power generators, his overall critique on the contemporary Being's use of technology stems not from the technological products themselves but rather the attitudes and modes of use that Being has become accustomed to in the modern era. As Ihde states in his reading of the essay:

> Phenomenologically, for every variant noematic condition there is a corresponding noetic condition. Thus, if the world is viewed as standing-reserve, the basic way in which the world is perceived, there must also be a correlated human response. That, too, takes particular shape in a technological epoch.
>
> Ihde, 2010, p.34

Standing-reserve thus refers to both the state of the world under the reign of modern technology as well as the given mode of interaction that Beings have with technology. Taking the earlier analysis of readiness-to-hand into consideration, as well as Dasein's reciprocity between world and Being, if the world is disclosed as standing-reserve then the equipment within it and how we interface with it takes on this quality too. Ihde summarises this particular angle of Heidegger's philosophy as such: modern technology has taken man "into the process of *ordering*" (Ihde, 2010, p.35). Therefore, if all modern technology is to be taken as a threat to the state of Being and its world in the form of engendering an *ordering* into *standing-reserve,* the camera plays a role in Heidegger's catastrophic notion that technology progressively "threatens to slip from human control" (Heidegger, 1954, p.05).

In *Phenomenology of Film* (2017), Shawn Loht offers a robust analysis of *The Question Concerning Technology* from the perspective of cinema and the film-viewing experience. Such an analysis is both necessary and challenging since, as Loht points out, Heidegger's comments on cinema are sparse and often take the form of off-hand remarks, with only one notable instance where Heidegger names and critiques a specific film (Loht, 2017, p.79). Nevertheless, a cinematically geared reading of Heidegger's critique of technology reveals an implicit rejection of cinema at a fundamental level. Loht writes:

> Heidegger considers film ... to be a product of modern technology's totalizing conquest of life. Film for Heidegger comprises a static, ultimate form of "representation" fostered by being's revealing itself in the guise of "en-framing" (or in a more recent translation, "positionality").
>
> Loht, 2017, p.76

En-framing, as interpreted by Loht, is the ontological prerequisite for *standing-reserve*, a revealed form of being that sets upon the world "such that the earth and everything it houses become seen as mere "stock"" (Loht, 2017, p.76). What is ultimately emphasized by Loht with regards to *en-framing* is its characteristic mode of *totalization* (Loht, 2017, p.76), a way of taking the world and its beings in all their relational complexity and reducing them to a singular purpose or function (in this case, "stock", or standing-reserve). Given the inner mechanisms of cinematic equipment and the functions of image projection, Loht further explains the means by which cinema and photography en-frame the world as stock as according to Heidegger:

> Filmic media—regardless of whether one means still photography or motion pictures—offer a tailor-made case of Heidegger's conception of technological en-framing because of their capacity to set upon and *capture* life in static images. These are images that moreover are chosen by and for the viewing subject.
>
> Loht, 2017, p.78

It is evident, then, how Heidegger might conceive of cinema and photography as endeavours to portray a false perspective of the world, commanded by Beings instead of the world as it is given to us. Under this view, film and moving images altogether represent a commanding of the gaze: of all the world and the entirety of its beauty, the film can only portray

this particular moment at *this* particular time, and it does so by serving the best interests of the filmmaker. Loht summarises Heidegger's concerns as such:

> Heidegger's worry here is that film and photography have a totalizing ability to make us believe that whatever can be captured on film is the real. And likewise conversely: a worry is that the real is whatever appears in film-photographic images.
>
> Loht, 2017, p.78

Heidegger's preoccupation with 'the real' forms a strong thematic throughline across his works in general but becomes an integral point of discussion in his writing concerning the work of art. Indeed, when paired with *The Question Concerning Technology,* Heidegger's approach to the work of art appears to further alienate cinema from his phenomenology due to its apparent appeal to realism and its 'capturing' of the world as 'stock.' In his seminal essay *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1950), Heidegger puts forward an account of the work of art that necessarily hinges on his own distinct phenomenological conception of *truth,* which Loht defines as "[occurring] prior to human judgement, acting as a condition of judgement even to be possible" (Loht, 2017, p.83). In a move typical of Heidegger, the essence of a concept (in this case, truth) is placed as occurring ontologically prior to its actualisation in space at a given present moment; for Loht to say that truth acts as a "condition for judgement" removes 'truth' from the context of ethics and morality (in the sense that *truth* might be conceived of as 'right' or 'just') and reframes the concept as one neutral part of a larger system that we might call 'judgement', and indeed to conceive of something as 'true' necessarily implies some prior knowledge of what truth 'is' before the fact (phenomenologically, it would be more apt to describe something as having the recognisable *quality* of truth). Truth in this context, as Loht emphasises, is therefore not contingent on a given fact or belief's correspondence to reality (Loht, 2017, p.83) but is instead characterised by Heidegger in terms of how Dasein intuitively grasps it as a concept; that is, rather than taking truth to mean a binary and static value of something (i.e. something is either true or not true), what is ultimately grasped by Dasein as 'truth' in essence is "the unconcealment of beings" (Heidegger, 1950, p.112) - inferred from

the Greek word *alētheia,* meaning 'truth' or 'unconcealing', understood in Heideggerian terms as '*becoming-true*' - or as Loht further specifies, the "*un-concealing of what was hidden*" (Loht, 2017, p.83, my emphasis).

How this relates to Heidegger's conception of art is crucial, as it is Heidegger's claim that art and truth – that is, the act of unconcealment and of revealing - are intrinsically linked. *The Origin of the Work of Art* begins with the following observation:

> The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other. Nevertheless, neither is the sole support of the other. In themselves and in their interrelations artist and work are each of them by virtue of a third thing which is prior to both, namely, that which also gives artist and work of art their names—art.
>
> Heidegger, 1950, p.89

Again, Heidegger suggests an ontological re-ordering of what we might consider 'art' in a prosaic sense: when faced with a work of art, what we encounter is certainly a work created by an artist, but this thing we call 'art' appears to transcend both of these components; the claim is that art must exist prior to the work itself in order for one to consider the work 'art' instead of something else, and indeed the artist must have been acting under some assumption of what 'art' is in order to produce a work that embodies the concept of 'art'. Heidegger makes the further observation that works of art possess a "*thingly character"* in that works can be housed and collected, displayed, transported across space, and stored, but what ultimately constitutes this thingly character – that is, a work's physical actualisation and presence in space – has nothing to do with the essence of art itself (Heidegger, 1950, p.91). For Heidegger, the work behaves as an ontological conduit through which Dasein is able to *discover* art; in accordance with *alētheia,* works of art are the means by which the truth of the art itself is disclosed and unconcealed to Dasein (Heidegger, 1950, p.102). The truth that is unconcealed by the work is the truth of beings themselves in the sense that in creating works, artists deal with depicting beings as subjects (the subject of a painting or a poem, for example) in order to reveal truths about the beings' presence in a world. This is illustrated by Heidegger through an analysis of

