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Magazin für Kunstkritik

www.brand-new-life.org
office@brand-new-life.org

Learning from Time

«Arrival» by Denis Villeneuve and «Story of Your Life» by Ted Chiang

Mathis Gasser

Arrival depicts the alien encounter as a transformative experience. Similar to *Contact, Solaris, Encounter of the Third Kind* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the narrative is underlined by a profound, sometimes teary but never dishonest humanism. Louise Banks, played by Amy Adams, is a university linguist charged with analyzing the challenging Heptapod language. The aliens are called Heptapods because of their seven limbs.



The film is based on *Story of Your Life* by Ted Chiang and was adapted for screen by Eric Heisserer and directed by Denis Villeneuve. Chiang's short story focuses on Louise Banks as she talks to the Heptapods, gradually acquiring a sense of the alien language. In between these language sessions she recalls memories of her happy, rebellious, dying, inquiring daughter. Screenwriter Heisserer added some geopolitical spice to Chiang's text by placing twelve obsidian concave lens-shaped alien space vessels into diverse political and national environments. Scientists initially share results, but when tensions arise, the militaries take over and communication is cut. Strategic alliances are formed between fairly standard ideological lines. Branded hostile, the Heptapods are suspected to set up nations against each other. But the Heptapods did not mean any harm. A faulty human translation brought the tension. ‹We offer tool or gift› was translated as ‹we offer weapon›. The balance between war and peace hinges on subtle nuances in meaning. (Figs. 1, 2)



1 *Arrival* (2016), film still



2 *Arrival* (2016), film still. They were twelve

Circularity of Language and Images

Language is central to *Arrival*. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, considered a misnomer by linguists, states that «the structure of a language determines or greatly influences the modes of thought and behavior characteristic of the culture in which it is spoken. Linguistic relativity comes in strong (language determines thought) and weak (language influences thought) forms.»[1] Language does affect its speakers' worldview or cognition in one way or another. Heptapod B, the alien's written language system, alters the perception of reality of its speakers. The more Louise masters the language, the better she remembers the future: the

final twist reveals that the memories with her not yet born daughter were flash-forwards in time.[2] Because the aliens see time as a circle, Louise has to deal with the fact that her



3 *Arrival* (2016), film still. Heptapod B language

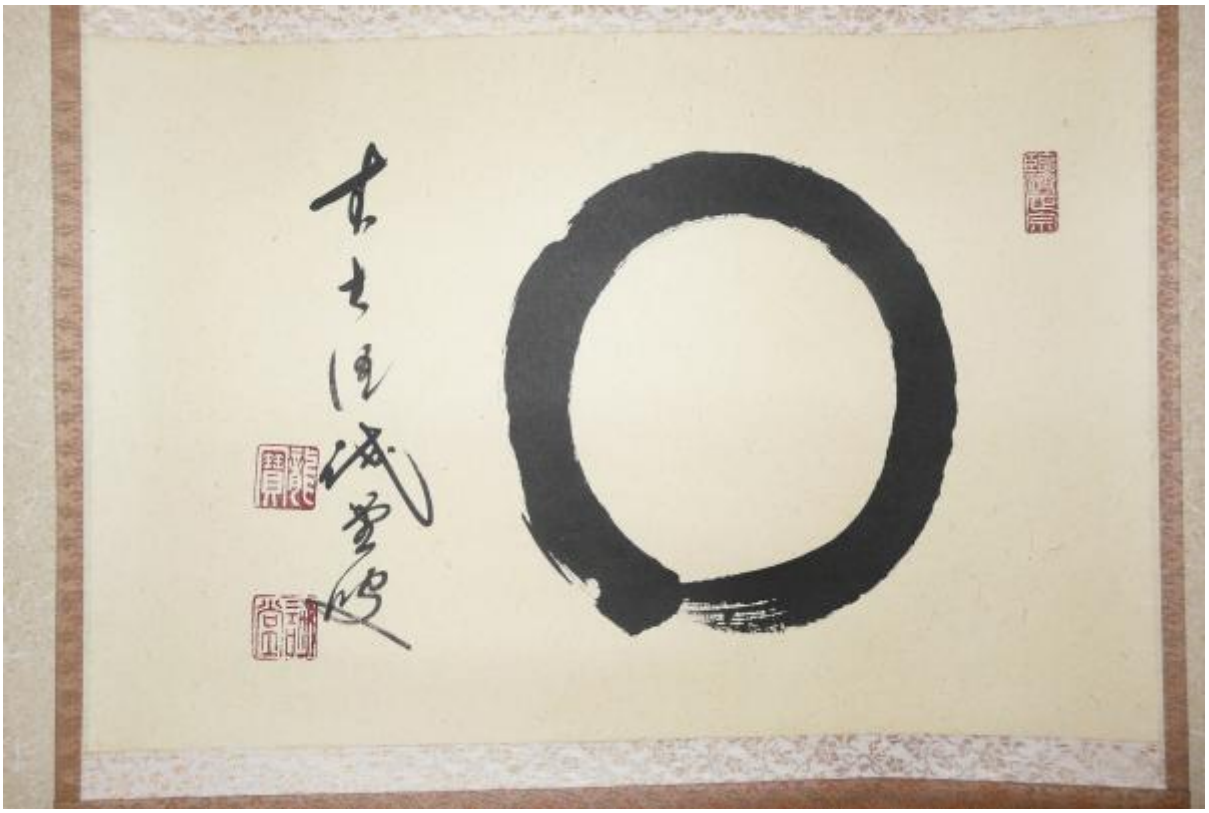
Free will and determinism are a subject, because the Heptapods and later Louise appear to enact – or faithfully follow – destiny. The film asks the profound question «Would you give birth to a daughter knowing she will die at young age»? Amy Adams as Louise Banks feels the need to follow her life's script as if it was a natural duty. An actor has to be dedicated, prepared to step into the fictional parallel reality which then becomes her own.[3] The scenes in front of the screen inside the spaceship double the cinematic experience. *Arrival* proposes the *ultimate* cinema of attraction experience because the first alien encounter may as well be lethal. And a film, as life, has a circular logic as well. Once you have seen or lived it, you know it as a strange, still mutating totality. Memories hover between past and present. The brain is a queer time machine. Knowing what will happen is a bliss in the case of cult movies. You develop a personal relationship to some scenes: you know you have seen them, but you still want to see them again.

