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NOTES

Introduction

- 1 An implicit contention throughout this book is the notion that we've moved past the postmodern thinking that defined the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. In fact, by the time scholars like Fredric Jameson and David Harvey were laying bare the fundamentals of the postmodern condition, our cultural logic was already being swayed by new modes of communication and image-making. For more, see Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991); and David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1990).
- 2 Emphasis mine. For more on this widespread debate, see David DeGrazia, "The Definition of Death," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Fall 2011 Edition), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/death-definition/>
- 3 Vivian Sobchack, "Inscribing Ethical Space: Ten Propositions on Death, Representation, and Documentary," in *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 227.

Chapter 1

- 1 Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis: The Seminars of Jacques Lacan: Book XI*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 54. Freud's actual quote, from his 1912 essay "The Dynamics of Transference," was "for when all is said and done, it is impossible to destroy anyone *in effigie* or *in absentia*," meaning that one cannot settle an interpersonal conflict by transferring their emotions onto a third party (as the analysand is wont to do). In our context, however, the meaning remains virtually the same: one cannot resolve painful tensions by simply replacing their source with a symbol, representation, or image.
- 2 For example, consider how overwhelming the complex movement of leaves blowing in a breeze would be if we attempted, every time we saw a tree, to truly engage with their patterns (let alone the elaborate activities of the ants at its base, or the flickering arrangements of sunlight dancing between its limbs, or the quivering sensations of the breeze as it tickles the skin). Instead, Freud

proposed that the pre-conscious instantaneously registers and dismisses much of this stimuli so that we can both avoid becoming overwhelmed and, when need be, focus our limited attention or mental energy on more pressing issues. Sigmund Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” in *Collected Writings*, trans. A.A. Brill (Seattle, WA: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2010), 236.

- 3 Ibid., 235.
- 4 Walter Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 161.
- 5 The particulars of Noé’s strategy — such as doppler-esque drones and heavy percussion on the soundtrack, swirling and destabilized camerawork, manic performances robbed of narrative context, and of course the unremitting deformation of a seemingly “real” human face — will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.
- 6 We’ll return to the notion of repetition in our next chapter, where it will be shown to be a key component of the employment of death in digital games.
- 7 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 225.
- 8 Ibid., 225.
- 9 Another example of this process comes from the games of “doctor” that children often play after returning from their first visit to a physician — their discomforts and fears negotiated through a restaging of the trauma of being poked and prodded.
- 10 Slavoj Žižek, *How to Read Lacan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 73; emphasis mine.
- 11 Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!: Five Essays on September 11th and Related Dates* (New York: Verso, 2002), 15–17.
- 12 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 3–5.
- 13 Foucault follows this graphic depiction with a stilted and dry “time-table” which lays out the average day of a Parisian prisoner during the 1840s, whose punishment took place behind high concrete walls, in small cells and closed off courtyards. Turning away from the threat of death and toward the promised sustenance of life, Western societies established a new system of control which Foucault termed *biopower*.
- 14 Giacomo Casanova, *The Complete Memoires of Jacques Casanova de Seingalt: Vol. 3 – The Eternal Quest*, trans. Arthur Machen (The Gutenberg Project, 2006), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2981/2981-h/2981-h.htm>
- 15 Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2012), 195.
- 16 Casanova, *The Complete Memoires*.
- 17 Philippe Ariés, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, trans. Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 93.
- 18 Less familiar to the public at large, though more frightening in its implications, are the racially motivated lynchings that were far too common in the American south until the early-to-mid-twentieth century.
- 19 Of course, legend has it that the brutality of combat on display was much more than these spectators bargained for, many of whom were soon under threat themselves when the Union retreat unexpectedly turned in their direction.

- 20 Geoffrey Gorer, "The Pornography of Death," in *Death: Current Perspectives*, ed. John B. Williamson and Edwin S. Shneidman (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995), 20.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Philippe Ariés, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 15.
- 23 Gorer: "They were encouraged to think about death, their own deaths and the edifying or cautionary deathbeds of others." Ariés: "And to think of how carefully people today keep children away from anything to do with death!" Gorer: "Our great-grandparents were told that babies were found under gooseberry bushes or cabbages; our children are likely to be told that those who have passed on ... are changed into flowers, or lie at rest in lovely gardens." Gorer, "The Pornography of Death," 20; Ariés, *Western Attitudes*, 12.
- 24 For better or worse, these social function have, in turn, served as the primary objects of study in most thanatological accounts of deathbed scenes, from Ariés and Gorer to Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and Elisabeth Bronfen. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Routledge, 1973); Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1992).
- 25 While the dying person was always saddened by the thought of leaving behind their loved ones, their homes, their friends, and their possessions, any display of such grief never went "beyond a level of intensity that is very slight," especially in comparison to our modern outbursts of emotion. The same reservation of emotion was even found, Ariés tells us, in "other periods, such as the baroque, that were given to inflated expression." Ariés, *Western Attitudes*, 12.
- 26 Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body*, 77.
- 27 Ariés, *Western Attitudes*, 87.
- 28 By "the pain of knowing death," I refer not simply to one's recognition, understanding, or knowledge of mortality — which, as we will see, was once grounded almost entirely in the act of perceiving the death of others — but also to the *anxiety* that accompanies the recognition of death's possibility, which will be examined in much greater depth in Chapter 3.
- 29 Ariés, *The Hour of Our Death*, 414–19.
- 30 Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), 19.
- 31 Ibid., 22.
- 32 Ibid., 17. Deleuze, responding to Barthes, reads *jouissance* as not necessarily embodied but rather *active*, such that there exists a duality between "the subject of the statement, capable of pleasure, and the subject of enunciation, deserving of *jouissance*." The statement, as a signpost that merely points-to, provides *for the reader* only the pleasure of looking or imagining, whereas the enunciation, as a declaration of affect and intuition, produces *for the speaker* an overwhelming gestalt. To put this into a clearer context, the passive contemplation insisted upon by representations of death pleasurably satisfies our immediate curiosity, whereas the active experience of witnessing always *inspires greater curiosity*. Gilles Deleuze, "Dualism, Monism and Multiplicities (Desire-Pleasure-Jouissance)," *Contretemps* 2, May 2001, 97.