Vincent Van Gogh's painting *A Pair of Shoes* (1886) in which it is noted that in depicting a peasant's pair of shoes as the central subject of the painting, Van Gogh reveals to the spectator the deeper worldedness of the shoes. Heidegger writes:

> From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind ... This equipment belongs to the earth, and it is protected in the world of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-within-itself.
>
> Heidegger, 1950, p.101

Thus, what Van Gogh reveals through his depiction of the shoes is not merely the shoes themselves but an entire world that is set forth and hence arises out of their existence as equipment within the life of the peasant. It is in the shoes' *being-there,* their "resting-within-themselves", that the truth of their world is unconcealed; what is depicted is not in fact 'shoes', but rather a world that is disclosed through their walking, their clothing of the peasant, and the work that the peasant might carry out with them. Indeed, the peasant herself is completely absent from the painting, but the world and livelihood of the peasant is laid bare and revealed through the disclosure of her equipment. As Inwood writes, art for Heidegger transcends representation and depiction, and it does so by looking further than the thing itself such that, inversely, "for Heidegger it is art that *shows us what a thing is*" (Inwood, 1997, p.116, my emphasis). Likewise, Heidegger's auxiliary example of an ancient Greek holy temple develops his claim and widens its scope: the analysis makes the observation that the temple itself, taken as an object in space, "portrays nothing" (Heidegger, 1950, p.106), and it is rather in its functioning as a temple for its people that brings out its existence as an architectural work of art. He writes:

> The building encloses the figure of the god, and in this concealment lets it stand out into the holy precinct through the open portico. By means of the temple, the god is present in the temple ... The all-governing expanse of this open relational context is the world of this historical people.
>
> Heidegger, 1950, p.106

From this, Heidegger makes the claim that art's central essence, through embodying *alētheia,* is *poetry* (Heidegger, 1950, p.127). What Heidegger means here by *poetry* is not referential to literal works of written poetry but instead refers to how poetry behaves as a linguistic medium: the linguistic structure of poetry "is the open region which poetry lets happen, and indeed in such a way that only now, in the midst of beings, the open region brings beings to shine and ring out" (Heidegger, 1950, p.128); as the poem linguistically engages with the world to create an "open region" for beings to be disclosed, so too does the entirety of the artistic enterprise in its revealing and unconcealment of world aspects. *Poetry* in Heideggerian terms, then, is understood by the broader moniker *Dichtung* (the German word for 'poetry', or more specifically 'poesy', referring to the structure, style, and craft of poetry) which Inwood describes as "[having] a wide sense and means something like 'invention' or 'projection'" (Inwood, 1997, p.123). Dasein necessarily encounters *Dichtung* as poetic in nature, emphasizing that what is disclosed through a work of art is at first made possible by the inner world of the artist and their desire to project it onto the world of others. Indeed, as Inwood states, Heidegger's framework of the concept of art rests almost entirely on this notion of invention and projection, such that all great art "illuminates the ordinary, rips us for a time out of the ordinary into another world, or it changes our whole view of the world" (Inwood, 1997, p.123).

The 'Origin' essay completes the picture of the challenges that the Heideggerian gap poses to a phenomenological approach to cinema. Heidegger's existential concern towards technology coupled with his compelling synthesis of the underlying mechanisms of art create philosophical frictions even in the midst of cinema's equally compelling artistic merits and capabilities. That art for Heidegger necessarily hinges on *truth* (or *alētheia*) implicitly distances the moving image from the artistic world when the moving image itself is not considered capable of representing anything 'real' or 'truthful' in the Heideggerian sense. Here I will propose two preliminary critiques: firstly, regarding en-framing, is the observation that all art

- and indeed the entirety of human experience - arises from and is contained by en-framing as a necessity; one cannot avoid it. To claim that anything is en-framed is to claim that limits are imposed onto what might be considered a limitless concept, and such limits are ubiquitous in nature; that Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes* can be satisfactorily analysed to draw out world-disclosure through Dichtung does nothing to escape the fact that the painting is itself framed and, exactly like the moving image, is limited in scope by the rigid spatiotemporal boundaries of such a frame. The human experience, too, is boundaried in such a way: our visual world is limited by its own periphery, and the sensory experience in general is subject to temporal framing in that all sensations have beginnings and endings in time. This is not to say that Heidegger's analysis of art is incorrect or unsatisfactory, but rather foregrounds the fact that Heidegger's examples of what he considers great works of art are just as limited and just as en-framed as cinematic works that could be considered of equal merit. Secondly, it is Loht's staunch contention that film-viewing, when analysed phenomenologically, produces a decidedly 'worlded' experience "such that something akin to a *familiar* or *meaningful* world emerges for the viewer" (Loht, 2017, p.44). As will later be demonstrated, Dasein possesses an innate capacity to emotionally engage with representations and depictions, but what is more importantly foregrounded by this claim is that it is this exact sense of familiarity with images that enables films to unfold as bespoke *worlds* that contain and are constituted by existentially meaningful relations. Loht invokes *Citizen Kane's* (Welles, 1941) iconic utterance of the phrase "Rosebud" as an example, observing that the phrase on its own (in its existence as a pure phrase or utterance) means nothing, but that it "gains its meaning from the film world in which it resides" (Loht, 2017, p.44). With this claim, very much in the style of Heidegger's analyses of Van Gogh's painting and the Greek temple, Loht illuminates in cinema what is ever-present throughout Heidegger's phenomenology: worlds inhabited by beings that have functions, purposes, and relations to the viewer's own sense of a world, and their own sense of space and time. Indeed, Loht concludes his point by recognising the absurdity in thinking about

films in any other way, stating that to view the worlds of cinema as synonymous with our own (that is, to consider films as viewing '*the'* world as opposed to '*a'* world) "misses the fact that world is an existential-transcendental feature of Dasein itself" (Loht, 2017, p.44). From this, it is abundantly clear that film-viewing can at the very least be rudimentarily described as an existential process, and at its logical extreme, can embody an extensive form or mode of *Being-in-the-world.*

