CHAPTER 13

Animal Unfamiliars
A Bestiary of Time-Travel Cinema

Alanna Thain

Aberrant or strange experiences of time in films provide access to one of the body's primary capacities, that of novelty.[1] The body's ongoing existence in time is simultaneously one of creative recompositions, of breaks; unusual experiences of temporality activate and remind us of what I term the "anotherness" of the body itself: a dispossessive strangeness most intimately ours.[2] In a kind of topographical relation to the quotidian, this anotherness inheres at the edge of livability, expanding one's capacity to act via a productive time machinics. Félix Guattari, speaking to this dispossessive force of time (which he calls "affect"), writes:

> As much the color of the human soul as of animal becomings and cosmic magics, affect remains fuzzy, atmospheric, and yet is perfectly apprehendable, in so far as it is characterized by the existence of thresholds of passage and of reversals of polarity … Affect is the process of existential appropriation by the continuous creation of heterogeneous durations of being.[3]

Guattari's connection of affect and time gives something other than loss as a way to think of existential appropriation, and the ambiguous intensities of affect embodied between human soul, animal becomings, and cosmic magics are clearly articulated in one form of speculative media: the time-travel film, a genre riddled with animal companions. What role do animals play in such experiences, and in particular, how does their relationship to territory demand that we think their role ecologically? Guattari's work rethinks relations between ourselves and what I will term our "animal unfamiliar." This paper uses Guattari's thought to consider the companion species that populate time-travel movies, exploring how animals make us live time both intensively and disjunctively – that is to say, affectively – through experiences of alterembodiment in Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* (1975), Alain Resnais' *Je t'aime, je t'aime* (1968), Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962), and David Cronenberg's *The Fly* (1986).[4] What can our animal unfamiliars teach us about time travel

as an ethico-aesthetic response to the crisis of contemporary ecologies? Throughout, I consider how the presence of animals in time-travel cinema foregrounds the way that all bodies are time machines, in the sense of their capacity for demonstrating the heterogeneity of our own existence in time. Animals, I argue, co-compose experimental ecologies of intensity, otherwise understood as direct experiences of heterochronicity, the felt multiplicity of forms of time. They make legible our corporeal experience of time. This is the work of the animal unfamiliar, an adaptation of Gilles Deleuze's work on the animal.

Deleuze's loathing for domestic animals is well known. In the eight-hour interview series *Gilles Deleuze from A to Z*, he heaps scorn on dogs and cats and the people who cherish them. But in the opening segment of that piece, "A is for Animal," and in the hours that follow, he qualifies this loathing as less for the domestic animal than for the familiar or familial, noting (in language that suggests the expanded sensorium that animal unfamilars enable) that "domesticated animals that are not familial, not familiar, I like them much, as I am sensitive to something in them."[5] This sensitivity registers the animal's capacity to activate an experience of the limit or threshold; animal unfamiliars are uncanny lures into territories of the "unthought":

> And there is no literature that separates the language and the syntax from the human being and the animal. One has to be sure of that limit. And I don't believe it. Even by doing philosophy. Here, one is on the border that separates thought from the non-thought. One should always be on the border that separates oneself from the animality in such manner that one is not separated anymore. There is an inhumanity peculiar to the human body, and the human spirit. There are animal relationships to the animal. So, if we could be finished with "A," this would be good.[6]

This inhumanity proper to the body and mind, and the animal relation to the animal, are fundamentally for Deleuze relations of time. Deleuze gives as an example the hunter who reads the signs, in footprints, of the animal that *was* there as an act of temporally disjunctive becoming *with* the animal: "I admire the people who can recognise, such as hunters, real hunters and not the ones from hunting societies, but the real hunters who are able to recognise the animal that passed by. Then they are animals; then they have an animal relationship to the animal. This means having an animal relationship to an animal. It is incredible."[7] Not mimetic, an animal relationship to the animal is characterized by an untimely becoming. Such a relation can *only* be untimely, in that the participants don't sync up; animals provoke these relations as out-of-body experiences. Animals

produce corporeal encounters of thresholding, as in Deleuze's description of the cat who returns home to find a place to die, who makes a territory of death as the body's ultimate anotherness. They are literally the *analphabêtes*, the illiterate beasts without speech. Deleuze articulates this otherness of the animal unfamiliar as the means to access one's own, to reach the limit that marks a change of state not from one thing to another, but to an excluded middle or in-between. The animal returns as a refrain function in the abecedary to contour the places of the non-thought that make thinking possible. Though Deleuze voices impatience with the topic of the "Animal," it recurs, making clear that the work of the animal for Deleuze is as a force of becoming, the shift from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Animals are our companions in anotherness, our unfamiliars. They are such because they both mark the limit of thought and non-thought (the bark of a dog, Deleuze says, is the stupidest sound in the world) where non-thought moves into potential. In other words, animals co-compose with us new territories of thinking.

