

## Cinematic Clones, Illusive Identities & Mercurial Memories

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of 'MA Media Studies: Film Studies' from the University of Amsterdam in the 2013-2014 academic year, submitted on June 27<sup>th</sup> 2014.



Figure 1: Sam Bell playing ping-pong with Sam Bell in *Moon* (TC:00:39:01).



Figure 2: The Ripley-clone encountering her former incarnations in *Alien: Resurrection* (TC:00:51:50).



Figure 3: Adam Gibson saving himself and the world with himself in *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* (TC:01:51:22).

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## Introduction

### **Envisioning an Encounter with the Self**

Within the Netherlands the ethical and political discussion revolving around cloned animals has recently been revived. The cause for this debate is the controversial import of three cloned horses named Jazz One, Two and Three – all studs which are genetically engineered from the cells of a renowned breeding horse. The actual cloning of animals is already forbidden in our country. But now voices from within our government have been raised to also ban the import of cloned animals (Eikelboom, 2014). Ever since Dolly the sheep was cloned in 1996, remarkable innovations within the field of genetic engineering have occurred. Smaller and larger animals have successfully been duplicated by the technique of cloning. However, it seems that the technical potential of cloning outstrips the legislative response of many countries when it comes to allowing this radical technique to be implemented. The Netherlands is not the only country which enforces a stern cloning policy. Nonetheless, at the present stage, it is incontestably possible for scientists to technically clone an entire human being – although the strict legislations a majority of the world deploys when it comes to maturing the cloned cells have prevented this scenario from happening. Regardless of all the legislative restrictions, the very real prospect of cloning humans gives rise to a plenitude of questions that we can already explore – questions that in fact are readily *being* explored within the domain of science fiction.

One of the recurring tropes within the science fiction of human cloning involves the scenario of encountering one's own duplicate: what might happen when a cloned person is faced with herself? Disquieting questions arise. Can I consider you, this other person that is not myself, to be me? Do we experience life in the same way? Are your memories mine and my memories yours? Do we share a consciousness? Is your body my own or is my body yours? Am I still unique? Are we me or am I you? Asking these kinds of philosophical and existential questions is intriguing and important, for they allow an examination of what it means to be an individual – an exploration of our own sense of self. Nevertheless, all the possible answers to these questions of subjectivity remain completely hypothetical to this particular instance, since actual human cloning has not seen the light of day yet. However, there is a way for us to presently venture into the subjectivity-reshaping terrain of human cloning on a slightly more palpable level; by means of exploring the manner in which this phenomenon has been envisioned within the cultural imaginary of the cinema (see appendix). Therefore, this thesis will undertake a philosophical 'thought experiment' of a sort on the malleability of our sense of self by closely discerning the cinematic figure of the human clone as it is conceived of within the filmic texts of *Moon* (Jones, 2009), *Alien: Resurrection* (Jeunet, 1997) and *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* (Spottiswoode, 2000). In scrutinizing the encounters the cloned protagonists of these films have with themselves, this thesis will delineate the different ways in which a cloned sense of self might unfold itself.

The heart of my forthcoming argument pertaining to reshaped subjectivity is exemplified and crystallized within an evocative scene stemming from the film *Moon*. In this short but sinister scene the precarious nature of the relation of self to self is beautifully condensed through an enigmatic 'vision' of the

film's protagonist Sam Bell (Sam Rockwell) – a man who is a clone but who is initially unaware of this fact. Just before Sam physically encounters his own self, a sort of metaphorical premonition of this impending future event manifests itself within a dream that seems to start out as a memory (*Moon* TC:00:22:59-00:23:38). Although it only lasts thirty seconds, this brief sequence has an ominous and disorientating effect. The scene begins with an establishing shot where the camera slowly tilts down to the moon-base on which Sam lives. While an eerie score accompanies a dissolve into Sam's bedroom, the camera tracks deeper into the room with a smooth and almost spectral-like movement – giving the impression that we ourselves, as viewers, are creeping up to a sleeping Sam. Another dissolve, cued on the close-up of Sam's dormant face, takes us into his dream-scape. At first this dream appears to be a recollection of an intimate memory, where Sam and his wife are sleeping in a caring embrace. Then, with an equally smooth and spectral-like tracking movement, the camera sweeps underneath the covers. The frame momentarily fades to black to subsequently plunge us into a claustrophobic, tunnel-like maze which is formed out of the covers. The camera slithers down Sam's legs from right to left. The suspenseful soundtrack climaxes and suddenly we discern a hand, which is frantically clutching at Sam's feet. As the camera further tracks the grasping hand, we zoom in to a close up of the face of another – very distressed – Sam (figure 4). After this 'second' Sam is revealed (who will turn out to be his 'predecessor'), the shot abruptly dissolves into another establishing shot of the moon-base and the sequence ends like a thief in the night.



Figure 4: Sam Bell clutching at Sam Bell's feet in *Moon* (TC:00:23:31).

This scene might go unnoticed by the casual viewer who sees this demure yet suspenseful film for the first time. Nevertheless, this succinct interlude within the narrative flow of the film plays an important role in understanding the cinematic configuration of the human clone in *Moon*. As we shall see, it delineates a certain spatio-temporal 'distortion' within the construction of the sense of self which the figure of the clone can bring forth. This cloning relation of self to self has a significantly different structure from other, 'conventional' forms of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity: this relationship could be discerned as synchronic as well as diachronic. And perhaps even more pertinent, it is informed by a paradigmatic instead of a

syntagmatic logic. The clone can be seen as a figure that abolishes conventional relations, which are based on a naturalized successive pattern. As a figure that thrives on perpetual seriality, it frees the individual from being inscribed in a finite, syntagmatic structure. We will return to these important notions in the first chapter of this thesis. Nevertheless the spatio-temporal confusion within this particular scene can already be felt at this point. While the overall status of the scene might at first be interpreted as a dream which is based on a memory, it could be argued that through the infusion of the literal latent presence of the other clone in this reminiscent dream, the scene in effect takes on the special function of a 'vision'. One in which two subjectivities intimately share a sort of 'continuous consciousness', prompted by what Alison Landsberg calls 'prosthetic memory' (1995). This concept experiments with the idea that the memories and therefore the identity of an individual could be extracted and subsequently implanted into the next as a kind of prosthesis – a crucial concept that will be elaborated on in the first two chapters. For now we should remark that the vision in *Moon* reveals that the conventional relation between memory and identity is radically transformed into an utterly mercurial and illusive one when an encounter with your clone reshapes subjectivity.

Moreover, it is important to note that the concept of memory in itself – a notion which essentially structures our sense of self – should already be discerned as an extremely slippery phenomenon. The age-old allegory of our memories as static, dusty old books shelved away in the library of our brains has exhausted itself (Lehrer, 2008:83). Our memories are actually malleable, volatile, erratic, fallible and involuntary. Memory can be deceitful, imagined, traumatic, collective and apparently even prosthetic. 'A memory is only as real as the last time you remember it – the more you remember something, the less accurate the memory becomes' (Lehrer, 2008:85). Therefore, memories 'are imperfect copies of what actually happened, a Xerox of a Xerox of a mimeograph of the original photograph' (Lehrer, 2008:89). But what if these memories possess and are possessed by a cloned subjectivity? This is a premises which potentially makes these memories the imperfect copies of a Xerox of a Xerox of a mimeograph of the original photograph of the memory within a subjectivity which on its own could already be discerned as a Xerox of a Xerox of a mimeograph of the original photograph of a cloned sense of self. Nevertheless, even within this dazzling scenario, memories still remain one of the most fundamental building blocks for identity – however unstable they might be.

As we have seen up to now, the phenomenon of human cloning entails a radical reshaping of the human sense of self. It holds the power to threaten the boundaries of our subjectivity, while at the same time opening up new ways of conceiving what constitutes as our sense of self. The traditional Cartesian perception of subjectivity – which comprises a singular, embodied subjectivity unified through the act of conscious awareness of the self – can be destabilized by encountering one's own clone. On a similar level, the mercurial conception of memory I delineated above, also has the ability to disrupt our conventional conception of identity. Therefore, the coupling of the trope of human cloning with the concept prosthetic memory can be a fruitful endeavor within the project of this thesis, for it might bring forth a number of severe consequences for maintaining the 'unique', Cartesian sense of self on which our place in the world is based. By letting the cinematic figure of the clone enter Landsberg's particular thought experiment, the

already radical effects of prosthetic memories on our perception of subjectivity and identity might be brought to unprecedented extremes. However, if the trope of human cloning combined with the notion of prosthetic memory ferociously reveals Cartesian subjectivity to be a mere fantasy of unique individuality, we should nevertheless not cease, and indeed have not ceased, to search for the self. Perhaps precisely because identity and memory have become so illusive and mercurial, a self-reflexive quest like this project may presently gain additional momentum – especially within the realm of cinematic fiction.

It is within the cinematic figure of the human clone that this fantastical trope of refashioning subjectivity has had a prolific and productive life, however unlikely the actual practice of human cloning still remains for the moment. After the cloning of Dolly, the production of cloning-films especially took off: in the 2000's a quadruplication occurred (see appendix). Furthermore, as we will see in the course of this thesis, the phenomenon of cloning is a cinematic as well as scientific *topos* within a cultural imaginary – one that increasingly pervades our discourses on the self, memory, identity and humanity (Stacey, 2010). To interrogate this capricious connection between memory, cloning and subjectivity within the realm of cinema, this thesis will thus take a closer look at three case-studies that elegantly combine these volatile concepts. Moreover, these filmic texts themselves also function as philosophical thought experiments of a sort – each raising a particular set of existential questions, each operating within its own specific genre. This particular selection of films is foregrounded within this thesis because all three case-studies explicitly and affectively deal with the notion of an encounter with one's own self through evoking the trope of human cloning, where each film gives way to a different yet kindred delineation of the relation of self to self.

A rather vigorous and productive relation with the self is engendered in *Moon*, through my concept of 'continuous consciousness' in chapter two and my reworking of Stanley Cavell's notion of 'the unattained but attainable self' (Cavell, 2004) in chapter three. *Alien: Resurrection*, on the other hand, envisions a nuclear loss of 'bio-aura' (Stacey, 2010) that prompts a destructive affiliation between the different incarnations of the self through my concept of 'continuous corporality', which will be discussed in chapter four. *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* – the focus of chapter five – tries to restore a former, more conventional conception of subjectivity and force this outdated sense of self onto the novel, reshaped structures of subjectivity in vain. For it partially denies the metamorphic consequences of human cloning for the constitution of identity. Because these three films belong to different genres, each deploys an alternative cinematic language to comment upon the thought experiment of encountering one's own self. *Alien: Resurrection* envisions its hybrid-clone within the *body-horror*-genre, whereas *Moon* investigates the patterns of conduct of its cloned protagonists in a manner worthy of an art-house film, while action blockbuster *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* adheres to the conventions of Hollywood. The figure of the clone thus cuts across diverse film-genres. Taken together, these different cinematic 'visions' of the figure of the clone inextricably chart the space of this thesis' thought experiment and reveal the various modes in which the cloned sense of self can manifest itself. But before we can embark on this endeavor, an exploration of the concept of cloning and its intimate relation to the medium of cinema is necessary to form a theoretical foundation from which we can set out to explore the intricate relation of self to self that is variously staged within our case-studies.

## Chapter 1: Reshaped Subjectivity

### **Cinema & Cloning: Refashioning our Sense of Self**

Since our cells are now thoroughly codifiable as genetic information – which can be tagged, extracted, transferred, reprogrammed, and recombined – and our reproductive capacities can now be amplified, assisted, manipulated, substituted, externalized, or blended with laboratory techniques, previous notions of the sacredness of life, the distinctiveness of the human, and the singularity of embodied subjectivity can no longer form the foundations of modern subjecthood as they once did. (Stacey, 2010:179)

This passage from Jackie Stacey's book *The Cinematic Life of the Gene* (2010) evocatively shows that unraveling the human genome has a treacherous flip side. The promise of enhancing human life by potentially eradicating diseases through genetic modifications also gives rise to the destabilization of the very notion of what it means to be 'human'. For 'sacred' human subjectivity relies for a large part on the stability of embodied subjectivity, which is governed by the singularity of the self. The sacredness of life and the distinctiveness of the human are thus utterly endangered by the increasing malleableness of our cells. Perhaps thinking in this vein seems like a giant leap when we are coming from practical, scientific questions of genetics that are asked today and dive into elusive, philosophical questions of subjectivity that might or might not affect us in the future. Nonetheless, it is very important to ask these existential questions beforehand, for 'the time to address the ethical implications of this [genetic] technology is before we actually apply it' (Kirby, 2000:211). Especially since 'the possibilities of techno-scientific interference in biogenetic processes' are advancing in such a way that they inaugurate 'a sense of what we might call a lost bio-aura' (Stacey, 2010:179). This notion of lost bio-aura will be addressed shortly. For now it is important to stress that, although actual human cloning has not been implemented by science yet, the integrity of our traditional embodied subjectivity is nevertheless presently already highly compromised by 'the geneticization of the body' (Stacey: 2010:180). Stacey evokes the concept of the geneticized body in tandem with the 'the decade of the clone, marked by the completion of the Human Genome Project and the cloning of Dolly' in order to lay bare 'a profound disturbance to our previous modes of corporeal perception' (Stacey, 2010:180-181).

In line with this disturbance, a kind of 'genomic discourse' is indeed intimately informing and affecting our cultural imagination as well as our sense of self in a very palpable fashion. In this vein Stacey argues that something she terms 'the genetic imaginary' has entered into the fabrics of our lives – into our discourses, into our fictions, into our minds and even into our embodiments. Within this genetic imaginary several tangible tensions 'surrounding the reconfiguration of the boundaries of the human body, the transferability of its informational components, and the imitative potentialities of geneticized mode of embodiment' (Stacey, 2010:8) are played out. The genetic imaginary should be seen as a kind of *mise-en-scène*, which frames these fantastical yet substantial anxieties: 'a fantasy landscape inhabited by artificial bodies that disturb the conventional teleologies of gender, reproduction, racialization, and heterosexual kinship' (Stacey, 2010:8). In sum, the genetic imaginary, of which cloning is a prominent part, radically problematizes traditional teleologies of subjectivity. Moreover, Stacey argues that cinema and genetic

engineering – both seen as technologies of imitation – are intrinsically intertwined. This kinship should not only be discerned as a sort of homology, rather cinema and genetic engineering also function on a kindred ontological level. These imitation-technologies not only share a fundamental similarity based on common 'descent', they also share innate characteristics which define the very essence of their productive mechanisms. Both technologies, according to Stacey, 'inaugurate disturbances to our sense of place in the world, and our connectedness to people and things around us' (Stacey, 2010:7). She continues that the "genetic imaginary" spatializes the inner and outer limits of such disturbances' (Stacey, 2010:7). So cinema and genetic engineering as part of the genetic imaginary seem to both probe our sense of self by simultaneously disturbing and delineating our foundations of subjectivity.

Furthermore, Stacey argues that the imitative and elusive medium of cinema epitomizes an important shared quality with genetic engineering: 'it brings to life still images and, disguising its own artifice, invests them with a believable presence on the screen' (Stacey, 2010:7). This particular quality is of importance for her to show 'how the animation of cellular life at the genetic level is produced in the cinema at a moment where the mutability of the body coincides with the mutability of the image, in both cases threatening particular diachronic continuities' (Stacey, 2010:16). At this point we should return to the notion of 'lost bio-aura'. When she ventures into a chapter where she reworks Walter Benjamin's famous 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", Stacey further explains how the geneticized body and the cinema work on a kindred ontological level:

[...] its new modalities present a shock, arguably comparable to the ways in which, according to Benjamin, photographic and cinematic technologies of reproduction led to mediated human relationships to culture; and the geneticized body's fragmenting and disembodiment effects on the connections between sexuality and reproduction parallel the digital disturbance to the authenticity and integrity of the mechanical produced image. (Stacey, 2010:180)

The reason it is so fascinating that Stacey draws this ontological parallel between both technologies of reproduction, is the fact that 'the move from authentic singularity to artificial duplication' (Stacey, 2010:182) – which is applicable to both mechanisms – has severe consequences for maintaining a neatly unified sense of self. Stacey herself explains: 'Extending Benjamin's concept of the loss of aura to the domain of the geneticized body, we might think of the demise of bio-aura through the fading sense of the body's singularity, nonrepeatability, uniqueness, integrity, and authenticity' (Stacey, 2010:182). Hence, noting the continuities of cloning and cinema is of great relevance to this thesis, for this fading sense of previous notions of subjectivity due to the kindred technologies of imitation and/or reproduction is exactly the kind of dynamic which this project will investigate through evoking the cinematic figure of the clone – a figure that especially thrives within the film-genre of science fiction.

