Skepticism films: Knowing and doubting the world in contemporary cinema
Schmerheim, P.A.

Citation for published version (APA):
Schmerheim, P. A. (2013). Skepticism films: Knowing and doubting the world in contemporary cinema

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
“Living is easy with eyes closed”

The Beatles, “Strawberry Fields Forever”

(Tattoo on Charlie Pace’s upper arm in the TV series LOST [2004-2010])

Introduction: Skepticism Films. A Certain Tendency in Contemporary Cinema

Abstract
The dissertation project “Skepticism Films. Knowing and Doubting the World in Contemporary Cinema” examines configurations of philosophical ideas and thought experiments in contemporary cinema by analysing films that explore the philosophical problem of doubt about human knowledge of the world. Such ‘skepticism films’ are based on film plots that involve characters within deception situations of various sorts – simulated/fake environments, blurred boundaries between layers of reality, systematic self-deception or externally induced deception by other members of a shared world – exposing them to doubts about what they hitherto believed to know about the world they inhabit. The case studies are prepared by a detailed discussion of contemporary scholarship on the relation between film and philosophy. Chapters on the film philosophers Stanley Cavell and Gilles Deleuze deal with the influence of skepticist ideas in reflections on the nature of the medium of film.

Little Do They Know
It is another morning in the picture-perfect seaside town “Seahaven”. The insurance salesman Truman Burbank is ready to start another glorious All-American day. Having enjoyed his cereal breakfast, a goodbye kiss from his lovely blonde wife Meryl, and some chit-chat with his neighbours, he is about to jump into his car and drive into the office of the insurance company he is working for. Little does he know that in a few moments an entire star will fall out of the blue sky right in front of his feet – a headlight tagged as “Sirius 9 (9 Canis Major)”. This is only the beginning of strange events that will turn Truman’s life upside down, and within four days he will discover that he spent his entire life in a TV studio as the unwitting star of a life-long daily reality show, surrounded by actors posing as colleagues, friends and relatives.

Meanwhile, in another part of the fictional universe of cinema, the bored computer hacker Thomas Anderson wakes from his sleep because a chat message starts blinking on his always-on computer screen in his messy, run-down apartment. Little does he know that within a few moments, he will follow the wake-up call “follow the rabbit” into a nightclub, from where a woman called Trinity will bring him to Morpheus, an enigmatic underground rebel who confronts him with a devastating revelation: All his life, Anderson has been living in the dream world of the Matrix, a computer-generated virtual reality built by machines in order to keep him under control.
Meanwhile, in yet another corner of the boundless world of cinema, the rich playboy David Aames suffers from recurring nightmares, reminding him again and again of the horrible accident which left him disfigured before the doctors found a way to reconstruct his face. So horrible do the nightmares become that he starts losing grasp on his life and is even unsure whether the woman he shares it with is really the one she claims to be. Little does he know that soon he will call out loudly for “tech support,” and an inconspicuous middle-aged man will patiently tell David that he is living a dream of his own making, while he actually spent the last 150 years in cryostasis, his tormented body frozen at extremely low temperatures, his mind immersed in a lucid dream. Only within this dream he can spend a life together with Sofia, the only woman he ever loved, while actually she is already long gone and… dead.

While all these strange stories unfold, the solitary astronaut Sam Bell is counting down the last few days of his three-year stint at a lunar base, harvesting the precious raw material helium-3 on the far side of the moon for an energy company called Lunar Industries. Longing to see his wife and daughter again, and stricken by rapidly declining health, he sets out one last time to repair a broken harvester on the moon’s surface. Little does he know that within a few hours he won’t be alone anymore, waking up inside the lunar base after an accident with the harvester knocked him unconscious. But that other man who now is with him is… his own clone. And little does he know that he, Sam Bell, is only a three-year-old clone of the original Sam Bell as well.¹

This kaleidoscope of cinematic deception situations represents only a short glimpse at a vast variety of films that confront their protagonists with revelations about the unreality of their worlds, confront them with the unpleasant insight that they, or other persons they spend their life with, are in a very fundamental way not what they seem to be. For the protagonists of these introductory examples, the skepticist fear that the world is not real has become true: Truman Burbank in THE TRUMAN SHOW (Weir, 1998) lives in a TV studio world, directed by a megalomaniac filmmaker. For Thomas Anderson, of MATRIX (A. and L. Wachowski, 1999), the world turns out to be an interactive computer simulation run by sentient computer programs. In VANILLA SKY (Crowe, 2001), David Aames becomes his own evil deceiver and builds his own lucid dream. And in MOON (Jones, 2009), Sam Bell discovers that he was in fundamental respects ignorant about himself.

