ANIMAL POSSESSIONS: QUEER TIME AND QUEER MORPHOLOGIES IN THE CINEMA OF KELLY REICHARDT

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Ryan Walter, B.A.

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Ryan Walter, B.A.

Thesis Advisor: Dana Luciano, PhD.

ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a reading of two films by American filmmaker Kelly Reichardt, *Old Joy* (2006) and *Wendy and Lucy* (2008), exploring the animal, or animality, as a figure articulating queer lives refused or refusing dominant modes of sexual and economic reproduction. Over the past decade queer theory has become increasingly concerned with the kinds of futures available to queer lives, given that viable "futures" are typically measured by the chronological achievement of capitalist milestones centered around the family: marriage, home-owning, childrearing, and retirement. Queer politics have always rejected definitions of kinship based on filial, oedipal enclosures meant to enforce a compulsory heterosexuality that understands alternative sexualities as immoral, pathological, dangerous, and impractical. However, more recently, theories of queer temporality have identified collective experiences of time as an important critical object, insisting that if normative futures necessitate reproduction, queers might look to embodied, temporal practices that build complex, even pleasurable continuities with the past and the present as a strategy for securing futures offering possibility over mere reproduction.

By pulling together these divergent discourses in readings of *Old Joy* and *Wendy and Lucy*, I am attempting to show that the animal -- specifically human-animal relations that are ambiguously companionate and erotic -- provides a method of queer historical identification
across time, bodies, and species. In Reichardt's work, human and non-human animal bodies are constantly in flux, identified by corporeal rhythms, non-linguistic verbal communication, desire for lost objects, and erotic relations that eschew phallic, reproductive models of heterosexuality. I argue that, for Reichardt, these values are inherently pleasurable, and serve as the raw material for fashioning new forms of queer subjectivity as well as generative and generous futures no longer bound to the repetitive symmetry of material wealth and filial relations.
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Sincerely,
Ryan Walter
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Introduction

I became interested in the films of Kelly Reichard after the theatrical release of *Meek's Cutoff* in 2009. *Meek's Cutoff*, like the films analyzed, here, *Old Joy* (2006) and *Wendy and Lucy* (2008), features characters leading complexly askew lives in relation to another, but in an important way, the intimate specificity of that relationality denies identity-affirming narratives. However, I didn't realize just how unsettlingly indeterminate those relationships could read until I discovered *Old Joy* listed as a "Gay and Lesbian Film" in my Netflix queue. *Old Joy* is not an unfamiliar narrative in and of itself: two old friends growing somewhat estranged embark on a road trip in order to recover their former selves. In the interest of getting in touch with former selves, perhaps intersubjectively as well as evolutionarily, they seek out a hot springs in the Cascade Mountains near Portland, Oregon. Neither self-identifies as gay at any point in the film. While there is a scene near the film's conclusion gesturing toward homoeroticism, that gesture seems to better address a desire to return to a past emotional intimacy, rather than an explicitly sexual come-on. What *Old Joy* badly needs, far more than "gay," is a term like "queer," one capable of lovingly negotiating the film's myriad ambiguities that exceed easy distinctions between heteronormativity and homonormativity, or friendship and romantic coupling. I began to wonder, if there is a latent tendency to place *Old Joy* in a gay archive, why not take *Wendy and Lucy* along with it, since its title potentially denotes a lesbian coupling? I began to wonder if
the fact that Wendy is a human and Lucy is a dog made the film less susceptible to paranoid reading, when a more interesting question struck me: paranoid of what?

Having just become interested in the recent emphasis on time in queer studies, particularly the work of Kathryn Bond Stockton and Elizabeth Freeman, I already wanted to know how thinking about the time of the animal worked to loosen Animal Studies' grip on species. I understood the emergent discourse on Animal Studies as having generated no shortage of work highlighting not only the physical and epistemic violence done to the animal in the name of human exceptionalism, but the various ways in which "animal" marks the histories of colonialism, slavery, or any form of biopolitics imagining historically marginalized populations as inhuman. However, I was also dissatisfied with the discipline's tendency to track the development of categories of race and sexuality as analogous to species, often constructing a history of interspecies relations foregrounding bioethics and ecological interdependence in such a way that often reinforces the boundaries of the body as biologically determined, singular, and, crucially, contemporaneous.