The Heptapod B language comes in circles and evokes a variety of circular shapes, from quotidian coffee stains to Ens? zen paintings to Duchamp's *Anemic Cinema* where words in circles play a main role. On a formal level, the circular appears as flash-backs and flash-forwards. Scientists study the alien language with software.[4]

The surrealists were interested in the non-linearity of dreams, in objects detached from words. Duchamp's *Anemic Cinema* engages and confuses; the circular movement complicates linear reading. The spiral can be an invitation to travel and enter an unknown black hole leading to other places. Astrophysicists suspect that the physics we understand here on Earth break down inside a black hole.[5] When Louise Banks travels to the ship in a personal vessel for face time with the Heptapod, the room is shrouded in fog. The fog may be the chemical mix needed for Louise to breath without mask. It also suggests a drug-induced, hypnotic state to bridge that last gap in order for her to fully understand Heptapod B's circular language. (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7)



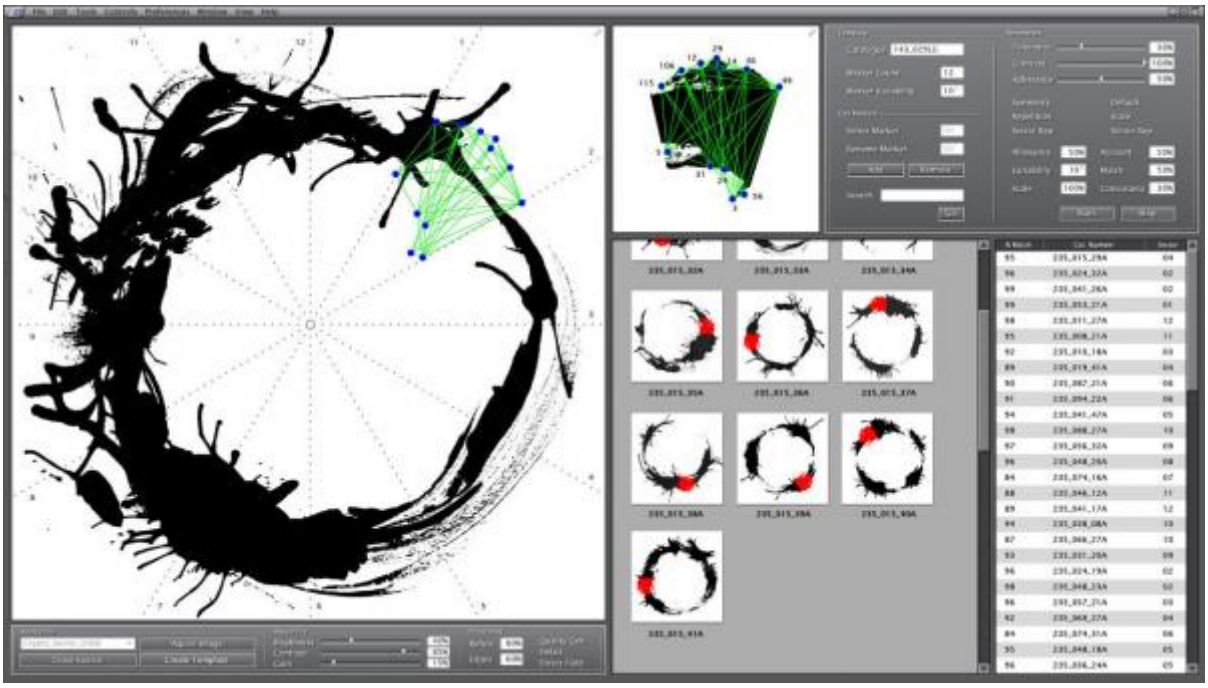
4 Coffee stain



5 Enso painting at Daitoku-ji, Kyoto, Japan

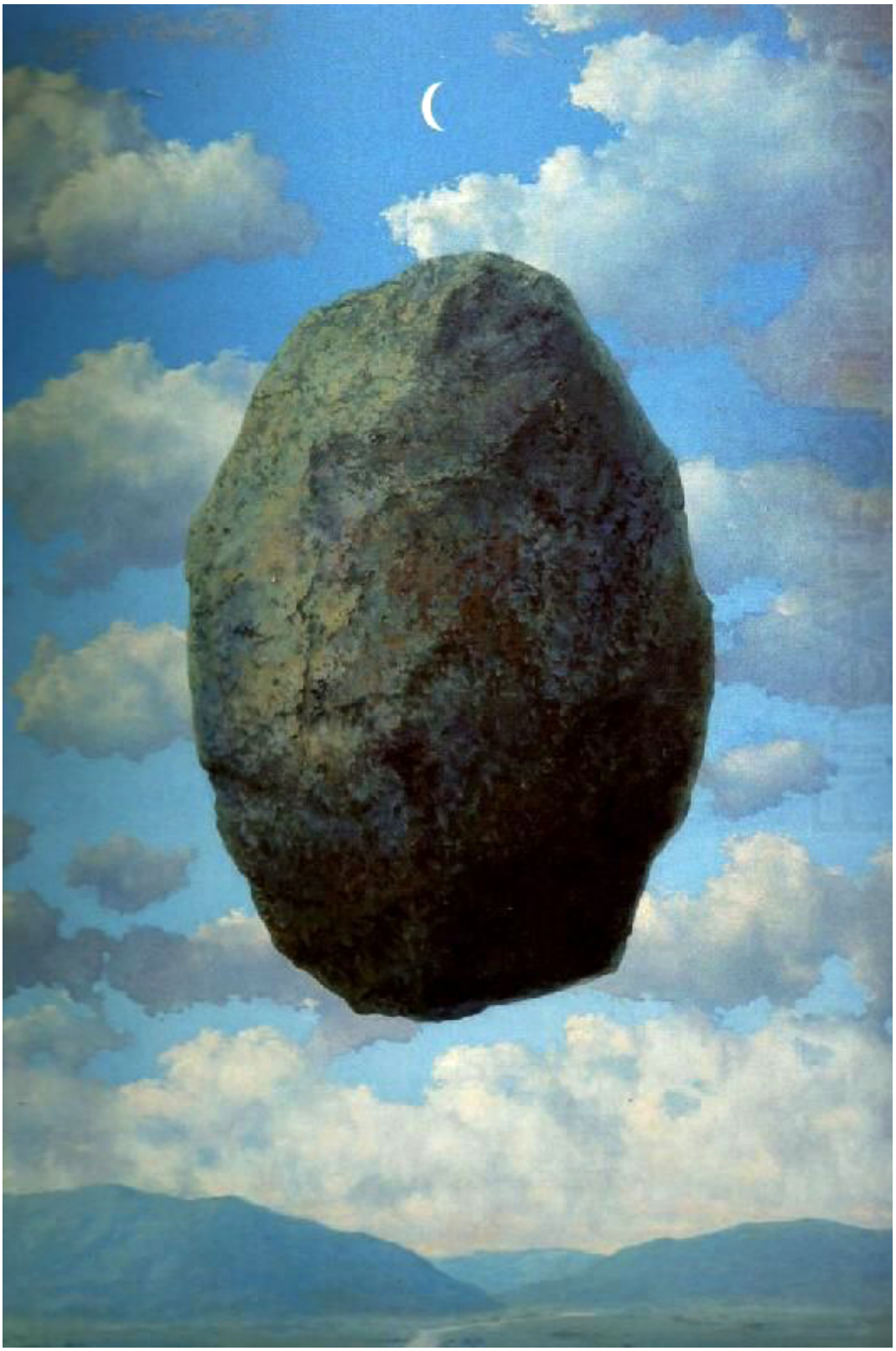


6 Marcel Duchamp, *Anemic Cinema* (1926), film still

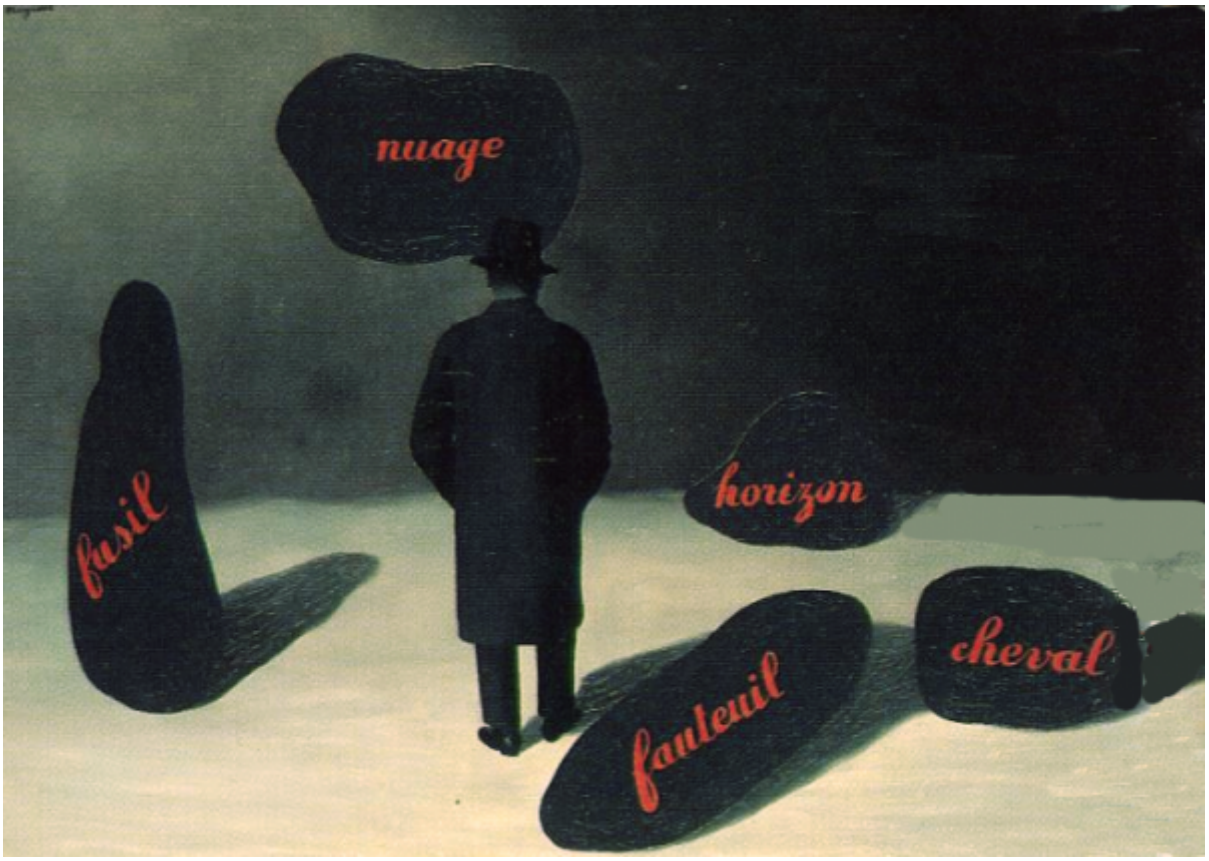


7 *Arrival* (2016), film still. Heptapod B language learning software by Stephen and Christopher Wolfram

Arrival evokes René Magritte paintings. The Heptapod ship recalls *A Sense of Reality* where a massive rock floats above a landscape. The painting might allude to a passage in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Domain of Arnheim* where, after a journey through a surreal landscape, a massive structure of ‹semi-Gothic, semi-Saracenic architecture, sustaining itself as if by miracle in mid-air› looms up over everything.