Multiplicities: An Anthropologist’s Thoughts on Replicants and Clones in Popular Film

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A recent essay on Blade Runner’s replicant as romantic hero opens with Dr. Frankenstein pondering the principle of life: “It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered a mystery.” Mary Shelley wrote these words in the early 1800s, in a wave of European romanticism, but it would appear that romantic grand narratives die hard where issues of life and death are concerned. In fact, quests for the secret of life—for life’s authoritative code or formula—occupy ever-multiplying and dispa-

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1. Quoted in John Abbott, “The ‘Monster’ Reconsidered: Blade Runner’s Replicant as Romantic Hero,” Extrapolation 34 (Winter 1993): 340. Abbott notes in this piece that Percy Bysshe Shelley would ask a related question in his Essay on Life and conclude by paraphrasing Tasso from Discorsi del Poema Eroico: “‘Non merita nome di creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta’ [None merits the name of Creator but God and the Poet]” (p. 349 n.1). A contrary view from progressive Judaism that argues against this type of personification within biotechnical debate is offered by Jonathan Cohen: “If we believe structuring our world a particular way lies at the heart of God’s creation, then we will likely view human cloning as transgressing that structure. In contrast, if we believe that transforming what exists for the better lies at the heart of creation, then our view of human cloning will likely depend on whether we use human cloning to accomplish good or evil” (Jonathan Cohen, “In God’s Garden: Creation and Cloning in Jewish Thought,” The Hastings Center Report 29 [July/August 1999]: 7–12).

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rate sites of the cultural imagination. One can think of Dr. Frankenstein's monster and his film incarnations or Blade Runner's Tyrell Corporation replicants and, in the same vein, the human and animal cloning experiments of recent history, the visionary mapping expeditions of the Human Genome Project, and the "romances" and other stories published on the Human Cloning Foundation website, www.humancloning.org. How scientists and their products are judged in these locations is anything but unequivocal; there are monsters and heroes aplenty occupying different mediascapes, compelling national ethics boards and commissions in the United States to flash an "amber light." But the big ethical questions, particularly in the wake of the seismic scientific and media event of Dolly the udder-cloned sheep, concern who controls the secret of life; who authors or authorizes creation, the intentions of these authors and the nature of their accountability; and, more generally, what are the envisioned consequences for humanity seeking to contain "life itself" within its ultimately noncontingent, biological moment. As an anthropologist I approach these questions already imbricated in their historicity, for they

2. For a particularly interesting discussion of science fiction and the myth of Frankenstein, see Susan Doll and Greg Faller, "Blade Runner and Genre: Film Noir and Science Fiction," Literature-Film Quarterly 14, no. 2 (1986): 89–100.


invoke the biological essentialism out of which anthropology was forged as a colonial discipline and against which a contemporary critical anthropology vigilantly works to define its corrections in course.6

These corrections have been crucial in the discursive realms of gender and race. When in 1996 the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AA PA) published its findings on race, including the statement that “biophysical diversity has no inherent social meaning except what we humans confer upon it,” it specifically addressed anthropology’s historical function for colonizers who would use “race” ideology to justify the trade in human property and to assert a normative white supremacy.7 At the same time, the AAPA statement indicated an affinity with the concerns of feminist anthropologists that biologicist gender distinctions not be naturalized along similar lines, that such distinctions be exposed for their part in programs to objectify, commodify, and control women. Extended to science culture, these concerns translate to a commitment that humans’ genetic makeup be defetishized and de commodified in the rhetoric and social practices of the scientific “community,” broadly construed. Fundamentally, it is a commitment that recognizes human personhood and “technologies of self” as social from the start. That is, they are culturally shaped by, and shaping, historically situated conditions and practices of human bondage and human agency—and likewise any respectable bioethics.8

The present paper takes this project to the movies. On one level, this is to acknowledge popular cinema’s place of honor in bioethical rhetoric and popular debate about genetically engineered entities; in late modernity’s image-conscious condition, popular films are major cultural documents of the social life of the public moment. So while I set aside for now discussion of the diverse audience responses and multisite film produc-


tion fieldwork that would add an ethnographic dimension and value to such a project, it is, I believe, worthwhile to follow out some narrative themes in films in which replication “passes” for reproduction—and in which human copies similarly “pass” for multiples of persons. More generally, I probe what might be termed 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—though underinvestigated as such.