Elizabeth Freeman begins her introduction to the 2007 GLQ issue on queer temporality, "When Shakespeare's Hamlet says 'the time is out of joint,' he describes time as if its heterogeneity can be felt in the bones, as a kind of skeletal dislocation. In this metaphor, time has, indeed \textit{is}, a body" (1). Thus, the question became, not whether time is the most appropriate way to think the relationality of human and non-human animals, but how does time make human and animal \textit{appear}? How does time produce bodies into chronologies, into dominant rhythms, and how do those rhythms engender
human and animal futures? How does having or not having a state-sanctioned, narratable future affect stature, not just socio-economic standing, but the very morphological coding of the body? And does species stick? Does time produce a single body, or multiple, precariously emerging bodies that can't easily be pinned to any single classificatory system whether it be species, class, history, or sexuality?

Thus, the goal of this thesis is to read *Old Joy* and *Wendy and Lucy* as texts imagining the animal less as a set of biological characteristics organized under the rubric of species, than an arrangement of time, embodiment, and labor historically useful in constructing the human as an enfranchisement of heterosexual pasts and futures. My discussion of *Wendy and Lucy* focuses on the way Reichardt's elaboration of themes of precarity and proximity work to characterize Wendy and Lucy's relationship as radically interdependent and indeterminate. Eschewing normative boundaries of kinship, property, labor, and species, I argue that Wendy and Lucy's shared rhythms and bodily capacities provide a radical imagining of queer lives as an "ongoing provocation" in relation to others, or an other, rather than a fixed identity. In this way, *Wendy and Lucy* encourages temporal practices and embodied identifications that reinvent the possibilities lurking between human and non-human animals. If *Wendy and Lucy* privileges radical re-imaginings of human and animal interaction denied within a hetero-capitalist arrangement of time, my analysis of *Old Joy* asks how those possibilities of human-animal becoming can be staged in the absence of animals. Specifically taking up the discourse surrounding Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, I argue that *Old Joy* attempts to articulate non-promissory
futures that are at once pleasurable and compassionate. Circling through its protagonists' shared pasts and imagined futures, *Old Joy* promotes an intimacy with the death drive that can't exactly be "embraced," but made to emerge in the acceptance of failure, duration, and chance with and through an other.
"Society and State need animal characteristics to use for classifying people; natural history and science need characteristics in order to classify the animals themselves [...] We are not interested in characteristics; what interests us are modes of expansion, propagation, occupation, contagion [...] The wolf is not fundamentally a characteristic or a certain number of characteristics; it is a wolfing."

-- Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus

"I'm just passing through." -- Wendy, Wendy and Lucy

Judith Butler's Precarious Life arrived in 2004 in response to the politics of grieving informing America's various wars and wakes following 9/11. Addressing the ways certain lives are made to count in their passing as others are not, Butler pays close attention to post 9/11 spectacles of identification and commemoration re-enforcing national, racial, and religious borders among the living and dead. "Precarious" has since emerged in critical discourse as a term populating the humanities at large, mobilizing a host of biopolitical entanglements that articulate persons and lifetsyles that haven't yet fallen off the grid, but aren't exactly "on the map" either. Here, "precarious" attempts a topography of normative borders through a forecasting of uncertain futures, taking up the space and time of lives accidentally or refusedly at risk. Discussing the origins of her own film in these terms, Reichardt states in an interview that "the seeds of [Wendy and Lucy] came about right after Katrina, listening to people talk about why people let their lives get so precarious in the first place, and in the country, sort of the vibe that poverty isn't something you ignore anymore [...] there's a real disdain for it." Perhaps, then, the most reliable tool for identifying the feeling of precariousness affected by others is worry, worrying "what will happen" to others, that they might
imperceptibly "slip away," or, in Reichardt's view, worrying that others on the outs might threaten one's own sense of security. No matter how sympathetic or defensive, worry implies difference. The question of what will happen to another is articulable because the life or lives in question can't provide the same answers to futurity as our own. Precariousness is a felt identification at the edge of a power relation, one that, as Butler states, would "tear us from ourselves, bind us to others, transport us, undo us, implicate us in the lives that are not are own" (25).