- 33 Nor should we be deterred by Deleuze's argument that *jouissance* is "impossible," because he also explains that "*jouissance* is in a fundamental relationship with death," and when we pursue this "impossible *jouissance*-death relation," we "hope for discharges" and seek a "transcendence" that we will never achieve. It is not *jouissance*, therefore, that is impossible, but rather the resolution of our fundamental anxiety. Ibid.
- 34 Ariés, *Western Attitudes*, 94.
- 35 Ariés, *The Hour of Our Death*, 6, 10.
- 36 Ibid., 28.
- 37 Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1973), 2.
- 38 Gorer, "The Pornography of Death," 20.
- 39 Ariés, *Western Attitudes*, 85.
- 40 Ariés, *The Hour of Our Death*, 11.
- 41 Ibid., 7.
- 42 Ibid., 588.
- 43 Gorer, "The Pornography of Death," 20.
- 44 Ibid., 21.
- 45 Ibid., 22; emphasis mine.
- 46 As Gorer put it, "the art of the embalmers is an art of complete denial." Ibid., 21; Herman Feifel, ed., *The Meaning of Death* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959); Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963).
- 47 Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*.
- 48 Although Becker presents the "project of heroism" as the central immortality project of the twentieth century, he notes that symbolic immortality is afforded not only through acts of great courage, but also through "piling up figures in a bank book ... or by having only a little better home in the neighborhood, a bigger car, brighter children." Becker, *The Denial of Death*, 4.
- 49 Ibid., 13–15. In addition to winning the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction, *The Denial of Death* became a part of popular culture when Alvy Singer, Woody Allen's alter ego in *Annie Hall*, purchased the book for Diane Keaton's Annie while discussing *his* view of the two types of people in the world: the horrible and the miserable.
- 50 Worse yet, he even seemed to believe that the inherent anxiety which had long accompanied the recognition of death — the *angst* of Heidegger and Sartre which I will return to in our third chapter — precludes one from ever truly understanding or accepting death, despite a long history of social and cultural attitudes which attest otherwise.
- 51 Ariés, *The Hour of Our Death*, xvii.
- 52 Ariés, *Western Attitudes*, 1.
- 53 Ibid., 88.
- 54 Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
- 55 Ibid., 18.
- 56 Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003), 26.
- 57 Of course, the truth-value of those photographs is difficult to assess, which Sontag points out when she discusses the manipulations of early war photographers, such as the staging of bodies or the tweaking of destroyed scenery. Errol Morris, however, takes issue with Sontag's claim that such

- manipulations irreparably harm the photographs, arguing instead that any image, staged or not, which recalls and reflects upon a truth that is beyond basic observation (such as the full horrors of war) is nonetheless extremely valuable. Errol Morris, *Believing Is Seeing (Observations on the Mysteries of Photography)* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011).
- 58 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wand, 1983), 96.
- 59 Ibid., 96.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid., 97; emphasis mine. Barthes's most famous and striking example, not even included amongst the many photographs featured in his text, was a picture of his deceased mother, which he claimed possessed a strongly personal punctum which could not have affected the average viewer in the same way as it did him.
- 62 Scott Combs tells us that Mary's stand-in was not an actor per se, but rather the treasurer of Edison's Kinetoscope Company, Robert Thomtae — one of many cameos by production company staff in the early days of cinema, when "flicks" were considered too low an art form for many trained actors. Scott Combs, "Cut: Execution, Editing, and Instant Death," *The Instance* 38 (Fall 2008), 33.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Ibid. For that matter, they may also have believed any number of other pictures that made up the strangely popular subgenre of "execution films" in the early days of the cinema, to which Mary Anne Doane assigns titles "such as *Execution by Hanging* (Mutoscope/Biograph, 1905), *Reading the Death Sentence* (Mutoscope/Biograph, 1905), *Execution of a Spy* (Mutoscope/Biograph, 1902), [and] *Beheading the Chinese Prisoner* (Lubin, 1900)." We can also add some of Edison's recreations of more contemporaneous killings, such as the murder of President William McKinley and the subsequent electrocution of his assassin, Leon Czolgosz (*Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison*, 1901; a film which Edwin S. Porter supposedly made only after being denied the chance to film the actual event), as well as his more disturbing animal electrocution films like *Electrocuting an Elephant* (1902), un-simulated experiments which Edison hoped would steer the public away from Nikola Tesla's alternating current system in favor of his own direct current system. For more on execution films, see Mary Anne Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); and Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
- 65 For more, see John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (Boston, MA: Mariner Books, 2005); and Antonia Fraser, *Mary, Queen of Scots* (London: Orion, 2010).
- 66 Guy, *Queen of Scots*, 8.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Ibid., 9.
- 69 Fraser, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, 540.
- 70 There are, of course, exceptions to this rule — films, shows, and games which have occasionally jostled us with imagery too intense or sincere to

- ignore — yet their influence is far outweighed by images that are almost designed to be disregarded. For more on the history of violence in the moving image media of the twentieth century, see Stephen Prince, ed., *Screening Violence* (London: Athlone Press, 2000).
- 71 Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Ken Knabb (London: Rebel Press, 1967), 7.
  - 72 Ibid., 11.
  - 73 Ibid., 9.
  - 74 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 6.
  - 75 Ibid.
  - 76 Ibid.
  - 77 Ibid.
  - 78 Ibid., 1.
  - 79 Even in those rare moments when we can once again touch reality unmarred by signs or symbols, it too often fails to impress or stimulate us in the same manner as its image — or, perhaps more accurately, it is us who can no longer be stimulated — which Frederic Jameson referred to as the “waning of affect” in postmodern culture. See Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).
  - 80 Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, 9–10.
  - 81 Ibid., 11.
  - 82 Ibid., 16.
  - 83 Ibid., 11.
  - 84 Ibid., 15.
  - 85 Ibid., 16; emphasis mine.
  - 86 For more on the “ethics” of actual death in moving images, see Vivian Sobchack, “Inscribing Ethical Space: Ten Propositions on Death, Representation, and Documentary,” in *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
  - 87 Jennifer M. Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 122.
  - 88 Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts*, 239. There are exceptions to this rule are certainly worth noting, however, such as Sobchack’s example of PBS’s *On Our Own Terms: Moyers on Dying*, or Showtime’s recent limited series *Time of Death*, both of which focus on the protracted and often agonizing wait that accompanies an expected death.
  - 89 Barker, *The Tactile Eye*, 122.
  - 90 Lacan, *Four Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis*, 53–4.
  - 91 Gorer, “The Pornography of Death,” 22.
  - 92 Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, ix.
  - 93 For more, see Taylor Carmen and Mark B.N. Hansen, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Taylor Carmen and Mark B.N. Hansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 15–16; Kristen Brown Golden, “Trauma and Speech as Bodily Adaptation in Merleau-Ponty,” in *The Trauma Controversy: Philosophical and Interdisciplinary Dialogues*, ed. Kristen Brown Golden and Bettina Bergo (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 73.