In following our animal unfamiliars through their displacements in time-travel cinema, I explore their invitation to think and live otherwise. In these works, animals diverge from their normal function within the anthropocentric discourse of disaster that characterizes so much of our current thinking on ecologies. This chapter looks at the relation of catastrophe, time, and affect to ask what new powers to affect and be affected we gain in relation to our traveling companions.

Time Machinics: Beyond Domestic Seriality

To move into the machinic, I understand time travel as fundamentally an experience of affective intensity rather than displacement along a temporal continuum. The body does not travel through time as through space; rather time travel is a process of reworlding, as becomes clear in Deleuze and Guattari's work on nomadology and machines for traveling. A simple sketched image of a fourth- or fifth-century horseless nomad chariot opens the chapter "1227: Treatise on Nomadology: – The War Machine" in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*. That chapter characterizes the nomad as the one who travels intensively rather than extensively across space, one for whom "voyage in place is the name of every intensity."[8] Such an intensive voyage in place does not simply absent the animal, but rather situates it at the limit of the perceptible and the legible. A mobilizing disappearance traverses both Deleuze and Guattari's nomadism and Alain Resnais' time machinics of a vanishing

mouse, as we shall see in the next section of this chapter. How might we see this horseless chariot, then, not as a machine for traversing space, but as a time machine? Animals in time-travel cinema generate heterochronic bodies, deranging relations of risk, approximation, and mimesis. Deleuze and Guattari write, speaking of the outlandish, creative force of nomadism:[9] "what the warrior borrows from the animal is more the idea of the motor than the model of prey. He does not generalize the idea of prey by applying it to the enemy, he abstracts the idea of the motor, applying it to himself."[10] Here, they describe a regime of affective intensity as a movement impulse "which relates only to the moving body in itself, to speeds and compositions of speed amongst elements."[11] They term this "matter in variation":[12] intensive transformations of time, inseparable from the "passage to the limit as change of state,"[13] from processes of deformation or transformation.

Robert Bird attributes the uncanny efficacy of animals in Andrei Tarkovsky's films to the filmmaker's preference for long uninterrupted takes, which gave "considerable freedom to the material forces" of animals "to manifest themselves in activity."[14] The effect was a crucial part of what he terms the "aleatory" or "stochastic" feeling of time within Tarkovsky's cinema, including the film under consideration here, often described as his most personal work, *The Mirror*.[15] *The Mirror* is non-linearly composed of three distinct time periods in the life of a poet, with the body in extremis initiating time travel in response to the imminent death of the protagonist, Alexei. Like Deleuze's dying cat, the film performs an outlandish deterritorialization of the space of a dying form, and early on, the film's time machinics are yoked to animality as a productive force of unfamiliarity. Two back-to-back scenes play out the film's relation to our animal unfamiliars.[16] These scenes make explicit Deleuze's link between the writer and animal as two beings "on the lookout":

DELEUZE: Yes. If someone would ask me what an animal is, I would answer "a being on the lookout." It is a being fundamentally on the lookout.
CLAIRE PARNET: And the writer?
DELEUZE: Well, yes, the writer is on the lookout. So is the philosopher. Of course we are on the lookout. For me, you know, you see, the ears of an animal. Well it does nothing without being on the watch. An animal never keeps still.[17]

Deleuze's description not only equates the animal to the writer, it also performs a corporeal rearrangement of "ears that look" that constitutes a typical threat to animal and human embodiment alike in time-travel

movies – that displacement in space and time will (fatally) rearrange the body. In Tarkovsky's film, animals signal not just an altered state, such as dreaming or memory, although this is how animal appearances are often read in his work. They repurpose habitual embodiment in the service of the body's heterochronic being, folding and complexifying forms of time.

