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# Horror as Film Philosophy

**Lorenz Engell**

Department of Media Studies, Faculty of Media, Bauhaus Universität Weimar, 99423 Weimar, Germany; lorenz.engell@uni-weimar.de

**Abstract:** The article starts from Gilles Deleuze's assumption of film being a philosophy in its own right and applies it to the horror genre. It reads Stanley Cavell's concept of genre, Timothy Jay Walker's work on the Horror of the Other (1) and Eugene Thacker's understanding of philosophical horror (2). It researches horror film as philosophically relevant access to nothingness (3) and shifts to the operations of assigning places to nothingness according to its respective place of access (off screen, on screen, behind the screen/behind the camera) (4). It then gives short analyses of *Midsommar* (5), *Hereditary* (6), *Tarantula* (7), and *The Conjuring* (8). In *Tarantula*, the screen functions as a shield against the agent of nothingness residing behind it. Once surmounted from behind by nothingness, the screen is finally purged. In *Hereditary* and *Midsommar*, nothingness is always already here, in full light, constantly transforming everything into nothing. In *The Conjuring*, the morphings and vectorial movements have nothingness evaporate from the screen to what lies behind it, namely (digital) picture technology. The screen turns into a membrane between nothingness and its condition, technology. As a consequence, we have to switch from philosophical horror to technological horror as access to nothingness (9).

**Keywords:** horror film; nothingness; horror of geometry; horror of intensity; behind the screen; morphogénie; picture technology

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## 1. Film Philosophy and Horror

There are two ways of doing film philosophy [1]. One is to think about film and to investigate the philosophical dimensions and aspects of what a film or a group of films narrates. It reads the moving image as a contribution to the discussion of philosophical topics. The other way of doing film philosophy assumes that film is not the object but the medium of an individual and idiosyncratic way of thinking [2]. It therefore watches film itself at work in the argument, i.e., thinking [3–5]. We will come to this second variant later. Let us start with the first one: horror films, for example, undoubtedly deal with topics that are of philosophical relevance. In contrast to other genres, however, these themes do not just eventually occur in horror films; they are exactly their subject. Horror films present themselves as contributions to these themes. For example, there is the ethical question of good and evil, the epistemological question of what is real and what is not, what I can and cannot know, the existential question of death and life and life after death, the question of fear and anxiety, and even the ontological question of why something is at all and not rather nothing. The sub-genre of supernatural horror is particularly relevant here.

In his reflections on genre, Stanley Cavell declares that every film genre has a fundamental philosophical core question around which it revolves and that differs from the questions of other genres [6]. As an example, he examined a sub-genre of comedy, namely the group of remarriage comedies that he himself discovered. According to Cavell, they ask not only about the nature of the love relationship (already a philosophically relevant question) but also, in another way and embedded in it as if pointing outwards, actually about hope: what you can hope for is what you already have. In an interesting way, Cavell continues, a completely different genre also deals with the question of hope but gives a complementary answer to it: the melodrama [7]. For Cavell, melodrama is therefore the

"adjacent genre" of (remarriage) comedy. It deals with the same primordial philosophical problem–what can I hope for?—but gives a different and differently paradoxical answer: what I can hope for is what I have always lost.

After Cavell, Timothy Jay Walker has made a different proposal to find the complementary genre to (remarriage) comedy, i.e., not melodrama with its reversal of the answer to the question of hope [8]. Walker's proposal switches gears and replaces the question of hope with the precisely complementary question of fear: What do I have to fear? This is the philosophical question of the horror movie. At first, this sounds very unsurprising, since we are talking about horror film after all, but depending on the answer, we can now distinguish between different sub-genres of horror. The answer, which is given specifically by the splatter horror genre preferred and examined by Walker, is that what I have to fear is the Other. He therefore speaks of the splatter genre as the "Horror of the Other" [8] (pp. 24–26). He thus replaces Cavell's comic or melodramatic desire for the Other (or the hope for the Other) with its complement, the fear of the Other in splatter horror.