- 94 Roland Barthes, quoted in Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts*, 234.
- 95 Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts*, 233.
- 96 Keep in mind that for the child, every new encounter is traumatic — equally terrifying and exhilarating. As such, much of our initial understandings of the world were born from trauma, and it was only when we removed the experience of witnessing from the experience of adolescence that we began to misrecognize death.
- 97 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 3.
- 98 Perhaps Baudrillard saw simulations as a threat precisely because he anticipated our embrace of them, and therefore our potential to not only lose sight of the Real, but also to destroy it.
- 99 Frasca, “Simulation versus Narrative,” in *Video/Game/Theory*, ed. Mark J.P. Wolfand Bernard Perron (New York: Routledge, 2003), 223.
- 100 Bogost’s also adds to this definition the notion of the “simulation gap,” which posits that the meaning or value of a simulation exists in the gap between the images it generates and the viewer or user’s subjective understanding of the system the simulation models. Ian Bogost, *Unit Operations* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 107.
- 101 *Ibid.*, 94.
- 102 I don’t intend for this to be a concrete or complete definition of a simulation, but rather a complication that expresses elements of the autonomy of simulations that often go unremarked.
- 103 Moreover, Manovich reminds us that many “high-level” simulations “require a computer to understand, to a certain degree, the meaning embedded in the object being generated.” Not only is the simulation too complex to model without the assistance of the digital, but the images it produces are occasionally too complex to understand without that same assistance. Frasca, “Simulation versus Narrative,” 223–4, emphasis mine; Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 33–4.
- 104 My focus on trees in this chapter is not entirely arbitrary, as Siegfried Kracauer, in his essay on the “Basic Concepts” of the cinema, wrote that the ability to dynamically present “the familiar leitmotif of leaves” blowing in the wind was one of the early aspirations of the cinema, and likewise the tree and the word *l’arbre* was, in *The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious*, Lacan’s preferred example for the signified and signifier (split as they were by the bar of signification). Siegfried Kracauer, “Basic Concepts,” in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings, Fifth Edition*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 171; Jacques Lacan, “The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud,” in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004).
- 105 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith, ed. Nicholas Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 75.
- 106 *Ibid.*, 91.
- 107 *Ibid.*, 87.
- 108 Despite the fact that we encounter them everyday of our lives, we have all, at one moment or another, been struck by the majesty of a tree, particularly in those moments when we’ve allowed ourselves the time to contemplate their complexity.

- 109 David H. Eberly, *Game Physics, Second Edition* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2010), xxxix. At the same time, few things destroy the immersion of games as quickly as physics glitches — those moments when objects pass through one another without properly colliding, bounce too high or too fast into the air, fail to lose momentum as they should, are easily pushed away despite their apparent weight, are stopped cold when colliding with a smaller and lighter object, and so on.
- 110 Ibid.
- 111 For more on the complexities of physics engines, see Ian Millington, *Game Physics Engine Development: How to Build a Robust Commercial-Grade Physics Engine for Your Game, Second Edition* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2010).
- 112 Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts*, 235.
- 113 Although Baudrillard tells us that the simulacra arrives as “a hyperreal sheltered ... from any distinction between the real and the imaginary,” I would argue that hyperreality is found not in the image that is indistinguishable from reality, but rather one that feels so real that it makes us question our ability to *distinguish the unreal*. Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 3.
- 114 Riccardo de los Rios and Robert Davis, “Digital Frames and Visible Grain: Spatial and Material Reintegration in *Irreversible*,” *Film Criticism* 32 (2007), 105–6.
- 115 “SFX,” on *Irréversible*, DVD, directed by Gaspar Noé (2001; France: Lion’s Gate Home Video, 2001).
- 116 Ibid.
- 117 Ibid.
- 118 Festival audiences were frequently cited as not only walking out of the film, but feeling disoriented, faint, and quite literally sick.
- 119 Ibid.
- 120 Eugenie Brinkman, “Rape and the Rectum: Bersani, Deleuze, Noé,” *Camera Obscura* 20 (2005), 38.
- 121 Mikita Brottman and David Sterritt, “Irréversible,” *Film Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (Winter 2003–4), 41.

Chapter 2

- 1 This is, of course, the central conceit of Ernest Becker’s *The Denial of Death*, which we briefly touched upon in our last chapter. Becker argued, shortly before his own death in 1974, that society and culture have long been structured around ideological regimes that act to repress and deny the permanence of death, ranging from medieval religion to the project of heroism in the twentieth century. Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1973).
- 2 Even the most experienced players would eventually encounter a death of sorts, as many classic games would inevitably freeze or crash when some bit of programming advanced beyond the 256 character limit (0–255) of 8-bit code.