Kelly Reichardt's 2008 feature film, *Wendy and Lucy*, has a penchant for circulating just that kind of worry that binds us to another while putting us strangely at odds with ourselves. In his review of the film for *The New York Times*, A.O. Scott writes: "Disapproving of Wendy’s choices is one route to caring about her, which in turn leads to some difficult, uncomfortable questions. What would any of us do in [Wendy's] situation? What would we do if we met someone like her? How can we be sure we haven’t? What will happen to her?" Reichardt's film seems intent on asking these questions of Wendy's onlookers without the promise of easy resolution. On her way to Alaska to claim a job at a salmon fishery with her yellow-brown mutt, Lucy, Wendy's car breaks down in a small Oregon town, instating a series of bad-luck failures that cast her well-being, and at times, her very body onto the kindness of strangers, an environ often bearing not enough or no kindness at all. Her car in tow and lacking the money to rent a room, Wendy sleeps in the woods near an abandoned rail-yard where she is attacked by a stranger. Running low on food with only funds enough to cover the repairs to her car, she is arrested for shoplifting at a local grocery store. Given that the
pervasive sense of threat Wendy endures directly relates to her meager reserve of cash, which -- significantly -- she straps to her body with a belt, it's hard not to understand Wendy's failure as symptomatic of providing for two rather than one. Thus, Lucy's presence -- as companion and dependent -- marks the cause and effect, the instance and the persistence of Wendy's precariousness. In that capacity, animal Lucy becomes the figure of difference by which "we" (those of us not sleeping in our car, and presumably, with access to multimedia resources) recognize and organize our worry for human Wendy. As the grocery clerk who apprehends Wendy after stealing some dog treats warns: "If a person can't afford dog food, they shouldn't have a dog at all."

Yet something about the animal in Wendy's life exceeds the ostensible class difference we perceive as Wendy's precariousness. *Wendy and Lucy* would be an easier and far less interesting text if the titular couple found themselves marooned in a socio-economic strata that didn't so closely mirror their own. Wendy fails, but she's stuck in a town equally off the rails: trains racket away on rusted tracks without any cargo or clear destination, cars are old, houses are modest and worn, jobs are scarce, and there are too many forgotten dogs in the local pound. If leaving our dogs behind -- as Wendy does at the film's conclusion -- proves a necessary step in easing financial burden, it seems pertinent to ask: would we be worried about Wendy if Lucy were human?

Certainly, the queer expectation one brings to the figure of *Wendy and Lucy* can't quite account for Lucy's canine embodiment, yet imagining Lucy as a gendered human doesn't quite put straight what might persist as the couple's exclusion from heterosexual or capitalist reproduction. The financial sacrifice, emotional vulnerability, physical
exchange, and, particularly, the daily synchronicity Wendy shares with Lucy stands to the side of pet or property: they are for each other and for each other they participate in classed rituals of kinship that buck easy distinctions between pleasure and labor, prosperity and precariousness.

Taking up the temporality of Wendy's precariousness, I'm interested in making use of alterity that is at once fleeting and chronic, present and returning, persistent and flexible, generating multivalent human-animal becomings in time that species cannot contain. A recent conversation with a colleague yielded a simple, yet effective summary of the kind of complex, embodied response *Wendy and Lucy* tends to evoke: "I felt so vulnerable on her behalf." Attending to the inter-personal affectivity engendered in this response, this chapter explores *Wendy and Lucy*’s rich pronouncement of embodied temporalities shared across normative boundaries of species, kinship, and ownership in an attempt to open Wendy's "precariousness" to modes of identification that value possible futures over perilous presents, and an erotics of loss over the witnessing of past traumas. I do not intend to argue that we should deny the palpable social and psychic pain underwriting Wendy's attachment to and desperate recovery of Lucy. *Wendy and Lucy* understands that the body and its durations police the boundaries of normalcy, but the film is equally committed to dramatizing those boundaries in the service of reparative modes of queer being and relation, rendering porous and permutable the wild and the domestic, the body at work and the body at pleasure, the human animal and non-human animal.
If we are to consider the descriptive value "precarious" lends to an arrangement of embodied, interspecies time, I want to first locate the term in the specificity of Butler's usage, which draws from an elaboration of interpersonal and collective proximities. On one hand, Butler defines proximity as a body's exposure: "...each of us is constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies--as a site of desire and physical vulnerability, as a site of publicity at once assertive and exposed" (20). Following Butler's definition, we can roughly understand politically-motivated violence as the rejection of a social desire expressed as physical violence toward an individual body, a violence meant to injure that body's signifying proximity--intended or not--to the desires associated with a larger faction of the social body. Mourning, then, seems not only a natural corollary to the threat posed by proximity, but a highly visible reflection of the potential outcome of social exposure, since, as Butler rightly observes, "grief makes us, not private, depoliticized figures, but public ones, exposed by and to our ties to others" (23).