I argue the point that feature film replicants and clones are corporealizations of the supplement’s capacity to destabilize the social paradigms and self-knowledge of their creators. The fact that these doubles range across genres of science fiction, drama, and film comedy is apposite precisely because the idea of the double in different ways confounds cultural boundaries, including film genres, revealing their inadequacy to contain it. Thus films as different from one another as Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956; 1978), Sleeper (1973), Jurassic Park (1993), Blade Runner (1982), The Terminator (1984) and Terminator II: Judgment Day (1991), The Boys from Brazil (1978), Multiplicity (1996), The Stepford Wives (1975), Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me (1999), Alien: Resurrection (1997), Parts: The Clonus Horror (1978), Making Mr. Right (1987), Bicentennial Man (1999), and The

9. Studies from ethnographic engagements in the social practice of large and small media are taking visual anthropology in this important new direction. See, notably, Ginsburg, “Shooting Back: From Ethnographic Film to Ethnography of Media,” in The Social Practice of Media, ed. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin (forthcoming); Purnima Mankekar, Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India (Durham, N. C., 1996); Abu-Lughod, “The Interpretation of Culture(s) after Television,” Representations, no. 59 (Summer 1997): 109–34; and Steven C. Caton, Lawrence of Arabia: A Film’s Anthropology (Berkeley, 1999).

10. The ambiguity of the supplement is apparent in musings such as those of Time’s Charles Krauthammer that “what Dolly . . . promises is not quite a second chance at life (you don’t reproduce yourself; you just produce a twin) but another soul’s chance at your life. . . . Here is the opportunity to pour all the accumulated learning of your life back into a new you” (quoted in Patrick Hopkins, “Bad Copies: How Popular Media Represent Cloning as an Ethical Problem,” Hastings Center Report 28 [Mar.–Apr. 1998]: 8).

Sixth Day (2000), taken together, present a striking counternarrative to scientific hubris and the sufficiency of scientific knowledge for comprehensively “enframing” life—biological or social. Inevitably, these films tell us, the human artifact will escape the creator’s control and intentionally or otherwise defeat the creator’s program, even when this program is relatively benign or expressly therapeutic. That this message contains an element that could undercut the efficacy of its own thrust is a point I return to at the end.

One effect of the antiprogrammatic streak in replication narratives and imagery is to expose the limitations of the entity of the creator, whether a human authority figure or an institution of science or corporate culture. Of course, the imagined consequences of human replication correlate to the issues of their time, from the aliens and doppelgängers that threaten authority structures on the political Right or Left (alluded to in Invasion of the Body Snatchers, on one hand, and The Stepford Wives, on the other) to the recent concern for the subject-position and legitimacy of the human copy or replica in an age of simulacra (the point that drives Bicentennial Man). Yet the taproot of these various scenarios—and of what Jackie Stacey has recently termed “the new genetic imaginary”—is the threat that reifying human being poses to any understanding of the complex relationality of human subjects. Donna Haraway has called this kind of reification “corporeal fetishism”: the phenomenon of “mistaking heterogeneous relationality for a fixed, seemingly objective thing.” It makes sense, then, to seek our theoretical cues not in ego-based paradigms of self or film theory but in the literary and sociological influences of the discourse of social exchange.

A humorous case in point is Harold Ramis’s Multiplicity, released in the United States six months after the news broke of Dolly the sheep. Multiplicity, a tale of human cloning, joins a short line of feature films that make a joke of substituting replication for reproduction. As such it

12. For a recent though not comprehensive listing of science fiction films, 1895–1996, including cloning films, see the supplement to Sight and Sound 6 (Nov. 1996): 3–21.
15. Stacey, “She Is Not Herself: Alien Resurrection and the New Genetic Imaginary” (paper delivered at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Dec. 1999); hereafter abbreviated “S.”
17. I should note that in a long interview generously granted by Ramis, he indicated that his position on human cloning was fairly uncomplicated, that for him Dolly was never an issue, cloning was inevitable, and inevitably commercial (Harold Ramis, interview by author, 5 Aug. 1999). He credits Chris Miller for the story. See Chris Miller, “Multiplicity,” National Lampoon (Spring 1993): 65–87.
keeps company with classics like Woody Allen's *Sleeper* (in which scientists devise a plan to clone a whole dictator from his nose) and more contemporary features like *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me* (in which the disciples of Dr. Evil, a Hitler-like corporate dictator, clone him, producing a downsized alter ego the dictator names Mini Me). From ethnographic evidence—not, that is, from Freud alone—we know that joking, as cultural practice, and the joke as a cultural artifact can function as social critique as much as entertainment. Although *Multiplicity* could be catalogued with an exuberant wave of cloning-themed cartoons and headlines in the media, not to mention stand-up comedy routines, the film's treatment of politicized social difference and its antiutilitarian message take it to another level (fig. 1).18

The protagonist is Everyman Doug Kinney, played by Michael Keaton (Ramis first thought of Eddie Murphy—a point that was significant for me in ways to be discussed, but not for Ramis). Doug is feeling torn apart by the demands of his boss, his wife, and his kids, all of whom he is failing. To his rescue comes a scientist and CEO of the mysterious Gemini Institute, Dr. Leeds, who offers to solve all of his problems. “I create time,” he tells Doug, “I make clones.” Dr. Leeds then establishes his credentials in terms of the evolutionary progress he himself has made; he began, he tells us, by cloning viruses, then an earthworm, then a chimp, then himself, to which Doug responds, “You xerox people.” He then follows with, “So . . . what would a basic clone job cost?”—the Big Question of this film.

