

**THE END OF FILM THEORY AND THE TASK OF  
FILM INTERPRETATION: A PATHWAY TO THE  
PHILOSOPHICAL TURN**

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**By  
Sinem Aydınlı  
May 2011**

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SİNEM AYDINLI

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I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Assist. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Gürata (Advisor)

I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Prof. Dr. Mahmut Mutman

I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman

Approved by the Graduate School of Fine Arts

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Prof. Dr. Bülent Özgüç  
Director of the Graduate School of Fine Arts

## ABSTRACT

### THE END OF FILM THEORY AND THE TASK OF FILM INTERPRETATION: A PATHWAY TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL TURN

Sinem Aydınlı

M.A. in Media and Visual Studies  
Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Ahmet Gürata

May 2011

The aim of this study is to interrogate film interpretation in terms of Heideggerian thinking as a pathway for arguments in the history of film theory via the idea of “happening” in the art. For this reason, the “happening of truth” is considered in terms of its filmic implications. In addition to this, the *poetic revealing* as a mode of “happening of truth” is questioned via filmic experience by making an analogy with the idea of *strife* between the *earth* and the *world*. Thus, this study also investigates the *experience* of the audience with respect to its involvement in the film. By walking through this pathway, hermeneutic phenomenology as a method contributes to an understanding of the *experience* of the audience. In this respect, the idea of film interpretation refers not only to the audience’s dwelling in the film but also to its ontological experience, and so the ontological investigation is triggered via “happening” in the film.

Key words: Film theory, film and philosophy, Heidegger, happening of truth, hermeneutics, film interpretation.

## ÖZET

### FİLM TEORİNİN SONU VE FİLM YORUMUNUN GÖREVİ: FELSEFİ DÖNEMEÇ İÇİN BİR PATİKA

Sinem Aydınlı

Medya ve Görsel Çalışmalar  
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Bu çalışma, film teorisi tarihindeki tezlere bir patika açmak amacıyla film yorumlamasını Heideggerci bakış açısıyla sanattaki “oluş” düşüncesi üzerinden sorgulayacaktır. Bu nedenle, “hakikatin gerçekleşmesi” düşüncesi filmlerdeki yansımaları üzerinden değerlendirilecektir. Buna ek olarak, “hakikatin gerçekleşmesinin” bir tarzı olarak *şiiirsel açığa çıkma* düşüncesi, film deneyimi üzerinden *yeryüzü* ve *dünya* arasındaki *çekişmeyle* bir benzerlik kurularak incelenecektir. Böylece, bu çalışma izleyicinin filme *dahil olmasıyla*, film *deneyimini* de araştıracaktır. Bu patikada ilerlerken, hermeneutik fenomenoloji yöntemi izleyicinin deneyimini anlamaya katkı sağlayacaktır. Bu doğrultuda, film yorumlama düşüncesi sadece izleyicinin filme *ikamet etmesine* değil aynı zamanda onun ontolojik deneyimine, dolayısıyla filmlerdeki “oluş”un başlattığı ontolojik sorgulamaya işaret edecektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Film teorisi, sinema ve felsefe, Heidegger, hakikatin gerçekleşmesi, hermeneutik, film yorumlaması.

To my Grandparents in *heaven* Hilmi Ekinci and Hatice Ekinci,

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Heidegger, at the beginning of his article, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking”, which is one of the central inspirations for the title of this study, asks two questions regarding his *magnum opus*, *Being and Time*: “To what extent has philosophy in the present age entered into its end?” and “What task is reserved for thinking at the end of philosophy?” (Heidegger, 1993, p.434) His basic argument is that, due to the development of science, and technology, philosophy becomes the “empirical science of man” and “of, all of what can become for man the experiential object of his technology” (ibid, p.434). In other words, he means that, there is no place for “thinking”; there is only methodology and calculation. In addition to this, he implies that the development of technology refers to the domination of man in the world “by working in the manifold modes of making and shaping” (ibid). Thus, “the end of philosophy” refers to a “scientific-technological world and of the social order proper to this world” (ibid, p.435).

With regard to “the task of thinking”, what Heidegger means is not the thinking of a Cartesian subject who becomes *subjectum*. To put it differently, the idea of *subjectum* blocks all ontological inquiry since it leaves the nature of man unquestioned and gives priority to the mind and ideas, not the idea of *being-in-the*

-*world* ontologically. Rather, it refers to human domination of the world. That is why Heidegger refers to a new kind of “task”. In addition to this, for Heidegger, since “The matter of philosophy as metaphysics is the Being of beings, their presence in the form of substantiality and subjectivity” (ibid, p.438), this new task of thinking saves us from the idea of subjectivity.

On the other hand, by tracing backwards to Husserl, Heidegger examines the call “to the thing itself” since this is essentially what brings him to the idea of “the end of philosophy” and “the task of thinking”.

According to Heidegger (1993),

All philosophical thinking that explicitly and inexplicitly follows to call “to the matter itself” is in its movement and with its method already admitted to the free space of the clearing. But philosophy knows nothing of the clearing. Philosophy does speak about the light of reason, but does heed the clearing of Being.” (p.443)

Thus, the idea of “the task of thinking” refers to “the free space of the clearing” and this clearing refers to the idea of “unconcealment”. Regarding the idea of “unconcealment”, Heidegger considers the meditative man who does not think with the procedures of Descartes, based on a subject–object dichotomy. Rather, it is the one who “is to experience the untrembling heart of unconcealment” (Heidegger, 1993, p.444). That is why film-thinking through meditative thinking, which will be argued with relation to Heideggerian thinking. In other words, this project does not proceed using the processes of traditional philosophy, taking aim at a reference point with the goal of “unconcealment”. Rather, it refers to “unconcealment” itself.

With regard to the idea behind the second part of our title, “A Pathway to the Philosophical Turn”, this refers to the new way of thinking through controversial arguments, beginning with the domination of philosophy in film theory. As we

know, there is an intimacy between film and philosophy in the sense that philosophy can provide a means of analyzing, criticizing and theorizing film. Yet there are other approaches which consider films alongside philosophizing. Regarding arguments in film theory, after the 1980s<sup>1</sup>, philosophy was discussed more deeply. Deleuze came to the scene suggesting a new and different path by separating classical cinema from modern cinema in terms of movement–image and time–image. Frampton also emerged, reexamining earlier arguments with the idea “Filmosophy”. Even though Deleuze and Frampton searched a place for more thought in the cinema, the categorizations especially in the idea of the “philosophical turn” is our main challenge in this study, in order to leave space to argue Heideggerian thinking in relation to film theory. We thus follow Heidegger’s critique of the idea of “theory”, regarding the “supposition of categories” that have previously been “denied any ontological meaning” (Heidegger, 1993, p. 435). These theories and the categories will no longer be permitted to stand in our way. The new pathway will be constructed based on the audience’s relationship with the film and the being of the film itself, without supporting any theory in traditional sense.

In this respect, this study intends to carve out a Heideggerian pathway to film theory, and will thus focus on both the experience of the film due to the “happening” in it and on the implications of the audience’s engagement and interpretation of it. Yet, this idea of interpretation is neither audience-related nor film-dependent. Rather, it is about engagement with the film.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Rushton and Bettison (2010), “Theories of film are flourishing and many new titles influenced by continental philosophy (for recent contributions see Beller 2006; Frampton 2006; Harbord 2007; McGowan 2007; Rodowick 2007; Stadler 2008), as well as cognitivism and analytic philosophy (for example, see Branigan 2006; Grodal 2009; Plantinga 2009), are continuing to appear.” (p.177)

Thus, this study primarily aims to question the “happening” in film by drawing an analogy with the idea of the work of art introduced by Heidegger. The “happening”, which refers to the struggle between the *earth* and the *world*, will be argued via its filmic revealing since Heidegger does not reduce his idea of “happening of truth” to any single form of art. In addition, film interpretation will be explored in terms of audience engagement with film. It is engagement with the *world* that is revealed in film, since the interpretation of the audience results in unconcealment of the *world*. It is the *world* which reveals itself by means of the audience’s interpretation. In other words, when a viewer watching a film, the *world* reveals itself via the images, yet this is only possible when audience draws its interpretation of what has been seen. Put simply, even though this setting-forth of the *world* is only possible in relation to the “happening”, this happening is independent neither from images nor from the presence of the audience. The “happening of truth” cannot be possible without presence of an audience, and this gets us to the point of film interpretation. Film interpretation is not audience-related, but happening-related. And it is only the audience who can interpret the *world* that is kept by the work, just as the viewer of the painting “A Pair of Shoes”<sup>2</sup>, is the one who interprets these shoes to belong to a peasant woman.

### **1.1 Outline of the Study**

In the second chapter of this study, titled “Film Theory and the Philosophical Turn”, we will concentrate on different approaches to film theory. Even though it is hard to classify theories of film, a loose classification will be set out in chronological order with discussion on the main points of each. The rest of this chapter will address the

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<sup>2</sup> Vincent van Gogh, A Pair of Shoes, 1885, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. <http://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/vgm/index.jsp?page=1576&collection=621&lang=en>

question of how the intimacy between film and philosophy came into being. Thus, our early challenge will be the traditional understanding of philosophy itself, since it does not consider film to be a “free space of clearing”. That is why we introduce approaches to film theory, since traditional philosophy is regarded as remaining on the level of ontic investigation in the Heideggerian sense. In this respect, the implication is that film theory blocks itself. That is why we search for a space to carve out this new pathway. Thus, we will take the stance on film theory with respect to Heideggerian thinking in order to interrogate the idea lying behind the “end of philosophy”.

Through the end of this chapter, we will focus on the notions such as ‘filmind’, ‘film-being’ and ‘filmgoer’ used by Frampton in order to point how a different approach with a new terminology among the arguments of the film viewing was argued. Also, these concepts are the inspirational ones for us since they remove the separation between film and its audience in a new ‘filosophical’ frame in relation with the film theory. Then, we will follow the Deleuzian notion of thinking over meditative film-thinking. Meditative film-thinking, as described by Frampton, “enacts a fluidity of instinct that dwells on moments, actions, scenes, or other aspects of the film-world” (Frampton, 2006, p. 193). Being “active and open”, meditative film-thinking contributes to the “happening” in the film. In this respect, Frampton’s Filmosophy is an inspiration in the way it proposes a pathway to a new way of “understanding film form, and putting forward an interpretation of film-being” (Frampton, 2008, p.373)

The focus of the third chapter, titled “An Analogy: Film as a Work of Art” will basically be a reconsideration of Heidegger’s article “The Origin of the Work of Art” in the context of its reflection on film. Before investigating the article, introductory

themes of Heideggerian philosophy will be examined in order to comprehend his thinking. In this context, the underlying idea behind the origin of the work of art will be investigated in the Heideggerian sense in order to make the point that art is the becoming and “happening of truth”. Then, *strife* between the *world* and *earth* will be evaluated in terms of its filmic relevance, since this strife refers to “happening” in art in general and so do films. Heidegger emphasizes that “all art is poetry” in the sense that it is the truest form of language, providing clearing of being. Thus, instead of concentrating on language literally, we will focus on the language of the images, which has the power to create a *poetic revealing* in film, remaining aware that poetic revealing is only one mode of clearing. We will develop this idea through selected examples from film history.

In the fourth chapter of the study, titled “The Preserver of the Film: the Being of an Audience”, the presence of the audience will be interrogated. The audience encounter with the film will be considered as a mode of revealing or happening, since without this encounter, there would be no happening. Additionally, how the audience engages with the film will be questioned, since the idea of the ontological event will be considered via its dependence on the experience of the audience. Since the audience interprets a *world* revealed in images, its dwelling or engagement with this world will be investigated in terms of *Dasein*’s engagement with the *world*. That is why we will examine the being of film with reference to the “surrounding world” of the audience. Thus, the themes of “present-at-hand” and “ready-to-hand” will be analyzed in the context of the audience’s encounter. In addition to this, the engagement will be investigated in terms of the basic concepts of *Dasein*’s “being-in-the-world”, related to the idea of *worldliness*. As *Dasein* is “in” the world as an active engaged actor, the engagement of the audience will always be examined by



referring to the idea of “involvement”. The theme of “understanding” will also be explained in order to apprehend the idea of interpretation, and this will create the framework for our film interpretation.

In the fifth and the final chapter, titled “Film Interpretation”, film interpretation throughout its history will be analyzed in relation to the audience encounter. Thus, the different approaches to film interpretation will be summarized briefly. In addition, since hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation, the influence of hermeneutics will be considered with respect to the method of hermeneutic phenomenology. In this regard, hermeneutics will support the main idea of this study as the search for the ontological structure of human understanding and interpretation. For this reason, in order to make space for our pathway alongside previous approaches of film theory, audience interpretation of film will be deeply considered. The idea of the “happening” will thus be a central focus, since the audience’s encounter with the film brings forth this “happening”. Without the presence of the audience, the *world* cannot reveal itself. Rather, the film reveals itself by means of a reciprocal relationship with the audience. Regarding “happening”, even though the *earth*, which is regarded as “sheltering and concealing, tends always to draw the *world* into itself and keep it there” (Heidegger, 1993, p.174), the *world* reveals itself by means of audience interpretation. This reciprocal relationship with respect to “happening” is our main field of investigation in this study. The happening is the disclosure, and no disclosure is possible independent of the presence of the audience. As there is no absolute interpretation and thus no absolute truth, all interpretation refers to the possibility of Being of an audience, who bring forth the truth through the act of engagement. Thus, we will consider the Heideggerian path in relation to film interpretation.

## 2. FILM THEORY AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL TURN

No art has ever become great without theory<sup>3</sup>

Film theory is, in short, a verbal representation of the film complex (Andrew, 1984, p.3). Thus, the beginning of film theory is considered as old as the film itself. It advances to different approaches, such as ontological, epistemological, anthropological, ideological, psychological etc. Its history is hard to classify as much as the history of theory, since film theorists would not like to classify their ideas in terms of existing theories. Rather, they would like to classify theories of film within their own frames of reference<sup>4</sup>.

In the early twentieth century, film would relate with theory. Already in 1924, Béla Balázs argues in *Der sichtbare Mensch* for film theory as the compass of artistic development guided by the construction of concepts (as cited in Furstenau, 2010, p.24). Thus, in the task of film theory, the implications of space, time, vision and meaning open to debate and film theorists unravel the magic and escape of cinema (Miller and Stam, 2004, p.3).

Theory, however, is an umbrella term or a variable concept. The Greek *Theoria* (θεωρία) means “contemplation, speculation, a looking at, things looked at”. It is derived from *theorein* “to consider, speculate, look at”, from *theoros* (θεωρός)

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<sup>3</sup> Bela Balazs, as cited in Casetti, 1999, p.1

<sup>4</sup> See Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, 2010, *Film theory: an introduction through the senses*. New York and London: Routledge.

“spectator”, from *thea* (θέα) “a view + *horan* (ὁρᾶν) “to see”<sup>5</sup>. Thus, theory expresses the state of being. If attributed to activity, it is “a scheme of ideas which explains practice” as Williams argues (as cited in Furstenau, 2010, p.24). In this respect, we can identify many different classifications for this scheme of ideas. We will therefore discuss these, in the historical order in which they emerged, as we consider films with respect not only to their sociological, conjectural, and ideological reflections, but also their ontological, epistemological and psychological implications.

On the other hand, for this study focuses on the audience’s engagement with the film as well, we should remember how different theories treat the relationship between audience and film:

Audience concerns include psychological, sociological, educational, consumer, criminological and political promises and anxieties. Textual ranking involves authorship, genre, form, style, and representational politics. They cross over in the area of mimesis, with audiences interpreting films against their own worlds of race, gender, class, region, age, religion, language, politics, and nation. (Miller and Stam, 2004, p.2)

The above quote indicates how film theory works with respect to interpretation. However, in following chapters, the audience, first and foremost, is remembered to be a human who questions his/her own being without labelling it. This leads us to investigate his/her engagement with the film in the ontological sense. Our stance is quite different from the more conventional schools of thought. Additionally, the historical presence of the audience will not be regarded on a canonical basis. Rather, we will search for ontological implications of both the audience’s presence and the being of the film.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/theoria>

## 2.1. General Approaches to Film Theory

A film is difficult to explain because it is easy to *understand* (Metz, 1974, p. 69, my emphasis)

It is hard to give exact time for the beginning of arguments about film medium. However, according to Thomas Elsaesser (2010), “The first attempts to engage with film as a new medium took place in the early twentieth century, and two representatives whose work can lay claim to the title of ‘the first film theory’ are Vachel Lindsay and Hugo Münsterberg” (p.2).

Film theory is considered a part of the theoretical reflection on the art of film. Some of the early debates on film theory concern aesthetics, specificity of medium, genre, and realism<sup>6</sup>.

In the early, silent-era period of film theory, questions such as “Is cinema an art or merely a recorder of visual phenomena”, “If film is an art, what are its salient characteristics?”, and “How does film differ from other forms of art, such as painting, music, and theatre?” were asked, as Stam tells us. As we know, these have been transformed and reformulated in contemporary film theory (Stam, 2000, p.27). On the other hand, as Stam puts it, “early theorists were very much concerned with proving cinema’s artistic potentiality and they had to do with defining the film medium and its relation to other arts” (p.28).

Systematic film theory *per se* traces its origins to the first comprehensive study of the film medium: “The Photoplay: A Psychological Study by Hugo Munsterberg” (Stam, 2000, p.29), in which the author questions whether film is an art of subjectivity or not. Munsterberg focuses on the active spectator who participates in the event of the

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<sup>6</sup> See Robert Stam. (2000). Film theory: an introduction, Oxford University Press.

film. As Stam (2000) concludes, his works on filmic process and the mind itself anticipate the ideas of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gilles Deleuze (p.31). In his works from 1920s through the late 1940s, Hungarian film theorist Bela Balazs stresses the language-like nature of film. Vachel Lidsay anticipates auteurism through the middle of the 1910s. “In 1921, the filmmaker Jean Epstein, in “Le Cinema et les lettres modernes” applied the term “author” to the filmmaker. (...) The characterization of the cinema as the seventh art, similarly, implicitly gave film artists the same status as writers and painters” (ibid, p.33).

On the other hand, Stam’s chronological classification of theories of cinema follows this order: “The Soviet Montage-Theorists”, whose ideas were grounded in practical questions in the socialist film industry; “the historical avant-gardes” in the years between the 1910s and 1920s; “theories after sound” with names such as Artaud, Arnheim, Bela Balazs discussing what kind of art the cinema is; and “the debates of the Frankfurt school”, which shifts critical attention from the venerated object of art to the dialogue between work and spectator (ibid). Adorno and Horkheimer outline their critique of mass culture, and thus film theory, under the influence of these debates. Following these controversial discussions, as Stam (2000) mentions in the 1940s, post-war film realism emerged from the smoke and ruins of European cities; the immediate trigger for the mimetic revival was the calamity of World War II (p.73).

In addition to this, according to Casetti (1999), there are three phenomena in film theory in the years around 1945. The first is “the acceptance of cinema as a cultural fact”, the second postulates the “accentuation of the specialized characteristic of film theory”, and the third takes the internalization of cinema as a source of debate. Thus,

cinema was accepted as cultural fact, theory became more specialized, and the debate more international (p.9). After this period, as Casetti (1999) continues:

In the 1950s and 1960s there was a conflict between those who considered cinema a means of expression through which personality, ideology, and culture were manifested and those who viewed it as an objective reality, to be examined in its tangible components and in the way it actually works. (p.11)

The aesthetic and scientific discourses on cinema can be understood in light of this. The aesthetic discourse does not focus on the single idea; rather, it encompasses all its aspects. Conversely, in scientific discourse, each possibility connects with a specific view and so scientific inquiry.

Andre Bazin, the last film theorist of the classical period before the 1960s brought post-structuralism and ideological criticism, notes that “its true medium is the flow of life itself, the world viewed, whose motions and changes, intervals and durations, are perceived on the screen” (as cited in Vacche, 2003, p.2). In addition to this, as Casetti (1999) asserts: “The main point is clear in the sense that ‘cinema adheres to reality and even participates in the latter’s existence’” (p.32).

Regarding the post-war years, three different paradigms are postulated by Casetti: “the aesthetic-existentialist”, “the scientific-analytical”, and “the interpretive” (1999, p.13). The aesthetic-existentialist paradigm refers to the ontological theory of Bazin. “This theory chooses truth as its own measure” (ibid, p.14). In other words, in asking what cinema is, ontological theories always aim to uncover an essence in order to define the phenomenon, to reach a global knowledge, and to measure themselves in terms of a form of truth” (ibid). With regard to the second postulation, “the scientific-analytical” makes cinema into an object of research. With regard to Casetti, “Conscious of their specific point of view, they invoke an assessment more

than a certainty, the possibility of proof more than the evidence, the correctness of the research more than a specific truth” (ibid, p.15). Finally, “the field theory”, aims to single out questions that touch on cinema and to draw attention to the exemplary quality of some of its articulations: what emerges is neither essence nor pertinence, but rather a field of questions or a problem (ibid, p.16). In sum, the ontological theories take approaches such as cinema as reality, imaginary and language; the methodological theories refer to sociological, psychological, semiotic, and psychoanalytic approaches; and the field theories discuss ideology, representation, the generic identity of the subject on and beyond the screen, cinema’s ability to become witness to cultural processes, and the possibility of reconstructing its history (ibid, p.19).