On the other hand, Butler describes proximity not just as the potential for physical violence attending social intimacy, but the profound way one's potential intimacy with a social other is gauged as a measure of recognition. Citing the surge of national(ized) sympathy and support for the murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl by his Al-Qaeda captors in 2002, Butler argues that mourning the gainfully employed husband and father is easy because of his proximity to what is familiar. Grieving the
multitude of nameless non-American, non-Judeo-Christian, non-White, non-English
Speaking individuals killed as a result of their proximity to the American war efforts in
Iraq and Afghanistan is a far more demanding ethical imperative.

Butler's concept of ethical mourning attempts to reconcile culturally determined
proximities with the physical proximity that makes us all vulnerable social bodies and
subjects. Making physical proximity and cultural proximities gel in the work of
mourning means opening the body to unfamiliar and indeterminable intimacies,
"agreeing to undergo a transformation [...] the full result of which one cannot know in
advance" (21). Here, Butler's attention to the transformative effects of embracing a
future of uncertainty over and above a passive concern for those inhabiting uncertain
futures follows an ethics of mourning that requires a mutual recognition through which
the grievable and the ungrievable -- Iraqi lives and Daniel Pearl -- emerge as a
constitutive coupling at the cost of fixed or classifiable identities. Precarious life, then,
seems less about being in limited proximity to the norm, than the precariousness with
which any life emerges in relation to another without tipping that tremulous proximity
into physical violence or social disavowal.

It is in this sense of the term that Elizabeth Grosz describes the tenuous
emergence of the human from the animal:

The animal is a necessary reminder of the limits of the human, its
historical and ontological contingency; of the precariousness of the
human as a state of being, a condition of sovereignty, or an ideal self-
regulation. The animal is that from which the human tentatively and precipitously emerges; the animal is that inhuman destination to which the human always tends. The animal surrounds the human at both ends: it is the origin and the end of humanity. (12)

While Butler never explicitly makes room for the animal, as I have tried to argue, an ethical practice of mourning gestures toward the precarious emergence of human-by-way-of-the-animal Grosz describes above. However, Grosz's conception of the animal as that which surrounds and governs the putative boundaries of humanity, here functioning primarily as chronology -- that inhuman destination to which the human always tends -- understands precariousness as a cycling, inconstant temporality. In The Animal That Therefore I Am, Jacques Derrida elaborates on the importance of chronology in the arrangement of the human and non-human animal, as the ubiquitous, bifurcated naming that attends the temporal-evolutionary achievement of the human. Derrida writes: "the gaze called 'animal' offers to my sight the abysmal limit of the human: the inhuman or the ahuman, the ends of man, that is to say, the bordercrossing from which vantage man dares to announce himself to himself, thereby calling himself by the name that he believes he gives himself" (12). However, in contrast to Grosz, Derrida's concern for time returns to the spatial and subjective autonomy of animals bodies, calling for a familiar ethics predicated on shared precepts of pain and mortality across species. Following Bergson and Deleuze, Grosz recognizes that classificatory boundaries of the species-centric body are potential sites of evolutionary and anatomical
reinvention: "the living body is itself the ongoing provocation for inventive practice, [...] for using organs and activities in unexpected and potentially expansive ways, for making art out of the body's capacities and actions" (20). As an ongoing provocation, Grosz's attention to time routes the human-animal body's proximity of the self to others through a shared experience of duration. Yet, as a function of duration, the "natural" body as it were, doesn't give up the chronology that binds it to time, rather it renders those temporal stations dynamic, in flux, capable of affecting embodied continuities across a range of social and evolutionary outposts, generating new ontological positions contemporaneous with previous ones.