From the site of this early conversation—outdoors, in nature, the wind blowing through the trees—we move to the laboratory environment of science culture, and the high-tech birth scene of Doug's clone. This scene visually inscribes the theme of time that drives the film, the same theme that animated Ramis’s earlier *Groundhog Day* (1993). (In that film the central character, a disaffected jerk, finds himself trapped in a single day, February second, that is repeated over and over—multiplied—giving him the time to notice those around him and to develop meaningful relationships, including a romance with a woman that delivers him into a new day and a marvelously unknown future.) Ramis’s *Multiplicity*, released three years later, ironizes and to my mind politicizes the earlier film’s narrative of time.

The Gemini laboratory, then, is a space of accelerated precision instruments and machines, numbers and letters, and calibrating dials and panels that yields a fully mature human clone of Doug in twenty-five fast cuts or something like fifteen real-time seconds (fig. 2).

In no time, the clone is sent off to the office in Doug's place, leaving Doug more time for his wife and kids and various leisure pursuits. The clone, tattooed with the number 2, proceeds to distinguish himself from Doug by performing Doug's job with alpha-male zeal. The entire arrangement is so successful, at least initially, that Doug has himself cloned again, producing 3, the sensitive, feminized homemaker who can help with kids and kitchen. Then the clones audaciously take it upon themselves to have 2 cloned, producing the inbred 4, a simpleton "child" who does manual chores and, being unruly and a messy eater, is closest to animal nature. In short, the "use-value" of the clones is embodied as gender and age stereotypes, reproduced as an all-male, but not all-masculine, nuclear family with a somewhat uncertain future.

19. The fact that 4 is related to Doug as a degraded copy passing as his clone makes 4 an interestingly ambiguous figure. A product of the clones' free agency, he is himself freer than the others of the workplace disciplines of conduct and thought that mould their personhood. One consequence is that he appears at times as a kind of idiot savant whom Doug consults when he needs to simplify his life. Also, 4 embodies the unpredictable genetic outcome of "germline" manipulation—as it were, the generational future of the innocently dangerous gene supplement within.
Male Parthenogenesis: From Paterfamilias to Prion

From the viewpoint of an ethnographer, this scenario of male parthenogenesis would not seem in the least exotic to certain male cult practitioners in Melanesia, whose self-induced acts of symbolic menstruation and birth are meant to ensure the reproductive future of the natural world at large.20 The cloning fantasy is nothing if not gendered, and no less in the corridors of science culture than in the bush. Jackie Stacey has argued that in Alien: Resurrection female cloning presents an "excess of sameness," a problematic that renders same-sex doubling monstrous (she cites Elizabeth Grosz) more generally speaking ("S"). But in the masculine mode it would appear that more of the same is neither invariably excessive nor monstrous, meaning that less of the same is the issue, in the movies at least.

The male urge to double appears in its most sympathetic light when it addresses a functional deficiency of men in a world of women who wish to have it all. In Multiplicity, Doug's crisis of time is precipitated by his wife who, first pleadingly, then willfully, accepts a job outside the home.

and leaves Doug to confront his inadequacy in tackling domestic duties alongside the demands of his wage-paying job. Arguing incompetence to manage domestic matters, Doug says to his wife, “It comes more naturally to you,” and “You got the two X chromosomes and I—I don’t know what I have,” and “That’s why you have breasts . . . look at me, I got nothing.” In short, the clones of Multiplicity are personalized to answer to the dilemma that separate, gendered realms of production within capitalist systems produces for the male; they address the insufficiency of an “old” division of labor by tying this to the reproductive insufficiency of men, and both to a natural order. Doug’s “solution” is to produce multiple egos, in line with an ethic of self that is predicated on this culture’s lone-hero model, and on a frontier romance with autonomous self-determination. Here the film links up with the real-life fantasy of gay rights activist Randolfe Wicker, head of the Cloning Rights United Front in New York, who announced in an interview in the New York Times Magazine shortly after Dolly that he wanted to have himself cloned as soon as possible, as a matter of reproductive choice (fig. 3).

More usually, the theme of male insufficiency is psychologized, as in Susan Seidelman’s Making Mr. Right, in which a depersonalized (defamilialized) scientist, played by John Malkovich, creates a replicant in his own image—the replicant’s name is Ulysses—for the purpose of sending him into outer space. The Malkovich copy is discovered by a curious Ann Magnuson, who socializes him and also instructs him in matters of the heart. The result is that the copy becomes more human—that is, he develops a greater capacity for intimacy and reciprocal commitment—than his creator. “I’ve spent years so he could function in space alone,” the scientist tells Magnuson, “and now you’ve ruined everything.” Eventually, the scientist, vanquished by the supplement, wisely sends himself into outer space and the replicant prepares to greet his future in human society.