## 2. From Otherness to Nothingness

However, in a next step, Walker expands the "Horror of the Other" in a philosophically interesting way [8] (pp. 34–36). The Other to be feared in the splatter movie is about more than just the Other person or the evil person. It is about the Other, the evil par excellence, which is mostly evil precisely because of its Otherness. Splatter horror is horror not of the Other person, nor of the Other object, nor of the Other place or any definable other concrete something, but the Other of everything, i.e., nothing. The horror of the splatter film is the horror of nothingness, bare and as such. It has to be noticed, though, that Walker does not consider the Other here in Lacanian terms (the famous Grand A in contrast to the petit a in Lacan) [9]. Rather, his conception could be compared to Heidegger's notion of Angst and Nothingness [10].

Without referring to Walker's work in any way, Eugene Thacker continues this line of thought in his three volumes of "The Horror of Philosophy" [11–13]. For him, horror is a continuation of philosophy by other means. According to Thacker, horror reaches a place where philosophical reflection can never reach. For Thacker, nothingness as the Other of everything cannot be thought by philosophy for systematic reasons: The Other of everything would ultimately also be the Other not only of philosophy, but also of all its presuppositions and every possibility of thought in general [11] (p. 2). In the anthropocentric tradition, the most important of these preconditions is a thinking being as the bearer of thought, and traditionally, and still today, the human is claimed to be this bearer of thought. If the human disappears, thinking ends and philosophy ends all the more. The horror therefore begins when the preconditions for human existence are put at risk, for example when the human habitat is fundamentally threatened (and this is why Thacker's interest in horror has a current ground).

Thacker in his first volume named "In the Dust of the Planet" now differentiates what "everything" is into three different realms or addresses [11] (p. 4). Firstly, there is an anthropocentric everything addressed as "the world", that is, as the content of our human consciousness and everything that is accessible, perceptible, conceivable, etc., to us (humans), in short, what is represented in human consciousness [11] (p. 7). Therefore, nothing can exist for us humans outside the world. Secondly, there is what we can address as "the earth". In contrast to the world, the earth also comprises what we are not aware of, what we do not (yet) know, and what we look upon as being independent of our conceiving. The earth is, in short, the postulated object of scientific knowledge, of the laws of nature and of technical action, which itself does not depend on representation in consciousness but as counterpart to our efforts or will. Ultimately, however, Thacker conceives of everything addressed as "the planet", as our habitat and as the condition of possibility for our existence at all. If the planet disappears, then we no longer exist, then there is no more consciousness, no more knowledge, and consequently no more philosophy [11] (pp. 7–8).

But this, the no-longer-being-capable to philosophy, is, according to Thacker, the outermost edge of philosophy's possibility of thought. Beyond this, there is no more space for thinking. The philosophy of horror turns into the horror of philosophy in the downfall of the planet. The destruction of the planet is therefore no longer philosophically conceivable. But horror is not a thought and not a concept but, just like laughter in the case of comedy, an affect. It makes us not think, but shiver, and scream. Horror (the fear of (the) nothing) remains where the unthinkable passing of thought is concerned. In this respect, horror as an affect takes on a similar function in Thacker as the mood of anxiety, or Angst (and, on the other hand, boredom) in Martin Heidegger's existential philosophy [10]. And as an affect—in contrast to thinking, to cognition in particular—this terror extends into the world and takes on the form of horror, for example horror films.

