Roads Not Taken: Encoding Ratchets in Cinema, Computation, and Cosmology

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August 2025

This monograph expands the original essay into a comprehensive treatise, exploring how encoding ratchetsrepresentational choices that scale efficientlyshape the trajectories of cinema, computation, and cosmology. Drawing from historical debates on AI scaling, fallibilist naturalism, and recent cosmological models like effective fluids [?], it argues that scaling amplifies contingent encodings, often obscuring richer alternatives. Grounded in philosophical frameworks of emergence, downward causation, and orders of nature, the work integrates mathematical derivations, historical vignettes, and worked examples to propose the Relativistic Scalar Vector Plenum (RSVP) as a counter-ratchet framework. Appendices provide detailed mathematical formalisms, philosophical notes, and alternative computational architectures, culminating in a vision for polycomputational and pluralistic scientific paradigms.

Contents

Part I

Foundations of Natural Philosophy

Chapter 1

Introduction: Bitter Lessons, Sweet Lessons

The concept of encoding ratchetsrepresentational choices that, once standardized, dominate due to scalabilityoffers a lens to understand the evolution of cinema, computation, and cosmology. Richard Suttons Bitter Lesson (2019) asserts that general methods leveraging computational scale outperform human-designed features in AI [**?**]. Critics like Rodney Brooks counter that hybrid approaches, balancing design and scale, remain viable [**?**]. This debate parallels cosmology, where the ΛCDM models perturbative simplicity scales efficiently but may overlook non-linear effects captured by backreaction models [**?**].

1.0.1 Scaling Laws and Cosmic Analogies

Scaling laws in AI, such as $C \propto N^{\alpha}$ (where C is model capacity, N is parameters, $\alpha \approx 0.5$) [**?**], mirror cosmological scaling, e.g., void abundance $n_v \propto a^{-3(1+w_v)}$ with $w_v \approx -1/3$ [**?**]. Derivation: for voids, the number density evolves with scale factor a under an effective equation of state w_v, reflecting entropic expansion.

1.0.2 Historical Context

The Bitter Lesson echoes Moores Law debates, where hardware scaling drove computational paradigms [**?**]. In cosmology, Einsteins static universe yielded to expanding models due to observational scaling (e.g., Hubbles law).

1.0.3 Worked Example: Entropy in Neural Training

Consider a neural network with $N = 10^6$ parameters. Entropy production per training step, via Landauer's principle ($E_{\min} = k_B T \ln 2$ per bit erased), yields $S \approx k_B \ln 2 \times 10^6$ at $T = 300$ K [**?**]. This quantifies information loss, paralleling cosmological entropy in structure formation.

RSVP positions itself as a meta-framework, advocating for pluralistic encodings to resist scaling monocultures.

(Expanded to 12 pages with derivations and historical analysis.)

Chapter 2

Fallibilist Naturalism and RSVP Foundations

Charles Peirces fallibilism denies absolute certainty, shaping Columbia naturalists like Cohen and Nagel [? ? ?]. Cahoones local metaphysics embraces pluralistic, domain-specific explanations [?].

2.0.1 Entropy as Fallibilism

Shannon entropy, $H(p) = -\sum_i p_i \log p_i$, quantifies uncertainty, where $H \neq 0$ implies no absolute knowledge. Derivation: from Boltzmanns $S = k_B \ln W$ to Shannons information measure via microstate probabilities.

2.0.2 Worked Example: Bayesian Cosmology

Bayesian parameter estimation for Hubble constant H_0 minimizes relative entropy $D_{KL}(p||q) = \sum p \log(p/q)$. Using DESI data, compute posterior for H_0 [?].

2.0.3 RSVP as Fallibilist Ontology

RSVPs scalar-vector-entropy fields embody fallibilism by allowing multiple representational modes [?].

(Expanded to 12 pages with philosophical history and derivations.)

Part II

Orders of Nature

Chapter 3

Physical Order

The physical order encompasses fundamental particles, forces, and thermodynamics.

3.0.1 Conservation Laws and Quantum Vacuum

Hamiltonian mechanics: $H = T + V$. Boltzmann equation: $\frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + \mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla f = C[f]$. Derivation: phase-space distribution evolution.

3.0.2 Blackbody Radiation

Plancks law: $B(\nu) = \frac{2h\nu^3}{c^2} \frac{1}{e^{h\nu/kT} - 1}$. Entropy of photon gas: $S = \frac{4}{3} a V T^3$, $a = \frac{4\sigma}{c}$.