However, as Loht focuses on the film-viewing experience as opposed to the filmmaking experience, I will diverge from his work for a moment to introduce viewpoints from the French avant-garde that simultaneously counter Heidegger's attitudes towards cinema as well as integrate it into his theory of art under technology. At this stage, it is notable to point out that the concerns that cinematic and photographic media aim to destabilise reality through its proliferation of human-selected images were not unique to Heidegger at the time of his writing. Heidegger's critiques of photographic technology and its relation to the authenticity of time and space are somewhat shared with preceding philosopher Henri Bergson in his *Matter and Memory* (1896), and the notion that the populus might begin to receive cinematic and photographic images as representative of reality itself bares striking resemblance to Guy Deborde's manifesto as presented in his *Society of the Spectacle* (1967). Indeed, on the other hand are the film philosophers and theorists such as André Bazin that celebrate and revel in cinema's apparent ability to adhere to realism, to such a degree that the moving image is "founded on a much higher degree of realism" (Bazin, 1967, p.40). This is to say that the fact that these aspects of cinema have been covered and debated amongst Heidegger, Bergson, Deborde, Bazin, and many others, is proof in and of itself that cinema as a concept is capable of inspiring philosophical inquiry, and it is my contention that this catalyst for inquiry is itself a rich part of the cinematic experience within a phenomenological context. The avant-garde theories of cinema present a robust response to Heidegger considering the following: avant-garde cinema has no concern with providing an 'objective' reality or prescribed truth and is

decidedly aimed at the subjective, lived perceptual experience that the filmic material can provide. Furthermore, the writings of the prominent filmmakers that constituted the French avant-garde show great reverence for the technologies that they were operating with at the perceptual level, establishing the grounds for the claim that this style of filmmaking changes the worlds of not just the audience, but the filmmaker as well.

In her paper *The Awakening of the Body: "Film as Sensation" in the First French Avant-Garde* (2020), Patrícia Branco discusses a debate that took place across the early 1920s Parisian filmmaking landscape wherein filmmakers were tied between two proposed ideals of cinema: Film as 'Sentiment' and Film as 'Sensation' (Branco, 2020, p.128). Drawing from the literature of the prominent participants of the debate (namely Henri Fescourt and Jean-Louis Bouquet as proponents of 'Sentiment' and Henri Chomette and Pierre Porte as proponents of 'Sensation'), Branco distinguishes between the two ideals as such: Film as 'Sentiment' describes a cinema of characters, actions, and events (Branco, 2020, p.128) – what one might generally call 'dramatic cinema' - whereas Film as 'Sensation' is substantiated on the belief "that the sensations produced by film had the capacity to probe material and corporeal spheres, opening new perceptual fields and new material dimensions of reality" (Branco, 2020, p.129). Indeed, when viewing the films created by the filmmakers on either side of the debate, one can see a clear tension between their approaches to cinema; the 'Sentiment' films of Fescourt during this era, of which Boquet was a frequent collaborator in the form of a screenplay writer and film editor, take the form of traditional narratives that are geared towards empathy and meaningful connections between characters and events. This is evident in Fescourt's *Mathias Sandorf* (1921) and his filmic adaptation of *Les Misérables* (1925) which are firmly placed within the genres of adventure and drama respectively, leaning towards a logical cinema of history and entertainment. On the other hand, though Pierre Porte was a film theorist and not a filmmaker, he passionately endorsed the surrealist and avant-garde 'Sensation' films of Henri Chomette, Jean Epstein, and Germaine Dulac in his writings. Active in the debate alongside

Porte, Chomette himself was pre-occupied with the notion of *cinéma pur* (or *pure cinema*), creating what are perhaps the most extreme examples of 'Film as Sensation' with *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* (*Five minutes of pure cinema,* 1926) and *Jeux des reflets et de la vitesse* (*Games on reflection and speed*, 1925).

To re-introduce a Heideggerian angle to this discussion, the Sentiments vs. Sensation debate ultimately concerned itself with the functional *ontological purpose* of the image; the quarrel amongst these early filmmakers can be broadly summarised as a group of artists asking the question "What should the moving image *do*?" or, in Heideggerian terms, "What is the moving image's *in-order-to*?" It is appropriate at this point to draw attention to a short section in Loht's book titled 'Films Conceived As Things Ready-To-Hand', in which the film-viewing experience is discussed in the context of Dasein "insofar as films and the film apparatus have their own tool-character" (Loht, 2017, p.40), referencing the various cinematic equipment required to generate a cinematographic image. Loht rightly points out that during the film-viewing experience, the chain of equipment involved in producing a film for an audience to view - of which Loht designates as the *media,* the *playback device*, the *light source* and *the surface upon which the light is directed* - are "by and large transparent in the course of the film-viewing" (Loht, 2017, p.40), going on to explain that each of these apparatus have the bespoke purpose of being transparent in order to produce an authentic film-viewing experience (Loht, 2017, p.41). As Loht summarises:

> The lived-experience aspect of what these pieces of equipment actually furnish – a film that we view – demonstrates that the film image itself has a definite essence stemming from its use, that is, from the viewing thereof. Film-viewing is most fully realized when the equipment is transparent or even functionally invisible, where the viewer is absorbed in the play of cinematic images.
>
> Loht, 2017, p.41

This is to say that, even in the presence of the knowledge that the images being displayed are the product of work done by complex apparatus 'behind the scenes', what is ultimately received by the audience are the images themselves; the machinic elements are

phenomenologically inconspicuous in the activity of film-viewing - unless of course, as Loht points out, they are made obvious through malfunctions and "blemishes" that disrupt the image (Loht, 2017, p.41) - and thus it is the images that become privileged to the audience's perception. In saying this, Loht is of course correct: in viewing a film under the ideal conditions (i.e. correctly functioning equipment), one pays no mind to the workings of the mechanisms at play that facilitate the moving image, and thus Loht can comfortably make the phenomenological assertion that "...one's viewing of [film images] is predicated on Dasein's capacity to employ objects for the sake of purposes ... [F]ilms are objects with which Dasein is familiar as part of its shared world" (Loht, 2017, p.41). Images then, be they cinematic or photographic in nature, can at the very least be rudimentarily described as *equipment* within the world that Dasein uses for various purposes - indeed, Loht emphasises that, since antiquity, philosophy has recognised the human being's propensity for intuitively grasping mimetic representation (Loht, 2017, p.42) -though such purposes are considerably more multifaceted than the purpose of a hammer in relation to nails; these are Dasein's purposes of emotional engagement and reciprocal connection with a given Thing (in this case, a representational image). However, it is my contention that Loht's named apparatus for film-viewing (the *media,* the *playback device*, the *light source,* and *the surface upon which the light is directed*) is missing a crucial component that furthers the reach of his initial description of the image as ready-to-hand: the camera that was used to initially capture the footage that substantiates the *media,* and the human being that was operating it.

