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Spirals: Spacing, Trauma, Becoming, and Autoimmunity with Caruth, Derrida, Freud, Itō, and Miyazaki.

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Abstract

This thesis studies trauma through the works of Japanese popular culture to propose a spiral model for the form of trauma. I analyse trauma as it is re-presented in the *Dark Souls I, III*, and Junji Itō's *Uzumaki*. Applying contemporary trauma theorists such as Catherine Malabou and Cathy Caruth alongside Gaston Bachelard and Jacques Derrida, I seek here to present a *becoming-space of time* and *becoming-time of space* as a new way of approaching trauma. This phrase is briefly mentioned in Derrida's *Rogues* and has been reworked here to describe trauma as it behaves in space and time—or, rather, a mixture of the two. I then apply the Derridean notions of spacing and autoimmunity to illustrate a non-linear model of time and trauma, which allows for a discussion of the methods by which we (re)orient ourselves when we have been affected by a traumatic event or image.

Keywords

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor Jonathan Boulter. Thank you, also, to my husband, for his support. To my fellow students, thank you for sharing this experience and your knowledge.

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Preface

Trauma is such a difficult concept to discuss because it is, in the first place, difficult to define. Organizations, institutions, fields of study, and theorists will ascribe a variety of limits to the concept (e.g. whether it encompasses everything outside of the normal range of human experience to anything that is violent or leaves a physical mark—on the body, or brain, or "spirit"). However, such a wide and generalized description leaves us at a loss—for how can we treat something that we do not understand? How do we help ourselves, and others, when we do not understand the thing that is afflicting us?

There is nothing so originary as trauma; nothing that belongs to any 'beginning' or source such as trauma. One might claim that life itself is the origin of all things, but in truth life is but the introduction of difference and as such, is itself a disruption—that is, a trauma. One may also claim that thought is instead the origin of all things,[1] but this too also introduced disparity (between light and dark, life and death, etc.). However, we must cease to read this 'disruption' as a purely *timely* concept. It cannot be so simple as this; we disrupt space (or, if the reader prefers, the '*natural* order of things') by building and creating. Indeed, the very existence of human beings is a disruption of both time and space. Humans produce and build, enacting change upon the materiality and physical geometry of the world; after all, human civilization itself was precipitated by the introduction of agriculture and the domestication of animals, but this was done at the cost of disrupting the nature of the land and seasons. From the very 'beginning,' human *beings* have known nothing but disruption. We always return to it; it is cyclic, corruptive, seductive—and we have known no other way, for we ourselves are disruptions. When I say 'cyclic,' however, I do not mean that human beings only ever move in circles, but rather in *spirals*. To understand such a model or method, we must speak of space *and* time, instead of merely time. Spirals are, of course, *geometric* figures and thus must be as *spatial* as they are *temporal* (i.e. even in the simplest sense—it takes time to draw a figure).

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[1] I.e. Once there was a god, and she *thought*, 'How nice it would be, if there was *light*'

Theorists of varied traditions and schools have often referred to trauma as a disruption in one's life, or one's experience of it. These theorists believe that trauma belongs to time, or more specifically, that it touches the affected through time. However, because they locate this rupture largely in time, they have largely neglected to study the physical creativity and/or capacity for material destruction in trauma. Although some theorists such as Catherine Malabou—and, of course, many neuroscientists—have researched the impact of trauma upon the physical matter of brain tissue and neural connections, they have not asked themselves how trauma changes the way in which the individual places themselves within geometric and metaphysical space. Further, they have not asked how the individual sees, interprets, or navigates themselves within these spaces after a traumatic event occurs or after they have been subjected to a traumatic image. Often, these theorists betray themselves by using turns of phrase which reveal the spatiality of trauma or of the experience of time, but oddly, they do not seek to explore the implications of these betrayals.

To better understand the machinations of trauma in space, then, I will speak of *spacing*. Jacques Derrida spoke of this notion at length—with his concepts of *différance*, the *trace*, *archè-writing*, etc.—and in terms of its materiality/physicality, but did not specifically speak of trauma in terms of specific human experiences. Here I seek to apply these concepts, as well as the Derridean notion of autoimmunity (a concept which he explored in depth as it applies to the logic of democracy), in order to facilitate and suggest a more nuanced study of trauma. The logic and patterns of autoimmunity are quite useful to the discussion of the spiral as well, for although it is cyclic, it too does not place the affected 'back at the beginning,' spatially or temporally. This is impossible, and we must cease to approach trauma with a narrow mindset—for the sake of knowledge, research, and those afflicted. To explore this notion further, I will be speaking of the supplement—or that *dangerous* supplement, as Derrida called it—and exploring the chain of supplements as an example by which the autoimmune process functions within time and space. This leads us to what is the central phrase or concept of this thesis: a *becoming-space of time and a becoming-time of space*,[2] a phrase put forth by Derrida in his works but never discussed at length. I will be utilizing it

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[2] Derrida, *Rogues*, 46.

here to reveal the *ongoing* complexity of our human experiences of time-space and the ruptures we experience within it, or traumatic events and images.

To discuss these concepts, theorists as well as popular works of non-theoretical literature will be consulted. Jacques Derrida, Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth, Catherine Malabou, and Gaston Bachelard will be featured among the theorists, and will be examined in conjunction with mangaka (author and artist of Japanese manga) Junji Itō's *Uzumaki*, and director Hidetaka Miyazaki's *Dark Souls I* and *III*.[3] These latter, non-theoretical works prominently feature the figures of spirals and the logic of repetition, becoming, trauma, and autoimmunity, as well as characters who suffer both traumatic episodes and PTSD-like symptoms.

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[3] Refer to Appendix B for brief summaries of all three works. *Dark Souls II* has been omitted as it was directed by Tomohiro Shibuya and Yui Tanimura, not Hidetaka Miyazaki.

Chapter 1

1 « The Becoming of Trauma »

1.1 The Turn of Traumatic Events

Let us begin, then, with Freud, and with *repetition*; for a spiral does re-*turn*—although not, of course, in the same way which a circle re-*turns*. Beginning with Freud's discussion of the repetition-compulsion and (as it relates to) traumatic episodes, I must first state that I do not wish to equate the two, but they are so often present in the same event—and in its aftermath / return—that the two must be studied in proximity to one another. The autoimmune process, when it inevitably fails, often sparks a repetition of the event that it wished to protect itself from in the first place, and then therefore repeats theaforementioned act of protection.[1] Repetition-compulsion often results in the individual attempting to protect herself against the trauma of the repetition and yet always failing to do so—for to engage in protective acts against it is to acknowledge that it exists and to still return to it time and time again. It is not just that the act returns to us but we also return to the act. For Freud, this repetition is intimately involved with both pain and pleasure:

> Under the influence of the instinct of the ego for self-preservation [the pleasure principle] is replaced by the 'reality principle,' which without giving up the intention of ultimately attaining pleasure yet demands and enforces the postponement of satisfaction, the renunciation of manifold possibilities of it, and the temporary endurance of 'pain' on the long and circuitous road to pleasure.[2]

However, where pain, or more specifically, trauma, is involved, this process is turned on its head; the ego's instinct for self-preservation is once again deployed, but instead of postponing pleasure, the unconscious employs the process by which 'reality,' or one's experience of time, is put on hold so that the conscious mind can bear and survive the

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[1] We will discuss this more in the second chapter, "Autoimmunity in Trauma"

[2] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 6.

traumatic event. Later, when the moment has passed, the unconscious will reintroduce the event by the process outlined by Freud; that is, temporary pain will be introduced to fulfil the postponement of satisfaction.

Freud also states, "all neurotic pain is […] pleasure which cannot be experienced as such,"[3] —or, all trauma is the interruption and replacement of the pursuance of pleasure, necessarily and ineluctably. Cathy Caruth, who discusses this work in *Literature in the Ashes of History*, also understood that the initial traumatic event introduced a 'break' into one's *experience of time* which would then disrupt one's timeline entirely, allowing for returns to the repressed pain and event. However, neither she nor Freud could decipher the means by which repression "changes a possibility of pleasure into a source of 'pain.'"[4] I will here attempt to understand the *shape* of these means, although perhaps not the means themselves (indeed, I would argue that a true understanding of the latter would be a task quite impossible to achieve). Furthermore, I disagree that there are "experiences of the past that contain *no* potentiality of pleasure, and which could at no time have been satisfactions,"[5] as Freud stated. There is a small and bittersweet pleasure to be found in reliving a traumatic event—if only in the realization that one has survived this event and that there is the possibility for continued survival despite it. I do not mean to say that the individual is always capable of *consciously* recognizing this pleasure, but that life—or perhaps thought—itself must be pleased at its continued existence. *Thriving* is, of course, another issue altogether (although it really should be a condition of survival) and would most likely require treatment to be achieved in the wake of the trauma and in spite of its repetition.

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[3] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 7.

[4] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 7.

[5] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 14-15. emphasis added

Let us take a brief detour to a more modern and 'adult' example: the same logic of the child's "*fort–da*" game which Freud observed in the child[6] can be seen in today's phenomenon of incremental or 'clicker / tapping games.' The tedious and often painful exercise of methodically and repeatedly hitting one's mouse buttons or smart phone screen for hours on end is rewarded with almost immediate results and the satisfaction of quick, incremental progress. For example, *AdVenture Capitalist*[7] rewards the player with increasing amounts of in-game capital based upon the number of lemonade stands, then newspaper deliveries, and so on—all the way to oil companies. The player is rewarded with immediate satisfaction which is also multiplied by the amount of time and effort she is willing to invest in the game. Of course, there are no *real* gains to be had from playing the game, and yet players around the world have invested 'real-world' currency to further their progress in the game (eventually one reaches the point where the amount of in-game capital required to progress takes more than a few days to acquire). Here we can see the child's anxiety that Freud attributed to the absence of his mother and the pleasure of the reunion replaced with the anxiety of earning enough money and the joy of watching one's investments multiply commensurate to the amount of effort one applies. Yet it would appear as though the process of real-world capitalism is not enough for some, especially when there is no immediate visual reward or effect in the average work day.

So too do we such repetition in Miyazaki's *Dark Souls* and Itō's *Uzumaki*. In *Dark Souls*, the player painstakingly makes her way through challenging areas and bosses in order to make the 'most efficient' use of her experience and levels. Each defeated area and boss rewards the player with the satisfaction of having triumphed over a portion of a very difficult game—and oftentimes (especially for the newcomer) these places and bosses can take hours and multiple attempts (tens, hundreds) to conquer. Furthermore, if the player desires a specific piece of weaponry, equipment, or useable item, they must "farm"

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[6] He and Caruth equate this with the child's wish to recreate the return of his mother in spite of the repeated pain in sending the toy, representative of his mother, away.

[7] Hyper Hippo Productions and Kongregate, *AdVenture Capitalist*. "Very Positive" on Steam with nearly 40,000 reviews despite critics stating that it is a "pointless" game with little return on time investment. There is a startling multitude of such games available, many of which also make great profits.

the enemy or location that drops that item, which consists of repeatedly killing the enemy until the item is obtained. Yet many players will return to the game time and again for this pleasure, at the cost of the 'pain' and high risk of failure.

In Itō's *Uzumaki*, we might see 'pleasure' in the town's determination to repeat its spiralling to mirror that of the spiral city underground. There are also many village people who use the spiralling effects to their own advantage—i.e. to find 'food'.[8] These pleasures come at the cost of completely changing its upper (exterior) appearance, and of course, at the cost of its inhabitants. Yet, individuals such as Shuichi's father willingly (and later, obsessively) repeat spirals and inflict pain upon themselves for the final pleasure of becoming one with this enigmatic shape. It is also implied, of course, that this process repeats itself over the years, with each town and other generations of individuals also repeating such behaviour—and most importantly, repeating it *willingly* (or so it seems).

Imitation is not the only motive with the repetitive behaviour (both internal and external) of traumatized victims. There is almost always both pain and pleasure involved, and where there is pain, there is still the promise of future pleasure. However, for Freud, these repetitions should, where possible, be sent away to the past: "[The patient] is obliged rather to repeat as a current experience what is repressed, instead of, as the physician would prefer to see him do, recollecting it as a fragment of the past."[9] Here we see again that memory cannot serve true to the experience of trauma, and furthermore, that although both Freud and Caruth read trauma as an experience in and of time, the fact that the patient is repeating rather than *recollecting* necessarily involves the space in which she is living; more importantly it involves the assemblages of the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space in which she is living.

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[8] There are multiple instances of this: the 'mosquito' pregnant mothers who use augers to obtain blood for their fetuses and the men who wait for spirals to turn human beings into snails for 'meat.' See Figures 1 and 2, Appendix A.

[9] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 13.

The individual who repeats within these assemblages is thus changing either or both processes. For Freud, the goal of the physician is to commit the experience to memory and to the past rather than to allow the repetition to continue to occur. If, however, we are to read this experience in a more Derridean or even Deleuzian fashion, the becoming, even though its course has been altered, cannot be stopped or altered. To deny the becoming to occur at all rather than to find another direction for it to continue in is to deny that the trauma has affected the individual altogether—which is an untenable position. Freud seems to be aware of this—to an extent, for he does state that the physician must not allow the patient to repeat (to the best of their abilities), and so by referring to repetition here he acknowledges that there will always be a *remainder* of the event left behind in the present and to continue on into the future(s). However, he does not delve into the issues and risks that will inevitably arise due to attempts to commit as much of the event to memory as possible. If, as he and Caruth suggest, memory is so corrupted by trauma, it *must* be inadvisable to attempt to reintroduce that thing which injured it so in the first place. Freud continues:

> The unconscious, i.e. the 'repressed' material, offers no resistance whatsoever to the curative efforts; indeed it has no other aim than to force its way through the pressure weighing on it, either to consciousness or to discharge by means of some real action. The resistance in the treatment proceeds from the same higher levels and systems in the psychic life that in their time brought about the repression.[10]

Of course! The repressed, traumatic material does not *care* either way (taking care to note that *caring* is a human ability and to use this word is to anthropomorphize trauma—but alas, we have no other means of discussing non-human things). There is no changing the damage it has caused; one can only learn to accept and live with the knowledge that it existed and continues to exist. To attempt to completely 'cure' trauma is an exhausting and futile effort; although this is not to say that we should abandon all hope of treatment. We must, as Derrida would say (*il faut*), take responsibility.

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[10] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 14.

I simply wish to say that as it is, we cannot hope to erase the effects and affects that trauma inflicts upon the individual. To attempt to cast away the event to the past and to memory is a naïve hope that will only further damage the individual by introducing many more breaks in their experience of time-space, or by twisting their becoming time-space / space-time beyond recognition. Rather, acceptance and understanding are far more helpful… The task at hand is not to alter the course of one's becoming but rather to come to terms with where and when it has been and where/when it is going (on). I realize this may not offer much hope to those suffering from PTSD and other such disorders, but there is a very real cruelty in offering to 'cure' those who live within these realities.

In terms of treatment and protection, Freud states, "For the living organism protection against stimuli is almost a more important task than reception of stimuli."[11] He goes on to say that this protection is only in place against external stimuli. From internal dangers and risks—i.e. from the mind—there is no such protection and the organism is entirely vulnerable.[12] In terms of trauma, of course, external stimuli manage to break through, and once inside, become both external and internal. This means that the organism is no longer able to protect itself from itself. Such a thing can only be done retroactively, and we know by now that such an act (repression) must be autoimmune. What is repressed will always return, and often with a vengeance:

> But the pleasure-principle is to begin with put out of action here. The flooding of the psychic apparatus with large masses of stimuli can no longer be prevented: on the contrary, another task presents itself—to bring the stimulus under control, to 'bind' in the psyche the stimulus mass that has broken its way in, so as to bring about a discharge of it.[13]

He speaks here in the language of 'energies,' but his theories are still useful. To simplify this a little, let us briefly think of this in terms of biology and virology. Imagine, if you will, a human being that is infected with a dangerous virus. In response, the human's

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[11] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 21.

[12] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 22.

[13] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 21 -22.

immune system wraps a barrier or membrane around the virus, and leaves it at that, satisfied that the threat has been taken care of. However, over time, the virus manages to send out little pieces of itself which contain strands of DNA that will then be translated by the human cells as their own—and so the cells begin to become sick, or to die, or to otherwise behave chaotically or abnormally. The method that the cell / immune system chose to protect itself is not unlike that which the mind uses to protect itself against trauma. Trauma will inevitably burrow its way into the mind, and the mind retroactively protects itself by burying it still deeper. The act of protection itself becomes the downfall of the organism that wished to protect itself in the first place.[14]

In *Uzumaki*, we see such autoimmunity take place multiple times. Horrific and strange events occur, and yet the townspeople continue with their daily lives as though there is not a threatening phenomenon taking over their surroundings and their own bodies. One could read this as the efforts of the village people persevering in the face of difficulty, but it is hard to believe that with strange events such as pregnant women[15] feasting on human blood and similarly bloodthirsty newborns,[16] that the town could continue as though such an event had not occurred. It is easy to conclude, therefore, that they repress these events as soon as they occur, and thus manage to continue carrying on through their mundane lives. Even Kirie, who witnesses each event, is oftentimes affected by the spiral

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[14] This is, of course, made even clearer in instances of autoimmune diseases, where the immune system is mistakenly mobilized against the afflicted patient's normal human cells rather than invading / dangerous viruses or infections. But this is a case where the immune system no longer recognizes the normal cells as "normal," whereas it is not as though the trauma is no longer recognized as such, but the mechanism by which it is buried is similar to the methods by which the immune system attempts to protect the body (but the protection fails—often as a result of the protective act itself). Please keep in mind that these are gross over-simplifications of these biological conditions.

[15] Itō's works are full of explorations of the monstrous feminine as it applies to trauma. See *Tomie* Volumes I and II, *Hellstar Remina*, and *Gyo* for more examples. Other instances within *Uzumaki* itself include Dragonfly Pond as the "source" of the spiralling phenomenon—the inverted shape of the pond as it whirlpools is womb-like, and the "feeding" of cremated ashes and so forth are suggestive of impregnation. Of course, this imagery of the womb-like pond simultaneously casts the feminine and its creative potential via the issue of the womb (i.e. the spiral, in this case, or the child) as monstrous. There are further examples of the monstrous child in Itō's other works.

[16] See Appendix A, Figures 1A and 1B.

personally (i.e. her hair[17]). Further, although she is warned many times by her boyfriend, Shuichi, she still does not manage to escape. Of course, Kirie's and the other townspeople's refusal to truly acknowledge the real danger of what is happening eventually culminates in their inability to escape the town once they realise that the town's becoming-spiral will only continue to worsen. While they do recognize that strange events are occurring, they do not seem to be willing or able to admit the very real danger that these events present.

Shuichi may perhaps be the only exception to this; he had every intention of leaving the town and was among the first of the villagers to notice the strange spirals appearing in Kurouzu-cho (within puddles and streams, etc.). In fact, before the beginning of the manga he had been attending school in a neighbouring town due to his fear of Kurouzu-cho. However, the town's own becoming-spiral soon prohibits him from leaving. It could thus be argued that the townspeople of Kurouzu-cho would be unable to leave even if they had realized the true danger that their town presented, since people are able to enter but they are only unable to leave when the "leaving" takes the form of "escaping." However, the fact that Shuichi was able to attend school in another town at the beginning of the narrative, and that news agents were able to arrive later suggests that there was a period during which they had an opportunity to leave, but that something brought them continually back. Even if there was an unnatural force that was exacting its will upon these people, their relative domesticity and lack of panic until the later portion of the narrative suggests that there is some type of repression taking place in their psyches. This repression is also evident within the relationship between the village of Kurouzu-cho and the spiral city underneath as well, for the spiral city deceives and hides itself by way of the illusion of a safe and inhabitable city above. The village is implied to have witnessed several cycles of the process by which the underground city swallows the village above but does not betray a trace of the previous violent acts.

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[17] See Appendix A, Figure 2.

In *Dark Souls*, this attempt to protect one's mind (psyche, consciousness, etc.) is also a prevalent theme. I will later mention how the player as human being attempts to leave her becoming-character behind, and thus break the spiral (thus time-space and space-time themselves).[18] However, we know that such a thing is impossible—everything as we know it would end (and a human being lacks such power in her faculty, anyway). If we are to speak solely of the lore of the game and leave the human being who is playing it out of the discussion momentarily, we still have such autoimmunitary gestures on the level of the character.

Whether we speak of *Dark Souls I* or *III*, Miyazaki's protagonists begin as a weak, pitiful Undead (I) or Ashen One (III). These characters then embark upon a quest to save themselves by linking the Flame of their respective reality. There are different implications of each ending, based upon the decisions that the character makes and where she chooses to go at which point in the timeline, but the final moment remains the same: a new 'cycle' begins ("New Game Plus"). Even if the character chooses to usurp the flame, betray it and the gods, and become the dark lord,[19] she is not then permitted to continue in a world without fire, where humans rule. She is still transported back to the asylum or cemetery, and although she carries with her the experiences of the past 'cycle,' she must still start from the (or *a*) beginning. If the character chooses this ending, then the 'immunization' of the human race against the gods has clearly failed. If the character chooses to link the fire and continue the age of the gods, it still fails, for the fire is still dying, or remains unlinked, when she returns to the beginning of her quest. Either decision in either series in Miyazaki's *Dark Souls* universe(s) presents a character who becomes stronger through both experience and materials; once she has become strong enough, she is able to challenge the final area and boss, but this act inevitably precipitates

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[18] Chapter 2.1

[19] She who dared to begin the era of the human and the dark rather than allow the age of fire and the gods to continue; the 'lord' by virtue of being the person who achieved this for humankind. The return to the beginning after completing this ending would suggest that she was not the first or only one to achieve this, nor the first iteration of herself, especially if the player has chosen this ending in new game plus or in a second, third, etc. play-through of the game.

her towards the previously mentioned 'reincarnation' sequence. In her refusal to allow herself to turn Hollow or her determination to prove herself worthy by linking or betraying the flame, she brings herself right back to the beginning.