The first scene involves a burning barn in the countryside. Here the fire's destruction, replayed already in memory, is further rippled by heterochronic forces and initiated by animal sounds. The scene's abstracted animal elements machinically articulate a movement across time. The scene opens with a close-up of Maria (Margarita Terekhova), the mother of Alexei, wiping tears from her face, accompanied by the noise of a ticking clock. In the background, a dog barks and an echo effect makes this sound almost artificial or metallic, a curious bark that contours and deranges the surrounding space. A cat's meow immediately follows. Maria turns her head as if in response but it is unclear which animal has caught her attention. People begin to shout in alarm and the barking increases, the echoing effect producing a strong sense of dislocation as the volume varies and destabilizes the dog's relation to the human characters. The mother announces there is a fire, and two children leap up to run and see. The camera cuts to the reverse shot and lingers in the home as everyone flees. As this happens, the ticking stops and we hear the mechanical call of a cuckoo clock, the harsh metricality of time fading away into the refrain function of birdsong. The camera continues to explore a space now shot through with the folds of time made manifest and initiated by the abstraction of animal voices, moving from sense to sound. If the warrior abstracts the animal motor and applies it to himself, in time-travel cinema the animal's propensity to make territory through leaving – what Deleuze in the abecedary calls its "outlandishness"[18] – suits an art of replay like cinema and relays a line of flight, the emergent novelty of anotherness.

In the next scene, the effects of temporal derangement play out again across abstracted movements of animality. From the burning barn, we cut to a child who starts upright in bed at the sound of a distant birdcall. Shifting to black and white, the film presents a forest where grass and trees are rippled by wind. We cut back to the boy, sleeping now, who starts awake. The birdcall repeats and he gets out of bed; at the third birdcall, a white form flits across the screen, a piece of clothing suggesting the extravagant form of a bird, traditionally a harbinger of death, but here, abstracted, a harbinger instead of anotherness. In the mysterious scene that follows, the bird's form and force are distributed across characters

and frame-composition. In slow reversed motion, the mother rises from washing her hair, which hangs over her face. Her arms flail awkwardly like disjointed wings in an impossible movement composed of competing forces of time. Only as an animal can she move. This scene mirrors the irreversible burning of the barn in a corporeal contagion, as the mother's wetness infects the whole room, which, saturated in liquid, starts to collapse. At the end of her movement through space, the young Maria encounters her future self. The animal unfamilars confound and make contagious Alexei's temporal movement through the bodies of women; he doesn't simply travel through his memories but becomes unfamiliar to his own self.

Writing about his film's receptions in his book *Sculpting in Time*, Tarkovsky describes letters he received about his films that directly address the complex temporal conditions that his films enacted upon the bodies of his spectators and their link to our animal unfamiliars.[19] The first is a violent failure of sense (the work of the *analphabête*) where what frustrates, according to viewers, is their failure to recognize and understand, described as a shock to mind and body. The effects of Tarkovsky's films – "severe headaches" and revulsion (one man describes the film as "unhealthy")[20] – can perhaps be understood as the effects of what Tarkovsky described as a deeply felt "time-pressure" (his term): a kind of unlivable intensity. Other viewers, instead of an alienating somatic repulsion, describe an experience of immediate, intuitive understanding, that generatively claimed the film's uncanny anotherness as their own. A factory worker wrote to say that *The Mirror* is a "film I can't even talk about because I am living it."[21] He then describes the film's time-transporting affect in terms that show the importance of animals for articulating technology and corporeality in an ecology of sensation: "if two people have been able to experience the same thing even once, they will be able to understand each other. Even if one lived in the era of the mammoth and the other in the age of electricity."[22] Rather than integrative forces of indexical reality, animals in *The Mirror* activate untimely affective contagion. *The Mirror's* animal unfamiliars open a gap in space-time, enabling an encounter across what Guattari calls "partial enunciators" of subjectivation.[23]

In *Bodies in Suspense: Time and Affect in Cinema* (2017) I outline two qualities of cinematic time travel as a somatechnics.[24] The first is that at the individual level, time travel is barely liveable. Deeply disturbing to our body's heterogeneous but fragile composition of speeds and slownesses, working at radically different rates, time travel amplifies this fragile

holding together and generally produces breakdown. Chris Marker's *La Jetée*, a film with a special place for animal unfamiliars, portrayed a kind of primal scene of time traveling bodies as drained of life force by the experience, only kept alive by technology[25] The film's unusual use of still images unfolding in cinematic time doubles the stuttering exhaustion of the protagonist's wasted body, in a catastrophe that is equally subjective and ecological. Bodies do not simply move through time but are made of time, and the violence of time travel mutates our chronological DNA.