Female clones and replicants, possibly invoking the specter of matriarchy or the abomination of lesbian reproduction (as Stacey proposes), generally fare less well. We are made to contemplate several bad deaths of Sigourney Weaver clones in Alien scenarios; the Stepford Wives are disappeared one by one, to be replaced by replicant sex toys with subservient attitudes; and the female organ slaves of Parts: The Clonus Horror’s rescue fantasy face terrible lives. Overall, the male clones and replicants of the

21. This dilemma is a feature of the new American familism, which, as distinct from lineage, turns on the naturalized “commitment, sharing, cooperation, and intimacy” of a feminized nuclear family (Jan Dizard and Howard Gadlin, The Minimal Family [Amherst, Mass., 1990], p. 6).

movies have a productive function that the females among them are denied, other than as parts. Their range of function may be reduced, as Mini Me is reduced in size and scope of evildoing to a thug employee of Dr. Evil, but no excess of productivity produces a monstrous male double. Virulent consumption, however, is another matter.

When I was doing fieldwork in Melanesia among Sabarl islanders, this was an explicit theme of sorcery discourse. In these parts both men and women might acquire reputations for sending out spirit doubles that could give them supernatural access to knowledge. However, women inherited their powers through their mother's blood, whereas men learned their techniques as sorcerers' apprentices. A reputation for sorcery gave men an advantage in political life. But more dreaded than any sorcerer was the bibiloia, an entity whose dedication to human consumption could transform him into a monster that traveled not in spirit but in flesh, at great speed and far range, to feast on human bodies.

Tom Ripley, as portrayed in *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999), could have been the bibiloia's American cousin. His consuming process of becoming the social clone of the popular, upper-class wastrel Dickie is fueled by a string of murders the victims of which include Dickie and other men in
his social set (his social doubles). The effect is to generate a negative patri-line with Ripley as originary ancestor; Ripley, having first murdered his own identity, absorbs Dickie’s. Here, it is a fear of class insufficiency that produces the displacing clone as a kind of prionistic agent, devouring humanity from his place of privilege within the social body, a proteinaceous infectious particle in its social aspect. A homophobic message is all but explicit in this film, arguably projected onto the 1950s from the era of AIDS.23

Heidegger approaches technology as both “a way of revealing . . . whatever does not bring itself forth,” an “arising of something from itself,” and in its negative capacity, as a “setting upon” nature an “unreasonable demand” upon it “directed from the beginning toward something else” that places nature “on call” or “on stand-by.”24 An essentialized Heideggerian “nature” notwithstanding, the clones of the movies are corporealizations of this double capacity of technology.25 Their promise, as we see in the clones of Multiplicity, is that they may beget or elicit useful knowledge of the original, who can never be seen or see himself in the same light afterwards. Or, like Hitler clones, they may set upon humanity, becoming hegemony’s most lethal weapons. The various film scenarios of human doubles would appear to be showing us that, genetic or social, cloning is anything but a final solution to social problems, including the ultimate social problem of human mortality. Like all examples of cultural rhetoric, this one contains its potential opposite.

Continuities and Discontinuities

The travesty of the human clone, that it can be reduced to a derelationalized unit of production in the service of commercial and/or political agendas, is the travesty of mistaking the value of the (nonagentive, reified) part for the contingent, relational (agentive) person. This is not dissimilar to the problem posed by the cultivation of transplantable organs. Of course, in Multiplicity’s replication scenarios, no one needs to die

23. Although the social clone is not invariably a figure of lethal consumption, the idea of fashioning a replica identity is at least problematic and a topic in the literature of gay “clonism.” Lauritsen, for example, has argued that “negative aspects of the Gay Clone Lifestyle, with a particular focus upon the premier gay clone drug ‘poppers’ (or nitrite inhalants),” and the evolution of gay social cloning is tied to the “profit-logic of an expanding sex industry” globally (John Lauritsen, “Political-Economic Construction of Gay Male Cloning Identity,” Journal of Homosexuality 24 [Spring 1993]: 221).
for Doug to put his capacities of self to future use, for these to be transplanted into his failing social relationships. Were we to turn to such real-life moments when persons are judged “dead enough” for the purpose of having their organs or other valued parts recycled, we would encounter the real horror stories of corporeal fetishism: how far people will go in order not to “waste” a cultivatable resource.

*Multiplicities* is in a sense a disquisition on antiwaste: different capacities of self, otherwise lying dormant or buried by the complex demands of modern life, are brought forth by an agent of scientific therapy and put to productive use. Because the clones have a full store of the original’s memories, and create new memories that differentiate them from their originals, past knowledge is also rendered an available resource. Of course, memory, reduced here to strictly usable information, ought properly to be corporeally contained. In fact, the problems for Doug begin as his futures multiply, as the clones exceed the limits of his original self. This shows the clones in their human process of memory-making and selective forgetting, shows them to be not merely copies or products but meaning-makers in their own right. They even run the risk of creating social relationships with authentic people (such as women they pick up at the 7-Eleven when they decide to throw a party). Thus, control of human life has the inadvertent effect of showing life’s indeterminacy. If “the splitting of the self would, at least, have the finality of destroying its presumptuousness,” as Lyotard muses, it is likewise for the scientific doubling of the self.