There has been much talk of beginnings, and to quantify or qualify what that means, we must speak of time as well. For Cathy Caruth (a theorist and scholar of Jacques Derrida) and Sigmund Freud, for example, "what causes trauma, then, is an encounter that is not directly perceived as a threat to the life of the organism but that occurs, rather, as *a break in the mind's experience of time.*"[20] Note here that it is not *time itself* that is broken, but rather the *experience* of it. To be charitable to Caruth (and Freud), trauma does indeed break the linearity of time by intermingling the past, present, and future together. The broken illusion of linearity allows for the recognition of time as a much more fluid element, without a 'shape' that we might even begin to imagine.[21] For Caruth, trauma does not occur in the instance of the event, and the mind only registers the danger retrospectively. It must then revisit the event after the fact: "Since consciousness cannot bear witness to death, the life of the survivor becomes the repetition of the reality that consciousness cannot grasp. In the traumatic encounter with death, life itself attempts to serve as the witness that consciousness cannot provide."[22] Once the mind has returned to the event, it attempts to belatedly recognize and combat the danger, and repeats these attempts when it inevitably fails. Consequently, the subject is forced to witness the inscription of the traumatic event time and again. The gaps or ruptures which the unconscious allows for in the experience of time provides *space* for the revisiting of these events, as well as memories in general.

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[20] Caruth, *Literature in the Ashes of History*, 5. Emphasis added.

[21] This, however, may be traumatic in and of itself. The notion of linear time is so pervasive and accepted as a universal truth that the realization that time, and therefore one's existence within it, is otherwise is truly shocking and disruptive. Later, I will explore the figure of the spiral as a metaphor for the movement of such a time.

[22] Caruth, *Literature in the Ashes of History*, 6.

Caruth also recognized that traumatic events could be creative and uses the example of a boy's experience of losing his friend, Khalil, to death. Faced with what she names "the ineradicable difference between his life and Khalil's death,"[23] Caruth observes that the boy, Greg, creates a narrative through which he seeks to understand and accept his friend's passing. Greg discovers that Khalil was accidentally buried in his (Greg's) own shirt, to which Greg responds, "it was my favourite shirt and my favourite friend."[24] Caruth claims that this narrative, in which Greg has given a gift to his deceased friend, is a pure,[25] and more importantly, *creative* act: "as Greg gives Khalil back to death, Khalil, in a sense, gives Greg back to life. This is a creative act, an act that bears witness to the dead precisely in the process of turning away."[26] However, she fails to recognize that the creative potential of trauma is not only in the response to it but in its own violent nature. She does speak of the ruptures and distortions caused by trauma:

> [The] simple definition [of post-traumatic stress disorder] belies a very peculiar fact: the pathology cannot be defined either by the event itself—which may or may not be catastrophic and may not traumatize everyone equally—nor can it be defined in terms of a distortion of the event, achieving its haunting power as a result of distorting personal significances attached to it. The pathology consists, rather, solely in the structure of its experience or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event.[27]

Note here that Caruth does not emphasize the reception of the event or image. Since she has already limited herself to the timely experience—i.e. limits her definition and

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[23] Caruth, *Literature in the Ashes of History*, 12.

[24] Caruth, *Literature in the Ashes of History*, 12.

[25] I have used the word "pure" here purposefully—Caruth seems to think that this gift to the dead is one that "can never, now, be returned," and is thus a successful gift to the dead (2013, p. 12). Of course, for Derrida, the gift is always already impossible, and the very fact that Caruth later states that Khalil "gives Greg back to life" shows that the gift was, indeed, not innocently given with no expectation of a return. Greg *had* to give his shirt to Khalil in order to *keep living*.

[26] Caruth, *Literature in the Ashes of History*, 14.

[27] Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 4 – 5.

investigation of trauma to its return in the temporal sphere—and because she claims that the traumatic event or image possesses the subject, it is not surprising that she does not emphasize the reception. She is here more interested in trauma itself as a thing with power and possessive capabilities. That is, trauma for Caruth is something that can *hold or have property* and therefore must first be proper to itself—after all, something or someone must *be* before something or someone may *have*. When one considers traumatic reception, however, one cannot ignore the spatial; after all, the human subject is grounded in both time and space, and orients themselves in the world within both planes, or rather amalgamations of the two (a becoming-space of time and a becoming-time of space). Caruth's theory that trauma *possesses* the individual is truly representative of the hold that these events and images have on their victims. However, this hold is also indicative of the spatial and material, and thus only highlights the *lack* in trauma theory in addressing the spatial. Caruth use of such terms as "possess" and "inhabits" further implies a materiality to trauma.

The ruptures that trauma inscribes leaves *spaces that create and maintain the dynamism and animation of life itself*. After all, it is only in the face of the other that one truly exists; similarly, life only exists in the face of death, and only by facing it might we continue to live. However, for Caruth, these returns are only ever failed attempts:

> For what is the story of the mind's attempt to master the event retrospectively if not the story of a failed return: the attempt, the failure, of the mind to return to the moment of the event? […] and this story appears again as the beginning of life in the death drive, as life's attempt to return to *inanimate* matter that ultimately fails and departs in human history."[28]

"Inanimate," here, is the word chosen and used by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and used again, pointedly, by Caruth. The word implies the concept of a transcendent 'spirit,' or perhaps 'force' which drives or animates life. "To animate" suggests the ability to 'render' or 'produce.'[29] "*To be* animate," on the other hand,

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[28] Caruth, *Literature in the Ashes of History*, 15. Emphasis added.

[29] *Oxford English Dictionary,* "inanimate"

conjures a figure who is capable of emotion, and more importantly, of passion and rage. "To be inanimate," then, is not only to be devoid of life, but to lack will and vigour. However, Caruth's characterization of these returns inspired by traumatic events as 'failed' endeavours is false. While it is true that the subject can never return to the original time and place of the event, she may still return to the *space* of the event in the becoming-time of space, or becoming-space of time in memory, and in doing so, creates the opportunity to move in whichever direction she chooses by creating ruptures, and therefore space for movement. I reject this characterization of 'failure' because it limits the view of trauma to a strictly temporal existence rather than recognizing its potentiality for spatial creating; that is, it rejects the potentiality of and for *spacing*.

1.2   The Becoming-Time of Space and the Becoming-Space of Time

What do I mean by the *becoming-time of space* and the *becoming-space of time*? These are terms used by Derrida in *Rogues*, although they are never clearly defined. I will briefly speak of the concept here, but must also begin by speaking of the figures of the circle and spiral. I will then continue in Chapter II to discuss the Derridean notion of *becoming* in relation to his concepts of the trace and of autoimmunity.

When Derrida and I speak of a becoming-space of time and a becoming-time of space, we speak also of *cinders*. That is, whatever "space" or "time" there ever was, never existed in the first place:

> If a place is itself surrounded by fire (falls to ash, into a cinder tomb), it no longer is. Cinder remains, cinder there is, which we can translate: the cinder is not, is not what it is. ["*Il y a là cendre, traduis, la cendre n'est pas, elle n'est pas ce qui est. Elle reste de ce qui n'est pas, pour ne rappeler au fond friable d'elle que non-être imprésence*"] It remains *from* what is not, in order to recall at the delicate, charred bottom of itself only non-being or non-presence. Being without presence has not been and will no longer be there where there is cinder and where this other memory would speak. There, where cinder means the difference between what

remains and what is, will she ever reach it, there? [*Là, où cendre veut dire la différence entre ce qui reste et ce qui est, y arrive-t-elle, là?*"][30]

So, the "original copy" or whatever 'pure,' 'normal,' or 'regular' time or space ever was, it never existed; it was always already in the fire, always burning, and thus always burning out. This means, of course, that it will also never be fully burnt out. *Becoming*, then, is a continuous and ineluctable state of being. In fact, Becoming is rather a better word for Being than "being" itself. Similarly, space was never itself—nor was time. The two were always becoming the other, and since the other *never existed in the first place*, they were and are always becoming something else. In becoming, there is erasure, but also creation. There is also supplementation, which I speak of at length in Chapter II.

Notice as well that Derrida refers to the "cinder" as a "she/*elle*." This is, of course, in part because *cendre* is a feminine noun, but I believe this is not purely a coincidence, especially as Derrida, the editor, and the translator all chose to keep the "she" rather than changing "she" to "it" in the English translation. The feminine attribute was highlighted here, I believe, as a nod toward the creative attributes—that is, to mobilize the cinder as a metaphoric womb. On the next page Derrida refers to the cinder as "virginal" [*vierge*]. However, the very idea of virginity or the hymen which is to be pierced brings into being the very notion of penetration or rupture. After all, what is meant to safeguard against rupture does of course also simultaneously suggest wholeness, safety and rupture, terror.[31] Indeed, there is no *insemination* of the cinder, or of becoming. There is a suggestion of a sort of immaculate conception,[32] something (or, rather, some "she") that came into existence and erased all hints of whatever or whoever came before. Here we turn to the trace:

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[30] Derrida, *Cinders*, 39.

[31] Refer to chapter 2.3 for further discussions of the hymen.

[32] Indeed, when I previously suggested that the "womb" that is Dragonfly Pond is inseminated, it is rather that the pond impregnates itself and therefore remains "virginal." There is no true insemination here because it is the phenomenon of the pond itself (or what the pond hides) that impregnates it.

> At present, here and now, there is something material—visible but scarcely readable—that, referring only to itself, no longer makes a trace, unless it traces only by losing the trace it scarcely leaves
> that it just barely remains.[33]

We can also clearly see here a reference to a materiality, or geometric spatiality, to time—the present, in this case. The cinder has erased what existed in the past, has come into creation by the act of burning and erasure, just as the trace comes into existence by way of arche-writing, and leaves only invisible traces, or rather traces it has destroyed by way of the autoimmune. Where the cinder leaves a mark, it does so by erasing it, and what it does leave is a lack—a disappearance.

In both Itō's *Uzumaki* and Miyazaki's *Dark Souls* games, we see loss and repetition, or preservation in loss, and loss itself as a sort of becoming by way of deferral and distancing. Derrida describes the burning of a letter: "how can it guard the trace of itself and breach/broach a history where it preserves itself in losing itself?"[34] We see here a curious inversion of his logic of autoimmunity: rather than a thing which loses itself in its preservation, we see something which does the opposite. However, this "inversion" is not really the opposite but rather the same thing—just as the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space are essentially the same. In any case, the end-product is the same: we have something which has been burnt or erased, and all trace of what once *was* has been destroyed and wiped from history. These breaches in history are perversions of time—not exactly inversions, but rather folds and sutures of it—where interstices appear. These timelines and time-spaces do not necessarily exist along side of each other but within each other as well. We see these timelines as threads in a fabric (as Solaire says in *Dark Souls I*), which "*waver*," and interject, interpose themselves upon the others such that no single thread exists solely on its own (i.e. without touching an *other*, or indeed multiple others). However, by sharing, existing, and interposing, the oneness of whatever

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[33] Derrida, *Cinders*, 43.

[34] Derrida, *Cinders*, 44.

may have been the "subjectivity" that the thread was sewing its way towards is lost, *but the fabric of time has already been made*, or continues to be made in this way.

In terms of a subject who has undergone a traumatic event or witnessed/seen a traumatic image, the subject that she once was in the present or past never and will never exist. Human beings are only ever *becoming-subjects*. Even if we are ever to reach or have ever reached an approximation of whatever this so-called subject might be, becoming it would erase it and we would be becoming all over again—*cinders upon cinders*—both burnt and unburnt at the same time. We must keep this in mind as we ponder what exactly is meant by a becoming, and especially for a becoming-time of space and a becoming-space of time, or a becoming-subject of the individual (perhaps most especially for the individual who has witnessed or undergone a traumatic event or image).

If we are to speak of the *becoming* of space and time, then we must, of course, speak of the nature of these two things, and to do this we must establish that the traumatised individual is not *stuck in time*. This is an impossibility. Time is such a fluid and dynamic force that it does not exist solely within *one* dimension, reality, space, etc. Even the dead—or indeed, fictional characters—are not stuck in time. 'Being stuck' is a untenable notion that must be discarded if we are to better trauma studies. However, the phrase does betray a certain spatiality to time itself, for "stuck-ness" suggests a becoming or being moored, trapped, or otherwise bound in a certain spot—that is, a certain space or place. Secondly, we must recognize that trauma does not trap the individual in a cycle. Although the individual certainly *returns* to an event in time, we must re-evaluate what this return means within a much more complex theory of time itself. That is, we must speak of what a return suggests as regarding to the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space.[35]

A return does not mean that the individual is returning to the exact same event, with the identical set of spatial, temporal, or personal (emotionally, mentally, physically, etc.)

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[35] These terms are introduced in Derrida, *Rogues*, 46.

conditions as the original event. To suggest that these affected individuals are spinning around in circles is to condemn them to a state of hopelessness, for the circle always already closes itself off, and there is very little room for free play (save for the centre of the circle, but this too is limited and bounded). Furthermore, the circle, even if it is aware that there is an exteriority to its interiority, will never be able to intermingle the two, or know the two at the same time, or in the same time-space. The circle also cannot roam off, freely, in any direction it chooses. The figure of the spiral, however, is capable of all these things.

Indeed, Miyazaki's Dark Souls games are a great example of the failure of the circle, in which a major theme is the futility of repetition. Regardless of the decision made or the ending reached,[36] the message remains the same: a single course cannot continue in the same direction for perpetuity. Doggedly following a course to a *single* end will always result either in madness, failure, or that horrible realization that it has all been an exercise in futility. There are many examples and warnings by way of NPCs who consumed too much of what they desired and consequently became insane: Manus, the Father of the Abyss, Seath the Scaleless,[37] Big Hat Logan[38] and other NPCs who go insane when the player-character purchases everything in their inventory, signalling an end to their purpose and thus the beginning of their Hollowing, etc. In Miyazaki's *Dark Souls* universe(s), the player-character's 'choice'[39] is between giving up and failing, or

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[36] There are multiple, and the number of endings varies depending upon which game one is playing within the series.

[37] Seath, as his name suggests, is the only dragon without the stone scales which granted immortality to the dragons. He betrayed his kin and joined Gwyn in the war against dragons. At the time which the player-character enters the fold as the Chosen one, Seath is conducting experiments on people—mostly maidens—in order to discover the secrets of crystal magic, which he believes to hold the secret to another source of immortality.

[38] A sorcerer NPC (non-player character) who teaches/sells the player-character sorceries (spells which the player-character can use if their statistics are high enough for them to use). Once he has sold all the "regular" sorceries he leaves Firelink Shrine to seek the Duke's Archives (where Seath resides and conducts his experiments) in search of crystal magic. Once the player-character has already discovered all the crystal magic, Logan turns hollow (insane/without purpose, "inhuman").

[39] As much as a scripted game allows for choice.

'finishing' / achieving one's goal—even after finishing the storyline, the player/character embarks upon a new journey in a new direction anyway. There is no moving *beyond* in this universe and no transcendent or triumphant *being* to become nor to move towards. There is only the striking off upon another journey in another direction. A better figure for the individual in trauma than a circle is the fractal or logarithmic spiral.[40]

Junji Itō's *Uzumaki* and Miyazaki's *Dark Souls I* and *III* illustrate the dangers of "being stuck" in time or space. This concept is demonstrated situationally in Itō's work, where the characters are quite literally trapped within the village of Kurouzu-cho. More subtly, the concept is represented through the theme of "fixation," or obsession. This notion is echoed in Miyazaki's *Dark Souls*, where fixation on one thing (i.e. humanity) leads to one's ruin, as may be seen in most of the NPC's "endings," in which these NPCs discover that they no longer have any purpose by/for which to continue living. However, in Uzumaki, there are multiple examples of fixation, all of which are representative not only of the pattern of the spiral, but its logic as it applies to the becoming-time of space and the becoming-space of time as well. That is, becoming 'stuck' or fixated on one point whether one consciously or is unconsciously doing so, can result in nothing but despair and failure. Therefore we must re-evaluate our definition of trauma, for to return to the same point over and over again can only end in failure. While the most severe traumatic cases (i.e. extreme PTSD) most certainly take this shape, the majority of less-severe instances must then follow a different pattern or logic (i.e. order); to provide any hope of successfully acting upon the trauma.

For example, in Itō's *Uzumaki*, a new friend of Kirie's, Kurotani Azami, who has become accustomed to her status as a sexually desired woman, becomes obsessed with Shuichi when she realizes that Shuichi is not attracted to her. She has a mark upon her forehead in the shape of a crescent moon which is rumoured by the other girls in the school to be the source of her seductive "powers." However, as her fixation upon Shuichi and her desire for a relationship with him increases, this mark extends itself into a small spiral, and

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[40] See Mandelbrot set, Appendix A figure 3, and logarithmic spiral, Appendix A figure 4.

continues to extend itself from both ends until it covers her entire face and has burrowed into her skull.[41] Her obsession leads to insanity and violence inflicted upon herself and others, as she seeks to harm those who stand between her and Shuichi. To this end, she seeks to swallow Kirie with the spiral on her body, as well as a male classmate who has expressed his romantic interest in Azami.[42] Eventually she becomes so overcome by her desire for Shuichi's love and attention that her entire body is consumed by the spiral and she, as well as the spiral which consumes her, ceases to exist.[43] The trace erases itself. The horror of this event is not isolated, and others continue to become fixated on their desires as the spiral overcomes and infects them. The spiral continuously re*turns*, until the village is no more, and continues to return once other villages are erected in Kurouzu-cho's place.

Now, instead of "the democracy to come" or *become*, let us speak of *the turn to come*, or the trauma to come —or re-*turn*. However, we must take care that when we speak of such things, we are not talking about circles or spheres. The turn or re-*turn* to trauma is not a closed cycle, but rather continuous, such as in a continuous spiral. Trauma does not eat itself up (i.e. erase itself), like Ouroboros, but rather creates the conditions for its continued and repeated existence both in time and space. Existence as a circle also closes off the opportunity for free play and for more creative possibility. Although it is true that the arc or turn of an infinitely large circle can theoretically continue for an infinite amount of time or space, the very definition of a circle's arc includes the knowledge that it will eventually close itself off, join with itself, and *end*. However, this is not true for the spiral, which has a turn that continues into perpetuity and will never close itself off. Furthermore, the figure that I propose for the study of the *re-turn* of trauma allows for additional 'branching off points' or interstices within the turn of the spiral itself, as in a logarithmic spiral. Logarithmic spirals are great starting-points for imagining the shape of

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[41] Appendix A, Figure 5.

[42] Appendix A, Figure 6.

[43] Appendix A, Figure 7.

trauma or of time itself (as effected by trauma), for they are at once infinite and chaotic and rational, ordered. It is important to note that the traumatized individual does not live an *absolutely* irrational life, but that they experience moments of chaos within an otherwise ordered world.

I should also note here that the 'beginning' of the spiral does not truly exist, since trauma and *thought* before *human* trauma and thought always already existed. The beginning of life as we know it is not even the beginning of thought, if we consider the "communication" of non-living things or concepts as something that requires thought. If so, then thought predates life, and life is not a necessary condition for thought to exist. For example, if we are to say that thought is necessary for communication to take place, things which are not alive, such as the wind, are still capable of communicating (i.e. of a storm coming, etc.). Life and thought enrich each other, but neither are *necessary* conditions for the other—although of course a *human* life without thought is a life of very poor quality indeed.

Let us return to Derrida and the notion of the centre of the circle. Here we are lead back to the material, geometric, physical, and spatial condition:

> Let us not forget that, like the circle and the sphere, the turn (all turns [*tours*], and all turrets, all towers [*tours*], including the turret of a chateau or the turning surface of a potter's wheel [*tour*]) requires surfaces, a surface area, lines that come back round to or toward themselves according to a certain motivation, a certain mover, and a possible rotational movement, but always, simultaneously, around a center, a pivot or axle, which, even if it too ends up turning, does not change place and remains quasi immobile.[44]

However, as Derrida's circle is described here, it seems to require a single and somewhat flat surface upon which to turn. It cannot exist upon its own but requires something to support it and provide its foundation. It requires structure outside of itself. This is clearly due to the limitations of the circle itself; because the figure closes itself off, at one or multiple points it must exist upon the same surface. The spiral, on the other hand, has

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[44] Derrida, *Rogues*, 12. Original emphasis.

much more freedom to roam in terms of surface area, and it could be said that rather than a single surface, one could imagine the 'surfaces' in a more Deleuzian or rhizomatic manner (this is also compounded by the logarithmic spiral's multiple centres). Also, thanks to its capacity for free play, it is able to provide support for itself, folding in and out in order to provide the very surface area upon which it turns. The spiral figure which I am proposing also needs something to turn around; however, unlike the circle the centre does not need to be fixed and has much more space in which to play. It could theoretically be proposed that this centre is also absent, or rather non-present, as it erases itself in the very immediacy of its introduction or creation. I am referring here, of course, to the trace's curious ability to exist and erase itself at the same time.[45] Additionally, this figure, with its infinite spirals within (and without) spirals, also has an infinite number of centers. One could visually imagine this as a never-ending logarithmic spiral, but even this is too simplistic. I might venture to say that a better description of the figure I am imagining is an Escherian version of the logarithmic spiral. However, even these examples would fail to encapsulate the dynamism, movement, and chaotic free-play of this ideal spiral which escapes words and the human imagination.

Perhaps the Ringed City[46] in the DLC (downloadable content) of *Dark Souls* III may be read as a sort of 'centre' for its universe and an example for a 'true centre' in this figure of the never-ending spiral, for it is described thus:

> At the close of the Age of Fire, as the world ends and all lands converge upon themselves, a lone adventurer descends into the madness of the earth and uncovers the secrets of the past […] at the bottom of it all, a long lost city filled with new horrors for players to overcome.[47]

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[45] Which I will discuss at length throughout this thesis, especially in Chapter II.

[46] Appendix A, Figures 8, 9.

[47] Press release for *Dark Souls III DLC: The Ringed City*, *bandainamcoent.com*.