From a philosophical perspective, the diagnosis is obvious: All these films are variations of skepticist scenarios, scenarios which are supposed to support the claim or suspicion that we are not able to “know what we think we know” (Stroud 2000 [1994]: 174) about the world we live in, about ourselves, or about others. They are what throughout this dissertation I will define as “skepticism films” – dramatized, fictional narrative versions of the hypothetical thought experiments which are part and parcel of philosophical reflection on knowledge and doubt. The way in which such films play with the skepticist impetus and traditional scenarios is at the heart of the dissertation project.

¹ Little Did I Know: Excerpts from Memory is the title of Stanley Cavell’s autobiography (2010a) as well as, in the form of “little did he know,” one of the repeated lines in the black comedy STRANGER THAN FICTION (Forster, 2006). There, an estranged character named Harold Crick (Will Ferrell) discovers that he is the fictional creation of the author Karen Eiffel (Emma Thompson), whose narrator’s voice he keeps hearing in his head while she writes the story of his life. Using that phrasing seems only fitting for introducing this dissertation on skepticism films.
The premise of skepticist scenarios is simple: If we are even unable to exclude extreme deception situations in which the entire world fundamentally differs from our most basic beliefs about it, then how can we even claim to know things about our world? René Descartes’ methodical doubt in the Meditations de Prima Philosophia (Descartes 1904 [1641]) led him to the irrefutable certainty that he exists as a thinking substance as long as he is thinking, but he did not manage to derive other certainties from his cogito argument without invoking the existence of a basically good-willed Deity that assures him of the existence of a spatially extended world, and that not all of his fundamental beliefs can be false. Deriving knowledge of the world by exclusive, a priori reliance on human rational capabilities turns out to be a dead-end street. In that respect, skepticism is the outcome of a deeply-rooted suspicion about the “claim of reason” (Cavell 1979a) that, as misled as human beings can sometimes be about the facts that constitute our world, in general we do “know what we think we know”.

This dissertation project will claim that at the latest since the 1990s, with precursors in the 1960s to 1980s, there is a proliferation of skepticism films in mainstream cinema which put into doubt the ontological status of their characters’ environments by revealing the manipulative potential of modern technology. The chapters that follow will investigate the manifold expressions of skepticist discomfort in contemporary mainstream films, and they will discuss Stanley Cavell’s and Gilles Deleuze’s philosophical accounts of cinema as an example for philosophies of film that directly or indirectly tap into skepticism as an intellectual resource. As will be shown, some of the skepticism films, such as MATRIX and VANILLA SKY, present core, quasi ideal-typical screenings of skepticist thought experiments, while others, such as the TV series LOST (2004-2010), invoke skepticist ideas as merely one layer of a rich web of themes and topics. Skepticism films, I will argue, update and fictionalise philosophical doubts about claims to knowledge about the external world, and therefore can be functionally similar to, for instance, Descartes’ evil deceiver hypothesis, Hilary Putnam’s brains in a vat (Putnam 1981), or Robert Nozick’s experience machine (Nozick 1977) – thought experiments that are introduced as test devices for the stability of concepts of knowledge.

2 Films from the era of early, silent and classical cinema such as DAS CABINET DES DR. CALIGARI (Wiene 1920), RASHOMON (Kurosawa 1950), BLOW UP (Antonioni 1962) or REAR WINDOW (Hitchcock 1954) tend to explore blurred boundaries between reality and fantasy, dreaming and waking state, truth and imagination, and therefore are effectively films with protagonists who have lost proper contact with the world because they are hallucinating or imagining up non-real worlds of their own. Skepticism films, in contrast, feature basically sane protagonists who are deceived by external forces in their world, simply unaware that they are living in a simulated, artificial, or fundamentally misinterpreted environment. If you will, skepticism films are a pessimistic cinematic version of fantastic literature.

3 While one usually distinguishes film from television studies, for heuristic reasons I will here assume that fiction films as well as fiction television shows are rooted in an increasingly converging moving-image or screen culture, and can thus be referred to simultaneously (as long as, in closer analysis, one remains aware of their functional and structural differences).