A powerful cross-cultural study by Lawrence Cohen that considers the discourse of Alzheimer’s victimage in the popular media offers a kind of reversed perspective on the issues. Alzheimer’s produces xerox copies of bodies whose minds have lost definition in the process, or bodies whose claims to subjectivity have anyway become blurred. Yet the Alzheimer-stricken subject loses, rather than gains, history (among other capacities). Faced with reduction to “neural static,” his or her agency and ability to relate are mortally compromised or defined away by medico-legal terminology.

Alzheimer’s, then, produces (by a different agency than Mr. Ripley’s or the *bibiloia’s*) a multiplicity of victims, wherein, as Cohen recognizes, the initial victim must be “disappeared” in order that survivors become unambiguously the object of therapeutic intervention. The first victim is the patient as a degraded self, the second the survivors whose relationship to the patient medical rhetoric renders ghoul. That is, shifting

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our terms of reference from an ego-based model to a relational model of personhood, the disease process creates a new relationship comprised of victims 1 and 2, the living-dead double of the first relationship. This new entity must confront not issues of terminability (as Blade Runner's replicants and the clones of The Sixth Day do) but the interminability and irreversibility of institutional codependence.

As such, the victims, prospectively in the case of the Alzheimer's patients faced with making decisions ahead of time about their care, and retrospectively in the case of victim-survivors, are left to seek the legal dispatch of a stake through the heart (or the brain) in order that the relationship might stop feeding on the mere matter remains of itself and, also, in order that it might stop reproducing other (legal, medical, and so on) “undead” relationships. This apparent solution is premised on the romantic narrative device of prefiguration. We are dealing with death by prefiguration; the chronicle of the life of the undead is foretold in the idiom and practice of victimage, which denies future alternatives the space to emerge. Hopelessness masks helplessness, in Maslow’s classic phrase. The “Kevorkian moment,” or what we might think of as death itself, is hence legitimated. When this moment is authorized by the initial (originary) victims while still endowed with agency, while still themselves, the problematic ambiguity of this solution is resolved; one can yet deny the heterogeneous authorship and the coproduction of personhood in its social, rather than biological, dimension.

It is perhaps not surprising that human cloning “romances,” like those on the Human Cloning Foundation’s website, erase the figure of the intermediary agent and focus instead on the self-replication of a unique person or relationship. Cloning fantasies express the peculiarly Euroamerican “obsession with uniqueness,” as Hopkins puts it, “pouring the weight of that concept into genetic patterns.”29 One woman’s letter on the website states that she wants to clone herself in order to “raise herself” differently; another’s that she “can never be a mother any other way.” A couple whose families have never understood their love wish to have themselves cloned, hoping for a more sympathetic response next time round. The website pleads for a “genetic encore” for Stephen Hawking, whose clone could live a life free of disabilities (he is said to be in support of the idea). A physician writes, “human cloning will mean the same as the resurrection of Jesus Christ or Gautama Buddha.”30

In her recent paper, Stacey argues eloquently that the “genetic turn” in popular science culture “can be seen to reconstitute the boundaries and the desirable shape of the human body in the making” through its figurations of abnormal bodies. She continues, “this division between

monstrous and proper bodies pervades both the narrative structure and iconographic landscape of all the Alien films” (“S”).  

The idea of the human double as it appears elsewhere in popular cinema in hybridized genres invites us to consider a supplementary model to the semiotic one that organizes critical inquiry in terms of body metaphors and boundary maintenance and the insider/outsider, periphery/center categories they require. More specifically, it invites us to reconsider the idea of a boundary between replication and reproduction and its problematic of a “proliferation of sameness.” This other model that would refocus analytic attention on social exchange foregrounds the transactions, both monstrous and beneficial, that enable and compromise human connection. The view from exchange theory demands that we consider which forms of social exchange and which patterns of relation set upon social connection, violate social futures, and which beget and elicit these in particular cultural and historical locations.