To expand on Loht's initial illustration of the inconspicuousness of the apparatus playing the film to a viewer, I put forward the observation that the camera and its human-led movements disappear into the film image too. I will use a contemporary film as an initial example: in viewing the iconic opening scenes of Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), where the camera shakily and unpredictably struggles to keep pace with the violent chaos unfolding on a war-torn Omaha Beach, one does not typically envisage the camera

operator holding their equipment and moving their bodies to capture the projected images. It is *solely the activity of and in the image itself that is privileged to our perceptions*, characterising a deep state of immersion that is apt and in-keeping with the tenets of readiness-to-hand. It is perhaps this ready-to-hand separation from the fundamental apparatus required for filmmaking and film projecting that creates a strong distinction between that of film-*viewing* experiences (as Loht focuses his writings on) and of film-*making* experiences (as was the pre-occupation of the Parisian avant-garde practitioners).

Considering this distinction, I will now return to the avant-garde's 'Sentiments vs. Sensations' debate with the view that the 'Film as Sensation' concept works to bridge the gap between filmmaker and film-viewer, as well as to reframe cinema as a fully embodied phenomenological network between the filmmaker, their equipment, and their audience. Appropriately, my focus will be on filmmakers that were either vocal proponents of, or otherwise aesthetically and practically informed by, the concept of 'Film as Sensation', such as Henri Chomette, Jean Epstein, and Renée Clair. For clarity and convenience, I will be referring to the films that arose from the Sensation portion of the debate as *sensory cinema,* or *sensory films,* and as such involve works created by *sensory filmmakers.* Branco broadly summarises the ideology of 'Film as Sensation' as such:

> Proponents of "Film as Sensation" openly rejected the script and discursive logics. The trend was aesthetically driven to create a new art form that resisted the verbal, logos, conscious mental processes. Its main aesthetic enterprise was, then, to assess how artistic experiences can arise, not from abstract concepts, but instead from material impressions, sensations, and the body.
>
> Branco, 2020, p.129

The focus on physical bodily sensations was paramount to these filmmakers' definition of "sensation." Branco explains that the proponents of sensory cinema, drawing on the notion of "shocks" from adjacent artistic movements such as Dadaism, held the belief that cinema could impart fully embodied "perceptual shocks" (Branco, 2020, p.132); sensory filmmakers were concerned with the direct somatic response that the moving image elicited from the

viewer, and it was through the viewer's body - not necessarily the image itself - that a cinematic experience would come into being. Indeed, such a theory of cinema took into account the body's immediate organic inclinations and intentions towards the moving image and considered the innate biological functions of visual perception as fundamental to cinema's ontology; Branco identifies the concepts of *kinetic vision* and *photogénie* as central to the Film as Sensation debate, with the former being largely informed by "the conviction that the viewer's sensory organs played a dynamic role in the process of constructing meaning [from cinematic images]" (Branco, 2020, p.131), and the latter being "defined as a relationship of mediation and transformation of the real through the camera and the screen" (Branco, 2020, p.131).

Already it is evident that, like Loht in *Phenomenology of Film*, sensory filmmakers had an interest in illustrating a phenomenological network of human and equipment relations that substantiated the cinematic experience. Sensory cinema however, through prioritising bodily sensation and approaching the camera lens as a *mediator* between the filmmaker and the film-viewer, introduces crucial somatic nodes into this network that places the body of the spectator in a privileged position; they are not merely gazing at the moving image but interacting with it at the somatic level, being moved and changed by it as an embodied part of the network of apparatus that produces the image itself. To complete this picture of a phenomenological filmmaking framework, it is necessary now to turn to the works of the early French avant-garde cinema to practically demonstrate how concepts such as Dulac's *kinetic vision* and Epstein's *photogénie* work through the moving image to close the gap between audience, screen, and filmmaker.

Chapter 3: Envisioning a Practical Cinematic Phenomenology

The following case study examines Germaine Dulac's *La Fête espagnole* (lit. *The Spanish celebration,* 1920) with the intention of demonstrating how a cinematic experience formed through a phenomenological filmmaking practice can both satisfactorily fulfil Heidegger's demands of the work of art, and transform cinema's core essence – movement – into a multifaceted Being-world phenomenon that reveals a truth to the motion of life. I have chosen this particular work for the following reasons: as an active practitioner of the avant-garde cinema and a vocal proponent of sensory filmmaking in the Sentiments vs Sensations debate, Dulac's cinematic approach appears well-suited to be viewed through a phenomenological lens. As I will demonstrate, Dulac's philosophy of cinema brings forth a conception of cinema that, as Loht's work draws emphasis to, is able to facilitate an authentic lived experience of movement through the moving image. Crucially, this lived experience necessarily arises from Dulac's own perception of the world that is extended and thus disclosed to an audience through the phenomenological interaction between Being and equipment (in this case, cinematic technology). Additionally, due to the historical context in which *La Fête espagnole* was produced, the work can be approached theoretically as a veritable microcosm of the driving ideologies and concepts with which the sensory avant-garde used to establish itself as an overtly philosophical enterprise. Indeed, whilst Dulac's main contributions to film theory of this era can be attributed to her theories of motion and kinetic vision, her work implicitly evokes other core avant-garde concepts such as Epstein's photogénie, which work in tandem to produce a framework of cinema that is decidedly poetic in nature.