Science fiction has long been recognized as a genre that is particularly apt for allowing philosophical ideas to roam freely through the fictional simulations it creates, and 'to reflect on existential questions rarely encountered elsewhere' (Eberl, 2010:27). As we have seen, questions of subjectivity, identity, singularity and humanity seem to be poignantly probed by the trope of human cloning – a phenomenon that has been eagerly

appropriated in many filmic fictions. The variety in which the figure of the cinematic clone is imagined, is vast: the concept of human cloning has taken up many different forms over the course of the past few decades. From renegade replicants supposedly without memories and thus emotions (*Blade Runner* [Scott, 1982]), to the covered-up cloning of the remainder of humanity to ensure its survival (*Aeon Flux* [Kusama, 2005]), to organ back-ups not only restrained by a false consciousness but also endowed with false, prosthetic memories (*The Island* [Bay, 2005]), to muscular action-heroes who save their family, the world and their selves with the help of their cloned self (*The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* [Spottiswoode, 2000]), to an evil 'twin' with a differing traumatic background (*Star Trek: Nemesis* [Baird, 2002]), to resurrected heroines with alien DNA (*Alien: Resurrection* [Jeunet, 1997]), to cheap, cloned laborers on the moon (*Moon* [Jones, 2009]), to an intricate genetic identity performance to be able to pass as a genetically superior double (*Gattaca* [Niccol, 1997]) and even to fabricated Führers complete with duplicated socio-environmental conditions (*The Boys from Brazil* [Schaffner, 1978]). And this list only represents the cinematic tip of the cloning iceberg (see appendix for an extensive yet still incomplete list of film-titles).

The cinematic site itself has also become an arena where identity politics are played out and where a sense of self is being formed and reshaped: 'the body is made and remade in both science and cinema, with both the image world and the world of science engaged in the process of visual and narrative (re)constitution of subjectivity itself' (Bishop, 2011:353). Here we find a conclusion similar to the argument Stacey makes, one that adheres to the potential power which resides within the figure of the clone. The cinematic science fiction theme of cloning, of the double, of a simulated self, of a copy questioning the original's status, might be discerned as the ultimate 'posthuman' trope. It is a trope where apparent fixed identities and unique selves are virtually but nevertheless viscerally problematized, where the discourse on conventional subjectivity might get unraveled to its possible bare absence. A cinematic trope where we can reconfigure our sense of self, a discursive trope that might just give way to a posthuman conception of identity that does not inherently entail a singularity of embodied subjectivity to maintain a productive sense of self. Filmic texts that deal with this radical trope of cloning might thus be considered as philosophical and existential thought experiments on subjectivity – each engaging with different scenarios of encountering one's own self.

### **Paradigmatic Relationality & Prosthetic Memory**

If we explore the distinct logic which governs the construction of the cinematic figure of the clone, it seems to comprise a mechanism that especially problematizes the way in which embodied subjectivities enter into a *relation* with each other. The manner in which one individual relates to another individual (i.e. inter-subjectivity), or how one specific group relates to another group, determines the form and face of its existence to a large extent. To perhaps rephrase this statement rather bluntly: without darkness we would not have light, without the left we would not have the right, without the other we would not have the self. Identity and subjectivity are thus generally delineated by a normative relationship of self and other, by the discontinuities between subjects, as entities in opposition. However, the figure of the clone might entail a perverted inter-subjective relation that is rather based on a narcissistic affiliation of self and self, on ominous

continuity, formed out of radical sameness instead of differentiating otherness. Or, as Stacey elegantly terms this affiliation: the 'configuration of cloning as the embodiment of the relations of 'excessive sameness'' (Stacey, 2003:252). However, as we shall see, this problematic relation of excessive sameness manifests itself in the production of multiple differences. Furthermore, the subjective relations between individuals in terms of their spatial and temporal dimensions are also radically challenged by the figure of the clone. By duplicating or multiplying the body, these doubled entities as subjectivities of sameness start several new life paths within different spaces and/or times – a multiplicity of forks in the road of life is formed. Therefore, the clone can be seen as a figure that abolishes conventional relations that are based on a naturalized successive pattern. As a figure that thrives on perpetual seriality, it frees the individual from being inscribed in a finite, horizontal, syntagmatic structure. For the cloned body is overtly artificial – a construct and a copy – overthrowing the original body's privileged as well as 'natural' position and subjectivity. Hereby the clone but also the 'original' itself are placed within a potentially infinite, vertical, paradigmatic structure. In this state, it appears that seriality seen as endlessly repeating alternatives of the same, has replaced successiveness seen as a new generation elaborating upon the former one.

The figure of the clone thus flips the previous, normative 'relationality' upside down. The term relationality should in this respect be regarded as the particular logic that governs subjectivity and intersubjectivity. The paradigmatic relationality of cloning may very well hold the power to erase the syntagmatic relationality of the traditional sense of the self. This potentially endless relationship, which holds a perverted promise for eternal life because the cloned individual can be copied ad infinitum, savagely smears conventional subjectivity out to the point where we no longer can constitute our sense of self as unified and unique. If the same singular embodied subjectivity is perpetually reproduced through human cloning, that particular subjectivity now flows across a plenitude of embodiments that could exist within multiple spatio-temporal dimensions – diachronically as well as synchronically. It seems that through the figure of the clone our sense of self implodes precisely because this subjectivity expands exponentially. This is a dynamic that can also be found when the interconnected notions of 'time and space' are drawn into a 'black hole'. If we elaborate on this particular metaphor, the radical relationality of the cloned sense of self could in fact be delineated as essentially functioning like an actual black hole. This relationality amounts to being a nefarious nexus that simultaneously expands and compresses space and time, self and other – for within the continuum of cloning these oppositions are no longer tenable. However, up to now we have mainly discussed the relationality of *embodied* subjectivity, whereas subjectivity traditionally – according to Cartesian thought – encompasses more than just the physical sense of self. It encompasses a singular, embodied subjectivity which is unified through the act of *conscious awareness of the self*. So what kind of mutations does the figure of the clone possibly bring forth when we contemplate subjective consciousness? Here again we will encounter the mercurial nature of memory and its relation to identity.

The films that are mentioned in the precious section of this chapter only form a small fraction of the various cinematic fictions that deal with cloning or replication to some extent, as the list of seventy-seven 'cloning-films' in the appendix shows. What particularly fascinates me for my search of the reshaped sense of

self through the cinematic construction of human cloning, are clones that in some respect possess and are simultaneously 'possessed' by the mercurial memories of the lived experiences of their 'original': clones that are endowed with an actual prosthetic memory (Landsberg, 1995). As I stated in my introduction, by letting the cinematic figure of the clone enter Landsberg's particular thought experiment on identity, the radical effects of prosthetic memories on our perception of subjectivity might be brought to unprecedented extremes. The concept of a prosthesis readily connotes a certain logic of expansion and enlargement, but its infusion within the figure of the clone could stretch this particular logic to the point where it snaps into an inexhaustible logic of seriality. The term prosthetic memory itself was coined by Alison Landsberg in her article "Prosthetic Memory: *Total Recall & Blade Runner*" (1995) and she defines this posthuman concept as follows: 'By prosthetic memories I mean memories which do not come from a person's lived experience in any strict sense. These are implanted memories, and the unsettled boundaries between real and simulated ones are frequently accompanied by another disruption: of the human body, its flesh, its subjective autonomy' (Landsberg, 1995:175). Here already we can discern the potentially dislocating power memory holds over embodied subjectivity, as was touched upon in my introduction and which will be elaborated on shortly.

Landsberg's article starts with delineating the manner in which memory is constitutive of identity. First of all, we should note that the lived experiences we have and the memories we conceive of them, shape our subjectivity. Subsequently she argues that although memories might be radically divorced from the actual lived experience, they nevertheless do continue to motivate actions and construct identity (Landsberg, 1995:175). The idea that memories can be severed and extracted from one individual to be implanted into the next individual as a prosthesis, shows that our 'sacred' conscious awareness of ourselves – which is based on our experiences that make us who we are – is a very fragile and mutable construction. As Landsberg herself continues to explain:

We rely on our memories to validate our experiences. The experience of memory actually becomes the index of experience: if we have the memory, we must have had the experience it represents. [...] If memory is the precondition for identity or individuality – if what we claim as our memories defines who we are – then the idea of a prosthetic memory problematizes any conception of memory that posits it as essential, stable or organically grounded. In addition, it makes impossible the wish that a person owns her/his memories as inalienable property. (Landsberg, 1995:176)

Therefore, we could claim that the evocation of a prosthetic memory renders any conception of memory as inherently unstable and inessential, although memories in their precarious nature do very much structure the basis of our subjectivity. What does this tell us then about the nature of human subjectivity itself?

To shed a skeptical yet informative light on this question, we turn to the philosophy of David Hume. In his essay "Of Personal Identity" – a section of his larger *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Hume, 1783) – I recognize a kindred argument to the above mentioned claim of Landsberg. Within Hume's conception of personal identity, he stresses that the very notion of a 'constant and invariable' self and the idea that 'we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our self; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence' is intrinsically a *fictional* construction (Hume, 1783: bookI, part4, sect.6). I gather that, according

to Hume, we should therefore view our subjectivity as a 'fiction of the self' – one which is based on our ever-changing perceptions of our identity which on their part are based on the perceptions of our memories of our perceptions of ourselves. As Hume himself delineates this dynamic: 'a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement' (ibid.). So, his statement 'I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception' (ibid.) shows that subjectivity within this vein should be discerned as already being an imagined impression we carve out of our own perceptions. In a way, we could argue that Landsberg's prosthetic memory not only lays bare the unstable nature of memory itself, but also evocatively underlines the Humean idea that our personal identity has always been an inherent fictional assemblage.

If we now return to the coupling of human cloning and prosthetic memory, we can posit the following argument. When a clone 'receives' the prosthetic memory of the original, we can argue that the particular perception of identity of the original is transplanted as well, because memory is the precondition for individuality. Consequently we can conclude that the endowment of these prosthetic memories within the figure of the clone functions as a sort of conductor of consciousness, giving way to the formation of a 'continuity of consciousness'. Jason Eberl also comes to a similar conclusion: 'Cloning, as it is sometimes imagined in science fiction, takes the notion of continuity further. It promises progeny who share not just the complete genome and exact appearance of their progenitors, but also their consciousness and memories of lived experiences' (Eberl, 2010:28). Because of the endowment of prosthetic memories into a clone, not only does the body of the subject enter into a plural relationality, but likewise the mind is multiplied and continued, thus adhering to an inexhaustible logic of seriality. If we take memory to be one of the most foundational and formative aspects of identity and subjectivity however fictional they might be, the shared and collective implanted memories of the original – which are placed into the clone as a prosthesis – forge a continuous consciousness that flows through a multiplicity of embodied subjectivities. Consequently a profound modification of the aphorism 'cogito sum' can be made: 'we have thought, experienced and felt the same by means of prosthetic memories, therefore WE are'. A sort of 'fractalization of the self' will accordingly be set in motion, an important notion I will return to in chapter three.

For now it is important to note that discourses on conventional, Cartesian subjectivity based on uniqueness and singularity are most radically challenged when faced with an 'implosive' continuity of consciousness – formed by prosthetic memories and stemming from the 'configuration of cloning as the embodiment of the relations of 'excessive sameness'' (Stacey, 2003:252) – seen as a nefarious nexus that simultaneously expands and compresses the categories of self and other. The ways in which these relations of excessive sameness function on a cinematic level, will be discussed in the next chapters, when we critically explore some of the filmic texts that are to be regarded as thought experiments on the reconfigured subjectivity of the clone: *Moon*, *Alien: Resurrection* and *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*.

## Chapter 2: Continuous Consciousness in *Moon*

### **An A-grammatical Identification of 'I are You'**

Duncan Jones' debut-film *Moon* is a kind of thought experiment that intensely and intimately explores questions of subjectivity, identity, memory and humanity through the trope of human cloning. This film implicitly raises existential questions like: who are we, if we are not ourselves? Who are we, if we are already out there? Who are we, when we are immanently and inescapably faced with ourselves? Remarkably enough, *Moon* actually starts off by explicitly raising a question itself. For the very first shot of the film literally displays the ominous question: "Where are we now?" *Moon* thus immediately poses a self-reflexive thought experiment to its spectators – one that will turn out to radically challenge conventional notions of subjectivity based on uniqueness and singularity. Furthermore, this film places prosthetic memories firmly within the foundations of the cloned sense of the self. It even seem that these memories might be the key to how the cloned protagonists are able to affiliate with each other in a novel kind of subjective relationality.

In the first place *Moon* can be perceived as an ode to the monumental science fiction classic *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick, 1968). Like *2001*, *Moon* affectively touches upon existential questions within a science fiction scenario. In the film protagonist Sam Bell is stationed for a three year period on the far side of the moon in the not so distant future. His task is to singlehandedly, with only the company of benign computer pal GERTY (voiced by Kevin Spacey), manage the harvesting of moon-rocks that supply nearly seventy percent of the earth's energy consumption. However, Sam Bell is a clone. Actually he is one of many clones. He is 'a Xerox of a Xerox of a mimeograph of the original photograph' (Lehrer, 2008:89) of Sam Bell as it were. These clones were all bred to subsequently man the station after the previous one expired after three years, without ever knowing they were clones. A period of ghastly corporeal deterioration precedes their inescapable expiration. These shocking truths are, however, gradually revealed to the spectator, since the narration of the film restricts us to the knowledge the protagonist(s) have. Two weeks before the current Sam thinks he will be able to return home to 'his' wife and daughter on earth, he crashes while inspecting a harvester-machine that is malfunctioning. A new Sam is awakened – although the spectator, like both Sams themselves, initially does not know that it is a clone who has been awoken. Shortly after this new Sam finds his barely alive predecessor. What unfolds next is a moving, distressing, cynical and uncanny relationship between the two Sams, who at the end of the film wake up yet another Sam. The purpose of bringing this third clone to life, is using him as a proxy in their escape plan for the second clone. The last sequence of the film crosscuts the awakening of the third clone with the arrival of the supposed 'rescue' team, while the expiring Sam watches the second Sam being launched to earth and he exhales his last breath.

In *Moon*, the two clones that we follow for the duration of the film exist next to each other in a confined space and time. Because they are in such physical proximity to each other, the problematic of subjectivities entering into a paradigmatic relation might be raised to a higher level. For Sam Bell actually lives and converses with Sam Bell throughout a large part of the film, whereas other cinematic figures of the the clone usually do not encounter each other or only for a brief period of time. So the relation of Sam Bell

with Sam Bell is structured diachronically as well as synchronically. This close physical and temporal proximity of the clones prompts me to ponder over the question of how the sense of self is conceived of within the specific spatio-temporal construction of the relationality of the multiple Sam Bells in *Moon*. This construction comprises a complex framework that is already astutely alluded to within the explicit question the film poses as it commences: where (a place) are (a being in time) we (multiple subjectivities) now (a spatio-temporal unit)?