A second somatechnical effect of time travel is that mutation takes place both in bodies onscreen and also in the audiovisual image (or cinematic body) itself. The first mainstream time-travel film of the digital era, *Jurassic Park* (1993), depicts actual and existential mutation played out across insect, dinosaur, and cinematic bodies alike.[26] This demonstrates how we live ourselves as composed by our flesh and by our images, over which we have only partial control at best. Images are partial enunciators of subjectivation, that nomadically relay our experience of the world across subjective, social, and media ecologies. Time travel, understood as something other than displacement along a predetermined continuum, is thus a minor practice of anotherness. The violence and derangement of time-traveling bodies and the generic affiliation of time-travel cinema with the motivational spur of imminent death or apocalypse release an anarchic impulse geared towards the virtual dimension of existence – what else could happen? – and the ethical question that accompanies it – how else can the future be?

Siegfried Zielinski, writing on time travel in cinema, has argued that cinema, as essentially a chronometric machine, serves as a mechanism to regularize movement to allow us to control the emergence of novelty as lived in the body.[27] Cinema's future for Zielinski will be a built-in time machine: "a machine that not only enables us to travel through time using our imagination but also using our bodies."[28] But en route to that future, Zielinski mentions the numerous animals – experimental subjects – that populate fantasies of machines of corporeal displacement. The animal articulates the familiar and unfamiliar, the limit where the mechanical production of the same (regulated clock time, for instance) tips over into the machinic, the creative, or the as-yet-unthought. This is one way a cinematic time machinics expresses the disjunctive corporealities and different ways of making sense that time travel both requires and tries to resolve.

In time-travel cinema, animal bodies make human bodies into inscriptive surfaces. They reverse the idea of the disposable experimental animal

as a transparent site of legible effects, throwing their human utility into question. In amplifying the differential, these animal unfamiliars reveal the constituent force of time in the composition of human bodies. The animal's inability to speak, the muting of its difference in an experimental violence of mimesis, reappears in the human bodies that come not to speak in the name of animals, but to participate in an untimely becoming, what Deleuze calls the act of writing. Often, intensive movement triggered by an animal's displacement causes such transformations.

In Alain Resnais' 1968 experimental science fiction film *Je t'aime, je t'aime*, a mouse's scurry repeatedly serves as the counter-rhythm to lost human life, whether that of protagonist Claude Ridder (Claude Rich) or of his lover Catrine (Olga George-Picot). Resnais' film abounds with animal unfamiliars, from scarab beetles to a possibly imaginary cat to sea serpents, and the small white lab mouse becomes an uncanny companion to Ridder throughout. While recovering from attempted suicide following the death of his lover, Claude is invited by a pair of blandly sinister scientists from the Crespel Research Institute to become a human guinea pig. Chosen, the scientists say, because he has "nothing to lose," Ridder will be sent back to spend one minute in the past as part of an attempt to master the science of time travel.[29] His voyage from the hospital to Crespel is coded in the language of rational cuts and cinematic norms: multiple shots of the car moving through the city and out into the countryside both convey and condense the journey in the space of a single continuous song. From this point on, however, Resnais' film upends the conventional language of cinematic displacement, entering into a series of irrational cuts that continuously disorient the viewer.

Ridder meets a man who informs him that "everyone thinks we do agricultural tests; actually, we study time," and who delicately probes Ridder's suicidal impulses. Ridder realizes he is their "ideal guinea pig," and agreeing to serve as such he asks his odds of surviving. The man blithely replies, "if you were a mouse, 100%," before taking him to the lab to introduce him to mouse subjects A and B. Ridder is a writer, valuable because, as such, he can compensate for the inability of the mice to describe their experience. Mouse B, he is told, was sent back just yesterday to relive a moment from his past and has returned with no ill effects. Claude replies: "Then how do you know it really happened?" and the scientists admit that there's the rub. This is Claude's first taste of ambiguous embodiment, as he stands in for the animal, giving voice to experience that cannot be extracted from its body. We see the repeated image of mice in glass jars and under glass

domes, their monadic embodiment a barrier to science and a metaphorical expression of desire for a spatialized and thus manageable time. As Claude agrees to repeat the mouse's journey, this doubling plunges him and the viewer into the creative sensation of a body in time.