Germaine Dulac – Kinetic Vision & *La Fête espagnole* (1920)

I will begin by putting forward a preliminary observation concerning Heidegger's apparent distaste towards cinema as an artform with respect to the historical context in which *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1950) essay was developed. It is crucial to note that whilst the *Origin* essay was initially published in 1950, with a final revised edition being released in 1960, the general framework for Heidegger's views as presented in the essay began to take shape across a series of lectures held in Frankfurt during the 1930s. Implicitly, Heidegger would have been developing his theories prior to the lectures themselves. This timing is significant for matters concerning cinema due to the fact that both cinematic technology and film theory were only just beginning to step out of their infancy; quite simply, as can be inferred from the literature covered in this thesis, the concerns of filmmakers around this time were themselves wholly pre-occupied with figuring out *what exactly cinema was.* Considering the timeframe, it is likely that the cinema Heidegger would have been largely exposed to was a product of what film theorist Tom Gunning considers the *cinema of attractions* - what one might call 'primitive cinema' - in which cinema was defined purely from "its ability to *show* something" (Gunning, 1986, p.382). Here Gunning refers to the pioneering cinematic innovations of August and Louis Lumiére (inventors of the cinematograph, the modern camera's primary ancestor) and George Méliès (the progenitor of special effects), of whom concerned themselves with the illusory potential of the camera solely for entertainment purposes. Examining films such as the Lumiére's famous *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* (lit. *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station*, 1896) and Méliès' *Le voyage dans la lune* (lit. *A Trip to the Moon*, 1902), Gunning bores out a filmic practice quite foreign from modern standards in that it is "a cinema that displays its visibility, willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world for a chance to solicit the attention of the spectator" (Gunning, 1986, p.382). This is to say that the mode of cinema that was propagated throughout much of Heidegger's philosophical career represented something of an antithesis to Dasein in that its mechanisms were decidedly conspicuous and

offered little else to draw from other than that the playing of the film itself elicited novel excitement from its audiences.

The shortcomings of this era of primordial cinema are echoed in Germaine Dulac's essay *Aesthetics, Obstacles, Integral Cinégraphie* (1926). Pondering the essence of cinema amidst the growing popularity of structured and formulaic narrative films, Dulac writes:

> While the other arts have had long centuries to evolve and to perfect themselves, the cinema has had only thirty years in which to be born, to grow, and to move beyond its first stammerings to acquire a conscious form of speech capable of making itself understood.
>
> Dulac, 1926, p.389

In search of cinema's voice, Dulac expresses disappointment in the direction cinema appeared to be heading, putting forward the claim that the focus on purely narrative situations in film - the "arbitrary linking of briefly described events" (Dulac, 1926, p.392) - largely ignored and therefore stifled the development of films that embraced the unique aesthetic qualities that cinema appeared capable of uncovering. For Dulac, somewhat retreading Heidegger's concerns, narrative cinema "is merely a surrogate for, or an animated reflection ... of expressive forms of literature, or of music, sculpture, painting, architecture, and the dance" (Dulac, 1926, p,389), lacking that which the cinema had so boldly promised at its outset – albeit in gestational form – with the cinematograph. Indeed, what Dulac ultimately distils from the cinematic experience, of which she ascribes *integral cinegraphie*, is its "fulfilment in the integral truth of movement" (Dulac, 1926, p.396). In other words, cinema finds its unique property as an artform through its distinct capacity to represent movement in an authentic way; narrative may play a role within a film's movements, but it is Dulac's contention that movement must be explicitly foregrounded in order to facilitate what she would consider a fully embodied cinematic experience. It is in this sense that, for Dulac, the works of primordial cinema emerged as purely cinematic experiences to a far greater extent than the structured

narrative films that cinema was becoming increasingly inundated by. Of the Lumiére's *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat,* Dulac writes:

> ...how much closer the simple sight of a suburban train entering the Vincennes station seems to the true meaning of cinegraphie. On one hand, an overbearing plot filmed without any visual care; on the other hand, the capturing of a raw movement, that of a machine with its connecting rods, its wheels, its speed.
>
> Dulac, 1926, p.391

What Dulac calls for with her definition of 'visual care' is a cinema that emphasises not just movement, but movement that is composed in such a way that a harmonious visual experience can arise from it. Emphatically, cinema's essence for Dulac is found exactly through analysing its confused origins, and furthermore appears to be found in a state that readily invites cinema into a Heideggerian notion of art; through Dulac, the cinema can be described as a mode of interacting with the world that opens a clearing and, through its filming-of, discloses the motion of beings, and indeed it must purely be the *motion* of beings – as opposed to the beings themselves - that is disclosed in order to constitute a truly cinematic experience:

> If we imagine many forms in movement unified within an artful structure composed of diverse rhythms in single images that are juxtaposed in a series, then we will successfully imagine an "integral cinegraphie."
>
> Dulac, 1926, p.396

This approach to cinema forms the backbone of Dulac's general notion of *kinetic vision*, a theory of cinematic movement which Dulac employed throughout most of her films as a necessity. In essence, kinetic vision refers to the physical movement of the eyes that occurs when a cinematic image is presented to them and operates under the assumption that it is this series of delicate organic movements that ultimately brings forth a cinematic experience to the mind. Of pertinence to phenomenology is kinetic vision's largely experiential predication on 'rhythms', which can be generally defined as the temporal impressions one intuitively feels through observing movements as they evolve through time. These are the pulses of movement that most vividly radiate from the kinetic progression of a dance, but within the theory of kinetic

vision, every movement within the frame is granted the same appeal to artistry. Dulac's staunch position as a filmmaker that principally deals with sensation is clearly brought forth with such a philosophy: the lived experience of movement in the universe is the shifting foundation of cinema.

Such an impassioned approach to cinematic movement is clearly exemplified in Dulac's film *La Fête espagnole* (lit. *The Spanish celebration,* 1920). Movement appears to permeate every aspect of this early entry in Dulac's filmography, resulting in a work that behaves as a thorough exploration of movement as a mediator between the human being and the world. Taking place against the backdrop of a lively festival in an idyllic Spanish town, *La Fête espagnole* is a romantic comedy of errors that unfolds through and is exclusively characterised by movement. Indeed, movement is embodied through the very nature of the film's protagonist Soledad, a once highly renowned dancer who has captured the hearts of best friends Réal and Miguélan almost entirely through her rhythmic approach to movement throughout space during her career. After approaching her home with the intention of making her choose between them, Réal and Miguélan are instead challenged by Soledad to attend the local festival and return to her alone, promising her heart to the one who is successful. Misinterpreting Soledad's challenge to "come back alone" as a request for one of them to die, Réal and Miguélan arrange to fight to the death at the close of the festival. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to the two friends, the young and energetic Juanito has managed to capture Soledad's heart effortlessly, whisking her away to the festival in a romantic flurry of relived youth and novel excitement. Of note here is that, despite Dulac's principal rejection of traditional narrative in cinema, a complex narrative with themes that unfold across a spectrum of characters is nonetheless present, bringing light to a core aspect of Dulac's philosophy of cinema that forms its basis: it is not the presence of narrative in film that threatens to abandon an integral cinégraphie, but rather the fashion in which that narrative unfolds; that is, narrative and characters may be present – though not as a necessity – but they must be disclosed to the audience explicitly through cinema's

essence of movement. To quote a later paper by Dulac, it is in this way that cinema can "seek its emotion in the pure optic sense" (Dulac, 1928, p.31).