- The most famous example comes from *Pac-Man*, whose 256th level exceeds this limit by attempting to draw 256 fruit onscreen, causing half of the screen to be rendered in unintelligent strings of numbers that make the game all but unplayable. The common name used to describe such levels: “kill screens.”
- 3 Perhaps, however, the recent popularity of “endless runners” in the mobile market marks a return of the trope of inevitable failure and death.
  - 4 I use the term “narratively-driven digital game” to refer to games whose primary goal is (or at least appears to be) the resolution of a narrative, and which often use the concept or image of death as a marker of incorrect or poor gameplay. While this may preclude a number of important genres such as puzzle games, music games, driving games, and sports games, portions of this model — especially those dealing with repetition and the drive to create one’s own “path” — may be useful in other contexts.
  - 5 Prior to the digital turn, the cinema would occasionally toy with alternative approaches to temporality in films like Kurosawa’s *Rashomon* (1950). However, the success of films like *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and *Memento* (2000) cemented nonlinear storytelling as a defining characteristic of digital-era cinema.
  - 6 Using animations rotoscoped (i.e., digitally traced) from home videos of his brother jumping and flailing about, Mechner’s prince would shuffle his feet when attempting to slow down, swing his arms behind himself to catch his balance near-steep drops, and wield his sword with both grace and menace — an attention to real-world physics that, as we saw in Chapter 1, became a key component of digital simulations of death.
  - 7 *The Sands of Time* was, admittedly, not the first three-dimensional *Prince of Persia* game. That honor belongs to *Prince of Persia 3D*, a poorly received, early three-dimensional game made in 1999 without Mechner’s involvement by Red Orb Entertainment, a division of Brøderbund who were known more for educational titles than action-adventure games.
  - 8 Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 11.
  - 9 *Ibid.*, 67.
  - 10 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 117; Andre Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* trans. Tim Barnhard (Montreal: Caboose, 2009), 9.
  - 11 Roland Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 41–62.
  - 12 Maria Walsh, “Against Fetishism: The Moving Quiescence of Life 24 Frames a Second,” *Film Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (2006), 2.
  - 13 Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*, 161–80.
  - 14 Steven Shaviro, “Post-Cinematic Affect: On Grace Jones, Boarding Gate and Southland Tales,” *Film Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (2010), 16.
  - 15 Walsh, “Against Fetishism,” 1–2.
  - 16 Digital technologies have also given the individual access to relatively advanced editing techniques, and with it the power to re-combine images in various ways. However, unlike the re-animation of digital games, these video mash-ups are only rebuttals to their original sources and, more often than not, are not intended to overwrite the initial action.

- 17 Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*, 185–6.
- 18 Alexander R. Galloway, *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 4.
- 19 Bernard N. Schumacher, *Death and Mortality in Contemporary Philosophy*, trans. Michael J. Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 56.
- 20 Ibid., 56.
- 21 Ibid., 58.
- 22 Perhaps this partially explains why cinematic protagonists throughout most of the twentieth century (and especially during the 1980s) were usually depicted as perfect in both action and intent, whereas heroes in the digital age are often quite the opposite: fallible, accident prone, more lucky than skillful.
- 23 See Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters: A Selection*, trans. Leroy E. Loemker (New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2012).
- 24 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Continuum, 1989), 130.
- 25 Ibid., 131.
- 26 Deleuze stresses that impossibility is not the same as contradiction, but nonetheless one cannot know of the true existence of two impossibilities *because* one necessarily contradicts the other, so instead one can only know that two *possibilities* exist. This is why Deleuze states that “only the impossible proceeds from the possible.” Ibid., 130.
- 27 Marcus Schulzke, “Moral Decision Making in Fallout,” *The International Journal of Computer Game Research* 9, no. 2 (2009), 2.
- 28 Ibid., 2.
- 29 At the same time, *Bioshock*’s insistence on explaining re-animation can only destabilize the process — rather than a temporal rewinding, death becomes a spatial displacement, as the player is instantly transported to the nearest Vita-Chamber to be “restored” without jumping back in time. As such, time in *Bioshock* is not compossible so much as death itself and death alone.
- 30 Looking at these endings from another perspective, the “bad” ending denies the player a complete image of their own death (instead only implying its inevitability), while the “good” ending provides absolute confirmation of a narratively satisfying death.
- 31 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974).
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Alexander Cooke, “Eternal Return and the Problem of the Constitution of Identity,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, no. 29 (2005), 16–34, 17.
- 36 Ibid., 18.
- 37 As we will see in Chapter 3, without the ability to construct a coherent sense of identity we also lose the ability to fully recognize death, and while *virtual* subjectivities exist independent of the body and therefore outside of death, they always point to death’s *actual* necessity and thus are always already a response to temporal limitations of the body.
- 38 This is, admittedly, a simplification of Heidegger’s project to explicate “the principle of identity” in his essay of the same name. Martin Heidegger, *Identity*

- and *Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 27–9; and Martin Heidegger, “Nihilism,” in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 855.
- 39 Heidegger, “Nihilism,” 852.
- 40 Ibid., 855.
- 41 Grant Tavinor, “Bioshock and the Art of Rapture,” *Philosophy and Literature* 33, no. 1 (2009), 91–106, 104.
- 42 More often than not, chance in games is centered around life and death. In gaming, “I have unlimited lives” and “I have unlimited chances” are equivalent statements.
- 43 Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xi.
- 44 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 71.
- 45 Ibid., 76.
- 46 Ibid., 57; emphasis mine.
- 47 Daniel W. Conway, “Tumbling Dice: Gilles Deleuze and the Economy of Repetition,” *symploke* 6, no. 1 (1998), 7–25.
- 48 Deleuze, “Nietzsche and Philosophy,” xiv.
- 49 Sigmund Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” in *Collected Writings*, trans. A.A. Brill (Seattle, WA: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2010) 240–2.
- 50 Ibid., 242.
- 51 Ibid., 243.
- 52 W. Craig Tomlinson, “*Jenseits* and Beyond: Teaching Freud’s Late Work,” in *On Freud’s “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,”* ed. Salman Akhtar and Mary Kay O’Neil (London: Karnac Books, 2011), 74.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 In fact, when Freud makes his bold claim that “the goal of all life is death,” he puts his own phrase in quotation marks, as if to distance himself, to assure us that he is merely an observer and thus not responsible for the drive toward death. Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” 244, 248.
- 55 Ibid. One significant difference between the approaches of Nietzsche and Freud is that where Nietzsche understood the difficulty of accepting the doctrine of eternal return — “the heaviest burden” — he felt compelled to argue for it more and more as his philosophy matured. Freud, on the other hand, was never comfortable with the notion that life strives for death, and therefore worked to distance the death drive from the very consequences of such a thought.
- 56 Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” 245.
- 57 Ibid., 247.
- 58 Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” 245.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Later games in the series would play with the protagonist’s death in interesting ways. After Marston is once again killed at the end of the non-canon horror DLC *Undead Nightmare*, players amusingly find themselves in control not of Marston’s son but rather a zombified Marston, a rather literal instance of

- “re-animation.” More interesting is the prequel, *Red Dead Redemption 2*, in which players inhabit the role of Arthur Morgan, a former member of Marston’s outlaw gang. Part way through the campaign, Arthur suddenly becomes ill and must seek a doctor, who tells him that he has contracted tuberculosis. Despite the player’s best efforts, Arthur dies before he has enacted his revenge against those who have wronged him, and the game uses that narratively *unsatisfying* death to comment on the fact not everyone dies a hero. Only in an epilogue, where players once again control John Marston, can Arthur’s wishes be posthumously fulfilled.
- 62 Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 92–3.
- 63 Ibid., 95.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*, 72.
- 66 Thanks to their roots in dice-driven, table-top gaming, contemporary RPGs and MMOs even refer to the creation of a new avatar (and thus a new virtual subjectivity) as “rolling a new character.”
- 67 This small choice is especially important given that, at certain points in the game, small worm-like creatures attach themselves to the boy’s head and take control over his movement, leaving the player feeling ever more vulnerable.