In the time-travel device, which resembles a lumpy organic blob, Claude accompanies a mouse in a round dome. Both passengers are placed in furniture that appears to have grown up around their bodies. The mouse's domed confinement echoes Claude's within the time machine and also figurally suggests the danger of contamination across human and animal bodies: another instance of ambiguous embodiment. Sunk into his bed, Claude eyes the mouse sniffing around the dome when suddenly, with a brief rush of sound, the mouse vanishes. The same thing happens to Claude, except instead of a single disappearance, his movement through time is represented as a stutter-effect. At first his body disappears from the time machine, and reappears in an underwater shot of him swimming. Scenes of Claude in the machine, underwater, or emerging onto a beach are disjunctively intercut with shots of the machine and the empty bed. Once Claude begins to travel, he doesn't simply return to a discrete moment in the past but starts violently skipping, like a record. One temporal displacement only generates more non-chronological cuts, and often Claude's only cue to his actual body's state back in the machine is the occasional glimpse of a mouse running through the scenes of his past. The ecological nature of such displacements, which do not simply travel along a temporal continuum but take an entire world with them, is evidenced by the first jump in time Ridder makes. He first lands in the sea, his body at the rear of the image as the camera hovers between water and air. Snorkeling produces strange modes of embodiment for Ridder; when he emerges from the water and makes his way to shore he tramps along in a crab-like side scuttle. This is not a body moving autonomously through space and time, but a body caught up in its relations. Throughout the film, Ridder remains largely at the center of every shot, sometimes exaggeratedly so. In one scene where he stacks magazines, the camera dodges left and right to keep him dead center as he sorts and shuffles. The film's centering camerawork proposes a different solution to irrational movement through time than the famous dream sequence from Buster Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.* (1924), discussed by both Deleuze and David Rodowick,[30] in which Keaton's character retains his footing as he leaps through space and time by consistently remaining at the center of the image, and after a moment of disorientation, he

quickly finds a new way to move in each world he encounters. In *Je t'aime, je t'aime*, however, the same technique is undermined by the film's animal alterrhythms, which destabilize Ridder's embodiment even as he remains at the center of the frame. The mouse returns twice early in the film, making its way into Ridder's past by scurrying across a sandy, open beach where Catrine and Ridder lie together. Ridder exclaims in surprise at the mouse and tries to snatch it; he marvels to Catrine, "have you ever seen a mouse at the beach?" She laconically replies, "Perhaps he's on vacation" (off the clock, so to speak). But the mouse's appearance at the water's edge, a site that across varying locations will be a scene for exhaustion, death, and re-animation, is critical to the film's time-traveling alterembodiment. The mouse is a natural-cultural time traveler, infinitely reproducible as a lab animal and emblematic of efforts to contain the unruliness of life by suggesting that one iteration is the same as the next. But in Resnais' film, the silent mouse suggests that the body's differential is time itself. Just before its second appearance, Ridder sits in a room at 3 p.m., utterly still and seemingly in despair at the relentless seriality of time. It's 3 p.m., in three days it will still be 3 p.m., as also in three weeks, he notes, finally picking up the phone to check the time and hold an absurd conversation with the recording, as if to reinject life into this clockwork stasis.

In this film, the time machine as a device is machinic, in Deleuze and Guattari's sense of that which is not mechanical, producing only the same, but machinic, productive of novelty through connection; a time machine assembles whatever passes through. As such, between the availability of objective lab time, cut to the measure of the scientists' desired life cycle, and the aberrant spatiality and speed of the experimental subject's actual experiences, the mouse is as much a part of the apparatus of the time machine in that film as the visible device in the laboratory. Alterrhythms of existence are drawn into the loop, and the lesson they open to us is to look again at our corporeal habits of temporalocation, how we place ourselves in time.