The movement of auteurism then arises in the early 1960s. Also, the relationship between cinema and language appears as an intellectual movement called structuralism. Structuralism is based on the Saussurean linguistic model<sup>7</sup>, which evokes the linguistic turn of cinema. According to Stam (2000), “Indeed, the 1960s and 1970s might be seen as the height of semiotic ‘imperialism,’ when the discipline annexed vast territories of cultural phenomena for exploration (p.107). Semiotics, which is generally about signs organized with respect to cultural codes or the process of signification, can be applied in film theory to the “filmolinguistic project” (Stam, 2008, p. 107). The name Christian Metz falls under the title of language of cinema in this sense. Stam (2000) points out the position of Metz as the following:

“Film,” meanwhile, refers to a localizable discourse, a text; not the physical object contained in a can, but rather the signifying text. At the same time,

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<sup>7</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure developed the model *la langue* which described a particularly arbitrariness, language as speech circuit, communication, recursivity, syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations (Buckland, as cited in Mill and Stam, 2004, p. 85). He also described *la parole* as an infinitude of manifestations generated by *la langue*, which is necessarily finite (ibid, p. 86).

Metz points out, the cinematic institution also enters into the multidimensionality of films themselves as bounded discourses concentrating an intense charge of social, cultural, and psychological meaning. (p.110)

Thus, in the relationship between cinema and language, the language of cinema should be considered a grounding a set of messages with artistic language. This is a discourse characterized by specific codes or procedures.

In addition, in mid 1960s, the theory of deconstruction was introduced by Jacques Derrida in the sense that it “stipulates that text is not transparent, natural or innocent and therefore must be unpicked and deconstructed” (Hayward, 2006, p. 413). In this regard, we come to the idea that there is no single reading of a text, nor any final reading.

With regard to post-structuralism, Stam (2000) asserts that “The linguistically oriented semiology gives way to “second semiology” where psychoanalysis became the preferred conceptual grid, as attention shifted from film language and film structure to the “subject-effects” produced by the cinematic apparatus” (p. 158-9). Thus, the spectator as a subject and the passionate reactions caused by cinema are questioned. As a result of this, debates on psychoanalysis and its relationship with cinema appear. The major contribution to psychoanalytic film theory was made by Jacques Lacan. According to Stam (2000), “Psychoanalytic theorists were especially interested in the psychic dimension of the film medium’s overpowering ‘impression of the reality’” (p.162). Thus, these theorists discuss cinema as it has power over human feelings. In the 1970s, psychoanalytic theory was argued in the context of the Lacanian idea of the “deluded subject of the cinema”.

In addition, echoing Stam, the feminist intervention and the poststructuralist mutation are given credence in the 1980s. On the other hand, the question of text, in



particular “film text”, is rooted in different problematics. The idea of textual analysis is attacked from different directions during these years.

In order to understand such attacks in relation to the spectator, we should look at “the dynamism of cinematic desire”. Spectatorship reveals itself in multiple dimensions.

According to Stam (2000):

The spectator as fashioned by the text itself (through focalization, point-of-view conventions, narrative structuring, mise-en-scene); the spectator as fashioned by the (diverse and evolving) technical apparatus (Cineplex, IMAX, domestic VCR); the spectator as fashioned by the institutional context of spectatorship (social ritual of movie going, classroom analysis, cinemathèque); the spectator as constituted by ambient discourses and ideologies; the actual spectator as embodied, raced, gendered, and historically situated. The spectator theory of the 1980s, with Mulvey’s<sup>8</sup> entrance, recognized that this theory is also sexualized, classed, raced, nationed, regioned, and so forth. (p.232)

On the other hand, regarding postmodernism<sup>9</sup>, which is roughly seen as “a counter position of modernism, and is often associated with post-structuralism” (Hayward, 2006, p. 300). It also refers to an age, particularly the 1980s and 1990s (ibid). It is fair to say that postmodernism, with relation to film supports to the idea of the “chains of multiplicity”. Thus, postmodernism makes the audience free to appreciate to the work independent of conventions in film theory.

With regard to debates about postmodernism, these appear due to suspicion towards universal systems of explanation of the idea of modernism. To this end, it can be said that the most influential source triggering the debates is Lyotard’s 1979 book, *The Postmodern Condition*. For Lyotard, ‘the postmodern condition’ may be defined in

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<sup>8</sup> Laura Mulvey’s 1973 article, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” was published in 1975 in the British Film Theory Journal Screen. This article became significant, shifting the path of film theory towards a psychoanalytic frame work.

<sup>9</sup> Although the debates on postmodernism relate to film theory, it is not easy to identify a distinctive postmodern film theory. Thus, the idea lying beyond the postmodern subject is emphasized in order to see how a spectator can be conceptualized in this respect.

terms of a growing 'incredulity' towards what he calls 'les grands recits' or 'metanarratives of Western thought (as cited in Hill and Gibson, 2000, p.95). In general, this condition is framed by a suspicion of totalizing theories, which try to absorb accounts of social and cultural phenomena. It is a critique of Enlightenment ideals. The critique of the unified self is also strictly grounded in Enlightenment ideals, and thus refers to the distinction made by Stuart Hall:

The enlightenment Subject' which is based upon 'a conception of the human person as fully centered, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action' and the 'postmodern Subject', which is conceptualized as having 'no fixed, essential or permanent identity but rather as assuming 'different identities at different times (as cited in Hill and Gibson, 2000, p.95).

In addition, referring the discursive theory, "the discursive theory coincides with this criticism in the sense that, in the discursive theory, individual identity is not a function of singular, solely psychic or unfaltering processes, but rather, subjectivity is constructed by the cultural forces of multiple, overlapping, and sometimes competing discourses" (as cited in Miller and Stam, 2004, p. 152). Put it differently, the discourse constitutes its subject. Thus, the basis of analysis or interpretation becomes something functionless in the sense that it does not explain anything ontologically about the subject of the interpretation. Nevertheless, the idea of the post-modernism saves us from the idea of unified self of Enlightenment. Parallel to this, in our study, the audience is considered neither as a unified self who knows the "truth", nor one who relies on a "meaning-generating agency". Thus, this contributes to our ontological inquiry of the audience's experience with respect to Heideggerian thinking since our aim is to focus on neither "the ideal spectator who can read the entirety of meaning in a single attribution of a cinematic narrative" nor on the analysis of the socially or culturally constructed postmodern spectator. Rather, we

are searching for a Heideggerian pathway among the debates since, as Andrew (1984) states, “the point of departure for phenomenologists is not the text but rather the act of reading or interpretation” (p. 178). To put it differently, we emphasize neither the text itself nor the audience; rather, we try to *interpret* the process of audience engagement and interpretation of the film.

For this reason, the spectator, for our purposes, is first thought not to be one defined by class, race, nation, region etc. Rather, the spectator is one who *understands* his/her own existence in the context of his/her own world. This, then, is the implication of our entry-point into the ontological inquiry. Similarly, in our analysis, the existence of the spectator or audience is interrogated depending upon its experience of the film. Hence, after briefly summarizing the philosophical turn of film theory, Heideggerian philosophy will be connected to film interpretation. As Casetti (1999) concluded, “Theory must be a fragmented and dispersed form of knowledge, knowledge about cinema as well *beyond* cinema” (p.316). Thus, Heideggerian thinking will function as a new pathway for previous ideas in film theory with respect to *knowledge* “about and beyond cinema”.

## **2.2. Film and Philosophy**

The relation between cinema and philosophy is that between image and concept. But there’s a relation to the image within the concept itself, and a relation to the concept within the image: cinema, for example, has always been trying to construct an image of thought, of the mechanisms of thought. And this doesn’t make it abstract, quite the reverse. (Deleuze, 1995, pp.64-5)

Having briefly outlined the history of film theory, it is next important to discuss the work of Gilles Deleuze, since his ideas link philosophy and film theory. Instead of trying to debate whether cinema is art or not, Deleuze saw that the source of theory behind film was about the concepts that cinema itself triggered. As put by Stam (2000), “Deleuze not only theorizes the cinema in new ways but also cinematizes philosophy” (p.258).

The debate on the relationship between film and philosophy is quite controversial. However, the first thing to argue about this issue is how philosophers view films. For instance, films can be seen to make philosophical claims, they can illustrate philosophical issues, and they can be used as thought experiment. A stronger comment on this issue is reflected by Stephan Mulhall in his book “On Film”, in which says that “films can actually philosophize”. However, in general approaches which focus on the intimacy between films and philosophical issues, philosophy in film is regarded as somehow an implication of the traditional philosophical arguments. On the other hand, we do not aim to question whether whether films can “do” philosophy or not; rather, we interrogate how films can be both about self-questioning and about how they lead to self-interpretation with respect to Heideggerian thinking. Thus, we do not focus on the relationship between cognitivism or phenomenology and philosophy to focus on the experience itself, which is borrowed from the idea of the ontological event referring to Heideggerian thought. In addition, the philosophy of film and “film as philosophy” are not our concern, since we do not deal with the idea that “films are bringing philosophical issues to the attention of audiences<sup>10</sup>” in spite of the fact that it is a strong favor to

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<sup>10</sup> Philosophy of Film, retrieved from: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/film/>

philosophy itself. Arguments about the intimacy between film and philosophy direct the philosophical turn in a broad sense.

In this respect, it can be said that Gilles Deleuze's monumental books, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* are significant works of film theory. The themes of the first book dwell on the movement-image focused on by classic cinema. The idea of movement-image considers the relationship between montage and shot, and therefore between cinema and narration. Deleuze (1986) asserts that "cinema does not give us an image to which movement is added, it immediately gives us a movement-image" (p.2). Thus, "we no longer see life as some unified whole that goes through time; we see divergent becomings, movements or temporalities from which the whole would be derived" (Colebrook, 2002, p.40). For this reason, the perceived world is thought of as being viewed through time. In this respect, the movement-image takes us back from the homogeneous and ordered world of a single point of view to one of differing durations (ibid, p. 43). We also sense differing flows of time by means of the movement-image. That is what classical cinema does. On the other hand, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* explores the upsurge of films that no longer subordinate time to movement or action but rather aim at making time, as such, perceptible (Marrati, 2008, ix). Deleuze advises that modern cinema dwells on different forms of time-images. Thus, modern cinema links "perceptions", "affects" and "thoughts". Deleuze, though, claims that modern cinema is the cinema in search of more thought. With regard to Marrati (2008), for Deleuze, modern cinema says that movements and actions no longer shape both time and space but rather that they occur in time and space (xiv). Since cinema produces new possibilities of perception, it, in a sense, creates new affects, emphasizing how the audience experiences the flows of images through time, which are not perceived

from a fixed point. It is Deleuze's masterpiece, molding philosophical concepts of the time-image in response to cinema. As Colebrook (2002) states, "What philosophy does in this response, with its creation of new concepts, is to open up a future for thinking" (p.54). Thus, that which allows *philosophy* and thinking to become is the essence of the power of cinema.

### 2.2.1. Filmosophy

Perhaps the study of film and philosophy should die in order to be  
reborn<sup>11</sup>

Similar to Deleuze, though presented as a kind of collage of film theories, Daniel Frampton also moves beyond the arena of "film and philosophy" in his book called *Filmosophy*. He asserts that the issue of film and philosophy requires another kind of thinking: the affective thinking of film (Frampton, 2006, p.12). He suggests that philosophers who work on film are either simply concerned with illustrating well-known philosophical ideas via film, or they think on film via theory related to film narrative. According to Frampton, the question of "what can film do for philosophy" should be considered in a new dimension. He thus introduced the idea of "Filmosophy":

Filmosophy is a study of film as thinking, and contains a theory of both film-being and film form. The 'filmind' is filmosophy's concept of film-being, the theoretical originator of the images and sounds we experience, and 'film-thinking' is its theory of film form, whereby an action of form is seen as the dramatic thinking of filmind ... Filmosophy proposes that seeing film form as thoughtful, as the dramatic decision of the film, helps us understand the many ways film can mean and affect. (Frampton, 2006, p.6)

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<sup>11</sup> Frampton, 2006, p. 9.

The concept lying behind this new mode of thought is affective film-thinking. It is not about how to describe the scene we see; rather, it focuses how film affects on us. It begins with “film as pure sound-image experience” (ibid, p.75). Thus, rather than interrogating the mechanics and creative intention of film, it leads us to address the poetry of cinema.

In addition to this, one of Frampton’s pursuits is to trace the image of thought in Deleuze and the meditative thinking of Heidegger in order to arrive at a “postmetaphysical thinking” on film. To that end, Frampton (2006) declares that “[f]ilmosophy is not better than philosophy, but another kind of philosophy – an intuitive, affective philosophical event. At the end of philosophy<sup>12</sup>, beyond (or rather outside of) philosophy’s capability, filmsophy is simply one separate route for philosophy” (p.184).

In general, Frampton uses the idea of film-thinking in order to assert that it *enacts* a kind of non-rational, figural non-communication, a pointed non-saying (ibid, p.196, my emphasis). This is why this idea recalls the Heideggerian idea of thinking, which makes us consider film as an open way of apprehending the “shining-forth of truth”. Parallel to that, film, as Frampton (2006) upholds, “disrupts principles of reason and judgement, and so becomes a truth with its own will” (p.200). Frampton also (2006) asserts that “[f]ilmosophy simply asks the ‘filmgoer’ to see the film ‘through’ the concept of thinking. It is the film that thinks (p.366).

Since the experience of film will be elaborated in the following chapters, the effect of “Filmosophy” should be clarified insofar as it postulates that the thinking of film

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<sup>12</sup> In reply to critiques of idea “at the end of philosophy”, Frampton (2006) puts the following forward: “But to be clear, I think that film is simply a different kind of creative thought, and in no way do I think it to be ‘better’ than philosophy. My statements about ‘at the “end” of philosophy lies film’ etc., are obviously rhetorical ways of alerting the reader to the possibilities of film” (p.180). Thus, he is not strictly speaking of the “end of philosophy”. He hopes for a new understanding, that of “Filmosophy” itself.

produces its own kind of knowledge. Frampton (2006) put forward that “[f]ilm bleeds its ideas if you allow yourself to become attuned to its thinking” (p.373). Such thoughts and ideas reveal a way of seeing the world since they are, in a sense, in relation to the truth.

According to Frampton (2006), “Filmosophy is proposing a new way of understanding film form, and putting forward an interpretation of film-being. Filmosophy wants to go forward and try to understand all the ways film might possibly next affect us” (p.373). This is why we clear a path towards Heidegger in film interpretation via Frampton’s thought-provoking Filmosophy.

Yet, one of the significant critiques of Frampton’s ideas comes from Mullarkey (2009): “If film can at all be said to think for itself, if film is to philosophize for itself, then we must first of all attempt to get away from any prior philosophical definition of thinking and, indeed, of philosophy too” (p.129). It is true that his ideas are viewed as if they are on the level of post-metaphysical thinking, and it is aggravating to philosophy to philosophize films. Nevertheless, it saves us from conventions in film theory, for it focuses the film experience as well, without passing over the experience of the audience. Rather, it questions the engagement with the film itself in terms of the being of the film and the being of the audience. In this respect, echoing Heidegger, this engagement can be the forgotten question of film theory. For this reason, in order to consider these questions, Frampton’s Filmosophy provokes us on the way to Heideggerian meditative thinking, away from the convention of human mentation, which plans, calculates, analyzes and so on.



### 2.2.1.1. Frampton's 'Film-beings', 'Filmind' and 'Filmgoer'

The distinct form of encounter between audience and film is shaped by Frampton's understanding of *Filmosophy*. It is different from interpretative spectator theories, which concentrate on voyeurism, identification or desire, and Marxism. Thus, after briefly analyzing the idea of how a person can experience film with respect to its basic, personal and cognitivist expansions, Frampton's discussion on "how understanding film as thinking reveals an intimate relationship between film and 'filmgoer'" (p.149) carries us towards Heideggerian approaches to experience.

In order to have a fully involved position in an encounter with film, the experience is the key point. Thus, the nature of experience has been argued from different perspectives. These have been contextualized especially within cognitivism and phenomenology. In the cognitivist approach, the 'filmgoer' uses his/her real world thought processes in order to understand the film. Thus, the 'filmgoer' makes sense of the film. The focus is on the viewer's consciousness while processing the film, as opposed to constituting the film experience as unconsciousness process<sup>13</sup>. To Currie (2004), cognitivism is a realist position insofar as it emphasizes the similarities between our responses to film and to events and processes in the real world: "no cognitivist supposes that film and reality are interchangeable; film is not just "more reality", and if it were it would be hard to see what its interest for us could be (as cited in Miller and Stam, p.118). On the other hand, the phenomenological approach argues that the 'filmgoer' sees what the film wants them to see (Frampton, 2008, p.157).

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<sup>13</sup> Philosophy of film, retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/film/>

Frampton concentrates on a new mode of thought. In other words, his understanding of film and philosophy is regarded as a new attempt to frame film theory in terms of new concepts such as ‘filmind’, ‘film-being’, ‘film-thinking’ and “‘filmgoer’”. For our study, ‘film-being’, ‘filmmind’ and “‘filmgoer’” are inspirational concepts, which support our understanding of filmic experience<sup>14</sup>. The ‘film-being’ provides the transition since the human mind is not in question. Thus, with respect to Frampton (2006), “Filmosophy is partly a philosophy of film-being, of the film-world is created and reconfigured: how it works and means. (...) ‘Film-being’ is a general term for what we understand to be the origin(ator) of the images and sounds we experience” (p.27). For this reason, Frampton classifies the ‘film-beings’ of the history of film theory “as camera ‘I’ or virtual creator, as ghostly or absent author, or as some kind of narrotological or post-narrotological beings” (ibid, p.27). He shapes film theory with these ideas regarding his filmosophical stance. Thus, understanding of the film is issued from itself. The film becomes the creator of its own world, not from a ‘point’ of view, but from a realm that gives us some things and not others (Frampton, 2008, p.38). Put it simply, the film-being is the creator of the world revealed in the film since it refers that films generates their own thoughts. This refers to what the film is thinking. “My philosophy of the ‘filmgoer’ leads us to a phenomenological ‘mix’ of thinkings: the film and ‘filmgoer’ join in thought, and the process of that encounter provides immediate meaning and knowledge” (ibid, p.149). In other words, this event becomes an organic unity which opposes separation between film and ‘filmgoer’. Thus, the experience of the audience exceeds subjective interpretation and is not limited to cognitive processes.

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<sup>14</sup>The concept of filmic experience is borrowed from Casetti’s article titled “Filmic Experience”.

Regarding the 'filmind', "It is another kind of mind, its own mind; a new mind ... The meaning of mind has been changed towards its expression in film (Frampton, 2006, p. 73). In other words, Frampton saves us from the chains of the Cartesian idea of the mind. It is a new philosophical concept "when considering the being of film within filmosophy (Frampton, 2008, p.366), and acknowledges that we are not dealing with any prior definition of thinking and of the human mind in this respect. The idea of filmind refers the organic unity of 'filmgoer' and the film. In other words, the Cartesian separation removes<sup>15</sup>. In addition, Frampton (2006) adds: "But the filmind is distant from both reality and the brain, being neither ontological nor anthropomorphic: it neither shows us how things 'really are', nor what or how we 'really think'. It is its own mind, a prelinguistic, affective world-mind, ready to think anything it wishes" (p.202). For this reason, Filmosophy is the reflection of a new way of conceptualizing the encounter with film.

In his new understanding of 'filmosophical filmgoer', Frampton would like to indicate that film and 'filmgoer' have special relationship. At first, he postulates that there is kind of affect which makes 'filmgoer' 'feel beyond mechanics and creative intention' (ibid, p.75). That is the point why the experience of film exceeds audience engagement of film which generates 'contextual knowledge', too (ibid). Also, as Lyotard notes, "The feeling is the immediate welcoming of what is given" (as cited in Frampton, 2006, p.178). It does not refer identification of audience itself with the film. Rather, it points out how this relation is constituted.

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<sup>15</sup> That is also why Mullarkey emphasizes on it is not necessary to 'know' about the mind to use in relation to film (Mullarkey, 2009, p.127). Thus, referring Frampton, Mullarkey puts filmind as it appears only as 'rhetorical extention' (ibid).

To put it differently, film and ‘filmgoer’ affect each other. The ‘filmgoer’ actively participates in the film; it is an encounter, a joining, a dialogical connection (ibid, p.164). In this respect, for the experience of film is organic due to a dialogical connection, there are more “*meaning possibilities* to steer their interpretation” (Frampton, 2006, p. 149). For this reason, Frampton’s emphasis on this active event illuminates us in the context of Heidegger’s use of Dasein and being-in-the-world, which we will cover in the following chapters.