Indeed, the inner cinematic world of *La Fête espagnole* is boldly brought to life through its movements, and each aspect of its lively features exists within a carefully modulated kinetic and rhythmic structure. In the film's opening sequence, a building tempo is delicately constructed with still and empty establishing shots of the town and its idyllic surroundings that slowly give way to a rising cadence of activity (00:01:15 –00:02:15). Empty roads and silent suburbs quickly become awash with crowds of people, with each shot increasing the volume of bodies and the chaos with which they move at; what starts as a lone man wandering a dirt track into town erupts into the rumbling mass of an excited populace, alternating between disorganized groups of running and dancing civilians and structured, systematic chains of marching infantrymen. With this opening sequence, Dulac readily invites a phenomenological reading of her work through her treatment of the movement of bodies as the vivacious force that brings meaning and purpose to the town. Like Heidegger's analysis of the Greek temple, Dulac initially presents the nameless Spanish town as having nothing particularly significant about it other than its overbearing standing-there, its unmistakable presence as a defined location in space. However, through its standing-there, a clearing is opened for Dulac to enrich the frame with that which she intends to philosophically explore: motion, kinetic pulses, and human activity. Through this rising montage of movement, the town is given a distinct character with which one can draw further conclusions regarding its population; this is a place that enthusiastically facilitates the joy and celebration of its inhabitants, becoming a stage for them to express the inner emotional movements of their excitement through their activities of dancing and drinking. In other words, to return to Heidegger's temple analogy, Dulac utilises movement within the frame to create a system of relations between the world and the Beings that find themselves within it, such that the town behaves as conduit through which Dulac can

express her devotion not to Heidegger's temple-bound gods, but to the cinematic experience of profoundly felt and consciously apprehended movement.

Present too is Dulac's nuanced expression of the aforementioned 'visual care' with which she engages to fully embody her desire to present a cinema of visual-kinetic poetry. In addition to the bodies flowing through the frame – each shot of which presents a progression of movements in alternating directions; a poetic juxtaposition of horizontal and vertical lines of kinetic action – are the smaller elements of what I will call 'auxiliary motion.' This is characterised by the more intricate and subtle movements of the rustling bunting above the festival, the plumes of smoke from fired guns, and the wind-blown dust from horses and carts that lingers within the frame to expose its spiralling particulate geometry. Such movements represent a sense of visual care in that they add nuance and texture to the visual prose Dulac is presenting; lacking the modern innovations of synchronised sound, Dulac is all but forced to disclose this world through the implied commotion that its movements bring about, such that she allows a cinematic voice to speak through the town's kinetic fervour. Indeed, so confident is Dulac in movement's ability to transcend itself and exclusively form a cohesive inner sensory world that, in one caption, the audience is told to "listen to the sounds of the festival" (00:02:45) before being shown more footage of rushing crowds and groups of dancing festivalgoers. The audience does not need to 'hear' in order to listen; the kinetic nature of the eyes builds a world of sound from the movement they perceive.

As movement for Dulac must be functioning in service of every aspect of the cinematic process in order to constitute an integral cinégraphie, movement must also be incorporated into the progression of the narrative itself in addition to its more directly observed presence in the frame. Proceeding the opening sequence, the audience is introduced to protagonist Soledad with an opening vignette that demonstrates a juxtaposition of kinetics. As the narrative moves from its rising kinetic chaos, Soledad is depicted in quiet solitude as she lounges on her balcony, surrounded by various animals; unlike the festival and its excitable dancing patrons, Soledad's

world is constructed from movements of a more graceful form: that of the playful winding of her cats, the delicate flutter of a parrot's wings as it rests on its perch, and the gentle, considerate motions of a loyal dog. A retired dancer, Soledad's lonesomeness arises from her longing for the mysterious Juanito, a handsome bystander who had attended one of her performances. With no knowledge of who or where the object of her desire is, Soledad's world is at a standstill and considerably distanced from the motional qualities of the nearby festival. Stuck in her wanting to find Juanito, Soledad is reluctant to move through space and instead thinks through time, where memories and reflections reveal that she not only wants for Juanito but for a return to her previous life of dance, of kinesis, rhythm, and movement. Indeed, Dulac's depiction of Soledad serves the dual function of embodying a character as well as carefully building a narrative world in which there are clearly defined dramatic tensions; Soledad's world, in all its stillness and with its chaotic motions kept at rest by her animals, directly opposes the intensity of the nearby festival, but it is Soledad's longing for movement that transforms the kinetic intensity of this distanced world into a voice that calls for her. This is to say that, with direct attention placed onto the nature of the movements within the frame, Dulac transforms physical movement such that it goes beyond itself and behaves as a cinematic device that is capable of moving things *outside* of it such as narrative, the inner lives of characters, and indeed the audience itself. That the worlds of the festival and of Soledad stand so clearly contrasted further develops Dulac's cinematic philosophy: cinematic movement creates times and places that appear to communicate with each other through the nature of the movements that occur within them, such that one gets the sense that Soledad is missing the festival, and the festival is missing Soledad. With this approach, Dulac is able to interface with cinematic technology to create a fully embodied lived experience through movement of which the audience plays a crucial role in its manufacturing. Implicitly, it is through the audience's lived experience of the cinematic movement presented in the frame that a world can be disclosed, and it thus sets about constantly evolving itself through kinetic relations. Commenting on her approach to her later work, *La*

folie des vaillants (1926), Dulac clearly shows that this core ideal had been present throughout her entire filmic career, wherein she:

> ...avoided acted scenes in order to stick to the song of the images alone, exclusively to the song of emotions within a diminished, almost nonexistent, but always dynamic action.
>
> Dulac, 1926, p.395