Chapter 3

- 1 Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 2.
- 2 Ibid., 137.
- 3 Much like Borges’s map which is so large and so detailed as to entirely blanket reality, the digital serves as a virtual model which has begun to replace our perception of the actual. In fact, as was discussed in the introduction to this project, digital technologies have made the adoption of their own model of thinking essential, because they have provided new tools of communication which have expanded the scope the individual’s empirical limit points well past the point of becoming sublime and therefore unmanageable.
- 4 Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 137; emphasis mine.
- 5 Ibid., 9. Massumi borrows this example from Henri Bergson, who in turn was drawing upon Zeno’s paradoxes of motion.
- 6 Ibid., 9.
- 7 For comparison’s sake, consider the cultural response to nuclear warfare during the Cold War (immediately prior to the birth of digital thinking) which was based almost exclusively around potential rather than possibility, a constant and calculated consideration of the likelihood of attack alongside a continuous accounting of the variations and variables that could accompany it.
- 8 The only M&M’s who seem unconcerned about the dangers of being considered a snack are the females, Green and Brown, who both read that hunger as primarily sexual in nature. Green, playing off the urban myth that

green M&M's are an aphrodisiac, is an aggressor, while Brown uses her cool, business-like demeanor to fend off a constant barrage of sexual advances. "He thinks you're naked," a friend tells Brown at a party, referencing a group of ogling men. "My shell is brown," she explains with a dry annoyance, "it only looks like my milk chocolate is showing."

- 9 Considering that the term "angst" is a direct translation of the Danish word for anxiety — first introduced into English through a mid-twentieth-century translation of Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Anxiety* — throughout this chapter I'll use the two terms somewhat interchangeably. That said, the term "angst" often carries with it (at least in its modern, colloquial usage) a greater specificity, in that it frequently implies a depression brought about by the anticipation of death, as opposed to more general anxieties relating to injury, loss, or misfortune. Aside from its frequent pairing with the word existential, for example, one of the most common contemporary associations for the term is the "angsty teenager," a stereotype that fully took root during the national panic concerning teen suicide following Kurt Cobain's death in 1994.
- 10 Imagine how postwar audiences of the 1950s would have responded to these commercials, and how perverse it would have seemed to suggest that a cartoon mascot would ever experience an existential crisis akin to the "shell-shock" of soldiers who bore witness to death and violence on a grand scale.
- 11 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1952), 125. *The Concept of Anxiety*, Kierkegaard's most thorough examination of angst and the central text explored here, was, like a number of his early works, published under a pseudonym, in this case Vigilius Haufniensis. Kierkegaard's strategy at the time was to publish his "upbuilding discourses" — i.e., those works with an explicitly Christian message — under his own name, while his "expressions of an aesthetic or ethical orientation" would be pseudonymous. In this regard, however, *The Concept of Anxiety* is somewhat unique, in that its arguments regarding the origin of anxiety are grounded explicitly in biblical Scriptures, suggesting that the book's implications as to the value or role of anxiety must have seemed secular or controversial enough to warrant the adoption of the nom de plum. For more, see Gordon D. Marino, "Anxiety in *The Concept of Anxiety*," in Alastair Hannay and Gordon D. Marino, *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- 12 Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, trans. Reidar Thomte (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 37.
- 13 Ed Cameron, "The Ethical Paradox in Kierkegaard's *Concept of Anxiety*," *Colloquy: Text Theory Critique*, no. 13 (May 2007), 98; Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 44. In fact, Kierkegaard's text is largely a rebuttal of the concept of original sin, which argues that Adam's fall from grace barred our possibility for innocence by fashioning within us the propensity toward sin. Instead, Kierkegaard reads our anxiety as precisely akin to Adam's, in that we are always, to some degree or another, both ignorant of sin and yet capable of knowing it.
- 14 Natalie Wulff, "Anxiety in Existential Philosophy and the Question of the Paradox," *Existential Analysis* 19, no. 1 (2008), 74.
- 15 Marino, "Anxiety in *The Concept of Anxiety*," 317.

- 16 Rollo May, *The Meaning of Anxiety* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1950), 32.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 “The prohibition induces in [Adam] anxiety,” Kierkegaard tells us, “for the prohibition awakens in him freedom’s possibility.” Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 44.
- 19 Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 91.
- 20 Ibid., 45.
- 21 Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 10.
- 22 Ibid., 11, 14.
- 23 Jameson argues that they only affect which remains in postmodern works of art is “a peculiar kind of euphoria” which Lyotard called “intensity,” but we which could also read as akin to the “shock of the hoax” which we discussed in Chapter 1, an image which fails to truly replicate the experience which it represents. Ibid., 16.
- 24 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Perennial, 1962), 231.
- 25 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 73.
- 26 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 32.
- 27 Ibid., 226.
- 28 Wulfgang, “Anxiety in Existential Philosophy,” 75.
- 29 Meghan Craig, “To Be or Not to Be: Understanding Authenticity from an Existential Perspective,” *Existential Analysis* 20, no. 2 (2009), 294.
- 30 Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 86; emphasis mine.
- 31 Ibid., 39.
- 32 Hazel E. Barnes, “Translator’s Introduction and Notes to Special Terminology,” in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 800; Richard Pearce, “On Being a Person: Sartre’s Contributions to Psychotherapy,” *Existential Analysis* 22, no. 1 (2011), 1–3.
- 33 Pearce, “On Being a Person,” 4.
- 34 Barnes, “Translator’s Introduction,” xlv–xlvii. We must be careful not to confuse this “transcendence” with the *a priori* sense of self found in the transcendental thought of Kant and Husserl. Here, it is the individual who “transcends” — or at least attempts to “transcend” — the boundaries of subjectification, to push beyond the ease and comfort of Being-for-others in order to recognize and connect with one’s anxiety.
- 35 Sartre, quoted in Wulfgang, “Anxiety in Existential Philosophy,” 77.
- 36 Craig, “To Be or Not to Be,” 293; emphasis mine.
- 37 Robert D. Stolorow, “Toward Greater Authenticity: From Shame to Existential Guilt, Anxiety, and Grief,” *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology* 6 (2011), 285; Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 89.
- 38 Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 88. In his chapter on “The Look” in *Being and Time*, Sartre lays out a “look” through which we render others into objects within our facticity, while also recognizing (at the same moment) that we are objects within the “look” of the other.
- 39 Barnes, “Translator’s Introduction,” xxxix.