## 3. Thinking without Us

However, Thacker is not particularly concerned with horror films—he concentrates on literary fictions and their illustrations. Let us make up for this. For, to finally enter the area of the second variant of film philosophy mentioned above, film philosophy, contrary to what was assumed at the beginning, is not only and not even primarily about which philosophical themes, contributions, questions, and answers are dealt with in films. Film philosophy actually begins with the assumption that the way in which films negotiate anything at all differs significantly from other ways of negotiating and arguing, and therefore always already constitutes a complementary enterprise to philosophy [2] (pp. 8–11, 197–205). To think with film means to think differently than to think with philosophy, especially in so far as (Western) philosophy is and has always remained a side piece to writing and reading, to the medium of writing, and hence lives from the privilege of writing and language in general as traditionally ascribed to the human. This has since long been described by Western philosophy, if we only think of Plato's critique of writing [14], of Lessing's comparative aesthetics [15], or of Nietzsche's remark on the writing tool that cooperates in our thinking [16]. But film goes beyond this. In some authors, this culminates in the maybe somewhat difficult assumption that films not only stimulate or trigger thought movements (in viewers), but also carry them out themselves; that there are thought images, that film thinks, just as film "lives", since one also speaks of film as a "living" image [17]. While this assumption may not be really widely accepted in film studies, it is nonetheless shared by authors like Daniel Frampton [18]. Moreover, it fits perfectly into the wider frame of the founding approaches of recent general media philosophy from Kittler [19] and Flusser [20] to Krämer, Mersch [21], Hansen, Engell [4] (pp. 79–96), and Voss [22] (see also [23]), thus making up a wider philosophical context for film philosophy.

With this assumption, however, we are already moving into the realm of horror. The movie which thinks (without us!) while we watch it thinking already contains the imposition at least of a strange kind of world without us, but also of the earth without us and possibly of the planet without us. Jacques Lacan once raised the question of whether there are images without us or after us, a—then almost planetary—imaginary outside the human psyche, such as the reflection of lightning on a mountain lake when humanity no longer exists on the planet. In this respect, horror would already be the philosophy of the movie [24].

But let us, as announced above, drive Thacker's considerations further into the unknown that starts where film begins and think of horror not only thematically, but operatively with film and vice versa. Thacker examines three different spaces of "everything", namely, as we have seen, the world, the earth, and the planet, each in relation to the position of the anthropos (as everything for the human and represented in the human in the case of the world, as everything opposite to and outside of the human in the case of the earth, and as everything without the human in the case of the planet). Conversely, however, Thacker does not differentiate nothingness in the same way. Nothingness has no space or no place. Thus, if we start from the human being, there seem to be three different places for the All, but only one and the same nowhere for the Nothing. However, with film in

mind, film operates exactly thus: it differentiates its own nothingness once again. It does this in advance, still just analogously to philosophy, i.e., language, by distinguishing what is cinematic from what is not.

## 4. The Situation of Nothingness

In doing so, however, it subjects the question of nothingness to a very important and film-philosophically relevant shift. The question of nothingness is situated within film and through film. The moving image switches from the question of what nothingness is to the question of where nothing is, of where nothing or nothingness appears. This situating of nothingness goes along with the significant media-ontological shift from ontology to operative ontologies [25] and to ontography, as we have shown elsewhere [26,27]. Hence, with cinematic horror we have to deal with the ontography of nothingness. Film's own ontology is not conceptual but perceptual. While the concepts of conceptual thought are in principle placeless as they are bodiless, the percepts of film are not. Like everything, nothing is also assigned a place by the film and in the film, but without just turning nothingness into allness. If it can be said that everything is everywhere and nothing is nowhere, then everywhere and nowhere in film are in turn assigned locations, and what they are or are not can turn out depending on the location assigned to them.

In film, this localization of nothingness occurs through framing, i.e., through the frame or edge of the image. Something is in the picture, but everything else is not. In a way that still corresponds to philosophy, the film can distinguish relative nothingness (in the sense of not this here, not something) from absolute nothingness, nothing at all. However, this distinction is kept permeable in the motion picture. The image has an edge, but this is a movable one ("cache", or mask). Film can let something penetrate or vanish out of its image; things and bodies can enter or leave the image, and the image looks at these operations in each case [28] (pp. 2–13). Moreover, film can move the mask beyond the visible or across it by panning. It therefore recognizes a relative outside of the image, in which the currently invisible is located beyond the boundaries of the image in the case of the cinematic "cache" (mask). Then, we are dealing with relative nothingness or with the not-something.

