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## The Obscene Immortality and its Discontents

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The digital machinery that sustains video games not only directs and regulates the gamer's desire, it also »interpellates« the gamer into a specific mode of subjectivity: a pre-Oedipal not-yet-castrated subjectivity that floats in a kind of obscene immortality: when I am immersed into a game, I dwell in a universe of undeadness where no annihilation is definitive since, after every destruction, I can return to the beginning and start the game again... One should note here that this obscene immortality was the stuff of fantasy long before cartoons – say, in the work of de Sade. The axiom of the philosophy of finitude is that one cannot escape finitude/mortality as the unsurpassable horizon of our existence; Lacan's axiom is that, no matter how much one tries, one cannot escape immortality. But what if this choice is false? What if finitude and immortality, like lack and excess, also form a parallax couple, what if they are the same

from a different point of view? What if immortality is an object that is a remainder/excess over finitude, what if finitude is an attempt to escape from the excess of immortality? What if Kierkegaard was right here, but for the wrong reason, when he also understood the claim that we, humans, are just mortal beings who disappear after their biological death as an easy way to escape the ethical responsibility that comes with the immortal soul? He was right for the wrong reason insofar as he equated immortality with the divine and ethical part of a human being — but there is another immortality. What Cantor did for infinity, we should do for immortality, and assert the multiplicity of immortalities: the Badiouian noble immortality/infinity of the deployment of an Event (as opposed to the finitude of a human animal) comes after a more basic form of immortality which resides in what Lacan calls the Sadean fundamental fantasy: the fantasy of another, ethereal body of the victim, which can be tortured indefinitely and nonetheless magically retains its beauty (recall the Sadean figure of the young girl sustaining endless humiliations and mutilations from her depraved torturer and somehow mysteriously surviving it all intact, in the same way Tom and Jerry and other cartoon heroes survive all their ridiculous ordeals intact). In this form, the comical and the disgustingly-terrifying (recall different versions of the “undead” — zombies, vampires, etc. — in popular culture) are inextricably connected. (Therein resides the point of proper burial, from *Antigone* to *Hamlet*: to prevent the dead from returning in the guise of this obscene immortality...)

We are not describing here a mere fantasy but a fantasy which can be enacted as a real life mode of subjectivity – say, I can act in my love life as if I am experimenting with ever new partners and, if the relationship doesn't work, I can erase it and start again... Instead of celebrating such an immersion into the gaming dreamworld as a liberating stance of playful repetitions, we should discern in it the denial of »castration,« of a gap constitutive of subjectivity. And we should not confuse the denial of this gap with the loss of contact with hard external reality: our point is not that when we float in the gaming dreamspace we lose contact with hard reality but, on the contrary, that we ignore the gap of the Real that hollow external reality itself – the idea of being fully immersed into gaming dream space is structurally the same as the idea of being fully

immersed into external reality as one of the objects in it. In short, our »free« floating in the digital dreamspace and the dreaded possibility that we are totally controlled and regulated by a digital machinery are the two sides of the same coin, i.e., our immersion into the digital space can be experienced in the two opposed ways of free floating and of total control.

At a conceptual level, the main result of our immersion into the “undead” dreamspace of video games is thus that it breaks with the linear time and throws us into a circular time with no end where we can always return to the same point and begin again – the opposition of these two times gives birth to many paradoxes with important implications and consequences. *The Discovery* (Charlie McDowell, 2017) deploys an interesting version of circular time – here is the film’s story (shamelessly copied from Wikipedia). It opens with a TV interview with Thomas Harbor, the man who scientifically proved the existence of an afterlife, which has led to an extremely high suicide rate. The interviewer asks Harbor if he feels responsible, to which he says no, and directly after this statement, a member of the crew kills himself on air. We then jump two years ahead: Harbor's son Will travels on a ferry where he meets Isla, a strange young woman; they engage in a conversation and Will notes Isla looks very familiar. He says he is upset that people keep killing themselves, while Isla thinks it's an easy way out. Will also shares a memory he had while being dead for a minute, where he saw a young boy at a beach. When they arrive at their destination, Will is picked up by his brother Toby who drives him to an isolated mansion where their father has built up his new station. Will notes people working for him, and Toby says they all attempted suicide. They enter a room where Will meets Lacey and Cooper, two scientists who work on his father tied up to a machine as they repeatedly kill and revive him. Will blames his father for the high suicide rate.