Je t'aime, je t'aime proceeds by a logic of small irrational cuts, a logic of the relay that displaces the replay of a past simply recorded. It is a form of nomadology as a knowledge practice. Nomadic thought, Deleuze and Guattari write, operates by relays instead of forming an image, as the inbetween has a consistency all its own: the point is reached, only to be left behind. In this way, Ridder isn't simply a "lab rat," with the mouse's punctual appearances there to underscore the similarity; rather the parallelism runs interference with a logic of exchange such that the two become

indistinct, and we are left looking for the mark of change itself. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari write:

> We think and write for animals themselves. We become animal so that the animal also becomes something else. The agony of a rat or the slaughter of a calf remains present in thought not through pity but as the zone of exchange between man and animal in which something of one passes into the other. This is the constitutive relationship of philosophy with nonphilosophy.[31]

This constitutive relationship ultimately forces us to think. In their untimely becoming and exchange of signs, Ridder and the mouse jam the mechanical and release the machinic, something only made possible by the experiment's instigating factor, the mouse's silence.

At the end of the film, Ridder activates a relay to escape from the temporal leaping he is subject to, reversing into death. Sitting at his desk in the final sequence set in his "past," Ridder rises up like a somnambulist and walks over to the record player where a jazz song plays, lifting the needle from the record. We continue to hear the sound of the record turning. He then retraces his steps to his desk, pulls out a gun, and shoots himself. The sound of the record turning stops as soon as he sits. There are a series of cuts between Ridder's dying body in the office, as he silently mouths words we do not hear, and his body landing and collapsing at multiple sites at Crespel. The dislocations stop with a close-up on Ridder's face as an exaggerated bird song plays, its refrain re-marking the territory of Ridder's altered embodiment. We cut back to the lab where the scientists decide, "We'll never get him back," and exit the space. As they go outside, once again the birdsong plays at a high volume and they discover Ridder alive. As the scientists mutter orders around him, his lips move and his eyes fill with tears, but he makes no sound. Through the replay, and the reversal away from the interruption of the repeatable record, Ridder breaks the disjunctive, spasmodic hold of the past. But in doing so, he does not simply free himself. Rather, he takes up the mouse's silent seriality as a new force, and in doing so loses his own speech. The final shot of the film is the mouse, forgotten in the abandoned time machine and returned to his plastic dome in the present. As he sticks his snout through one of the air holes, pressing against the surface with his paws, the image freezes. Here, the mouse is trapped not simply in space but in time, in a kind of limbo. But much like Ridder's mute entrapment within his own body, is this freeze-frame gesture legible as an image of temporal displacement, retaining the body's capacity for anotherness in an image of an uncertain future?

In Resnais' film, human bodies ping off of animal bodies in a relational ecology of time travel. In Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962), a dystopic time-travel fantasy composed mostly of still images and an important precursor for Resnais, a man travels back in time from post-apocalyptic Paris. He is the latest lab rat in experiments on prisoners by scientists seeking a way out of their present hell. What gives him the power to withstand what has killed and deranged other experimental subjects is the affective intensity that codes his guiding image in the past of a woman glimpsed at the Orly airport at a moment of fatal crisis. She becomes his cross-temporal touchstone. Marker's film does not parallel the bodies of human and animal as experimental subjects; instead, it appropriates the alterrhythms of animal embodiment when the time traveler and the woman he seeks fall in love amidst the animal remains of the Museum of Natural History, their training ground as they seek to learn how to move in an impossible space between worlds. More than background, these taxidermied bodies stage a tableau of cinematic suspense: in the doubled suspense of durational photogram (the length of the shot) and the animal's eternally posed bodies, affect intensively ripples static form without movement. As with Resnais' doubled embodiment of man and mouse between parallel and contagion, here the film and animal bodies become sites of alterembodiment. For Marker, the time traveler is always in the process of becoming-lab-rat, but never quite arriving at it. Like the mouse in *Je t'aime, je t'aime*, this lab rat lends its ambiguous embodiments to the art of experiment and speculative futures.

Simians, Cyborgs, and Chronic Collage

The key device in *Je t'aime, je t'aime* is explicitly a time machine, one that ends up machinically articulating man and mouse in a mute territory that the scientists cannot measure and fail even to perceive. In David Cronenberg's remake of *The Fly* (1986), a more sensitive experimental scientist, Seth Brundle (Jeff Goldblum), aims to build a machine for spatial displacement – a transporter or telepod – in a home laboratory that more closely resembles an artist's loft.[32] At the beginning of his experiment, in a modest gesture, the two telepods sit in the same room only a few feet apart, just for starters. But before anybody is beamed anywhere, the machines must harness the energy of time by shrinking the temporal scales of past and future. The telepod must represent time to itself, make it legible. These images of time are as much part of the blueprint of the machine as any design specs; they are in fact its speculative dimension of futurity.