4 The following list of films underscores the impression that skepticism films are a major phenomenon in recent mainstream cinema. There are the MATRIX sequels MATRIX RELOADED (A. and L. Wachowski, 2003) and MATRIX REVOLUTIONS (A. and L. 2003; THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR (Rusnak, 1998), DARK CITY (Proyas, 1998), EXISTENZ (Cronenberg, 2000), THE VILLAGE (Shyamalan, 2004), THE ISLAND (Bay, 2005), TOTAL RECALL (Verhoeven, 1990; Wiseman, 2012), THE SIXTH SENSE (Shyamalan, 1999), THE OTHERS (Amenábar, 2001), HERO (Yimou, 2002), THE GAME (Fincher, 1997), SIMONE (Niccol, 2002), FIGHT CLUB (Fincher, 1999), WAKING LIFE (Linklater, 2001), and VANILLA SKY, a Hollywood remake of the Spanish-language European production ABRE LOS OJOS (Amenábar, 1997). Examples for the older storytelling tradition of exploring the boundaries between real and non-real world are SHERLOCK JR. (Arbuckle and Keaton, 1924), THE WIZARD OF OZ (Fleming et al., 1939), RASHOMON, BLOW UP, THX 1138 (Lucas, 1971) and WELT AM DRAHT (Fassbinder, 1973).
The update character of skepticism films is evident in the remarkable presence of virtual or otherwise simulated worlds in films such as \textit{Matrix}, \textit{THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR}, \textit{VANILLA SKY}, \textit{ABRE LOS OJOS}, \textit{WELT AM DRAHT}, \textit{DARK CITY}, or \textit{INCEPTION} (Nolan, 2010). All of them tap into the computer-generated fictional universe of cyberpunk literature, which already established itself in the 1950s and 1960s as a premonition of the digital screen culture we live in today. These films are cinematic dystopias which, again, screen a fundamental suspicion about the manipulative and destructive potential of modern technology. In this respect, skepticism films are part of a cinematic tendency towards “digital paranoia” (Rodowick 2007: 3) in which human beings are cloned as living organ donors for their rich counterparts in the real world (\textit{THE ISLAND}, \textit{NEVER LET ME GO} [Romanek, 2010]), where teenagers are thrown into a lethal battle for survival for the entertainment of decadent masses (\textit{THE HUNGER GAMES} [Ross, 2012]), or where a devastating nuclear war or virus has left the surface of the earth almost inhabitable (\textit{TOTAL RECALL} [Verhoeven, 1989; Wiseman, 2012], \textit{ELYSIUM} [Blomkamp, 2013], \textit{OBLIVION} [Kosinski, 2013], \textit{AFTER EARTH} [Shyamalan, 2013], THX 1138). Mainstream cinema is entertainment – but as entertainment it addresses the fears and desires of its mass audiences. Cinema seems to take up the feeling of not quite fitting into the world, by invoking the \textit{mene mene} of digital totalitarianism.\footnote{This is a reversal of Kant’s famous reflection that “[d]ie schöne [sic!] Dinge zeigen an, daß der Mensch in die Welt passe und selbst seine Anschauung der Dinge mit den Gesetzen seiner Anschauung stimme.” (Kant 1968: Refl. 1820a)} This kind of human discomfort, however, is not a recent phenomenon – on the contrary, it is only the most recent form of a main characteristic of occidental intellectual culture (see Früchtl 2013: 11f.).