### **2.2.2. The Meditative (Film) Thinking through Film-Thinking of Frampton and The Deleuzian Idea of Thinking**

It is known that Heidegger’s criticism of traditional philosophy is supported by his arguments about the ‘end’ of philosophy. He asserts that, “Philosophy turns into the empirical science of man, of all that can become for man the experiential object of his technology, the technology by which he established himself in the world by working on it in the manifold modes of making and shaping” (Heidegger, 1993, p.434). Due to the domination of the subject and technology, which does not leave a place for thought, Heidegger believes the current thinking would not provide to clearing of beings. In order to analyze this, he postulates two kinds of thinking: calculative and meditative thinking. Calculative thinking never stops, never collects itself (Heidegger, 1966, p.46). It is somehow scientific thinking. It can reveal itself as a technological thinking which “threatens the rootedness of man”. With regard to meditative thinking, it “reigns in everything that is” (ibid, p.46). This thinking exceeds ordinary understanding. It is the releasement toward things we can endure in

the world of technology without being imperiled by it (ibid, p.55). Thus, meditative thinking is the basis of our inquiry referring to the experience of film.

As we deal with film art, we consider it within the Heideggerian approach. Heidegger sees art as a kind of revealing of truth. Frampton (2008) contributes the following interpretation:

In Heideggerian terms then, films are bestowed with the gift of truth, which is addressed to the work's preservers, the filmgoers. The mix of film and 'filmgoer' becomes a (somewhat Eisensteinian) leap forward. Film, in its meditative state, is thus the *happening of truth*. For the Heideggerian cinephile, film-thinking lets truth leap forth, and truth becomes a kind of film-thinking. (p.193)

To put it differently, meditative film thinking becomes kind of reflective film thinking. It provides the audience with images on which to dwell, i.e., world revelation through images. According to Heidegger (1966):

Yet anyone can follow the path of meditative thinking in his own manner and within his own limits. Why? Because man is a *thinking* that is a meditating being. Thus, meditative thinking need by no means be 'high-flown.' It is enough if we dwell on what lies close and meditate on what is closest; upon that which concerns us, each one of us, here and now; here, on this patch of home ground; now, in the present hour of history. (p.47)

Heidegger also focuses on this side of meditative thinking since, in the century of technology, people forget their thrownness to the world and try to dominate it by means of technology. For this reason, we postulate meditative thinking, which is not passive or closed to other ideas. Rather, it can be related to both "past as a memory and the future as fore-sensing possibilities" (Frampton, 2006, p.193).

On the other hand, meditative thinking becomes a poeticizing of thought, an attempt to move thinking beyond language, towards a 'primordial poetry' – as all poeticizing begins with thinking (Frampton, 2008, p.192). As Heidegger emphasizes, meditative thinking refers the idea of unthought in thought which leads us to the Deleuzian idea

of thinking. As Marratti (2008) emphasizes, “In Deleuze’s view, we certainly need more thought to create “new forms of life”; but we also need, maybe in the first place, to acknowledge the power of thought (xvi). Thus, this is what Deleuze finds cinematic in the cinema. As with the Heideggerian understanding of artwork, in the Deleuzian way, cinema can present images or perception liberated from this organizing structure of everyday life and it does this by maximizing its own internal power (Colebrook, 2002, p.31). Also, for Deleuze, thinking is not something that we can point out or define. It is, as Colebrook (2002) put it, “a power of becoming and its becoming can be transformed by what is not thinking’s own – the outside or the unthought. Thinking is not something ‘we’ do; thinking happens to us, from without (p.38). To put it differently, it is happening for Deleuze. Thus, Frampton (2006) parallels Heidegger by drawing our attention to meditative thinking: “For Heidegger, meditative, poetic thinking goes some way towards revealing the unthought in thought: the unthought is the not yet thought, the future of thought which brings the chaos of the outside into rational thought” (p.192). That is the point of why the idea of thinking is related to Heideggerian meditative thinking. Thinking is not only cognitive process for Deleuze, too.

In this regards, we should note that, after the book *Cinema 1: The Movement–Image*, in which Deleuze focuses on early cinema, with the idea of time-image in *Cinema 2: The Time–Image*, he argues that images are freed from logical sequences by means of using the irrational cuts so the image of time itself is given. For this reason, “Cinema is thought as it has the power of taking thought beyond its own fixed images of itself and the world; we can think of images that are no longer images of some being” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 54).

In sum, by dwelling upon *Filmosophy* and crossing Deleuzian thinking, we can say that “philosophically, film affects our way of understanding life, because it affects our ways of perceiving our lives (Frampton, 2006, p.209). Also, “We should enjoy the visual experience for its own sake, but to appreciate film is to emancipate everyday understanding – how we understand film pools our understanding of life and being” (ibid, p.209).

Since Deleuze saves us from the Cartesian idea of thinking, it refers to the junction between him and Heidegger in this respect. Thus, with the inspiration of Frampton, this leads us to work on a Heideggerian understanding of Being in order to see how film affects or changes our way of looking into our own Being while *interpreting* what we see. Also, how the relation with the film, i.e., the engagement itself leads audience to an ontological investigation will be argued in this context. And since meditative thinking contributes to the “happening of truth” in film, in the next chapter we will also analyze the idea of the “happening of truth” in the work of art by considering its implications on the idea of film.

### 3. AN ANALOGY: FILM AS A WORK OF ART

Heidegger, in his monumental article “The Origin of the Work of Art”<sup>16</sup> (1936), specifically argues the origin of the work of art, artwork, the characteristics of the work of art and truth as an *alētheia*<sup>17</sup>. By doing this, he includes both creators and preservers of the work of art. With regard to truth, differing from the traditional understanding of both philosophy and art, Heidegger (1993) puts forward that “... art is the creative preserving of truth in the work. Art then is a becoming and happening of truth” (p.196). Philosophically, he says that “all art is poetry”. Even though he questions the nature of the work of art and its origin via “the Greek Temple”, “the Roman Fountain”, a poem by C.F. Meyer and Van Gogh’s painting “A Pair of Shoes”, he does not generalize his ideas to any specific kind of art. For this study however, Heidegger’s approach to the “becoming of truth” will be explored via its *filmic revealing*. This opens up a new path for our ideas on meditative [film] thinking, “contemplating the meaning which reigns in everything that is” (as cited in Frampton, 2006, p.191).

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<sup>16</sup> Heidegger delivered a public lecture on the 13th of November in Freiburg titled Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes in Deutch. The version referenced in this study is derived from the Frankfurt Lectures in 1936. Heidegger, M. (1993). Basic Writings: Second Edition, Revised and Expanded (1964). Harper San Francisco

<sup>17</sup> This is the Greek word for “truth” and refers to the “unconcealment of beings”.



### 3.1. The Related Introductory Themes of Heideggerian Thinking

The relationship of human beings with the world has always been the central question of Western philosophy. In Ancient Greek, Socrates has issued human being. After the turning point of him, Descartes was the peak in 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Hume and Kant continue the tradition. In his time, Descartes first liberated philosophy from the domination of theology. He then adopted a strategy of philosophical skepticism, but this methodological doubt was itself a pathway on the search for things that cannot be doubted, and he does not doubt that he is present. He must admit that “he is”. According to Heidegger (1993), “As the doubter, Descartes forced men into doubt in this way; he led them to think of themselves, of their ‘I’. Thus the ‘I’, human subjectivity, came to be declared the center of thought” (p.297). This thus becomes the argument for a human-centered construction of both modernity and subjectivism. Until Descartes, ‘I’ was not a special subject. Nevertheless, after the proposition *cogito ergo sum*<sup>18</sup>, the ‘I’ as a point of thought becomes *subjectum*<sup>19</sup>. In addition to this, ‘I’ posits itself. Consequently, Heidegger (1993) argues that “[w]ith this peculiar emphasis on the ‘I’, that is, with the “I think”, the determination of the rational and of reason now takes on a distinct priority” (p.304). This idea also determines the grounding of knowledge since thinking becomes the fundamental act of reason. In Heidegger’s words, “Descartes’ interpretation of entities and of truth first creates the presupposition underlying the theory of knowledge and the metaphysics of knowledge. Through Descartes, realism is first put in the position of

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<sup>18</sup> This is expressed as “I think therefore I am” in English, but Heidegger (1993) argues that “[t]he major premise would be only a formal generalization of what lies in the proposition: “cogito — sum”. Descartes himself emphasizes that no inference is present” (p.302)

<sup>19</sup> Subjectum is the translation of *hupokeimenon* and signifies that which is not taken from somewhere else. This underlying Subject is established before and it emerges from itself.

having to prove the reality of the outer world” (as cited in Guignon, 1983, p.13).

Hume, on the other hand, identifies the essence of entities resides in the bond between impressions and ideas. Kant then distinguishes *phenomena* from *noumena*<sup>20</sup> so he represents another turning point in the history of philosophy.

On the basis of Heidegger’s critique of the Cartesian epistemological account of subject (*res cogitans*) and of contemplating objects (*res extensa*) Dreyfus (1995) correctly drew attention to why Heidegger thought traditional ontology based on the occurrent failed:

Traditional ontology succeeds only if it can account for all modes of being, including Dasein's practical activity and the equipmental whole in which Dasein is absorbed, in terms of the law-like or rule-like combinations of occurrent elements. If it can be shown that the world is irreducible to occurrent elements, be they bits of matter, atomic facts, sense data, or bits of information, then an ontology based on the occurrent fails. Heidegger focuses on Descartes' attempt to understand everything in terms of nature. (p.108)

According to Heidegger, for *Dasein* is not only a “thinking thing” which encounters objects in the world, his critique of traditional philosophy starts from this point. The reason why he calls a human being *Dasein* lies behind this difference. *Dasein* does not see objects as only extended things (*res extensa*). For instance, the table (one of the extended things that human beings in the world) on which one puts his/her computer is not merely an entity with a given set of geometrical and physical properties; rather it may be a place for a computer at which she/he writes a paper. Moreover, this table is not isolated from other entities that make up the world around them; it may be where she/he hears the sound of the rain outside. In this case, the immediate surroundings point to a larger world beyond, which reveals itself in this way.

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<sup>20</sup> *Phenomena* as appearances are known only in space and time while *noumena* are things-in-themselves, which we cannot know.

As Heidegger says, philosophers of traditional philosophy have dismissed the meaning of Being. As he insists:

Basically, all ontology, no matter how rich and firmly compacted a system of categories it has at its disposal, remains blind and perverted from its ownmost aim, if it has not first adequately clarified the meaning of Being, and conceived this clarification as its fundamental task. (Heidegger 1993, p.9)

Thus, Heidegger rejects the question of the meaning of Being in Western philosophy on the basis that it is dispossessed of a self-evident answer.

The nature of human beings' relations with the world has been a question throughout the history of philosophy. Along this line of inquiry, for the human always encounter the object, the world becomes that very object. Hence, rather than constructing human beings as actors within the world, philosophers assume them to be detached observers. Yet, Heidegger shifts this tradition with his monumental work, *Being and Time* (1927)<sup>21</sup>. As Stephan Mulhall (1996) notes, "Heidegger's protagonists are actors rather than spectators, and his narratives suggest that exclusive reliance upon the image of the spectator has seriously distorted philosopher's characterizations of human existence in the world" (p.39).

To put it differently, human beings live with physical objects within the world, and so also the audience cannot be singularly extracted from this whole and made the spectator. Instead, the actor makes a world by being-in-the-world. Heidegger's use of *Dasein*, which is literally "there-being" or "being-there", affirms an internal relationship between the human being and the world. Since only the human being

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<sup>21</sup> Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and Time* (English Edition). Translated by J. Stambaugh. SUNY series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy. State Univ. of New York Pr. (Original Work published in 1927)

takes his being as an issue, he reserves the use of Dasein for usage only with human beings.

Additionally, Heidegger (1996) says that “the term ‘Da-Sein’ which we use to designate this being does not express its what, as in the case of table, house, tree, but being” (p.40). This means that whenever question “Who are you?” is asked, the answer, if it were “A Turkish filmmaker and mother of two”, would be indicating being Turkish, being a filmmaker and being a mother as the dimensions of Being. In other words, it tells the determination of the some of the possibilities (dimensions) of the ways of Being. Therefore, if she realizes one of these possibilities, she has chosen to be someone and thus interprets herself. Also, as Polt (1999) argues, “For Heidegger, Dasein is not a thing at all. Things are “whats”; their Being is “presence-at-hand”, and their characteristics are “categories”. Dasein is a “who” whose Being is “existence” and whose ontological characteristics Heidegger dubs existentialia” (p.43). For instance, a piece of wood is “present-at-hand” for the carpenter. It is actual but it has no relationship with its own being. On the other hand, the carpenter is not simply what he is. The dimensions of his identity, such as being an English carpenter and being a grandfather of four, are not just the facts of the here and now. They are part of his past and also part of his future since they open up possible ways for him to be in the world. He acts as he is an English carpenter and grandfather of four. He interprets who he is.

Heidegger identifies Dasein as the object of inquiry that precedes any proper posing of the question of the meaning of the Being (Mulhall, 1996, p.14). The ontological characterization of *Dasein* forms its fundamental ontology. Also, *Dasein* is different from other entities in the sense that all other entities are encounterable in the world, and some exist by virtue of the fact that they are alive. Nevertheless, *Dasein* is

considered with itself. Cats do not concern themselves with their lives but *Dasein* does. *Dasein* cannot be called the specific essence which it necessarily manifests. In other words, *Dasein* is not simply what it is as opposed to other entities. Mulhall (1996) observes: “But for *Dasein*, living just is taking a stand on who one is and on what essential about one’s being, and being defined by that stand” (p.15). In choosing whether or not to go to see a movie or to spend time working, one chooses what kind of person one is. In identifying with some choices, human beings elucidate the concept of the human being. However, these choices cannot fix an identity; the interpretation of identity remains open. This self-interpretation of *Dasein* is the existentiell understanding which refers to the ontic state of *Dasein*. In order to apprehend the idea of ontic state, by referring to Polt, (1999), we can say that this means pertaining to particular facts without regarding their Being. For example, “How old is the sun?” is an ontic question, while “What is the way of Being of stars” is an ontological question. Ontical questions stand a chance of being answered by experimental science, but ontological questions call for philosophy (Polt, 1999, p.34). However, any attempt to uncover the structures that shape any “existentiell understanding” possible is an “existential analytic”. In this regards, it should be noted that, “existentiell understanding” means to concern an individual with *Dasein* as a way of Being. For instance, if you ask ‘should I vote Republican?’, it would be an existentiell question. It is about life itself. Yet, with regard to Polt (1999), “Often this existentiell understanding is defective, usually we are only partially aware of it, and it rarely turns into an existential understanding of human Being in general” (p.35). In addition, the existential analytic of *Dasein* is prior to any empirical investigation, and the existential analytic carries us to the ‘fundamental ontology’. Thus, as Dreyfus (1995) put forward, “We shall understand how every mode of

intelligibility – the being of equipment, of objects, of institutions, of people, etc – depends upon a fundamental way of being, namely, existence” (p. 28). It is Dasein’s way of Being. In other words, it is the investigation of Being.

Thus, Heidegger sums its role as follows:

The question of the meaning of Being becomes possible at all only if there is something like an understanding of Being. Understanding of Being belongs to the kind of Being which we call "Dasein." The more appropriately and primordially we have succeeded in explicating this entity, the surer we are to attain our goal in the further course of working out the problem of fundamental ontology. (as cited in Guignon, 1983, p. 66)

The aim of the “fundamental ontology” is to interrogate Being as it makes itself revealed through the Being of an entity. For the aim of any such exercise is to investigate Being as it makes itself through the Being of an entity; and the fact that Dasein’s essence is existence makes the relationship of its Being to Being a peculiarly intimate one in at least three respects. Heidegger elaborates the three aspects of *Dasein*. “First, it has ontic priority; unlike any other entity, at every moment of its existence, it relates itself to its own Being” (Mulhall, 1996, p.17). Second, this ontic priority also has an ontological aspect in the sense of *Dasein*’s own relation to its Being (which means it questions its own Being); *Dasein* has a certain implicit *understanding* of its relation with its own Being (ibid). Since *Dasein* exists and has its Being within an understanding of its Being, scientific investigations and everyday activities are also grounded in its capacity to grasp all entities as entities. The third aspect, called the “ontico-ontological condition”, grasps at the possibility of any ontology (Heidegger, 1996, p.11). In this respect, if we understand that *Dasein* is the being whose Being is at issue, it is grasped in the sense that it relates itself towards the Being of any and every entity.

In addition to this, speaking to the fundamental point of Heideggerian thought, it can be said that *Dasein* does not only comprehend the objects in the world, but it produces a world with them by being concerned with its own being within this world. Thus, for Heidegger, ‘the world’ is not a construction by “present-at-hand” entities and their properties; rather it is ontological in the primary sense. Heidegger makes a distinction between “present-at-hand” (PAH) and ready-to-hand (RTH) entities. The “present-at-hand” entities are somehow objects of knowledge like in Descartes’ model, which thematizes the world (*extensa*) and makes the subject out of it. A “ready-to-hand” entity reflects the “howness” of a thing. It cannot be methodologized. RTH entities precede PAH entities and are available in everyday life. For instance, you do not think what a table serves for; rather you use the table as equipment in all relationships with it. You can read your book which you have placed on it or you can eat your dinner on it. However, if a leg of this table is broken, then you would think that it is a table with four legs. It would become an object of your consciousness since it does not serve its aim. It becomes PAH.

On the other hand, Heidegger uses another important expression for *Dasein*’s Being: “Being-in-the-world”. This can be explained by contrasting it with PAH. PAH entities, such as the wood, exists in a specific location, they are “in” some place that refers to three-dimensional space. Being-in, in contrast, means dwelling for *Dasein*. For instance, an Iranian woman lives with her family in Turkey. Her world is the setting of this life including her national identity and her family. She understands customs, political events by living through her own world. Other entities seem foreign to her. This means that her own existence is entangled in the context of her world. According to Polt (1999),

Dasein is in its world, then, through engaged, concerned dwelling. This dwelling is not primarily cognitive, its not built up out of observations, beliefs or knowledge. Rather, knowing is a specialized manifestation of Being-in-the-world that depends on a more basic, non-cognitive dwelling. (p.47)

In this respect, we understand that the human being, involved in a world, engages concerns. Regarding the example of the Iranian woman, it can be said that belief and knowledge are founded upon this primordial “Being-in-the-world” (Polt, 1999, p.48) since she would interpret events from the perspective of her own worldview. This is the source for understanding how she dwells in her world.

The meaning of the world, as it is discussed here, is different from Cartesian idea of the world. Heidegger calls it *worldliness*<sup>22</sup>. It refers to the “Being of worlds, the essential structure that characterizes every Dasein’s world” (Polt, 1999, p.49). “‘World’, in quotation marks, refers to the “totality of beings which can be objectively present within the world” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 60:64) In this idea of “world”, reality is viewed as a collection of objects. Thus, Heidegger uses “worldliness” as “an ontological concept which designates the structure of a constitutive factor of “being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1996, p.60). For this reason, in order to analyze worldliness, Heidegger investigates the environment (*Umwelt*), the closest world to *Dasein*, namely the surrounding world. Although he begins to analyze this environment, he first focuses on the things — “ready to hand entities” —that human beings encounter in the context of using and making. Thus, the everyday environment provides a chance for human beings to recognize themselves as engaged actors who dwell in the world as part of a significant whole. In this significant whole, the things that human beings encounter refer to a purpose. As

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<sup>22</sup> It is used as *worldliness* in Stambaugh’s translation of Being and Time.



Heidegger (1996) points out, “The world turns out to be a totality of references (p.71:76). For instance, you have your DVD player in order to see a film. In turn, this DVD player refers to the person who uses it, perhaps announcing that its owner loves movies. Thus, the world of the owner announces itself with this totality of references. Polt (1999) sums up the issue with the following:

A world is not only an environment, but any context in which entities are available and meaningful to Dasein. Important features of the world for someone may include many references that go beyond mere utility, references that are structured around sin, beauty, or sincerity. (p.52)

Even though *Dasein* is being-in-the-world, it is still itself “there”. In other words, it exists out in the open. It is not a being which is closed. As Heidegger (1996) put it: “The expression “there” means this essential disclosedness. Through disclosedness this being (Da-Sein) is “there” for itself together with the Dasein of the world” (p.125:133)

Heidegger (1996) adds that Dasein is its disclosure (p.125). It means that we, as human beings, think of ourselves as an event of self-opening, rather than as beings inside a closed world. It is hard to imagine or picture this event, but if we try, we find it picturing or presenting itself. However, it is not a matter of discussion; when the existence of *Dasein* is questioned, this happening cannot be materialized.