First, Brundle's machine reins in the past as the history of evolution, drawing in as the first experimental subject a cultured figure of our recent ecological past: a baboon who, like the serial mouse in *Je t'aime, je t'aime*, is presented as an acceptable stand-in for the human body. The baboon is the time machine's "animal familiar" and what underpins the mechanical imperative to produce repeatable effects: close enough in form and history to stand in for a human body, but at a safe distance as an experimental subject. Brundle repeatedly speaks to the baboon, who of course can never reply; as a stand-in, the baboon is non-disruptive, but also unsuccessful. The first baboon sent through the system suffers a horrible fate, literally turned inside out, just a pile of smoking guts in the receiving telepod. Later a fresh baboon, as repeatable as Resnais' mouse, witnesses Brundle's work looking in from the outside of the machine through a pane of glass. From his first failure, a crestfallen Brundle concludes that the machine is stupid: it doesn't know how to deal with organic matter, only inorganic objects. He has yet to realize that he too is stupid: he doesn't yet know enough about "the flesh" to program the machine successfully, and in particular he is ignorant of the body's temporal forces. He only gains an insight while having sex with his girlfriend (Geena Davis): she exclaims, "I want to eat you up! That's why old ladies pinch babies' cheeks. It's the flesh, makes you crazy." This crazy, incorporative, cannibalistic desire is also a mode of time travel, producing an ambiguous embodiment, of old ladies incorporating youthfulness; this ambiguous embodiment will likewise characterize the film's human and nonhuman becomings.

For Brundle, the problem of moving across space becomes one of untimely animation, rendering the ecology machinic through the movement of life itself. The machine projects into the future the promise of a superhuman cyborg, floating free of the constraints of time and space. But the tight control of Brundle's experiment fails when its spatialized displacement (one that reins in past and future by disappearing the present of one thing becoming another) comes out of joint: when Brundle rashly decides to teleport himself to prove his own genius, a fly joins him in the transporter. Caught up in the vision of his own future success, he fails to notice the unexpected traveler sharing his domestic ecology. The baboon notices, though, and with calm interest observes the fly make its way into the telepod; Brundle seems to feel that the baboon's only concern is for him. We of course can't know what the baboon is thinking. The trip through the transporter merges man and fly.

Brundle's body soon begins to mutate. But it is the eccentric temporality of the Brundlefly's life cycle that turns the transporter, and the film

as a whole, into a time machine. When Brundle takes his fateful trip, he enters the pod naked and assumes an iconic, crouched position that immediately evokes Arnold Schwarzenegger's time-traveling cyborg assassin in *The Terminator*,[33] but Brundle will only briefly live up to the superhuman potential of the reference. Scientific protocols have little to offer Brundlefly in the art of living this new life. Rather than a linear transformation, this life is expressed in the film as a variable and unlivable intensity that simultaneously transforms human into fly, making all of his corporeal habits painful, and replays at accelerated speed human development and growth. In one scene, Brundle, charged with a powerful sex drive, brings home a woman he meets in a bar for some athletic lovemaking. With the stamina of a teenager, he flinches when she notices wiry hairs growing out of his back, untimely markers both of a kind of relived puberty and of the fly's emerging re-corporation.

One of Brundlefly's first impulses is to archive himself, turning his bathroom into a cabinet of curiosities storing the disgusting excess of this coming-into-form, in an attempt to regain control over a future both predictably deadly and dangerously unknown. Though at first his transformation gives him super strength and energy while keeping his exterior intact, he quickly starts to mutate, with strange growths and unidentifiable liquids oozing from his body. Early on after this disturbing turn, he enters the bathroom to examine his face, becoming unrecognizable, and his fingers, which are increasingly useless for typing. Here, in another conflation of temporalities, he resembles nothing so much as a teenager getting his first pimples, as he pokes and prods at the gooey lumps on his face. This replay of his already-past is the expression of the derangements of time travel. He takes a finger and, while examining it, causes it to "ejaculate" a white goo onto the bathroom mirror. As with the animal on the lookout who watches with ears, this corporeal derangement makes visible the heterochronic distortions of the Brundlefly's merged temporalities, the finger-penis a limp reminder of Brundle's fading agency. That the animal and the human play out at once, rather than transforming progressively from human to fly, speaks to the ambiguous embodiments of time-travel cinema. We consistently see a double vision of Seth as an aging human body and as a becoming-other – neither fully arrives or settles and this vagueness is the source of affect and potential. The fly's accelerated life-cycle, developing into legibility on the screen of Brundle's human form, serves both as ticking time bomb but equally as the affective form of suspense, intensifying the present by rendering the future intimately other.