The idea of the clone as supplement is that unlike the replicant, which requires no connection to an original and is often seen questing for a connection, even a negative connection, to its makers (such as the toy maker and Tyrell Corporation CEO of Blade Runner), the clone embodies the closest relation to the original. The clone’s existence requires an other—which is why the clone goes against the grain of totalizing romantic narratives and images and why the idea of the heroic clone seems somehow wrong, whereas the heroic replicant makes sense. In other words,


33. One exception would seem to be offered by The Sixth Day, in which Schwarzenegger and his clone appear as twin action heroes rescuing their shared family and the world from the evils of corporate cloning. However, Arnold and the other clones of the movie are more like replicants that exhibit “cloneality.” Products of an illegal assembly line in which grown human “blanks” are held in amniotic storage, warmed up, and imprinted with an original’s thoughts and physical features, they behave and are treated as renegade imposters. The narrative, as in Blade Runner, is driven by the danger of their exposure as nonauthentic doubles; knowledge of their human sources is either accidental or incidental. But while the doubling of The Sixth Day serves mainly to multiply the number of violent deaths per actor, its attack on corporate science is direct and unequivocal. In another vein, I am grateful to Elizabeth Lee for drawing my attention to Greg Egan’s “The Planck Drive,” a science fiction story in which a virtual clone nobly sacrifices herself in order that her flesh alter ego may survive to continue a life in the material world. The idea of a virtual clone who takes individuality to its final destination locates the physical clone’s victimage in its very materiality and in the problematic of continuity and connection. See Elizabeth Lee, “Clashing Worlds: Hard Science Fiction and the Soft Boundaries between Humanities and Sciences” (paper presented at the Fourteenth Annual Conference for the Society for Literature and Science, University of Oklahoma, 7–10 Oct. 1999).
the distinction between replicants and clones is, respectively, the distinction between relations predicated on social displacements and ruptures, on the one hand, and those predicated on continuity and connection, on the other, where both may have a positive value in certain situations. Replicants, having no necessary relationship to their originators (any human relation between them and their originary source is a supplement to their existence), problematize distinction, separation, and historical ruptures and displacements, such that any knowledge of relation to sources invites a destabilization of previous understandings of who or what they are. Hence the rogue agency of Blade Runner's replicants, who indulge their dying quest to meet their maker, or express their pathos in clinging to ersatz photographs of families of origin that never existed. The replicants achieve a willed forgetting of the lie of their heredity. Clones, meanwhile, whose connection to a human original is their defining condition, problematize continuity and connection; the duplicate-original relationship foregrounds this problematic in their exchanges, which tend to produce messy human relationships.

Cloning a Racialized Hierarchy

In Multiplicity, the "family of man" is shown in its devolutionary potential, from independent business manager through to primitive tool-user. So in addition to a Lamarckian familism and a nuclear family unit whose "raison d'être is autonomy," class distinctions, too, are cloned and even sorted in the bargain. The work ethic that posits isolated work sites for the various clones contains the gene of social hierarchy. Indeed, the birth scene's schematized matrix anticipates this birth of hierarchy: (reading across) two heads produce (reading down) the hierarchical zones of the Head (clone 2), Heart (clone 3), and Belly (clone 4) (fig. 4). The birth of hierarchy and the narrative of devolution cues us that the clones may be white, but the happy clone family of Multiplicity is not a free family.

34. Dizard and Gadlin, The Minimal Family, p. 22.
35. Bukatman (Blade Runner, pp. 74–76) argues more strongly that Blade Runner's replicant is the "nigger" of late capitalism. His use of the inflammatory racist term calls up the historical violence to personhood that inheres in programs to produce and subjugate human beings. But as applied to human cloning the point is more slippery. On the one hand, the European parliament banned human cloning under antislavery laws. Specifically, the European parliament's resolution on cloning states that "the cloning of human beings . . . cannot under any circumstances be justified or tolerated by any society, because it is a serious violation of fundamental human rights and is contrary to the principle of equality of human beings as it permits a eugenic and racist selection of the human race" (European Parliament, Resolution on Cloning, O. J. [C 115] 14.4/92, 12 Mar. 1997; my emphasis). The problem with comedic treatments of cloning in feature films, which stand in contrast to Blade Runner in this respect, is precisely that they can mask or efface the element of violence, pacifying the topic of cloning in the public sphere.
When Doug's clone makes his first appearance he is shown against a grid set within an enframing arch. The grid strikingly resembles still photographs of nineteenth-century anthropometry and in particular the "normalising grid" that the British anthropologist John Lamprey devised in the mid-nineteenth century for the purpose of scientifically measuring humankind's phenotypic evolutionary progress, with that project's associations of race and hierarchy (fig. 5).³⁶

Throughout the film, this clone will appear in the context of some grid or another; it is his visual signature and the imprimatur of science culture. At the birth scene the film audience adopts the scientific team's clinical point of view of their creation; as coparticipants in the project of documenting human replication, viewers are the wry modernizers of the project of capturing human diversity. In this respect Ramis's camera, which looks over the shoulder of Doug and Dr. Leeds, the clone's proud parents, could as well be the tool of contemporary ethnographers acknowledging their agency in some project of documentary film realism.³⁷

The point of slippage is that the new Other has traded the racial marker of its enslavement in nineteenth-century evolutionism for the tattooed number of a Holocaust prisoner; Holocaust anxiety has been displaced to the self and respatialized as a nineteenth-century plantation society.