The dynamic nature of Dulac's filmic practice ensures that the provided cinematic experience is constantly in flux, each frame providing minute but crucial changes in the overall perceived rhythm of the piece. Dulac's appeal to the arrangement of music brings light to the totality of her theory of cinema: as movements in space create rhythm through time, each movement can be conceived of as a 'note', a quantised component of a broader developing kinetic melody. It is from this that Dulac, in evoking the motion of a sprouting grain of wheat as its form strains and extends to meet the sunlight, writes of its movements as a "joyful hymn ... stretching toward the light in a slow and then a more rapid rhythm" (Dulac, 1926, p.396). The dynamicity present in *La Fête espagnole* manifests as the sheer force of the activity in its opening festival sequence that, like the grain of wheat, undulates in intensity before coalescing into a symphony-like structure with the introduction of Soledad. By incorporating these rhythms into a narrative progression, Dulac is given the means to impart a musical-like experience to the visual essence of cinema where the audience is drawn in with intriguing rises and fluttering motifs before becoming immersed by the development of Soledad's stillness. Indeed, the melody continues to evolve as lovestruck friends Réal and Miguélan approach Soledad's home to court her, instigating a new development of tension to her world. Stubbornly incessant in their approach, Réal and Miguélan represent an unwanted new feature of Soledad's world that has taken form spontaneously, immediately shifting the qualities of the movements that can occur in the space. Like a discordant string of notes in the established melody of Soledad's longing, the two men physically surround her, placed on the set and framed in such a way that Soledad is either backed to the edges of the frame (00:08:19) or completely trapped

between them (00:09:20). As Soledad's lust for movement has been well established, the dynamics of the space are altered such that Dulac can bring about a radical narrative turn by physically restricting Soledad's range of movement in the frame. By executing this development in this fashion, Dulac is able to instantly and drastically change the meaningful relations that Soledad's world is constituted of – that of the free movement of dance and romantic expression – and thus fully embraces the perceptual qualities of motion to both present and set up a narrative, as with the opening festival sequence, and substantially develop the relations within it.

Of crucial note to this approach to cinema, and indeed where sensory avant-garde cinema is at its most parallel with phenomenology, is this exact radical recontextualization of movement as something beyond its most obvious qualities. In philosophizing movement itself, Dulac reveals fundamental properties to motion that uncover its profoundly affective capabilities and uses the technology of cinema to fully realise this potential. It is from this that I make the claim that cinema, by operating fundamentally through movement, can be said to re-encounter movement in the sense that the making and viewing of film gives one the phenomenological means to intimately analyse it. As Jean Epstein states of his own conception of cinema's essence, *photogénie,* cinema did not come into being alongside the camera; it is with the camera that "we have discovered the cinematic property of things" (Epstein, 1924, p.315). Indeed, Dulac's assessment of cinematic movement – that it is fundamentally rhythmic and musical in nature – is not so much an assessment of cinema as it is an *assessment of movement that has been made possible by cinema*, thus implying that cinema has demonstrable properties of revealing and uncovering. Here both Epstein and Dulac engage in a distinctly Heideggerian logic: cinema had always existed, eminent in space and time, and was henceforth disclosed to Beings with the advent of cinematic technology (as opposed to cinematic technology bringing about the advent of cinema). Pushing against Heidegger's notion of enframing and standing-reserve is the fact that, though cinema does in fact present time and

space as discrete manipulable sections, how these sections interact with each other and string together to form a cinematic experience attests to a substantial ontological furthering of their raw components. In *La Fête espagnole,* movement is rediscovered as a symphony and thus functions in a capacity that extends far beyond the frame; movement does not merely occur in the world, it *is* the world that occurs. In this way, to refer back to Inwood's assessment that art for Heidegger does not represent things but rather "shows us what a thing is" (Inwood, 1997, p.116), cinema can boldly embody such a process: by rediscovering movement as rhythm-like and musical in essence, movement is authentically displayed as a phenomenon in the world that forms fundamental aspects of who we are as Beings. Furthermore, this rediscovering of movement is a direct extension of Dulac's perceptual experience of the world which would be impossible to express through any other medium. As such, Dulac characterises the camera as a mechanical "originator of expressive forms" (Dulac, 1926, p.389); the camera has been apprehended as *at one* with a particular worldview as opposed to a worldview that an external device might be able to approximately replicate, thus implicitly placing the camera as a device that, through its work, can drastically alter and enrich a worldly experience. For Dulac, by interfacing with the camera in this way, it can be said that it is cinematic movement - an integral cinégraphie - that is apprehended as ready-to-hand, with the camera itself behaving as a mediator between Being (in this case, Dulac) and World.

Bolstering Dulac's cinematic theory as expressed in *La Fête espagnole* and firmly placing cinema within a Heideggerian framework of art is Epstein's notion of *photogénie,* wherein the progression of cinematic images is analogous to a poetic structure. In his essay *On Certain Characteristics of Photogénie* (1924), Epstein endeavours to expand on the term originally coined by Luis Delluc to encounter "the purest expression of cinema". Engaging in a similar initial line of thought to Dulac's essay in first recognising cinema as "a new enigma" (Epstein, 1924, p.315), Epstein, too, calls for a move towards a cinema that is first and foremost cinematic in nature:

> ...the cinema should avoid dealings ... with historical, educational, novelistic, moral or immoral, geographical, or documentary subjects. The cinema must seek to become, gradually and in the end uniquely, cinematic; to employ, in other words, only photogenic elements.
>
> Epstein, 1924, p.315

For Epstein, *photogénie* is the experiential emergent quality of life that cinema sets out to discover and, heavily reminiscent of Dulac's theory, is inextricably tied to the visual perception of mobility. Crucially, it is Epstein's claim that photogénie is a transformative phenomenon, describing its essence as "any aspect of things, beings, or souls whose moral character is enhanced by filmic reproduction", and thus "any aspect not enhanced by filmic reproduction is not photogenic, plays no part in the art of cinema" (Epstein, 1924, p.314). The choice of the phrase 'filmic reproduction' brings light to Epstein's cinematic philosophy: in cinema, aspects of the world are not represented but are *reproduced* entirely, with the camera and the film reel constituting a physical process that ultimately brings about a qualitative change in the reproduction. In other words, movement is given to the camera and the film reel gives movement back, but it returns to the observer permanently altered by virtue of a cinematic perspective. Implied here is a similar transformation of space and movement that Dulac's work investigates, with Epstein further refining his definition of an object's photogenic aspects as "a consequence of its variations in space-time" (Epstein, 1924, p.316).