- 40 Craig, "To Be or Not to Be," 293; Stolorow, "Toward Greater Authenticity," 285.
- 41 Of course, when it rains it pours: released mere months after the premiere of *The Sopranos*, the Harold Ramis-directed film *Analyze This* presents a similar premise with a comedy twist, a clear indicator of the pervasiveness and proliferation of angst in contemporary culture.
- 42 From Caesar Bandellotto to Michael Corleone, from Tony Camonte to Tony Montana, gangsters in American entertainment have personified the myth of the American dream through their flawless performance of ruthlessness, will, determination, and loyalty, a role that they play up to and even through their deaths. Perhaps it's Henry Hill of *Goodfellas*, whose story is a microcosm of the shift from the romanticized, Robin Hood-esque gangsters of the 1950s to the cocaine-fueled neurotics of the 1980s, who can be seen as the transitional figure, the gangster who begrudgingly shoves us into an age of authenticity even as he himself fights against it.
- 43 Robert D. Stolorow and Robert Eli Sanchez, "Philosophy as Therapy: The Case of Heidegger," *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology* 4, no. 4 (2009), 128.
- 44 Kenneth C. Bessant, "Authenticity, Community, and Modernity," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 41, no. 1 (2010), 4; Andrea Kenkmann, "Circles of Solicitude and Concern," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 13, no. 4 (2005), 478.
- 45 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 193.
- 46 Michael Inwood, *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 59.
- 47 Tony Fisher, "Bad Faith and the Actor: Onto-Mimetology from a Sartrean Point of View," *Sartre Studies International* 15, no. 1 (2009), 378. Here we see a break between Heidegger and Sartre, for Heidegger saw one's existence as determined by one's facticity and the possibilities it brings to bear (though one could either authentically face one's possibilities or inauthentically deny them), whereas the notion that the individual Being is non-determined was central to Sartre's entire philosophy.
- 48 Brent Adkins, *Death and Desire in Hegel, Heidegger, and Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 46.
- 49 Lacan, for his part, concretely linked the uncanny — which he read as any object which is removed from its context and thus made unfamiliar — to the production of anxiety.
- 50 Wulfing, "Anxiety in Existential Philosophy," 75.
- 51 François Raffoul, "Rethinking Selfhood: From Enowning," *Research in Phenomenology* 37 (2007), 94.
- 52 Heidegger, quoted in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, *A Companion to Heidegger* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 11.
- 53 David A. Stone and Christina Papadimitriou, "Exploring Heidegger's Ecstatic Temporality in the Context of Embodied Breakdown," *Schutzian Research* 2 (2010), 140.
- 54 For more on Heidegger's elaboration of the temporalization of Dasein, see James Luchte, *Heidegger's Early Philosophy: The Phenomenology of Ecstatic Temporality* (London: Continuum, 2008); and Hakhamanesh Zangeneh,

- “Phenomenological Problems for the Kairological Reading of Augenblick in Being and Time,” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 19, no. 4 (2011).
- 55 Graham Harman, *Heidegger Explained: From Phenomenon to Thing* (Chicago, IL: Open Court Press, 2007), 68.
- 56 Bruce Baugh, “Death and Temporality in Deleuze and Derrida,” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 5, no. 2 (2000), 74.
- 57 Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, trans. Alastair Hannay (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 45.
- 58 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 175.
- 59 Ibid., 345.
- 60 Ibid. There appears to be some play in Heidegger’s use of the term “resolution” — clearly felt in Taylor Carmen’s analysis of *Being and Time*, for example — in that it implies both the projection necessary in Being-toward and a sense of death as the resolution of life. Taylor Carmen, *Heidegger’s Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse and Authenticity in Being and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 279–80, 298.
- 61 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 345; emphasis in Heidegger.
- 62 Heidegger, quoted in Gjermund Wollen, “Heidegger’s Philosophy of Space and Place,” *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift—Norwegian Journal of Geography* 57 (2003), 35.
- 63 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 345.
- 64 As we will see, *Breaking Bad* could never have ended with any event other than Walt’s passing (its final shot unsurprisingly hovering above his lifeless body).
- 65 In fact, the first moment where we truly see Walt struggle with his diagnosis is when he finds out the cancer has momentarily gone into remission, which challenges the certainty of his plan and his projection toward a specific future.
- 66 Sherry Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 8, 260.
- 67 Lisa Nakamura, *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
- 68 Steven Shaviro, *Connected, or, What It Means to Live in the Network Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 13.
- 69 See Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Psychology Press, 1993).
- 70 Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959). For Goffman, these included “onstage” or “front region” performances (where the individual “maintains and embodies certain standards” established by an audience of other people), “backstage” or “back region” performances (where the audience’s disappearance or disavowal allows one’s onstage performance to be “knowingly contradicted,” though one is still acting as a “team-player”), and even “offstage” or “outside” actions (where one’s central performance is momentarily put on hold in order to address the concerns of a specific audience directly). Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 67, 69.