Multiplicity's clones are housed in the segregated guest apartment over the garage on the master's property. They are visited occasionally by Doug as if by the foreman, and in one sequence of primal transgression, they venture into the big house and even into the master's marital bed, "passing" for the master himself. In effect, the clones recapitulate the era of radical Reconstruction in American history that Blade Runner's replicants act out from the subject position of the slave. Both recover a time of politicized racism when the public could read that "Africa was on the rampage" in the South, when a major crime bill could be aimed overtly at "Negro lawlessness," and when blacks could be described in print as "born thieves," such that the "natural" biological flaws of slaves became "black crime," an offense against the state. All of this can be read as part of a heightened consciousness that emancipation had removed one of the two "great distinctions," as David Oshinsky cogently argues, between the white farmer and the Negro, everyone now being "free." Here the question of how to maintain white supremacy is cast in terms of boundary maintenance; whites focused their efforts on starkly spatialized rules of conduct, as they did on the geopolitical borders of their colonies.

In Multiplicity, however, these themes have been domesticated. Human relations and affect motivate the narrative in place of political goals and borders, in keeping with the clone's "natural" relationality to its sources. The whole house of cards of Doug's complex replica of a social life collapses when the breadwinning alpha clone 2 falls ill, and his attempted substitution by 3 exposes the artificiality of fixed status boundaries (although a disastrous outcome in some sense goes back on the message). Overall, the film turns the tables on white supremacy, exposing the joke of separatism and of master race separatism specifically.

It is not uncommon in films of human doubles that narratives of passing expose the insufficiency of dominant-culture originals. In Blade Runner, for example, replicants have greater physical and/or moral strength, or discipline, or skill, or capacity for feeling, or for noble self-sacrifice than humans—ironically, sometimes by design. Typically the inferior superior is an embodiment of normative whiteness. When the

39. Ibid., p. 15.
40. See Giuliana Bruno's argument that "no original is . . . invoked as point of comparison, and no distinction between real and copy remains" in Blade Runner's world (Giuliana Bruno, "Ramble City: Postmodernism and Blade Runner," October, no. 40 [Spring 1987]: 68). On the displacement of racial (natural) to political narratives in Blade Runner, see Kaja Silverman, "Back to the Future," Camera Obscura 27 (Sept. 1991): 109–34.
replicants slip their parameters and become agents of their own futures, when they show themselves to be “more human than humans” (the Tyrell Corporation advertising slogan), they are consigned to the camouflage of a racially, linguistically, and architecturally creolized urban underworld marked by cosmopolitanism run amok. This is the natural environment, the hyperactive and hyperplastic gray area of the categorically monstrous. As “skin jobs” stripped of historical color, replicants use their racial invisibility to infiltrate a monolithic white ruling class that depersonalizes and enslaves them.41 Attacking their makers as if life, or “life itself,” de-

pended on it, replicants in effect violate the charter order of a white corporate world. Meanwhile, confronted not with blackness but with the "plasticity of race" in the form of renegade whiteness, white creators are robbed of the social terms of an originary definition by contrast to a racialized Other.\textsuperscript{42}

Too, replicants' capacity for human feeling resists their raison d'être for their producers, their use-value for powerful agents of capital production. Although their social personhood inheres in these relations of power, their particular character and rogue agency comes to distinguish them from a droning humanity. In this respect the inevitable termination or expulsion of the replicant marks the end of \textit{programmatically} controlled difference—what we are shown is the dominant culture purging itself of \textit{uncontrolled} human diversity—which is of course the just end for any Reagan-era renegade from corporate expansionism and from corporate science. But it also marks the end of renegade affect; the unacceptable supplement that reveals the for-profit machine in the person of the creator and in his heartless institutions.

The idea that human enslavement of a marked otherness—racial, ethnic, gendered—belies the skin-deep whiteness of replicants and clones should perhaps figure more directly in our thinking about spectatorship for human-double films, generally speaking. In such films, viewers are an audience both to a historical white domination and to its subjugated human objects. This situation sets up a problem of identification for the grammar of the film that, as Mulvey theorizes, places the spectator \textit{with} the hero.\textsuperscript{43} Because the heroes here are multiple, not the autonomous egos of Freudian theory, we are \textit{with} the owner and the owned at once, if we are with anyone; our subject-position identifies with a \textit{relation}. It is interesting to ponder the phenomenology of viewing in such situations, as well as in situations where a spectator's subject-position may pun a structurally ambivalent one appearing on the screen. Such ambivalence marked the experience of whites in Europe or the United States, for example, confronting a historical supremacism as agents and victims at once. But this is a topic for another paper.