Something completely different, however, is the absolute outside of the image, in which the fundamentally Other of the image is located beyond the boundaries of the image. In this case, in the case of the "Cadre" [28] (p. 165), the picture itself contains everything it needs; nothing gets in or out, and sometimes it even contains the condition of its own possibility—such as the light, the light source—itself. In this case, that which is excluded from the frame and never becomes visible is the completely Other [2] (p. 13). Again, this completely other is not to be confused with the Lacanian Big Other [9] (pp. 386–402). Such "cadre" aesthetics exist in all genres. But while Deleuze identifies this complete other, following Bergson, with the unthinkability of allness and time [2] (p. 16), we will read it here, in the case of horror, as the opposite unthinkable other of everything, which is not all-encompassing undividable allness but nothingness.

Maybe, the framing out of nothingness is active in other genres also. But there, it is so complete that it is not effective or noticeable in the images and the images do not have to deal with nothingness. In horror, though, the Deleuzian framed-out allness of the image is doubled with the nothingness of the non-image, which includes the nonbeing of the image itself. Although precisely this—a relation between allness and nothingness—is logically to be excluded under all circumstances, it is operative affectively, for example, again with Heidegger, in the mood of Angst.

## 5. The Horror of Light

But Deleuze's locating time at the outside of the "cadre" leads us to moving still another cinematic place of pure nothingness. Being a moving image made of light, film can operate through time in space by light. The film image and everything beyond it is a moving place of light. This other nothingness is therefore not located in an excluded

space but in the middle of the screen, in the middle of the diversity and richness of what cinematically is, in the midst of the excess of visibility, in the abundance of light.

This is precisely the case of a certain type of horror film. An outstanding example of this is Ari Aster's horror film "Midsommar" (Ari Aster, USA, 2019). Like in hardly any other movie, everything becomes visible here. Apart from the—already gruesome—detailed prequel, which tells the situation of the heroine after the suicide of her parents and in her participation in the expedition to Sweden, which is basically unwanted by everyone else, this film only plays in abundance [29]. There is only light and color here in midsummer, no darkness, no night, no emptiness. And no absence. Nothing can leave the picture, nothing can hide; everything that disappears (people, for example) reappears, even if only as a body. Lushness and fertility and even a certain folkloristic cheerfulness determine the atmosphere even when the most cruel things happen. The picture lets nothing go or escape. Complementarily, it brings with it everything that it needs or presupposes and keeps with it. The picture gathers and recollects everything within itself. In "Midsommar", this is even projected or prolonged into the diegetic world of the closed ritual community in remote Sweden. Even the excesses of movement that the film tells of, for example, in the form of the seemingly endless ritual dance competition, not only do not leave the image, but they are explicitly transfers from the moving image itself with its circulating camera.

This is also clearly visible in the bizarre metamorphoses of pictorial objects such as flowers, vegetables, and others. They take place as changes not at all in the things to be found, the food, the flowers, the faces, but through the image and of the image itself. The film thus becomes all-seeing and even all-powerful; nothing escapes it and nothing is inaccessible or impossible for it. When it shows or does something, it is no longer at the expense of something that it does not show and does not do. As with light without shadow, there is an everything without nothing. But it is precisely for this reason, in this lack of difference, that the ground of the image dissolves, for the ground of the image consists precisely in the distinction between what is (in) the image and what is not (in) the image. The pure, differenceless everything is just as unthinkable as Thacker's absolute nothingness, but it is visible; and the fullness of the image in "Midsommar" proves to be its absolute emptiness, i.e., pure horror.