[6] In Magritte's The Apparition, a man stands in a room with red words on dark, cloud shaped panels. The man might be wondering what these words mean and how meaning remains elusive. Being in this *Twin Peaks* environment, isolated in their abstraction, the words seem foreign to the objects they are supposed to portray.[7] The back wall is black, a reversed version of Banks in front of the Heptapod screen. (Figs. 8, 9,10)



8 René Magritte, *A Sense of Reality*, 1963



9 René Magritte, *The Apparition*, 1928


10 *Arrival* (2016), film still. Making contact

The Visit by Michael Madsen must have inspired *Arrival*'s art direction. The experimental 2015 documentary investigates the real-life impact of potential extra-terrestrial contact. Madsen asked NASA scientists and UN employees to imagine what they might say to an extra-terrestrial visitor. *The Visit* raises many ethical questions, for example about what happened to less advanced civilizations in the past when encountering European explorers. In the context of an alien encounter as depicted in *Arrival*, we as the human species would clearly be facing an incredibly advanced, technological alien society. (Figs. 11, 12)



11 Michael Madsen, *The Visit* (2015)



12 *Arrival* (2016), film still. Louise and Ian studying Heptapod B in a pop-up research lab

Time and International Relations

In *Story of Your Life* Louise tells a ‹Borgesian fabulation›, that «some might say that the Book of Ages could exist, as long as it wasn't accessible to readers: that volume is housed in a special collection, and no one has viewing privileges.»[8] Heptapods have a 1000-year lifespan; their perception of time is non-linear, similar to Kurt Vonnegut's Tralfamadorians, the alien race in his *Slaughterhouse Five*. They are able to perceive any point in time. The strangeness of time is reconsidered in a variety of fields. In quantum mechanics, entangled particles appear to coordinate their behaviour instantaneously across vast distances.