In addition to this, Polt (1999) claims that “Heidegger’s approach is holistic: in other words, he stresses that the experience of the meaningful world as a whole is more basic than the particular facts we discover about entities within it” (p.58). Moreover, the Cartesian outlook suffers from intellectualist myopia: it examines a specialized class of entities within the world, present-at-hand objects, but it misses the world itself, the larger context in which these objects presents themselves (as cited in Polt, 1999, p.58). In this respect, Cartesianism sticks with the trees and its subject cannot

think in terms of the forest. It is therefore essential to clarify how Heidegger draws a distinction between meditative and calculative thinking. According to Heidegger (1959), there are two kinds of thinking<sup>23</sup>. Calculative thinking “whose peculiarity consists in the fact that whenever we plan, research, and organize we always reckon with conditions that are given” (ibid), dwells on traditional views on thinking and works within these frameworks. As Anderson (1969) points out in the introduction to *Discourse on Thinking* (1959), “it is also characterized by human methods of approaching things, and by the fact that in calculative thinking we deal with things in our term for our advantage” (p.24). In other words, calculative thinking is the thinking that leads us to an ordinary understanding of the objects. On the other hand, meditative thinking begins with an awareness of the field within which these objects are — an awareness of the horizon rather than ordinary understanding (Heidegger, 1959, p.24). Thus, it is kind of “releasement” beyond the distinction between activity and passivity. Releasement involves openness and, in meditative thinking, human beings open to Being and resolve its disclosure (Heidegger, 1959, p.26). Due to the involvement of openness, the experience of the work of art must therefore be about meditative thinking, since “meditative thinking demands of us not to cling one-sidedly to a single idea, nor to run down a one-track course of ideas” (Heidegger, 1959, p.53). It is, at the same time, an ontological event through the “happening”. Thus, the possibility of happening will be the aim of our analysis, first by means of the work of the art.

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<sup>23</sup> M.Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, p.46

### 3.2. Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1936)

In Heideggerian analysis, the question of art is always based on the question of Being. Contrary to traditional understanding, he questions Being through his assertion that “The question of Being” has been forgotten in the history of Western Philosophy, last asked by Plato and Aristotle at last. He aims to revive this question. As mentioned in the previous section, the ontico-ontological priority of *Dasein* is put forward. For this reason, the question of what Being is, at first, is interrogated. The meaning of Being cannot be ambiguous. Only then can the relationship between art and Being be discovered.

Heidegger brings art into the basic hermeneutic approach. More than this, he talks about distinction between the *world*, as a major hermeneutical concept covered in *Being and Time* (1927), the “earth” a counterconcept introduced by him in “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1936). By opposing the traditional metaphysical concept of truth, which dwells on the idea of correspondence<sup>24</sup>, he interprets truth as an unconcealment of being. Thus, he also mentions truth with regard to art and artworks. As to work itself, Heidegger’s analysis of the work of art can be examined in terms of its thingly and equipmental character. The relationship between the work and Truth, the endless *strife* between the *world* and the *earth* and finally Truth, and art are also examined in the article.

A work of art, allegorically, is abstracted from its thingly character. A work of art is used as a medium which would like to be transmitted. It is a symbol, and thus its thingly character should be purified of all traditional understanding. To understand a work of art, its non-meditated truth should be grasped. For a work of art is a “thing”

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<sup>24</sup> Put simply, the correspondence theory of truth is about the relationship between truth and reality, i.e., that truth corresponds to a fact. There are many versions of this theory but for instance, this theory can premise that “x is truth if and only if (iff) x corresponds to some facts” and “x is false iff x does not correspond to any fact”

of some kind, Heidegger begins his analysis by arguing traditional conceptions of “thing” in Western thought. Firstly, for instance, a granite block is a mere thing, he says. It is hard, heavy, bulky, etc. Thus, it can be known via its characteristics and it still signifies something proper to itself. Heidegger continues his analysis by re-considering the concept of thing. He points out that:

For them, this core of the thing was something lying at the ground of the thing, something already there. The characteristic, however, is called *ta symbebekota*, that which has always turned up already along with the given core and occurs along with it. (Heidegger, 1993, pp.148-9)

With regard to the second interpretation of a thing, this is based on the idea of the unity of a bundle of sensations, which make possible our grasping of a thing as an object of thought. “But a thing never reaches that position as long as we assign as its thingly feature what is perceived by the senses (Heidegger 1993, p.152). Lastly, it is interpreted as formed matter; the thingly element manifests the matter of which it consists. In other words, the form does not precede the matter. Form as a shape is not the consequence here of a prior distribution of the matter (Heidegger, 1993, p.154). In these approaches to the thing, the thing is reduced to the approaches. For instance, in the first approach, the thing is reduced to characteristic of the subject; in the second, the subject is not related with the object. In the third, the thing is reduced to a physical matter. Heidegger does not find any of these satisfactory.

In this context, in any relationship with the work of art in Heideggerian thought, the work of art does not fit within the observing or calculating methods of Western thought. Put differently, if a thingly character is attributed to the work at all, it becomes a present-at-hand object. However, for the real nature of a “thing”, its definition is derived from the concept of equipment. Hence, Heidegger emphasizes the equipmental character of equipment. However, this consists of its usefulness. In

this context, by means of artistic representation, Heidegger considers a painting called “A Pair of Shoes” by Van Gogh as an example in order to argue the thingly character of the thing via the equipmental character of the artwork. The peasant woman does not think of the Being of the shoes when she wears them, as she does not think of the aim of these shoes. Only when the usefulness of the shoes is not considered do they serve their equipmentality. Thus, the true essence of equipment sets itself to the work. In addition to this, the usefulness of the equipmental being rests in the Being of the equipment. Heidegger (1993) calls it reliability (p.160). Since the equipmentality belongs to the earth and is protected in the world of the peasant woman, this relationship provides reliability. Thus, as Heidegger (1993) articulates his point: “This equipment belongs to the earth and it is protected in the world of the peasant woman” (pp.159-160). Additionally, Heidegger (1993) considers idea of “reliability” in order to indicate that both world and earth exist in the equipmental character of the work:

The equipmental being of the equipment consists indeed in its usefulness. But this usefulness itself rest in the abundance of an essential Being of the equipment. We call it reliability. By virtue of this reliability the peasant woman is made privy of the equipment she is sure of her world. (p.160)

For this reason, the work of art is not a piece of equipment with aesthetic properties<sup>25</sup>. In this respect, the work of art allows us to understand “what shoes are in truth”. Heidegger, in his inquiry of same, does not characterize the work of art as an object; rather, he says it is a thing that stands in itself. Gadamer (1994) confirms this:

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<sup>25</sup> Heidegger makes a distinction between the traditional concepts of aesthetic and art. For him, the thinking on aesthetic in the manner of Western thought eclipses its true historical significance. Put simply, art cannot be art’s own manner: Heidegger (1971) believes that art “grounds history” by “allowing truth to spring forth” (p.77).

By standing-in-itself it not only belongs to its world; its world is present in it. The work of art opens up its own world. Something is an object only when it no longer fits into the fabric of its world because the world belongs to has disintegrated. (p.103)

Regarding the importance of this relationship, Gadamer (1994) adds that “the whole world of rural life is in these shoes” (p.103). Hence, in this idea of opening, as a counterconcept, Heidegger uses earth to keep world in force. It is self-sheltering as opposed to self-opening. Consequently, the work of art has two essential features, both self-opening and self-enclosing. Thus, a work of art does not mean something or function as a sign that refers to a meaning; rather, it presents itself in its own Being such that the beholder must carry it. As Gadamer (1994) asserts, it is so very much present itself that the ingredients out of which it is composed – stone, color, tone, word – only come into a real existence of their own within the work of art itself (p.104). Furthermore, regarding Heidegger (1993), “The work moves the earth itself into the open of a world and keeps it here” (p. 172). This indicates endless strife or a rift between world and earth that brings forth truth. The work of art does not copy the objective world; rather it sets up a world, one which is not merely a collection of extended things. In this sense, the peasant woman’s world is set up by the work of art itself. Hence, Heidegger (1993) claims that:

World is never an object that stands before us and can be seen. World is the ever-objective to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse keep us transported into Being. ... there the world worlds. A stone is worldless. Plant and animals likewise have no world. ... The peasant woman, on the other hand, has a world because she dwells in the overtness of beings. (p.170)

Heidegger investigates not only a painting but also a poem and a temple. For instance, according the Heidegger’s analysis, C.F. Meyer’s poem “Roman Fountain”

does not copy reality or attempt a representation of it in words; rather it is about truth, which is “timeless and supertemporal”: “The jet ascends and falling fills/ The marble basin circling round;/ This, veiling itself over, spills/ Into a second basin’s ground ...” (as cited in Heidegger, 1993, p. 163). In these lines, there is nothing about the physical properties or usefulness of the fountain. Yet, it is art itself, truth happens in this poem. You may visualize a fountain, but there is more than this. You feel the earth into which the fountain has been installed and the world which the fountain unconceals.

For our main concern is the “happening of the truth” in the work of art, and the significant point that we take from this analysis is the nature of creation, which Heidegger (1993) defines in terms of “the work-being of the work” (p.165). Thus, this idea forms the basis of his claims about the *strife* between the *world* and the *earth*, since a work’s becoming a work is in relation with “happening of truth”. This occurrence of “happening of truth” is only about the “dialogical confrontation” in the work (of art), consisting of *strife* between *world* and *earth*.

In order to interrogate the relationship between the work and truth, Heidegger examines a Greek Temple. The work-being of the temple emerges from within the understanding of a historical world. However, this process or the dwelling of history is concealed in the *earth*. According to Heidegger (1993), the temple, in its standing there, first gives to things their look, to men their outlook on themselves (p.168). Thus, as a temple-work, this work opens a *world* and at the same time sets this *world* as an *earth*. This temple reveals the relationships of mankind in history.

With regard to the “happening of truth”, it is about endless strife between world and earth. In his own words, Heidegger (1993) says, “Setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work accomplishes this strife” (p.175). However, Heidegger continues

his line of questioning by asking how truth happens in the instigation of strife between *world* and *earth*. Thus, he describes the essence of truth using the Greek word *alētheia*, meaning the unconcealment of truth. The truth always refers to its being. Truth happens itself by means of *alētheia*. In the query of *alētheia*, once again, he does not attribute any kind of being or proposition to it, and postulates that: “The unconcealment of beings—this is never a merely existent state, but a happening: Unconcealment (of truth) is neither an attribute of matters in the sense of beings, not one of propositions” (Heidegger, 1993, p.179). Yet, the point is that when there is unconcealment, the concealment of beings happens at the same time. Truth has this dialectic nature. In addition, the work is also the guarantee of the settlement of the *earth*. The historical Being sets its *world* within the *earth*. Put simply, the “happening of truth” is about this conflict between the world and the earth. Truth is not totally unconcealment or concealment. Something unconcealed is concealed by the rest of everything. The essence of truth is this dialogical confrontation between *world* and *earth*, namely, unconcealment and concealment.

With regard to the creators of the work of art, in the process of creation, both the creator and the work of art are means to the happening of truth, since truth is also about belonging. Heidegger (1993) defends this with the following:

Creation is here always thought in reference to the work. To the essence of the work there belongs the happening of truth. From the outset we define the essence of creating by its relation to the essence of truth as the unconcealment of beings. (p.182)

Heidegger, in his analysis of the work of art, also focuses on the distinction between craft object, the work (of art), art and the craft. For this reason, Heidegger (1993) examines the concept of *techne*, which is used in Greek for both art and craft:



The word *techne* denotes rather a mode of knowing ... For Greek thought the essence of knowing for Greeks is *alētheia*, that is, in the revealing of beings. It supports and guides all comportment towards beings. *Techne*, as knowledge experienced in the Greek manner, is a bringing forth of beings in that it brings forth what is present as such out of concealment and specifically into the unconcealment of its appearance; *techne* never signifies the action of making. (p.184)

Although *techne* is directly about creation itself, if it becomes the basis of technology and it is attributed to only the creator, then it would be moved away from happening of truth. Thus, the creation is considered with the idea of *poiésis*, since the “happening of truth” can be grasped by means of the nature of creation. Whatever has *poiesie* in its essence is a form that provides us with ways to understand the Being of beings. The truth in the work of art is related to the *Dasein* in the sense that *Dasein* has a relationship with the art in terms of disclosure of truth, since the unconcealment of being belongs to itself. Furthermore, Heidegger (1993), before emphasizing poetry, discusses preservation of the work, stating that “[p]reserving the work does not reduce people to their private experiences, but brings them into affiliation with truth happening in the work” (p.193). Put differently, the work of art bestows to its preservers historical beings<sup>26</sup>. Thus, he affirms that “[a]rt – especially poetry as a poetic projection, comes from nothing in this respect, that it never takes its gift from the ordinary and traditional. Yet it never comes from nothing in that what it is projected by is only the withheld determination of historical *Dasein*” (Heidegger, 1993, p.200). This means that this historicity is set up by art since art is historical itself.

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<sup>26</sup> Heidegger does not here refer to the chronological time of beings. Rather he uses the German term *Geschichte* referring to history. As Heidegger notes in *Being and Time* (1927), *Dasein*'s historicity depends on its happening, or ‘historizing’, the peculiar way in which it stretches itself along between its birth and its death (as cited in A Heidegger Dictionary, 1999, p.94). Also, for *Dasein* is also its past (BT, p.20), this provides access to the historical past of art.

The work becomes true work only when a historical being as an audience penetrates it. Thus, this being relieves him-/herself from inauthentic understanding, such as those from everyday practices. The Being sets its own being in truth in this way. The happening brings preservation with it. The preservation of truth is about settlement of the disclosedness of Being. With respect to Heidegger (1993), “Setting-into-work, however, also means the bringing of work-being into movement and happening. This happens as preservation (p.196).

Thus, beginning with the question of the origin of the artwork, this inquiry reaches the idea of “the origin of the work of art becomes art”, and this is about both creators and preservers, who are historical beings.

The appearance of the happening of truth determines the way of thinking. Thus, the relationship between Being and the work of art fulfills itself by means of the way of thinking. For the Being exists only when it questions its own being, truth is considered in terms of this kind of thinking. As Anderson (1969) puts it:

The resolve for truth which expresses that-which-regions<sup>27</sup> as the bringing forth of all natures, is not a subjective expression; rather, it springs from an inner necessity which man can come to understand as the ground of his thinking itself. (p.35)

This kind of thinking is far from the thinking of science, namely, calculative thinking, which manipulates the truth. Calculative thinking is not about power of creation.

In addition to this, Heidegger (1993) states that truth as the concealing of beings is in essence poetry, which is about language since language itself is poetry in the essential sense (p.197 and p.199) and *poesy* is only one mode of the clearing

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<sup>27</sup> Its nature bond with the meditative thinking, since meditative thinking as a resolve for truth might be said to be grounded in that-which-regions as disclosed.

projection of truth (p.198). As a work of art, poetry is a free happening positioning itself in unconcealment. For this reason, in our study, poetry indicates itself to be a *poetic revealing* via images argued via language of the images, i.e., various sequences from some major works of selected films in film history.

### **3.2.1. From the Work of Art to the Film**

This discussion is related to film art because of the dynamic unity of the film, which has the power to create a *world*. Yet, film is separated from painting since the painting cannot depict the dynamic of a narrative sequence. As Graham (2003) puts it: “Film has the resources to construct and display dynamic visual images and may thus transcend the limitations of the static visual image” (p.115). Thus, it is not simply a re-production of the real world via static images; rather, it creates its own world, i.e., it becomes its own world. Its dynamism reveals itself as a world opening to the audience. Also, we experience the film as “we experience a thing belonging to the world by letting its material qualities affect us in a new way” (Held, as cited in Dreyfus and Wrathall, 2002, p.71).

On the other hand, film reveals itself via the image, color, sound, focus, speed, framing, movement, shifts. These composed elements of the film come into the real existence within the film. If the film is considered only by way of these composed elements, the consideration is of the “equipmentality” of the film, which refers to the *earth* in Heideggerian sense. Held (2002) argued that “[d]ue to the physicality of material qualities, we can say that things are made ‘of earth’. ‘Earth’ is as such the name for the materiality of all material, that out of which things exists” (as cited in Dreyfus and Wrathall, p.71). These matters appear to us as something we can

‘penetrate’ in various ways. This penetration always has the sense of bringing light to the inner darkness of material. This darkness is phenomenologically the earth as the happening of self-closing (Held, as cited in Dreyfus and Wrathall, 2002, p. 71). Put differently, it is the earth that sets together everything that is already is, but it is hidden from itself. For the endless strife between *world* and *earth*, Heidegger (1993) asserts that “The work moves the earth itself into the open region of a world and keeps it there” (p.172). Hence, the images are regarded as if they are self-closed, and the darkness of the material refers to “phenomenologically the earth as the happening of self-closing” (Held, as cited in Dreyfus and Wrathall, 2002, p. 71) so that the world opens via them. This reciprocal process exists because of this happening. In addition, Heidegger (1993) focuses on the following:

Yet, as a world opens itself the earth comes to tower. It stands forth as that which bears all, as that which is sheltered in its own law and always wrapped in itself. World demands its decisiveness and its measure and lets beings attain to the open region of their paths. Earth, bearing and jutting, endeavors to keep itself closed and to entrust everything to its law (p.188).

In other words, the *earth* keeps the world in force and the continuity of this strife, i.e., the reciprocity in this relation provides happening of truth. As Dronsfield (2010) puts it, “Truth needs matter, what Heidegger calls *earth*. Truth happens in being composed” (as cited in Davis, p.134). The elements of the film, for example the images, close their usefulness or their equipmental character – when the audience sees the film, it sets up a *world*. Just like the audience (preserver) of “A Pair of Shoes”, who can interpret its meaning by saying “these shoes belong to a peasant woman”, so it follows that the audience of a film can interpret it in the same way.

Nevertheless, we know that the elements of film tell that it is a mechanical reproduction. As a mechanical reproduction, we, at first, think of sound films, which

are nearer to reality. After the introduction of sound film, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that (2003),

Far more strongly than the theater of illusion, film denies its audience any dimension in which they might roam freely in imagination – contained by the film’s framework but unsupervised by its precise actualities – without losing the thread; thus it trains those exposed to it to identify film directly with reality. (pp. 99-100)

Above quote means that audiences can drift into the film. In addition, they are deceived by visual images since they believe these images to be real. Every sequence of film re-creates or forms reality. Thus, audiences become engrossed in the film, and in doing so, they identify the film with the reality. However, the audience cannot be “there” since the audience is drifted by the film due to its “reality” so she/he cannot question her/his own being. Thus, throughout the film, the audience cannot interpret the *world* revealed since “happening” does not happen. On the other hand, as Arnheim (1958) argues, “Art begins where mechanical reproduction leaves off (p.55)”. For this reason, it can be said that where the mechanical reproduction leaves off, the *world* reveals itself as that which is provided by the interpretation of the audience.

On the other hand, even though cinema refers to technological en-framing [Ge-stell]<sup>28</sup>, as it is considered in this context, it would be the most appropriate art form of the age of technology. According to Sinnerbrink (2006):

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<sup>28</sup>In the article called *Question Concerning Technology* (in “Basic Writings” (Ed. David Krell, 1993), Heidegger speaks of technology as a ‘challenging’ or a ‘setting upon’, in which the powers of nature are indeed unlocked, transformed, stored up, distributed and redistributed, but always and only within the frame (Pattison, 2000, p. 54). Put simply, in the age of technology humans are challenged by enframing which causes us to see the world as resource. Thus, it brings human domination on the world.

If we take cinema to be the art-form most appropriate to the age of technology, then such ambivalent possibilities must also be present in cinematic art. This remains the case despite the evident dominance of standardized Hollywood genres and conventions that often do reduce film to a 'worldless' aesthetic resource designed to manipulate sensation and homogenize affect. (pp.35-6)

Thus, if a revealing via sound and images displaces conventional representations and does not focus on objects in their presence, then film would be a form of cinematic *poesis*. Despite the technological elements, this opens up the possibility of new approaches to the world. It is the revealing of the *world*.

Thus, the film, due to the *strife* between *earth* and *world* contained within it, overcomes its being of mechanical reproduction. Besides, film does not exist due to some of its attributions, such as giving pleasure, tasting beauty or wasting time. Neither is it only for consumption. Rather, it opens a *world* to audiences in order for them to interpret their own Being. The experience of the film becomes an ontological event. Hence we will try to examine this via some films in the next chapter.

### **3.2.1.1 The Poetic Revealing in the Film**

In "The Origin of the Work of Art", Heidegger, after arguing the "happening of truth", focuses on poetry: "All art, as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of beings, is as such, in essence, poetry (Heidegger 1993, p.197). The essence of art refers to both the artwork and the artist, and creates an open place. In this respect, the aim of poetry is the clearing of projection in the work; it is one of many modes of clearing. Yet, all art cannot arbitrarily be reduced to poesy since poesy is only one mode to this end, i.e., poetic composition in this wider sense (Heidegger, 1993, p.198). Still, as linguistic work, "poetry has a privileged position in the domain of the arts" (ibid).

On the other hand, language is not only an audible or written expression of what is to be communicated. It is a medium in general, one which “brings beings as beings into the open for the first time” (ibid). There is no openness of being where there is no language. In this sense Heidegger (1993) asserts that “Projective saying is a poetry; the saying of world and earth, the saying of the arena of their strife and thus of the place of all nearness and remoteness of the gods. Poetry is the saying of the unconcealment of beings” (p.198).