In fact, the Ringed City's architecture[48] shows the buildings bending in towards a "centre," as if drawn in and held together (for it is clear that some of these buildings are centuries old) by some unyielding force. The Ringed City is a collection of all past, present, and future 'lands,' or realities. The universe of *Dark Souls III* makes it clear that all timelines[49] (co)exist and are connected via various nodes or interstices such as the bonfires.[50] Since the Ringed City is an assemblage of all these worlds, it would be tempting to name it as the "centre" for this spiral I speak of; however, we must still remember that the Ringed City, as a stationary and fixed location does not fit with this theory. While time is certainly in flux here, with both the old and new intermingling, there are complications. For example, the presence and implications of Slave Knight Gael (boss)[51] at the end of the DLC of *Dark Souls III* suggest that the timelines of Miyazaki's universe(s) are not a perfect example of the logarithmic spiral. Gael is said to have "existed since the dawn of the age of man, and has lived out the entire cycle of the First Flame […] he has killed every last being in existence."[52] This implies both a beginning and an end to time as we know it; additionally, Gael's presence and the Ringed City closes the loops of these cycles, placing them both in the same location and 'time.'[53]

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[48] Appendix 1, Figure 8.

[49] Or, alternate/parallel realities (represented by the multitude of players in the online version, and the multitude of Ashen Ones who have failed to link the flame). This is also true of *Dark Souls I*, but I will focus on *III* for this example.

[50] These connect different areas within a particular character's reality or world. One may also view other players/characters as ghostlike shadows near bonfires, suggesting that the veil or fabric (as NPC Solaire refers to it) between worlds/timelines/realities is particularly thin in these areas.

[51] Appendix A, Figure 10.

[52] "Slave Knight Gael", *fextralife.com*

[53] If we can indeed name the temporal situation in the Ringed City a singular "time," that is.

Once the player has defeated Gael (the last boss of the game),[54] she receives the blood of the Dark Soul,[55] which she then brings back to the nameless painter woman[56] who wishes to use the blood to paint a 'new world' free of pain. Upon receiving this blood, she ruminates:

> My thanks, Ashen One. With this will I paint a world. Please tell me thy name. I would name this painting after thee. My thanks. I will paint a world of that name. Twill be a cold, dark, and very gentle place. And one day, it will make someone a goodly home. I see. We are much alike. Twill be a cold, dark, and very gentle place. And one day, it will make someone a goodly home. Then I will name this painting "Ash."[57]

The cold and dark of this intended new world is not inherently negative, but rather full of possibility and hope. It is only that the dark and Humanity is coveted and determinedly (to a fault and extreme) sought, and in excess it becomes corruptive. Gael is also found in a world contained in a similar painting (the painted world of Ariandel) made with blood, implying that others have done this in the past; despite their intentions, the worlds they paint do not remain 'gentle' for long, and eventually become corrupted. The darkness is dispersed by fire, and thus disparity is introduced; the dark and the cold are made the other, and distanced, deferred from light and fire: "In the Age of Ancients the world was unformed, shrouded by fog […] But then there was Fire and with fire came disparity.

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[54] This is interesting because Gael's attack patterns are an amalgamation of bosses from *Dark Souls I*, *II*, and *III*. This is another reference and suggestion towards the 'thinness' between the worlds and timelines in and between the games' different universes as well. They are no longer different points on the timeline but rather timelines which overlap and fold around each other, almost like an intensely complicated Borromean knot of spirals.

[55] The Dark Soul, which was found by the Furtive Pygmy in the introduction of the Age of Fire (as stated in the first cutscene of *Dark Souls I*), is not "dark" as in evil, but rather in its opacity and weight. It is a draw for Humanity (the item—see figure 12A and 12B in Appendix A—and concept), and has a tendency towards corruption, especially in excess. In *Dark Souls III*, Gael is found feasting upon the Pygmies for their pieces of the Dark Soul, and attacks the player for her fragment as well. At this time, there is no-one and nothing left in the universe save for the character and Gael, and Gael's last and all-consuming purpose is to collect the blood of the Dark Soul for the painting maiden to paint a 'new world' with.

[56] See Figure 11, Appendix A.

[57] *Dark Souls III*: *Ringed City DLC*.

Heat and cold, life and death, and of course, light and dark."[58] Thus, a cycle is revealed, with each *roue* ever more chaotic than the last, and each containing the possibility for more chaos and hunger (i.e. Gael, madly seeking the fragments of the Dark Soul). Each painting is made of blood and will therefore inevitably rot and decay, as will the world it contains. The painters each set about to paint a new, gentle world within their own worlds, and in doing so set their own world ablaze, to fall into ruin and ash.[59] It is also implied that the world 'outside' of the painting is also painted: *spirals within spirals within spirals*… Each turn or spiral is more convoluted than the 'last,' but with very little sense of coherence or sequence—not in the holistic sense, in any case. In a geometric or spatial sense, I mean there is no "ultimate" outer spiral which encapsulates the rest, since this would mean that the spiral becomes a circle.

An example of the function of such a spatial and temporal spiral is in the form of the multiverse. Within a single 'universe,' one may find multiple time-spaces, each branching off into its own infinite worlds which are based upon how each moment may or may not transpire. Already we have an infinite number. We must add to that each of the infinities from the (also infinite) number of universes in the multiverse. Not only do we have spaces stacked on top of each other (and branching off, alongside, on top of, obliquely—the list of possible configurations goes exponentially and infinitely on), but we have the complications of infinite temporality as well. One can only begin to imagine what such a thing might look like, or how it may present itself; it is impossible to create a true and faithful material (geometric) representation of this notion.

Itō Junji's manifestation of such a concept in *Uzumaki* is, at first glance, also too simplistic. However, we must keep in mind that his spirals and his village of Kurouzu-

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[58] *Dark Souls I*, introduction cutscene.

[59] This is a representation of the macrocosm of the 'outside' world (where the majority of the game takes place), which also goes through cycles. When the flame is linked or (re)introduced, it brings order by way of the reign of gods, which inevitably and eventually descends into dark and chaos. Then the cycle repeats… within the outer and painted worlds alike. The implication here is that the painter and painting set precipitate these cycles, each enacting their will on the other (neither can be placed above the other in this dichotomy, and neither came before the other).

cho only represent a *single* iteration of a spiral in the multiplicity of the whole assemblage. That is, the spiralling period shown in *Uzumaki* is but one of many, and it is between/among many more instances of spiralling in this small village. In this, Itō's representation is a good example of the process by which a single spiral unit becomes and continues into the next. The manga also includes separate instances of spiralling in the architecture,[60] the people,[61] natural phenomenon,[62] etc., illustrating the 'spirals within spirals' effect I spoke of previously, but not to the absolutely chaotic (but simultaneously ordered) degree which I imagine. However, Itō's spiral perpetuates itself into eternity, following the logic of the logarithmic spiral in this regard:

> Spirals suck things in… the eye follows the pattern to its center. I don't know who… or *what* built it here, or why… But every so often, every few hundreds or thousands of years, it can reach the people above the ground, and even though its builders are gone, *maybe it's still building itself*.[63]

Shuichi suggests that there is a centre to the spiral here, a source from which the spiral emanates and consumes the village. Kirie affirms this thought and assumes that there is a logical 'end' to the spiral:

> And with the spiral complete, a strange thing happened… just as time had sped up when we were on the outskirts, in the center of the spiral, it stood still. So the curse was over the same moment that it began. The endless frozen moment that I spent in Shuichi's arms. And it will be the same moment when it ends again… when the next Kurouzu-cho is built where the ruins of the old once lay. When the eternal spiral awakes once more.[64]

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[60] In the end, the people of the village feel an all-consuming need to extend the row houses they take shelter in, and Kirie and Shuichi find that it has taken the shape of a spiral, with its center focused on Dragonfly Pond which has been theorized by Shuichi to be the source of the spiral infection. Refer to Appendix A, Figure 13.

[61] Appendix A, Figure 14A and 14B.

[62] Appendix A, Figure 15.

[63] Appendix A, Figure 16. Shuichi speaking to Kirie after they have entered the underground spiral city (Appendix A, Figure 17) underneath Kurouzu-cho, accessed from the centre of the aboveground village.

[64] Appendix A, Figure 18.

She contradicts herself, however, when she states that the spiral completes itself, but that it is also eternal. The spiral model which I propose, and the logarithmic spiral, is never complete, and once the reader considers the macro-verse which is made up of each repetition of the spiral and village, the true complexity of the spiral is revealed. Additionally, Kirie's suggestion that time stands still at the centre of the spiral cannot be true; since the process is undone and then repeated over the years, it can rather be said that time moves extremely slowly at the centre.

In Itō's Uzumaki, there is a space and time made anew at the end of each iteration of both town and spiral-world. Each time there are new townspeople, and each time there are new technologies and architecture; so, there are never any two instalments of the cycle that are exactly the same. Yet, no iteration will end without another to continue the path, extending on through time and space. So, while Derrida's wheel [*roue*] is free to wheel wherever it wills, its own structure is limited. The wheel rounds off, where the spiral continues. The spiral has the freedom and creativity of the turn without the finality and rigidity of the circle.

Regarding centres, Derrida writes: "Without counting—and yet while counting on—this strange necessity of zero, the necessity of a circular annulment or zeroing out in the perfectly round zero."[65] However, for the figure of the logarithmic spiral which I propose, there is no zero, for its inner 'end,' is constantly approaching zero (like a mathematical asymptote) but will never reach it. There is no negative space in this figure where possibility does not exist, or where another branch or spiral may not continue to grow. Even in the case of time-space in the multiverse of *Dark Souls*, when and where a universe and its space or timeline 'ends,' there is yet another to continue the dance into the (now) free space. One sees this notion in *Dark Souls* in both the in-world and (external) gameplay logic. No matter how many times one plays the game, the player and character will never have two playthroughs that are exactly the same. Furthermore, no two runs may possibly take place simultaneously. However, each run ends with the

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[65] Derrida, *Rogues,* 13.

immediate beginning of another, in which the experience of the previous character carries on into the cycle of the new. Additionally, when the human player walks away from the console or monitor, the universe of the game continues to exist. There is also space for different decisions and experimentations to be made, and thus the realm of possibility is never cut short.[66]

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[66] This notion was briefly touched upon in Menuez's work: "Game play is not so much a loop but an ever-widening spiral with narrative and ludic elements inter-weaving to create a constantly evolving understanding of the game world as both a fictional space and a system." (Menuez, *The Downward Spiral*, 70).

Chapter 2

2 « The Memory of Trauma »

2.1 Spacing and Autoimmunity of Traumatic Events

For Derrida, "an autoimmunitary process is that strange behaviour where a living being, in quasi-suicidal fashion, 'itself' works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself against its 'own' immunity."[67,68] Put more simply, it is an act which seeks to give life, to protect, and preserve but ultimately fails to do so, and causes its own death. Derrida uses the example of democracy in order to explain: "We are always led back to the same aporia: how to decide between, on the one hand, the positive and salutary role played by the 'state' form […] and, on the other hand, the negative or limiting effects of a state."[69] Here Derrida speaks of a democratic state defending itself against acts of international terrorism, and of the impossibility of democracy which seeks to represent the multitudes by way of a sovereign (who replaces the multiple voices with the single and therefore defeats the purpose of democracy in the first place); however, this logic may be applied to the notion of trauma, if we read trauma as trace, as well. The human mind which seeks to correct its trauma through seeking to go back to the moment of trauma in linear time and to erase its presence has set for itself an impossible task.

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[67] Derrida, *Autoimmunity*, 94.

[68] Future discussions or further forays into this study would benefit from a brief study of the "immune" or "immunitary" that is at the heart of the "autoimmune" and "autoimmunitary." Roberto Esposito's analysis of the relationships between community and immunity would be very useful here. In fact, he alludes to immunity's tendency to "shut our existence up into non-communicating circles or enclosures" (*Community, Immunity, Biopolitics* [Esposito, 85]). This raises some interesting points—immunity closes off where autoimmunity continues into spirals. Yet autoimmunity is by far the more dangerous act of the two. There would have to be some turning away from the biological sense of "autoimmunity" towards the philosophical meaning; that is, the autoimmune risks danger in order for life to continue whereas the immune stops life in its tracks in order to remain safe. Additionally, Pieter Vermeulen, in analysing Esposito's work through the lens of trauma studies, asks "Why is it that the immunizations strategies that organize modern life […] have so fatefully led to excessive violence against life?" (Vermeulen, *The Biopolitics of Trauma*, 150). He has not here considered the effects of autoimmunity.

[69] Derrida, *Autoimmunity*, 124.

> Although aporia, double bind, and autoimmune process are not exactly synonyms, what they have in common, what they are all, precisely, charged with, is, more than an internal contradiction, an indecidability, that is, an internal-external, nondialectizable antinomy that risks paralyzing and thus calls for the event of the interruptive decision.[70]

In seeking its own erasure, trauma seeks to cancel out its presence in the first place, creating a paradox reminiscent of Robert Zemeckis' 1985 *Back to the Future*. This, of course, would alter the course of time and create a new timeline in which the trauma never occurred in the first place—this is impossible. Rather, trauma returns the subject to the general *space* of the event, allowing the subject to witness and recognize the event, but simultaneously creating more space by which the subject may also move away (or around, under, etc.) from the event and onwards in life (I write *onwards*, not forwards, because the linearity of time is an illusion and construct perpetrated by society).

Trauma is what makes life auto-immune—or, more specifically, life must have autoimmunity to exist as we know it—for the only way to properly recognize life is to know how, when, and where we are alive — all of which we must know and answer before we can begin to ask why it is that we are alive. Trauma, which introduces breaks in one's experience of life (rather than just time, as Caruth said), allows one to realize that that which has been broken is merely the illusion of a linear and properly ordered experience of time and space. There are only moments and places, and they are only loosely held together—if at all—in space. The topology of the traumatic return is that of the autoimmune *renvoi*: one is sent off, expelled and taken away from place, as well as put off, delayed, or displaced in time. Here we, and Derrida, return to différance, for both concepts exist within both space and time, distanced and deferred in both.

Returning once again to Freud's and Caruth's statement that trauma seeks to erase itself in the past and future, we might read trauma as an element of the death drive, that which seeks to drive towards an inanimate state. If we do so, we must also remember that the death drive is *mute*, according to Derrida. That is,

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[70] Derrida, *Rogues*, 35.

It always operates in silence, it never leaves any archives of its own. It destroys in advance its own archive, as if that were in truth the very motivation of its most proper movement. It works to destroy the archive: on the condition of effacing but also with a view to effacing its own "proper" traces—which consequently cannot properly be called "proper."[71]

The memory of the trauma, then, for the victim, cannot be "properly" archived, for the trauma is no longer—and never was, never will be—"proper" to her. Since the archive leaves no traces of its erasure, the trauma is doubly difficult to locate—it is gone in memory and in the archive: the memory simply does not exist as such. The archive therefore suffers from an autoimmune disorder: in attempting to make itself present through inscribing itself upon the world, it makes itself unknown and erases itself from past, present, and future. To pursue the archive, to desire it, to seek a return to our memories, is the *trouble de l'archive*:

> The *trouble de l'archive* stems from a *mal d'archive*. We *are en mal d'archive*: in need of archives. Listening to the French idiom, and in it the attribute *en mal de*, to be *en mal d'archive* can mean something else than to suffer from a sickness, from a trouble or from what the noun mal might name. It is to burn with a passion. […] It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement. No desire, no passion, no drive, no compulsion, indeed no repetition compulsion, no "*mal-de*" can arise for a person who is not already, in one way or another, *en mal d'archive*.[72]

Trauma displays this passionate desire to return, the compulsive desire to repetitively erase itself. In the case of Itō's *Uzumaki* we can clearly see this compulsion to return home, but the curious thing is that it is not necessarily the villagers and a human compulsion towards homesickness, but rather the desire of the village itself—i.e. to return underground to the ever-enduring spiral city. Caruth seems to have read this 'sickness' or 'lack' of the death drive and the archive as a cyclical process which results in a break that cements the subject in place and in stasis. The figure of the spiral is again

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[71] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 10.

[72] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 91.

useful here to correct this assumption. Instead of returning to the same place, trauma returns one to the same *space*.

Geometrically, it is the same; the objects within the snapshot that is the traumatic image do not change their appearance. Here I will turn to a real-world, historical example as another non-theoretical case: The Holocaust. The camp in which the Holocaust survivor was detained will always be a camp. However, the context and passions which condition the subject's return to the traumatic event or image change one's circumstances so that the 'place' in which the trauma occurred no longer exists. The 'place' changes from one re-visit to the next, and thus the witnessing of the trauma is never the same. Instead of returning to the same spot in the circle's line, one returns to the general 'space' within the line of the spiral, but ever moving onward, and always arriving under different circumstances, temporally and in terms of *place*. When she returns, the camp is no longer her prison, and this recognition creates more and new space by which she may leave. This notion of moving onwards, rather than forwards, is echoed in Derrida:

> If an event worthy of this name is to arrive or happen, it must, beyond all mastery, affect a passivity. It must touch an exposed vulnerability, one without absolute immunity, without indemnity; it must touch this vulnerability in its finitude and in a *nonhorizontal* fashion, there where it is not yet or is already no longer possible to face or face up to the unforeseeability of the other. In this regard, autoimmunity is not an absolute ill or evil. It enables an exposure to the other, to what and to who comes-which means that it must remain incalculable. Without autoimmunity, with absolute immunity, nothing would ever happen or arrive; we would no longer wait, await, or expect, no longer expect one another, or expect any event.[73]

By including this quote, I do not mean that the internment camps were not ill or evil, but that the trauma revisited upon their survivors is not necessarily evil. We must remember that evil is a human construct, and we can thus extend this construct to other human constructs (i.e. architecture, which is quite literally constructed by human hands and minds), but we cannot extend it to non-human concepts which existed long before humans could construct. What I mean is that autoimmunity and traumatic re-visitations

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[73] Derrida, *Rogues*, 152.

which work by way of an autoimmune logic are not inherently evil, but the intent behind the original traumatic act, if performed by a human being, may of course be evil—but I digress.

Suicide by autoimmunity has never been and will never be non-violent. To have inscribed oneself upon the world and then seek to erase that inscription is to deny the fact that one has committed the violence of inscription in the first place. It is folly. But this "wheel [*roue*] this route which turns back on itself, this additional turn or twist"[74] does not spin in place, or only horizontally. Yes, to travel by wheel will always expose one to risk, and the "unforeseeability of the other" that is death and erasure, but it is still the best and most efficient way to travel, is it not? Autoimmunity which creates in us the hope of something *to come*, which inspires us to wait for one another, does not spin in place, but rather is turning in on itself even as it is heading somewhere. The key here is that it is *moving*, it is always already arriving, and returning allows one to *choose* to set off in a different direction. There is an agency and power that autoimmunity affords, if one chooses to listen for the creative potential that it promises, rather than muting oneself to the risk of death and erasure that it threatens.

On the other hand, the autoimmunity of Miyazaki's *Dark Souls* games is more subtle and complicated than in Itō's work. It is twofold: the illogical, autoimmune logic exists not only on the plane of the games' lore but also on the plane of the player. That is, the latter plane is that of the human being who is experiencing, performing, effecting change upon the game, and allowing the game to affect change upon herself. This is corroborated in a study conducted by Zach Waggoner:

> Findings indicate that the relationships between the virtual avatar and the "real-world" users were dynamic and complex: the real-world identities continually informed the virtual identities of the avatars, despite widely varying levels of user immersion and conscious diegetic identification. […] This study found that virtual

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[74] Derrida, *Rogues*, 18.

identities, created and maintained by users' non-virtual identities, may be just as 'real' to users as their non-virtual identities.[75]

If we extrapolate these findings to the human as the *Dark Souls* player, she begins the game with the belief that she exists as a "whole" being within a real, singular, and linear temporality. This is, after all, the only understanding of life experience that she has been taught to perceive—from infancy and the moment that she became capable of retaining memory. If trauma can only effect and affect change upon her through memory as a purely temporal concept, then Caruth's theory that trauma causes a break in one's experience of time makes perfect sense. If, however, memory is not entirely temporal and is also tied—ineluctably and necessarily—to physical space and place, objects, bodies, etc., it stands to follow that trauma effects change upon one's experience of space—geometric or imagined as in Gaston Bachelard's daydreams—as well. Thus, the human who places herself before the Dark Souls game upon the monitor, inviting image, sound, and story into her memory, and thereby opening herself to the risk of trauma, causes an unraveling of the logic of human as player—that is, as separate from character. As one plays as character, one is both simultaneously both, one, and neither. One becomes the *hyphenated, liminal identity of player-character*, further complicated by the third person aspect of the game, which affords the illusion of a third-party entity controlling the character who is in turn controlled by the human. Additionally, the space in which the character exists in turn becomes a place for the player, whose body is only in contact with the controller, the ridges on the joystick, the desk chair, and the floor of her apartment or home. What she sees is only seen within a frame, outside of which is her "real" world. Thus, in addition to a hyphenated identity and status, she also exists within a hyphenated space of virtual-reality. Therefore, Zach Waggoner argues that the term "*avatar*" for playable characters in role-playing video games may often be replaced with "*agent*" instead,[76] indicating the possibility for both identity formation and change in virtual-reality space and for agency.

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[75] Waggoner, *My Avatar, My Self*, 1.

[76] Waggoner, *My Avatar, My Self*, 10.

One, both, and neither become a sort of Deleuzian assemblage which complicates and challenges the human's binary methods of thought and therefore her experience. This is not to say that each player will recognize this *becoming hyphenated, or becoming other*, but that the becoming occurs, nonetheless. The player who then exits the game after saving or completing the session or playthrough returns to 'real life,' either without questioning the hyphenation or becoming, failing to recognize the event in the first place, or assuming that once she has stepped away from the game, the beginning is reversed and she and her world/reality are returned to her and their wholeness: unhyphenated. This disconnect cannot and does not occur, of course. The assemblage is not so easily undone. The wasp does not cease to be a becoming-orchid simply because he flies back to his nest or on to the next flower. On the contrary, he *continues* becoming-orchid, and in doing so, continues becoming-wasp as well.