[9] The Heptapods could entertain a metaphysical framework that «emphasizes unity and is fundamentally mathematical, following the path of least resistance in a circular way. Value could come from mathematical notions of unity, involving connecting with other agents as well as connecting with the universe itself in the form of understanding.»[10] Armen Avanessian writes how «hyperstitions locate the origins of our present in the future by creating the conditions that make their fictions subsequently become real.»[11] Liam Gillick notes: «… those who think about the future affect the future as much as thinking about the past changes what has already taken place.»[12] «The storm is no longer coming from the past. Today the storm is blowing from a future that has been depleted of resources and hope and it is driving people back into the past. People are driven towards the womb—or their assumed origins—not the grave», says Hito Steyerl.[13] In a recent blog post tracing proto-forms to current types of accelerationisms, Vincent Garton, describing the social and political thought of Georges Sorel, writes: «How, precisely, does historical time progress—what is the

interrelationship between the technical determinants that lock in substantive progress from the past, and the futurities opened by contingent human behavior?»[14]

Late in the movie, the Heptapods reveal why they came to earth. In 3000 years, they say, humanity will help them in return. The gift they brought is the gift of their language to perceive time. In *Story of Your Life*, Louise Banks muses

> «I can't believe that you, a grown woman taller than me and beautiful enough to make my heart ache, will be the same girl I used to lift off the ground so you could reach the drinking fountain, the same girl who used to trundle out of my bedroom draped in a dress and hat and four scarves from my closet.»