Interestingly, this also applies, albeit in a completely different way, to another horror film by the same director, namely "Hereditary" (Ari Aster, USA, 2018). Here, the appearance of nothingness in the abundance of image and light takes the form of intensity. This means that the image in "Hereditary" does not, at least not always, arise from its geometry, i.e., from its boundaries, whether they are drawn as a "cache" or a "cadre". Rather, the most impressive moments and events of absolute horror form intense islands of light in the middle of an otherwise unlit, dark picture surface. This applies, for example, to the gruesome severing of the Charlie's head on the lamppost which she passes, unsheathing her head out of the car. The same kind of intensity comes from the living, upright body of the family's father bursting into flames in front of the fireplace in the living room of the house. The range, radiance or intensity of the light in the darkness of the picture fills the picture by simultaneously destroying it and turning into nothing.

## 6. The Horror of Geometry

This is all the more true as these images themselves are islands of material physical intensity in the film as a whole, since at the same time, "Hereditary" is dominated by the geometric determination of the image, which is quite polar to this process of sudden intensification, the becoming intensity of the image, that is, of its turning into nothingness. In the rooms of the house, there are doll's house-like miniature models of these same rooms and the house; the main female character creates them as works of art. The camera can also move into them until they become one with the picture (detail) and thus with the house or the room of which they are models. These pictorial spaces function decidedly geometrically, i.e., they determine space and image from their boundaries, the framing by side and rear walls, which are also repeated and doubled when the camera travels into the

doll's house. It is precisely this recursiveness of the return of the frame within the frame that proves every outside to be just another inside. There is nothing merely excluded, but only an absolute nothing outside of all framing and differentiation; and this nothing breaks into the middle of the picture, the everything, and as everything, in the scenes of intensity. Once again, the fullness of the image proves to be its absolute emptiness, but now the horror that arises from this is split up. There is a horror of framing, a horror of geometry, i.e., of exclusion and inclusion, including all the transitions and repetitions between them. This horror accordingly produces a geometric nothingness. And it is a physical horror of intensity and singularity that cannot be iterated. This horror sets the nothingness in light.

Incidentally, we can uncover another contribution of the horror film that is relevant to film philosophy. In his definition of the film image, Gilles Deleuze makes the intuitively plausible distinction between images of saturation and those of rarefaction, of barrenness or emptiness [2] (pp. 102–108), [14]. Interestingly, however, he basically conceives of both variants as fullness, because for him, a new fullness is inscribed in the empty image, namely the fullness of possibilities to put something into the image, i.e., the possibility of everything. This switch to possibility is then of the utmost importance for his further argumentation, for example, in the qualification of the famous "affect image" of the film [2]. The horror film, which Deleuze does not deal with, again provides for the complement to this, at least in the cases just examined. For the horror movie, fullness is nothing other than the reality of nothingness placed in the light.

In addition to the traditional absolute outside of the cadre aesthetic of film, we have now identified a further film-relevant location of nothingness and thus of horror. Both place nothing and everything into one by placing nothing as a becoming-empty in the middle of the fullness of light. On the one hand, in "Midsommar" this happens through a complete shadowless illumination; on the other hand, in *Hereditary*, this happens within the framework of the difference between a geometric and an intensity-oriented conception of the image.

## 7. Nothing behind the Screen

With the camera's journey into the depths of space—in "Hereditary", into the model spaces—we arrive at a further form of horror and a further splitting of nothingness into several of its places of appearance, which the film is able to perform. As a reminder, we pursue this film-relative pluralization of nothingness in addition to Thacker's approach to the horror of philosophy. As we have seen, Thacker divides everything into the three anthropo-relative variants of the world, the earth, and the planet but only recognizes a single nothing. This is not the case for the movie. For film operates not only with the delimitation of the film image from its boundaries in the surface but also with the exclusion of what lies behind the screen and thus behind the image and what the image conceals.