Commencing the first part of my analysis of Wendy and Lucy, I want explore how Reichardt's cinematic techniques elicit Wendy and Lucy's precarious emergence as human and animal through a careful reading of the film's strong emphasis on bodily proximity and shared duration. Before Wendy and Lucy's first images appear on screen, we hear the unmistakable sound of a train coursing along its track. Not too fast, not quite menacing, the train seems to be moving at a moderate pace, its aural presence uninterrupted throughout the opening credits. When an image eventually appears, it shows a series of freight cars traveling left to right across the screen. The camera is close enough to the train that we are only permitted to see a car or two drift by at time, and when the image cuts to the opposite view of the train, the image now moving right to left, we can't be sure if these cars are connected to the previous image, or a different train entirely. The camera will change positions in this manner two additional times before leaving the train-yard, each reversing the direction of the cars in succession.
Yet, despite these changes in viewing position and, presumably, time, the sound of the train heard throughout the credits is sustained, continuous, echoing at the same volume in our headspace even as our perceived distance from the cars varies from shot to shot. Trains comprise an important part of *Wendy and Lucy*'s signifying economy, particularly as their machinery, momentum and mass contrast the fragile, non-linear permutability of the human-animal body. Trains are images of and symbols for movement, but they also have a menacing feature, noting how easily, amid their size and speed, one can get swept under the tracks. Trains signal their arrival, announcing their danger, their potential for injury, and possible derailment; a metallic hugeness, their automation provides no sympathetic feedback against flesh. For Reichardt, trains are anything but precarious. However, what I want to emphasize here is the dramatic way Reichardt uses her opening scene to establish an aural spectatorial space truer, or "closer" to the viewer than the image. Since the sound remains constant while the screened movement of trains intermittently remap direction, destination, and perspective, we quickly learn to interpret the relative aural proximity of the soundtrack as an embodied, stable experience of duration supplying some degree of traction to a fragmented, distant, or in this case, potentially dangerous image.

Reichardt's use of sound in the film's opening moments wouldn't seem so significant if she didn't drastically elaborate this motif in the following scene. The scene begins with a wide shot of Wendy and Lucy strolling through a weedy field, less a grassy pasture than the kind of accidental yellowish-green space that tends to pop-up near industrial areas cleared of real estate; presumably, we're not far from the train-yard.
Casually moving over the grass, Wendy throws a stick for Lucy to fetch, "Go get it, Lu-\-," as the camera follows at an examining distance, frequently allowing brush and trees to obscure our view of the characters. The remote, wide shot positioning of the camera in tandem with the intermittent spoiling of our vision promotes an uneasiness in the scene, though it's an anxiety we don't seem to share with Wendy or Lucy. That's likely because we're made to feel much closer to the couple than really are: throughout the scene's nearly two-minute duration, we hear an intimate humming on the soundtrack. As in the train-yard, it's impossible to know whether this sounds comes from the time of the image, or from a time elsewhere in the storyworld, which is precisely the point: we're too far from Wendy to hear the intimate buzz of humming, yet it rings in proximity to our ears, again, seeming to inhabit our headspace in the same manner as the trains.

Humming betrays a lack of awareness: we hum when we've lost ourselves, pulling some tune from the air, improvising a familiar arrangement, largely oblivious that others can hear us. Humming, too, creates a resonance in our ears, a strange Cartesian proof that, yes, we really are in our own bodies. Thus, Reichardt uses the ear canal as mode of transportation as well as transformation; we aren't just commuted to Wendy's temporality, we embody it, enduring her long walk with Lucy. Yet, at our ears and before our eyes, we encounter Wendy from within while observing her from a distance. This perceptual rupture provides some insight into the uneasiness the scene provokes, but no less comfort: as source and bearers of threat, we feel so vulnerable on
Wendy's behalf, as it seems we could easily breach her proximity, a proximity that is also our own.

If, as Butler suggests, precariously emerging with another means undergoing an interpersonal transformation the effect of which cannot be determined in advance, ear to ear, Reichardt locates the viewer's physical vulnerability with Wendy's in a way that very much tears us from ourselves, from our own sovereignty, tying us to the space of Wendy's body, certainly, but experiencing that body as a function of duration.