\textbf{Skepticism’s Historical Roots}

The problem of philosophical skepticism is part and parcel of the history of philosophical thought at least since Plato developed his theory of forms and the allegory of the cave in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BC. Sextus Empiricus’ \textit{Outlines of Pyrrhonism}, a comprehensive account of the tropes and arguments of ancient Pyrrhonian and academic skepticist thought compiled in the late second century, is influential for the transition from mediaeval to early modern philosophical philosophy.\footnote{See Popkin 2003: chapter 2. Invoking Pierre Bayle, the philosophy historian Richard Popkin characterises “the reintroduction of the arguments of Sextus as the beginning of modern philosophy,” (Popkin 2003: xx)} At the time Descartes writes his \textit{Meditationes de Prima Philosophia}, doubt about knowledge and the attempt to defend it from skeptical doubts has become an established philosophical problem. In the reformation era, skepticism is a by-product of the religious battle within Christian faith: Martin Luther’s reformation movement in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century destabilises the hitherto largely unquestioned supremacy of the Catholic Church over matters of knowledge and faith. The reformation movement and renaissance humanism question the nature and proper conduct of faith, and thereby also nurture doubts about the human position in and knowledge of the world. The religious battles between reformation and counter-reformation as well as the development of a humanist world view in the Renaissance era fuel the development of modern rationalist philosophy. Descartes’ \textit{Meditationes}, written
with a distinctly skepticist impetus but primarily aimed at establishing an unshakeable foundation of the sciences, mark the beginning and intellectual foundation of the era of modern philosophy, at least as far as the canon of the history of philosophy has it. After Descartes’ cogito argument was in the world, it remained a deeply rooted element in the history of modern philosophy, from Berkeley’s subjective idealism and Hume’s probabilistic epistemology to Kant’s indignation about the

“Skandal der Philosophie und allgemeinen Menschenvernunft, das Dasein der Dinge außer uns […] bloß auf Glauben annehmen zu müssen und, wenn es jemand einfällt, es zu bezweifeln, ihm keinen genügenden Beweis entgegenstellen zu können.” (Kant 1998 [1787]: Anm. B XL)

In the increasingly secularised, post-Enlightenment modern world, which puts the human perspective at the centre of intellectual thought, the skepticist impetus gradually loses relevance. The procession of naturalism and positivism in the 19th century, which accompanies the rise of capitalist industrialisation and the scientific “Vermessung der Welt,” is carried by the belief that humanity is rapidly approaching a comprehensive picture of the world and its natural laws.

It is left to the two world wars of the 20th century to shake what the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze will later call “belief in the world” (Deleuze 1989). The “Great War,” as the first World War is called by the contemporaries, debunks the dream of safely mastering the world by technological means, and the Nuclear catastrophes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki throw a deep shadow on the kinds of knowledge attained by the technological world view. In his Cinema books, Deleuze advances the pseudo-historical thesis that World War II ruptured the “link between man and the world” (Deleuze 1989: 164) in an existential way. From that perspective, skepticism in the 20th century is not a mere intellectual toy for (analytic) academic philosophers such as O.K. Bouwsma, Anthony Brueckner, Thompson Clarke, George Edward Moore, Hilary Putnam, Barry Stroud, Michael Williams, or Ludwig Wittgenstein. The renaissance of skepticism particularly in analytic philosophy of the second half of the 20th century can also be considered as resulting from the existential crises brought along by the devastating discrepancy between technological mastery and social progress. Predating on Deleuze’s thesis, technological progress can be identified as triggering a fundamental suspicion against technologically deterministic and naturalistic ways of knowing the world in secularised societies. It is not only that “God is dead” (Nietzsche) – God’s death even did not improve the way of things on earth.

Skepticism Films as a Sign of Our Times

This, admittedly, is a speculative, culturalist account of the development of skepticist thought throughout the history of philosophy. But if one participates in this intellectual

---

7 This historical overview follows Popkin 2003.
8 For Heidegger, the scandal rather was that philosophers still try to attempt such a – in his eyes futile – refutation, see Heidegger 1993 [1927]: § 43.
9 *Die Vermessung der Welt,* “Measuring the World,” is the title Daniel Kehlmann’s pseudo-biographic historical novel about the 19th-century scientists Carl Friedrich Gauß and Alexander von Humboldt. In their own ways – Gauß as a reclusive mathematician who greatly contributed to progress in mathematics and astronomy; Humboldt as empirically oriented polymath who travelled the entire world – both contributed to filling the hitherto largely blank regions of the human landscape of knowledge. See Kehlmann 2005.
game of correlating high times of skepticist thought with specific socio-historical developments and events, one arrives at a very interesting picture of the appearance of skepticist ideas as a narrative and aesthetic element of contemporary cinema: If one understands skepticism as a reflection of social-cultural uneasiness about (the human position in) the world, then indeed skepticism films can be understood as updated audiovisual configurations of philosophical thought experiments as well as of the skepticist impetus caused by the manipulative power of digital technology, computer-generated imagery and comprehensive control of worldwide information flows. Such worries perhaps converge in the “genesis of computer-generated, virtual image worlds […] which are directly injected into the neuronal system and which thereby are in no way distinguishable from reality.” (Pinkas 2011: 263) Similarly, the ethnologist Arjun Appadurai directly connects recurrent themes in literature, film and other forms of storytelling and contemporary socio-historical developments: “Like the myths of small-scale society as rendered in the anthropological classics of the past, contemporary literary fantasies tell us something about displacement, disorientation, and anxiety in the contemporary world.” (Appadurai 1996: 58) Such uncertainties need not be equivalent to a literal fear of being a prisoner to simulated worlds. Skepticist scenarios can simply be an extreme expression of the feeling that digital environments are taking control of our lives, that reality is already an augmented reality; a mix of a ‘natural’ world and a ‘computed’ world in which the boundaries between what is real and what is not are inherently blurred. Skepticism films are a sign of our times.