Any creation is poetic in essence. The preservation of the work is also poetic since we remove ourselves from our ordinary lives and move into what is disclosed by the work only by way of poesy. It is the “happening of truth”: the truth discloses itself. “What went before is refuted in its exclusive actuality by the work” (Heidegger 1993, p.200). In addition to the happening of poetry in art, “poetry is founding triple sense of bestowing, grounding and beginning” (ibid, p.202). It means that art is historical; it grounds history. For the essence of art is its origin, it refers to both the creators and the preservers, i.e., their historical existence. In the Heideggerian sense, it points out the “being-in-the-world” of Dasein.

Poesy constitutes the fundamental part of Heidegger’s works due to its projective language. It is also the openness of being. In our study, language as a medium reveals itself as the language of images. Since film provides projective viewing, we focus on *poetic revealing* as a mode of action in the films.

In the context of film, poetic language can be related to poetic images<sup>29</sup> since “the poetic images are imagining in a distinctive sense: not mere fancies and illusions but imagining that is visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the familiar”

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<sup>29</sup> For Heidegger argues that beings come to presence through language, i.e., *poiésis*, through speaking and hearing, “cinema seems a strange choice for poesis” (Furstenau and MacAvoy, 2003, p.186). However, the images are not illusions for us; rather, they think that they contribute to the happening in the film.

(Heidegger, 1971, p.226). Just as language is not reduced to representation, the images created by film are thought not to be able to be reduced only to representations of reality. Heidegger thus stresses the poetic presentation which breaks through the structures of representation. That is why we choose to focus on *poetic revealing* in action.

The films which will be discussed are not special examples. They are chosen from both national and international cinema. The idea of “happening” cannot be reduced only the so- called masterpieces or films of art-cinema; rather, “the happening” can be introduced by any film. Yet, these films should remove audiences from the ordinary mode of viewing. They are not simple mechanical reproductions of reality. They are thought to indicate a “happening of truth” through them. The strife is felt and the audience finds itself in the openness created by the film. The *poetic revealing* occurs in these films. The selected films are the creative works of their directors, and have been chosen from such authors as Terence Malick, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Andrey Tarkovsky. Films from other genres, such as *Wild Strawberries* (1957, Bergman) and *Anayurt Oteli* (1986, Ö. Kavur), are included in our study of the Heideggerian understanding of filmic *poiesis*. Thus, this section aims to argue *poetic revealing* in action as a way of unconcealment of truth in the films. For this reason, we first examine the idea of strife in terms of film-art via dynamic images. This also refers to *disclosedness* of the audience with respect to its ‘engagement’ and interpretation of the film.

First of all, we should note that the cinema of Terence Malick has already been analyzed in the context of Heideggerian cinema, since his approach is influenced by



Heideggerian philosophy<sup>30</sup>. In addition to this, it is the *poetic revealing* that triggers us to analyze the way of Being, i.e., the Being of the beings in his films. For this reason, the cinematic power of reference and reflection are at focus. Cavell (1979) estimates that Malick has found a way to transpose such thoughts for our meditation (p. xv-xvi). Thus, “the objects in these films participate in the photographic presence of themselves and objects projected on a screen are inherently reflexive; they occur as self-referential, reflecting upon their physical origins. Their presence refers to their absence, their location in another place” (ibid, xvi). In this respect, the structure of presence and absence refers to metaphysical thinking. It is the representation of the world. As Furstenau and MacAvoy (2007) suggest, “cinema also contains the often unrealized possibility of presenting its representation, of drawing attention to the fact of its representing (p.182). In addition, as poetry confers the presence of Being through language, the poetic and image-based language of films is related to the question of Being<sup>31</sup>.

For this reason, the films of Malick are not only representations of reality, but it “gathers the brightness and sound of heavenly appearances into own with darkness and silence of what is alien” (as cited in Furstenau and MacAvoy 2007, p.182). Additionally, “Poetry as a bringing-forth or creation makes present what the instrumentality of technological bringing-forth conceals” (Furstenau and MacAvoy, 2007, p.185). Thus, *poetic revealing* will first be argued in the following films by Malick: *The Thin Red Line* (1998), *Days of Heaven* (1978) and *Badlands* (1973). The

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<sup>30</sup> Cavell, in the forward to the second edition of his ontological analysis of cinema, “The World Viewed”, argues Malick has found a way to make visible certain key Heideggerian themes, particularly the theme of the Being of beings and the presence of beings (1979:xv) (as cited in Furstenau and MacAvoy, p. 181).

<sup>31</sup> Even though both Cavell and Malick argue that cinema can serve as a medium for addressing the philosophical problem of [the representation of] presence or Being, in our study, we focus on ‘unconcealment of truth’ via its filmic ‘bringing-forth’ness.

audience can observe the “happening of truth” in his films due to the *poetic revealing*.

For instance, in one of his most significant films, *The Thin Red Line*, the audience can easily follow the “happening” created by the images. Instead of focusing on its content, which illustrates the results of technological thinking and the alienation of Being in the realm of war, we focus on its images that disturb the audience’s “forgetfulness of Being” and the “happening of truth”. As Furstenau and MacAvoy (2003) demonstrate, “The film must poetically bring forth its subject, and since that subject is human existence or dwelling, the film must present this dwelling, and it must do so in a reflexive way that draws attention to this presenting” (p.189).

In the sequences of *The Thin Red Line*, as an ontological experience, the audience feels the *strife* between *world* and *earth*. This is why the film becomes *poesis* for the audience in spite of its theme, i.e., war. For instance, in one battle scenes (between 01:50:27 – 01:51:36), one of the filmic elements, sound, is muted. The audience does not drift into the “reality” of the representation of battle via the sound of bombing; rather, she/he feels the strife between earth and the world. Even though the audience focuses on the images, the truth happens in terms of poetic creation. The images point out the *world* beyond them. The film prompts the audience to question its world while experiencing it. The audience sees the dead bodies and the images exceed themselves. The audience sees the different attitudes towards problem-solving, taking from this that the film does not endorse a particular strategy to the question of Being. For this reason, Furstenau and MacAvoy (2007) declare:

The answer to the question of Being or ground around which the film swirls remains ambiguous, and this is necessary for the film to remind us of our humanity and of the question of Being. It also plays an important role in the film’s presenting of its own presentational function. (p.189)

Hence, in the Heideggerian sense, this presentational function of the film refers to the being of the film as the “work-being of the work”. For instance, the dominant voice-over of Private Witt penetrates the images (in the sequences between 02:06:09 and 02:06:33). When Witt says “War don’t ennoble men; It turns them into dogs and poisons the soul”, the images parallel his declaration: Two soldiers fight, one grovels, and afterwards, one of the two seems to be alone. The audience feels the happening through these sequences in the sense that she/he knows the voice-overs and images belong to the film itself, but they tell more than this. They go beyond themselves; the *world* unconceals itself to the audience via them. Put simply, Sinnerbrink (2006) states that “Malick films perform a cinematic poesis, a revealing of world through image, sound and word” (p.27).

*Days of Heaven* and *Badlands* can also be employed to show the *poetic revealing* in these films since the mode of *poetic revealing* also exceeds the philosophical framing of the films. The story of *Days of Heaven* based primarily on the relationships of humans examines the problems of evil and honesty. The characters continually have encounters that change their internal feelings and attitudes towards things. These things with which they come in contact become distinct parts of their lives. For instance, a bicycle, a hat and a necklace may be seen up close, or from a distance. But the moment that provokes the audience to feel strife and question its being is the locust sequence. Malick filmed this scene in large part as a series of close ups. It begins with a few characters observing individual locusts present in their domestic spaces (between 01:06:21 and 01:06:39), and their number increases as the sequences unfold. The locust invasion is about more than locusts, and indeed is described as an invasion because of their presence in places where humans live, and

so the world of these humans reveals itself. Between these close ups, the fight of humans against the locusts is shown. People try to kill the locusts by throwing them into a fire they have built. They remove the locusts from their surrounding world. After these scenes, Bill kills the farmer. In this respect, the attack of the locusts signals the beginning of the end. The existence of locusts belongs to *earth*, to nature. In addition, the *earth* keeps the *world* in force, and the attack of the locusts refers to the authenticity of human beings, namely, death. In this respect, it is the “happening of truth” as bringing-forth of “being-towards-to-death” of the human.

*Badlands*, contains a scene featuring a burning house. Kit and Holly plan to run away together, and Kit, after killing Holly’s father, sets it on fire, in one of the film’s peak moments. This is about *poesis*, it is the creation of the director. The audience, upon seeing these sequences (between 00:29:03 and 00:30:13), understands that with the burning of the house, Holly’s past and childhood are gone forever. The audience, while interpreting Holly’s situation, interprets its own historicity in the context of its own existence. The audience understands that the burning of the house indicates the realization of [one of] the possibilities of Holly. This is where the world reveals and exceeds the earth.

With regard to two films by Nuri Bilge Ceylan (NBC), the use of dominant diegetic sound is characteristic of both, e.g. *The Town* (1997) and *Clouds of May* (2000). In *The Town*, one sequence depicts a child who travelled to school through snowy weather (between 00:11:00 and 00:12:51). He is drenched from the snow when he arrives at class, and moves to hang his socks over the classroom stove to dry. Before his bare feet are visible, the sizzling sound of dripping water turning to steam on the hot stove from the socks above can be heard. It points out the world of the child. Even though the diegetic sound dominates the sequences, it contributes to the

*worldling* of the world. In other worlds, as long as the scene provokes the audience to interpret the child's family or home life, the *world* reveals itself. When the family later comes together in the forest, they make a fire and start to talk about their individual lives and about the history of mankind. The sounds of wind, fire and birds are heard (between 00:41:37 and 00:49:15). The family's conversation exceeds itself in this *mise-en-scene*. The film creates its own authenticity by referring to the inauthenticity of man. Thus, with these diegetic elements, film propels the audience to preserve the truth. It is not what the film makes by itself; rather, the film refers to interpretation of the sequences (of the audience).

At the end of *Clouds of May*, Muzaffer's father is in-frame and seems tired by his efforts to avoid giving his land to the government. He leans a tree, snacking on an apple. He falls asleep as the sun slowly rises. Among the trees, the sun is at focus in the frame. The film ends with a fade to white. The angle of the camera in the final shot goes beyond itself: it explains the surrounding world of the old man. He protects his own life and the audience preserves old man's own world. The audience penetrates the "happening of truth".

Regarding Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979), during the sequences between 00:34:00 and 00:37.48, the protagonists are making their way to the 'zone', which was said to be able to make their deepest wishes come true. While the zone can be regarded as the "truth" itself; what is of more immediate interest is that they are traveling in a kind of railway wagon as if they are out in nature. We see them as they reach a green expanse and Stalker declares "Here we are, home at last". In this scene, nature represents the earth in the Heideggerian sense, and the zone brings forth the world in a sense. The zone represents more than its physical existence since the protagonists, Stalker, the Writer and the Professor aim to go the zone in order to apprehend their

deepest wishes. For this reason, the audience feels the strife between their physical condition and the truth of the zone, namely, the audience's engagement with this scene reveals the truth. Put differently, this encounter becomes a path to the "happening of truth".

In one of the very earliest scenes of Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*, a mathematics professor explains his dream while we simultaneously watch his dream unfold on-screen. He describes the empty streets and ruined houses he has seen just before we see him notices a public clock on the street that does not have an hour-hand or minute-hand. At this is occurring, we hear nothing but the sound of a heartbeat. He checks his pocket watch and realizes it doesn't have any hands either. He stands against a wall, stares at the street clock, while the sound of the heartbeat dominates the scene. It is a kind of happening, i.e, *strife* between sound and image. The sound dominates the moment this close up view, but the clock without hour- and minute-hands tells of the world beyond. The world of man reveals itself. It implies the time of death of professor. It is the "bringing forth" of the happening.

In *Anayurt Oteli*, there is a fight cock scene. As people watching them, the cocks are shown in close-up attacking each other. Once in a while, we see Zebercet, the protagonist, taking notice of the handsome young man next to him. Even though the cocks are in focus, the audience may easily draw its own focus to Zebercet's presence. He is interested in the boy; his inner feelings are revealed in the frame. The strife or struggle between the sound and the image convey Zebercet's feelings in a deeper sense, referring to the hidden nature of his feelings. The audience infers that he is a closeted homosexual. Thus, his *world* reveals.

As an audience, we find ourselves in encounter with art in the sense of an encounter with "worlding the earth". The earth in the sense of film is attributed to its filmic

existence; it means the being of a film, since it is the film which enframes the world in order to reach audience's subjective existence. It is, in general, a technological medium; in Heideggerian sense, it cannot be seen as a *technē*<sup>32</sup>. It is only the bringing forth of the world, i.e., "worlding the earth". In encounter with the film, the audience thus subsumes its own interpretation of going-ons in the film. Although it is the film (moving images) which she/he have experienced, and although the film may exceed its own world, when the audience interprets what it sees, the *world* dwelling in images unconceals itself via dynamic images, as with those we have explored above. Even though the idea of film<sup>33</sup> refers to the ontic existence of the "self-interpreting being", this "experience" leads audience to its own ontological questioning. For this reason, in the next chapter, we will make an inquiry into the experience of the audience and its engagement with the film.

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<sup>32</sup> The Greeks used *technē* for art and craft, but Heidegger says that *technē*, understood in the Greek sense, means neither art nor craft nor anything 'technical' (in the modern sense) at all. Instead, *technē* is "a mode of knowing"

<sup>33</sup> Heidegger discusses technology and the idea of the world picture belonging to modern world view in an article called "The Age of World Picture". In it, Heidegger (2002) argues "the world picture does not mean, "picture of the world" but, rather, the world grasped as picture. ... The being of beings is sought and found in the representedness of beings" (p.67-8). Thus, "the fundamental event of modernity is the conquest of the world as picture" (Heidegger, 2002, p.71). It is plausible to think that film also represents his idea of world picture since the Subject can become subjectum of the experience of film. The idea of film analogically refers to idea of world Picture, since the world becomes what it represents. For this reason, film can also be thought within this context. Thus, the encounter with film, at first, can also be attributed to this idea in the sense of ontic investigation.

#### 4. THE *PRESERVER* OF THE FILM: BEING OF AN AUDIENCE

A work needs an audience or 'preservers' as well as a creator. The work draws its preservers 'out of the realm of the ordinary' into the new world it opens up, and suspends their 'usual doing and valuing, knowing and looking'. (Mulhall, 2006, p.67)

As Mulhall argues Heideggerian approach to the work of art, its preserver participates in the truth happening in the work. In other words, regarding its phenomenological roots, what is manifested in the work is related to the presence of the audience and its experience. Since the audience easily penetrates the film, the film has the power of “happening” only when the audience is present to preserve it. On the other hand, engagement with film also creates a feeling of disturbance since it changes our relationships with the ordinary world and thus our paths towards truth. Heidegger (1993) puts forward that artworks “transport us out of the realm of the ordinary” (p.191). Guignon (2002) adds the following:

Thus, the world brought to realization by a work of art is not a static “grid” that fixes once and for all how things can show up for us. By harboring the earth as what can never be fully mastered by this world, the work holds out a challenge to future generations of “preservers” whose decisions will contribute to defining and realizing what is yet only potential in that work. (as cited in Dreyfus and Wrathall, p.55).



The truth, then, unconceals itself due to the presence of the preserver. “Just as a work cannot be without being created, but is essentially in need of creators, so what is created cannot itself come into being without those who preserve it” (Heidegger 1991, p.191). To preserve the work of art is to perpetuate the truth that happens in the work since the work waits for the preserver in order to “enter them into its truth” (ibid).

In addition to this, Heidegger’s new insight in the “The Origin of the Work of Art” removes the subjective experience in order to focus on the movement of *worlding* and happening of clearing. In other words, in this new approach to art, instead of taking the Being of beings for granted, the aim is to notice the Being of beings without grounding in any subjective experience (Polt, 1999, p.135). Thus, the subject is not the source of the *experience*.

Analogically, in preservation, film does not reduce the audience’s role to one of a private experience, but it brings them into the “happening of truth”. The audience, in front of the film, preserves the film by letting film be a film with its all parts<sup>34</sup>. This enables the re-opening of all relationships with all engagements. In a sense, it can be implied that the preservers of the work of art respond to the truth in it. In other words, the presence of the audience is put in contact with the Truth. It is the role of the audience to interpret the *world* revealed, which in turn means this engagement with the film has not been a private one. Since this encounter has phenomenological grounding due to the experience of “what is manifested in” the art as the “happening”, it is an ontological event.

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<sup>34</sup> It means that the audience knows that she/he perceives the film with his eyes and ears. He knows that there are dynamic images which go with the time.

#### 4.1. An Ontological Event: Audience's "Experience" of the Film

The classic expression in Cartesianism which refers the division between subject and object is linked to a technological understanding of our existence (Polt, 1999, p.142). Thus, beings other than humans become objects of science. In this respect, human beings can become masters of a world that appears as a collection of PAH entities, including art objects. In this context, the human takes control and dominates the world, but in a world in which everything becomes a mere present-at-hand object, meaning fades away. Consequently, Heidegger "wants us to perceive things as more than just dull and meaningless, present-at-hand objects" (Polt, 1999, p. 152).

In addition to this, we can say that, Heidegger also opposes the aesthetic in the sense of understanding of the experience of the subject. He objects to the reduction of experience to the subjective experience of the object. Thus, if art is related to aesthetic, objects are the objects of subjects, following the Cartesian dichotomy of subject and object. This Cartesian dichotomy is easily attributed to the filmic experience<sup>35</sup> in the context of film theory if we are searching for any grounds for it. However, we deal with experience itself.

With regard to film theory, Casetti (2009) points out the dynamism of the "filmic experience" as the following:

Indeed the spectator, viewing a film, sees pictures, but at the same time sees 'beyond' pictures, to the reality that is represented. This means that the

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<sup>35</sup> In the article called "Filmic Experience", Franco Casetti argues that filmic experience is mainly discussed from the early period of cinema to contemporary times. He generally presents arguments about film experience in terms of its consideration in different periods of film history. He comes to points such as filmic experience as an experience of diegetic world (p.5), as beginning of relocation (p.7), as a performance (p.8) as construction of identity (p.9). In order to understand how filmic experience is argued in a deeper sense in film theory, Casetti's (2009) article is important. His defense is that the "filmic experience will survive in order to allow spectator of media to be involved in a truly explanatory way, in order to force eyes and ears to be opened as they are nowhere else and also he says that this experience asks that the spectator give it meaning and sensibility" (p.11).

spectator interprets its filmic reality as something in which she/he might be immersed, thanks to a tight game of projection and identification with what appears onscreen. (p.5)

In this regard, “filmic experience” seems as it is quite controversial among the arguments grounded in conventional theories. This is where we trigger inquiry into the idea of the experience through film viewing.

Heidegger always claims that traditional metaphysics focused on beings rather than a questioning of the Being of beings. In other words, he tries to think about Being without grounding thoughts. For this reason, regarding the *experience*<sup>36</sup> of Being, we cannot point to any objective reference point or source, and by extension, this is also the reason we focus on the concept of the “event” linked to the happening in this respect. The question thus becomes one of “appropriation” or *Ereignis* in German. In general, Heidegger’s texts suggest that “we can never truly be detached from the world and become timeless, placeless observers. The world opens up for us only because we are engaged participants in it” (Polt, 1999, p. 146). Also, as Dastur (1993) put forward: “It is the happening of the disclosing of beings, i.e., the coming of beings to their own (Eigen), or proper manifestation” (as cited in Sallies, p.364). This points to truth and so does “involvement”.

Yet, this is not a process that takes place without the participation of humans. In other words, “the appropriation” is in short “the event of the grounding of the there” (Polt, 1999, p.148). In this event, *Dasein* comes into its own because it comes to belong to the happening of beings (as cited in Davis, 2010, p. 78). Thus, things that

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<sup>36</sup> Heidegger (1993) attacks the idea of “lived experience” (Erlebnis). He puts forward that “[l]ived experience is the source that is standard not only for art appreciation and enjoyment but also for artistic creation. Everything is an experience. Yet perhaps lived experience is the element in which art dies” (p.204-addendum). To put it differently, our “lived experience” is the location of rumination on our private feelings, but we are better served to focus on the artwork itself.

we experience become interpretable and explicable. This experience cannot be reduced to any objective reference. In this sense, the “appropriation” would be thought as it can be possible through poetic creativity, as Heidegger (1993) asserts:

Art, as the setting-into-work of truth is poetry. Not only the creation of the work is poetic, but equally poetic, though in its own way, is the preserving of the work; for a work is in actual effect as a work only when we remove ourselves from our commonplace routine and move into what is disclosed by the work, so as to bring our own essence itself to take a stand in the truth of beings.” (p.199)

We therefore pay attention to what is going on when unconcealment of beings is granted to us. We are trying to observe the happening of the disclosure of what is (Polt, 1999, p.145) In other words; it is the “appropriation which provides the unfolding of Being”. Put simply, it also refers our engagement with the *world* due to the happening itself.