Generally speaking, studies of whiteness in popular cinema have concerned either whites' spectatorship of racialized Others or, more commonly, discussion of how exotic Others are represented to presumably


\textsuperscript{42} John Hartigan's ethnographic examination of nonwhite racial plasticity in relation to whiteness illuminates the range of issues that conjoin race and class. See his "Establishing the Fact of Whiteness," American Anthropologist 99 (Sept. 1997): 495–505.

white audiences, or to audiences imagined as such by the white, mainstream movie industry and its reviewers. Normative whiteness requires, from these perspectives, a fantasy of white supremacy and a subjugated, racialized Other. The joke of Multiplicity is its reductio ad absurdum of white supremacy. Racial and ethnic differences are bleached out of what is otherwise a cartoon rendering of a plantation or concentration camp–style division of labor.

In the End: A Moral Economy

Eventually, Doug loses his job, his wife, and kids. In post-Faustian fashion, he has traded off the humanizing experiences of his social relationships to his stand-ins. His self-replication and the resultant fragmentation of productive self-functioning have won him his battle with time but lost him the meaningful social connections he originally sought to safeguard. He finally decides to dispatch his clones (the director referred to them as his “personalities” and his “masculine,” “feminine,” and “inner child” “selves”) to whatever future they might make for themselves: the clones go South, driving off in a convertible to open a pizza joint in Florida.

The fetishization of time in late-capitalist nightmarescapes, which is central to replication films and an explicit theme of Multiplicity, returns us to the social practice of memory and forgetting. The condition of the hero’s stable self is, paradoxically, that he must remember to forget that his multiplicity is commodity driven. Or, put another way, he must forget the notion of evolutionary progress in order to recall and celebrate the recombinative value of the social relations that constitute him as a person in terms not amenable to quantification. Of course, in stating this, the director and I part company (or, rather, we engage different and supplementary models), for I find a significant difference between multiplying wholes (individuals) and parts (personality traits) and a danger for healthy sociality in taking the latter for the former. The film’s narrative calls its own bluff on this point: Doug’s plan—or, more precisely, the Gemini scientist’s solution for him—goes awry. Whereas the myth of totality (and totalitarianism) imagines a world in which the whole of life is subject to the will of one scientist, one regime, or one corporation, the film is saying, Let the buyer, or creator, beware any expression of the double’s


45. Ramis, interview with author.
free agency. The multiple will inevitably reveal its difference from the copy; the clone demands distinction from the replicant.46

The irony that films about devouring regimes of power are produced for mass consumption should not escape us. Neither should this delude us that films as cultural artifacts do not enter diversely into the social exchanges and cultural imaginaries of diverse audiences, just as human cloning provokes diverse cultural and personal responses, yet to be fully explored ethnographically. The idea of mass-producing life, however, is in a sense publicly registered in replication films as a prospective trauma for humankind. The notion is drawn, like images in celluloid, from the possibility of history materially repeating itself, anywhere within reach of corporeal fetishism. In short, the medium puns the message and vice versa, creating a historicity in which linear, chronological time—time in forward play—must acknowledge replay and the prospect of returning, with critical awareness and a felt urgency, to problematically painful or pleasurable historical templates. I feel I cannot overstate the danger of becoming inured to the idea of commercial human cloning as a result of normalizing media coverage or of scientists applying cloning technology to sentimental private ventures like the Missyplicity Project, which advertises the cloning of a “beloved pet” by “world-class” scientists.47 The most recent cloning film to date, The Sixth Day, set in a future labeled “Sooner Than You Think,” makes this point with linked subtexts and images of cloned pets and macabre little-girl dollies.

In human double films, the ability to serialize human beings is represented as the apogee—or nadir—of an evolutionary program to materially control human “nature.”48 The films’ visual and textual rhetorics of resistance to this program tend to focus on the double’s subject status; replicants and clones engage in acts of memory and forgetting and show that they can learn and transform models of and for relating; their subjectivity is rendered a moot point. Working the project from the other end are their close relatives, the cyberwarriors of The Matrix, whose technologically enhanced bodies become virtual weapons for rescuing humanity from the benumbed simulacrum of normalcy that daily life on earth has become under the rule of alien bugs. Here the romantic mission is to expose a hideously degraded reality that underpins an apparently secure “society.” The cyberwarrior’s quest for immersion in the brutally

46. This is the hard-won lesson for Schwarzenegger’s character, whose first impulse in The Sixth Day is to blow his clone away (he can’t do it) as if he were a mechanical action figure. Later the two Arnolds form a brotherly bond. See footnote 33.
48. See Haraway, Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™; see also Strathern, Reproducing the Future.
real and the drive to converge with that reality target the destruction of what Richard Coyne has termed the "'consensual hallucination' of the digital matrix" of an IT world that passes for reality.49 We might well follow Walter Benjamin in taking "convergence with the real" as the new directive for postmodernity.50 But if we listen to ourselves in the films we make and take in, this directive will need to recognize explicitly the "second nature" that heroic individualism threatens to become in public culture.51


51. I am reminded of Silverman's figure "outside lack and the desire which it sustains," and of the film Gattaca (1997), which critiques a futuristic society's intolerance of less than "perfect" people (Silverman, "Back to the Future," p. 109).