Cinematic time passes in Wendy's humming, just as her melody cycles through a repeating minor scale. Her melody comes to us and asks us to hear it, take it up, retrieve it in a way, re-sounding in us as it re-sounds in her. Our internal, perceptual, yet necessarily embodied play with Wendy imbricates us in the temporality of her play with Lucy, not only making our ears perk up but, at Elizabeth Grosz's proclamation of human-animal becoming, using our organs to invent new, ostensibly inhuman practices, transforming our ears into a tool for fetching, moving us rhythmically, expectantly, recursively through space and time. I do not mean to suggest that our embodied intimacy with Wendy affects some manner of becoming-dog in the Deleuzian sense; that comes later. At present, I want to be careful not to allow Lucy's canine presence to perhaps too symptomatically mark our other-than-human relation with Wendy as teleologically "animal," since "animal" can only refer to the anthropocentric, humanist binarism that produced it: "I am not an animal, therefore I am (human)."

Rather, I want to stress the way we are made to experience Wendy and Lucy's physical companionality, their profound proximity to one another that exceeds putative
human-animal relations, not only of dog and owner, but, insofar as dogs and daughters have been known to make an advance on Freud's family romance, Wendy and Lucy's complexly erotic non-filiality. In his recent book tracking the ever-multiplying discursivity of the Posthumanities, Cary Wolfe asserts that the human "is achieved by escaping or repressing not just its animal origins in nature, the biological, the evolutionary, but more generally by transcending the bonds of materiality and embodiment altogether" (xv). Indeed, if the Marxist critique of capitalism identifies a fundamental alienation of the physical body -- which produces labor and yields profit -- from the social body which understands itself as subject of a disenfranchising, repressive class determination, then Wendy and Lucy's shared physical and social proximity neatly de-center capitalism's demand that dog and human, owner and property, remain strictly unbound as body and transcended-body. Further, as Donna Haraway argues, the physicality of companionate species, "-- whether jerky and nervous or flaming and flowing, whether both partners move in harmony or painfully out of synch or something else altogether -- is communication about relationship, the relation itself, and the means of reshaping relationship and so its enacters" (26).

Later in this chapter I will use recent work on queer temporality to detail the way Wendy and Lucy's synchrony and subsequent asynchrony enact an erotics of loss performed across evolutionary bodies and beings-in-time. However, at Haraway's suggestion, we can already note the way that alternative modes of communication between companionate species, particularly embodied communication, break down normative arrangements of human and animal exchange, creating new categories for
physical, loving, dependent, even romantic entanglements that capitalism and heterosexuality cannot fully describe. Reichardt's skillful manipulation of viewer proximity to cinematic narrative imbricates us in the queerness of that relation, making us feel for and with -- in manners unfamiliar, even inhuman -- the intermittent, fluctuating, altogether precarious time of Wendy and Lucy.

**Slow Bodies, Slow Cinema**

As I have tried to argue in the previous section, early in *Wendy and Lucy*, Reichardt establishes a dense, layered scene of categorically indeterminate intimacies, inviting subject to emerge entangled with object, human to emerge entangled with canine, and spectator to emerge entangled with spectated. As I have also tried to show, these entanglements are largely the work of time: time as a shared rhythm placing distinct bodies in mutual proximity, rendering them subject to mutually constituted, unknown futures; time as historical precedent, arranging species in a chronological hierarchy dictating epistemic foreclosure of the animal in order to sustain strategies of human rights to ownership, not just over other bodies, but human sovereignty and exceptionalism, the human arriving onto the scene of history a creature triumphantly bereft of its bonds to materiality. Finally, I have tried to show that cinema, first and foremost as *duration*, has a unique ability to bring these permutations of time and body to bear on its subjects and spectators.
Indeterminacy and time are crucial terms in Gilles Deleuze's theory of cinema, specifically what he calls the "time-image," which I would briefly like to elaborate here. For Deleuze, the time-image stands in contrast to the "movement-image," which are less opposing terms than necessary components in a historical system describing an aesthetic shift in cinema from spectacle to realism. As film scholar D. N. Rodowick has noted, Deleuze identifies the movement-image with a silent, pre-war cinema, exemplified by both Soviet and Hollywood films, as both organize the shot as a moving ensemble rather than a static figure. Deleuze elaborates: "The movement-image has two sides, one in relation to objects whose relative position it varies, the other in relation to a whole . . . Time is necessarily an indirect representation, because it flows from the montage which links one movement-image to another" (11). The movement-image manipulates bodies in space in order to create dynamic effects that register as "time." The movement of the camera and objects held in its view signal time's passing, each registering into a durative, temporal whole emphasizing arrivals and destinations through continuous, diegetic environments. However, even as the movement-image provides an indirect or affected representation of time, Deleuze argues that the interlocking, synchronous system of montage implies an "ideal of knowledge as harmonious totality," as if lived experienced, like the montage, simply unfurled before its subjects is an uninterrupted whole (12).