- 71 The obvious exception here is Kierkegaard, who saw one's spirit as preexistent to one's Being.
- 72 Levi R. Bryant, *Difference and Givenness: Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008), 3.
- 73 David Detmer, *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity* (Chicago, IL: Open Court Press, 2008), 19, 21; emphasis mine.
- 74 Mogens Lærke, "Four Things Deleuze Learned from Leibniz," in *Deleuze and The Fold: A Critical Reader*, ed. Sjoerd van Tuinen and Niamh McDonnell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 28.
- 75 Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 96.
- 76 Ibid.; first two emphases mine.
- 77 Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues II*, trans. Claire Parnet (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2002), 148.
- 78 Ibid., 149; emphasis mine.
- 79 Following the observations of our last chapter on the temporality of gamespaces, it's worth noting here that the actual and the virtual each have, for Deleuze, their own temporal component, and their distinction "corresponds to the most fundamental split in time, that is to say, the differentiation of its passage into *two great jets*: the passing of the present, and the preservation of the past." To stand in the actual is to experience a present moment slipping away, but to virtualize is to preserve the ephemeral *nature* of time within images that are themselves ephemeral. At the same time, one's future is also glimpsed within the virtual, because the virtual (as something real yet not actualized) "appears in a smaller space of time than that which marks the minimum movement in a single direction," so temporally and spatially sublime as to be in every way equal to "the longest time, longer than the longest unit of time imaginable in all directions." Within the virtual, one's past comes into direct contact with one's future. Ibid., 151.
- 80 Even when the player makes choices that are utterly opposed to what they might do in the real world, those choices are still *affective* because they allow the player to consider a broader spectrum of potential attitudes and actions, which are in turn *folded* into the player's actual subjectivity.
- 81 Pearce, "On Being a Person," 85.
- 82 Detmer, *Sartre Explained*, 21.
- 83 Pearce, "On Being a Person," 87.
- 84 Detmer, *Sartre Explained*, 21.
- 85 See Pearce, "On Being a Person."
- 86 Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 97.
- 87 While neither *The Tree of Life* nor *Enter the Void* is a traditional sci-fi film, both employ some of the tropes of the genre. In the former, this entails the use of special effects to depict the geological and biological evolution of life on Earth, while in the latter we find a neon-soaked dystopian landscape clearly in the lineage of *Blade Runner*.
- 88 Given its sister tree's prominent role in Kierkegaard's proposed origin of anxiety, it's both interesting and unsurprising to find the Tree of Life appearing in more than one film confronting mankind's relationship to death, whether

“in the flesh” (as we see in *The Fountain*) or as symbol (as in *The Tree of Life*).

- 89 It's clear in his conversations with members of the crew that Kris's new subjective position is a desperate put-on, an experimental mindset which allows him to imagine a future where he and Rheya can “live together forever” (to borrow a phrase from *The Fountain*) even if it means denying what he knows is inevitable.

Chapter 4

- 1 Charlton D. McIlwain, *When Death Goes Pop: Death, Media, and the Remaking of Community* (New York: Peter Land Press, 2005), 21.
- 2 Daniel W. Smith, *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 287.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 3–4.
- 5 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 136.
- 6 Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines*, 161.
- 7 N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 115.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid., 4.
- 11 Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” in *The Cybertcultures Reader*, ed. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy (New York: Routledge, 2000), 291.
- 12 Steven Shaviro, “Supa Dupa Fly: Black Women as Cyborgs in Hip Hop Videos,” *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 22 (2005).
- 13 Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 84–5; emphasis mine.
- 14 Adam I. Bostic, “Automata: Seeing Cyborg through the Eyes of Popular Culture, Computer-Generated Imagery, and Contemporary Theory,” *Leonardo* 31, no. 5 (1998), 360.
- 15 Doran Larson, “Machine as Messiah: Cyborgs, Morphs, and the American Body Politic,” *Cinema Journal* 36, no. 4 (Summer, 1997), 58.
- 16 J.P. Telotte, “Human Artifice and the Science Fiction Film,” *Film Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (1983), 49.
- 17 This led to a vast proliferation in the manufacture of VI or *virtual intelligence*, synthetic beings that lack self-awareness.
- 18 Note the even their name — *the Geth* — suggests both a race of Beings and a single, unified, collective consciousness.
- 19 A similar if less-nuanced version of this same type of immortal machine is found in the Marvel superhero film *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, whose central villain, the titular Ultron, is an advanced AI whose consciousness is diffused amongst a great many machine bodies, its sense of immortality born from

- sheer strength of numbers. This is relayed rather dramatically when one of Ultron's machines taunts one of the film's heroines, only to be violently destroyed mid-sentence by a larger, more intimidating machine that proceeds to finish the sentence as if nothing had happened. Indeed, for a consciousness that can exist simultaneously across numerous platforms, the destruction of one mere body is, in fact, akin to nothing.
- 20 Alain Badiou, *Being and Event* (London: Continuum, 2007), 23.
  - 21 Ibid., 24.
  - 22 As Badiou puts it, "it should be taken quite seriously that one is a number. And yet, except if we pythagorize, there is no cause to posit that being qua being is number." Ibid.
  - 23 Gilles Deleuze, "Theories of Multiplicities in Bergson," *Lectures by Gilles Deleuze*, <http://deleuzelectures.blogspot.com> (accessed April 5, 2015).
  - 24 Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 287.
  - 25 Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 18.
  - 26 Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 306.
  - 27 Peter Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject of Truth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 52.
  - 28 Badiou, quoted in Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 288.
  - 29 Badiou, quoted in Hallward, *A Subject of Truth*, 7.
  - 30 Badiou, quoted in *ibid.*, 52.
  - 31 Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, 23. This is, of course, already a misreading by Badiou, for Deleuze was clear that the univocity of Being is in no way equivalent to the unity of "the One."
  - 32 The only real difference between "programs" and "machines" is that the former function within the virtual confines of the Matrix while the latter function in the "real world" with the help of their temporary and replaceable metallic bodies. Otherwise, all synthetic Beings of *The Matrix* are actually housed as digital code within the Source.
  - 33 Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 288. Deleuze provided his own names for quantitative multiplicity, including "multiplicity of juxtaposition, numerical multiplicity, distinct multiplicity, actual multiplicity, [and] material multiplicity," and likewise he referred to his preferred theory as a "multiplicity of penetration, qualitative multiplicity, confused multiplicity, virtual multiplicity, [and] organized multiplicity." Deleuze, "Theories of Multiplicities in Bergson."
  - 34 Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 302.
  - 35 In our last chapter, I argued that the virtual, though clearly related to the possible, is also an avenue through which we can recognize potential. Here we see an extension of that argument, where it is problems — a "nested field" of "virtual trajectories," as Smith puts it — that demonstrates potential, whereas inherently singular and possibilistic solutions show us only what is actualized. Ibid.
  - 36 Ibid., 304.
  - 37 Alain Badiou, "Existence and Death," *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture* 24, no. 1 (2002), 71, 72; emphasis mine.