A key figure in understanding Sam's subjectivity as multiple and being formed out of a relation instead of being based on singularity, is GERTY. When the newly awoken Sam finds the expiring Sam and brings him back to the station, he adamantly demands of GERTY to know who this man is. GERTY responds by saying: "Sam Bell, we need him to get to the infirmary immediately" (TC:00:28:00). Because GERTY usually addresses Sam by stating his full name, the computer is actually answering that this man is Sam Bell, while hailing the other Sam simultaneously. This uncanny encounter repeats itself when the expiring Sam wakes up and a similar habitual exercise of language is displayed. He also demands to know of GERTY who the man in the recreation room is. The computer answers: "Sam Bell. You are Sam Bell" (TC:00:31:50). From the perspective of GERTY there is no difference in their subjectivities, even though there are two corporealities present. Out of these dialogues with the computer, an intelligent entity with a computational instead of embodied subjectivity, we can state that the subjectivity of Sam Bell has become not only multiple but also continuous. Perhaps another singular, unique human being would not address the clones in the same way. But precisely because GERTY himself is a subject who does not form his sense of self according to conventional conceptions of subjectivity, he is able to rationalize the existence of the clones as a fluid and a-grammatical identification of 'I are You'. Within this identification the I that is You, is literally plural. Therefore Sam's sense of self flows across multiple embodiments as water runs through multiple rivers and as life gushes through multiple forms; 'panta rhei' – subjectivity indeed flows when I are You.

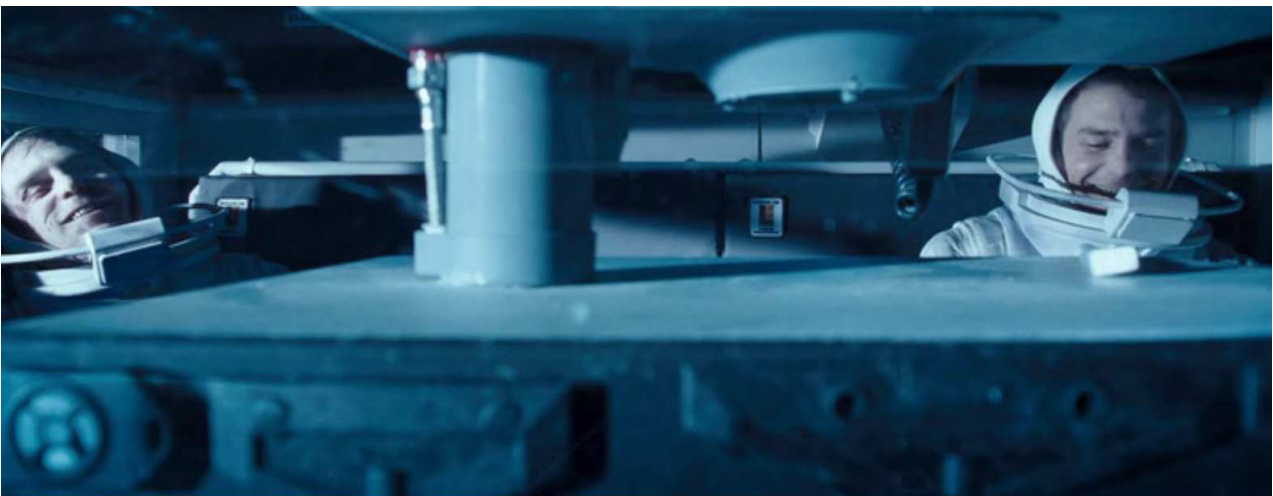


Figure 5: The Sams touchingly share their prosthetic memory of how they met their wife in *Moon* (TC:01:23:40).

Nevertheless, GERTY is not the only one who discerns the Sam in this particular way. Also the Sams themselves gradually accept their configuration as clones, seen as the embodiment of the relations of

'excessive sameness'. In the current experience of both Sams, the bigger trauma is the impossibility to unite with their loved ones instead of entering into a multiple, continuous subjectivity. This notion is beautifully underlined by a scene where the Sams sit in a moon-cart and together recall the moment they first met their wife (figure 5). Again the habitual use of language plays an important role. Both Sams easily switch between referring to themselves and the other by sometimes saying “you” and at other times expressing themselves with “I” in an intuitive fashion. This continuity of consciousness and thus of subjectivity – which is enabled through their mutual prosthetic memories – is also rendered visually in the mise-en-scène by the extensive scale model of the original's home town, on which all the previous Sam Bell clones build (figure 6). The expiring Sam comments upon this maquette by telling the newly awoken Sam that he cannot even remember building all of it, but still he conceives of it as his own, while continuing building on it fervently. These kinds of instances, which are subtly dispersed throughout the film, show that subjectivity has become continuous through multiple corporealities and that identity is not fixed anymore in the singular but flows across a paradigmatic relation.



Figure 6: Both Sams in front of their maquette that visualizes their continuous subjectivity in *Moon* (TC:00:45:33).

Yet *Moon* does not explicitly focus on the cloned elephant in the room, rather it sutures this reshaped and continuous subjectivity into the fabric of the characters in a naturalistic and intelligible way. The majority of the diegetic time focuses on the relationship of the two men. Their physical and temporal proximity allows the film to examine their day to day habits. Although the perimeters of the film are set through staging a fantastical narrative of cloning, the filmic text itself can be perceived as an investigation into their patterns of conduct. This film in a sense exhibits a philosophical and perhaps an anthropological thought experiment of how mundane, everyday interaction between clones could unfold itself and even how an uncanny friendship might be forged between two selves. The film is able to capture the everyday texture of their conduct in a Kafkaesque way, a quality that becomes of great relevance in chapter three. For now it is important to emphasize the film's specific tone, which endows this text with a certain uncanny banality. With a slow editing pace, a large part of the scenes merely comprises the two men participating in mundane activities: playing ping-pong (figure 1), arguing, building on the scale model, and reminiscing events their original experienced.

### **Discontinuous Continuity**

The clones thus seem to be accepting of this newly constructed subjectivity. They do not rebel against their paradigmatic relationship and do not perceive it as devouring; they appear to be rather in sync with one another. Nevertheless, it does not seem that each Sam Bell encompasses every single thing the other Sam Bell is – albeit they immanently are exact copies of each other. The little markers of these discontinuities within their continuity of subjectivity gain an even greater prominence as this film so explicitly focuses on their 'ordinary' conduct. Examples of these markers of difference within sameness are the facts that the newly awoken Sam cannot play the game of ping-pong or is not skilled at crafting together the pieces for the scale model while the expiring Sam is. Also slightly differing attitudes towards the uncanny situation they are in, hint at these disjunctions. Through their contrasting body languages, which are frequently juxtaposed within a single two-shot, and through the different intonations of their conversations, the discontinuities within their continuum of consciousness are made manifest. Perhaps these subtle filmic techniques tell us that we should not view the Sams as mere Xeroxes of Xeroxes of mimeographs of the original photograph of Sam Bell, but we should rather discern them as different temporal dimensions of one another as well, each one implying and simultaneously *supplementing* the other – a concept which will shortly be supplemented.

For now, let us focus on this notion of differing temporal dimensions of the self. This idea is manifested in the way that the characters are spatially positioned in relation to one another within the mise-en-scène. Most scenes where the clones are framed within a two-shot (see figure 1,5,6,7) the deteriorating Sam is positioned on the left of the screen, whereas the newly awoken Sam is placed on the right. Within the conventions of western languages, we are conditioned to read a sentence from left to right, so that whatever is stated on the left precedes what is stated on the right. In this sense the left of a visual composition immediately connotes the past and the right represents the present going towards the future. The deployment of a similar temporal and spatial logic could be ascribed to the characters of Sam Bell. However, this visualized spatio-temporal placement of the clones does connote a relationality that could be described as being based on the logic of a sentence – that is a syntagmatic, horizontal relation. This kind of relation I previously delineated as belonging to the conventional conception of subjectivity, based on uniqueness and singularity. Nevertheless, the two Sams can be perceived as being structured within a paradigmatic relationality too, for they are placed within a possible infinite structure of alternatives based on seriality and multiplicity.

This radical seriality is evocatively captured within the image of rows and rows of stocked Sam Bells, neatly set up to be awakened one day, while the expiring Sam stands left and the newly awoken Sam stands right (figure 7). So within this one and the same shot both kinds of relationalities are present. The temporal relation of the men – which is mostly visualized through the syntactic, spatial placement of left to right – is not only stressed by their figure placement but also by the dialogue. The latter clone asks the former clone: “Who goes first?” The decaying clone answers decisively “I go first” and descends into the hall of the clones (TC:01:06:19). Although the subjectivity of both subjects is conceptually structured as a paradigmatic relation, the visual language of the filmic text itself rearranges its protagonists by means of

deploying a syntagmatic logic. Hence, we can conclude that the particular model of subjectivity which is delineated by the trope of human cloning in *Moon*, does not fully comprise a radical identity that resides in a state of unbridled flux. This film rather reworks conventional models of subjectivity based on syntagmatic and unique singularity, problematizing and inherently complexifying the traditional sense of self on a paradigmatic axis. Nevertheless, this reshaped sense of self still remains very much structured indeed.



Figure 7: The Hall of Clones in *Moon* (TC:01:06:19).

When we are contemplating the discontinuities within the continuous subjectivity of Sam Bell, we should return to the way in which Landsberg conceptualizes the particular productiveness of memory. She states that contrary to popular opinion, memories are actually the domain of the present instead of belonging to the past (Landsberg, 1995:176). As was mentioned in my introduction, indeed 'a memory is only as real as the last time you remember it – the more you remember something, the less accurate the memory becomes' (Lehrer, 2008:85). Furthermore, 'the act of remembering also changes you' (Lehrer, 2008:84). Because every time you remember something, the memory of the lived experience itself gets altered by your act of remembering it. It thus makes you a slightly different person than before, every time you remember something. Here already we can discern a possible explanation for Sam Bell's excessive sameness that, remarkably enough, produces slight but indeed multiple differences.

To conceptualize memory in this particular sense, the different memories we have, should be seen as highly productive and formative moments. That is because the act of remembering could be delineated as the current experience of a perception of past experiences within the present – a retrospective as well a present-day experience that prompts us in such a fashion to act a certain way in the future. Landsberg also comes to a similar conclusion:

Surprisingly enough, memories are less about validating or authenticating the past than they are about organizing the present and constructing strategies with which one might imagine a livable future. Memory [...] is not a means for closure – is not a strategy for closing or finishing the past – but on the contrary, *memory emerges as a generative force*, a force which propels us not backward but forwards. (Landsberg, 1995:176 – emphasis added)

If we now return to the particular construction of memory of the Sam Bells, we can remark that their discontinuity in the continuity of their consciousness stems from the fact that their memories are a mixture of prosthetic and 'genuine' memories. The nature of this mixture of memories should not be interpreted as too self-evident. The discontinuities in their kindred identity are not merely propelled by the different lived experiences they have had after being awakened as identical clones, they can also be attributed to their differing recollections of their perceptions of their past experiences within the present. Every time a new and 'genuine' experience slightly changes one or both of the Sam Bells, their way of remembering their prosthetic memories also alters, resulting in the production of increasingly more subtle variations within their different embodiments of the same continuous subjectivity. To elaborate on this already convoluted statement within a Humean vein: not only their way of remembering their prosthetic and genuine memories changes, which readily fosters their discontinuous continuity of consciousness. Their perceptions of their fictional selves, which are based on the perception of their mercurial memories, get modified too. So by multiplying their embodied subjectivities, these doubled entities as subjectivities of sameness not only start several new life paths, forming a multiplicity of forks in the road. This mixture of memories also engenders a multitude of little different Sam's at different moments, which together comprise the larger fluid yet fictional and a-grammatical identification of I are You.

Up to now the spatio-temporal relationality of the Sam Bells has been discerned through consideration of the concepts of paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures as well as the notions of discontinuity within continuity. However, yet another kind of affiliation between the clones should be emphasized. At this point we shall return to the notion of clones as supplementing each other. In this line of thought we may turn to what Debora Battaglia calls 'the replication problematic':

What happens when a human being doubles by design and *the self presents itself as supplement to the self*. At base here is a notion of supplement as something that supplies, or makes apparent, insufficiencies. The supplement of new knowledge, for example, shows the limitations and strengths of prior knowledge with which it interacts. Supplementation, in this sense, is a process of new knowledge acting upon prior, never total or sufficient, knowledge, and in consequence placing the stability of the latter at risk, for better or worse. As such, supplementation is elemental to social exchange. (Battaglia, 2001:496 – emphasis added)

Battaglia argues with this claim that 'feature film replicants and clones are corporealizations of the supplement's capacity to destabilize the social paradigms and self-knowledge of their creators' (Battaglia, 2001:496). What I particularly am interested in for my analysis of *Moon* and the search of the self through the cinematic figure of the clone is not the insufficiencies of the creators or originals the supplement might highlight. Instead I will focus on the destabilization of the social paradigms pertaining to conventional subjectivity this specific supplementing relation might bring forth. By perceiving clones as supplements to each other, the new paradigmatic relations on which multiple subjectivities are based, might not just entail devouring relations of 'excessive sameness', but perhaps they give way to a more productive and vigorous conception of simulated, continuous subjectivities. The next chapter will delineate a certain manner in which the cinematic figure of the clone can specifically be seen as a productive supplement to its own sense of self.

### Chapter 3: *Moon* Continued through Cavell

#### **Remarriage of the Self**

In the train of thought pertaining to the productive supplementation of the self through cloning, we might take a theoretical detour to the dimension of thought of 'moral perfectionism' as prompted by Stanley Cavell in his book *Cities of Words: Pedagogical Letters on a Register of the Moral Life* (2004). This entails an essential detour which will shed a new light on the complex spatio-temporal construction of the relationality of the multiple Sam Bells via an ethical lens. As we shall see, this theoretical framework presents us with the inherent 'split in the human self' that engenders Cavell's important notion of 'the unattained but attainable self'. This is a particular conception of the self that in a way should be seen as a self which also supplements the self within an ongoing process. A dialectical process akin to the one Battaglia refers to as 'new knowledge acting upon prior, never total or sufficient, knowledge' in respect to her delineation of the clone. Within this specific theoretical schema, which can be designated as the philosophical discipline of 'film ethics', this chapter will place the figure of the clone in *Moon* on a different but kindred level of discernment.

As I stressed in my previous chapter, I consider *Moon* to be a work that touches upon existential questions with a certain vigorous force of affect. Furthermore, this elegant film forms a curious exception within the vast range of cloning movies. This 'status aparte' stems from the fact that the film does not explicitly focus on 'the front-page moral dilemmas' the theme of cloning can bring forth. *Moon* should rather be considered as a philosophical and perhaps anthropological thought experiment concerning how mundane, everyday interaction between clones could possibly unfold itself and even how an uncanny friendship might be forged between the two selves. In a sense this film might be perceived as giving an alternative to the Cavellian 'remarriage' of 'the principle pair'. This principle pair forms an important notion in Cavell's conception of how the outlook of moral perfectionism relates to his 'comedies of remarriage' genre. In these comedies of remarriage an older couple who are working themselves through a crises, function as each other's helpmate to make each other intelligible to the world as well as to one another, within a continuous process. However, in *Moon* the two protagonists, who have to come to terms with each other and make each other intelligible, are in fact each other's clones. Therefore, it could be argued that *Moon* exhibits a kind of *remarriage of the self* – a narrative that potentially stretches or supplements some of the key concepts of moral perfectionism, like the friend or helpmate and the unattained but attainable self. Furthermore, these clones – possibly forming a perverted version of the principle pair – might be seen as traversing the different stages of Plato's myth of Er, the myth of reincarnation, as reworked by Cavell. But before we venture into these claims with respect to our analysis of *Moon*, a closer look at Cavell's intricate and complex body of thought is needed.