On the other hand, although the happening of truth is examined via the “The Origin of the Work of Art” in terms of strife between *earth* and *world*, it is understood that “it can apply to any entity, as long as that entity shelters Being” (as cited in Polt, p.149). Referring to this, we can say that, in the interpretation of the audience, anything can be allowed to exceed and challenge audience interpretations. That is why audience encounters also the strife. When the audience realizes or feels that there is something more than what they see, this points out the happening.

Film, at first, shelters Being, the existence of the audience then provides the “happening of truth” through strife. The audience penetrates the film, the world in the film reveals itself. However, the experience of the audience does not dominate the “object” it encounters. Neither is this experience related to the idea of “en-framing”; rather, it is about existence of the audience. As long as the audience engages with the film, its own Being also opens. Guignon (2002) argues:

As an exemplary event of truth, the work of art reveals what is at stake in life by defining a “projection” or “sending” that only comes to realization in its ways of being appropriated through the stands taken on it by future generations. The very Being of the work, then, is seen as something impending and yet to be realized. (as cited in Dreyfus and Wrathall, p.55)

For this reason, as Polt (1999) puts forward, “Works of art are capable, somehow, of bringing us home to ourselves; they show we dwell together amid things, making us perceive our own existence as something fresh and strange” (p. 136). In this regard, the experience of the film is a dwelling so that audience interprets world-building in dynamic images. At the same time, its encounter with the film provides the revealing of the world.

Just as Van Gogh’s painting, which allows the viewer to participate in the work by means of interpretation of what is seen/manifested; the film lets the audience ride into it in order to make intelligible the world. In other words, the film is not only an object of the consciousness of the viewer. The world makes sense for the audience. Film, thus, sets up a world without objectifying it. As Polt (1999) asserts, “It is clear that there is no certain truth or absolute interpretation and the richness of beings will always involve some dimensions that are inaccessible to our current interpretations. Unconcealment thus involves both world and earth – both illumination and its limitations” (p.138).

In the context of film, the engagement with film refers both to the world of the audience and the being of the film. The audience understands the film, but, according to *Being and Time*, it is “intrinsically finite since there is no perfect process of interpretation”. However, when the audience sees the film, even though the images, “the foundation on which a world is built”, contain it, the world being revealed results in projection. This process therefore involves our understanding ourselves and

other beings by laying out possibilities (Polt, 1999, p. 138). Also, our experience of the film is the general revision of our relationship or our possibilities for the world. For instance, in Haneke's *Caché* (2005) there is a scene (between 01:24:50 and 01:26:10) in which Majid, the adopted brother of George, kills himself in front of him. Earlier in this scene, Majid calls to George to visit him, and as he entered the flat, Majid says "I called you because I wanted you to be present". He then cuts his throat. Blood spurts out from his throat to the wall. George is petrified in front of the dead man; he takes a few step and brokenly coughs. Both George and the audience, at first, are *shocked*. Yet, as it knows the goings-on beforehand, the audience understands that the two men had spent time together in the past. This becomes a projection onto the audience itself. While interpreting a scene in which a man is dying, the audience also reveals something about itself. This is the projection that the world revealed in the film prompts. This scene also illuminates Algerian Majid's world and how his life is regarded by French George. George makes him other, he holds him in contempt. The world behind George fits the idea that a world opens up "the broad paths of the simple and essential decisions in the destiny of a historical people" (Heidegger, 1993, p.174). These two men dwell in the same images. The camera angle covers both. We understand intuitively that this is a film and from it brings the *world*, building on and exceeding it.

Thus, truth in the films is not about representation of reality due to the nature of film; rather it is about the *world* and *earth* distinction; about concealment and unconcealment. Truth is not also an object caused by a representation of reality; rather it is "the becoming" by means of the film itself. Moreover, as Stack (1969) puts it: "The truth of the work of art is not strictly speaking something we know about the art work; rather it is a recognition, a "seeing" of the being which is present" (p.166). Put simply,

it is the novelty of happening of truth. In other words, films as works of art do not behave as ordinary entities. Rather, they “institute the horizon inside which the totality of beings places and arranges itself” (Vattimo, 2008, p.68). Accordingly, in “The Origin of the Work of Art”, Heidegger employs the term *Stoss* to describe the shock produced by the work. It is not a mode of Being but is nevertheless created by the work of art. According to Vattimo (2008),

Now, it is true that the *Stoss* is a “subjective reaction” to the encounter with an artwork. However, since in the work the event of being is at work, feeling acquires a more markedly ontological coloring and is not reducible to a spectator of the event of being. For being is not an immutable datum entirely established and constituted before I might encounter it: rather, being is an event in which I participate, indeed it has its privileged site in happening in me in so far as I am a *Dasein*. (p.71)

The work opens new relationships within beings and a new world. Thus, as Vattimo (2008) also notes:

This is why, if there is a term that can define the encounter between the reader and the work, it is “*stoss*” shock or quake: the artwork suspends in the reader all natural relationships, making strange everything that until that moment had appeared obvious and familiar. (p.152)

By encountering the world that film reveals, the concrete experience of the film always triggers the revision of the engagement with the world, i.e., the film questions the ways of standing in the *world*. Films reveal the *world* and they bring the phenomenon of the *earth*. Films thus preserve the “meaningful” world and the audience as a preserver carries the importance of the meaning of the film.

Film can accomplish the work-being of the film by favor of the audience. When the audience encounters a film, it is not only ontic experience of the audience; rather, it is an encounter with the ontological truth in the film. This meeting facilitates an interpretation, which is thus the interpretation of truth in this context. It refers both to

truth and un-truth since the experience of film opens possibilities while at the same time disclosing other possibilities by means of interpretation. In other words, this event of truth indicates that truth is a kind of disclosure.

#### **4.1.1. Film-being of a Film**

In the Heideggerian sense, “the experience of the meaningful world as a whole is more basic than the particular facts we discover entities within it” (Polt, 1999, p.58). The world of “present-at-hand” entities does not refer to the whole. Knowledge of them can be extracted only under certain conditions, from what we experience. These entities surround the *world*. The Being of these entities is not about their materiality but their nature and actuality. Thus, the concepts of “ready-to-hand” and “present-at-hand”<sup>37</sup> are interrogated in the sense of their implications to Dasein’s understanding and interpretations.

In everyday life, engagements in practical activity, and as we engage in the world and our engagement refers to who we are, the entities which make our world refer to our own ways of Being. In other words, as Polt (1999) argues, “The everyday environment provides an excellent opportunity to recognize ourselves as engaged actors who dwell in the world as a significant whole” (p.50). Thus, we find ourselves describing objects in terms of their significance to us.

As long as *Dasein* exists, things make sense. In other words, as long as the audience exists, the thing, for example one of Haneke’s masterpieces *Funny Games* (both 1997 and 2007 versions) is really a film. The significance of the film is audience-related in this respect. The audience may interpret the film to say that “Haneke

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<sup>37</sup> There is also one other mode, which is “unready-to-hand”, meaning that when we become aware of a problem, namely, we recognize it, our experience changes. A hammer, when it fails to do its job, is not ready-to-hand for us.



criticizes the bourgeois class and makes the audience participate in the film, and so argues Brechtian effect.” Being, therefore, depends on a pre-established network, and in this network, things that humans encounter become meaningful within their worlds. In any case, Heidegger does not want people to perceive things as meaningless and present-at-hand objects. For instance, a scientist conducts some experiments on micro-organisms in an attempt to cure some disease. Even though she/he cures some diseases by means of this experiment, this fact may have no meaning for her if, for example, her grandmother does not have this disease. She perceives this micro-organism as a “present-at-hand” entity. The point that Heidegger makes is that everything means something to us within a meaningful whole. This whole includes all the richness of the realm of human experience – the “life world” (Polt, 1999, p.58).

In this respect, Heidegger’s (1996) example of hammering points to the difference of “present-at-hand” entities from others with which human beings encounter in everyday life:

Hammering does not just have a knowledge of the useful character of the hammer; rather, it has appropriated this useful thing in the most adequate way possible. When we take care of things, we are subordinate to the in-order-to constitutive for the actual useful thing in our association with it. The less we just stare at the thing called hammer, the more actively we use it ... [T]he act of hammering itself discovers the specific “handiness” of the hammer. (BT, 18:65)

Besides, whenever there is something wrong with the hammer, Being questions it as a “present-at-hand” entity, making it an object of its consciousness, and then questions the being of the hammer.

In this regard, in the act of viewing, an audience may approach *Funny Games* as a “ready-to-hand” entity; it is a film. In other words, the less the audience thinks of it

as a film or as images to pass the time, the more actively the audience penetrates the world represented by the film. Film is thus no longer a practical everyday activity of Dasein. In the context of *Funny Games*, the audience begins to watch it like any film. By this we mean that the audience interprets this film and relates it to its meaningful whole by realizing, such as through Haneke's ideological criticism of the bourgeoisie class. However, this film is more than the sum of such parts. This recalls Heidegger's "fundamental ontology", which aims to lead Being to remember its forgotten "origin". For instance, when Paul looks into the camera and invites the audience to participate in the game in the film with the line "What do you think? Do you think they've a chance of winning?", he reminds us that it is a film (fiction). Also, when he takes the remote control and rewinds the goings on, the audience questions its own being in the ontological sense: "It is a film and I'm a human". The audience remembers its being and questions that being via this film. This film aims towards "fundamental ontology". Although Paul rewinds the film in front of the audience and disturbs its "readiness to hand", this does not make the film a present-at-hand object which needs to be the object of consciousness (of the audience). In other words, Paul's act makes audience question its own Being. If the film remains an ordinary object, it would shelter the modes of Dasein, i.e., Dasein would not see its possibilities. Yet, the power of film is to make question one's self by penetrating "happening" via it. *Funny Games* reminds the audience its own thrownness<sup>38</sup> to the world. In its own way, it makes the audience participate in the film; rather, it elevates itself from ordinariness. Per Heidegger's (1993) words: "Truth is never gathered from things at hand, never from the ordinary. Rather, the opening up of the open

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<sup>38</sup> It is an existential characteristic of Dasein referring to the everyday task of being what is already chosen. It is the 'facticity' of the human being.

region, and the clearing of beings, happens only when the openness that makes its advent in thrownness is projected” (p.196). Hence, the thing itself, rather the “work” itself, contributes to the “happening” in the film.

For this reason, we can say in general that films open an open region with their own modes, and they contribute clearing of film-being with the audience. The film, by being a film, breaks through the “experience” of the audience. Like the world announces itself as being clearly neither something “present-at-hand” nor something “ready-to-hand”, the film cannot be counted as a “present-at-hand” or “ready-to-hand” entity, since as a work, as Mulhall (1996) argues, it refers to “a web of socially or culturally constituted assignments within which entities can appear as the particular types of object that they are and which must therefore always be disclosed in advance of any particular encounter with an object” (p.50). Also, as Taminioux (1993) points out,

The world that is set up by the work is neither the sum of the present-at-hand, nor the frame of it, nor an object in front of us. It is like an escort (Geleit) which is “more being than all things present-at-hand and graspable amid which in everydayness we believe to be at home. World is the ever unfamiliar [Unheimische].” What is at work in the work, as it sets up a world, is the “rejection [Abweisung] of the usual present-at-hand.” (as cited in Sallies, p. 401)

Thus, film is more than a present-at-hand or a ready-to-hand entity. Moreover, it is the audience who questions its own being by the power of the film. That is why Heidegger (1993) says “Truth which is primordial and authentic must guarantee the understanding of the Being of *Dasein* and of Being in general. The ontological ‘truth’ of the existential analysis is developed on the ground of the primordial existentiell truth” (p.316). Thus, by means of *Funny Games*, the primordial and

authentic truth may be discovered by remembering the historical origins embedded in the audience's contemporary interpretations.

Since the being of film refers to the audience surrounding the world, the argument of this section indicates that film, by being film, causes the audience to question his own being. By means of the power of happening in film, we will question how the audience engages with the film in the following section.

#### **4.2. Audience as a Self-Interpreting Being: Engagement with the World of Film**

As the experience of the audience relates to the engagement with the film, in this chapter, the audience's engagement with the film will be examined in terms of Heideggerian concepts such as Being-in and its basic features. These features, which belong to the *worldliness* of the world, are significant to analyze in this context in order to question film interpretation.

According to Mulhall (1996), Heidegger uses at least four different ways to reach the notion of the 'world':

As an ontical concept which signifies the totality of entities; as an ontological term, denoting the Being of present at hand entities; as another ontical concept which stands for that wherein a given Dasein might be said to exist and lastly an existential sense which applies the worldliness of the world" (p.46).

Even though Heidegger aims to use the concept in its fourth sense, his use of the world usually conforms best with the third sense, which counts as one of the aspects of *Dasein*. For this reason, in our analysis of the dwelling on the world of film, we consider it not only to be the world that reveals by means of "happening" in film but also the *world* which the audience engages with it, and thus interprets its own Being via this world-building in the moving images.

#### 4.2.1 *Worldliness* and The Basic Structures of Being-in

Heidegger pursues the concept of *worldliness* in Division I of the third chapter of *Being and Time*. First, *worldliness* is not comprehended in terms of “present-at-hand” objects and their properties since the world is not a collection of present-at-hand entities as mentioned before. It should then be noted that the world is not a separate place where *Dasein* dwells. Rather, as Polt (1999) affirms, “it is an inseparable part of *Dasein*’s Being” (p.64). Thus, the Being of *Dasein* is understood in the context of how things reveals themselves to him. In other words, our dwelling in our world means how we are in-the-world. In this respect, the features of Being should be cataloged in order to understand how this “being-there” and “disclosedness” of beings is possible when *Dasein* engages with the world. These are structural features of Being-in, which we will discuss briefly. At first, “attunement” as a structure involves having a past. It designates our moods as ways of finding ourselves in the world (Polt, 1999, p.65). For instance, you are born into a family that you could not choose. Secondly, “understanding” as a structure involves projection into the future. The understanding is not about a proposition or set of claims since our dwelling or involvement in the world cannot be reduced to them. Moreover, possibilities are opened by means of our understanding since entities manifest themselves to us in limitless ways. After analyzing these two, Heidegger postulates that “discourse” is involved in both “attunement” and “understanding”. Thus, “discourse” is shaped by “understanding” so that the idea of the world is grasped by understanding. Lastly, the “falling” is one of the structures of Being-in whose mode of “thrownness” becomes manifested. All these structures refer to the historicity of

Dasein since humans are thrown from the past (e.g. born into a family), which attunes them to the world; they then understand the world in terms of possibilities (e.g. the everyday practices of the child of a bourgeois family is different from a child of proletarian family), and however these possibilities differ from each other shapes how all human fall into the world and become fascinated by the things around them. Thus, “falling” or “thrownness” is the direction of everyday attitudes in-the-world. As Mulhall (1996) claim:

If Dasein is always thrown into a world whose roles and categories are structures in inherently impersonal ways, in which “idle talk”, “curiosity” and “ambiguity”<sup>39</sup> predominate, then absorption in the they-self will be its default position. It may then be able to find itself, but only by recovering itself from an original lostness. In this sense, authenticity always involves overcoming inauthenticity. (p.108)

For this reason, the ontological structures of being-in do make authenticity possible. In addition, “falling” plays with “attunement”, “understanding” and “discourse” in everyday situations.

The idea lying beyond *worldliness* is significant since “we disclose things by letting them be together with something else, namely, letting them be involved in a possibility of our own Being” (Heidegger, 1993, p.78 [84]). Thus, the idea of *worldliness* suggests that there is a reciprocal relationship between the things in the world and the self-understanding of Dasein. For instance, through my understanding of myself as a carpenter, the nails or wood have specific relevance to me. So only in this context can I interpret myself as a carpenter. Thus, as Guignon (1983) puts it,

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<sup>39</sup> Idle talk refers the everyday communication of Dasein. In idle talk, the concern is not the object about which is being talked; rather, people concentrate on what is being claimed about it. In the wider sense, “idle talk” is a kind of discourse referring only to the inauthentic existence of Dasein. Curiosity is characterized by a specific way of not tarrying amidst what is closest (Dreyfus, 216-172). Also, “ambiguity” refers to Dasein’s everyday existence.

“The world mediates my self-understanding and makes me the agent that I am” (p.99).

Regarding understanding, we should first note that understanding is not a cognitive phenomenon. In general, as Polt (1999) has argued, “We *understand* by taking a *stand*, so to speak – by seizing upon some way of existing and acting. In order to do so we have to be fit to stand up to what we are doing – we have to be capable and competent” (p.68). Thus, “understanding” refers to a set of categories; it is the formation of who we are and relates our interpretation of who we are. In this respect, Heidegger (1996) affirms that,

Interpretation throws a significance over what is nakedly objectively present and does not stick value on it, but what is encountered in the world is always already in a relevance which is disclosed in the understanding of a world, a relevance which is made explicitly by interpretation. (Heidegger, 1996, BT, p.140)

Put differently, “interpretation” is grounded in understanding in an existentiell sense. As Inwood (1999) notes, “understanding is global, interpretation local” (sic p.106). It is also the development of possibilities projected in understanding (ibid). Thus, we will aim to argue implications of the idea of interpretation to film interpretation since we understand the film as film, which contributes to the hermeneutical aspect of audience in the Heideggerian sense.

#### **4.2.2. Interpretation**

Since our focus is film interpretation, we will analyze deeply the concepts of “understanding” and “interpretation. We should note that, as Heideggerian speaking, we understand ourselves in terms of our possibilities. For instance, a woman who is a school teacher may understand herself in this context in terms of lectures she gives.

She is also a mother to her child; she does not interpret herself as a teacher in the home. She understands herself in general but does not interpret herself generally as someone. Thus, her understanding refers to her possibilities. In other words, *Dasein* is a projection of possibilities, it understands things. This is what Heidegger (1996) means: “As long as it is, Da-sein always has understood itself and will understand itself in terms of possibilities. Furthermore, the project character of understanding means that understanding does not thematically grasp that upon which it projects, the possibilities themselves” (BT, p.136). Put simply, when we determine ourselves, we actually interpret our Being. When a person answers the question “who are you” by saying “I’m a painter”, she refers to her past since she is not painting when she answers. The statement “I’m a painter” means (if it is truly a revealing statement) that the possibility of painting is important to her. It means that she understands herself and her world largely in terms of “being a painter”. She approaches things as someone who can paint<sup>40</sup> (Polt, 1999, p. 69) and she defines herself by her ability to paint. Thus, in the context of film interpretation, when the audience understands and interprets the film, this says something about its own Being. This is why engagement with the world through film is significant to our analysis. It is not about film analysis but about understanding and interpreting film via ways of Being. As he puts it, “The Dasein which I myself am in each instance is defined in its Being by my being able to say of it, I am, that is, I can” (Heidegger 1985, p.298). However, the authentic existence of Being points out the understanding of the potentiality of being and draws attention to free creative revealing.

In addition, by being involved in the *world*, humans engage with everyday objects so these objects become their concern. Thus, they interpret them as something. With

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<sup>40</sup> Polt (1999) argues it via another example in his book called Heidegger: An introduction. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.



regard to meaning in this context, it can be said that whenever a thing is accessible to us, it means something. For instance, if a person is familiar with making film, light or sound, as an element of the film, means something to him. Thus, she/he understands and interprets them. In other words, they reveal themselves to this person as a reference to his/her own possibilities. As Heidegger (1996) puts it, the world is a “totality of reference”. The world is a sphere of meaning.

In other words, when audiences encounter the film, they also understand themselves and their own world through the film. However, they focus on the cinematographic elements, such as sound or the image; they miss the whole “meaning” of the film. The film, simultaneously, makes the audience participate the world of the film. Thus, we argue that “[w]hile this world is never fully the viewer’s own world, neither is totally alien. In experiencing this world, the viewer understands the world encountered and also develops self understanding” (Johnson, 2000, p.19). Film, when the audience begins to watch it, can no longer remain an object but becomes part of the audience’s world. It is this “involvement” which cannot be understood with the mode of relations between subjects and objects; rather, it fits into a context of meaningful activity. It is also a dwelling, which is *Dasein*’s basic way of being-in-the-world. Furstenau and MacAvoy (2008) describe the film itself similarly: “The film must poetically bring forth its subject, and since that subject is human existence or dwelling, then film must present this dwelling, and it must do so in a reflexive way that draws attention to this presenting” (p.189). Just as issuing Being itself, the audience, at first, separates itself from the film. Then, due to the event or “happening”, the audience goes “there” and then stays on through the film. It is there that the audience crystallizes its own understanding with respect to this interpretation.

On the other hand, Heidegger also stresses that “an interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us (pp. 191-2/150). Thus, it seems that any interpretation can be true. However, that is not the case. Humans must never allow their presuppositions “to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather [we must work out] these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves” (as cited in Polt, 1999, p.71). For this reason, “seeing-as is simply the fundamental structure of the totality of reference – or assignment – relations that make up the world” (Mulhall, 1996, p.86). It also points out how the entities in the world make themselves intelligible to *Dasein*. In other words, it clarifies their meanings or importance.

All in all, our “fore-conceptions” help us to understand things in some particular way and our “fore-sight” grounds this in a broader particular domain. Thus, by means of our “fore-having”, this way is embedded in a particular totality of “involvement”.