For Louise, Hannah is ‹the same girl› in both moments, in all moments. This is both Heptapod and human. Many parents may say the same of their children. And it is bonds between humans that keep the world turning. *Arrival*'s gift for Anthropocene's humans is its ethical dimension, the way it evokes forms of projection and mental time travel. It proposes an ethics of commitment to future generations in a post national world. The international relations portrayed in *Arrival* mirror a fragile world. CIA agent Halpern regrets that «we are a world with no single leader.» Screenwriter Eric Heisserer applied a typical American intelligence paranoia filter on Chiang's story.[15] In the second half, *Arrival* shifts to a messy Tower of Babel situation where mutual misunderstandings and a breakdown of international communication lead to potential war. The fear of war is palpable when the militaries think the aliens want humanity to fight among each other in a twisted national-Darwinian contest. This total war interpretation says more about humans than the Heptapods. The individual nations start to suspect each other—chains of suspicion lead to tension among the militaries with their mutually reinforced nationalist perspectives. Is our adherence to linear time a cage in which we are doomed to repeat conflicts among entities such as national states?[16] Are there ways to step outside the cage?

Tristan Garcia writes that science fiction emerged in parallel to the invention of a philosophy of history during the German and Scottish Enlightenment. From that moment onwards, the historical anticipation of human progress becomes a philosophical question.[17] The discovery of history paved the way to possible, possibly tangible futures, to potential predictions and speculations, to histories in the making. The future does inform the present. Each among the twelve nations in Arrival fears the erasure of their collective history to come. It's a shared fear, with each party fearing for itself. In *Arrival*, time as understood via Heptapod B language is key to humanity's common sense of endeavor. The nations have to work together to complete the last puzzle offered by the aliens, a massive data bulk that can only be deciphered by the twelve nations working in collaboration. The Heptapods want humanity to begin to collaborate on a common human project. In this sense the film has a pro global governance message. It shows a way to step outside national box thinking.

Beyond *Arrival*, how can humans connect and bridge gaps via language and diplomacy, when norms and worldviews differ drastically? How to arrive, from here, at federal global governance and transnational human bonds so strong they lead to nuclear disarmament and the dissolution of national militaries? As of now, language and diplomacy coexist with nuclear devices. Language and policies based on language are the only real tools humans have to diffuse general suspicions.[18] (Figs. 13, 14)



13 *Arrival* (2016), film still. Heptapod writing technique



14 *Arrival* (2016), film still. They were twelve

Heptapods B and Humanity’s Tools

What kind of cultural tools can advance humanity? The 18th century Enlightenment can be seen as a bringer of mental tools advancing human civilization, tools much like the Heptapod B language itself.[19] Through education and a long process of cultural internalization, individuals as part of modern societies carry these tools – and values – with and within them. David Krakauer, director of the multidisciplinary theoretical research Santa Fe Institute, mentions tools and cultural devices he calls ‹cognitive artefacts›. They include numbers, the abacus, maps, sextants, or quadrants. What makes these artefacts special is the way they rewire the brain so that even without the object at hand, after practice you would still be able to access it virtually. Krakauer compares these types of artefacts to the digital computer, where, without the device, you would be helpless or even worse off than before, because the object didn’t leave a particular imprint in the brain. Krakauer calls these other types ‹competitive cognitive artefacts› which, he says, «don’t so much amplify human representational ability as replace it.» In the same conversation, Krakauer addresses the issue of nation states, saying «not least, I think, the possibility in our lifetimes of the demise of the nation-state. The kinds of social networks that are the prequels to territories and ultimately nations are different now, and the possibility of a true reconfiguration of terrestrial social systems is really intriguing.»[20] Regarding technology as tools helping to create a just and abundant society, Hito Steyerl writes «At what point did the technology fail? Which parts would need to be developed to create the necessary social technology? Is cooking (or other so-called reproductive activities) potentially the more advanced technology in this respect?» [21]

These thoughts and ideas ask the important question of how can we find cultural tools and social technologies with similarly strong social and cultural effects as *Arrival*'s Heptadpod B language, a gift that advances humanity's common cause? A technology that does not drain or use energy for its own ends, but gives strength and shares hope, advances scientific knowledge and the general wellbeing of world citizens? A deep connecting tool, more powerful and spiritual than Silicon Valley's current app-based ways of connecting individuals around the globe? (Figs. 15, 16, 17)



15 *Arrival* (2016), film still. Learning from each other



16 *Arrival* (2016), film still. Heptapod full body


17 *Arrival* (2016), production still. Louise Banks in military Normcore

I re-watched *Arrival*. I forgot to mention theoretical physicist Ian Donnelly, jovially played by Jeremy Renner. He studies the Heptapods with Louise from a physical angle. He has a low key, sympathetic presence throughout the film. The cinematography by Bradford Young is impeccable. The special effects blend in well. Johann Johannsson's soundtrack reinforces the eeriness of the alien's presence on earth. Director Villeneuve has assembled a great team. Ok, I guess I love this movie. It's packed with science. It's intelligent and fun. But perhaps the themes and associative fields I mentioned so far are fairly obvious. What if *Arrival* is a metaphor for the unconscious?