When I speak of this assemblage in terms of time-space as a continuing process—that is, the becoming-time of space and the becoming-space of time—into perpetuity, I mean that space never fully becomes time, and neither does time fully become space. Instead of an 'endpoint,' or 'centre,' etc., what is most important here is the *spacing* which Derrida often refers to, or the becoming itself. This doesn't necessarily mean a change or journey, etc.; rather, spacing could be described better as *différance* or the *trace*. For Jean-Luc Nancy, this spacing is sharing, or "the sharing of being, in order indefinitely to share the sharing of singularities."[77] We can see this clearly in the 'sharing' or 'bleeding' of real-life identities into virtual identities, and vice versa. For Miyazaki's *Dark Souls* games, we might read this sharing or spacing as the blurring together of worlds and space-times / time-spaces (on both the planes of lore and game-play).

The logic of gaming assumes that the player who has become player-character can then simply return to being human, as though she was never player in the first place, just as democracy assumes that the voice of the people which becomes singular can return to being multiple. The mistake is in assuming that the original was ever, in fact, singular.

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[77] Nancy (*The Experience of Freedom*), quoted in Derrida, *Rogues*, 50.

Additionally, rather than assuming the path is circular—which is just a line which closes in upon itself and brings one back to the same—we must instead think of the path as spiralling, by which one may be returned to the same event, image, or text—traumatic or not—but never in the same condition as before. The key to understanding the autoimmune logic of gaming, then, is understanding firstly that the human being is not, never was, and never shall be singular, and that becoming cannot be reversed. Secondly, we must remember that the same applies to space and place. The spiral cannot be made symmetrical due to its dynamic nature. It is not a case of simply balancing the equation; *x does not equal y*. There are so many other variants we have conveniently ignored thus far in trauma studies.

Thus, the player attempts to protect herself from the trauma experienced by the character by stepping away from the game. She does so by inserting *space* between herself and the character on a variety of levels: physically and geometrically, she steps away from the monitor, console, controller, etc. Digitally/virtually, she removes herself from the game-space. Mentally, she takes a 'break' from the game and starts thinking about something else—her dinner or work, for example. In all cases, she assumes that this space she inserts is successful in deferring the character from her own self in terms of both space and difference. Here we turn to Derrida's différance: deferral, distance, and difference. Here is where her attempt to immunise herself against the trauma fails, for there is no walking away from the character. She has already become the assemblage of player-character, and the real threat of this autoimmunity is not the suicidal act, as Derrida states, but "in threatening the I [*moi*] or the self [*soi*], the ego or the autos, ipseity itself, compromising the immunity of the autos itself: it consists not only in compromising oneself [*s'auto-entamer*] but in compromising the self, the autos—and thus ipseity."[78] Thus the "I can" of the I is threatened and lost... indeed, the "I" itself is lost. The subjectivity of the individual has been ruptured and lost (although his so-called subjectivity never existed in the first place).

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[78] Derrida, *Rogues*, 45.

It is not, however, only the experience of trauma that is deferred and distanced in the spacing. There is something of the self of the individual, or perhaps a 'self' or ipseity of the experience itself (I mean of the becoming space of time and/or the becoming time of space) that is also sent off or away. That is, there is necessarily something(s) that is continually 'lost' or sent away of the self and its constructed identity during the process of *becoming*. Similarly, there is something that is sent away of the experience and the event when trauma is spaced away, and although it will return, it will never be 'whole' or remain in the same capacity or under the same conditions as it was once, originally.

Let us speak, then, of autoimmunity, and the trauma to come, or re-turn, through Jacques Derrida—that is, through the concept of the democracy to come. Derrida once stated, "democracy has always been suicidal, and if there is a to-come for it, it is only on the condition of thinking life otherwise, life and the force of life."[79] Could we also say, then, following this same pattern of logic, that if there is a 'to-come' for trauma and the study of it, it is only on the condition of *thinking thought otherwise*, and the force of thought? For trauma is not necessarily autoimmune as democracy is, so we do not need to rethink life itself, but whereas trauma is murderous towards life, it is born from thought rather than life itself. Then, when thought attempts to immunize itself against the trauma by forgetting or repressing it, it will inevitably return in one form or another, and thus the autoimmune process is revealed. Therefore, to better understand trauma, we must re-evaluate thought, and to do so we must consider that thought is not only temporal but localized (if only within the brain, in the case of creatures who have them), and consider the physical traces it leaves upon the word that effect and affect ourselves and others.

Gaston Bachelard, for example, pointed out that we leave traces in our world for our future and present selves to pick up, remember, and orient ourselves by. The logical pattern of autoimmune democracy is also very useful when we are discussing the schema of space and time as it applies to trauma and its re(turn). To speak of space in terms of autoimmunity and trauma, we must speak of spacing: "Operating in space, the

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[79] Derrida, *Rogues*, 33.

autoimmune topology always dictates that democracy be sent off [*renvoyer*] elsewhere, that it be excluded or rejected, expelled under the pretext of protecting it on the inside by expelling, rejecting, or sending off to the outside the domestic enemies of democracy."[80] If we replace "democracy" here with trauma, we can begin to reveal the logic and process of traumatic spacing, and then later, return. Caruth may be referring to this process of distancing and spacing when she speaks of the mind's refusal or inability to recognize the traumatic event in the moment that it truly occurs. Instead, the experience is sent off into the future, where it will be able to return to be experienced and, one hopes, processed: "the inevitable renvoi can signify simultaneously or by turns a sending off of the other through exclusion and the sending off or referral to the other, respect for the foreigner or for the alterity of the other."[81] Here we can refer back to the Freudian pattern and the child's game of *fort-da*,[82] where trauma is sent away from the mind's experience of the present towards the past and future. This is, of course, based upon a very linear notion of time as it functions within space, but as I have demonstrated, such a model is no longer useful nor sensible given our updated and far more complex understanding of time—this is especially true when we consider the implications of time-space within a multiverse or within alternate realities, as with Miyazaki's *Dark Souls*.

Furthermore, for Caruth, "the traumatic event *is* its future, is its repetition as something that returns but also returns to erase its past, returns as something other than what one could ever recognize. A singular and new event […] that undoes everything we have thought of as events, as history, because it is a future event that threatens to undo its own future."[83] According to this definition, trauma establishes its own future, and then returns to erase what it has created, away from the self and its experience. This is an inaccurate

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[80] Derrida, *Rogues*, 35 – 36.

[81] Derrida, *Rogues*, 36.

[82] In which the child rolls a toy away from him in a facsimile of his mother's departure in order to repeatedly experience the pleasure of her return, i.e. when the toy returns to him.

[83] Caruth, *Literature in the Ashes of History*, 87.

depiction of the traumatic process, for it refers to a circular, and therefore static and unchanging, nature of trauma in time. By this logic—if trauma exists only within time— then the traumatised person is turning around in circles on a single point. However, what if there are multiple points, or centres? What if the centre does not exist, as such? What if, instead of viewing time as a single and solid, unwavering line from timepoint *A* to timepoint *B*, we were to view it as something more like Deleuze's metaphor of the rhizome, which might allow for jumps between timepoints or junctures? This would then lend a *plasticity* to time that would more accurately respond to the plasticity of trauma itself.

Trauma cannot be so inorganic as time—that is, *linear time*—it cannot be limited to such a restricted plane. The sheer complexity of treating PTSD patients and of the pervasive nature of cultural trauma contests such simplicity. Consider, for example, the fact that trauma leaves physical scars upon brain tissue; that is, trauma quite literally effects the cognitive map and its neural connections. In fact, recent studies have shown that those with PTSD require twice the amount of time as control groups to form a "cognitive map of the [surrounding] environment."[84] Clearly, it is not only the experience of *time* that is fragmented by trauma, but the experience of *space* as well. It cannot be that trauma theorists have simply and conveniently forgotten that physical spaces and objects[85] can trigger and invoke trauma, or that the aesthetics of these spaces and spatial objects have come to inform our life-experiences. This is not to say that I am the only one who has questioned this lack in theory; there are doubtless countless others who have noticed. For example, phenomenologist Catherine Malabou, affected by her grandmother's experience with Alzheimer's disease, began to explore cerebral trauma in *The New Wounded: from Neurosis to Brain Damage*. After all, the brains of those who suffer from PTSD, for example, have been shown to be structurally different from those who do not. Further, Gaston Bachelard's theories in *The Poetics of Space*, which detail the ways in which

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[84] Tempesta et al., "A Specific Deficit […]," 1.

[85] Consider a person who has had a near-death experience via drowning—the sight of bodies of water may become a physical trigger.

intimate spaces such as the home (staircases and doorways, for example) inform childhood development—and therefore adult memory and experience—may be extrapolated to inform readings of spaces designed not for habitation but for much more insidious intentions. To demonstrate this, I will be speaking of the 'real-world' spaces of concentration camps. However, traumatic places are not limited to such spaces and may also include those of hospitals and funeral homes, which are not designed to traumatize but *are* designed for the *witnessing* and intergenerational and cultural *passing on* of trauma.

2.2   Blueprinting Trauma

Trauma theorists seem to have forgotten or ignored the existence of architects and engineers who created such objects and spaces such as concentration camps (including their barracks and crematoria), weapons, buildings, and machines of war, means of execution (guillotines, electric chair, and lethal injection), and even the spaces in which we treat, break news of, and mourn trauma and death (hospitals, waiting rooms, clinics, funeral homes, cemeteries and mausoleums etc.). Additionally, what links these places together is not only the shared quality of trauma, but their purpose; that is, these places and objects were designed and built with the express *purpose* of making their tasks, that is—death—more efficient. In the case of concentration camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, this means that the task of the SS architects who were charged with designing the crematoria (for example) was to execute the prisoners of that camp in the most *efficient* way possible. These draftsmen "prepared hundreds of drawings and plans of the construction sites and the various buildings. These included detailed drawings of the gas chambers and the crematoria"[86] and an interviewed survivor who was assigned to the construction detail at Auschwitz-Birkenau recalled pouring gravel and draining swamps for the foundation of a village: "It never crossed anyone's minds that we were actually

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[86] Yad Vashem, "Architecture of Murder."

laying the foundations for the largest death-factory in human history."[87] This was a place that was designed and built by human hands to mass-*produce* human death.

These architects and engineers organized these facilities, and more specifically, the floorplan of these rooms to maximize efficiency. The hallways and rooms of Birkenau were laid out in such a way that the flow and movement of human beings through these spaces were *convective* as opposed to *diffusive*. This means that the facilities were designed so that the bodies that entered the buildings were *directed* in such a way that there was only one direction in which to move. Put more simply: those who entered Auschwitz-Birkenau and its death factories did not— and were never meant to—leave. "The extermination installations included a room for undressing and the gas chamber, both underground, and a room for cremating the bodies of the murdered. These facilities made the murder of the Jews a far more efficient process" ("Architecture of Murder").[88] These are the places where the dead and (their) memories remain alive.

These material confrontations with the traumatic image remind the traumatized of who they have become—and not the person they once were, in the past. This type of trauma clearly upsets the Freudian definition of trauma, repeated by Cathy Caruth, which states that the experience of time is fragmented in response to a threat to life. Patients with Alzheimer's disease and dementia may reject the timeline in which traumas have occurred, thus fragmenting the experience of time, but it must be stated that this is a result of a compromised material structure of the brain, which cannot be ignored in these studies. Catherine Malabou classified these patients as the "new wounded," for they have suffered something *unthinkable*:

> The unthinkable is the metamorphosis that makes an unrecognizable subject emerge from an ontologically and existentially secret *place*. The unthinkable is a discontinuous—most often sudden—transformation, through which a diseased

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[87] "Architecture of Murder."

[88] See Appendix A, Figure 19.

> identity deserts its former reference points—which it no longer recognizes as its own—and fixates upon the undecipherable touchstones of an "other world." [89]

That is, those who suffer brain damage due to an injury or disease may become altogether different subjects after these events. The lesions upon their cerebral tissue "[create] a certain form of being by *effacing* a previously existing identity."[90] Perhaps this process, however, is not altogether irreversible—not discontinuous, as Malabou suggests. Although these patients may no longer be recognized as "their own selves," there are cases in which physical objects—such as photographs of late spouses or children—are able to trigger a temporary re-transformation and return to what Malabou denotes as "former reference points." These physical reminders, such absent presences/presents, seem capable of incurring a return to the traumatic event in such a way that the mind of the patient is temporarily able to return to an echo of a previous state. That is, the mind returns to a similar curve[91] as that of the previous turn of the spiral. It would also seem, then, that the damage inflicted by a traumatic event may be temporarily alleviated through confrontations with representations of the trauma, and perhaps with *trauma* (generally, I mean—any traumatic image, for example) itself.[92]

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[89] Malabou, *The New Wounded*, xv.

[90] Malabou, *The New Wounded*, xv. Emphasis added.

[91] "Curve" is also the term used by Slavoj Žižek to describe the nature of space:

> Space was originally perceived as empty space abstractly—symmetrical, non-curved. Then the presence of *stuff* curves it. But then […] Einstein […] turned the terms around. It was not the presence of metal, of stuff, which curves the space. It was, on the contrary, the curvature of the space which was primordial […] The primordial effect is not, in fact, some brutal intrusion of the Real, of a traumatic real. The primordial effect, and also the primordial real, is a purely formal imbalance. The symbolic space is curved, […] imbalanced." (*Slavoj Žižek on Trauma in Psychoanalysis*)

Of course, this thesis is not approaching the ways in which trauma and its spiral shape (or curvature) affects the Lacanian real or symbolic, but in future studies it would be beneficial to study both Žižek's analysis of it here in conjunction with Lacan's theories (in *On Feminine Sexuality* and *The Sinthome*, the latter which would be very useful in terms of discussing the possibility of multiple spirals intersecting in a Borromean fashion, and the consequences and/or implications thereof—how does one subject traverse three or more spirals in a singular instance of subjectivity?).

[92] For example, video games may be used in which to allow a body with PTSD to indirectly confront their trauma—of course, it would be inadvisable for a solider to play a game with war-like elements to it, but perhaps with careful and individualized-patient screening, the analyst and therapist would be able to

What I mean by *trauma* is not limited to time. Trauma does not exist only in temporal memory but manifests spatially as well. The method of loci, for example, is a mnemonic device dating back as early as Cicero; this is also known as the "memory palace" technique made famous by the recent BBC *Sherlock Holmes* television series.[93] Memory can be structured or organized according to physical *space*, and trauma can then be housed within this space. It then follows that such traumas are relived within this space, and other similar spaces as well—real and virtual, or imagined/remembered in a re-turn. As such, another trauma—indirect, perhaps through a traumatic image or video game— may be useful in creating a *rupture* by which to enter this memory palace and re-turn to that space in which the trauma has been hidden. The analyst must take care, however, for there are many methods of demolishing a bridge (read here, neural connections, also), but very few of building a stable one.

So, while there is destruction, there is also a "formal creation" that exists in the plasticity of the brain.[94] This creation is "the formation of identity in the aftermath of shock [which] is an established fact that 'rehabilitates' the traumatic event and its etiological

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recommend a video game which would allow the patients to combat *trauma itself* without forcing her/him to relive the exact trauma. It is, however, imperative that the ethics of such a course of "treatment" be discussed. The scope of this paper does not allow for such discussion—and to be brief with it would be dismissive and flippant. I will only say here that one must consider that such a treatment could be incredibly, and perhaps needlessly, *cruel*—for example, to force a patient relive loss of a partner or family member only to temporarily return to a facsimile of a "normal" mentality would be unthinkably cruel. There would, after all, be no lasting benefit to the traumatised body or mind, but only to his or her family, who must then also contend with the consequences of having reminded their loved one of a traumatic loss.

[93] When Holmes' life is in immediate danger and he must remain calm, he retreats to his memory palace and situates himself in a large building with wooden details, large windows, and many hallways. When he is warned by his mind's manifestation of his brother that "an *east* wind is coming," he goes upstairs in this palace, turns *right*, and opens a set of doors revealing a dog named "Redbeard." Later revelations in the series inform this scene upon re-watching: Sherlock is here re-turning to a past mental state in which he had known that Redbeard did not refer to a dog, but rather his childhood friend. Specifically, he re-turns to a childhood state in which he was aware that he has another sibling, subtly hinted at by Mycroft's use of the words "east wind" (her name is Eurus, that of the Greek god of the east wind). Note that he turns right, or eastward, in order to reach this realization.

"His Last Vow." *Sherlock*, BBC season 3 episode 3 (34:24 – 41:24

[94] Malabou, *The New Wounded*, 169.

power."[95] That is, where trauma destroys, there must be a supplementary or substitutive process initiated to allow for life to continue: life may be elastic (that is, it 'bounces' back to the original state of non-life/death), but identity is plastic. There is no true return, but only the re-turn to an approximate or similar position along the spiral—but always distanced, spaced apart. Rather, the traumatic event will be "rehabilitated" in such a way that the identity is mis- and/or re-shaped. For Malabou, this new identity may be what she refers to as the "new wounded," or those who are permanently traumatized and have become indifferent and cold to those elements which were once their reference points for life and love. Trauma for Malabou is the "annihilation of form," which we may also read as the annihilation of *home*.[96] Malabou's experience of witnessing her grandmother's suffering with Alzheimer's disease revealed to her a lack in psychoanalysis and phenomenology; in response, she turned to medical science and brain lesions to better understand the notion of plasticity of the mind. However, Malabou also links trauma to time: the wounds inflicted by trauma "constitute *temporal ruptures*, existential improvisations that proceed from the nullification of the past."[97] This is in accordance with Freud's and Caruth's theories. Malabou, although she spoke of material brain lesions, has neglected to consider metaphysical space; but she concludes *The New Wounded* thus: "To gather the other's pain is not to take his place, but to restore it to him. This is what I learned—too late, too early—from a patient with Alzheimer's."[98] One may read this passage in two different ways: the "it" being restored to the patient may be his "pain" or his "place." However, the ambiguous nature of the "it" allows for a different reading; this "it" is both. That is, to properly address trauma, one must not only (carefully) lead the patient back to his trauma in order to acknowledge and confront it,

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[95] Malabou, *The New Wounded*, 180.

[96] Malabou, *The New Wounded*, 181.

[97] Malabou, *The New Wounded*, 214. Emphasis added.

[98] Malabou, *The New Wounded*, 215.

but one must also lead the patient back to the place in which the pain now exists, and thereby allowing the patient to evaluate his new (wounded) place in the world.

There is another entry-point or school of thought by which to think this "spatial trauma." Gaston Bachelard, in his introduction to *The Poetics of Space*, agrees with my earlier points by way of Lescure:

> Not for a second can there be any question of reproducing exactly a spectacle that is already in the past. But I have to *re-live* it entirely, in a manner that is new and, this time, from the standpoint of painting. By doing this, I create for myself the possibility of a *fresh impact* […] An artist does not create the way he lives, he lives the way he creates.[99]

Bachelard refers to these statements to argue for aesthetics and art as an "increase of life" that "stimulates our consciousness and keeps it from becoming somnolent," but his theories may also be applied to the study of trauma.[100] What I have been heretofore referring to as trauma or the traumatic event may also be referred to as the traumatic image or object, which is capable in its *creative capacity* of re-introducing the trauma indirectly to the subject; further, the subject *must* re-live it "in a manner that is new," or risk becoming *somnolent*—what Malabou might describe as "cold indifference," or a lack of passion or interest in things and/or people which were previously loved. It is not a question of sight, however, but rather imprints or traces of the world which we leave in the material and metaphysical spaces around us and which the world's spaces leave in and on us.

Through Bachelard, let us turn to blueprints, by way of the home. The home is what we, as children, know of the world. It is the very "first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word" we come to explore, initially by way of our mothers and fathers, and then on our own two feet, touching and seeing things for ourselves (Bachelard 4). The walls and designs of our homes inform our development as human beings, and as a result, the

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[99] Quoted in Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxxiii. Emphasis added.

[100] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxxiii.

learned navigations and aesthetics of our homes inform the ways in which we navigate the external world beyond the home. In other words, the external world comes to be known by its relation to its differences from and similarities to, the home and house. Further, the constellation of images which comprises the home are the "real beginnings of images" […] that "give concrete evidence of the values of inhabited space, of the non-I that protects the I."[101] These images not only protect the subject, but also house it, and are the points by which we might address those wounds in the subject created by trauma. Through lived experience, space becomes place; space is geometry and mere material objects, but place holds memory, is lived-in, and defines the subject as much as the subject defines the place. The well-worn grooves in a much-loved rocking chair or the creaks of floors which echo the footsteps of ourselves, our friends, and loved ones become our *graphic* inscriptions upon the world, and carry the weight of our memories, both positive and negative. It is easy to overlook the scratches on the floor as one walks over them on a daily basis, but they are a thread in the very fabric of our lives and our time-space/space-time. These are the ways in which we *write* (in other words: inscribe, violently) our presence onto the surface of the world.

However, while such blueprints are positive in their creative capacity, they can be used for much more sinister purposes, as in Auschwitz-Birkenau. They can also be used to direct or otherwise inform or influence the paths or ways by which a person chooses to navigate certain places. In terms of video games, for example, there are blueprints of maps and levels, buildings, fields, etc. In Miyazaki's *Dark Souls*, a great deal of thought is put into the designs of the areas of this game, including illusions and secrets that even the well-seasoned player would not find if not for the help of the online gaming community. The well-seasoned *Dark Souls* gamer, however, knows where bandits lie in wait to ambush, or where a hidden boss-fight will occur. She knows how to spot the cues and clues and to begin looking carefully into the distance whenever there are windows, balconies, ramparts, or other edges and cliffs for enemies and treasures ahead. Memory here is engraved into virtual and digital space but it is just as real as those grooves upon

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[101] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 5.

the floor that a well-loved rocking chair creates over time. The physical reactions that are tied between the movements of the character on the screen and in the game's world are tied to the minute movements of the player's hands on her controller, and here there is a curious engraving or inscription of memories that Bachelard could not have anticipated.