#### **A Split in the Human Self**

From the beginning of *Cities of Words*, Cavell stresses the importance of thinking through the notion of a doubled world. A world in which the human being regards his existence from two standpoints (Cavell,

2004:1): in Kantian terms as belonging to the world of sense and as belonging to the intelligible world. According to Cavell, in addition to Immanuel Kant, thinkers such as John Locke, Henrik Ibsen, Sigmund Freud, Plato and most importantly Ralph Waldo Emerson also 'respond to some such insight of *a split in the human self*, of human nature as divided or double' (Cavell, 2004:1 – emphasis added). Within this notion of human nature as divided or double we can already discern a philosophical similarity with the discourse on human cloning. By invoking this philosophical notion of a split in the human self, Cavell takes his reader on a journey into a dimension of thought which he terms 'moral perfectionism'. He does this by putting the work of Emerson first – a body of thought which is, in Cavell's opinion, very much under-appreciated. Cavell claims that Emerson refused to break up philosophy into separate fields Therefore he inherently incorporated the field of ethics, seen as the practice of studying morality, into one and the same philosophical discipline (Cavell, 2004:3). In putting Emerson first, Cavell gives an account of 'the moral life' which 'is not constituted solely by consideration of isolated judgments of striking moral and political problems' (Cavell, 2004:16). Or to paraphrase: the moral life is not constituted solely by what Cavell calls front-page moral dilemmas. Rather it should be considered as being 'a life whose texture is a weave of cares and commitments in which one is bound to become lost and to need the friendly and credible words of others in order to find one's way' (Cavell, 2004:16). A way of gaining insight into this weave of cares and commitments that the moral life comprises, is by reflecting on our patterns of conduct. For, according to Cavell, morality is expressed and actualized by the *everyday*. Here already we can discern an explicit link with the manner in which *Moon* approaches and investigates its protagonists. But first the intricate relation of film and ethics needs to be investigated in greater depths.

Within Cavell's conception, the medium of film is especially apt to seize the texture of the mundane habits which disclose our morality. Because 'film, the latest of the great arts, shows philosophy to be the often invisible accompaniment of the ordinary lives that film is so apt to capture' (Cavell, 2004:6). The way in which the Cavellian discipline of film ethics functions is a complex process and needs to be broken down to its different parts to be fully comprehended. First of all we need to recognize that ethics itself is the practice of studying morality. Morality in turn could be describes as a culturally specific set of values and norms – where some values are said to be 'universal', whereas norms rarely are. Therefore, Cavell stresses the importance of the everyday in his conception of ethics. For morality is actualized by the patters of our casual conduct. This is the point where cinema gains its prominence, because this medium is able to capture the everyday texture of such conduct like no other. However, the way in which film captures this texture already comprises an investigative reflection itself. If we would paraphrase this dynamic, we could state that in practicing film ethics we are in a sense contributing to a 'reflexive' investigation – an investigation of an investigation into morality. So to sum it all up: if ethics is the philosophical practice of reflecting on morality seen as a culturally specific set of values and norms, film ethics could be discerned as the reflexive endeavor of reflecting on a cinematic way of investigating the actuality of our moral habits.

Because of this reflexive dynamic, moral perfectionism as well as the discipline of film ethics do not focus on front-page moral dilemmas. Rather the issues raised within these complementary dimensions of

thought concern themselves with 'the difficulty of overcoming a certain moral cynicism [...]. The issues the principle pair [...] confront each other with are formulated less well by questions concerning what they ought to do, [...] than by the question of how they shall live their lives, what kind of persons they aspire to be' (Cavell, 2004:11). In asking these kinds of questions lies the importance for Cavell: 'This aspect or moment of morality – in which a crisis forces an examination of one's life that calls for a transformation or reorienting of it – is the province of what I emphasize as moral perfectionism' (Cavell, 2004:11). Not the crisis itself, or the front-page moral dilemma, is indicative of our morality, but the everyday manner in which we deal with the aftermath of this moment is. Here we should return to the split in the human self. The way in which this notion pertains to the outlook of moral perfectionism, is addressed by Cavell in the following passage:

The very conception of *a divided self and a doubled world*, providing a perspective of judgment upon the world as it is, measured against the world as it may be, tends to express disappointment with the world as it is, as the scene of human activity and prospects, and perhaps to lodge the demand or desire for a reform or transfiguration of the world. So common is this pattern of disappointment and desire [...] that I think of it as the moral calling of philosophy, and name it moral perfectionism, a register of the moral life that precedes, or intervenes in, the specification of the moral theories which define the particular bases of moral judgments of particular acts or projects or characters as right or wrong, good or bad. (Cavell, 2004:2 – emphasis added)

Cavell calls upon this conception of a divided self and a doubled world to delineate a fundamental schism within the self and within the world, which immanently prompts us as human beings to re-consider and re-evaluate each and every step we take in our meandering journey that is called life. As we will see, this is a process that is to be re-iterated – again and again. In Cavell's own words: '[the conception of a divided self and a doubled world] provides a position from which the present state of human existence can be judged and a future state achieved' (Cavell, 2004:2). Therefore, I reckon, this dimension of thought is called moral perfectionism and therefore Cavell explicitly sets it against any idea of ultimate perfection (Cavell, 2004:3). Inasmuch as this constant re-assessment of self and world is perpetually re-iterated, before as well as after every single step we take in the erratic walk of life. According to Cavell, 'there is no question of reaching a final state of the soul but only and endlessly taking the next step to what Emerson calls “an unattained but attainable self” – a self that is always and never ours – a step that turns us not from bad to good, or wrong to right, but from confusion and constriction toward self-knowledge and sociability' (Cavell, 2004:13). In this sense moral perfectionism should be seen as the water running under the bridge that is erected by the two moral pillars of 'deontology' and 'teleology'. The former branch of ethics is motivated by duty, assesses human action beforehand, takes the notion of the right as fundamental and is associated with Kantianism. The latter doctrine is informed by utility, assesses human action afterwards, takes the notion of the good as fundamental and is associated with utilitarianism (Cavell, 2004:9). Important to note is that Cavell does not conceive of moral perfectionism as an alternative to Kantianism or utilitarianism, rather he sees it as emphasizing that particular aspect of moral choice that has to do with being true to oneself (Cavell, 2004:11).

In his article “The Good of Film” (2005) – a text which is derived from a lecture and which can be

seen as a previous and condensed version of his book *Cities of Words* – Cavell seems to succinctly capture the core of moral perfectionism. He describes Emersonian perfectionism as 'being true to oneself, or [...] the caring of the self, hence with a dissatisfaction, sometimes despair, with the self as it stands; [...] a progress of self-cultivation and with the presence of a friend of some kind whose words have the power to help you guide the progress' (Cavell, 2005:336). Here again we encounter this notion of being true to oneself, which is closely tied to the Romantic idea of 'becoming who you are'. Although this quote is rather brief, considering Cavell's elaborate linguistic usage, it still retains a certain esoteric quality. For how does this progress of self-cultivation with the presence of a friend unfold? How do you become the one you are? A passage in which Cavell explains two dominating themes of moral perfectionism, is illuminating in this respect:

The first theme is that the human self – confined by itself, aspiring towards itself – is always becoming, as on a journey, always particularly in a further state. This journey is described as education or cultivation. [...] The second dominating theme is that the other to whom I can use the words I discover in which to express myself is the Friend – a figure that may occur as the goal of the journey but also as its instigation and accompaniment. Any moral outlook – systematically asserting the value of human existence – will accord weight to the value of friendship. But only perfectionism, as I understand it, places so absolute a value on this relationship. (Cavell, 2004:26-27)

This quote shows that the split in the human self engenders a sense of self which is both confined by itself and at the same time aspires towards itself. Furthermore, this aspiring towards the self finds its shape with the aid of the other, the figure of the friend or sometimes referred to as the helpmate – a figure we will now take a closer look at.

Because the human self, according to Cavell in following Emerson, is unattained but attainable, we strive with each step we take in our life's journey of education to become who we are. But although we might attain ourselves a bit more with every step, we already have another unattained self who we aspire to become. This dialectic is the ongoing process of being true to oneself. Therefore there will and must always be an inherent split in the human self, so the self can be both unattained but attainable. Nevertheless, in this continuous process we need 'the figure of a friend' to decide which steps to take and how to take them in the walk of life. Cavell aligns this figure of the friend, among others, with the Kantian notion of speaking with an universal voice (Cavell, 2004:31). This friend seems to appear in many different forms, ranging from this transcendental universal voice, to the concrete figure of the helpmate as spouse – in the comedies of remarriage – to 'the sage in each of us, that without which one cannot become the one one is' (Cavell, 2005:344). Because the friend stands besides us, resides within us and hovers above us, it is a figure that may occur as the goal of the journey but also as its instigation and its accompaniment. The moral perfectionist journey of the unattained but attainable self can thus be described as follows:

The measure of direction, or progress, is not assured by a beacon from afar, or [by] a moral compass, but rather pointed to by what Emerson figures as *a gleam of light over an inner landscape*, and which concretely is guided, and tested, by whether the next step of the self is one that takes its cue from the torment, the sickness, the strangeness, the exile, the disappointment, the boredom, the restlessness, that I have claimed are the terms in which [...] the modern subject [is portrayed.] By a step that "takes it cue" from these conditions I do not mean one that attempts to escape them, but one

that judges the degree to which these conditions must be borne and may be turned [...] constructively, productively, sociably. This puts tremendous weight on one's judgment, critically including one's judgment of who's judgment is to be listened to most attentively. (Cavell, 2004:329 – emphasis added)

Returning to *Moon*, we can wonder how this intricate Cavellian construction of the self is delineated within the character of Sam Bell. For who's judgment should be listened to most attentively, when the presence of friendship in the film I analyze comprises a clone – a doubled version of yourself, perhaps even representing your *attained* self of a sort? It might be possible to perceive the multiple Sams as a literal materialization of the split in the human self, constituting an unattained as well as an attainable self. Because if this holds true, this materialization of the split would in effect endow the latter clone the role of an attained self of the former clone, whereas this former clone functions as the gleam of light over the latter one's inner landscape. Seen in this light we could perhaps read *Moon* as exhibiting a scenario where the unattained and the attainable self are both synchronically present, instead of the usual diachronic structuring of these selves. Therefore, the next section will elaborate on what happens if the one you become stands right in front of you, physically attainable within your reach.

### **Encountering the Unattained and Attainable Self**

As we have seen, Cavell starts his intricate conception of moral perfectionism in *Cities of Words* with the notion of a split in the human self, although this notion itself not a radical new insight. As Cavell himself mentions, many thinkers have entertained this kind of philosophical conception. However, the split in the human self has also been a pervasive image within the cultural 'imaginary'. The reason I find the prominent place of the notion of a split in the human self in Cavell's book so fascinating, is that this notion in my opinion immediately prompts the thought experiment of encountering one's own clone. As we have seen through the work of Stacey, the figure of the clone, the double, an alternative self, is a sort of mental picture that already intimately informs and affects our cultural imagination and sense of self in a very palpable fashion. Functioning within this genetic imaginary, how does the cinematic figure of the clone in *Moon* incorporate or perhaps even problematize the notion of a split in the human self which generates the unattained but attainable self? For, as I stated before, *Moon* could be seen as a filmic text that presents us with a scenario where an alternative of the attained self – a self which should have remained unattained to become attainable – is literally materialized. If we go back to the inherent quality of the science fiction genre which allows philosophical ideas to roam freely through the fictional simulations it creates 'to reflect on existential questions rarely encountered elsewhere' (Eberl, 2010:27), we can establish a link with the way Cavell discerns certain filmic genres. In a similar vein he argues that the genre of the 'remarriage comedy bears a relation to horror movies in view of their both featuring the idea of the transformation of self and the world' (Cavell, 2005:346). Strictly speaking *Moon* is neither a horror movie nor a remarriage comedy for that matter. However, a similar kind of strategy can be found within this film and so Cavell's argument could be extended to include science fiction movies. Either way, this kind of existential inquiry, pertaining to ideas of

transformation of self and the world, is touched upon in *Moon* by invoking the figure of the clone. The existential questions I prompted at the beginning of chapter two, can therefore now be rephrased as follows: who are we, if we are not ourselves? Who will we be, if we are already out there? Who should we aspire to be when we are immanently faced with ourselves? Who will become the one you are?

But before we move into the unattained but attainable self, we need to recapitulate some of the claims I made in the previous chapter. We have seen that *Moon* does not explicitly focus on the cloned elephant in the room. Rather, the film sutures this radical relationality into the fabric of the characters in a intuitive and intelligible manner. So instead of fixating on the front-page moral dilemma's that could be generated by the trope of cloning on the level of the diegesis, this filmic text places an immense emphasis on the unnervingly mundane, habitual interaction between the two clones and their transformation. The two Sams intimately exist next to each other in a confined space-time. Because of this the film is able to examine their day to day habits and the filmic text itself could be perceived as a subdued investigation into the patterns of conduct of the two men. Therefore, by closely discerning this everyday texture we could embark on practicing a film ethical analysis: the reflection on an cinematic way of investigating the actuality of moral habits captured on film.

As we have seen in my analysis of a number of scenes from *Moon*, the habitual use of language plays a pivotal role in delineating the reshaped sense of self present in the Sam Bell clones. Again GERTY is a key figure in understanding how Sam's subjectivity should be seen as multiple and being formed out of a relation instead of being based on singularity. However, this time around this understanding pertains to the *split* in Sam's sense of self. In the habitual way GERTY addresses Sam we can recognize that the materialized split in the human self of Sam Bell actually has become common for GERTY. As I stated before: there seems to be no differentiation within the two selves, even though there are two corporealities present. Because GERTY himself is an entity who does not have a conventional sense of self, he is able to rationalize the relationality of the clones as a fluid and a-grammatical identification of 'I are the one You become'. But also the Sams seem to be discerning each other in this particular manner. The Sams gradually accept, through their habitual interaction with each other, their configuration as clones seen as the materialized split in the human self. For both Sams the bigger trauma is the impossibility to be united with their loved ones instead of engaging with each other as perhaps different incarnations or versions of their unattained but attainable selves – where the latter clone could be perceived as the attained self of the former clone who is present within the same space and time.

The behavior of the clones is telling in this respect. Although the previous Sam is rapidly decaying and aware of his oncoming demise, he does not cease to take further steps in his walk of life; he continues in his mundane activities and he helps the newly awoken Sam to escape to earth. Perhaps his particular mixture of prosthetic and 'genuine' memories propels him forward to keep acting within the fluid identification of I are the one You become. Furthermore, because we could discern the latter clone as the materialization of the attained self the former clone is himself unable to attain, the former Sam functions as the corporealization of 'the gleam of light over the inner landscape' (Cavell, 2004:329) of the latter Sam Bell. Or to rephrase: the

second Sam stands before the first Sam as the synchronically materialized attained version of the self for the first, whereas the first Sam stands before the second Sam as the 'friend' which guides him to become the one you are. In this sense the former and latter clone might be considered as different *reincarnations* of the very same split in the self, where the previous clone is the helpmate for the subsequent clone, who is the attained self of the former one but who remains unattained but attainable for himself. An intricate 'fractalization' of the unattained but attainable self is thus set in motion; an attained self is added, which for its part also comprises a further unattained but attainable self where simultaneously the self functions as helpmate in the remarriage of the self.

A passage from the chapter on Plato, in which Cavell addresses the Myth or Er, the myth of metempsychosis (reincarnation), seems illuminating when it comes to considering *Moon* in this fractalizing respect:

the earlier books of *The Republic* [assess] rewards and punishments not in a future life but “in this one life.” But seen as *a series of unpredictable incarnations* (where a mistaken choice may be repeated for an unlimited number of lifetimes), it is no longer clear that what we live is “one life” rather than *a sequence of lives, as discontinuous as they are continuous*. [...]remembering enough to consider that we are already living a future life, reincarnating one past but open to one present, already possessed of the fact, if not the shape, of our immortality, such as it is. That we are the *successors of ourselves* (in our “journey from here to there and back again,”), and not necessarily succeeding in a given order or direction [...], is a reasonable figure of the perfectionist life, seizing crises of revelation, good or bad, clear or confused, as chances of transformation. (Cavell, 2004:337 – emphasis added)

Perhaps this Cavellian reinterpretation of the Myth of Er can be discerned as a kind of precursor to the fractalization of the unattained but attainable and attained self – a fractalization set on by the configuration of cloning seen as the materialized split in the human self. To return to Battaglia's notion of the clone as a self that supplements the self, we can note that the fractalization of the unattained but attainable and attained self is in a way 'something that supplies, or makes apparent, insufficiencies' (Battaglia, 2001:496) as well. But here the supplementation process of new knowledge acting upon prior, never total or sufficient, knowledge also adds a dimension. For the insufficient, prior knowledge seen as the former unattainable self simultaneously functions as the materialized 'sage in each of us without which one cannot become the one one is' (Cavell, 2005:344) and thus inherently but also literally supplies the supplement. Whereas Battaglia places a 'negative' focus on the supplement seen as 'the replication problematic', my Cavellian reworking of supplementation through different reincarnations of the same places a 'positive' focus on the fractalizing and paradigmatic qualities of the cinematic figure of the clone. So indeed, by perceiving the clones as supplements to each other's unattained but attainable and attained selves, the new paradigmatic relations on which multiple subjectivities are based do not entail devouring relations of 'excessive sameness' in this particular case, but give way to a productive and vigorous conception of simulated, continuous subjectivities. A true remarriage of the self seems to unfold itself – a remarriage that is not only a means to overcome skepticism as a mode of thought in general, as Cavell argues his conception of moral perfectionism tries to accomplish, but perhaps also the skeptical disposition of Hume's account of personal identity. For within my

Cavellian conception of the relation of self to self, the inherently fictional and unstable nature of identity engenders a rather productive and vigorous dynamic of subjectivity. Or, at least, these conclusions can be drawn within the thought experiment that the filmic construction of *Moon* presents us with.