Later, Will sees Isla on the beach as she walks into the water with a backpack full of stones. He runs after, barely saving her. He brings her to the mansion, where she is taken in. Will also reveals to Isla that his mother killed herself when he was younger. At a later meeting with the occupants, Thomas reveals he invented a machine that can record what dead people see in the afterlife, which requires a dead person, and they

steal the corpse of Pat Phillips from the morgue. The next day, they try to record the afterlife but nothing happens. After the failed attempt, Will enters the room alone and puts back a piece of wiring he took out of the machine, which then shows a sequence of a man driving to a hospital, visiting someone and fighting with a woman there. Will finds the hospital from the recording online and visits it, but finds that the hallway from the video is gone after remodeling a decade prior. Will drives Isla to the hospital, shows her the recording and tells her that he thinks the device records memory rather than the afterlife. After breaking into the hospital, they find a file from Pat Phillips' father, who died in the hospital. Isla finds out that the man in the recording has a different tattoo from the one she saw on Pat earlier. Will drives her to the beach, where she reveals to him that she had a son and that he died while she was asleep. Later they seek out the woman from the video, revealed to be Pat's sister. She tells them that Pat left her alone with their dying father and that he never visited him in the hospital.

Isla and Will grow closer together and share a kiss, which is interrupted by Toby. Together they rush to Thomas, who is hooked up on the machine and dead. They observe that he is seeing the night their mother killed herself, except that Thomas stops her. When others succeed in reviving Thomas, he realizes that "afterlife" is an alternate version of their existing life: it takes you to a moment you regret from your life and lets you change the outcome. "I always said the afterlife was a different plane of existence," he says. "But what if it's a different plane of *this* existence?" The group agrees to destroy the machine, and Thomas prepares to hold a speech, which is interrupted by Lacey shooting Isla (who claims Lacey just "relocated" her). Isla dies in Will's arms. Later, a devastated Will hooks himself up with the machine. He arrives back on the ferry, where he meets Isla again, who states that this is a memory. It is revealed that Will is living in a memory loop trying to prevent Isla's death and that he restarts on the ferry every time. Isla says that he saved her and that they both will move on now. Back to reality, although Toby and Thomas try to revive Will, he dies, promising Isla to remember her. In the final scene, Will stands on the beach, where he sees a little boy and gets him out of the water. His mother, Isla, arrives and thanks Will. They don't

recognize each other. After she leaves, he looks back, first confused and then with a knowing look.

Many critics claim that, after a good beginning, the film gets confused, aiming at some kind of metaphysical depth but not knowing to decide in which direction to develop its speculations – a reproach which rather betrays the laziness of the critics themselves to think. Yes, there are inconsistencies in the film, but its basic line of reflection is clear. It is easy to see the attraction of the first twist in the film's plot: Will travels to his father and finds that he is again and again "killed" (put into a flatline state, neither living nor dead) by his assistants in order to record his soul's post-mortem activities... is the undead father who returns to haunt us not one of the ultimate nightmares? If we accept this premise there is no need for some supernatural spiritual magic, and we can also easily accept that these travels back into alternate realities can become self-aware: "Will knows he's been sent back and Isla is equally self-aware. 'This is just your memory,' Isla tells him. 'You were never able to stop me from killing myself until this life.'" <sup>1</sup> Yes, but she tells him this as an appearance in his dying mind: "It becomes apparent that Will has been returning to this moment over and over, each time hoping to save the mysterious woman on the boat who killed herself. Only now it's different: He knows he's in a loop and he's looking for a way out." <sup>2</sup> And precisely through this self-awareness he finds a way out, but a tragic one: he knows that Isla wants to kill herself because of the death of her son, so he understands that it is not enough to save her from drowning – the only way to do it is to travel further back to the beach where her son drowned and save him. But this means that he will never meet her again, not even in his alternate-reality dreams... in short, the only way to save her is to lose her, to erase even the past of meeting her – or, to quote the director himself who say, when discussing the final beach scene:

*"[Will] realizes that he may never see [Isla] again, so in his mind this ultimate act of love is connected to her son because the only reason she ever wanted to take her own life was because she lost her son. So he finds a way in his mind to get to the beach."* <sup>3</sup>