For Itō too, blueprints seem to play a role in the inscription of memory. Recall that the villagers of Kurouzu-cho extend the walls of the old row houses to join themselves in the shape of spiral. The given explanation is to contain the masses of the bodies[102] of villagers, volunteers, and other people who have unluckily wandered into or found themselves in the village, but the reality is revealed by Shuichi, who believes that the underground city infects the village and the mind of its inhabitants above with the figure of the spiral, and continues to grow into an infatuation or fixation in their minds until they unconsciously build these row houses, even though such a protective act leads to their deaths.[103]

Bachelard believes in the imagining consciousness and its creative potential to be "very simply, but very purely, an origin," but he has limited himself to only the creative potential of the speaking being with is power of logos.[104] This creative power of logos, however, has proven to be false by many theorists who believe that logos is opposite to nature, and that the human being who lives by logos has only restrained herself to the laws enforced by a discourse which seeks to control and impose order onto the human being and onto life itself. By limiting himself in this way, Bachelard restricts himself to the creative potential of the human being who exists within logos—is it not true, however, that the human being emerges into existence without logos? Is that human being, new to the world, not capable of suffering and of experiencing trauma? Does her incapability to remember the trauma exclude her from being/becoming a traumatized

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[102] Appendix A, figure 20.

[103] Appendix A, figure 21.

[104] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxxiv.

being? Does the trauma of a mother wolf separated from her child exclude her as well? What of the trauma of a felled tree? We must rethink this stance, for it has solidified.

Bachelard too, refers to memory as temporal, but notably and importantly for the theories put forward in this thesis, it is also within the home and house, and therefore space (and place): "past, present and future give the house different dynamisms, which often interfere, at times opposing, at others, stimulating one another […] it is body and soul" (Bachelard 7). Thus, memory is not limited to an existence within time[105] but rather exists within and is created in a physical space. Memory is *protected* here, invulnerable to those threats that mother and father will ward off:

> Memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are. To localize a memory in time […] corresponds to a sort of external history, for external use, to be communicated to others. But […] for a knowledge of intimacy, localization in the *spaces* of our intimacy is more urgent that determination of dates.[106]

At least, one is *meant* to be protected here; but reality is rarely (if ever) so idyllic. Bachelard reads this physical intimacy of memories as positive, but this proximity also allows for a much more sinister reading. We must remember that although we are little more than our inscriptions upon the world, these inscriptions are also violent in nature.

2.3   The Trace of Trauma

The Derridean notions of archè-writing and trace are useful concepts here, for both refer to the creation of inscriptions which can only be violent in nature. Archè-writing makes language possible through the recognition of difference, and language in turn creates the conditions for knowing and understanding the world in which we live. For Derrida the key to archè-writing is in its recognition of difference, or rather, différance. That is, ruptures and spacing must exist for signification to be made possible. There is no original

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[105] Here he gestures towards a more fluid, amorphous notion of time rather than linear time which the very idea of trauma disputes through its fragmentation and confounding of it

[106] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 9.

unity; difference always existed to maintain space between any two concepts or materials. The trace, which is linked to memory as well as inscription, is "the opening of the first exteriority in general, the enigmatic relationship of the living to its other and of an inside to an outside: spacing."[107] Unity implies a certain static-ness, a standing still— but the forces of life would march ever forward. Spacing, on the other hand, allows for movement, dynamism, and plasticity (not *elasticity*, which would imply snapping back to an original state). However, the "linearization of writing" which followed from archè-writing introduced a vulgarization of time. Rather than fluid and plastic, it became bastardized and reduced to elasticity and a linear existence as past, present, and future. Différance, however, reminds us that that where there is a line, there is also interiority and exteriority, intimacy and distance; différance refuses sameness and the simplicity of linearity. The violence of the trace and of archè-writing was and continues to be necessary for the dynamism of life. Additionally, archè-writing is autoimmune in its logic, for it seeks to create but in doing so, destroys.

In *Of Grammatology* as well, Derrida is focused on temporal experience. He turns here to time as an escape from the presence that experience always must refer to, but in doing so conveniently overlooks the fact that spatial presence cannot be separated from time; at least, we *cannot* separate the two. However, even in the hopes of establishing the notion of an originary trace or arche-writing which precedes the letter and therefore graphic inscription, he admits, "yet we know that that concept [archè-trace] destroys its name and that, if all begins with the trace, there is above all no originary trace."[108] He then re-names the concept the "(pure) trace [which] is differance. It does not depend on any sensible plenitude, audible or visible, phonic or graphic. It is, on the contrary, its condition"[109] Briefly: the idea is that the arche-trace is always already erasing itself, but simultaneously also creates the conditions, or is the condition, by which it can exist in the

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[107] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 76.

[108] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 67.

[109] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 68.

first place. It is not as though it comes into being, but rather that it was always in being or always *coming into* being and was thus simultaneously always fading out of being or was never in being in the first place: "Differance is therefore the formation of form. But it is on the other hand the being-imprinted of the imprint."[110] Here we might also read that the concept of differance, then, also applies to the becoming-time of space and the becoming-space of time. The two create the conditions for each other's existence, and yet there was not, and could not be, one that came before the other. They have always simultaneously existed and not existed, have always already been *becoming*. The becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space, then, are also the conditions by which presence and experience (which can only refer to presence, temporal or otherwise) can exist. The rupture of these becomings, or the *seeming* rupture of this structure, cannot stop the becoming, but can only redirect it.

Further, these ruptures—or traumatic events and/or images—can defer and distance the individual from his or her *becoming* experience. Here it is useful to return to the subject of spacing, within the concept of both time and space, or rather as they are intertwined: "Spacing as writing is the becoming-absent and the becoming-unconscious of the subject."[111] If we are to take Derrida at his word here, might we not say that the traumatic experience spaces—distances, or places at a distance (really, in the aftermath of the traumatic event the individual can be more aptly described to be flung into the distance)—the subject from her present, and consequently absents her from her present experience of the world? If we are to think of, to define, trauma in this way, however, we must also speak of spacing in its positive capabilities; that is, spacing allows for difference and differance and therefore for the unconscious, for "meaning," language (following this, understanding and communication). If we speak of trauma as spacing in this way, then, we must re-evaluate and discuss the ways in which trauma is also positive or creative. When Derrida concerned himself with spacing, it was generally in the context

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[110] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 68.

[111] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 74.

of writing, language, or the history of the two. As a result, he limited himself to a linear or *horizontal* framework of spacing and although he touches upon the temporality of the concept, he did not consider whether spacing was possessive of *verticality* as well, or indeed a multiplicity of directions and directional forces. If we instead explore spacing within the context of trauma, and the chaotic nature of the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space, then we naturally begin to speak of a multiplicity or rhizomatic model rather than one which is much too simplistic in its linearity. While Derrida was able to demonstrate that there is more than one direction in which time flows,[112] his explorations here are also too linear. We have limited ourselves to the X-axis for far too long. What of the Y-axis? Or the Z?

Of course, it is foolish to speak as though we might ignore the negative consequences in favour of the positive or creative. Again, I turn to Derrida, for he so often speaks of the violence committed by such concepts as archè-writing and the trace. However, he fails to speak of the ruin or trauma which follows, choosing to focus instead on the act of violence or the history and possible origin of it (whether or not that origin is effaced in its establishment, as it so often is in Derridean logic).

Let us speak of trauma from another angle now, that is, as a *supplement* to one's regular or normal experience of the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space. However, whereas Derrida speaks of the supplement in the context of auto-affection,[113] and therefore deferral of pleasure and frustration, let us speak here of the supplement in terms of the traumatic event and image. Is trauma the supplement, and therefore supplementing or replacing something, or is it adding to something—time, perhaps? Or, is trauma being supplemented by something else?

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[112] Here I refer to his discussion of retention and protention: if B retains A and protends C, A is limited and restricted from becoming X, or rather stuck in place so that X may not take its place. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 72.

[113] Although, an orgasm may be referred to as *la petite mort*, and what is death but a rupture of life and the experience of it? And what is a rupture if not the simplest definition of the traumatic event or image? Derrida's discussions here are easily applied to trauma studies, it seems.

Further, if we are to speak of trauma as something that supplements, and we hold that what it is supplementing is the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space, it will help to imagine this/these becoming(s) as a circle. This is only for the sake of simplicity, for as I have demonstrated previously, a simple circle cannot sufficiently represent the nature of this becoming or the ways in which trauma affects it; but I digress. If trauma supplements the becoming, then it is rupturing or otherwise interrupting or breaching it. This, of course, echoes both Freud's and Caruth's definitions of trauma. Something is broken, and in the breaking act something new is formed by the traumatic event. This something new is at once lacking, whole, and in excess of itself. Where the traumatic event takes away, it also adds, or fills out. It is not as though the becoming can be stopped from becoming, but rather that it is folded in on itself, or folded out, and a rupture does not cause the structure to fall apart. This is not to say, of course, that the event does not change the structure—such a claim would be naive.

I will briefly refer here to the symbol of the hymen invoked in Derrida's *Living On: Border Lines*, in which the hymen and the process of invagination is described in terms that echo his discussion of supplementation. Derrida reads Maurice Blanchot's *L'arrêt du mort* and describes the terrible nature of the hymen as twofold: it establishes a promise and an understanding, but at the same time forsakes and breaks that promise. It simultaneously signifies both security and rupture. By definition, the hymen is susceptible to fragmentation and penetration, and as a structure has edges on both the interior and exterior that may be surpassed—and by 'surpassed' here I mean deferred and displaced. In terms of anatomy the hymen is not truly broken but rather stretched and pushed aside—displaced—in the act of invagination. Thus, it is not that the becoming is broken by the traumatic act, but rather that it is displaced, or folded, in such a way that it is structurally different than it previously was. In other words, the home is not shattered by the traumatic event, and it is not as though the parents' shelter and love which conditioned the safety of the child's memories has disappeared or been destroyed entirely but that it has been placed at such a distance from the child (or adult) that it has become difficult to see or recognize. The violence of revisiting the traumatic event in re-turns to it, i.e. in post-traumatic flashbacks, can be described as the creation of more folds or invaginations which are then, of course, also broken. The memory of the original event and the safety of the "normal" and sheltered life

that the affected individual once enjoyed in blissful ignorance are placed at a further distance with each re-visitation.

When we discuss the hymen as symbolic of the traumatic event and its consequences on the human being and her psyche, then we categorize the event as a crime. However, we also suggest that the traumatic event made the shelter of that original, safe, and "normal" life possible in the first place. Just as the Dark cannot exist without the Fire in *Dark Souls*, shelter cannot be understood without the contrast of danger and of trauma. The interior cannot be known without some knowledge of the exterior. Derrida describes this process as an excess of content that is constantly surpassing its limits, constantly spilling over and thus creating ruptures. The hymen is not capable of holding such an excess of these contents and must break, but at the same time creates the conditions that allow the breakage to take place. For the gate to fall it must be able to fall *in the first place*.

If we speak of trauma in such metaphorical or symbolic terms, then we must also acknowledge that it is a referent or a sign, and therefore an illogical or arbitrary repetition and representation of the real, it is quite simple to follow in terms of logic. Trauma will always transgress something and commit violence against someone or something. One may easily describe trauma as a chain of supplements, and therefore referents and a product of movement(s). It is always distancing and deferring, always referring to something outside of itself in an effort to bring itself back to the "real," or in this case, the "original" in an effort to somehow accept or make sense of the event. Yet, as Derrida reminds us, "there is nothing outside of the text [there is no outside-text; *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*]."[114] I mean there is no event to return to—in the first place. It never existed as such. The mind, as Freud and Caruth claim, closed itself off to the event and only experienced it retroactively, thus erasing and denying the proper "origin" or "original copy." The very words "original copy" suggests that something 'original' was copied and by this process was destroyed and replaced with a copy. There is no presence to be obtained, experienced, or retrieved here. It was only ever in the distance, in the far-flung

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[114] Original emphasis. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 172.

reaches of time-space, always something that was *becoming, arriving*, or *away*. The chain of supplementarity which the re-turns of the traumatic event attempt to construct in order to reach it can only produce frustration and can only ever be a failure, as the *thing never existed in the first place—not in the future, past, or present. It was and is only ever becoming*, just as space and time are only ever becoming themselves and each other: the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space).

Let us examine this theory in the context of Miyazaki's *Dark Souls* (to begin with) to demonstrate the applications of supplementation and erasure in non-theoretical works. Oftentimes these chains of supplementarity are prefaced by a sort of deceit, and quite often at the hands of the gods in *Dark Souls I*. In *Dark Souls III* we see a repetition of this, as well as deception performed by human NPCs who seek to deceive the player-character in order to achieve the "ending" or means they desire.

Firstly: in *Dark Souls I*, both primordial serpents seek to influence the player-character into performing within the world in such a way that their desired endings will come to fruition. Kingseeker Frampt wishes for the character to link the First Flame by defeating Gwyn and thus allow the Age of Fire to continue. He tells the player-character that he is bestowing "enlightenment"—that is, that her fate is "to succeed the Great Lord Gwyn [...] So that you may link the Fire, cast away the Dark, and undo the curse of the Undead."[115] He fails to mention here that there are multiple "Chosen ones" who can complete this task or that linking the Flame will lead to the player-character's downfall. That is, to take Gwyn's place is to throw oneself upon a funeral pyre in order to keep feeding the flames and become the cinders of one who *once was*, thereby erasing one's trace from the world. This is corroborated by the immediate launch into New Game Plus once the player has completed the gameplay—the player-character finds themselves once again in their cell in the Asylum, and although the player retains their statistics from the previous playthrough, it seems that nobody (NPCs) she encountered previously recognizes her. The conclusion one may draw, then, is that she is now in another time-space, or that her

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[115] *Dark Souls I*. Frampt dialogue after ringing both Bells of Awakening.

trace has been erased, although she has not been erased herself. In this way, she is the supplement that is added onto, removed, fills the lack of, and is in excess in each of the becoming-time of space and becoming-space of time of each playthrough in the *Dark Souls* world. This logic is true as well for *Dark Souls III*. This also demonstrates that the supplement itself is not something fragmented, or less than whole—the player-character herself is not lacking something to make her an individual, even though she is Undead. The state of being Undead should not be read here as something that makes her less than but is rather a simple fact of her existence. Becoming undead erased the state or nature of her previous existence, and "Undead" is what she now is, and what she will continue to be until she becomes something else. Being "undead" in and of itself does not exclude the player-character from *being* or *becoming*. Additionally, her absence from the previous world or those worlds she has yet to "play" in does not suggest that those worlds cease to exist; rather, the existence of other players and the suggestion that there are multiple chosen ones[116] would imply that there exists an infinite number of worlds that co-exist and continue to do so when a single chosen one reaches their "ending" in one respective world—another will rise up to take her place. Frampt betrays this when he is attacked, or when the player-character has chosen to follow Kaathe rather than him: "You sorry fool… You could not be the Chosen one. Enough… I shall slumber, until I am awakened again…"[117]

The other serpent, Darkstalker Kaathe, desires the opposite: he encourages the player-character to bring upon the Age of Dark by defeating Gwyn, but allowing the Flame to dissipate and ushering in the age of man (thus ending the age of the gods). Kaathe tells the player-character that the Dark Lord's powers "can preserve [one's] humanity while Undead, and cast off the shackles placed upon [one's] brethren"[118] and offers her the truth of humankind in this world. Instead of following the way of the gods, he seeks to

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[116] As mentioned by the Crestfallen warrior at Firelink Shrine in *Dark Souls I*.

[117] *Dark Souls I*. Frampt dialogue.

[118] *Dark Souls I*. Kaathe dialogue when speaking to him in the Abyss.

fulfil the Furtive Pygmy's goals by leading a group of Darkwraiths, members of Kaathe's covenant who invade other online players (i.e. chosen ones of other time-spaces), and seek to obtain their Humanity (the item) by defeating them. His tale of history is more informative than Frampt's and echoes the narrative from the introduction to the game. According to Kaathe, Gwyn threw himself upon the flames in fear of the darkness of man. However, in encouraging the player-character to collect humanity and usher in the darkness, he fails to mention the corruptive nature of humanity and the dark soul. In fact, it is revealed by Marvellous Chester, whom the player-character meets when forcefully dragged into the past by Manus, the father of the Abyss, that a serpent (presumably Kaathe, based upon his actions) tricked the people of Oolacile (the township in which this past is set) into disturbing the "grave of primeval man."[119] This disturbance awoke Manus, who was once corrupted by consuming *too much humanity*, and the darkness of the Abyss, which emanated forth from Manus, also corrupted Oolacile and her people. Here, the darkness of humanity and the Dark Soul, or the Abyss, serves as the supplement in a chain of referents. A human being is already whole, and by nature of being human is always already in possession of some amount of darkness. Accruing more, however, leads to an *excess* (of supplements) and leads to corruption, which may be read here as a *becoming something else*. Once the citizens of Oolacile became corrupted and became something else, their history is erased and re-written by the stories of the "monsters" they have become.

In *Dark Souls III*, supplementation can be clearly seen within the logic and lore of the paintings made with blood, and the painting which the girl is in the process of painting with the blood of the Dark Soul.[120] Although celebrated analyst of *Dark Souls* lore, Michael Sanders,[121] theorizes that the Dark Soul has never been retrieved in its entirety from the Ringed City, and thus the painting which the woman endeavours to create has

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[119] *Dark Souls I*. Chester's dialogue, when player asks him to "talk."

[120] See discussion of Gael and the painting of Ariandel.

[121] Also known by his YouTube handle: *VaatiVidya*

never existed before, he fails to note the implications of this in context of New Game Plus. That is, although it is true within a singular, closed time-space that the painting which the woman seeks to create has never before been made nor seen, this is *not* true when one considers the online community and the ways in which the multiple player-characters and their respective, multiple time-spaces change and impact the lore of the game. Thus, this painting made with the blood of the Dark Soul is not the *only one* in the sense that the Dark Soul which Gael hunts in one player-character's time-space is not the only Dark Soul to exist across the multitude of time-spaces, and it follows that the painting to be made will not be the only one as well. Although Samuels points out that Gael is shocked to see that the player-character is in his present (it is implied that Gael's present is many, many years into the future of the player-character)—"What, still here?"—this does not disprove the existence of a multitude of Ashen Ones (similar to the Chosen ones in *Dark Souls I* in that they have a so-called fated destiny to fulfil but in reality have a choice, although that choice does not necessarily change the fate of the world they inhabit) nor the multitude of Gaels, Dark Souls, or time-spaces. It only proves that *the trace of the supplement* which the player-character or the painting (or indeed everything and everyone else that is repeated in each iteration, play-through, or time-space) is erased, just as the trace erases itself by virtue of existing in the first place. Like the hymen, its existence is predicated on both presence and absence, creation and erasure.

Further, the slumbering princess Filianore[122] in *Dark Souls III* may also be read as a supplement. She, or rather her sleep, is also a deception, according to Ringed City Hollow: "her slumber is a deceit… a lid covering an overgrown privy: a prop to keep thee from the dark soul of thine desire."[123] Filianore's very presence here is strange: as Gwyn's youngest daughter, she is sent to the home of the pygmy kings, the Ringed City, to keep them safe. However, the Ringed City itself is a deception—Gwyn gifted the pygmies the city in order to keep them shut away and thus keep the darkness walled in

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[122] See Appendix A, Figure 22.

[123] *Dark Souls III*, dialogue of Ringed City Hollow upon telling him that you are "just pretending" to serve the gods.

and at bay. This is, Samuels theorizes, why the Dark Sigil upon the Ringed Knights are rings of fire encircling darkness[124]—he states that the ring of fire represents Gywn's desire to seal off the Dark Soul and keep it within the walls of the Ringed City with the pygmies so the humans cannot rise up.[125] The dark sigil and the sun above the Ringed City which looks like a seal of fire around the dark sigil are traces of Gwyn's desire to subdue the darkness and designate it as "lowly" and corruptive, inherently negative compared to the gods' flames and age of fire. Thus, Gwyn gave his youngest daughter to a city representative of his fear/hatred of the dark, and she too became a referent and sign of his fear, as well as his deception.

Filianore holds a cracked egg as she sleeps, and although the player-character is warned time and again not to disturb Filianore, when she does eventually disturb and wake the princess, the egg cracks and Filianore disappears, casting the player-character into a very distant "future" (or, perhaps a past which was written over) in which Slave Knight Gael has hunted down the last of the pygmy kings in his search for the blood of the Dark Soul. In this future, she has reappeared as a desiccated corpse. Oddly, the player-character has the ability to return to the Ringed City of the 'past,' but here Filianore has disappeared, and there is no body to indicate that waking her has "killed her," so we cannot conclude that the player-character is responsible for her death—the player-character is only for the dissolution of the illusion that Filianore represented. That is, Filianore and her egg[126] were illusions to mask the true power of a whole Dark Soul, which would have the power to end the age of fire. However, "illusion" is not truly representative of this strange deception: unlike other illusions in the *Dark Souls* games, such as the light/dark Anor

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[124] See Appendix A, Figure 23.

[125] Samuels, *Dark Souls 3 Story of the Ringed City* [Part 1].

[126] The egg's design is similar to that of Vagrants, enemies (that spawn when players die or rest at Bonfires) who travel from the world or space-time where they are "born" and travel to other player-characters' time-spaces. The similar design between the Vagrants and Filianore's egg would suggest that the egg represents some sort of talisman against time, which when broken sends the player-character into the past it was preventing, and thus has some capability of transcending its current time-space. See Appendix A, figure 24 for a picture of a Vagrant.

Londo in *Dark Souls I*, this "illusion" *can be reverted* by travelling by bonfire. This would suggest that the two versions of the Ringed Cities are not "illusion" and/or "reality" but rather alternate versions of each other, with each as 'real' as the other. Thus, the two supplement each other, and together they form a chain which defines the *becoming* of the Ringed City, of the cycles of the Age of Fire and Dark, and of Filianore, the pygmies, etc.