Every picture obscures what lies behind it, be that the wall on which it hangs or what is behind this wall, which can be nothing. Of course, there are works of art for instance in painting that also play with precisely this. But the motion picture can, as with the cache, observe how something from this rear space reaches into the picture, and it can approach this wall, tend to dissolve it, or double and place it in the picture. In film, the screen, i.e., the background, is not only a projection surface on which something can be projected but also a screen that shields off that which is or is not behind. By projecting something onto the surface of the image, the image simultaneously shields what lies behind it. And what lies behind it can again not only be something, or not something, but simply nothing. Marc Vernet in this sense speaks of the "au delà", the beyond the screen, as a figure of (fundamental) absence [30].

In a very characteristic way, this happens when the background, i.e., the screen, is doubled on the screen, for example, by a rear wall of the room shown. In the horror classic "Tarantula" (Jack Arnold, USA, 1955), for example, this happens when the scenery is closed off at the back by a rocky hill that stretches out the action space like a backdrop. The emptiness of the background is filled with these rocks. The gruesome giant spider,

Tarantula, now reaches into the action in this scene from the rear of the rocky backdrop, i.e., from the back of the backdrop facing away from the picture and concealed by it, over its upper edge. For a moment, it looks as if Tarantula is cresting over the upper edge of the canvas into the picture and has therefore been behind the canvas the whole time. But Tarantula is nothing other than the threat to all that is through its—man-made, laboratory-created—complete annihilation. Monsters are, as Simon Frisch has convincingly developed, always elsewhere, in the other room, in another space, in the off of everything, which again is nothing [31,32]. In "Tarantula", only the use of napalm bombs as a metonymy of the potentially world-destroying, earth-destroying, and planet-destroying atomic bomb can destroy Tarantula, i.e., nothingness. The shielding from nothingness owes itself to the projected nothingness from which it nevertheless shields.

**8. Driving Out Nothing**

This would be a variant that operates geometrically in the surface of the canvas or screen. But there is also again the variant of intensity, and this brings me back to the subgenre of the horror of infestation (Heimsuchung) using the example of "The Conjuring" (James Wan, USA, 2013). In the horror of infestation, nothingness—or more precisely, the demons as messengers of nothingness [11] (pp. 22–26)—does not have to enter the image, but it resides always already there, in the image. The possession has already manifested there and threatens to seize not just something or the other, but everything and tends to take over the world; i.e., nothingness is underway to become everything or take the place of everything. Once again, nothingness finds itself and takes place in the horror of visitation in the midst of abundance. The prerequisite for us viewers to be able to go along with this is of course the suspension of our skepticism—suspension of disbelief—as well as of our certainty—suspension of belief—which are gradually brought about in the horror of infestation according to all the rules of the genre.

Supernatural horror is therefore precisely a matter of stopping the becoming-all of nothingness, which is already underway, and expelling nothingness again, banning it from the image and literally making it disappear into the nothingness behind the image. However, this does not happen geometrically, beyond the edge of the picture, but in the middle of the picture, through the picture. The picture ground is now no longer a screen but a membrane that lets nothingness through when it is pressed through with the appropriate energy in the operations of exorcism. This movement towards the picture ground, into the picture ground, and, as a tendency, through the picture ground into the nothingness behind the picture dominates "The Conjuring" in both a narrative and, above all, a visual way. The doors that slam by themselves are preferably located in the back walls. The ghostly chairs move into the depths of the room. The tortured, demonized bodies of the possessed or, at the height of the crisis, the exorcists are also dragged away in the depth axis of the picture. Even the most terrible metamorphoses of the bodies, especially the extremities and faces of the possessed, do not take place in the surface of the picture but in its pictorial spatiality. They concern the plastic profiles of the faces and the organs of spatial grasping; the bodies thus blend with the surrounding space.