Before we end this analysis of *Moon*, we return for a moment to the beginning: to the scene where Sam Bell 'technically' – if we discern the film's chronology according to the information the plot disperses – encounters himself for the very first time. As was argued in the introduction, this ominous sequence should be conceived of as a 'vision'. A vision is a complex mode of cinematic narration which is quite distinct from the more common forms of chronological disruptions within the plot like flashbacks, flashforwards and dreams – even though these modes also inform the vision for an important part. If we trace the broader function of the vision, this esoteric phenomenon could in a way be seen as referring to 'the abstract'. Understood within a religious context, this state should be discerned as 'a thought, a religious belief, which is [...] rendered visually' (Copier, 2009:206). When a vision is delineated in such a manner, we can argue that visions reveal a kind of abstract 'truth': a grander conception of things that adheres to the overall structure of the thought at hand. Furthermore, a cinematic vision in particular problematizes chronological, syntagmatic time in a radical manner. To quote Copier: 'the uncertainty of the temporal reality experienced during a vision provokes questions with regard to the status of the beginning and the end [...]. The vision disrupts notions of linear time and, consequently, the unfolding of narrative. Time can be imagined as a loop, moving from past to present to future but [...] not necessarily in that order' (Copier, 2009:206). This intricate manner in which a vision problematizes conventional notions of temporal relationality already hints at some of the key arguments I have made when it comes to how the sense of self is conceived of within the specific spatio-temporal construction of the relationality of the multiple Sam Bells in *Moon*.

We can argue that most of the important themes regarding *Moon's* figure of the clone are already present within this brief cinematic vision. It is salient that within this scene the particular left/right composition of the clones is readily present – a composition that conceptually renders the subjectivity of both subjects as being structured by a paradigmatic relation, while the visual language rearranges its protagonists by means of a syntagmatic logic. This spatio-temporal left/right distribution is a sort of 'mise en abyme' which is paralleled by the Droste effect of the looping logic of a vision within a memory within a dream. Continuing within this spiral of thought, it seems that this vision can also be discerned as a quite literal envisioning of the configuration of the clone as being a materialized instance of the unattained but attainable self. For the 'older' incarnation of Sam, who is positioned on the left side of the frame, reaches out to the 'newer' incarnation of Sam on the right – in effect almost physically attaining but never actually obtaining his attainable self (figure 4). The dialectical process of becoming who you are in the remarriage of the self is thus effectively and uncannily envisioned. However, the fact that this metaphorical envisioning is presented to us, the viewers, in a dream-like state which appeared to be located within a mercurial memory already strongly testifies to the complex spatio-temporal construction that is the reshaped subjectivity of Sam Bell. Furthermore, the vision within a memory within a dream simultaneously alludes to the notion of the fractalization in the unattained but attainable and attained self, which occurs when the self and thus also the

inherent split in the human self is cloned. In my opinion Sam's vision of his future encounter with his former but continuous incarnation beautifully underlines while simultaneously enhancing the cloning thought experiment of *Moon*.

Nevertheless, all the conclusions of the past two chapters are only based on one single filmic text that deals with the radical trope of human cloning. As we have seen, there are many more different cinematic scenarios that deal with encountering one's own self out there to probe within the genetic imaginary. And since filmic texts that incorporate this cloning trope can be considered as philosophical and existential thought experiments on subjectivity, a critical delineation of a reshaped sense of self is not yet complete at this point. The fact that this particular cinematic figure of the clone engenders a rather 'positive' conception of continuous subjectivity, might be an exception. Other texts seem to delineate a more devouring 'configuration of cloning as the embodiment of the relations of excessive sameness', which possibly entices a dismantlement instead of a remarriage of the other self. Therefore, these Cavellian conclusions are only one part of the cloning continuum. The paradigmatic structures which shape cloned subjectivities should be further explored. This thesis will continue the delineation of the cinematic figure of the clone with two more filmic texts which feature a clone as their protagonist: *Alien: Resurrection* and *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*.

### Chapter 4: Continuous Corporality in *Alien: Resurrection*

An interesting and potentially diametrically different envisioning of the cinematic thought experiment of encountering one's own clone can be found within the filmic text of *Alien: Resurrection*. This film presents us with an inversion of some of the mechanisms that were applicable to the cloned sense of self in *Moon*. Whereas *Moon* could be said to delineate a certain discontinuous continuity of subjectivity, this film should be seen as rather prompting a kind of continuous discontinuity of the sense of self. Therefore, the analysis of this text will refine the previous arguments that have been made in relation to the concept of continuous consciousness. Whereas *Moon* investigated existential questions of cloned identity from a subdued and mundane vantage point, this particular film deploys a rather violent touch when it comes to raising its philosophical questions pertaining to notions of impure corporality, impure seriality and impure cloning. Through embarking on the thought experiment of *Alien: Resurrection* we can wonder what might happen when the configuration of the clone as the embodiment of the relations of 'excessive sameness' is a *hybrid*. What will happen if something is added to the copy that supposedly forms a continuation of consciousness, perhaps making it one of many different new, unique 'originals'? How do these cloned bodies and their subjectivities therefore relate to each other? In a sense *Alien: Resurrection* might be discerned as modifying the excessive sameness of cloning into a locus of excessive difference; a sort of sameness across species hybridization. Moreover, this film raises issues of gendered corporality within the figure of the clone – as opposed to *Moon*, where sexual difference seems to be neatly cast away to the sterile background.

In *Alien: Resurrection*, the heroine of the previous trilogy (*Alien* [Scott, 1979], *Aliens* [Cameron, 1986] and *Alien3* [Fincher, 1992]) Lieutenant Ellen Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) is resurrected from the dead by malignant scientists from 'the Company' to bring forth the alien queen that resided inside her body when she valiantly committed suicide at the end of *Alien3*. By cloning the deceased Ripley, the company is able to harvest the infant queen from her chest. However, by cloning a human body that was 'impregnated' with an alien life form, the DNA of the two different entities have merged into one during the process of genetic engineering. This intertwining of the DNA-strands holds true for the composition of Ripley's corporality as well as for that of the alien queen. The Ripley-clone has become a chimera that comprises a human surface with alien depths, whereas the reproductive system of the alien queen has been radically altered. In such a way that the queen will actually give birth to her offspring directly for the first time, instead of the 'usual' monstrous reproductive practice of the species where the queen lays a seemingly endless series of hatching eggs which bring forth the well-known 'facehuggers' of the series, who on their turn impregnate a random host body out of which the 'chestbuster' erupts.

As this description of the reproductive system of the alien-race unequivocally shows, the *Alien* *Quadrilogy* must be firmly placed within the specific tradition of the *body-horror*-genre. This is an abject (Kristeva, 1982) genre which is characterized by its explicit exploitation of the body's horrific and sensational qualities (Clover, 1987:189) and by its 'excessive' nature (Williams, 1991:3-4). Perhaps within the corporeal construction of the cloned Lieutenant Ellen Ripley we can find another configuration of the

cinematic clone that will illuminate a different side of the cloning continuum. One scene in particular unveils how the 'hybrid-clone-body' relates to its different incarnations of hybridity. Therefore, instead of an entire film-analysis, this chapter will take on the form of an extensive scene-analysis. As we will see, the embodied subjectivity of the hybrid-clone comprises a relationality which is delineated within a rather volatile and devouring paradigmatic structure instead of the more vigorous and productive relationality which *Moon* foregrounds. The particular scene I will analyze, has a prominent place within the text, exactly in the dead middle of the film. This placement within the greater narrative is salient for it constitutes perhaps the most important transformation in respect to the self of the protagonist. Prior to this scene, the Ripley-clone is not explicitly informed about the corporeal riddle she is. She does, however, intuitively feel that she is of a different composition than she was before her resurrection. Nevertheless, this scene irrevocably brings her face to face with herself. Through encountering her previous paradigmatic incarnations, she almost traumatically gains a new sense of self – which she subsequently negates forcefully.

The scene begins by 'gazing' at the Ripley-clone through a 'fetishized shot'. In this way the spectator is explicitly cued that an investigation into her constructed corporality will take place. As the camera slowly tracks the back of her body from the legs up, we are placed up close to her tough and exalted exterior. In a sense her body is fragmentized, for we are not permitted a shot where we can view her entire entity; she is broken down into her separate body parts in such a way that we can discern her design thoroughly. Her body is simultaneously spectacularized because of the theatricality in which her fragmented physique is displayed. This fetishized mode of presenting the body is a common procedure for rendering the female form in cinema, although it is certainly not unproblematic. Judith Butler has intricately argued in her book *Gender Trouble* (1990) that not only the gender of a subject should be perceived as an inherently cultural construct, also the categories of biological sex to which a subject belongs are far from being 'natural'. In this way Butler made the tumultuous claim that biological sex too is utterly produced by hegemonic discourses, which has had deep-rooted consequences for thinking about the nature of identity and the formation of the sense of self. Furthermore, psychoanalytic feminist theory has shown that especially cinematic renderings of femininity are affected by, and in a sense lay bare, the mechanisms of these cultural constructs. On the flip side, masculinity usually still retains an aura of naturalness, albeit this aura comprises a fallacious appearance.

Amongst these gendered – and therefore discursive – cinematic mechanisms is the kind of fetishized shot *Alien: Resurrection* makes use of in this scene. However, this particular shot even complexities this convoluted gender trouble a bit further in my opinion. For the spectacular fragmentation of the Ripley-clone not only shows femininity to be a construct on the level of gender as well as on the level of biological sex. It also reveals the notion of *corporality* itself to be an inherently manufactured and discursive creation, a notion which is generally valued as innate – especially when it comes to embodied subjectivity. In the remainder of this scene, the corporeal integrity of the Cartesian sense of self will be severely stretched. The Ripley-clone discovers why she has the number 8 etched into her skin, the sign for infinity. She will stumble upon the seven previous failed clones that paved the way for her 'successful' corporeal construction. By framing the Ripley-clone within the diegetic frame of the glass in the door that will unlock her predecessors – the

numbers 1-7 are inscribed on her face and mirrored in her eyes – it is made implicit that all the previous clones are very much part of her own breathing being (figure 8). Perhaps the manner in which this filmic text renders the figure of the clone, shows that cloning not only gives way to a continuation of consciousness, as we have seen in the analysis of *Moon*, but it also potentially fosters a sort of 'continuous corporality' – a continuity that does not engender a productive but rather a destructive relationality between different incarnations of the self.



Figure 8: The paradigmatic predecessors are inscribed into Ripley's corporality in *Alien: Resurrection* (TC:00:51:05).

Moreover, whereas the continuous consciousness of *Moon* formed a destabilizing factor for conventional subjectivity on a mental level, this capricious continuous corporality of *Alien: Resurrection* brings forth a dreadful disruption of bodily subjectivity on a visceral and physical level. Traditional conceptions of subjectivity not only rely on a unity and singularity of the mind, but also of the body. In *Moon* the reshaped subjectivity that flowed across a continuum of consciousness ('I are You') still remained neatly packed away in separate corporeal entities in the form of the several Sam Bells, who could be seen as different temporal dimensions of each other and as incarnations in different stages of 'becoming the one you are'. Because the Sam Bell clones should be seen as supplements to each other's unattained but attainable and attained selves, they are able to retain a certain corporeal integrity – one that in a way still alludes to a sense of 'bio-aura', as conceptualized by Stacey. As we will see, the same cannot be argued for the Ripley-clone. We could say that in *Alien: Resurrection* an almost nuclear loss of bio-aura, seen as 'the move from authentic singularity to artificial duplication' (Stacey, 2010:182), is envisioned precisely because of Ripley's continuous corporality – making her intimate physical affiliation with her predecessors an inherently pessimistic one.

To come back to the inscription of all the previous clones into Ripley's breathing being, it is important to note that Stacey too remarks upon this significant 'incorporealization'. It is a radical inscription which reveals a novel reflexive relation between the clones: 'A close-up shot from inside the room back through the glass, showing Ripley's face with the numbers one to seven in reverse across her forehead, indicates the distant trace of an ancestral memory of her shared genetic inheritance with the previous clones' (Stacey, 2003:256). It is salient how Stacey phrases this particular statement, especially because she adds the mercurial notion of memory to the mix. In my opinion Ripley's ancestral memory of her shared genetic inheritance with the previous clones does not pertain to a sort of shared prosthetic memory per se, which

would engender a continuity of consciousness. Rather this particular memory should be viewed as a 'corporeal remembrance'; an *anamnesis* in the full sense of the word. Anamnesis in this case should connote both its philosophical, Platonic meaning of the recollection of the Ideas which the soul had known in a previous existence as well as its biological meaning in immunology: the memory of cells when encountering a previous encountered antigen. When a corporeal remembrance seen as anamnesis is delineated in such a fashion, we could state that this kind of memory essentially operates as an 'unforgetting' of a sort: a literal undoing of a process of forgetting. Therefore, by encountering the previous incarnations of herself, the bodily memory of the Ripley-clone gets rekindled and jolts the nuclear loss of bio-aura: at this point the previous existence of the cloned corporealities forcefully collides into her embodied sense of self.

If we now take a step back, we can ponder over the particular corporeal construction that is the cloned hybrid. In *Alien: Resurrection*, cloning is not only a radical means to enter into an infinite, paradigmatic structure as the number 8 connotes. As we have seen, it also means incorporating multiple and radically different forms and subjectivities into one and the same body. Stacey comes to a similar conclusion: 'Ripley as transgenic clone embodies not only the relation of original to copy but, simultaneously, the relation of human body to alien monster' (Stacey, 2003:253). Ripley's sleek and slimy costume already connotes an alien physique, enlarging her shoulders and thereby resonating H.R. Giger's alien construct – the late Swiss surrealist painter who designed the alien for the film's franchise. Her predator-like gestures and glistening skin highlight this 'alienness'. However, this alien-clone-body is molded into a still somewhat 'human' form, recognizable as the heroic and self-sacrificial lieutenant Ellen Ripley of the trilogy. But this appearance is just a surface. It comprises a thin layer that veils her permeable and malleable constructed corporality.



Figure 9: Ripley is cinematically merged with one of her degraded counterparts in *Alien: Resurrection* (TC:00:52:23).