Repetition (repeatedly returning to the same point in the past in order to act in it differently) is thus not a process of playfully re-enacting the past but the activity set in motion by an ethical failure. The need to repeat disappears once the past failure is corrected: when Will goes back to the beach and saves the child he can die totally, his mind will no longer postpone death and travel to alternate realities, and, through his act, Isla will also find peace in death... As such, *The Discovery* should be compared with *The Arrival* (Denis Villeneuve, from the story by Ted Chiang, 2016), another film about temporal paradoxes in which the heroine makes the wrong choice (she chooses to marry and have a child although she is aware of the catastrophic outcome). *The Discovery* turns around the situation of *The Arrival*: in *The Discovery*, future (life of the soul after death) is revealed to be composed of its past dreams, while in *Arrival* past (flashback) is revealed to be future.

*Arrival* subtly subverts the standard Hollywood formula of the production of a couple as the frame of a catastrophic encounter – subtly since it appears to follow this formula: the final outcome of the arrival of aliens is that Louise and Ian decide to form a couple and produce a child... Here is a brief outline of the plot (shamelessly resumed from Wikipedia). The film opens up with what appears to be a flashback scene where we see the heroine, the linguist Louise Banks, taking care of her adolescent daughter who is dying of cancer. Then we jump to the present time: while Louise is lecturing at a university, twelve extraterrestrial spaceships appear across the Earth, and the US army colonel Weber visits Louise and asks her to join Ian Donnelly, a Los Alamos physicist, to decipher the language of the alien creatures on the ships and find out why they have arrived. They are brought to a military camp in Montana near one of the spacecraft, and make contact with two seven-limbed aliens on board, and Ian nicknames them Abbott and Costello. Louise discovers that they have a written language of complicated circular symbols, and she begins to learn the symbols that correspond to a basic vocabulary. As she becomes more proficient, she starts to see and dream vivid images of herself with her daughter, and of their relationship with the father. When Louise asks what the aliens want, they answer: "offer weapon". A similar translation of "use weapon" is made by scientists at another of the landing sites. Fear of a potential threat from the aliens leads

other nations to close down communication on the project, and some prepare for an attack. However, Louise argues that the symbol interpreted as "weapon" might have an alternative translation, such as "tool" or "technology."

Rogue U.S. soldiers plant explosives in the spacecraft. Unaware, Louise and Ian re-enter. The aliens give them a much larger and more complex message. Abbott ejects Ian and Louise from the craft as the explosion occurs, which leaves them unconscious. When Louise and Ian come round, the military prepares to evacuate, and the spacecraft moves higher above the ground. Ian works out that the symbols relate to the notion of time, and they conclude that the aliens must want nations to cooperate. Meanwhile, China notifies the world that its military is planning to attack the spacecraft off its coast. Louise rushes back to the spacecraft in Montana, which sends down a shuttle to take her inside. She meets Costello, who communicates that Abbott is dying or dead. Louise asks about her visions of a daughter, and Costello explains that she is seeing the future (her "visions" were not flashbacks but flashforwards). Costello also communicates that they have come to help humanity by sharing their language, which is the "weapon" or "tool" because it changes perception of time. The aliens know that 3000 years into the future they will need humanity's help in return.

Louise returns as the camp is being evacuated. She has a vision of herself at a future United Nations reception, being thanked by General Shang for convincing him to suspend China's military attack. He explains that she had called his private mobile telephone; he shows her its number, which he says he knows he must do without understanding why. In the present, Louise steals a satellite phone and calls Shang, but realizes she does not know what to say. Her vision continues with Shang explaining that she had convinced him by repeating his wife's last words in Mandarin, which he tells Louise. This convinces Shang in present time, the Chinese attack is called off, and the twelve spacecraft then disappear from Earth.

When packing to leave the camp, Ian admits his love for Louise. They discuss life choices, and whether they would change them if they knew the future. Louise foresees that Ian will father her daughter Hannah, but will leave her after discovering that she

knew their daughter would die before adulthood. Nevertheless, when Ian asks Louise if she wants to have a baby, she agrees.