In addition to this, when the audience encounters a film, this encounter becomes revealing. It is the happening which contributes to the audience interpretation of the film as a whole. However, the audience cannot penetrate “what images are in truth” without interpreting what she/he sees. This is the world building in the images due to the happening. Thus, the presence of the audience opens an opening in terms of world revealing.

That is the way of audience interpretation. The *world* is revealed insofar as the audience interprets the film. This interpretation of audience contributes to the understanding of his/her own Being, which in turn refers to disclosure in Being. This idea of film interpretation does not remain at the ontic level of investigation, and so it is a new path to the idea of film interpretation. Thus, in order to have place in film

theory, we will inquire about its relationship with arguments in the history of film theory and hermeneutics in the following chapter.

## 5. FILM INTERPRETATION

There is no longer a single notion of seeing; rather there are 'modes of seeing,' and every mode depends on the project the organism finds itself engaged in. (Andrew, 1982, p. 57)

As known from art history, interpretation becomes more important when figures are designated in the artworks. Thus, the issue of interpretation itself is seen as an issue because the figures resist ordinary or immediate understanding. As Andrew (1982) states, "Figures are the crowning instances of interpretive operations which go on all through the experience of artworks" (p. 58). The idea of interpretation changes from period to period since what is attributed to figures has also changed. For instance, as Andrew indicates that, "Since the Romantics, figures have enjoyed a more primary value in our conception of the work of art, and interpretation has consequently taken on a more central status" (p.58). Additionally, we evaluate figures as if they are "irreducible ways of expression" which artworks are considered to manifest. Then, interpretation, in a sense, becomes the special way we have of talking about irreducible (Andrew 1982). According to Andrew (1982), "If we value artistic expression, and privilege it as a kind of discourse from which we gain something unavailable to other modes of discourse, then interpretation may become an essential way of dealing with the essential" (p.58).

Thus, in our study, figures are thought to be images that cannot be reduced other than to themselves in films since they are the “irreducible ways of expression” which films bring forth.

### **5.1. Why Film Interpretation?**

There is an interaction between film and audience. This encounter leads us to the question of the process of “meaning-making” by the audience since film as a text is the object of interpretation. Thus, the act of film viewing brings film interpretation with it. As King (2000) points out, in the area of film studies, “what will count as an ‘appropriate’ reading of a given film and to what extent will the contingencies of the extra-textual determine the form of interpretative processing to which a particular film is subject” was asked in order to argue the relation between film, its audience and its interpretations. “These interpretations, at first, are context for meaning and they establish whatever is pertinent about such meaning” (Andrew, 1984, p.172). In the case of film studies, the interpretation of both ‘textual studies’ and ‘reception studies’ is mostly discussed. As Noel King (2000) argues, “According to Stagier<sup>41</sup>, ‘textual studies’ explains an object by generating an interpretation of it, whereas ‘reception studies’ seeks to understand acts of interpretation as so many historically and culturally situated events” (as cited in Hill and Gibson, p.211). “[R]eception studies are not textual interpretation but a historical explanation of the activities of interpretation” (Stagier, 1992, p.212). On the other hand, according to Bordwell:

Interpretation takes as its basic subject our perceptual, cognitive and affective processes, but it does so in a roundabout way by – attributing their

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<sup>41</sup>Staiger, Janet, *Interpreting Films*, 1992, Princeton University Press

“output” to the text “out there.” To understand a film interpretively is to subsume it to our conceptual schemes, and thus to master them more fully, if only tacitly. (as cited in Bhaskar, 2004, p.387)

Bordwell uses the concept of “the historical poetics” in order to locate the elements of interpretation in a historical context by studying the historical development of the style and the constructive principles of films and their effects historically, rather than with the meanings that are central to the interpretive act (Bhaskar, as cited in Miller and Stam, 2004, p.389). Also, Bordwell (1989) asks the questions such as “Does the interpretation ‘apply’ a theory in a fresh way?” and “Does it activate overlooked portions of films?” (p.260). Thus, “many of a film’s nuances now go unremarked because the interpretive optic in force has virtually no way to register them”, adds Bordwell (ibid). According to Bhaskar (2004), “As cultural, historical situations change, there are various interpretations that become possible in contexts other than those in which the text has been produced, because of the emergence and development of newer discourses and theoretical formulations ... “ (as cited in Mill and Stam, p. 391). Thus, there is a junction between the text and the audience’s “perceptual, cognitive and affective processes that are the ‘effects’ of the text (Bordwell, 1989b, p. 257). For this reason, regarding interpretation, Bhaskar (2004) continues to analyze via Bordwell’s definition:

If indeed interpretation “reactivates and revises our common frameworks of understanding” (257), it does so only because the subject of interpretation is the text, and interpretation is about understanding of the world of the text, the culture from which it is produced, and, by extension, human societies and life processes. Neither a text nor our ‘perceptual, cognitive and affective processes’ exists in a vacuum, and it is only when we recognize the contextual nature of life, and also speculation, that the interpretive act can be correctly valued. (p.396)

In addition to this, Bordwell is also against studying the “effects” of a text in the sense that only when an audience recognizes the significance of the text can this text can have effects.

On the other hand, the neo-formalist approach opposes the “historical poetics” of Bordwell in the sense that they are interested in “how, against a background of conventions, a film or a director’s work stands out” (as cited in King, 2000, p.213). As Bordwell (1989b) puts it “Neoformalism balances a concern for revealing the tacit conventions governing the ordinary film with a keen interest in the bizarre film that subtly, or flagrantly, challenges them” (p. 382).

Also, Greenbalt (2000) is interested in ‘cultural poetics’ in the sense that cultural poetics designates the play between the available discourses enabling cultural production in a particular time together with an acknowledgment of those occasions on which an art work seems to move beyond the discursive or representational systems that obtain in a particular historical moment (as cited in Hill and Gibson, p.14).

Besides these approaches, Dudley Andrew unifies formalism with phenomenology, which calls together ‘cultural hermeneutics’. The conversation with culture is articulated as film interpretation in this respect since hermeneutics is the theory indicating the relation between a text and its “historical grounded reading”.

On the other hand, the debates on the relation between texts and interpretation lead us to questions concerning text and context. To that end, King (2000) asks “ ... to what extent is a text to be explained in terms of the conditions of its production, as opposed to its subsequent insertion into a range of historically varying social-cultural contexts?” (p.217). He thus postulates Tony Bennett’s notion of reading formation, which indicates that meaning is not inherent in the text. It, as King (2000) argues,

was meant to attend the actual history of a text's social functioning rather than privileging the originating conditions of a given text's production (p.217). Also, regarding King's words, " ... Bennett proposed an investigation of the 'interaction between the culturally activated text and the culturally activated reader, an interaction that is structured by the material, social, ideological and institutional relationship in which both texts and readers are inescapably inscribed'" (as cited in Hill and Gibson, 2000, p. 218).

In sum, there are always critical perspectives that frame the reception of film as a text. However, instead of focusing on text, or on culturally constructed text and the audience's cognitive process, we will focus on a new path to philosophical critique since neither the text nor the audience by itself tells anything about interpretation, which is at its root caused by experience. For this reason, in the following section, we will first focus on the influence of hermeneutics on film theory with respect to its philosophical implications on film interpretations.

## **5.2. The Influence of Hermeneutics**

Hermeneutics<sup>42</sup> developed first as a concern, then as a method, and finally as a theory about the behavior of the mind in confrontation with the austerity of texts, especially those from which it is physically (historically, culturally, and linguistically) estranged (Andrew, 1984, p. 176).

In addition, since our aim also is to consider the happening of truth, we, at first, emphasize hermeneutics on truth. Regarding its relation with truth, Davey (1999) asserts that,

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<sup>42</sup> The word "hermeneutic" clearly invokes Hermes, the Messenger of the Greek gods whose allotted task was to interpret what the gods wished to convey and to translate it into terms mortals could understand (as cited Heywood and Sandwell (Eds.), 1999, p.6)



A major leitmotif of hermeneutic thought is that certain truths can only be experienced subjectively but that fact does not render them subjective. That what we come to see in art cannot be reduced to mere subjectivity depends upon historical and cultural ideas which transcend the subjective and yet achieve personal perceptual instantiations within aesthetic experience. (as cited Heywood and Sandwell (Eds.), p.3)

Contrary to aesthetic experience, the “understanding” itself is not a passive process. Also, the spectator is “a condition of what is held within a work coming forth and, furthermore, the revelation can effectively change the subject-matter it discloses” (ibid p.4).

Besides, in philosophy, Heidegger and Gadamer<sup>43</sup> extended the question of interpretation. Also, one proponent of Hermeneutics, E.D.Hirsch, popularizes ideas in hermeneutics, which opposes the any objective truth or meaning in the text. In addition to these names, in following Heidegger, Ricoeur<sup>44</sup> rejects Cartesian *cogito* and discusses the ontology of understanding, which refers the discourse about being. This also refers to the act of interpretation itself. According to Simms (2003):

Hermeneutics is not interested in linguistic description, nor it is interested in traditional semantics (theory of meaning). Rather, the hermeneutics sees the world related to the individual through the meditation of texts, I understand the world not directly, but through texts – and this means through texts seen as wholes, not as individual linguistic units combined together. (p.33)

Thus, hermeneutics keeps the poles of every single meaning in relation with the whole. Their goal is to understand “understanding” in general. Texts, in the form of films in our study, say something both themselves and to the *world* beyond and at

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<sup>43</sup> Hans-George Gadamer (1900–2002) approaches aesthetic experience grounded in the phenomenological tradition and showed how the idea of truth leads to question of “understanding” in human sciences. He thus formulated his own account of language as ‘the horizon of a hermeneutical ontology’ (Silverman, 1991, p.1).

<sup>44</sup> Following French Semiotics, Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) introduces the concept of discourse as a dialectic of event and meaning, The event is experience as expression, but it is also the intersubjective Exchange itself and communication with the recipient (Valdes, 1991, p.4).

large. Employing hermeneutics should therefore contribute to the greater understanding of the world that is grasped. In this respect, it should be noted that “[a]n ontology of understanding holds that man is already ‘a self-interpreting animal’” (Simms, 2003, p. 35). In addition, as Heidegger (1996) points out, “Every interpretation which is to contribute some understanding must already have understood what is to be interpreted” (p.142). However, hermeneutics is not a matter of interpreting some pre-given tasks. It refers to an understanding that has implications on who we are and what we do. “Thus, only because we implicitly understand what it means to be placed in a world, can we come to interpret a work being in its world” (Davey 1999, as cited in Heywood and Sandwell (Eds.), p.5). It is “prior understanding” which is the precondition of interpretation.

Thus, hermeneutic thinking, which is related with Heidegger, moves from facticity<sup>45</sup> through the ways we subjectively respond to our ontological condition. It is the task of what everyday *Dasein* does. As Inwood (1999) notes, “Dasein essentially interprets itself, as, say, a soldier, and such self-interpretation makes Dasein what it is” (p.89).

In this context, regarding *Being and Time*, it can be said that *Dasein* understands itself in terms of the typical roles and ordinary ways of doing things usual in time and place, since *Dasein* is always as being-in-the-world and as being-with-others<sup>46</sup>.

Thus, “Being-in-the-world” is not same as the traditional idea of subjectivity, which

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<sup>45</sup> This is the analysis of the objectivities of existence in the Heideggerian sense. Heidegger uses Hermeneutik to mean ‘interpretation’, the ‘interpretation of ‘facticity’ that is of our own Dasein. (Inwood, 1999, p.87)

<sup>46</sup> Heidegger postulates another dimension of being-in-the-world as Being-with. “‘The others’ does not mean everybody else but me - those from whom the I distinguishes itself. They are, rather, those from whom one mostly does not distinguish oneself, those among whom one is, too. This being-there-too with them does not have ontological character of being objectively present ‘with’ them within a world. The ‘with’ is of the character of Da-sein, the “also” means the sameness of being as circumspect, heedful being-in the-world” (Heidegger 1996, p.111). Thus, the world of Dasein cannot be considered without Being-with. For this reason, it is understood that Being of other people belongs to my world insofar as I encounter them in the world (Polt, 1999, p.60).

only refers individual consciousness as Descartes had put forth. In this context, it can be said that objects that are encountered in everyday life are not mediated by consciousness. Thus, the things that human beings deal with in everyday life are not (PAH) entities. Since Being is not a subject of Descartes, for Heidegger, its relation with the world is not separated from it, i.e., it is a Being who is Being-in-the-world; it is immanent to the world.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, the idea of hermeneutics reinforces this critique of the traditional idea of subject and object in this context, and it leads us to draw upon concepts such as “understanding” and “interpretation”.

“One of the main philosophical achievements of *Being and Time* aims at a radical paradigm shift which focuses on the paradigm of hermeneutics, a Latinized version of the Greek hermeneutic”.<sup>48</sup> By this new model, as Lafont (2005) points out, “Heidegger generalizes hermeneutics from a traditional method for interpreting authoritative text (mainly sacred or legal text) to a way of understanding human beings themselves” (p.265). Thus, it does not regard human beings as a primarily rational animal but firstly a self-interpreting being who typically interprets a meaningful text offering the most appropriate model for understanding any human experience. This is the basic notion of overcoming the traditional distinction of subject and object, which causes a distorted account for the existence of human beings. By means of the hermeneutic turn, Dasein always finds itself in an already structured world. By this turn, “the world is no longer the world of totality of entities but it is a totality of meanings that structured Dasein’s understanding of itself and of everything that can show up within the world” (Lafont, 2005, p.270). Since I

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<sup>47</sup> It seems that this creates the problem of solipsism, Heidegger, in order to present a solution to this problem, discusses how knowledge is possible, and thus he adds that it is about the idea of “framework”. For instance, in the context of science, you see everything as an object and you go out of Being since you have to determine the frame itself.

<sup>48</sup>Hermeneutics (2005). In the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/>

understand the world around me and its significance, when I focus on some particular entity I see it “as a table, a door, a carriage or a bridge” (BT, p. 149). On the other hand, as Heidegger (1996) has pointed out, “World itself is not an innerworldly being, and yet it determined innerworldly beings to such an extent that they can only be encountered and discovered and show themselves in their being because ‘there is’ world” (BT pp. 67-8). Thus, the hermeneutic account of our experience makes it possible to understand Being engaging in this world. For this reason, by virtue of the “being-in-the-world”, Dasein participates in a culturally-structured world at least so that it is not only the observer of the physical world. The world is not objectified and we do not understand “the world as a gathering of neutral facts by which we may reach a set of universal propositions, laws, or judgments that, to a greater or lesser extent, corresponds to the world as it is”<sup>49</sup>. It is a world in which entities are in relation to others, and in which, by means of interpretation; I come to understand the ‘possibilities’ of my environment in this world. As Inwood (1999) puts forward, “Interpreting something as something involves not the As (als) of assertion, the apophatic’ As, but the hermeneutical As, the As of interpretation” (p.106).

Since the world is that which human beings dwell in, the hermeneutic model brings new modes of understanding with it, i.e., in the understanding any kind of text is the important account of a human experience. Also, Heidegger focuses on experience through a prior understanding; the experience does not arise through perception. By means of the existential-analytic of Dasein, Heidegger searches for the possibility of understanding. In the Heideggerian sense, understanding is necessarily both projective and presuppositional, which leads us to the idea of the circle of

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<sup>49</sup> Heidegger’s Aesthetic. (2010) In the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger-aesthetics/>

understanding. This means that although parts are understood by anticipating the meaning of the text as a whole, to understand the meaning of a said text, an understanding of the meaning of its parts is needed. Heidegger (1996) maintains that “in interpretation understanding appropriates what it has understood in an understanding way” (p. 139). Yet, Heidegger not only focuses on understanding but also emphasizes the possibility of understanding via elements of the fore-structure of understanding<sup>50</sup>. In the context of interpretation, objects or the fabric of the world are made to appear as things that are opened by an understanding of *Dasein*. As Heidegger (1996) puts it:

As understanding, *Dasein* projects its being upon possibilities. This being toward possibilities that understand is itself a potentiality for being because of the way these disclosed possibilities come back to *Dasein*. The project of understanding has its own possibility of development. We shall call the development of understanding interpretation. In interpretation understanding appropriates what it has understood in an understanding way. In interpretation understanding does not become something different, but rather itself. Interpretation is not the acknowledgement of what has been understood, but rather the development of possibilities projected in understanding. (BT, p.139)

In addition, Heidegger (1996) notes that “[a]s long as it is, *Dasein* always has understood itself and always will understand itself in terms of possibilities” (BT, p. 145). In other words, by means of our projection of possibilities, we understand things and we interpret. For instance, a hammer is interpreted in terms of its function (such as banging nails). This means that it presupposes its understanding. A hammer cannot be interpreted if nails and wood are not understood. Thus, in interpretation, the interpreter *Dasein* has “fore-having”, “fore-sight” and “fore-conception” of what

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<sup>50</sup> As we noted, “Fore-having” (*Vorhabe*) refers to the prior intelligibility with which we have understood in advance what we want to interpret, the particular way it is presented to us prior to our explicit interpretation. “Foresight”(*Vorsicht*) refers to the specific perspective or point of view that guides the interpretation. foreconception” (*Vorgriff*) refers to the specific conceptuality, the particular vocabulary that is at the disposal of the interpretation. (Lafont, 2005, p.277).

she/he interprets. This also means that we already have a “take” on something, as they say, before we can interpret it. Put differently, the entirety of the interpretation depends on the “fore-structures of the interpretation”.

Furthermore, the hermeneutic circle allows us to say that our understanding of a film as a whole is established with reference to each of its parts, such as image, color, sound, focus, speed, framing, movement and shifts, and so our understanding of each individual part is also constituted with reference to the whole. This means that we cannot analyze a film via only its individual parts since it causes us to miss the full “understanding” of the film. In other words, it is a film as a whole composed of parts. By means of this “interpretation”, we make the film appear as something, which in turn depends on our “being-in-the-world” with our “self-understanding”. As long as we experience the *world* in its revealing through the film, we understand the *world* at large.

Clearly, since this study concerns the interpretation of film, concepts such as the “understanding” and “interpretation” of a work lie behind the hermeneutic model and Heidegger’s idea of “being-in-the-world”. Also, the work of art as a thing should be understood according to its nature in terms of “the happening”. Thus, in order to argue film interpretation via these concepts, we need the Heideggerian method of “hermeneutical phenomenology” which provides us a path by which to relate the parts with the whole. For this reason, in the following section, the method of hermeneutic phenomenology will be examined in the context of film interpretation.

### **5.2.1. Hermeneutic Phenomenology as A Method**

Heidegger borrows Husserl’s idea of “to the things themselves”. Nevertheless, his understanding of phenomenology moves away from Husserl. Heidegger goes back to

the Greek roots of the word: *phainomenon* or *phainesthai*, and *logos*. *Phainomenon*, Heidegger tells us, means “that which shows itself, the manifested, revealed [das Offenbare]” (Palmer, 1969, p. 127). As Rockmore (2011) tells us, “Heidegger understands phenomenology primarily as a methodological conception about things themselves (die Sachen selbst) in order to highlight the being of beings” (p.172). This is the reason why Heidegger is not concerned with beings while still being concerned with Being in general. However, with regard to Rockmore (2011), “Heidegger’s account remains merely prolegomenal in the sense that he points to situations in which something remains hidden, or is covered up, or shows itself in disguise” (p.174). This means that phenomenology is possible only as ontology, and must be supported to be credible (ibid). Thus, unlike a Husserlian phenomenology of the visible, Heidegger features a phenomenology of the invisible. “He understands phenomenology as the interpretation of what shows itself. Beings show themselves in human experience, but it is at least arguable that being in general does not show itself” (Rockmore, 2011, p. 175). In other words, the manifestation that is provided with respect to phenomenological research means “bringing to appearance of something as it is” (Palmer, 1969, p.128). This saves us from hermeneutical theory in the sense that this phenomenological hermeneutics implies that interpretation is not grounded in the human consciousness.

In addition to this, the idea of hermeneutics reinforces the critique of the traditional idea of subject and object in this context and leads us to draw upon concepts such as “understanding” and “interpretation. According to Guignon (2009), “Hermeneutic phenomenology sets out to describe human beings as they show up in ‘average everydayness,’ prior to high-level theorizing and reflection” (p.1). Thus, understanding follows to interpretation. In general, this approach recognizes that

human are always meaning-laden. As Guignon (2009) notes, “The claim of hermeneutic phenomenology is that, in understanding the human, we are always trapped in such a ‘hermeneutical circle,’ though this circularity should be seen as something positive; it is the enabling condition that first gives us access to the human in general” (p.2). Thus, in relation to humans, hermeneutics searches for the methodological principles of interpretation and phenomenology exposes *Dasein*’s everydayness, as mentioned above. It is a method that does not materialize or idealize the thing questioned. It depends on interpretation. Regarding the Heideggerian way, Rockmore (2011) states that “his theory of interpretation undermines the Husserlian view that knowledge is based on immediate intuition of the given” (p. 176). Also, interpretation arises from a prior understanding so that the subject is passive in grasping the given as it is given as the Husserlian view (ibid, p.177). This, in a sense, ignores objectivity. Thus,

Interpretation does not, so to speak, throw a “significance” over what is nakedly objectively present and does not stick a value on it, what is encountered in the world is always already in a relevance which is disclosed in the understanding of the world, a relevance which is made explicit by interpretation. (Heidegger 1996, p.140)

In other words, neutral interpretation is not possible since the surrounding world in which the interpreter engages cannot be abstracted from his/her interpretation. Thus, “interpretation is not free-floating, or unconstrained, since it is always constrained by context” (Rockmore, 2011, p. 178). Thus, “Heidegger turns here to meaning, which depends on *Dasein*, or the interpreter, nor on the thing being interpreted, since things do not have any intrinsic meaning” (ibid p.179).