The spectacular tracking shots in "The Conjuring", be it those of the real camera or the subsequently added movements of the virtual camera, also take place in and into the depths of the pictorial space. As in "Tarantula", there is also a repetition of the image ground within the image, for example, through backdrop-like rear walls. But unlike there, these rear screens are not overcome but drawn into the depth of the space, whereby they deform three-dimensionally into the depth of the picture, opening up to new pictorial grounds, which once again become three-dimensional. Here, too, we can speak of an almost physical dimension of the horror of intensity, because here we are talking about forces and deformations both narratively and optically. It is significant that the demon does not finally escape through windows and doors, nor does it sink downwards or rise upwards but disappears from the picture in the middle of the picture by breathing out

into the depths of the picture, i.e., in the direction of the depths of the picture, towards the picture ground or even through it into the nothingness behind the picture.

On the other hand, we have the reverse movement, the camera tracking back into the space behind it, objects approaching the camera, or human faces looking past or even through the camera into the space behind the camera. Marc Vernet examines this tracking back as "L'en-déca" (literally the "on this side") as another figure of absence, this time located on this side of the screen and hence unshielded [30] (pp. 102–110). For Vernet, the gaze into the camera is a third figure of fundamental absence, and all three are marked by their directionality, since they are all vectors. For us viewers, the tracking back is the more uncanny, since our bodies are asymmetric, as they cannot see what is behind them. Threat, namely the threat of nothingness, comes from behind. Having the picture permeate into the space behind the camera and behind our backs amalgamates geometry and affect as well as apparatus and human.

## 9. The Horror of Technology

Of course, the fact that the image is now under the regime of the digital, which can enormously increase the plasticity or morphogeneity, or, as we might say—analogous to the photogénie of film [33]—the "morphogénie" not only in the image but of the image itself [33] (p. 90). The shielding function of the image ground against nothingness is subject to a shift in the change from the projected screen image to the digitally displayed image on all kinds of monitors, effective also in the hybridizations between digital image and screen image on which "The Conjuring" still runs. Screens no longer simply shield us from nothing but, on the contrary, from everything, namely from that which makes the morphing of everything into nothing on the screen possible, that is, from the technology operating behind the screen or behind our backs. (In the case of the projection image, though, that which makes everything possible, the projection machine, is behind our backs, and shielded off as well. Of course, there is nothing behind the camera but the production apparatus, as there is nothing behind us but the beamer and maybe other spectators). So what is shielded is the image in the sense of the imago that turns everything into nothing through, as we have seen, the vectors of absence and the morphogénie, against the picture in the sense of the tabula picta, the carrier, which is the technological ground for the image. This leads us to think about nothingness and technology, a technically given nothingness. Let us not forget that exorcism is also ultimately a technique. The exorcist himself is a tool or medium. He drives out the demon, the emissary and governor of nothingness, through the image by pushing it behind the screen. In doing so, he exposes himself to the annihilating effects of the forces that he summons, releases, and manipulates and must withstand them. The expelled nothingness, however, rests temporarily, shielded from the screen, in the fullness of an image technology that operates in the back of the picture or in our back or both at a time, and makes everything possible. Only when it re-enters the screen from there can it be nothing again in the midst of the fullness of the image. And in the meantime, after we have switched from Thacker's horror of philosophy with its single, placeless nothingness in nowhere to horror as a philosophy of film with its multiple nothingness of different places, especially the nothingness in the fullness of the image, we would have to switch once again to the morphogénie of a technical horror behind the screen and behind our back.

Nothingness, once one and only and nowhere, now depletes into a manifold of morphogenic operations on screen, and an interplay of what resides behind the screen, and behind our backs. It thus translates from the range of the imaginary to the range of the pictorial. The horror of philosophy through the morphogenic digital picture empties into the horror of technology.

## 10. Filmography

*Tarantula*; Arnold, J., Dir.; USA, 1955.
*The Conjuring*; Wan, J., Dir.; USA, 2013.
*Hereditary*; Aster, A., Dir.; USA, 2018.

*Midsommar*; Aster, A., Dir.; USA, 2019.

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