Hannah, the daughter's name which can be read forwards and backwards, is an obvious code for the film itself. If we read it from the first scene forwards, aliens arrive on earth to justify her sad life (death of her child and loss of her husband) as the result of a meaningful decision knowing the outcome. (At the film's end, when the couple embraces, Louise aliens – but if we read it this way, an enigma remains: she says to Ian: "Nice to embrace you again" – so when did they embrace before? Only in Louise's flash-forwards visions of them as a couple?) And, of course, we can read it in the way directly suggested by the film: everything begins with the arrival of the first flashback/forward that opens the film – WHEN, in what present, does it take place AS FLASHBACK/FORWARD? Does she not experience flashbacks only in contact with heptapods who teach her to do it? Or is the true present the beginning (the present in which she talks in a voice-over) and all the main story is a flashback which includes flashforwards? All these paradoxes arise when our, human, sequential mode of awareness is suddenly confronted with a holistic circular one, or, as Chang who write the story on which the film is based, said:

*"Humans had developed a sequential mode of awareness, while heptapods had developed a simultaneous mode of awareness. We experienced events in an order, and perceived their relationship as cause and effect. They experienced all events at once, and perceived a purpose underlying them all."*<sup>4</sup>

Living in such a circular time radically transforms the notion of acting: our common idea of the opposition between free choice and determinism is left behind:

*"The heptapods are neither free nor bound as we understand those concepts; they don't act according to their will, nor are they helpless automatons, 'Louise says in Chiang's story. 'What distinguishes the heptapods' mode of awareness is not just that their actions coincide with history's events; it is also that their motives coincide with history's purposes. They act to create the future, to enact chronology.'"*<sup>5</sup>



We should especially not directly link this opposition of circular and linear to the duality of feminine and masculine: it is Louise, the woman, who (based on her grasp of the language of heptapods) does the act, makes the decision, and thereby undermines the circular continuity from within, while Ian (the man) ignores the heptapod Other and in this way continues to rely on it. (We should note that heptapods have the form of a squid, kraken even, the ultimate form of animal horror. The signs of their language are formed with their ink gushing out like squid's ink. As such, heptapods are not feminine but asexual monsters. - When Louise gets in contact with this different universe through her visions, her entire process of making key decisions concerning her life changes:

*“If you could see your whole life laid out in front of you, would you change things?” she asks her future husband Ian Donnelly. ‘Put another way, would you rob someone of their existence, and yourself of the time shared with them on Earth, if you knew they would one day would feel pain, and you would feel their loss?’<sup>6</sup> “What if the experience of knowing the future changed a person?’ Louise ponders. ‘What if it evoked a sense of urgency, a sense of obligation to act precisely as she knew she would?’ And it is precisely because Louise understands what it will be like to lose her daughter that she chooses to bring her into the world nonetheless.”<sup>7</sup>*

In this circular view, not only the past but also the future is fixed; however, although a subject doesn't have the choice of directly selecting its future, there is a more subtle possibility of the subject breaking out of the entire circle of future and past. This is why willing the inevitable (choosing the future we know will happen) is not just an empty gesture which changes nothing. The paradox is that it changes nothing, it just registers a fact, if we do it, but it is necessary in its very superfluity - if we don't do it, if we don't choose the inevitable, the entire frame which made it inevitable falls apart and a kind of ontological catastrophe occurs:

*“there is likely a reading of Arrival which might argue that this means time is circular, and all things are predestined to occur in a certain way. That there is no free will. It is the old ‘time is a circle’ adage of science fiction. [...] Rather, Villeneuve’s film (and the Chiang story it is based on) suggests free will and choice exists if one chooses to do*

*nothing. Time is not immutable, hence why the aliens' presence on Earth is still high stakes for them."*<sup>8</sup>