The way this volatile body is actually organized, gets revealed by her intimate relation to the 'failed' clones set up in monumental cryotubes – monstrous predecessors, in every stage of development ranging from fetuses to adults, that are immanently part of her existential anatomy. Grotesque eyes and mouths sprout out of incongruous body parts which are covered with alien skin (figure 2). Again by framing Ripley's face through glass – this time a cryotube containing one of her degraded counterparts – her physique is intrinsically linked to these abominable clones (figure 9). Again, the glass functions as a mirror which

unveils her chimeralike bodily construction for what it is: a continuous, capricious corporality configured as distorted and excessive sameness. With regard to the cryotubes, Stacey postulates a kindred argument and comments upon Ripley's habitual interaction with her monstrous 'pre-incarnations':

These transparent storage columns are spaced intermittently throughout the room, requiring Ripley to move amongst her predecessors as she slowly takes in the shocking visual evidence of her own prehistory. Physical proximity is indicative of her genetic connection, underscored by gestures of touch Ripley's hand touches the glass of the test tube containers as she passes, giving a visual sign of her empathy with her ancestors. [...] This gallery of genetically engineered monsters shows the spectacle of failed recombinant DNA. As a combination of Ripley and the alien, they are transgenic clones whose half-human half-alien status takes the visual shape of corporeal distortion. (Stacey, 2003:257)

In a way the particular cinematic configuration of cloned subjectivity and corporality in *Alien: Resurrection* connotes the notion of 'the one is multiple' instead of 'the multiple are one', as one could describe the relationality in *Moon*. As I stated before, the subjectivity of Sam Bell could be seen as a sense of self that is smeared out across different incarnations – the relationality of the clones as a fluid identification of 'I are the one You become'. However, in *Alien: Resurrection*, a sort of reversal of these subjectivity-reshaping mechanisms are set in motion. The different incarnations of the self are reflected, inscribed, mirrored, recollected and remembered upon/into one and the same volatile corporality – modifying the configuration of cloning as excessive sameness into a delineation of the cloned hybrid body as an explosive locus of excessive difference and of nuclear loss of bio-aura. These volatile pre-incarnations function far from the same as the vigorous reincarnations of the unattainable but attainable and attained self of Sam Bell. Moreover, whereas the continuous consciousness of *Moon* engendered an implosion of Cartesian subjectivity by stretching out the conscious awareness of the self, the continuous corporality of *Alien: Resurrection* collapses this singular and unified embodied subjectivity by scattering it across various deviant embodiments. The conceptions of continuous consciousness and continuous corporality could thus be seen as two different dynamics of the same black hole that is the continuum of cloning: a nefarious nexus that simultaneously expands and compresses space and time, self and other.

Towards the end of the scene, an actual scattering mirroring occurs, when Ripley finds number 7. This 'unlucky' clone is still alive, despite her agonizing state. Because this clone is given a human face – Ripley's human face – the 'unnatural' paradigmatic linkage becomes painfully clear. Although the eight clones are not exact mirror images of each other – all in different states, shapes and sizes – each of their bodies directly implies the other, accordingly with all its horrific continuous corporality. But in a way, it seems that within this particular configuration of the cinematic figure of the clone, there is only room for one actualized embodiment which encompasses a multiplicity of corporality. When the two clone-bodies, the 'successful' clone-construct and the degenerate clone-body, are faced with each other, number 7 pleads number 8 to kill her – in effect also asking the successful Ripley-clone to kill the paradigmatic linkage that structures her reshaped sense of self (figure 10&11). Number 8, overwhelmed with emotion, incinerates all of the clone-bodies with a flamethrower in a fashion that is reminiscent of the inferno at the end of *Alien3*. This was

the memorable scene where Ripley heroically sacrificed herself to expel the alien queen that resided in her body – a conscious and courageous act which made her into a full-fledged female martyr. But this time around the alien is not merely inside her body, it is intrinsically and immanently part of her body as well as of her corporeal remembrance – as are the clones that overtly unveil her bodily construct. Her hybridized continuous corporality now devours her from within her very own cells, for the loss of bio-aura radically hacks the last pieces of her human existence away. The only way for Ripley to win back some of her former humanity is to perform a perverted act of self-sacrifice.

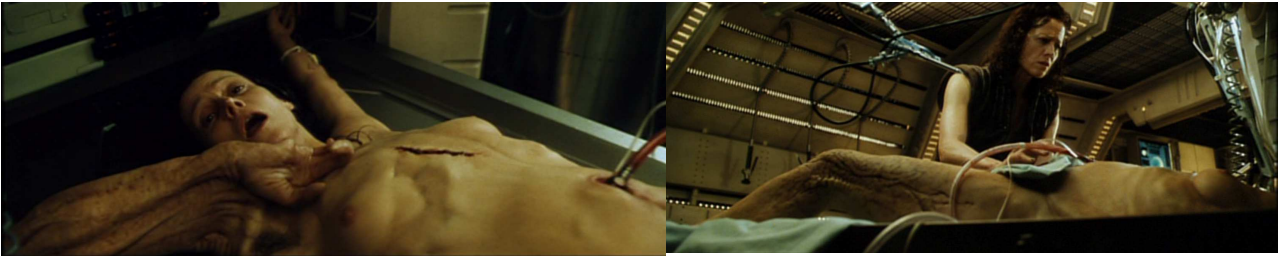


Figure 10: Kill me i.e. kill us in *Alien: Resurrection* (TC:00:53:05). Figure 11: No.8 faces no.7 in *Alien: Resurrection* (TC:00:53:14).

Once upon a time the bodies of Ripley and the alien were in a syntagmatic relationship, now their corporality is paradigmatically structured. This new paradigmatic relationship entails multiple subjectivities which are molded into a singular corporeality that simultaneously connotes and memorializes a multitude of constructed bodies. By expelling her multiple embodiments that reveal her relations of 'excessive sameness', the hybrid Ripley-clone seems to defy this new type of subjectivity: she radically dismantles this new devouring paradigmatic structure that incarnates her from within for it threatens a by now fallacious syntagmatic structure that veils her humanoid surface. To keep this surface intact, she eradicates her new subjectivity and thus herself. This inferno in *Alien: Resurrection* is not a valiant, sacrificial suicide anymore to preserve human kind. Rather this conflagration is instigated to preserve her own humanity in vain, making it an utterly self-effacing and self-destructive act. It is an act that devours her reshaped subjectivity because it is delineated as a petrifying paradigmatic relation (figure 12). It is a suicidal act instead of a true act of martyrdom.

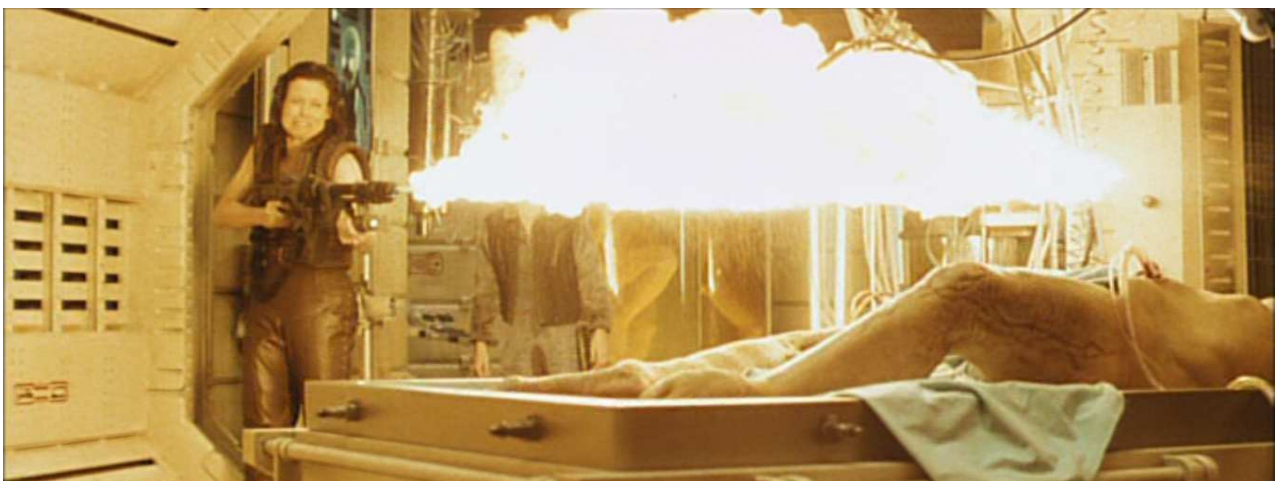


Figure 12: The inferno of devouring paradigmatic subjectivity in *Alien: Resurrection* (TC:00:53:46).

Nevertheless, the Ripley-clone is not able to escape her new bodily identity: even if the actual predecessors are now destroyed, her continuous corporeal construction continues to exist through the anamnesis of her physicality. The undoing of a process of forgetting cannot be undone, what is unforgotten remains remembered. Therefore this particular figure of the cinematic clone is a gruesomely destructive and dejected one instead of a productive and vigorous one.

Up to now, we have considered two very distinct and utterly contrasting cinematic figures of the clone as the embodiment of the relations of 'excessive sameness', as represented by the Sam Bell clones and the hybrid Ripley-clone. These two figures can be seen as occupying the extreme ends of the cloning continuum by delineating it with their respective continuous consciousness and continuous corporality. But this philosophical thought experiment on the malleability of our sense of self through the cinematic trope of human cloning encompasses more than sketching out a mere dichotomy. Therefore, this binary will be balance out with the analysis of a third filmic component. *Moon* and *Alien: Resurrection* both embraced the radical reshaping of subjectivity human cloning brings forth by suturing this novel structure of identity into the particular cinematic languages they each deploy, although they differ greatly in their respective productive and destructive conceptualizations of the cloned sense of self. However, as was stated in my introduction, the film we will now turn to actually tries to restore a former, more conventional conception of subjectivity by discerning the practice of cloning as a 'simple' continuation of the syntax of our lives. Moreover, *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* forces this outdated sense of self onto the novel, reshaped structures of subjectivity. But this will turn out to be in vain – for it denies the metamorphic consequences of human cloning for the constitution of identity. Within this denial, we can nevertheless find an interesting ideological resolution of a sort for the existential questions that have been raised by our first two case-studies. Therefore, the third cinematic figure of the clone in *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* is able to make this project more intelligible and critical, as it gives way to a kind of dialectical analysis of the cloning dynamic.

## Chapter 5: Continuous Life / Discontinuous Memory in *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*

### **The Syntax of Existence Prolonged**

This thesis has shown that the potentially endless serial relationship of self to self, which fosters a perverted promise for eternal life because the cloned individual can be multiplied ad infinitum, usually smears conventional subjectivity out to the point where we no longer can constitute our identity as unified and unique. However, in *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*, the conception of the sense of self seems to comprise a certain integrity that in a debased way still adheres to a more traditional notion of subjectivity. The manner in which the Cartesian sense of self is delineated – namely as a singular, embodied subjectivity unified through the act of conscious awareness of the self – remains largely intact. Within this filmic text cloning is presented as a method for escaping 'death', understood as the final ending to the syntagmatic course of life: when you die, you get cloned, you continue to live on and the syntax of your existence is accordingly prolonged. Or, as the film's evil antagonist himself dramatically states: “We will finally be able to *conquer* death” (TC:01:32:38). Death is thus conquered through cloning; a potentially radical refashioning of what it means to be human. However, the horizontal structure on which traditional human subjectivity is based, is merely extended through the practice of human cloning, rather than being overthrown by letting subjectivity abundantly flow across a paradigmatic relationality. Within this cinematic scenario the syntagmatic logic of subjectivity is thus still adhered to – although the figure of the clone does radically advance the problematic of prosthetic memories and their validity for forming as well as maintaining the same identity through different subsequent embodiments. The 'status quo' of the configuration of cloning in *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* is delineated as a successive and diachronic pattern, as the name “Replacement Technologies” connotes – the company which executes the process of genetic engineering and cloning. Ideally within the film's diegetic world, one clone replaces the other when the former incarnation perishes. However, the event that disturbs the status quo of this generic action movie and sets its three act structure in motion, is the fact that the protagonist accidentally gets cloned while his original is still alive.

Before we can turn to these arguments, a synopsis and a characterization of *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* is in order. Adam Gibson (Arnold Schwarzenegger) – a loving husband and father who works for an adventure-charter business – is supposed to fly an important client named Michael Drucker (Tony Goldwyn) to his snowboarding getaway. However, the sudden death of the family pet, a dog named Oliver, upsets the planned sequence of events. Adam's wife summons him to go to the RePet company and immediately get their favorite canine 'replaced' before their daughter ever knows Oliver died. At first Adam tries to protest the cloning of their dog. He tells his wife: “It's the natural process of life. You're born, you live and you die. She has to learn about that” (TC:00:10:25). However, there is no arguing with Misses Gibson and Adam agrees to take a look at the cloning store. Adam's partner Hank Morgan (Michael Rapaport) therefore takes his place as the pilot for the illustrious businessman Drucker – a man who owns popular sports teams as well as two genetic engineering companies: RePet and Replacement Technologies. However, Drucker's office is not informed about this replacement. Furthermore, Adam has already taken the mandatory 'drug test': a sample of

his blood has been taken and an alleged eye test is included (figure 13). However, these tests in fact amount to the ingredients necessary for cloning a human being: a piece of DNA and a 'syncord' – a prosthetic memory generating technology which will shortly be elaborated on. A chaotic and succinct sequence, which seems to comprise an ambiguous flashback or memory that is being played in fast-forward mode, follows these events. The fragmentary images show Hank, impersonating Adam, arriving with Drucker at the snowboard-piste. Suddenly a deranged man draws a gun. The audience is left to guess what happens when a point-of-view shot of the weapon firing gets dissolved into a visual of aberrant cells scattering across a black screen. The next thing we see is Adam waking up in a cab at the RePet store, highly disoriented. Later on the spectator and Adam himself realize that our protagonist in this very instance has been cloned. What unfolds next is a dazzling action spectacle where Adam tries to return to his family and get rid of the evil mastermind Drucker – the man who not only cloned Adam, but also himself several times along with many others.

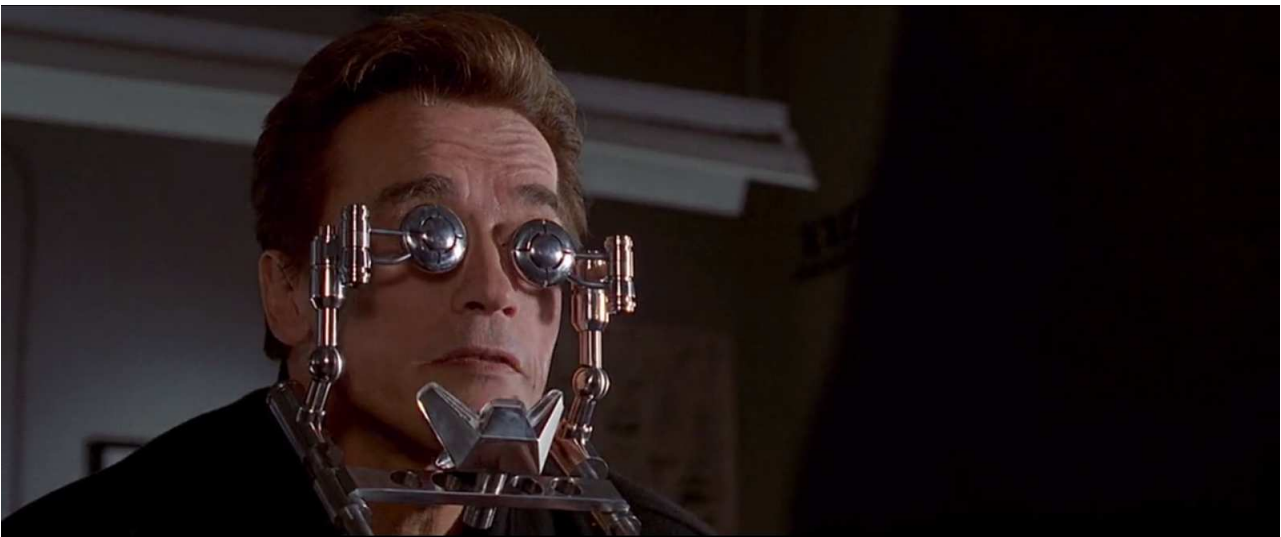


Figure 13: Adam Gibson's memory gets extracted through the process of 'syncording' in *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* (TC:00:15:22).