Similarly, in Itō's *Uzumaki*, we also see chains of supplementarity. This is of course most obvious in the repetitions of both the above-village (i.e. the "normal" copy) and the underground spiral city. However, what is known to be as "normal" above-ground soon unravels and is revealed to be nothing more than a deceit, and simply a mask which the spiral city sports until it is once again ready (i.e. "charged" enough) to appear or reveal itself. Each time this cycle repeats, the spiral city seeks to protect itself by way of creating the village above it, and the village attempts to protect itself by eventually creating a spiral of row houses leading towards the centre of the village (Dragonfly pond). This act of protection only serves to spur on the re-turn of the spiral city: "all these efforts to attenuate or neutralize the effect of the traumatism (to deny, repress, or forget it, to get over it) are but so many desperate attempts. And so many autoimmunitary movements. Which produce, invent, and feed the very monstrosity they claim to overcome."[127] And so the autoimmune process becomes a creative one, in which something *becomes* an other, and continues becoming an other, and so on—in a chain. When the village people become obsessed with or infected by the figure of the spiral, they *become* something other than they were in the past; but as cinders erase all trace of what they used to be in favour of the fire which burned and created them, so too do the people who become obsessed erase their histories and lives, destroying their homes and relationships, in service of a spiral which has consumed and destroyed them in turn. This is not a replacement but rather a supplementation: the spiral supplements itself into a villager until the villager has become a human spiral—both literally and metaphorically.

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[127] Derrida, *Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides*, 99.

This is also not to say that the villager has only ever been lacking something which the spiral fulfils, but that the spiral is also in excess to the whole that the villager already is and represents. The same can be said of the spiral and the village itself. At some point in the distant past, there was an origin or source of the spiral, but the act of the spiral writing itself into the history of the village violently destroyed all trace of a history without it. The spiral penetrated into the fold of the village and insinuated itself within it such that it could not be removed, and all trace of its violent entry had disappeared—in other words, it was always there.

As we can see by way of these non-theoretical examples, it is clear that the chain of supplementarity often comes into existence by way of the autoimmune process. There is often deception as protection or protection as deception, and this act leads to a destruction or creation of a lack which is then filled by another referent or supplement—this process is then to be repeated until a chain, or rather a chaotic spiral model of chains comes into being. A simple, original, non-supplementary model never existed in the first place, for neither any trace of the insertion nor introduction of the first supplement nor any supplement which followed has been erased from the very moment it was introduced.

Let us return to the promise of safety perpetuated by the childhood home, which is supplemented when it is ruptured and changed, for better or for worse, when the external world is experienced. The ideal of an enclosed bubble without risk, cruelty, indifference, and terror is like the figure of the circle. One is permitted to continuously return to the feeling of safety and belonging, and the inscriptions we and our parents make (upon ourselves, upon the home) during early childhood reinforce these feelings, allowing us to return to safety whenever we come across these inscriptions. Trauma, however, introduces a rupture in the line of this circle, and suddenly, the two points no longer fit together but diverge: picture here the figure of the spiral. The spiral does not return back unto itself and move backwards, but rather re-turns to the same *spaces* under different conditions (creating and marking—inscribing—different *places*): "life begins less by

reaching upward, than by turning in upon itself."[128] For trauma, and the following process of healing from it, then, the point is not to progress in the western metaphysical sense of the word. That is, it is not necessary to move *forward* (in a linear manner, I mean) or away from the trauma. For both temporal trauma theorists and spatial trauma theorists this would be impossible, since recursions always occur and will always be occurring: the traumatized subject will experience breaks in time (as per Freud and Caruth), returning to the past whilst in the present, and encounters with triggering images and objects within the present will return the subject to the site of the original trauma, indefinitely extending the event's 'life period.' It is rather more effective to move *within* the trauma. That is, since trauma is plastic and not elastic, it is easier to mould and fold the event or image into a formation that is easier to acknowledge than to attempt to throw it into some far-flung future in a hopeless and fruitless endeavour to keep it *away*. For life to continue, it must be continuously beginning rather than ending: that is, it must be *becoming*. The same can be said for thought. To be focused on progress is to work towards an end; the subject who is not focused upon linear progress is instead 'turning in' upon herself; that is, she remains dynamic, not still, in constant movement against the end rather than towards it. In the same way, trauma must be folded into itself, the traumatized must be folded into the trauma, the trauma folded into the traumatized, and since the movement continues, the subject continues to live.

However, this positive capacity of trauma/rupture is necessarily accompanied by its negative and destructive abilities. Images of home and life become polluted with those of terror and despair, and consequently become traumatic images, compromising and contaminating our idyllic memories. What does one do with these images, and how does one return home after the world's walls and hallways it taught us to navigate have traumatized us? What happens when the promise of protection is so cruelly and irrevocably broken? Unfortunately, there are far too many examples of what happens when this promise is broken:

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[128] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 106.

> Then the real world, the world of the past
> Sometimes far yet not so far?
> For the deportee it was an image.
> He belonged to this self-contained universe
> Hemmed in by observation posts
> Where the behaviour of the camp was watched
> And the soldiers spied on the deportees
> Killing them on occasion, having nothing better to do.[129]

In Auschwitz-Birkenau, mother and father were replaced by SS soldiers killing not with cold indifference but with pleasure. The prisoner comes to know the camp through his understanding of his childhood home, and this is perhaps one of the most disturbing thoughts. Painted nursery walls are replaced with stark barracks, picket fences with electric wire, and the smell of mother's cooking with something *unthinkable*. These human inscriptions are doubly violent in their nature and intent. They not only produce difference and deferral but also intentionally inflict harm, loss, and perform the inhumane.

It is not only the knowledge that the Auschwitz-Birkenau crematoria and complexes existed and operated that is so chilling, but also that there were orders given and carried out to *design* and construct these buildings; these were and are buildings that are not too different from homes, after all: they too have walls, doors, staircases, rooms, and hallways. They too bear the *traces* of countless footsteps and bear the material memory of many bodies (naturally shed skin cells which become dust, and the far more sinister ashes in the crematoria of the death camps). Further, the prisoners that were to be executed in these buildings were forced to construct them. Their physical labour resulted in the monstrous spaces that would end their lives in terrible ways. In other words, it is not quite only important to say that a trauma occurred, but we must also say that the trauma occurred *there* or *here*.

This is precisely what was proved in a London, England trial in which a Holocaust denier sued an author for libel. This denier claimed that the Holocaust was an "elaborate hoax"

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[129] Resnais, *Nuit et Brouillard*.

but historian Robert Jan van Pelt (University of Waterloo, Ontario) provided blueprints of Auschwitz which concretely proved the reality of the Holocaust but also proves the importance of *space* and *place* for the purposes of this thesis. The documents presented as forensic and architectural evidence in this case were gathered and exhibited in what came to be titled "The Evidence Room":

> The Evidence Room consists of life-sized replicas and casts of key pieces of architectural evidence (a gas column and a gas-tight hatch – both for the introduction of poison into the gas chambers – a gas chamber door, blueprints, architects' letters, contractors' bills, and photographs). Taken together, they provide proof, beyond reasonable doubt, that Auschwitz was a purposefully designed factory of death, equipped with large, homicidal gas chambers and massive incinerators.[130]

This exhibit was housed at the *Royal Museum of Ontario*, where it was separated from the rest of the museum—the exhibit itself created the walls for its own rooms. Here we see history displayed as art and memorabilia, history inscribed and inscribing; these are the displays of traces and cinders of lives lost and memories left behind. The room is stark white, and exists as *tangible* memory. There is no glass pane in between the viewer and the exhibit—one may quite literally touch and feel in *intimacy* the reality of the Holocaust and of Auschwitz-Birkenau: "the casts do not elucidate nor explain the past. They communicate the certitude of presence, urging us to remember the reality of history in its traces."[131] Once again, the importance of space and place are made clear, and the viewer becomes a witness *necessarily*. The visitor's duty is no longer to make an aesthetic judgment, but she has been made a part of it. She leaves fingerprints and dust behind, and the air in the room has been changed and displaced in accordance to the

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[130] *theevidenceroom.com*. See Appendix A, Figure 25. The layout of the exhibit may be seen in Appendix A, Figure 26, and a section of the exhibit in Appendix A, Figure 27. It may seem as though this is outside the purview of this thesis. I would like to briefly state here that it is worth discussing this display of history as a kind of bridge between the récits of history and art. These are all traces, all writings and inscriptions, but so often the link between the two is overlooked, and the validity of works excluded from "high art" are deemed unworthy of theoretical discourse. Here we see the traces of memory, already inscribed upon the world, further inscribed into plaster casts, and then even further inscribed into the witness and the act of witnessing itself, provoking and requiring a response. We cannot speak of trauma, however generally or theoretically removed, without speaking of response and responsibility.

[131] Royal Ontario Museum, "The Evidence Room".

movement of her body. Her feet and fingers have worn away a miniscule layer of the surfaces they have contacted. It is no longer the documents that are on display but she, she who finds herself in a stark white room face to face with trauma itself.

> "I am not responsible."
> Who is responsible then?"
> […] Those who take hope again as the image fades
> As though there were a cure for the scourge of these camps.
> Those who pretend all this happened only once,
> At a certain time and in a certain place.
> Those who refuse to look around them,
> Deaf to the endless cry.[132]

The Evidence Room is designed to traumatise the viewer and visitor. In this sense the exhibit is *doubly violent*. Its intention is not only to inform and to provide physical, forensic evidence of the reality of the Holocaust, but to encapsulate the viewer within its four walls to organize a room around it which has been designed to traumatise her. We must remember as well that *any type of inscription is inherently violent* in making its mark upon the world. The empty white walls and space invites one to rupture their memory palaces and find that trauma which hides inside, and to confront it with a sudden, newfound claim to responsibility.

Now then, when we speak of responsibility, we must also speak of *agency*. Heretofore I have not made much reference to the agency of the human being who is under the influence of or subject to the whims of traumatic agency. However, since the human being must respond to and engage with the event and its consequences, even if this act can only ever be performed belatedly (and much too late), and if she is to *respond responsibly*, then she must actively and freely choose to do so, revealing that she does, after all, still hold some agency proper to herself that cannot be taken away by the traumatic event. How much agency, however, does the human being truly possess?

To answer this question, or rather to suggest a beginning to an answer for this question, I turn once again to Jacques Derrida, and his definition of ipseity and selfhood. Employing

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[132] Resnais, *Nuit et Brouillard*.

the metaphor of the wheel, Derrida discusses the self's return to itself: "The turn, the turn around the self—and the turn is always the *possibility* of turning around oneself—the turn [*tour*] turns out to be it [*tout*]" (Derrida Rogues 12). *Le tour est tout*. The turn is everything. There is nothing but the turn, nothing but return and yet more return—only the becoming of the return. For Derrida, the wheel is made up of lines which "come back round to or towards themselves according to a certain motivation, a certain mover."[133] There will always already exist a force within the structure that the wheel surrounds which moves it forward and compels the traumatized individual to rise up, respond, and ultimately fall—and the process repeats each time the individual revisits the event:

> This circular or spherical rotation, the turn of the re-turn upon the self, can take either the alternating form of the by turns, the in turn, the each in turn, or else the form of an identity between the origin and the conclusions, the cause and the end or aim, the driving [*mortice*] cause and the final cause.[134]

Perhaps, then, the answer to the question is that the self is never truly itself, for it is constantly returning to itself, turning back on itself, turning on itself. It is always becoming something else, always something becoming the self but never really reaching it. As such, the agency of the self, the subject, and the human being are also always already becoming, always out of reach. Agency is, then, always external, and only ever a response to others. The character in *Dark Souls* does not leave her cell and the Asylum of her own will, but rather leaves, spurred on by a rumour that she is the chosen one who will end the curse upon humans.

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[133] Derrida, *Rogues*, 12.

[134] Derrida, *Rogues*, 13.

Epilogue

Some further issues: trauma theorists Caruth and Malabou concerned themselves with solely human trauma. Derrida too, when speaking of his aporias, focused on the human; even when he speaks of his cat *looking back at him*, he neglects to question what the cat is *thinking of him*, and/or to listen to what the cat *might have to say* (in its own language). Of course, when we speak of the human being's understanding of trauma, it cannot be helped that time becomes intimately tied to the concept. Time is, after all, an inescapable facet of the human experience of life itself. For example, in the process of remembering, one might ask, "how old was I when this happened to me?" It is an inescapable aspect of human nature to speak in the discourse which is proper to our own bodies. How, after all, might we speak of our own affective state without referring back to ourselves? It is not as though I am calling for time, or the human experience of it, to be cut out of the equation entirely. However, when we speak of trauma, we must, at some point, ask ourselves to look beyond human exceptionalism. What of trauma for the *living being* and not just the human being?[135] How does our definition of trauma change? Then, finally, how does our treatment and understanding of its nature, processes, and consequences change?

I am claiming here that a simplified concept of time is not enough as a foundation for trauma studies. We must instead first re-establish a more comprehensive understanding of the concept as something that is more a becoming rather than a being, hence the terms becoming-space of time and a becoming-time of space. Once we have addressed these issues then we can further analyse the patterns of trauma and how it behaves in both space and time.

At the beginning of this project I had convinced myself I was speaking of and researching trauma *generally*, without a specific cause or source. In consulting the various theorists in

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[135] Towards this end, I would suggest a reading and analysis of: 1) trauma studies through the lens of women, queer folx, and minority figures, 2) trauma studies through the lens of animal studies, and 3) trauma studies through the lens of critical plant theory (consult Hannah Stark's "Deleuze and Critical Plant Studies"). Only after performing one's due diligence in each of these categories may one then begin to address trauma as it pertains to the *living being*.

their respective fields of expertise, and my own studies and writing, however, I noticed a similar vein: human exceptionalism. These theorists, and I, were focused on human perception, human experience, human behaviour, and human trauma. I realized that this was far too narrow and naïve an approach to bring towards the study of trauma if one were to understand the nature of true trauma, divorced from the specificities of cause and consequence. I had taken a step towards dissolving the idea that trauma was only bound to time and proposed that trauma was instead irrevocably bound to both space and time, and that the facet of space had been mostly ignored. I thought that this inclusion would be enough to understand the nature of trauma—at least, to better understand it.

In the preface, I said that "there is nothing so originary as trauma." So, although I was not basing my study upon a particular historical event such as the Holocaust or 9-11, as so many trauma studies do, I was still looking at a *source*—trauma as the source. That is, I was—and am—trying to *locate* trauma. This is, of course, even more revelatory in the face of my proposal for the introduction of space and spacing into the study of trauma.

I returned time and time again to the idea that trauma was autoimmune—its logic, its process, and its nature, that is. Is autoimmunity not linked to time? Does it not spiral? The study of these "non-theoretical" popular works, Miyazaki's *Dark Souls I* and *III*, and Itō's *Uzumaki*, enabled me to see that autoimmune trauma (and it can only be autoimmune) is not only linked to both time and space, but also to the essentially *abhuman* and the *non-human*. Trauma does not solely belong to the human being, and so we must divorce our studies from the idea that suffering is a uniquely human experience. To continue along the path of human exceptionalism is to limit ourselves to only a small branch of the organism that is traumatic experience. Specificity is not wrong; is it not true, after all, that one must know what the letters stand for within an algorithm? However, to chase after specificity itself with no regard to the whole is a mistake just as damning and limiting.

Secondly, I have briefly mentioned post-traumatic stress disorder. It is not really post-traumatic in the sense that it is a reliving or revisiting of the event or image that traumatised the individual in the first place. However, I have not spoken about the

possibility of a true "post" for the traumatised subject. It is not within the scope of this thesis to delve into post-trauma or post-humanism (for what is more human that trauma), but it would be prudent to analyse the relationships between these subjects, or to discuss the affective spiral in terms of the possibility of "post"-ness. Briefly: the nature of the spiral is in its becoming, as I have stressed throughout this thesis. As a result, continuous becoming does not have an end—only further becoming. By this definition, "post"-trauma is not possible.

Here I would turn towards theorists such as Slavoj Žižek, who claims that the post-traumatic subject is one "who is no longer 'in-the-world [… and] lives death as a form of life."[136] He also observes that "trauma has always already occurred,"[137] but Malabou contests this by stating that the "post-traumatized subject disconnects the structure of the always already. The post-traumatized subject is the never more of the always already."[138] I am inclined to agree with Malabou considering the post-traumatized subject is outside of the model of the spiral and as such disconnects or has broken out of the always already which would logically take the form of the spiral (as it has no discernible source or end). Claire Colebrook's work on the post-human would also be beneficial for the study of who or what awaits the individual who successfully escapes (an impossibility, but nevertheless).

Finally, I have spoken here about arche-writing, inscriptions, and representations of trauma and violence. I also briefly speak of the violence being committed on these pages themselves, and within each of the works I have analysed here. Through the very act of inscription, they are works and acts of violence.[139] However, as Maurice Blanchot would

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[136] Žižek, *Descartes and the Post-Traumatic Subject*, 12.

[137] Malabou, *Post-Trauma*, 226.

[138] Malabou, *Post-Trauma*, 227.

[139] Petar Ramadanovic also asks, "how is trauma present in a piece of writing at all if not as the past making a second appearance?" ("The Time of Trauma, 2). Indeed, each writing creates another instance—another fold—upon which the traumatic event can situate itself and from where it can issue forth more reverberations and re-visitations.

say (*violently*), the disaster must be written. We must ask ourselves, then: can we condone such double violence that is performed each time a violence (in this case, a traumatic event or image) is written about? What other recourse do we have?

Then, when we speak of the writing and telling of these stories of violent, traumatic events, we must also speak of the act of *listening*, and the consequences borne by the listeners and readers—those who are called upon to witness the act and assume the weight of the trauma when it may well be suggested that it is not, and/or should not, be theirs to bear. We must eventually speak of the "practical hazards of listening—of coming to know"[140] when we wish to write of trauma, or when we write of writings about trauma. After all, we are inscribing these words into others, and we must assume the responsibilities for these actions.

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[140] Felman, "Testimony," xvii.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Figures

Figure 1A: Itō Junji, *Uzumaki Volume 2***, 119. Pregnant women harvest blood from males at night using drills tips or augers.**

Figure 1B: Itō Junji, *Uzumaki Volume 2*, 122. Pregnant women employ the spiral pattern to mesmerize their prey (male hospital patients) to sedate them.