What is a true choice? When, in a difficult ethical predicament where the right decision would have costed me a lot, I doubt, oscillate, search for excuses, and then I realize that I *don't really have a choice* – a true choice is the choice of no-choice. But an obvious question arises here: why will Heptapods need our – human – help? What if it is because time is NOT just a self-enclosed circle? What if they need to break out of their circular notion of time, what if they need our cuts, shifts, onesidedness...? It is a decision (like the one Louise faces) which breaks the circle of time. So we should not perceive the relationship between us (humans) and Heptapods as a relationship between those who think fragmentary, in a linear way, breaking the Whole, and those who think holistically, overcoming the linear flow of time, replacing it with a circular contemporaneity. Heptapods need us, and this need is a proof that their holistic approach is also flawed: the circle as the basic form of their "language" is really an ellipse, it circulates around a disavowed cut which always-already ruins its perfection. What this means with regard to temporality is that there is predestination, we cannot change the future, but we can change the past. This is the only consistent answer to the key question: what do they want from us? Why do THEY need us? They got stuck in their circularity and they (will) need our ability to intervene into a circle with a cut (decision). This is why the claim that "the alien race /of heptapods/ attempts to display to mankind they are their own worst enemy, *not* some outside force from the beyond"<sup>9</sup> is deeply misleading: if we, humans, are our own worst enemies, why, then, would they need us? What can we offer them except our blindness? Is it not that we should rather turn around this claim: while we, humans, have external enemies, the real worst enemy of a holistic race which sees it all can only be this race itself. This is why the heptapods universe, although it may appear more stable than ours, is effectively much more fragile and prone to dangers:

*"In researching the heptapod language, it is explained that those who 'speak' it can see the entirety of their own personal timeline, from start to finish, and their version of 'free will' means that they CHOOSE not to change anything that is destined to happen.*

*/.../ In Arrival's deterministic universe, free will exists in the form of following through on a choice you already know you'll make. In effect, by choosing not to alter the future, you're creating it, and actively affirming it."*<sup>10</sup>

OK, but what happens if they choose change, if they choose NOT to assert the inevitable? (Note how the situation is here the opposite of the one in Protestantism where the future is predestined but you don't know what your predetermine fate is – here you know it.) When Louise explains to her daughter why she got divorced from her father, she says: "He said I made the wrong choice."

Or, with regard to religion, while heptapods are immersed in a holistic spirituality that transcends divisions and encompasses all linear deployment in a circular unity, we humans are marked by Christianity in which the Event of Christ stands for a radical gap, a cut between Before and After which breaks the Circle. One should therefore resist the temptation to see in Louise's choice some kind of ethical grandeur (in the sense that she heroically chose the future although she was aware of its terrible outcome): what she does is an extremely selfish act of neglecting others' suffering. This is why she gets caught in a circle: not because of her spiritual contact with heptapods but because of her guilt. The irony is that Louise literally saves the world (by phoning the Red Army commander and thereby preventing the Chinese attack on the heptapods), with her final choice she ruins her world.

So what happens when we decide not to choose the inevitable? Such a "wrong" decision would destroy/undo the past itself, not only the future. Fredric Brown's classic short-short story "Experiment" deals precisely with this paradox, reducing it to its most simple form. Professor Johnson presents to his two colleagues the experimental model of a time machine; it operates only on small objects and for distances into the past and future of twelve minutes or less. The machine looks like a small postage scale with two dials under the platform; Johnson shows to his colleagues the experimental object, a small metal cube, and announces that he will first send it five minutes into the future. He sets one of the dials on the time machine, places the cube gently on the machine's platform. The cube vanishes and, five minutes later, it reappears. Then he sets the

other dial in order to move the cube five minutes into the past. He explains the procedure: "It is six minutes before three o'clock. I shall now activate the mechanism — by placing the cube on the platform — at exactly three o'clock. Therefore, the cube should, at five minutes before three, vanish from my hand and appear on the platform, five minutes before I place it there." "How can you place it there, then?" asked one of his colleagues. "It will, as my hand approaches, vanish from the platform and appear in my hand to be placed there." The cube vanished from his hand and appeared on the platform of the time machine. "See? Five minutes before I shall place it there, it is there!" His other colleague frowned at the cube. "But," he said, "what if, now that it has already appeared five minutes before you place it there, you should change your mind about doing so and not place it there at three o'clock? Wouldn't there be a paradox of some sort involved?" "An interesting idea," Professor Johnson said. "I had not thought of it, and it will be interesting to try. Very well, I shall not ..." The last two lines of the story: "There was no paradox at all. The cube remained. But the entire rest of the universe, professors and all, vanished."