Although *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* amounts to a genre flick, which in this case serves as an action-orientated Schwarzenegger vehicle, the plot itself is rather intricate. The presentation of the dense story information to its viewers is quite convoluted, as my description of the film's exposition already shows. The majority of the narration is restricted to the hero of the film, who is thus unknowingly cloned and whose memory gets tampered with in the process. Furthermore, Adam is apparently part of a large scale conspiracy to cover up Drucker extensive implementation of the banned practice of human cloning. Adam is initially unaware of all these twists and turns, which complicates matters even further when it comes to piecing together this narrative puzzle. We can argue that this action flick shares some elements with the genre of 'the mind-game film', as conceptualized by Thomas Elsaesser in his article "The Mind-Game Film" (2009). Elsaesser's broader description of this particular genre comprises two levels, which can be combined within one film: 'there are films in which a character is being played games with, without knowing it or without knowing who it is that is playing these (often very cruel and even deadly) games with him [...]. Then, there are films where it is the audience that is played games with, because certain crucial information is withheld or ambiguously presented' (Elsaesser, 2009:14). Although Elsaesser does not mention *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* in particular, I do think that

this filmic text can be seen as partially working on both these levels. The most obvious mind-game marker takes place within the final stage of the plot. It is the moment when a pivotal piece of plot information gets revealed to the spectator and the protagonist himself: the hero we have been following and identifying with for the duration of the film, turns out to be the *clone* instead of the original – a true plot twist which casts the entire film up to that point into a different light.

However, one could argue that already within the 'title sequence' the essence of the thought experiment of *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* is astutely envisioned. Generally a title sequence can be considered as an extremely dense 'emblem' of the larger film itself. According to Georg Stanitzek 'the title sequence comes into being as an eminent space of cinematic intermediality' and is 'one of the most complex of cinematic forms' (Stanitzek, 2009:45-46). 'The title sequence does not necessarily compel you to pay attention. However, it focuses on the situation of distractedness and diverging expectations, namely, in providing a focus that allows for a transition into the movie' (Stanitzek, 2009:44) These sequences are thus specifically designed to lead up to and foreshadow the film to come – often in a metaphorical, allegorical and paradigmatic way that does not abide to the strict rules of classic, syntagmatic narrative. A title sequence can therefore be discerned as 'a miniature experimental film' (Stanitzek, 2009:50) that stands in its own right, as it offers an artistic 'mini-meta-reading' of the impending text. If we read the title sequence of *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* according to this particular view, the most important issue this film raises, is readily present in this 'prologue'.

The title sequence of *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* recapitulates the legislative and technical advancement of genetic engineering and human cloning. When it ends, the text situates itself "In the near future, sooner than you think" (TC:00:01:53) by typing this sentence across the first genuine shot of the film. This ominous and direct temporal positioning should entice a certain feeling of imminence within its spectator: the previous statements and visualizations directly adhere to the very real prospect of human cloning – not only within the diegetic world that is about to unfold itself, but also within our own daily reality. The graphics of the title sequence display deviant and radical cells multiplying through a fractalizing pattern, while fragments of science reports and news coverages posit the current state of cloning-affairs.



Figure 14: The credits for the film-title of *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* (TC:00:01:43).

A sheep named Dolly has been cloned, the Human Genome Project has been completed, anti-cloning protests have taken place, the human cloning experiment has 'failed' and the court ordered the clone to be destroyed, after which 'the sixth day law' has passed: human cloning is banned. Even though this statement is explicitly communicated through the words on the screen, the parallel editing – which simultaneously shows visuals of deviant cells running amok – implies that humans nevertheless are being readily cloned. The image that is evoked after this cloning history lesson as the film-title itself is shown (figure 14), poignantly emits a specific discourse on genetic engineering: the fragile sacredness of human life dependent on mortality for its existence – here envisioned by an embryonic fetus – is utterly endangered by the frantic mitosis of the aberrant cloned cells that lurk beneath its womb. However, the cloned embryonic fetus, although being threatened by the mitosis, could also be seen as simultaneously restraining this volatile cellular division. For the radically multiplying cloned cells which could foster a disruptive paradigmatic structure of subjectivity should be contained by a more 'conservative' singular structure of identity which is located within the prolongation of the syntax of life – a crystallization of the film's discursive message that will shortly be elaborated on.

Although the evocative image of the film-title itself is quite sophisticated, the cinematic language of the rest of the film should be read according to the conventional rules that govern this kind of text: a Hollywood action blockbuster. In this sense, the filmic techniques that are deployed to entice a certain kind of signifying effect within its spectators, are not always as subtle. For example, the manner in which our protagonist, who is about to be cloned, is introduced to us signals the theme of the film very explicitly. One could even say the film lays it on too thick. The scene begins with an over-the-shoulder shot of Adam, who extensively examines his own reflection in the mirror while saying: “Do I look any different to you?” (TC:00:04:23). Seen from a diegetic level within the narrative, this introduction makes sense: he asks his wife this question on the morning of his birthday as he looks for additional wrinkles which tell his age. However, if we discern this instance at the level of the filmic text itself – seen as a signifying, cultural construct – this scene rather bluntly introduces the theme of cloning by way of framing its protagonist within the duplicating mirror and contrasting this with the question of difference. Furthermore, the habitual use of a certain kind of wordplay within the dialogues refer to the ambiguous multiplied nature of our hero. The phrase “You had me cloned” is an example of this. This phrase is uttered by Adam, when he encounters Drucker. Semantically it works both ways. The sentence could refer to the fact that the original at this instance is stating a clone has been made from his own cells. However, this utterance could also reveal the fact that it is the clone who is speaking. The latter conclusion is the correct one, although at this point Adam and the audience still believes that he is the original.

Furthermore, the diegetic world is riddled with deviant subjectivities which do not comprise the traditional Cartesian sense of self. So-called Sim-Pals – life-like dolls who are programmed to be play-mates – and holograms of attorneys, girlfriends as well as psychotherapists populate the narrative. Additionally, the film's editing techniques straightforwardly visualize the process of multiplication. When an establishing shot of the city is shown, the frames on the screen hectically multiply (figure 15). This kind of transitional editing

repeats itself a number of times. Also our protagonist's job should be understood as metaphorically alluding to the multiplication that is about to take place, and to the problematic of prosthetic memories. Adam is a pilot at “the Double X Charter” company, sometimes spelled as “XX Charter”. It's all in the name. His work entails that he flies a chopper – a clear intertextual reference to Schwarzenegger's famous action-oeuvre – from a distance within another chopper by operating it through a prosthesis. At times he races with himself, while he has no control over the chopper he physically resides in. This displacement of lived experience and the supposedly incongruent perception of this experience, manifests the idea that we indeed might be possessed by the memories of lived experiences instead of possessing them ourselves. At this point we should return to the particular manner in which the film envisions its prosthetic memory within the practice of syncording.



Figure 15: Multiplying edit in *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* (TC:00:31:26).

A syncord is described as an “exact picture of your mind”. The eyes function as the gateway to the brain and accordingly to all of its stored memories (figure 13). The extracted syncord can be downloaded into a cloned embodiment, therefore 'cloning' the identity of the genetic subject too by giving it the prosthetic memories of the original and engendering a continuation of subjectivity – although this continuation does not foster a continuous consciousness, for there is only one embodiment present that is possessed by this particular prosthetic memory at a time. Or, at least, that should ideally be the case. Furthermore, the syncord itself can be seen as a kind of transient and temporal snapshot of the original's memory. The syncord only records the memories which are stored at the exact time of the syncording. The memories of the lived experiences that follow after this moment are not included. The syncording thus needs to be updated regularly if one wants its subsequent clone to actually remain part of the same syntax of existence. Moreover, there seems to be room to tamper with the prosthetic memory in the moment between the extraction and the implementation of the syncord. As Landsberg notes, the concept of a prosthetic memory 'makes impossible the wish that a person owns her/his memories as inalienable property' (Landsberg, 1995:176). This notion is radically enforced by the manner in which *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* conceptualizes memory as an easily extractable, re-

mixable and implantable syncord – albeit the memories of a particular person are not exchanged between different individuals or should not be implanted within two or more alternatives of the same subjectivity at the same time. We could argue that *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* comments upon the notion that also our memories can be 'tagged, extracted, transferred, reprogrammed, and recombined' within the genetic imaginary, just as Stacey argued that 'our cells are now thoroughly codifiable as genetic information' (Stacey, 2010:179). In addition, on a narrative meta-level, we can state that the fragmentary and a-synchronic dispersion of the plot information throughout the course of the film symbolically doubles the mechanism of the film's particular form of prosthetic memory. The fact that through the practice of syncording our memories have become just as codifiable as our cells have thus also seems applicable to the overall narrative structure of *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*.

So not only our genetic information – which engenders the particular embodiments our subjectivity resides in – have become mercurial and malleable. But memory too, seen as our building blocks for identity, has become inherently open for *external* manipulation. Because of what was stated in this thesis' previous chapters, we are astutely aware of the fact that every act of remembrance changes you. However, that particular change was prompted from within. In *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* the changeability of our memories comes from without and is even homicidal. The manner in which memory gets tampered with is not only achieved through sterile remixing of the syncord itself, but by the act of killing too. For death is no longer the final ending to the syntagmatic course of life. A cloned embodiment is expendable and therefore a perished clone is effortlessly replaced. Accordingly, killing and subsequently cloning people to redirect and thus control their memories has become a routine business within the world of *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*. Eberl also comments upon the gloom manner in which the film delineates memory, death and cloning: 'The transfer of conscious experience is starkly depicted in *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*: A clone possesses even the memory of its progenitor's death. The memory sometimes manifests itself in psychosomatic symptoms: the clone of someone who was run over by two cars feels tightness in his chest, almost as if, were he to open his shirt, he would expect to see tire tracks' (Eberl, 2010:31). At this point we return to the sacredness of human life that depends on mortality for its existence. Although the film does seem to touch upon the majority of existential questions that can be tapped into by the trope of human cloning, as we have seen in this chapter's previous paragraphs, *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* nevertheless only breezes lightly over these intricate topics. Because the text deploys a generic film-language adhering to Hollywood's conventions, *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* does not intrinsically problematize these problematics. It merely utilizes the surface of these philosophical issues as filmic genre-traits. The real existential challenge of this film can be found within its particular delineation of humanness and mortality, which can be critically investigated through the notion of lost bio-aura.

### **Nostalgia for Bio-Aura**

Returning to the discursive message the title sequence emanates, the following passage from Stacey's chapter on the reworked concept of Benjamin's 'aura' captures the heart of the most intriguing existential question the thought experiment of *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* generates:

If the word “aura” can be understood as an affective and present relational connection between bodies and artifacts, bio-aura might be thought of as a sense of the transmission of humanness based on genealogical, integrated, and unmediated vitality. As successful imitations of human reproductive life, genetic engineering and cloning threaten the previous sense of humanness located within a particular intergenerational capacity for generation, simultaneously able to initiate new life and to avoid or postpone death. *The threats to bio-aura posed by genetic engineering and cloning concern the potential for technical manipulation of the cycles of life and death – scrambling generations and toying with immortality.* (Stacey, 2010:183 – emphasis added)

The sacredness of life and the distinctiveness of the human – which are guarded by the normative cycles of life and death – are utterly challenged by the perverted promise of eternal life the trope of human cloning engenders within *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*. This notion is explicitly alluded to within the film's narrative when Adam tells his wife about 'the natural process of life', which should comprise a person being born, living and dying. Instead the process of the cloned life now comprises a serial assemblage of living, dying, living again, dying again and living again – possibly ad infinitum. The previous cycles of life, which are productive and progressive by means of their circular nature, have been refashioned into a never-ending linear trajectory that remains static and lethargic. Furthermore, Stacey argues that 'genetic engineering threatens to taint human reproduction with a loss of authenticity, transforming our perception of the life-giving processes of the human body into a set of scientific techniques in which the promise of life is haunted by a deathly presence' (Stacey, 2010:183). And this deathly presence is certainly present within this text's conception of immortality. Therefore, the text raises 'interesting questions regarding the role *mortality* plays in human nature' (Eberl, 2010:29 – original emphasis). Nevertheless, it seems that in conquering death by merely *replacing* the previous embodiment with a new one instead of *supplementing* multiple embodied subjectivities simultaneously, this film's figure of the clone – while indeed highly manipulating the cycles of life and death – does not overthrow the singularity of embodied subjectivity so it can no longer form the foundations of modern subjecthood as they once did. In a conservative way, the cloned subject remains strikingly singular: neither its corporality nor its consciousness becomes continuous. The figure of the clone in *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* is not able to productively engender novel ways of conceiving what constitutes our cloned sense of self. But perhaps the physical encounter of the two Adams within the film's final stage will change this stark and fallacious singularity.

For now we should stress that the reason why the practice cloning within this text is dangerous and aberrant does not stem from a multiplication of the paradigmatic identity-structures. Its treacherousness can be precisely located within the erratic elongation of the more conventional *syntagmatic* identity-structures. As I stated in chapter four, *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* tries to force an outdated sense of self onto the logic of cloned subjectivity, although in vain – for it denies the metamorphic consequences of human cloning for the constitution of identity. However, within this denial, an interesting ideological negation of the existential questions that have been raised by our previous case-studies can be traced. This dismissal could be described as a 'fascist' denial of a sort, akin to the fascist endeavor of restoring the artwork's lost aura in the age of mechanical reproduction – as some have designated that essentialist undertaking. In envisioning the figure of the clone as a means to secure the continuation of the same syntax of life, *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* tries to restore the bio-

aura of normative embodied singularity, which threatens to be abolished by the truly radical paradigmatic relationality a cloned subjectivity could foster. For as we have seen within the first two case-studies, the cinematic figure of the clone does have the ontological power to affectively reconfigure the Cartesian sense of self. This is a power which amounts to the abolishment of bio-aura, seen 'as a sense of the transmission of humanness based on genealogical, integrated, and unmediated vitality' (Stacey, 2010:183). Just as the modernist medium of cinema abolished the artwork's aura through the mediation of its alleged essential non-repeatable nature, the post-human practice of human cloning could abolish the unmediated vitality of humanness by multiplying the sacred distinctiveness of the human – on the condition it reshapes subjectivity along the lines of its paradigmatic axis. But by working a still somewhat Cartesian delineation of singular subjectivity into the desire to conquer death through cloning, *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* dangerously negates the substantial consequences of multiplying identity.

Moreover, the desire to restore a lost aura, be it the aura of an artwork or the bio-aura, can be utterly dangerous in itself. Because within this logic certain categories are 'valorized' and deemed as organic or natural and thus more paramount than others, a kind of 'demonization' of the other categories are set in motion – as occurred in Nazi-Germany at the advent of World War Two. Furthermore, this desire could stem from 'the projection of a nostalgic longing for nature onto a lost golden age which is now to be mourned' and it may also be 'that the sense of original presence (of unspoiled, unmediated contact with nature) is itself an illusion' (Stacey, 2010:185). Within this vein Stacey argues that whatever is lost through the demise of bio-aura 'is imagined to have been previously connected to nature through its procreative capacity, authentic integrity, generational sequence and genealogical lineage' (Stacey, 2010:187). Therefore, when this conception of a mythical past is disrupted, 'pure biological reproduction comes to symbolize the traditional embodiment of modern spatiotemporal relations. Technoscientific interference in genetic processes represent the end of our embodied sense of integration, distinctiveness, and individuality, ideologically changed as that perception may have been' (Stacey, 2010:187). So in a contorted manner *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* envisions a configuration of the clone which is based on nostalgic, illusionary longing for an embodied sense of integration, distinctiveness and individuality, while it simultaneously operates within the very mise-en-scène that fosters the disruption of the aura it squeamishly tries to preserve: the genetic imaginary.

In this vein a sarcastic argument, in which Drucker confronts the clone with the fact that he is *not* the original, is revealing. Drucker states: "I just took over where God left off." Adam rebuts: "If you really believe that, then you should clone yourself... while you are still alive." Drucker subsequently asks Adam: "Why is that? So I can understand your unique perspective?" Adam replies in line with the kind of machismo parlance we expect from a generic Schwarzenegger-character: "No. So you can go fuck yourself!" (TC:01:33:38). Adam's abrasive answer strikes an essential nerve in respect to the relation between normative reproduction and human cloning. The notion of fucking yourself actually astutely alludes to the manner in which the life-generating practice of cloning makes human biological reproduction redundant by uncoupling sexuality and reproduction: by multiplying life without the interference of other cells, cloning essentially equates producing your own offspring through/from/with your own self. Therefore, a twisted

nostalgia for a 'bio-aura of heterosexual reproduction' (Stacey, 2010:188) that is already lost emanates from Adam's rebuttal. To sum it all up, the quote 'So you can go fuck yourself!' underlines the film's illusionary longing for biological reproductive sex as the normative life-generating practice, a notion which resonates with Stacey's following statement: 'The sense of a lost bio-aura enacts a form of heteronormative nostalgia in the phantasmagoria of new modes of reproductive and sexual replication' (Stacey, 2010:188).