Figure 2: Kirie's hair. Itō, *Uzumaki Volume 1*, 183.
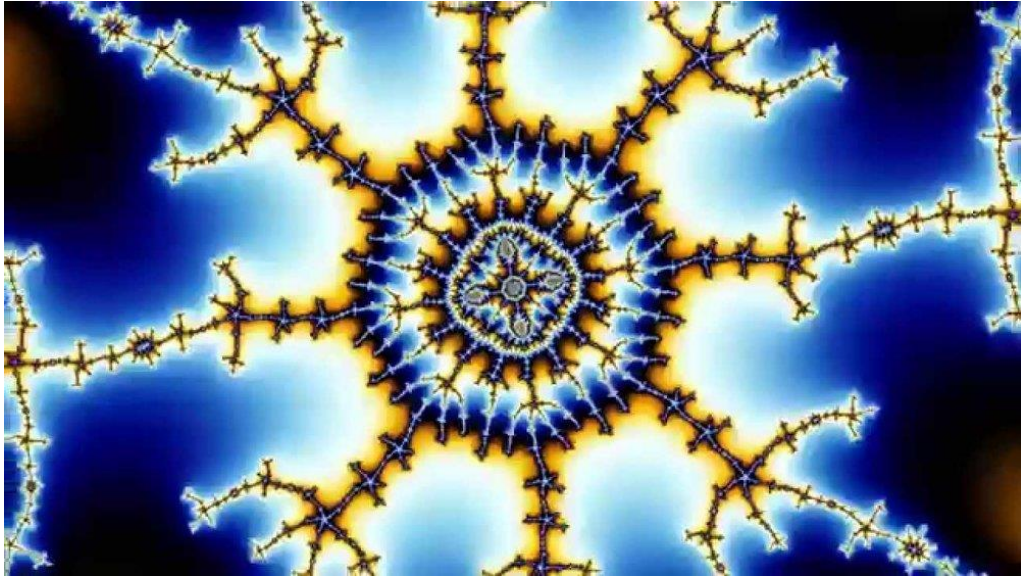
Figure 3: Mandelbrot set, *nunclife.com*
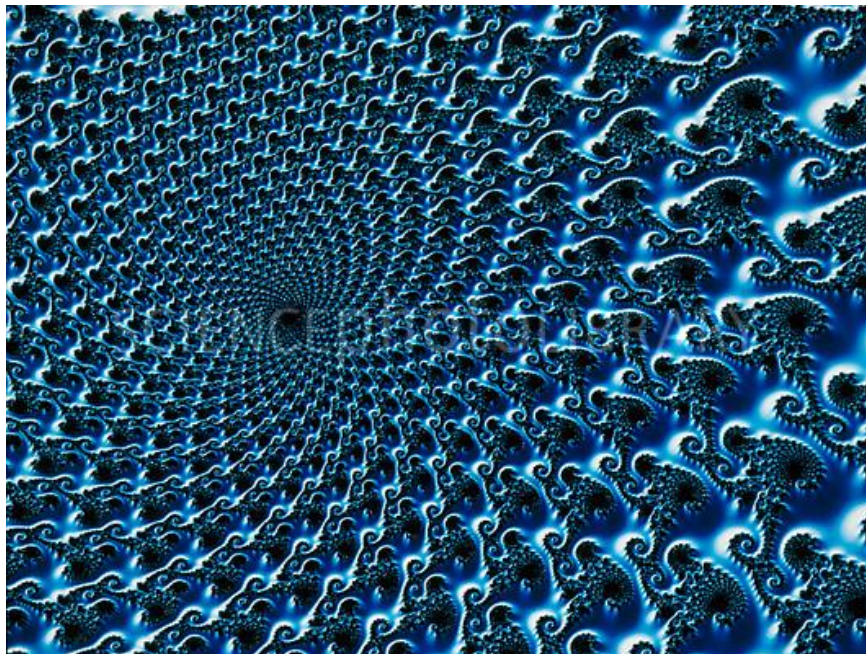
Figure 4: Logarithmic spiral, *sciencephoto.com*
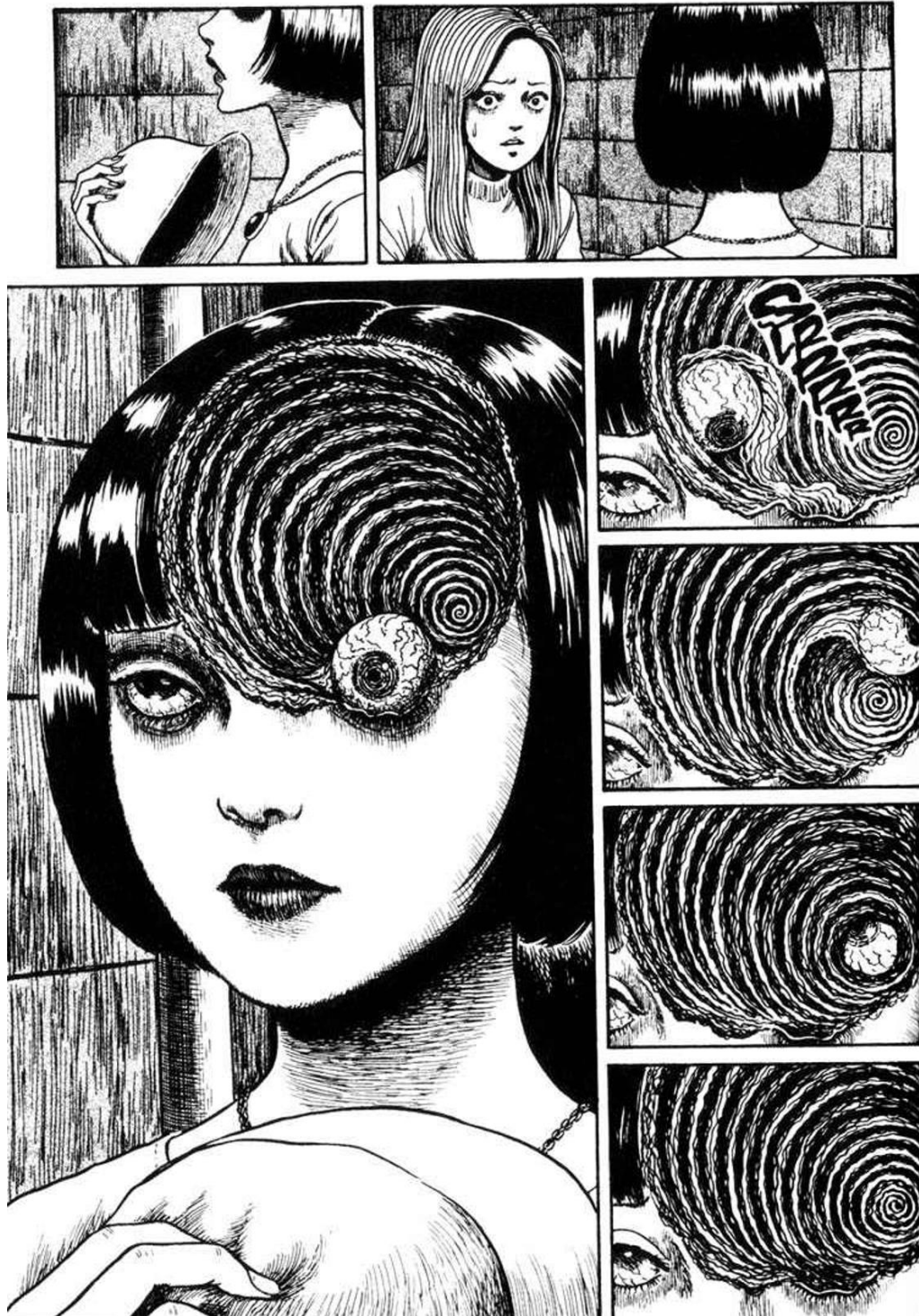
Figure 5: Azami's face in the process of being consumed by the spiral. Itō, *Uzumaki*
*Volume 1***, 100.**

Figure 6: Azami attacks her male classmate with the spiral. Itō, *Uzumaki Volume 1*, 104.

Figure 7: Azami's body consumed by the spiral. Itō, *Uzumaki Volume 1*, 106.

Figure 8: The Ringed City. Still taken from DLC announcement trailer. Bandai Namco Entertainment America, *Dark Souls III: The Ringed City DLC Announcement Trailer | PS4, XB1, PC*.

Figure 9: The Ringed City. Still taken from DLC announcement trailer. Bandai Namco Entertainment America, *Dark Souls III: The Ringed City DLC Announcement Trailer | PS4, XB1, PC*.

Figure 10: Slave Knight Gael, *Dark Souls III***.**

Figure 11: Painting woman, and the painting, *Dark Souls III***.**

Figure 12A: Humanity, item. *Dark Souls I.*

Figure 12B: Humanity, enemy. *Dark Souls I.*
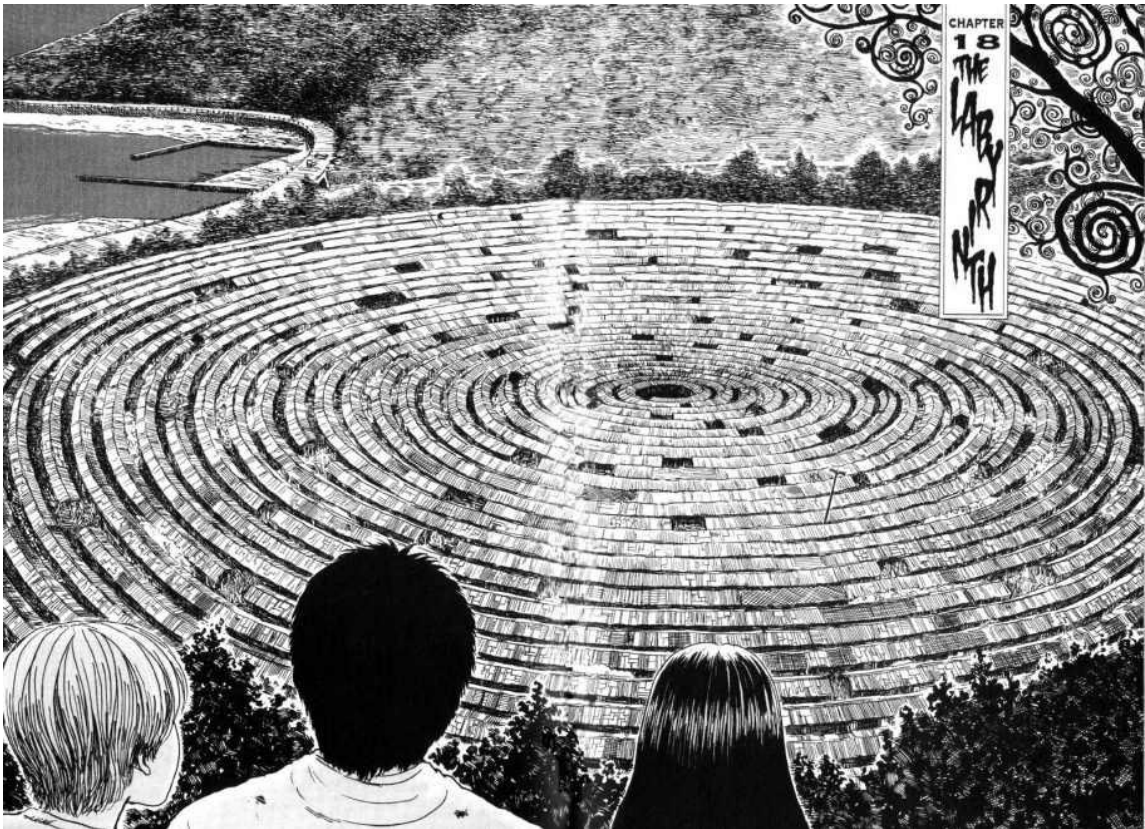
Figure 13: The spiralling row houses. Itō, *Uzumaki Volume 3,* **164-165.**

Figure 14A: People becoming spirals. Itō, *Uzumaki Volume 3,* **162.**

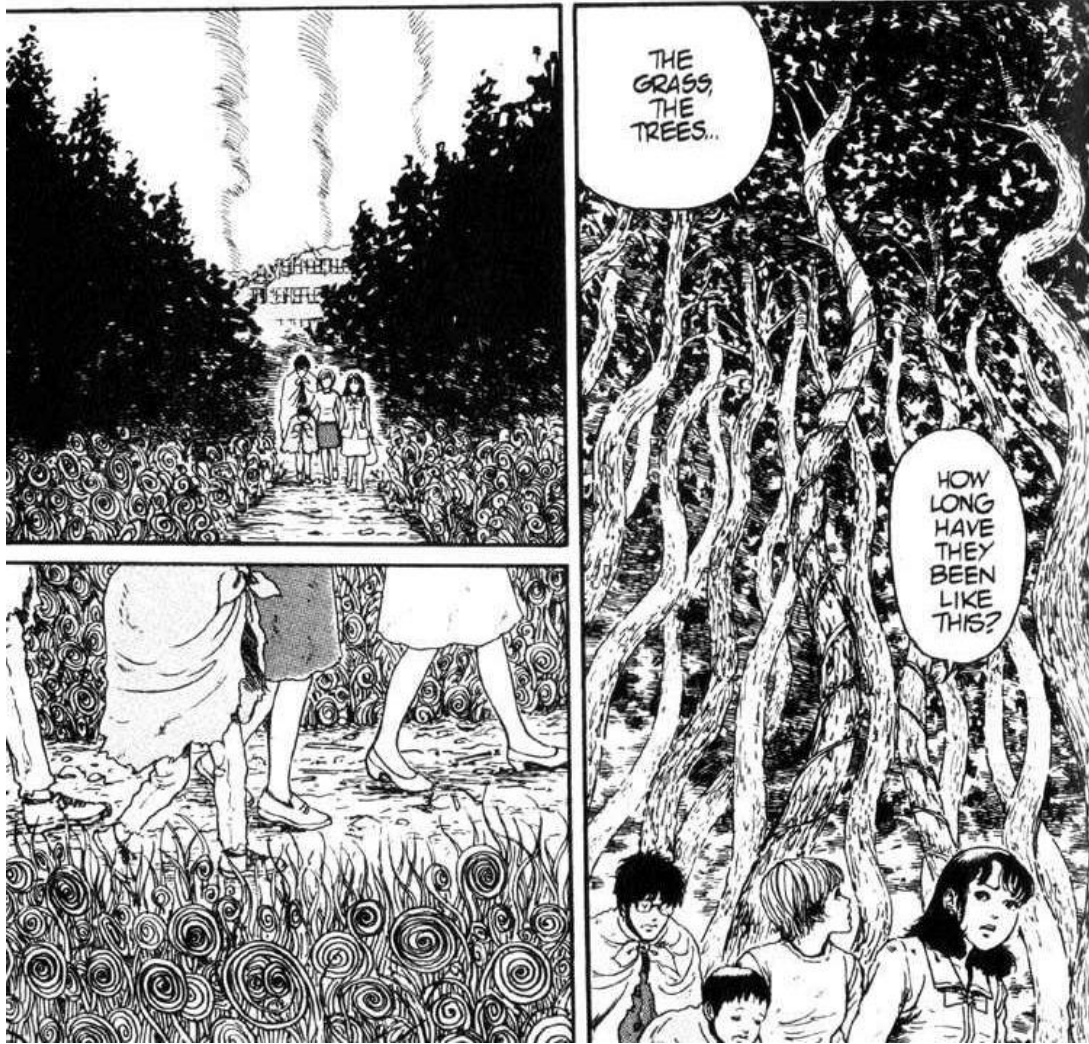**Figure 14B: Villagers who passed due to extreme spiralling and suffocation. Itō,**
***Uzumaki Volume 3*, 177.**

Figure 15: Spiralling in nature. Itō, *Uzumaki Volume 3*, 138.
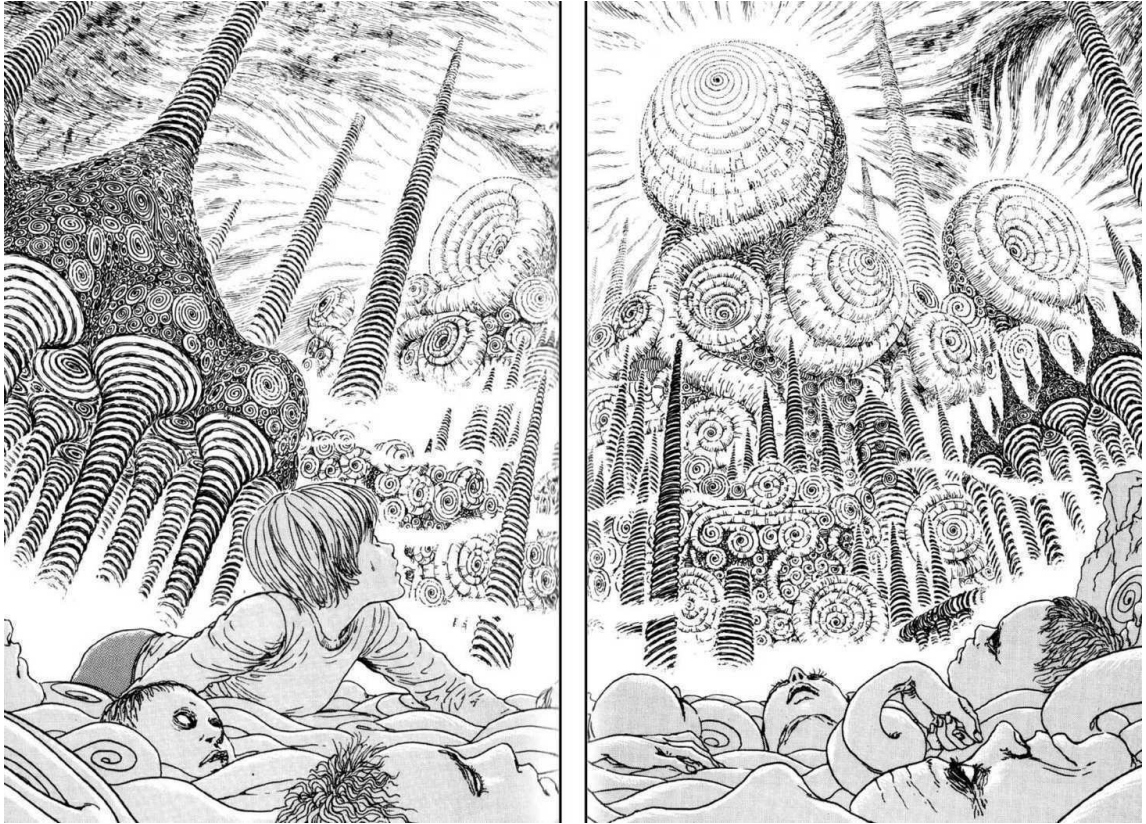
Figure 16: Itō, *Uzumaki Volume 3*, 214.

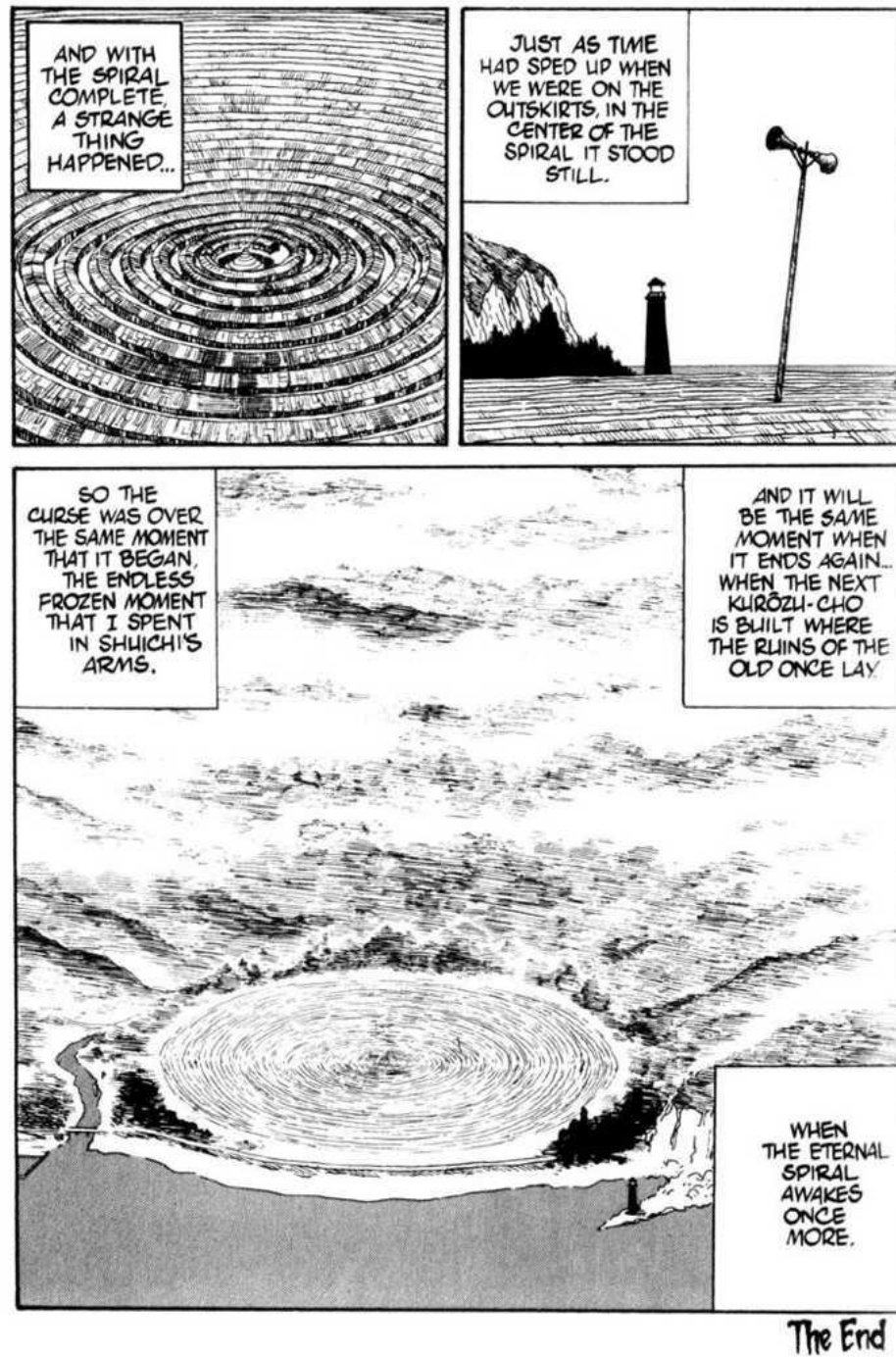**Figure 17: Underneath Kurouzu-cho. Itō,** *Uzumaki Volume 3*, **208 – 209.**

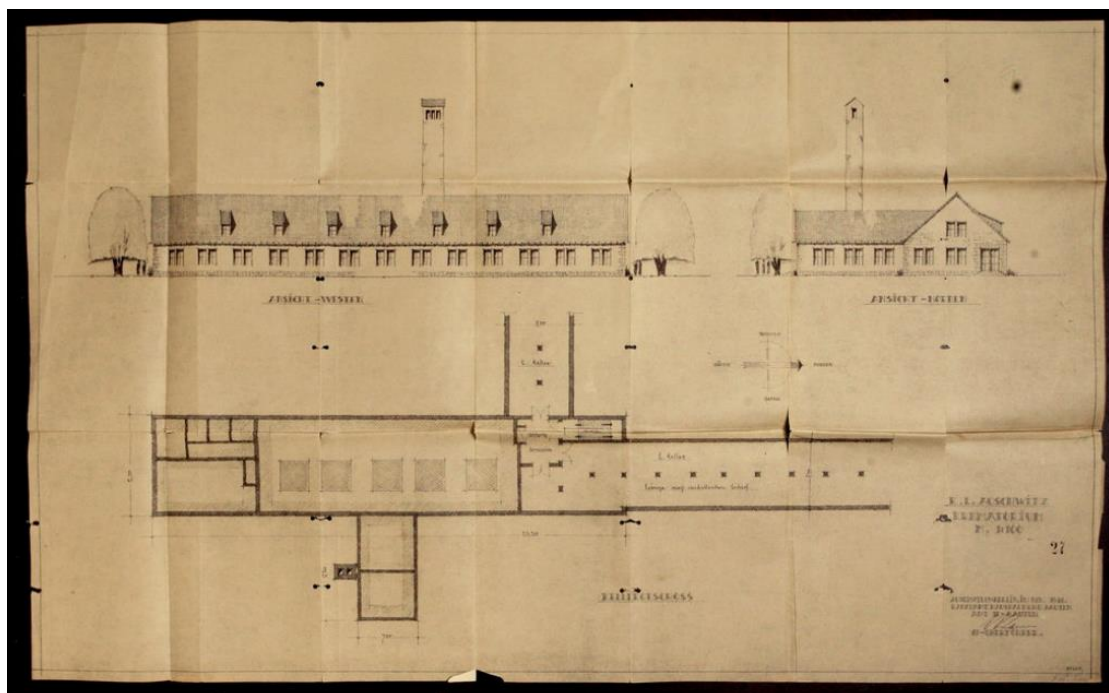**Figure 18: Itō, *Uzumaki Volume 3*, 218.**