In Lacanian terms, we get here a reversal of the relationship between reality and the Real: when we don't put the cube on the machine (for it to travel back), it is not the cube which disappears but the entire reality around it. In other words, the price for the cube becoming an ordinary part of our reality is that the rest of reality disappears. (In the "normal" state, the cube is the Real exempted from reality – as such, through its exemption, it sustains the consistency of our reality.) One should locate very precisely the cause of the catastrophe: it takes place when we violate the rules of the *backward* time travel. The cube (which we are supposed to put on the machine at a certain point in time) travels five minutes back, and we can hold it in our hands or play with it for five minutes before we have to put it back on the machine so that it could travel five minutes back... but what if we don't put it on the machine after five minutes? We in a way ontologically cheat on the future, i.e., after the cube already exists (in the past), we annihilate the conditions of its existence.

There are many versions of a similar paradox in science fiction – say, what if I travel back in time and kill my parents before I am born, what will happen then with me? Will I

then retroactively erase my own existence – but how can I do it if, by way of killing my parents, I don't exist? But there is a key difference between these versions and Brown's story: in the other predominant versions, the outcome of the paradox is that the agent who goes into the past and destroys its own future cause thereby destroys itself, disappears from reality, while in Brown's story, it's not the excessive object (cube) but *the reality surrounding it that disappears*. Therein resides the shocking effect of the story's conclusion: we expect something to happen to the cube whose position (not being placed on time on the time machine) breaks the ontological rule, i.e., we expect the cube to disappear and retroactively erase the traces of its existence, but what happens is the opposite: the cube reveals itself to be the real which persists in all possible worlds, and *it is the world (universe of reality) in which the cube existed which disappears*. Instead of dwelling in the intricacies of this paradox and deciding are they meaningful or just a nonsense game, we should note that there is a domain, that of the symbolic order, in which such ontological cheating is not only possible but practiced all the time. (We leave aside here speculations about the possibility of something homologous in the strange universe of quantum physics.)

The situation is like the one in science-fiction stories where the hero opens the wrong door (or presses the wrong button) and all of a sudden the entire reality around him disintegrates. And does something similar not take place in the scene in the hotel room, the place of crime, in Francis Ford Coppola's *Conversation*? The investigator inspects the room with a Hitchcockian gaze, like Lila and Sam do with Marion's motel room in *Psycho*, moving from the main bedroom to the bathroom and focusing there on the toilet and the shower. After a series of obvious references to *Psycho* apropos of the shower (quickly pulling open the curtain, inspecting the hole in the sink), the investigator focuses on the (allegedly cleansed) toilet seat, flushes it, and then the stain appears as if out of nowhere, blood and other traces of the crime overflowing the edge of the sink... Although the temporal dimension is absent here (there is no time travel), we do get an "impossible" object: an object which appears to be an ordinary thing but which should not be used as what it appears to be.

But is not something homologous taking place at a more elementary level in an ideological commitment? Are such commitments not in a way also indebted from the future? Say, in fighting for Communism, I act on behalf of a (Communist) future, I act as an agent of this future, but what if my acts undermine this future? What if, when the future I relied on is here, I cannot return the cube to its place, i.e., I cannot claim that what I offer is Communism? In this case (say, of Stalinism or, even more, of the Khmer Rouge reign), Communism remains, but social reality is in ruins, caught in the vortex of self-destruction. Therein resides the tragedy: even if I don't put the cube at its place (i.e., even if I try to pretend "this was not really Communism"), the cube will be there...

### **Links to Quotes:**

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Jackson, quoted from <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/netflix-discovery-ending-explained-theories>.

<sup>2</sup> Dan Jackson, quoted from <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/netflix-discovery-ending-explained-theories>.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/netflix-discovery-ending-explained-theories>.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/arrival-movie-ending-big-time-twist>.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from <http://www.theverge.com/2016/11/16/13642396/arrival-ted-chiang-story-of-your-life-film-twist-ending>.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from <http://www.theverge.com/2016/11/16/13642396/arrival-ted-chiang-story-of-your-life-film-twist-ending>.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted from <http://www.theverge.com/2016/11/16/13642396/arrival-ted-chiang-story-of-your-life-film-twist-ending>.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from <http://www.denofgeek.com/us/movies/arrival/259944/explaining-the-arrival-ending>.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from <http://21stcenturywire.com/2016/11/15/arrival-2016-the-films-secret-meaning-explained/>.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from <http://www.theverge.com/2016/11/16/13642396/arrival-ted-chiang-story-of-your-life-film-twist-ending>.