Method and Structure of the Dissertation

One cannot investigate the way in which films configure skepticist themes without having a general position on the relation between philosophy and film. Can films actually be philosophically interesting? Do they illustrate philosophical ideas, or can they be more than mere audiovisual illustrations of things that have already been expressed in written works of philosophy? If films can be more than mere illustrations – does the medium even allow doing philosophy in a special way which is non-reducible to philosophy in its linguistic (written) academic form? In other words, can films be an independent, novel way of thinking philosophically? And if this is so, what is the philosophical significance of narrative films, since traditional philosophy is an essentially non-fictional, non-narrative intellectual endeavour?

Part I, “Thinking through Cinema,” provides the theoretical framework for understanding possible relations between film and philosophy. Drawing on current film-philosophical scholarship, predominantly written by Anglo-American philosophers such as Noel Carroll, Catherine Constable, Stephen Mulhall, John Mullarkey, Robert Sinnerbrink, Murray Smith, or Thomas Wartenberg, this part develops a systematic account of film as expression of philosophical thought. Chapter 1 starts with an overview of the historical switch in film-philosophy from the justification of film as art to the justification of film as philosophy. On that historical foil, the chapter develops a

10 German original text: “Erzeugung computergenerierter, virtueller Bildwelten […], welche direkt in das neuronale System eingespeist werden und die auf diese Weise an keinem Punkt mehr von der Realität zu unterscheiden sind.”
11 Early film theorists tried to justify the idea of film as art and allow it to “take[…] the eight seat in the council of Muses,” as Sergei Eisenstein and Sergei Yurkevich claimed (quoted in Smith 2001: 464). When the artistic potential of film was widely accepted in the middle of the 20th century, (professional) philosophers such as Stanley Cavell
typology of possible relations between film and philosophy. Broadly drawing on the distinction between ‘films as objects of philosophical thought’ and ‘films as expressions of philosophical thought,’ the chapter proposes to understand films as potential configurations of philosophical thought. Chapter 2 focuses on the philosophical potential of narrative fiction film. Using Richard Rorty’s account of narrative philosophy, and Martha Nussbaum’s philosophical appreciation of style, I will claim films can be philosophically significant as screened thought experiments. This offers a consensus position which both film-philosophical camps can agree on. On that basis, chapter 3 takes a shot at the radical position that films can be hierarchically (equal) audiovisual expressions of philosophical thought in their own right. The chapter suggests a transmedial perspective on philosophy: All expressions of philosophical thought, even traditional ‘linguistic’ philosophy, are historically contingent and media-dependent figurations of philosophical ideas.