Normcore as a Gateway

In its embrace of plain design, normcore can be seen as a reaction to a global market dynamic pushing for new products and attitudes. Normcore does not need to advertise individuality. [22] Is normcore a teaser to a clone species? In the same conversation quoted above, David Krakauer states: «Unless we choose to assert our individuality and our constructive differences, we will, I think inevitably, become a clone species—not only in terms of the way we look and dress, but the way we reason. You asked me about my dystopian singularity—that's it. The optimistic future is the one where we say, ‹Enough. No more conformity, no more over-curation of what you think I should do and think.› A kind of radical accession of diversity, a radical individuality that we somehow reconcile with a constructive communitarian drive. I don't think we've done that very well historically. How to be as different as we can be, but be congenial with one another. That is a positive future for me, but I think that's the path of great labor.»[23] How would a common cultural tool affect communities throughout the world? How would it bridge Kassel and Lahore? How would it impact diversity and tackle cultural relativism as a justification for limiting the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Would it be some kind of great leveler, an all too powerful force that humans wished would be more benign? There is a difference between federal global governance having disarmed nuclear arsenals and a totalitarian world clone species. The 193 United Nations member states subscribe to common human rights norms. [24] Cultural relativism holds as little future potential as white supremacy. A healthy global

society needs pushing towards nuclear disarmament, foster imagination, create opportunities and spread gender equality. (Figs.18, 19, 20, 21)



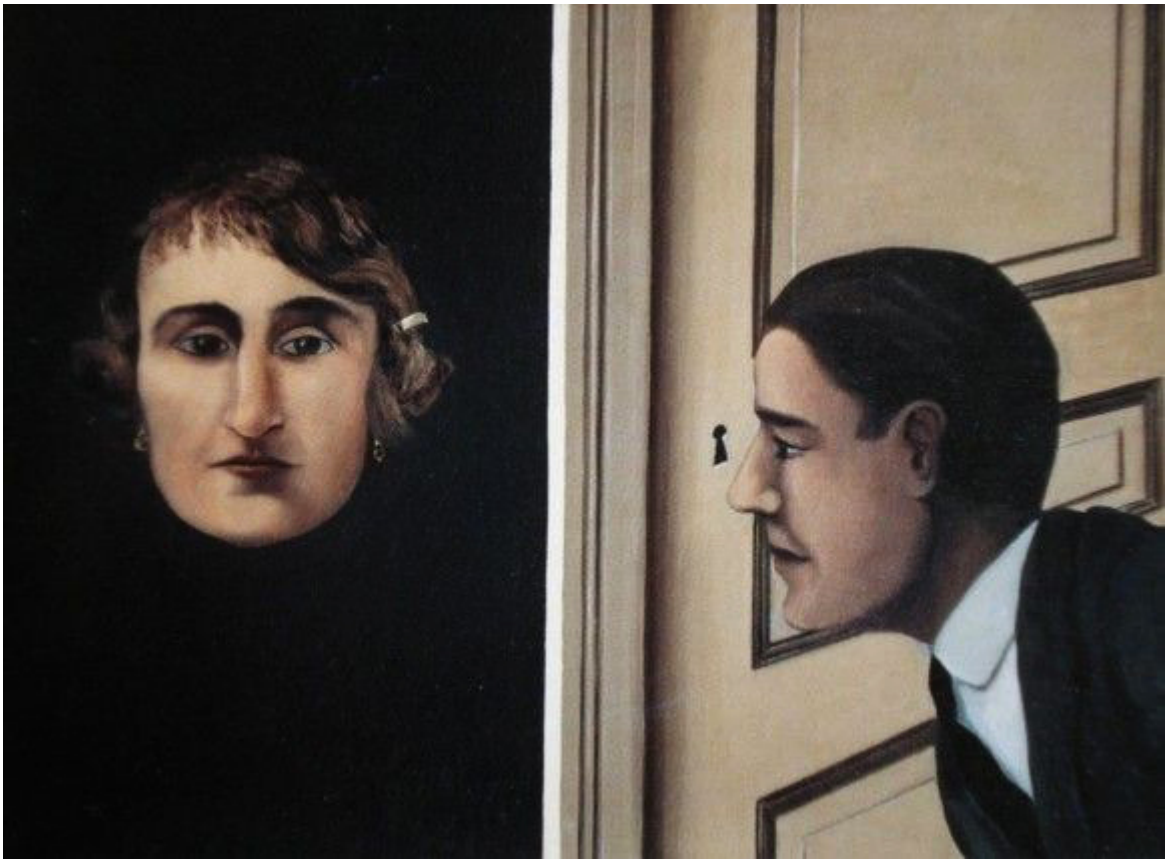
18 Anne Imhof, *For Ever Rage*, 2015



19 Street scene of Lahore, Pakistan



20 Melanie Gilligan, *The Common Sense* (video still), 2014-15. Courtesy of Melanie Gilligan and Galerie Max Mayer, Düsseldorf



21 René Magritte *L'Espion*, 1928. How can I get through to you?

With the gift of the Heptapod B language, *Arrival* hints at a large-scale shift from the national to the global stage. The ending proposes a politically interconnected world order. When Louise Banks understands and thinks in Heptapod B, she learns to interact with time. She is able to mentally travel in time to access information and feelings from the past or future. She resolves the world crisis by calling Chinese General Shang, repeating his dying wife's last words in Mandarin. She has his cell number and the wife’s last words because General Shang will give Louise this information in a future conversation when the international crisis has already been solved because of the phone call.

> General Shang: 18 months ago you did something remarkable that not even my superior has done
> Louise: What's that?
> General Shang: You changed my mind.