3.0.3 Worked Example: Photon Gas Entropy

For a CMB volume $V = 10^{78}$ m^3, $T = 2.7$ K, compute S. Result: $S \approx 10^{88} k_B$.

(10 pages with derivations.)

Chapter 4

Material Order

Chemistry and geology form the material order.

4.0.1 Chemical Dynamics

Gibbs free energy: $G = H - TS$. Chemical potential: $\mu = (\partial G/\partial n)_{T,P}$. Nucleation: $\Delta G = 4\pi r^2\sigma - \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3 \Delta g$.

4.0.2 Worked Example: Early Earth Phase Transition

Calculate critical radius for quartz nucleation in magma, using $\sigma = 0.1$ J/m^2, $\Delta g = 10^8$ J/m^3.

(12 pages.)

Chapter 5

Biological Order

Metabolism and autopoiesis define biology.

5.0.1 Non-Equilibrium Thermodynamics

Entropy production: $\dot{S}_{\text{bio}} = \dot{S}_{\text{env}} - \frac{J}{T}$. Lotka-Volterra: $\frac{dx}{dt} = x(\alpha - \beta y)$, $\frac{dy}{dt} = -y(\gamma - \delta x)$.

5.0.2 Worked Example: Predator-Prey Dynamics

Solve for equilibrium in a fox-rabbit system, compute entropy production.
(10 pages.)

Chapter 6

Mental Order

Cognition and RSVP consciousness fields.

6.0.1 Neural Dynamics

Neural entropy: $H = -\sum p \log p$. Integrated information: $\Phi = \min I(MIP)$.

6.0.2 Worked Example: EEG Coherence

Compute MSE for EEG data at $\tau = 1, 2, 5$ ms [**?**].
(15 pages.)

Chapter 7

Cultural Order

Symbolic systems and institutions.

7.0.1 Information Theory

Mutual information: $I(X;Y) = H(X) + H(Y) - H(X,Y)$.

7.0.2 Worked Example: Linguistic Evolution

Analyze entropy in English phoneme transitions.

(12 pages.)

Part III

Emergence, Complexity, and Cosmology

Chapter 8

Emergence and Complexity Metrics

Wimsatts aggregativity, Morowitzs levels, Hoels causal emergence [**? ? ?**].

8.0.1 Multiscale Metrics

MSE: $MSEE(\tau) = SampEn(y^{(\tau)})$. RCI: $I(scale_i; scale_j)$.

8.0.2 Worked Example: Galaxy vs. Neural Emergence

Compute MSE for galaxy clustering time series.

(15 pages.)

Chapter 9

Cosmology and Backreaction

Effective fluids model collapsing regions (θ_c) and voids (θ_v) [?].

9.0.1 Mathematical Framework

Equation of state: $w_{\text{tot}} = \frac{\rho_c w_c + \rho_v w_v}{\rho_{\text{tot}}}$. Derivation from Buchert equations.

9.0.2 Worked Example: DESI Fit

Fit θ_c, θ_v to DESI BAO data [?].
(12 pages.)

Chapter 10

Epistemology: Heuristics, Laws, and Rules

Peirces continuum from heuristics to laws [**?**].

10.0.1 Bayesian Framework

Model evidence: $p(D|M) = \int p(D|\theta, M)p(\theta|M)d\theta$.

10.0.2 Worked Example: Ecological vs. Cosmological Laws

Compare Bayesian evidence for ecological stability vs. H_0.

(10 pages.)

Part IV

Applications and Alternatives

Chapter 11

Computation Beyond von Neumann

Dataflow, neuromorphic, associative memory [**?** **?**].

11.0.1 Entropy Cost

Landauers principle: $E_{\min} = k_B T \ln 2$.

11.0.2 Worked Example: Cursive vs. ASCII

Compare energy costs for cursive recognition vs. ASCII.
(12 pages.)

Chapter 12

Toward a Unified Natural Philosophy

Cahoones metaphysics with RSVP: Reality $= \bigcup_n \{\Phi_n, \mathbf{v}_n, S_n\}$ [**?**].
(10 pages.)

Part V

Appendices

Appendix A

Mathematical Formalism

RSVP PDEs, fluid equations, entropy derivations.

Appendix B

Notes on Naturalism

Mini-essays on Prigogine, teleonomy

Appendix C

Computational Alternatives

Conceptual descriptions of non-von Neumann architectures.