Depending on Husserlian understanding of phenomenology, Heidegger adds hermeneutics to this method since one of the modes of existence of *Dasein* is to be



hermeneutical. Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics explores "the implication of the circularity<sup>51</sup> for the ontological structure of all human existential understanding and interpretation" (Palmer, 1969, p.132). Three points may refer to this circularity: According to Inwood (1999),

1. To learn what being is we need to examine Dasein's being. How can we do that unless we already know what being is?
2. All understanding and interpretation, of Dasein, of a text, etc., requires presuppositions to interpretation.
3. To understand the distinction between existence and reality, we need to understand being in general as the 'horizon' of the distinction. (p.89)

In this regard, we get the idea that *Dasein's* understanding of its own being depends on Being in general. Thus, phenomenological hermeneutics allows us to understand the way of beings of Being. "Hermeneutic phenomenology" as a method is the basis of Being of the beings who engage in the world, since it refers to both Being of beings and the "being-in-the-world" of them. In this engagement with the world, the dichotomy between subject and object dissolve with respect to this method. Thus, in our study, this method helps us to understand the audience in relation with its object, i.e., the film viewed.

In sum, in the exercise of understanding the medium, the film is not separated from the Being-there, *Dasein*. Hence, this method aims to understand the "experience" of the audience while focusing on the relationship between it and its engagement with the world of film. Speaking generally, this is about *Dasein's* self-understanding.

The phrase "the end of film theory" seems a plausible description with respect to this method since the audience is nevermore the subject positioning the film as the object of its consciousness. Rather, this method opens a path to clearing of the possible

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<sup>51</sup> The Hermeneutic circle involves the idea that we cannot understand a part without some understanding of the whole and we cannot understand the whole without understanding its parts.

ways of being of an audience, removing the domination of the audience over the film.

### 5.3. The Audience's Interpretation of the Film

The ontology of life takes place by way of a private interpretation<sup>52</sup>

Since *Dasein* is not self-consciousness but its fundamental characteristic is primarily “being-in-the-world”, “disclosedness” as a mode of *Dasein* that can easily be put into focus. Regarding hermeneutics, when it is related to understanding and interpretation, it becomes a theory of ontological disclosure in the Heideggerian sense. Thus, it refers to the “Truth in the most primordial sense”. In other words, “there is truth only in so far as *Dasein* ‘is’ and only so long as *Dasein* ‘is’” (Heidegger, 1996, p.208). Thus, in one sense, this means that there is no truth without *Da-sein* since truth can exist only as a mode of *Dasein*'s Being. Furthermore, *Dasein* is “worldly” in its essential way of being-in-the-world, since *Dasein* can meet and understand entities only as they are available in our world. Thus, according to Heidegger (1985):

*Dasein* itself, ultimately the beings which we call men, are possible in their being only because there is a world. .... *Dasein* exhibits itself as a being which is in its world but at the same time is by virtue of the world in which it is. Here we find a peculiar union of being in the world with the being of *Dasein* which itself can be made comprehensible only insofar as that which here stands in this union, *Dasein* itself with its world, has been made clear in its basic structures. (HCT, p. 202)

In this regard, we can say that understanding shows possibilities of Being of *Dasein*.

“Yet the essence of understanding lies not in simply grasping one's situation but in

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<sup>52</sup> Heidegger, 1996, BT, p.46

the disclosure of concrete potentialities for being within the horizon of one's placement in the world" (Palmer 1969, p.131). Thus, according to Mulhall (1996),

For Heidegger, then, since *Dasein's* Being is Being-in-the-world, it will always necessarily begin from a position in which it must relate itself as the occupant of a role in a practice, and so must begin by understanding itself in the essentially impersonal terms that such a role provides..." (p.73)

In this respect, Heidegger (1993) tells us that "[i]n interpretation, understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself" (p.149). This means that *Dasein* discloses how it is in the world in terms of interpretation. Every interpretation therefore indicates how *Dasein* is involved in or engages with the world. Put differently, *Dasein* interprets something as something with respect to its own Being. Thus,

We shall call the development of understanding interpretation. In interpretation understanding appropriates what it has understood in an understanding way. [...] Interpretation is existentially based in understanding, and not the other way around. Interpretation is not an acknowledgement of what has been understood, but rather the development of possibilities projected in understanding. (Heidegger 1996, BT, p.149)

On the other hand, regarding the truth, truth<sup>53</sup> by no means has the structure of an agreement between knowing and the object in the sense of a correspondence of one being (subject) to another (object) (Heidegger, 1996, p.219). When statements are confirmed to be true, humans are confirming that they uncover what they assert. Thus, things reveal themselves to humans. They reveal themselves by means of *Dasein* since *Dasein* is disclosed. "Disclosedness" is a mode which refers to *Dasein*

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<sup>53</sup>Heidegger's analysis continues by dividing truth into three parts: (a) the traditional conception of truth and its ontological foundations, (b) the primordial phenomenon of truth and the derivative character of the traditional conception of truth, and (c) the kind of being that truth possesses and the presupposition of truth.

as “in the truth” (Heidegger, 1996, p.203 [221]).<sup>54</sup> There can be no truth without Dasein since there can be no question of a judgment’s correspondence (or failure to correspond) with reality without a prior conceptualization of reality without Dasein (Mulhall, 1996, p.99). To put it differently, truth does not happen without *Dasein* since *Dasein* interprets things in such a way that they reveal themselves.

In this respect, it is “the ontological view of truth of Heidegger which equates truth not with a judgment about an object, but with the object or the being” (Rockmore, 2011, p.183). But, according to Heidegger (1996),

... we showed in our earlier analysis of the worldliness of the world and of innerworldly beings that the discoveredness of innerworldly beings is grounded in the disclosedness of the world. However, disclosedness is the basic character of Da-sein in accordance with which it is its there. Disclosedness is constituted by attunement, understanding, and discourse, and pertains equiprimordially to the world, to being-in, and the self... Hence only with Dasein's disclosedness is the most primordial phenomenon of truth attained. (p.203) [220-221]

In addition to this, there are at least three different views of truth in *Being and Time*. According to Rockmore (2011), “First, the object can be directly grasped in what amounts to *veritas transcendentalis*<sup>55</sup>; second, the object can be intuited in grasping its essence; and, third, the intuited object must be interpreted (p.179). Thus, when an audience interprets a film, this interpretation occurs via his/her own involvement-in-the-world that allows the film to reveal itself.

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<sup>54</sup> Dasein is also “in untruth” since “falling” causes superficial interpretations of the world because, as we are thrown to the world, we are surrounded by particular beings that we need to confront, but their meanings become dull. This means that humans are both in truth and in untruth. An assertion may be correct but not true. If a glove means “a continuous surface with five outpunchings”, this would be correct but not true. Truth should shed light on what is most important. Thus, such statements may even promote an attitude that covers up what matters most (Polt, 1999, p.83).

<sup>55</sup> This is the phenomenological truth which means the disclosure of being in general. (BT,34)

On the other hand, in order to inquire about revealing or happening, Heidegger uses Newton as an example. However, following Polt, an analogy to Eisenstein will be used in this study. Polt says that even if the claim of  $E=mc^2$  is correct, Eisenstein did not create the relationship; he simply recognized it and then tried to justify it. On the other hand, this statement was not true until Eisenstein explained it (Polt, 1999, p.84). In other words, had there been no one to interpret this formula, it cannot have revealed itself. Thus, beings do exist without *Dasein*, but truth and Being of beings are not possible without *Dasein*.

In addition, “truth depends on comprehending things as they are, which depends on the subject interpreting what is given” (Rockmore, 2011, p. 184, my emphasis). To put it differently, this means that truth claims are related to *Dasein*. In Heidegger’s view of truth, it is the role of *Dasein* to uncover things. As cited above, “all truths, including the law of contradiction and Newton’s laws, depend on the subject” (BT, 269) (Rockmore, 2011, p.185).

Thus, when a film appears as such within a world which is founded in the relations of *Dasein*’s worldliness, the separation between *Dasein* and the film is removed as long as it is interpreted. The film reveals itself to *Dasein* since, as a work of art, it is the “happening of truth”. Even unconcealment is part of the existence accompanied by concealment; audience interpretation of the film contributes the unconcealment of truth, since the audience provides the revealing of the world. Rather, the audience contributes to the “worlding of the earth” by means of interpretation.

For this reason, this interpretation also allows us to exceed subjective thinking since humans are not “thinking things” but participants and engaged actors in this world. Thus, film interpretation is about neither the film itself nor the audience. Instead, an “ontological event” is manifested with reference to engagement per se. This

engagement is related with the struggle between world and earth. Whenever the audience sees the film and interprets what is seen, the world is triggered to set itself up. In this sense, the dialectical character of art that refers happening is contributed by the presence of the audience. By making the audience question its own existence, this engagement indicates that the world is the totality of possible disclosures constituting “intelligibility for us”. For this reason, the interpretation of the audience tells us how she/he engages with this world. Even if this engagement seems to remain at the ontic level, ontological questioning of the audience’s own self is still called for by virtue of its own interpretation. Still, the audience is in relation with the happening of truth in this sense.

In the end, the underlying reason for this new proposed path runs in parallel with Heidegger’s criticism of traditional philosophy. Since the audience is not separated from its object, if something is seen, there must always have been someone who saw it. For this reason, our main argument has been established in order to interrogate the relationship between the audience and the film itself, just as with *Dasein* and its relation with the world, and with its implications. The reason the audience’s interpretation carries it to the level of ontological investigation is the “happening” in the film.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis has been, at first, to consider a new pathway to film interpretation in terms of Heideggerian thinking. In order to lay out this new path, we have interrogated the possibility of film interpretation with respect to idea of “happening” in art. To be more specific, this study searched for the implication of ontological investigation of the audience’s understanding and interpretation via his/her engagement with the film relating to the “happening” in the film, and the dwelling of the audience in the *world* revealed in the film. For this reason, this study did not accept the Cartesian subject and object dichotomy since it would not be valid to explore film interpretation via this separation on the way to Heideggerian thinking. As we have argued, in Heideggerian thinking, Being cannot be separated from where the audience lives, terminologically, where she/he dwells. This is why Heidegger positions *Dasein* as that which is “Being-in-the-world”. Thus, this condition is clear cut in the making of our point. There is neither audience-related nor film-dependent interpretation. Rather, the dwelling itself constitutes the idea of interpretation which we have defended as a new path. Hence, film was not examined as an object posed in front of its subject; rather, its own being, namely, the being of the film, has been re-considered in this context.

Even though the idea of an en-framing force by which to think about cinema is generally about representationalism itself, to which Heidegger mainly opposes, we should not forget that as Hölderlin writes, “But where there is danger, there grows also what saves” (as cited in Heidegger, 1971, p.118). Thus, as there is “happening” due to *strife*, films are regarded as the point of departure, and this is why we do not confine films to the area of film studies. This is the reason to make space for Heideggerian thinking.

While beginning to argue for this new path, it was important to analyze theories that have already been put forward in the history of film theory in relation to the subject, society and other texts. In other words, the twists and turns of film theory, which point to the place of films, the analysis of films and the construction of the relationship between the films and the audience, have been inquired about in order to indicate how the history of film theory has progressed in spite of the varieties of arguments. Since we have analyzed this history, albeit briefly, our final point of departure was the philosophical turn that had been triggered by the Deleuzian effect on cinema. Deleuze has carried the turn in a new side by emphasizing the “image of thought” as a new aspect of thinking and this indicates that cinema has its own power to give rise to concepts. However, instead of focusing on the Deleuzian idea of thinking, the philosophical turn began to construct itself. In addition to this, locked in its own chains of reasoning, it had not been realized since, per Heideggerian speaking, this turn pointed out neither the Being of the film nor the Being of the audience. Though it contributed to philosophizing, theorizing and even thinking with films, it did not consider the encounter with films as a way of “happening” resulting in a revealing of the *world*. On the other hand, one may respond that, as a technological medium, film itself is a way of revealing even if in the ontic sense.



Yet, this revealing limits itself and dominates the world by closing all the possible ways of being. The revealing is not *poiésis* due to modern technology. We know that the idea of *poiésis* refers to unconcealment as the togetherness of four causes: *causa materialis* (the material cause) “the matter out of which, for example a silver chalice is made”, *causa formalis* (the formal cause), “the form, the shape into which the material enters”, the *causa finalis* (the final cause), being that for the sake of which a thing exists and *causa efficiens* (the efficient cause), which brings about the effect that is the finished... in traditional sense (Heidegger, 1993, p.291). However, modern technology makes *causa efficiens* the only cause, and the only way to unconcealment. That is why it roots on *techne* which refers producing an object by accomplishing a goal on this way and. Also this is the reason why the subject had remained the *subjectum*.

On the other hand, our aim has not been to question the effects of technology on human life, which Heidegger criticized primarily due to its implications on the idea of world-picture, referring to the dominance of “the operational and model-based character of representational-calculative thinking” (Heidegger, 1993, p.435). That is why we emphasized on the difference between the calculative and the meditative thinking of Heidegger. In this regards, whether the idea of world-picture is dependent on the Cartesian dichotomy or not has not been our concern. Rather, as stated, we have strictly opposed the idea of world picture and representationalism, since the idea of representationalism implies the domination of the subject. Thus, modern technology as a ready source, the sciences inquiring about beings using its own categories at an ontic level, and philosophy running parallel with them do not bring forth the “happening of truth”. For this reason, we searched for the “happening of truth” within itself. The “happening” saves us from the idea of subjectivity in the

sense that the dialectical character of art, namely, the strife between unconcealment and concealment, removes the domination of the audience. Therefore, through interpretation, the “truth” rides into the film. Films, generally, had not been regarded as a viable medium of inquiry for some theories or critical approaches. We did not use medium-specific ideas in order to defend our main argument. However, film, by being film, makes a great contribution to our central point.

Conversely, film interpretation has not only been intended to be audience-related; rather, it has been dependent on “happening” in the film since the *world* reveals only in the presence of strife. In addition, this happening permits us to treat both the audience and the film equally. In other words, art does not only relate to the idea of setting up a world, it also refers to the creation itself such that the materiality does not disappear. Conversely, it, namely, the earth in the form of images for us, comes into the open. Thus, film lets the *earth* be the *earth*.

Since we carried this interpretation out at an ontological level, this project has also been about the audience’s interrogation of itself via interpretation of the film. Film interpretation thus points out the ontological implications of “understanding” and “interpretation” themselves. We aimed to point out that this was not only about film interpretation, but the reflections of the “happening” in the film. In other words, the world the audience engages with or dwells in, happens or reveals itself due to the *strife* in the film. In addition, the dwelling of the audience enables the *poiésis* and makes the “happening” a poetical experience. As a case in point, we followed Heidegger in considering “happening” in film in relation to the painting “A Pair of Shoes” by Van Gogh, since the language of images at first refers to Heidegger’s ideas on the origin of the work of art.

Thus, film interpretation refers to the “worlding of the earth”. In other words, whenever being questions its own Being due to an interpretation which simultaneously refers the understanding of Being, “the world worlds” in this respect. The audience carries this interpretation to the ontological level in some respects. First, she/he is the one who not only sees the images but provides and preserves the “happening of truth”. Put simply, without the audience, the *world* does not unconceal itself, since there would not be anyone to interpret what she/he sees. Thus, it slowly retreats from ontic investigation, since there is no reference point from which to categorize or formalize the conventions of both philosophy and art. In other words, the “happening” cannot point to any source of reference, neither can interpretation. In the second respect, significance is attributed to the film itself since, like the temple revealing in the earth or ground, the *world* opened to audience interpretation dwells in the images, i.e., it is grounded in the film. The third way in which the audience brings interpretation to ontological analysis is through the audience. The audience is the preserver and witness to the unconcealment itself, thus taking part in the unconcealment of truth. The experience leads the audience to its own ontological investigation of understanding of the film, since every interpretation refers the audience back to an understanding of itself. This interpretation, constituted in the history of film theory, thus exceeds itself with the idea of interpretation in the Heideggerian sense. This interpretation also indicates the possibility of “being in the world”. It opens the possibility itself since *Dasein* refers to the possibility of existence.

We wanted to make an inquiry into how the encounter with the film provides ontological understanding, since it was considered to provide us with the ability to see the relationship between *Dasein* and the world. To this end, we illustrated some

of the ways in which film is, in a sense, the “house” of the audience<sup>56</sup>, since the audience is not only she/he who sees the film but also who engages with the film and thus interprets its own Being via film. Thus, film, simply by being a film, contributes to an understanding of Being in and of itself by means of this encounter.

Regarding theories of film, even though the idea of “chains of multiplicity” in post-modern theories seems to provide a space for broad-perspective thought, this does not exceed ontic investigation. Even though it clears the passage for any interpretation in relation to culture, theory, ideology, sex, race and even the sub-conscious, these interpretations do not concentrate on the engagement of the audience with the film. That is to say, they do not focus on the origin of this *experience*. Although the philosophical turn has been one of the major developments in film theory, it does not satisfy us. Yet, Frampton’s new idea of Filmosophy and its new terminology were necessary to note in order to argue whether there can be different meta-filmosophical thinking possible or not among these arguments. Thus, this also led us to seek out a new and different dimension, one which directs us to treat equally both film and audience. Heideggerian thinking contributes our study with its focus on considering the engagement itself, and also it questions the nature of the reciprocal relationship between film and audience.

The films chosen are not special in their ability to allow us to consider “happening” and interpretation. The films used in this study were chosen in order to illustrate different ways of referring to the “happening” itself. None of these has any special significance for our study since there is a *world* dwelling in any and all images insofar as the event of an audience encounter with a film. For instance, in order to

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<sup>56</sup> The famous phrase of “Language is the house of Being” is main inspiration for this rhetorical sentence (Heidegger, 1993, p.137). In a sense, it is the mode of appropriation. So it means that happening happens as a poetic language or revealing. This also refers to the world itself since we dwell in the world that which we can *communicate* in and with it.

indicate “happening”, Heidegger used the examples of a temple, a painting and a poem. We, in a sense, consider them together, a *world* dwells in the images referring to historical people as it reveals itself as a temple work. The *world* for us dwells in images that exceed itself, just as in painting. It equally dwells in images that have poetic revealing, as in a poem’s power, which both conceals and unconceals the words.

All in all, the main aim has been to concentrate on the audience’s interpretation with respect to its encounter with the film. The encounter is the implication of “happening” and the “revealing” itself. Beyond this, our goal was to indicate how the encounter is fundamental to this interpretation, and how film contributes to it by means of its “being”. Thus, with the idea of “happening”, we were able to approach both the audience and the film. We have tried to defend this path in terms of the ontological investigation of the audience in interpreting a film. Thus, film is no longer a medium that provides pleasure, exemplifies, understands and theorizes. Rather, by being a thing with which the audience encounters, the film contributes to the questioning of the Being of the audience. The encounter facilitates the audience’s interpretation and ontological investigation. It thus demonstrates that it is an effective mode of ontological inquiry, of the understanding and interpretation of the audience. In addition to this, since we opposed to the methodology of traditional philosophy, we choose to pursue hermeneutic phenomenology in contrast to the Cartesian way. Thus, in order to argue for the engagement or experience itself, hermeneutic phenomenology gave us a way to complete our ontological investigation of film interpretation in relation to both the audience and the film.

Film interpretation is not a newly-born idea in the history of film theory. Yet, it should not refer only to the idea of analyzing or explaining a film. Rather, film

interpretation should exceed its conventions, and if it thinks deeply on the experience of the film viewing, it may save itself from its own limits. Still, neither a total theory nor a single theory is sufficient to illuminate how the relationship between film and audience refers ontological investigation. This is why, we tried to develop a new way of understanding in terms of the Heideggerian thinking. Throughout the entire study, our strategy was always to think through Heideggerian pathways, and have utilized the concept of pathway a central feature in formulating our new approach. This has still been presented from an argumentative perspective, but what differentiates our approach from other theories is its focus on engagement itself within a Heideggerian framing. Thus, even as it develops itself with a frame, this approach does not limit previous inquiries; rather, it “opens an open place” in this respect, since it provides a free space *per se* for this path. Within such an opening, we can only say that this study is “done but not completed”<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> Kaan H. Ökten, upon completing his translation of “Being and Time” into Turkish, composed this sentence. Thanks for the inspiration.

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