Part II focuses on the general role of skepticism in film philosophy by exploring the works of Stanley Cavell and Gilles Deleuze. Chapter 4 outlines the function of skepticist ideas and thought experiments in traditional philosophical discourse, particularly in Cavell’s works, and uses Donald Davidson’s model of triangulation – which distinguishes knowledge of the world, self-knowledge, and knowledge of others as mutually indispensable varieties of (empirical) knowledge – as a pragmatic way of coming to terms with the varieties of knowledge and doubt. Chapter 5 critically investigates Cavell’s well-known proposition that “[f]ilm is a moving image of skepticism” (Cavell 1979a: 188) and accounts for the influence of classical film theorists such as Bazin and Kracauer on Cavell’s film philosophy. The fate of Cavell’s film ontology under the significantly altered conditions of digital screen culture is discussed by drawing on D.N. Rodowick’s book *The Virtual Life of Film* (Rodowick 2007). Chapter 6 turns to Deleuze as the other Godfather figure of current film-philosophy, and his thesis that “[r]estoring our belief in the world […] is the power of modern cinema” (Deleuze 1989: 166) as a quasi-metaphysical variation of skepticist doubt. Based on Josef Früchtl’s book *Vertrauen in die Welt* (Früchtl 2013), the chapter outlines resonances between Deleuze and Cavell and sketches four ways of understanding the belief restoration thesis. I will read Giuseppe Tornatore’s childhood nostalgia film *NUOVO CINEMA PARADISO* (1989) for exemplifying my claim that the broken link between man and world diagnosed by Deleuze is a kind of temporary, passing anomaly of ordinary life instead of a metaphysical rupture. Concluding the chapter, Patricia Pisters’ concept of the “neuro-image” (Pisters 2012) will be helpful for understanding the continuation of Deleuze’s belief restoration thesis into the era of digital screen culture.

Part III and part IV conclude the trajectory of this dissertation and provide a typology and evaluation of skepticism films. While part III develops the typology, part IV contains in-depth case studies of selected films. Chapter 7 uses a wide range of film examples for developing the typology, which adapts Davidson’s model of triangulation and broadly distinguishes between external world skepticism films, self-knowledge and Gilles Deleuze discovered film as an object and potential expression of philosophical thought, and thereby paved the way to establishing film-philosophy as a philosophical sub-discipline which “grant[s] film the status of a subject that invites and rewards philosophical speculation, on a par with the great arts” (Stanley Cavell 1979a: xvi).
skepticism films, and other minds skepticism films. The chapter systematically develops the themes, narrative structures, and aesthetic strategies shared by these varieties of skepticism films. Chapter 8 discusses how skepticism films fit into the broader current cinematic tendency towards complex, non-conventional narratives.

Part IV analyses selected skepticism films in detail by focusing on external world skepticism films (chapter 10) and self-knowledge skepticism films (chapter 11). The goal is to understand better the literary and filmic influences as well as narrative and aesthetic choices the chosen films make for playing with the general idea of skepticism. Chapter 9 outlines the methodology used for the philosophical film analysis in the subsequent chapters by drawing on structural-cognitivist film-analytic approaches. Chapter 10 exposes structural and narrato-aesthetic similarities and differences between the external world skepticism films of the MATRIX trilogy, THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR, and THE TRUMAN SHOW. Chapter 11 turns to self-knowledge skepticism films in which the protagonists become their own genius malignus (VANILLA SKY, ABRE LOS OJOS, INCEPTION), or are fundamentally unaware of certain unpleasant truths about themselves (e.g., of being a clone, as in MOON).

The coda wraps up this dissertation’s journey through the problematic yet fascinating relation between film, philosophy and skepticism. In lieu of a conclusion, and as a call for continuing film-philosophical reflection, it takes up Stanley Cavell’s metaphor of “cities of words” (Cavell 2004) and claims that philosophy and film are in the middle of an on-going, open-ended dialogue. At least this dissertation tries to understand both conversation partners as hierarchically equal, since film, “the latest of the great arts, shows philosophy to be the often invisible accompaniment of the ordinary lives that film is so apt to capture” (Cavell 2004: 6f.) Skepticism films exemplify this presence of philosophical ideas in contemporary popular culture.

Formal remarks
Foreign-language sources are directly translated; the footnotes contain the original wording. Direct quotes are in double quotation marks (“”), informal word use in single quotation marks (’’). Foreign words and book titles are printed in italics; FILM TITLES are printed in small capitals, article titles in double quotation marks. Internet sources with clearly identifiable authors Internet sources are listed in the regular bibliography.

The chapters 1, 2, 7 and 10 are thoroughly revised and expanded versions of parts of my Amsterdam MA thesis on Scepticism films (Schmerheim 2007). Chapter 4 in part draws on material from chapter 1 in my Amsterdam MA thesis and part I of my Göttingen M.A. thesis (Schmerheim 2005). The terminology of chapter 9 was in part adapted from my co-authored publication Kinder- und Jugendfilmanalyse (Kurwinkel/Schmerheim 2013). Chapter 8.3 uses material from my published article “Paradigmatic Forking-Path Films: Intersections between Mind-Game Films and Multiple-Draft Narratives” (Schmerheim 2008a).