Figure 19: "An early blueprint of Crematorium II, Birkenau, dated November 1941. The blueprint provides an overview of the structure's underground level, including what later became the undressing chamber and the gas chamber" ("Architecture of Murder").
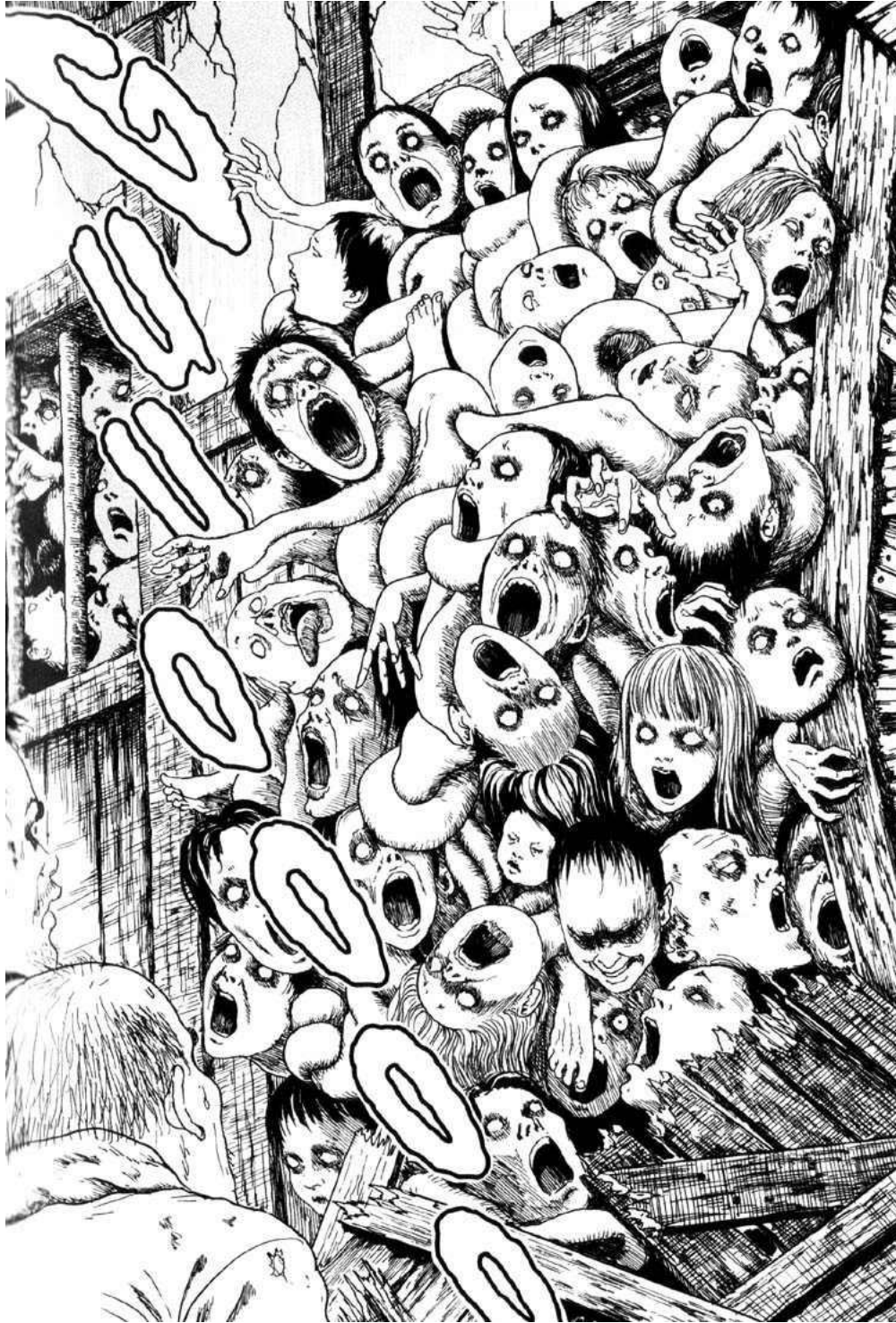
Figure 20: The bodies in the row houses. Itō, *Uzumaki Volume 3,* **116.**

Figure 21: The bodies of the villagers, once sucked into the underground spiral city, solidify into what seems to a type of stone. Pictured here are Kirie's parents. Itō, *Uzumaki Volume 3***, 212.**
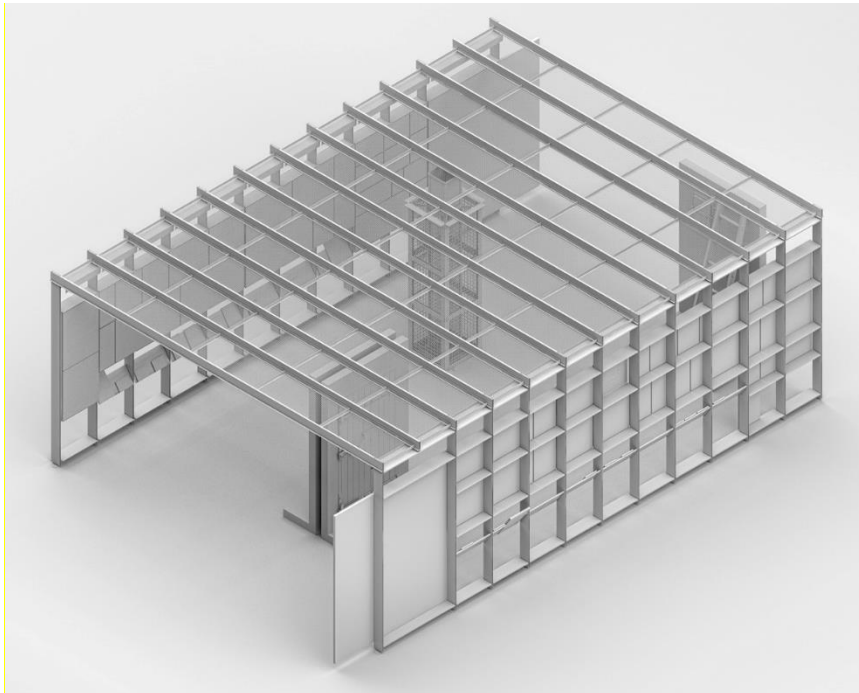
Figure 22: Filianore and her egg. *Dark Souls III*.

Figure 23: Ringed Knight, and the Dark Sigil upon his chest. *Dark Souls III*.

Figure 24: Vagrants. *Dark Souls I***.**

Figure 25: Layout of "The Evidence Room" exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum (theevidenceroom.com)

Figure 26: View from entrance to "The Evidence Room" exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum (theevidenceroom.com)
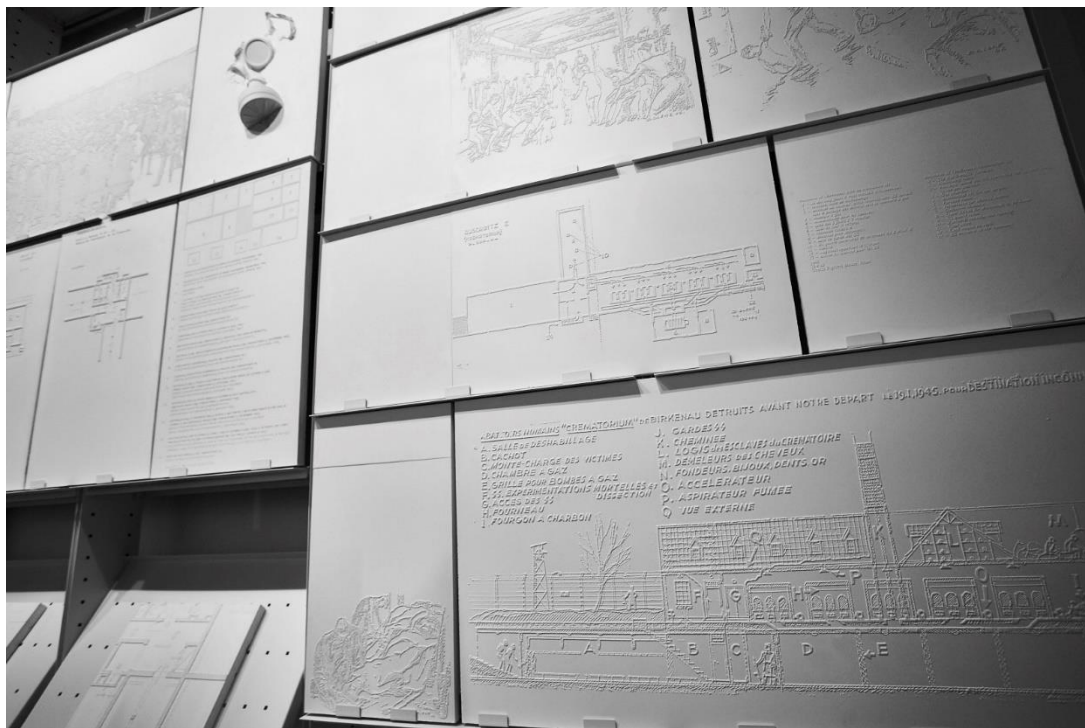

Figure 27: A section of "The Evidence Room" exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum which shows the use of plaster as a medium.

Appendix B: Summaries

Junji Itō, *Uzumaki*

Itō's work, *Uzumaki*, is a horror cult classic of Japanese manga. Goshima Kirie,[141] the protagonist, shares the tales of the strange events in her village, Kurouzu-cho, which has been 'contaminated' by the figure of the spiral. In the beginning, it is revealed by Kirie's boyfriend, Saito Shuichi, that the village has always featured an unnaturally high frequency of spirals in its natural (fiddlehead ferns, whirlwinds, snail shells, swirling cloud formations, and whirlpools) and architectural (curving streets) forms. Shuichi suspects that the spiral has infected his father; at first, he simply collects representations of it, but his mania worsens and he finally forces his body to become a spiral itself, resulting in his death. Upon his cremation, his ashes are released into the sky as a spiral of smoke which lands in Dragonfly Pond, at the centre of the village. After this, other villagers also become infected: Shuichi's mother, Kirie's father, their friends, and so on, until eventually every villager develops either an obsession or becomes a physical manifestation of the spiral (some villagers' bodies become contorted, and others transform into snail-people. Others who pass also produce spiralling ashes (most Japanese people are cremated) which are sucked into the same pond. Additionally, the village itself and becomes more and more contaminated as well. Sounds, such as the evening bell and children's screams, produce a dizzying effect and are visually portrayed as spirals surrounding the characters' heads. Infants born during this period present with strange symptoms, such as unnatural intelligence and placentas which constantly and consistently return and keep growing (in this case the doctor theorizes the infants wish to return to their mothers' wombs, signifying a theme of 'returning to an origin' as is demonstrated in the end when the spiral collapses into its centre). These spiralling events escalate into typhoons and hurricanes, and the village becomes unrecognizable and descends into chaos. Due to extensive damage to their homes, more and more villagers

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[141] Japanese custom lists the surname first, then the given name.

move into traditional Japanese "row houses," and as the number of occupants requiring temporary housing grows, the villagers build extensions to these houses. As conditions worsen, it is revealed that members of rescue and press teams travelling into the village are 'drawn' in by an unknown force, and those attempting to leave also experience the same effect; as a result, none may escape. Those who attempt to escape find that time slows or speeds up near the edges of the village, and they find that they have been walking in circles, or there is an increase of atmospheric pressure which builds until the individual is forced to turn back. Eventually there are no safe buildings save for the row houses, which are peculiarly resistant to the storms and whirlwinds. In the end, villagers, rescuers, press, and volunteers are all housed in the row houses and their fixation on safety and "having enough room" warps their minds and personalities until their bodies are spiralized and tangle together. The row houses are eventually connected in a large spiral which encompasses the village's surface area, and so too do the tangles of bodies become connected. Once everything is completely connected, there is an audible "whoosh" as the bodies are sucked into the centre of the pond, which has now evaporated to reveal a spiral staircase which descends into the earth. It is revealed that there is a "spiral city" below the village, which has continuously infected the village above time and again. Kirie and Shuichi, the last survivors, make their way to this underground city, and succumb to the strange energy of the spiral, finally becoming spirals themselves.

Hidetaka Miyazaki (dir.), *Dark Souls I*

Technically speaking, there is no real or sanctioned chronological "story" that can be summarized for the Dark Souls universe. There is, however, a narrative. The game begins with a cutscene which states:

> In the Age of Ancients the world was unformed, shrouded by fog. A land of gray crags, Archtrees and Everlasting Dragons. But then there was Fire and with fire came disparity. Heat and cold, life and death, and of course, light and dark. Then from the dark, *They* came, and found the Souls of Lords within the flame. Nito, the First of the Dead, The Witch of Izalith and her Daughters of Chaos, Gwyn, the Lord of Sunlight, and his faithful knights. And the Furtive Pygmy, so easily forgotten. With the strength of Lords, they challenged the Dragons. Gwyn's mighty bolts peeled apart their stone scales. The Witches weaved great firestorms. Nito unleashed a miasma of death and disease. And Seath the Scaleless betrayed his own, and the Dragons were no more. Thus began the Age of Fire. But soon the flames will fade and only Dark will remain. Even now there are only embers, and man sees not light, but only endless nights. And amongst the living are seen, carriers of the accursed Darksign. Yes, indeed. The Darksign brands the Undead. And in this land, the Undead are corralled and led to the north, where they are locked away, to await the end of the world… This is your fate. Only, in the ancient legends it is stated, that one day an undead shall be chosen to leave the undead asylum, in pilgrimage, to the land of ancient lords, Lordran.[142]

Gameplay begins after an indeterminate number of years have passed following the events mentioned in the introduction. The First Flame which prompted the Age of Fire has begun to fade, and as a result, humans in Lordran are turning Hollow. The Witches of Izalith attempted to birth a new flame, but this failed and the consequences are believed to have transformed her and several of her daughters into the Bed of Chaos. Thus, humans continued to die or become afflicted with the Darksign, which does not allow the bearer to die, but rather condemns them to be "reborn." However, each death deprives them of something, and eventually these humans become Hollow, a condition which seems to be representative of a consequence of obsession; as the humans with the Darksign keep dying, they lose will and purpose save for a desire for accruing Humanity, and thus become Hollow—insane. Those that are cursed, or Undead, are sent to an

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[142] *Dark Souls.*

Asylum, which is where the player/character begins their journey. Oscar, Knight of Astora, sends a corpse with a key into the player's cell, which allows you to escape. Oscar also tells the player that there is a legend that claims a chosen Undead who manages to ring the Bell of Awakening will know "the fate of the Undead."[143] After defeating the boss of the Asylum, the Asylum Demon, the player is picked up by a giant crow, who drops her at Firelink Shrine. Here the player discovers there is not only one bell, but two. The player has several choices to make throughout gameplay, and these decisions change the "storyline" in one way or the other. For example, there are two primordial serpents, Frampt and Kaathe, the former who leads you to rekindle the First Flame and 'link the fire', and the latter who encourages you towards the "Dark Lord" ending (where the Age of Darkness or humankind begins). These decisions, however, are not clear to the first-time player, and in the case Kaathe, the steps one must take in order to meet him are nearly impossible for a beginner.

Frampt asks the player to retrieve the Lordvessel from Anor Londo, the home of the gods, which is reached through many more difficult areas and bosses. Once this has been retrieved, the player can travel between bonfires, which are the 'central' points of each area in that they allow the player to rest and restore their health, Estus flasks[144], upgrade items, etc. More importantly, the Lordvessel must be filled with the souls of the Witch of Izalith (the Bed of Chaos), Gravelord Nito, the Four Kings, and Seath the Scaleless. Once this has been completed, the Lordvessel reveals the entrance to the Kiln of the First Flame. Here, time is even more distorted than in Lordran, and Gwyn may be challenged, and his defeat prompts the end of the game, which immediately begins "new game plus," in which the player finds herself once again at the Undead Asylum, regardless of the path she chose (Dark Lord or Link the Fire). This would suggest that no matter the decision made, there is always a return, and that there is an inescapable cycle in place of fire and dark. Frampt encourages the player to link the Fire and thus save the world from perishing in the Dark.

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[143] *Dark Souls*.

[144] Essentially health potions.

Kaathe, however, reveals more [although strictly, the player should never take the words of any nonplayer character (NPC) at face value]: Gwyn attempted to stop the cycle and keep the world in the Age of Fire, fearing the dawn of the Age of Darkness in which humanity would rise. Kaathe thus temps the player to kill Gwyn but allow the Fire to fade. The idea is that the most players, especially first-time players, will never know of this duplicity on Gwyn's and Frampt's part unless they know to look for Kaathe in the first place. However, this encounter reveals that the Dark Soul which the Furtive Pygmy found may be a precursor to the human soul, and thus a source of "power." This information, however, is also misleading, for it is revealed in the downloadable content (DLC), *Artorias of the Abyss*, that a serpent[145] told the people of Oolacile (a town from the past) to search for the Dark Soul. These actions led to the opening of the Abyss, which is a manifestation of Darkness itself. Presumably, Manus, who is named "The Father of the Abyss," gave birth to the Abyss,[146] which corrupts those who seek or touch it. Artorias, Gwyn's Knight, attempted to rescue Princess Dusk of Oolacile who was kidnapped by Manus (in the past, and also in the present—time is extremely convoluted here), and was corrupted, and this manifests in a purple slime and smoke which emanates from his being, and a violent rage which consumes him. The Oolacile of the past is consumed, and only bleak ruins of it remain in the "present"[147] in which the player exists (Darkroot Garden area).

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[145] Believed by many in the gameplayers' community to be Kaathe.

[146] It is also believed by some that Manus is the Furtive Pygmy, but there is no concrete evidence to support this theory, other than the link between the Dark Soul and the Abyss.

[147] Inserted in quotations because of the strange fluidity of timelines in this universe.

Hidetaka Miyazaki (dir.), *Dark Souls III*

This sequel takes place in a different time-space of the universe which is introduced in *Dark Souls I*. Instead of a "chosen one" who is becoming hollow, the player-character is instead an "Unkindled" one. The Unkindled are ashen as a result of a failure to link the flames in their respective time-spaces. It is also suggested that these Unkindled are products of the numerous repetitions of the cycle (fire fading, fire linking) but also simultaneously unworthy of even kindling the Flame (that is, they never stood a chance). When the flame is fading, they are awakened by a bell because Ludleth, a Lord of Cinder (a name given to those who successfully linked the flame in their respective worlds), has concocted a plan to "save" the universe—or rather, to give birth to a timeline in which the fire was linked. To carry out this plan, Ludleth requires the player-character to retrieve the ashes of the other Lords of Cinder who have abandoned their place in the Kiln. These other ashes belong to Ludleth the Exiled of Courland, Farron's Undead Legion (Abyss Watchers—related to Artorias the Abysswalker of *Dark Souls I*), Aldrich, Devourer of Gods (ate men and then gods to gain power; created a cult), Yhorm the Giant, and Lothric, the younger prince.

You awake in the Cemetery of Ash and journey to the Firelink Shrine, but this Firelink is only one of multiple in this game. There is also the Untended Graves, where the Age of Dark has descended (the champion, Gundyr, failed to link the Flame)—the handmaiden here seems to remember you, suggesting that you are not the only being within these timelines that is capable of "time-travel" or rather, has several iterations of themselves across different timelines that are connected to each other mentally/spiritually. The messages that are inscribed into one manifestation / time-space of Firelink appear in the other accessible Firelinks, suggesting that these spaces are all linked as well. The last repetition of Firelink is the Flameless Shrine, which appears to be further into the "future" of a world whose flame was never linked. It is through this bonfire that you access the Kiln of the First Flame where you find the Soul of Cinder, the final boss (after retrieving all the ashes of the Lords of Cinder and placing them in their respective thrones at the Kiln where Ludleth sits). This Soul of Cinder is a physical manifestation of the First Flame, and all the Lords of Cinder who managed to link it by sacrificing themselves

to it. As a result, this boss fights with the same moves and attacks as previous bosses, player-characters, and Gwyn (who you find in *Dark Souls I* in the same location).

If the player has the second DLC, they can then access the Dreg Heap from the Kiln, which consists of an amalgamation of all the kingdoms across the world and all the time-spaces of each kingdom. This then leads to the Ringed City, where one fights their way through to the Princess Filianore, whose slumber protects the world / time. When she is awakened, the player is transported to a timeline in which Slave Knight Gael has gone insane in his quest for the blood of the Dark Soul and has slaughtered all the Pygmies. This timeline is stated to be the end of the world by those who warn the player-character not to wake Princess Filianore.

This quest is precipitated by the painter's desire to create a new painting made of the blood of the Dark Soul. She is introduced in the first DLC, *Ashes of Ariandel*. Like the painting of Ariamis which houses Priscilla in the first game, this is also a painting made of blood which is decaying and thus becoming corrupted. It is revealed that there have been multiple painters who attempted to create better, gentler, and more peaceful words as their worlds became corrupt and burned, but blood will always rot, and thus every painting always became corrupt. The painter of Ariandel believes that her painting, made of the blood of the Dark Soul, which finally accomplish this goal for a "better world." Of course, we know that the darkness of humanity and of the Dark Soul will always corrupt in excess, so it is all too possible that her painting will rot as well—suggesting of course, that the murder of the pygmies and Gael's insanity was for nothing.

There is also the introduction of the Deep in the third game. It is similar to the Abyss, and may indeed be the Abyss, as it was initially peaceful and gentle but eventually became corrupted and the home of monstrous creatures. As with darkness and the Abyss from *Dark Souls I*, it is not inherently "bad" or "evil," but there is an unspeakable and unknowable aspect to it: "There is a darkness that lies beyond human ken."[148]

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[148] *Dark Souls III*. Deep gem item description.

There are four possible endings to this game. One is to link the First Flame after killing the Soul of Cinder. The second is to find and gift the Eyes of the Firekeeper to the Firekeeper of Ludleth's Firelink Shrine. After killing the Soul of Cinder, summon the Firekeeper and allow the Flame to die, ushering in the Age of Dark. Another option is to kill the Firekeeper and hold the flame in your own hands, allowing it to die. The final possible ending is difficult to achieve without prior knowledge of its existence and without consulting a guide. The process requires hollowing and "drawing out one's true strength" via Yoel, an NPC, to obtain five Dark Sigils. The player must allow Anri (NPC) to die and then wed him/her (Anri's gender is the opposite of the player-character's). This ending usurps the Fire and ushers in the Age of Man as well as placing the player-character as the Dark Lord.

Curriculum Vitae

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