- 38 Roberto Casati, and Achille Varzi, "Events," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Fall 2014 Edition), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/events/>
- 39 Remember that "the situation" is a substitute term for existence, which Badiou finds to be something other than being. "The fundamental problem [of philosophy]" he tells us, "is to distinguish on the one hand, being as such, being qua being, and, on the other hand, existence, as a category which precisely is not reducible to that of being. It is the heart of the matter." Alain Badiou, "Towards a New Concept of Existence," *Lacanian Ink* 29 (Spring 2007).
- 40 As a staunch atheist, Badiou would never think of death as a transition to another (and certainly not a higher) state of consciousness, and so death, insofar as it is possible, must be the end of all thought. Peter Hallward, "Translator's Introduction," in *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, ed. Alain Badiou (London: Verso, 2001), xix.
- 41 Badiou, *Existence and Death*, 72.
- 42 Peter Hallward, "Depending on Inconsistency: Badiou's Answer to the 'Guiding Question of All Contemporary Philosophy,'" *Polygraph* 17 (2005), 14.
- 43 Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 310.
- 44 Hallward, "Depending on Inconsistency," 13.
- 45 Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (London: Continuum, 2008), 129.
- 46 Given his explicit rejection of the linguistic turn of de Saussure and Lacan, it's odd to find that the function of naming in Badiou's theory (and by extension that of the event) is so closely analogous to the relationship between language and trauma in Lacan — in giving something a name, an overwhelming or invisible inconsistency is made orderly and consistent to being. Yet perhaps this is why Badiou felt compelled to distance himself from the more basic enactments of this process by making one of his most difficult assertions, that "the void" is the "proper name of being," which is not to follow Sartre in saying that being is nothingness, but rather a statement that the *pure multiplicity of being-qua-being* cannot be contained within a singular term or name (such that being itself is made to count-as-one). Thus the "name of being," as that which can never count-as-one, belongs to *no set* or, in other words, the empty set, $\emptyset$. At the same time, "the void" *names being* because the act of naming (to count a thing as-one) is to declare that a thing is *not nothing*, and thus to *subtract it* from "the void." Badiou, *Being and Event*, 173.
- 47 "Perhaps the most distinctive and unusual feature of Badiou's ontology," Hallward continues, "is the rigor with which he maintains this strictly *implicative* condition" — that to count a thing as-one necessarily implies its inherent multiplicity. Along these lines, Badiou's former student Quentin Meillassoux observes that "philosophy is the invention of strange forms of argumentation, necessarily bordering on sophistry, which remains its dark structural double. To philosophize is always to develop an idea whose elaboration and defense require a novel kind of argumentation," one dependent upon "internal mechanisms for regulating its own inferences," such as Badiou's dialectical implication of multiplicity. Hallward, "Depending on Inconsistency," 11; Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 127.

- 48 Henry Somers-Hall, "Deleuze's Philosophical Heritage," in *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 349–50.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 350.
- 50 Badiou, quoted in Hallward, *A Subject of Truth*, 91.
- 51 Hallward, *A Subject of Truth*, 91.
- 52 Badiou, *Existence and Death*, 72. We've obviously seen, again and again, the difficulties in presenting death — not just representing, but making death an integrated and thus consistent facet of our lives (this, despite the fact that beneath the surface, death already influences nearly every aspect of our culture). At the same time, our inability to "define" death is in every way an inability to "name" death.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 66.
- 54 After all, why would a purely mathematical consciousness have any interest in that which is "supernumerary" to ontology?
- 55 Hallward, "Translator's Introduction," xix. Elsewhere, Hallward writes that "to put it in conventional Kantian terms: we are inconsistency (i.e., pure indetermination or unbounded freedom) but we can never ... have some radical encounter, via our finitude or mortality, with our ownmost being." Hallward, "Depending on Inconsistency," 18.
- 56 Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 288.
- 57 John Protevi, "Deleuze and Life," in *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 244.
- 58 Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 304; emphasis mine.
- 59 Badiou, "Towards a New Concept of Existence."
- 60 Henry Somers-Hall, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6.
- 61 Protevi, "Deleuze and Life," 256–7.
- 62 Louise Burchill, "Translator's Preface: Portraiture in Philosophy or Shifting Perspectives," in Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), x.
- 63 Smith had earlier told a member of the resistance that he believed humans to be not mammals but rather viruses, in that they continually move to new areas, multiply as rapidly as they can, utterly deplete all resources, and then leave their host environment spent and destroyed.

Conclusion

- 1 Jacques Choron, *Death and Western Thought* (New York: Collier Books, 1963), 242.
- 2 Anna Powell, *Deleuze, Altered States and Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 177. For more on Mandelbrot's early work on fractals, see Benoit B. Mandelbrot, *Fractals: Form, Chance, and Dimension* (San Francisco, CA: W.H. Freeman, 1977).

- 3 Ian Hamilton Grant, "Postmodernism and Science and Technology" and "Critical Terms," in *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism, Third Edition*, ed. Stuart Sim (New York: Routledge, 2011), 254; emphasis mine.
- 4 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 36–40; Powell, *Deleuze, Altered States and Film*, 177.
- 5 Powell, *Deleuze, Altered States and Film*, 177; emphasis mine.
- 6 Grant, "Critical Terms," 255.
- 7 Perhaps this popularity was inspired, if only on an unconscious level, by the fact that they functioned as "the icon of *chaos*," as Grant tells us, "that seems so aptly to sum up the endless fragmentations of postmodernity. ... If under Mandelbrot, geometry goes back to the Earth, then it is only to prove that the Earth, once thought flat (pre-modern), then spherical (modern), is now fractal and infinite, thus demonstrably post-modern." Note that Grant's observation not only points to the birthplace of fractals as not mathematics but rather geography, but also that it hints at the expansion of our empirical limits at the beginning of the digital age. Grant, "Postmodernism," 99.
- 8 In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari refer to Menger sponges — three-dimensional fractals consisting of endlessly subdivided cubes, which have infinite surface yet no volume — as "Sierpinsky's sponge." Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 538.
- 9 Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 98.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Steve Silberman, "The Outsider," *Wired* 14, no. 11 (2006).
 "Macrophotography" refers to the creation of images whose subjects appear far larger than their actual size, and not to the creation of overly large photographs. Conversely, "microphotography" is the art of making very small photographs, and not necessarily the creation of images whose subjects are much smaller than their actual size (presumably because most photographic images are printed or displayed smaller than their actual subjects).
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Andrew Pickering, "Cybernetics as Nomad Science," in *Deleuzian Intersections: Science, Technology, Anthropology*, ed. Casper Bruun Jensen and Kjetil Rødje (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 160.