Time machinics foreground the question: how to negotiate the differential of excess as the remainder of anotherness. One of Brundlefly's final desires in the film is to use the transporter to fuse his wildly mutating body with that of his pregnant girlfriend, condensing and composing the linearity of generations, as he puts it to his horrified girlfriend, into "the ultimate nuclear family." Brundle's mad scientist thus takes his place in a long lineage of masculine reproducers, seeking to harness the future through orderly reproduction, here shifting from the lab mouse's seriality to a novel form of simultaneity. Rather than Frankenstein's elimination of motherhood, however, Brundle manages the movements of a body reproduced within the media archive. Its untimeliness is best demonstrated in the pregnancy scene where Brundle's lover dreams she gives birth to a larva: the nine months to grow a human are suspended between dream and film time in a nightmare anotherness. Machines here are black boxes of relation, serving to derange. This illustrates a last characteristic of time travel: its contagious effects. All human bodies are subject to this in this film. But the ethico-aesthetic question all these films share, made legible by their animal unfamiliars, is how to live in intensity, in the heterogeneity of becoming, without simply falling into death. What kinds of time machinics might be an open invitation to anotherness as a felt futurity? While this differential might fail at the level of character, as so many time-travel narratives kill their protagonists or recuperate them into cliché, it registers as ambiguously embodied across cinematic and nonhuman bodies, through animal unfamiliars, as the sign of the more-to-life, or the productiveness of bodies in time.

Notes

1 Some sentences and concepts in this essay are adapted from chapter 4 and the conclusion of Alanna Thain, *Bodies in Suspense: Time and Affect in Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).
2 Thain, *Bodies in Suspense*, 3.
3 Felix Guattari, *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, trans. Andrew Goffey (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 23.
4 See, for example, the thread of the animal throughout the work of Donna Haraway: "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula A. Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 295–337; *The Companion Species Manifesto* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press at University of Chicago Press, 2003); *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_*

Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience (London: Routledge, 1997); and *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

5 Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, "A Is for Animal," *Gilles Deleuze from A to Z*, dir. Pierre-Andre Boutane, trans. Charles J. Stivale (Cambridge: Semiotext(e)/ Foreign Agents at The MIT Press, 2011).

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 381.

9 Deleuze mentions that "outlandish" is the English equivalent of "deterritorialized" in "A Is for Animal," a term he gleans from reading Herman Melville's *Moby Dick.*

10 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 396.

11 Ibid., 400.

12 Ibid., 406.

13 Ibid., 407.

14 Robert Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 171.

15 Andrey Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989).

16 Andrey Tarkovsky, *The Mirror* (Kino International, 1975).

17 Deleuze and Parnet, "A Is for Animal."

18 Ibid.

19 These responses to Tarkovsky's films are described in greater detail in Thain, *Bodies in Suspense*, 271–4.

20 Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 8.

21 Ibid., 9.

22 Ibid., 10.

23 See Felix Guattari, "On the Production of subjectivity," *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 1–32.

24 For a longer discussion, see Thain, *Bodies in Suspense*, chapter 4, "Time Takings: Suspended Reanimations and the Pulse of Post-Digital Cinema."

25 Chris Marker, *La Jetée* (Criterion Collection, 1963).

26 Steven Spielberg, *Jurassic Park* (Universal Films, 1993).

27 Siegfried Zielinski, "Backwards to the Future: Outline for an Investigation of the Cinema as a Time Machine," in *Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary After Film*, ed. Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 566–9.

28 Ibid., 568.

29 Alain Resnais, *Je t'aime, je t'aime* (Kino International, 1968).

30 See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) and

D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

31 See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 30.

32 David Cronenberg, *The Fly* (Twentieth Century Fox, 1986).

33 James Cameron, *The Terminator* (Orion, 1984).