This key conversation in *Arrival* is exactly where the use of a sophisticated cultural tool, global interconnectedness and the personal exchange meet. Heptapod B gives Louise the power to deep-connect with a foreign military general. She establishes a powerful connection that lets hesitation or protocol of communication evaporate in favor of direct and open international dialogue. Arrival can be seen as a metaphor for accessing the unconscious.[25] The magic lies in the establishment of mutual understanding at a level so deep that all the other stuff such as cultural norms, local politics and other preconceived protocols fade and are exposed as the illusions and unhelpful power structures they are. Louise telling Shang his wife's last words transforms him and his outlook completely. He cuts through institutional bullshit. The one phone call is more meaningful than all the military power in the world. If we could access such ways of connecting, institutions not fit would have to readapt or disappear. In anticipation of similar game-changing events in real life, institutional design can already be reconsidered. Kassel and Lahore can and will be bridged. In lack of a Heptapod B type tool, a large scale international exhibition as documenta can be seen as a connecting psycho-environment-tool to learn from, as artworks and videos shown there quantum-entangle far apart places, ideas and minds, much like what happens between Louise and General Shang. As the exhibition visitor you connect to other people and histories, you find yourself in the same room with them. Of course, visiting an art exhibition like *documenta* requires some fair amount of culturally and contextually coded knowledge and access to the exhibition is far from guaranteed. What I mean is curated international exhibitions *can be a model for future institution and cultural tool building*, and be applied and adapted to more political spheres to help establish deep, entangled root systems between institutions, people and places.

Arrival really is about how people relate to each other and how they discover new depths and knowledge in relationships. Louise Banks knows that she will lose Hannah to cancer, yet she decides to give birth to her daughter. Her commitment lies in the sharing of deep, intimate moments, not the fact that her daughter will never bear her grandchild. In a moving dialogue, Louise addresses her daughter's coming cancer death.

> Louise: it has to do with a rare disease, and it's unstoppable. Kind of like you are…your singing and your poetry and all the other amazing things that you share with the world.

The passage resonates with Donna Haraway's idea of making kin. Haraway writes «this making kin, both with and among other humans and not humans, should happen in an enduring fashion that can sustain through generations. I propose making kin nongenealogically, which will be an absolute need for the eleven-plus billion humans by the end of this century—and is already terribly important. I'm interested in taking care of the earth in a way that makes multispecies environmental justice the means and not just the goal.» [26] We get a sense of the future through science fiction. *Arrival* based on Ted Chiang's *Story of Your Life* tells a loving, profound, ethical story of an alien encounter, a story containing the gift of showing us a way out of national and institutional cages.

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistic_relativity.
[2] «Like Christopher Nolan's Memento, the twist is central not only to the film's narrative

but also to its moral architecture—which, like Memento's, concerns itself with questions of time, memory, and human choice.» Christopher Orr, «The Epic Intimacy of Arrival», in *The Atlantic*, November 11, 2016, https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/11/amy-adams-arrival-review/507017/.

[3] «So, as she comes to understand her gift, she feels like a celebrant performing a ritual recitation. Or an actor reading her lines, following a script in every conversation.» James Gleick, «When They Came from Another World», in *New York Review of Books* 64, 1 (January 19, 2017), p. 28, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/01/19/when-they-came-from-another-world/.

[4] Margaret Rhodes, «How Arrival's Designers Crafted a Mesmerizing Alien Alphabet», in *Wired*, November 16, 2016, https://www.wired.com/2016/11/arrivals-designers-crafted-mesmerizing-alien-alphabet/.

[5] «What does this tell us about whether it is possible to fall in a black hole, and come out in another universe. The existence of alternative histories with black holes, suggests this might be possible. The hole would need to be large, and if it was rotating, it might have a passage to another universe. But you couldn't come back to our universe.» Stephen Hawkins, *Into a Black Hole* http://www.hawking.org.uk/into-a-black-hole.html.

[6] A.M. Hammacher, *René Magritte* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986).

[7] Each medium is ultimately, at some farthest reach where their easy cooperation no longer works, an unknowable and unrepresentable other. «The ekphrastic image acts, in other words,» says Mitchell, «like a sort of unapproachable and unpresentable ‹black hole› in the verbal structure, entirely absent from it, but shaping and affecting it in fundamental ways.» This black hole theory of the image/text relation is of great interest. J. Hillis Miller, «Picture This - W.J.T. Mitchell's Picture Theory», in *Artforum*, January 1996, https://www.artforum.com/inprint/issue=199601&id=33400 .

[8] Ted Chiang, *Story of Your Life* (London: Picador, 2002).

[9] «Professor Truscott said that the experiment showed that a future event causes the photon to decide its past.» Stephen Morgan, «Scientists show future events decide what happens in the past», in *Digital Journal*, June 3, 2015, http://www.digitaljournal.com/science/experiment-shows-future-eventsdecide-what-happens-in-the-past/article/434829.

[10] Jenelle Gloria, «Metaphysics of Arrival», November 21, 2016, http://jenellegloria.blogspot.co.uk/2016/11/metaphysics-of-arrival.html?view=classic.

[11] Armen Avanessian, «Present Tension: Notes on Preemption, Hyperstition, Contemporary Art and the Post-Contemporary Condition», in *Art Against Art*, 2 (Spring/Summer 2016).

[12] Liam Gillick, «Should the future help the past?», first published in 1998 by ARC Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, http://www.liamgillick.info/home/texts/previsions.