Even though the vocabulary of this dialogue is quite vulgar, we might wonder if the 'unique perspective' it refers to indeed unfolds itself within *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*, for there seems to be a particular instance which might honor the metamorphic consequences of human cloning and might overthrow the text's conventional but fallacious conception of subjectivity. As I mentioned, Adam's physical encounter with himself potentially fosters a genuine subjectivity-reshaping scenario – one after which the clone and its original could co-exist within a synchronic and paradigmatic logic. Our previous case-studies have shown that when you physically encounter your cloned self, traditional boundaries of subjectivity are no longer tenable. So do they remain intact for Adam? Both Adams seem to share the same identity through their mutual love for their family, as the following passage from Eberl shows:

Does it matter that we are apparently left with *two* Adam Gibsons now? The two of them seem to accept this consequence; for while the cloned Adam leaves for South America to keep his identity as a clone secret – death is the legal prescription for any human clone in this society – the “original” Adam allows him first to visit his family – who are none the wiser – one last time, telling him, “This is your family too. You were willing to die to save them.” Adam further reassures his clone that his willingness to sacrifice himself out of love for his family is a clear sign that the clone is just as human, and apparently just as much “Adam Gibson,” as he is. (Eberl, 2010:35)

In this way, Adam might be akin to the Sams in *Moon*, for they too shared the loving memory of their family. Nevertheless, Adam cannot be fully qualified in the same fashion. Whereas the Sams intimately shared a substantial spatio-temporal 'unit' which allowed *Moon* to examine their everyday habits, Adam only encounters himself under extraordinary yet short-lived circumstances that abide Hollywood's conventions. The original and his clone only meet their selves in the film's finale, as they team up to save their family by fighting Drucker. As soon as this task is completed, they part ways. The Ripley-clone for her part also succinctly encounters her former selves. However this encompasses an awfully affective and explosive encounter which shakes her to her existential core: she carries her pre-incarnations within her corporality on a cellular level while she physically abolishes the actual clone-bodies. So unlike *Alien: Resurrection*, Adam's encounter with himself unfolds within a rather moderate manner and unlike *Moon*, Adam's fleeting collaborative encounter is quite generic. It seems that by cloning its protagonist, *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* merely doubles its narrative action instead of multiplying its cinematic structures of subjectivity. Even though our cloned action-hero saves his family, the world and himself with the aid of its original self, Adam Gibson remains just that: a doubled generic action-hero who is unable to transcend a conservative sense of self.

The way *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* envisions its encounter with the self is thus neither as intricate nor as intimate as the other two case-studies – qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Seen from a meta-level, we could state that *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* not only negates the metamorphic consequences of human cloning in its desire to restore a

bio-aura that is irretrievably lost, also its delineation of the encounter between the cloned protagonists is utterly based on an ideological denial of the possible paradigmatic upheaval the figure of the clone engenders. Adam neither enters into a continuous consciousness, nor a continuous corporality. Their encounter remains generically propelled by the Hollywood plot-line and refrains itself from inherently problematizing the intricate cloning relation of self to self. If we rephrase this conclusion within a Cavellian vocabulary: both Adams do not seize the opportunity to 'aspire to become the one I are'. Immediately after their 'job' is done, the clone casts his potential helpmate aside and the original negates his potential attained self. Adam only momentarily allows himself to supplement the fractalization of his unattainable but attainable self, while he regrettably ignores the materialized split in himself as function as the gleam of light over his inner landscape. Whereas *Alien: Resurrection* enticed a dismantlement of the other self, *Moon* proposed a remarriage of the other self and now *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* cultivates a fascistic denial of the other self.

## Conclusions

### **Are We Me Or Am I You?**

The cinematic terrain of science fiction fosters an evocative space for philosophical, existential and ethical thought experiments on human cloning to roam freely through the virtual yet visceral simulations it creates with an affective force. The genetic imaginary, seen as a cinematic as well as scientific *topos*, which has entered into the fabrics of our lives – into our discourses, into our fictions, into our minds and even into our embodiments – is indeed informing our cultural imagination and therefore our sense of self in a very palpable fashion. As we have seen in the introduction, the very real prospect of cloning humans gives rise to a plenitude of questions that we can already explore, questions that indeed are readily *being* explored within the terrain of science fiction. I postulated that a compelling recurring trope of human cloning involved the scenario of encountering one's own duplicate while prompting the particular question that structured this thesis: what might happen when a cloned person is faced with herself? Further disquieting questions arose. Can I consider you, this other person that is not myself, to be me? Do we experience life in the same way? Are your memories mine and my memories yours? Do we share a consciousness? Is your body my own or is my body yours? Am I still unique? Are we me or am I you? Questions which we can now answer, because the capricious connection between memory, cloning and human subjectivity within the realm of cinema has been critically investigated.

This thesis has thusly ventured into a thought experiment on the malleability of our subjectivity by closely discerning the cinematic figure of the human clone as it is conceived of within *Moon*, *Alien: Resurrection* and *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*. In scrutinizing the encounters our cloned protagonists have with themselves, I delineated the different ways in which a cloned sense of self unfolds itself. The theme of human cloning can be discerned as the ultimate 'posthuman' trope, where conventional discourses on subjectivity possibly get unraveled to their bare absence. However, this trope simultaneously constitutes a discursive space where we can reconfigure our sense of self, as it in some cases give way to a conception of identity that does not inherently entail a syntagmatic singularity of embodied subjectivity to maintain a productive sense of self. The phenomenon of human cloning thus entails a radical reshaping of subjectivity as it holds the power to threaten its boundaries, while at the same time opening up novel paradigmatic ways of conceiving our sense of self. The traditional Cartesian perception of subjectivity – a singular, embodied subjectivity unified through the act of conscious awareness of the self – can be destabilized by encountering one's own clone.

The existence of the clones in *Moon* can be rationalized as a fluid and a-grammatical identification of 'I are the one You become' – where the I that is You, is literally plural. Sam Bell's sense of self flows across multiple embodiments as water runs through multiple rivers and as life gushes through multiple forms: *panta rhei*. By perceiving the Sams as *supplements* to each other, the new paradigmatic relations on which their multiple subjectivities are based give way to a productive and vigorous conception of continuous consciousness. To put these conclusions in a Cavellian light: the former and latter clone can be considered as

different *reincarnations* of the very same split in the self, where the previous clone is the helpmate for the subsequent clone, who is the attained self of the former one but who remains unattained but attainable for himself. An intricate 'fractalization' of the unattained but attainable self is thus set in motion, where an attained self is added, which for its part also comprises a further unattained but attainable self in the remarriage of the self. My Cavellian reworking of the notion of supplementation places a 'positive' focus on the fractalizing and paradigmatic qualities of the cinematic figure of the clone. *Alien: Resurrection* on the other hand envisions a gruesomely destructive and dejected figure of the clone. The Ripley-clone's hybridized continuous corporality devours her from within her very own cells, for the loss of bio-aura radically hacks the last pieces of her human existence away. She radically dismantles the novel paradigmatic structures, which entail the molding of multiple subjectivities into a singular corporeality which simultaneously connotes a multitude of constructed bodies. This incarnates her from within as it threatens a by now fallacious syntagmatic structure that veils her humanoid surface. Nevertheless, the Ripley-clone is not able to escape her new bodily identity: even if the actual predecessors are destroyed, her continuous corporeal construction continues to exist through the anamnesis of her physicality. The undoing of a process of forgetting cannot be undone, what is unforgotten remains remembered.

Although they differ greatly in their productive and destructive conceptualizations of the cloned sense of self, *Moon* and *Alien: Resurrection* both embrace the radical reshaping of subjectivity human cloning brings forth by suturing this novel structure of identity into the cinematic languages they each deploy. However, *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* deploys a conception of the sense of self that in a debased way still adheres to a more traditional notion of subjectivity. Within this text cloning is a method for escaping death, understood as the final ending to the syntagmatic course of life, while the film emanates an ideological message: the disruptive paradigmatic structure of subjectivity should be contained by a conservative singular structure of identity which is located within the prolongation of the syntax of life. Just as the modernist medium of cinema abolished the artwork's aura through the mediation of its alleged essential non-repeatable nature, the post-human practice of human cloning abolishes the unmediated vitality of humanness by multiplying the sacred distinctiveness of the human. But by working a still somewhat Cartesian delineation of singular subjectivity into the desire to conquer death through cloning, *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* dangerously negates the substantial consequences of multiplying identity. In a contorted manner the film envisions a figure of the clone which is based on nostalgic, illusionary longing for an embodied sense of integration, distinctiveness and individuality, while it simultaneously operates within the very *mise-en-scène* that fosters the disruption of the aura it squeamishly tries to preserve. Also its cloned protagonist, Adam Gibson, remains just a doubled generic action-hero who is unable to transcend a conservative sense of self. Seen from a meta-level, *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* not only negates the metamorphic consequences of human cloning in its desire to restore a bio-aura that is irretrievably lost, also its delineation of the encounter of the cloned protagonists with himself is utterly based on an ideological denial of the possible paradigmatic upheaval the figure of the clone engenders.

Whereas Sam Bell's continuous consciousness flowed, the Ripley-clone's continuous corporality incinerates and Adam Gibson's ideological denial fosters a fascist stasis. Continuing in this vein, we could

state that the figure of the clone in *Moon* productively supplements the future by aspiring to become the one you are while subjectivity flows through a continuous consciousness. In a similar logic, *Alien: Resurrection* could be said to be destructively supplementing the past by incinerating the pre-incarnations of the self which remain immanently part of a continuous corporality. And perhaps *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day* only generically and sporadically supplements the present action by way of its static denial. And to add the different concepts of memory the texts delineate to the mix: *Moon*'s prosthetic memory functions as the gateway to its scenario of continuous consciousness, *Alien: Resurrection*'s corporal remembrance opens up a portal to continuous corporality and *The 6<sup>th</sup> Day*'s continuous but singular syntax of life fosters its discontinuous conception of memory as an easily extractable, re-mixable and implantable syncord.

To tie all these thoughts up, we could say that if the cinematic trope of human cloning combined with the mercurial notion of memory ferociously reveals Cartesian subjectivity to be a mere fantasy of unique individuality, we indeed should not cease, and will not cease, to search for the self. Precisely because identity and memory have become so illusive and mercurial, a self-reflexive quest like this project gained additional momentum. Furthermore, noting the continuities of cloning and cinema was paramount to this thesis, for the fading sense of previous notions of subjectivity due to the kindred technologies of imitation and/or reproduction is exactly the kind of dynamic which this project investigated through evoking the cinematic figure of the clone. The relevance of this project lies within its particular discernment of the subjectivity-reshaping mechanisms without deploying a preset normative objective. In this unbiased manner, we can freely yet critically explore the ethical and existential implications of human cloning on a philosophical level – an affective thought experiment our three cinematic fictions have generously provided us with. Personally I find the thought experiment of *Moon* the most appealing scenario, for it allows us to think about our ever-changing sense of self in a manner which does not deny or fixate all the possible steps we could take in our life's journey of education and therefore gains its inherent productiveness. So indeed, we are me and I am you. But the pressing question remains: which ones will we aspire ourselves to become?

## Appendix: 77 'cloning-films'

This list contains a selection of films I found that deal with cloning in some respect.

### 1970's and before

*Flesh Feast* (Grinter, 1970)  
*Futureworld* (Heffron, 1976)  
*KISS Meets the Phantom of the Park* (Hessler, 1978)  
*Monsters from Green Hell* (Crane, 1957)  
*Sleeper* (Allen, 1973)

*The Brood* (Cronenberg, 1979)  
*The Clones* (Card & Hunt, 1973)  
*The Clonus Horror* (Fiveson, 1979)  
*The Grissom Gang* (Aldricg, 1971)  
*The Resurrection of Zachary Wheeler* (Wynn, 1971)

### 1980's

*Anna to the Infinite Power* (Wiemer, 1983)  
*Cherez Ternii K Zvyozdam* (Viktorov Bros., 1981)  
*Creator* (Passer, 1985)  
*Robotech: The Untold Story* (Noburo & Macek, 1986)  
*Starman* (Carpenter, 1984)

*Superman IV: The Quest for Peace* (Furie, 1987)  
*The Clones of Bruce Lee* (Velasco, 1981)  
*The Nude Bomb* (Donner, 1980)  
*Warrior of the Lost World* (Worth, 1983)

### 1990's

*Army of Darkness* (Raimi, 1992)  
*Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me* (Roach, 1999)  
*Johnny 2.0* (Fearnley, 1997)  
*Judge Dredd* (Cannon, 1995)  
*Jurassic Park* (Spielberg, 1993)  
*Multiplicity* (Ramis, 1996)

*Rasen* (Iida, 1998)  
*The Avengers* (Chechik, 1998)  
*The Fifth Element* (Besson, 1997)  
*The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (Spielberg, 1997)  
*Universal Soldier III* (Woolnough, 1999)

### 2000'

*4* (Khrzhanovskiy, 2005)  
*2001: A Space Travesty* (Goldstein, 2000)  
*Alien Abduction* (Forsberg, 2005)  
*Appleseed* (Aramaki, 2004)  
*Austin Powers in Goldmember* (Roach, 2002)  
*Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker* (Geda, 2000)  
*Blueprint* (Schübel, 2003)  
*Code 46* (Winterbottom, 2003)  
*Dragon Fighter* (Tang, 2003)  
*Frankenstein* (Mercurio, 2007)  
*Genetic Admiration* (Leeming, 2005)  
*Godsend* (Hamm, 2004)  
*Impostor* (Fleder, 2001)  
*Jaane Hoga Kya* (Ankush & Glenn, 2006)  
*Life-Size* (Rosman, 2000)  
*Lego Star wars: Revenge of the Brick* (Graham, 2005)  
*Lego Star Wars: The Quest for R2-D2* (Pedersen, 2009)  
*Leroy & Stitch* (Craig & Gannaway, 2006)  
*Pokémon: Mewtwo Returns* (Hidaka, 2000)

*Red Cockroaches* (Coyula, 2003)  
*Replicant* (Lam, 2001)  
*Repli-Kate* (Longo, 2002)  
*Resident Evil: Extinction* (Mulcahy, 2007)  
*Reversal of Fortune* (Park, 2003)  
*Shadow Fury* (Yokoyama, 2001)  
*Stargate: Continuum* (Wood, 2008)  
*Star Wars: Ep. II – Attack of the Clones* (Lucas, 2002)  
*Star Wars: Ep. III – Revenge of the Sith* (Lucas, 2005)  
*Star Wars: The Clone Wars* (Lucas, 2008)  
*Stitch! The Movie* (Craig & Gannaway, 2003)  
*Superman: Doomsday* (Montgomery, 2007)  
*Teknolust* (Hershman-Leeson, 2002)  
*The Adventures of Pluto Nash* (Underwood, 2002)  
*The Other Me* (Coto, 2000)  
*The Shock Labyrinth* (Shimizu, 2009)  
*The Spirit* (Miller, 2008)  
*Viyabari* (Chidambaram, 2007)  
*What Planet Are You From?* (Nichols, 2000)

### 2010's

*Cloud Atlas* (Tykwer & Wachowski Bros., 2012)  
*Evangelion: 3.0 You Can (Not) Redo* (Anno, 2012)  
*I'm Not Jesus Mommy* (Juares, 2010)  
*Naruto Shippuden the Movie* (Murata, 2011)  
*Never Let Me Go* (Romanek, 2010)

*Oblivion* (Kosinski, 2013)  
*Pacific Rim* (Del Toro, 2013)  
*Stranded* (Christian, 2013)  
*Womb* (Fliegau, 2010)

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