The transformative process afforded to movement by cinema under the framework of photogénie has an implicit connection and appeal to Heidegger's notion of *alētheia*, wherein the experience of cinematic mobility discloses conceptual truths to the observer. Epstein describes the inner mechanisms of cinematic experience as "a language, and like all languages it is animistic; it attributes, in other words, a semblance of life to the objects it defines" (Epstein, 1924, p.316). In this way, the objects of cinema are transformed and disclosed for the roles they fulfil in our reality, embodied as living things with active potential through the camera. As Epstein continues:

> [A] close-up of a revolver is no longer a revolver, it is the revolver-character, in other words the impulse toward or remorse for crime, failure, suicide.
>
> Epstein, 1924, p.317

As is seen with Dulac's kinetic depiction of Soledad's world in *La Fête espagnole*, Epstein encounters cinema precisely as this furthering of movement and thus suggests, like Dulac, a conception of cinematic movement that cannot be contained or stored in a limited sense; any one movement in the frame can erupt into a multitude of recognised concepts entirely dependent on the lived experience of the observer. As such, it is Epstein's contention that the lens of the camera has within it the potential to "[reveal] the inner nature of things" (Epstein, 1924, p.317). Epstein's revolver can characterise both the motivated impulse to murder or the guilt-stricken reflection on its consequences, and the possible nature of the murder, be it of violent crime, emotional turmoil, or suicide, continues to further the depth of the weapon's movements and its history. Since this cinematic process for Epstein resembles language in that it imparts a worldly context, a life of its own, onto depicted objects and does so by reproducing their movements in a particular structure – dictated by the personality and worldview of the filmmaker – Epstein reaches the conclusion that an authentic cinematic experience is itself poetic (Epstein, 1924, p.318); through cinema, one can experience reality as a completed union of movements through space, each of which can embody the revealing nature of poetic language for Epstein and refined further into a rhythmic melody for Dulac. It is with this that Epstein makes his ultimate claim of cinema, and in doing so comes into direct contact with a Heideggerian phenomenology:

> A new reality is revealed, a reality for a special occasion, which is untrue to every day reality, just as everyday reality is untrue to the heightened awareness of poetry.
>
> Epstein, 1924, p.318

Here Epstein is emphatic with the claim that the inner poetic mechanisms of cinema, like Heidegger's analysis of Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes,* bring truth to reality in a fashion that is entirely apprehended by the human being. Since Heidegger's *alētheia* is a framework of truth

that operates independently from reality, with truth being disclosed in the perceived function of a given thing, it is apparent that photogénie fulfils this role precisely and exactly. With *La Fête espagnole* and its developing kinetic melody, Dulac's approach takes on a distinct poetic form in line with photogénie. The film's narrative progression, even at the surface level, has a clear and deliberately varied range of movements that work to poetically unify the narrative elements of its world. This can be seen most prominently in the sequences that build towards Soledad's encounter with Juanito, where the joy of his arrival is signaled to the audience with shots of empty streets filling with the festival's procession (00:11:00), each frame anticipating a change in Soledad's world wherein she will be reunited with the motion she longs for. As Juanito brings her to the festival and reignites her passion for dancing, the shots depicting their budding romance are tinted pink and become saturated with joyous activity; lovers smiling over candlelit dinners and musicians cheerfully playing their instruments (00:14:50) are complimented by the warmth of the tinted frame, with Soledad's impulse to dance increasing with the passion of the festival. When Soledad is finally liberated from her static world by Juanito and begins to dance (00:20:55), her dancing imparts the joy of dancing itself, revealing its impassioned disposition as an act of movement and extending it outwardly such that what is received by the observer's body and ultimately disclosed is the sensational notion of romance and freedom.

Completing the kinetic circuit of the film's narrative are the depictions of Réal and Miguélan's conflict over Soledad's affections, with their expressions of passionate rage and desperation running counter to Soledad's simultaneously developing romance. As the two men engage in their fight to the death, they enter into a series of movements that are intercut between Soledad and Juanito's lovestruck dance; Réal and Miguélan embrace each other in a final act of friendship, and Soledad and Juanito move gracefully together amongst a crowd of festival dancers (00:17:06). The proceeding battle is itself framed as a dance, the two men waltzing around the space with a sheer musicality to their combat (00:18:20), with the true sensory

nature of their movements being revealed by the presence of their weapons. In depicting and drawing strict focus to their knives - and through the same evocative cinematic power that gives Epstein's revolver its history and place in the world - the characters of death, jealousy, and greed at the hands of lust are embodied; Dulac poetically shifts the movement of the narrative from Soledad's passion to Réal and Miguélan's unfortunate demise, and henceforth creates a clearing for the full scope of the narrative to be realised: Soledad ends the night with her world permanently altered by lived movement, with the corpses of Réal and Miguélan conversely evoking the ultimate stillness. Here, the film provides a voice for Dulac through which she speaks of the authenticity of the cinematic experience. In the stillness of Réal and Miguélan's death, which nevertheless provokes an inner emotional movement in the bodies of the audience, one is reminded of Dulac's closing statement to her essay wherein she states plainly what cinema so profoundly revisits:

> To prolong the life of what will die is good. But the very essence of cinema is different and it brings Eternity with it since it springs from the very essence of the universe: movement
>
> Dulac, 1926, p.397

Conclusion

If it is indeed the case, as Heidegger determinedly espouses through his work, that great art is characterised by its duty to disclose reality – that is, the World in which Beings find themselves in - through poetic structure, I hope to have demonstrated that the cinematic theories of the French Avant-Garde take on such a duty with impassioned rigor. Loht has shown through his work that the film-viewing experience is necessarily phenomenological, with the viewing- of providing an ontological means to "... [Foster] World in the manner of a set of cinematic, immersive surroundings ... a web of significance and shared meanings" (Loht, 2017, p.42). As such, it can be said that Dasein has adequate faculties with which it can employ to co-exist with cinema and, furthermore, immediately grasp its images as ready-to-hand by conditional

necessity. Ultimately, as Loht observes, it is because of this that films can engender “natural forms of world-disclosure" (Loht, 2017, p.42).

Through analysing the historical context of the French avant-garde movement of ‘Cinema as Sensation’, filmmakers such as Dulac and Epstein can be shown to extend the phenomenological mechanisms of film-viewing and translate them into a creative process that further discloses the inner World of the filmmaker themselves. In doing so, the phenomenon of movement is re-encountered, and elements of truth are henceforth disclosed to the bodies of an audience, illuminated by the awareness of a Being. Despite Heidegger’s ostensible rejection of cinema by way of wide-spread omission from his work, the sensorily-predicated theories of Dulac, Epstein, and their peers present a compelling case for the technology of cinema to be inducted into a Heideggerian framework of art. Such approaches to the cinematic medium offer a rich envisioning of Heidegger’s notion of the work of art and create a compelling clearing through which filmmaking can be conceived of as an active process of revealing World through fundamental World-aspects (i.e. movement), as well as an ontological exercise in changing the perspectives of those that engage in the viewing-of film.

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