[13] Anton Vidokle and Hito Steyerl, «Cosmic Catwalk and the Production of Time», in *e-flux Journal* 82 (May 2017), http://www.e-flux.com/journal/82/134989/cosmic-catwalk-and-the-production-of-time/.

[14] Vincent Garton, «Technoindustrial capitalism and the politics of catastrophic velocity», June 23, 2017, https://vincentgarton.com/2017/06/23/technoindustrial-capitalism-and-the-politics-of-catastrophic-velocity/.

[15] «There is a weird echo chamber that happens in different countries, and even within different communities within a country, where we put a filter on anything from someone else and have already decided to see it in a certain light. Part of my mission in building the international glimpses we get was to also apply an American intelligence filter on top of it. And the other way we would know is if we'd have contact, which the science team did for a while, until it was taken away.» Oscar-nominated Arrival screenwriter Eric Heisserer extended interview, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bI4xA_Q7WA

[16] «The signs and symbols of language form a scaffolding for collective mental time travel, as in political/religious narratives of transformation and salvation. Common knowledge is

powerful, as we have seen. Signs and symbols especially seem to be after temporality, in the sense of seeking to become real in the consensus timeline. The tactic of semiocide – ‹a situation in which signs and stories that are significant for someone are destroyed because of someone else's malevolence or carelessness, thereby stealing a part of the former's identity (Puura 2013)› – can shape both simulated and temporal futures.» Sarah Perry, «After Temporality», in *ribbonfarm*, February 2, 2017, https://www.ribbonfarm.com/2017/02/02/after-temporality/

[17] «Nous soutiendrons donc l'hypothèse selon laquelle la formation d'un certain ordre rationnel de l'Histoire humaine a autorisé, comme par compensation, dans nos représentations l'apparition de la science-fiction en tant que résultat, en tant qu'assemblage inédit de diverse fonctions de l'imaginaire, souvent fort anciennes, de manière à produire une forme radicalement neuve d'art, une petite machine narrative et graphique à transformer l'être en peut-être.» Tristan Garcia, «Avant-hier, après-demain – Science-fiction, fantaisie et philosophies de l'Histoire», in *Revue Oscillations* 3 (December 2014).

[18] «Drezner, who is also a Washington Post contributor, says that although the film doesn't get everything right about international relations—for one, the United States cuts off communication with other nations too hastily—it does show how language matters.» Zachary Pincus-Roth, «Aliens as immigrants: How Arrival became the latest political sci-fi film», in: Washington Post, February 24, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/aliens-as-immigrants-how-arrival-became-the-latest-political-sci-fi-film/2017/02/23/b9975f08-f83e-11e6-bf01-d47f8cf9b643_story.html?utm_term=.be37f5f2f107.

[19] «The Enlightenment was, according to Foucault, a ‹a set of events and complex historical processes,› at once institutional, social, technological, and cognitive; and above all as a new relation of philosophy ‹to the present as a philosophical event to which philosophy belongs,› and thus as the emergence of a new way of posing the question of modernity in the ‹relation of discourse to its own present reality›.» Asad Haider, «The Paradox of Enlightenment», in *Viewpoint Magazine*, March 13, 2017, https://www.viewpointmag.com/2017/03/13/the-paradox-of-enlightenment/.

[20] Sam Harris, «Complexity and Stupidity. A conversation with David Krakauer», in *Sam Harris Podcast*, July 11, 2016, https://www.samharris.org/podcast/item/complexity-stupidity.

[21] Vidokle and Steyerl 2017 (as in n. 13).

[22] «Normcore doesn't want the freedom to become someone. Normcore wants the freedom to be with someone. … Normcore moves away from a coolness that relies on difference to a post-authenticity that opts into sameness. But instead of appropriating an aestheticized version of the mainstream, it just cops to the situation at hand. To be truly Normcore, you need to understand that there's no such thing as normal.» K-Hole, «Youth Mode: A Report on Freedom», *October* 2013, http://khole.net/issues/youth-mode/.

[23] Sam Harris, «Complexity and Stupidity. A conversation with David Krakauer», in *Sam Harris Podcast*, July 11, 2016, https://www.samharris.org/podcast/item/complexity-stupidity.

[24] «It has become increasingly clear that human rights norms are compatible with the leading ethical, religious and philosophical traditions. They have now been accepted, both ethically and legally, by all the UN member states. The argument that human rights are a purely Western concept is therefore untenable. The Advisory Council can see no reason whatever to embrace the ultimate implications of relativism. Over-emphasis on cultural differences conceals the overwhelming similarities between the various cultures in matters of human rights.» Advisory Council on International Affairs, «Universality of Human Rights and Cultural Diversity», no. 4, June 1998, http://aiv-advice.nl/69h/publications/advisory-reports/universality-of-humanrights-and-cultural-diversity.

[25] «In Arrival the learning of the Alien language is metaphoric for that transformation of our experience upwelling from our own unconscious. Learning the Alien language may be seen as attempting to learn the language of the unconscious.» Kent Palmer, «Signs of an Arrival of a Transformation in the Philosophy of Time», in *Academia.edu*, February 16, 2017, https://www.academia.edu/30971512/Signs_of_an_Arrival_of_a_Transformation_in_the_Philosophy_of_Time.

[26] Donna J. Haraway, «500 words», in *Artforum*, September 6, 2016, https://www.artforum.com/words/id=63147.

MATHIS GASSER

Mathis Gasser is a Zurich-born artist living in London.

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