The time-image appears historically with Italian Neo-Realist cinema, which integrates economic and social crisis in the years following World War with a cinematic crisis of action and movement. Drawn to the neo-realists' penchant for the long take,
and protracted fulfillment of teleological movement through a dramatic narrative, Deleuze argues that in these films:

Narrative situations appear where reality is represented as lacunary and dispersive. Linear actions dissolve into the form of aleatory strolls. Events occur where it is no longer possible to act or react: situations of pain or beauty are intolerable or insupportable; occurrences that are incomprehensible or undecideable. . . . The interval becomes an autonomous value . . . ideally, it no longer facilitates the passage from one image to another in any decidable way. The flow of images or sequences bifurcate and develop serially, rather than continuing a line or integrating a whole (13-4).

In this way, the time-image offers an account of lived experience antithetical to that of the movement-image: as a direct representation of time, the time-image allows characters and audience to experience its duration as uncertainty, each shot moving into an open-endedness that provides no security to integration, resolution, or constancy between one scene and the next. This is not to say the cinema of time must enact a radical rupture from shot to shot, scene to scene, a strategy typified a few years later by early entries in French New Wave cinema; rather, an emphasis on presenting characters in situations where motives, outcomes, even bodies remain ambiguous, holding a
potential of movement and expression left unarticulated, *produces* cinematic time that is equally unknowable and open-ended.

Deleuze refers to these types of narratives as "lacunary," "dispersive," and "aleatory;" popular entertainment has another word for them, "slow." Rodowick argues that, for Deleuze, the open-endedness of the time-image encourages "nonidentity," "a deterritorialized and nomadic becoming" (17). Certainly, these associations match the kind of indeterminate becoming I have been reading in *Wendy and Lucy*; however, I want to further explore the possibilities of "slow" in tension with its popular meaning, identifying in *pace* those queer relations between spectator, human, and animal I've hence identified in proximity and duration. Kathryn Bond Stockton's chapter on daughters and their dogs in *The Queer Child* makes great use of terms like "pause" (presumably playing off the canine homonym "paws"), and "delay" in order to describe the lesbian's child sexual suspension in her often over-determined relations with the family dog. For Stockton, the appearance of "lacunary," or "slow" moments in the novels of Virginia Woolf, Djuna Barnes, and Radclyffe Hall, often involving extended descriptions of physical play, desire, or embodied exchange with an aging, loyal family dog over the budding interest of prospective suitors, attest to the lesbian child's refusal to accept adulthood as down payment on a straight, child-bearing future. Thus, the figure of the dog, "... because he cannot grow generationally in human time, like the queer child who will never be straight, who puts the goal of socially-sanctioned couplehood on perpetual delay... grows sideways in relation to his mistress" (101).
Wendy's only companion throughout the film is Lucy, though we're never informed how or when this coupling came to be. Wendy's characterization shows that she is determined to get to Alaska and, seemingly, the wheelhouse of her determination to move forward, move North, to arrive far away from the center leads to our lack of knowledge about Wendy's past. Wendy is not a child: she has her own car, her own money, she budgets meticulously and makes difficult sacrifices in order to be on her own with Lucy, without a family, without an expense account, without any identifiable savings or safety net. Yet, in spite of her determination, she is constantly put in a position in which she's relying on older, "adult" men for help. The auto mechanic "helps her out" by knocking fifteen dollars off the price of a tow; the Walgreen's security guard she befriends gives her advice, lets her use his phone, and near the end of the film, gives her six dollars toward a bus ticket out of town.

Stuck in Oregon, Lucy still missing, broke, relying on the help of others, it is only at this moment, maximized in delay, that Wendy reaches into her past, accepting the filial, generational burden she can't seem to outrun. Even then, she becomes, not daughter, but sibling, narrating her situation to her sister in the defeated terms of a shamed child: "car broke," "Lucy lost." Presumably, Wendy's sister knows Lucy, as she may have been her dog too, but we can't be sure. Lucy could just as easily have found Wendy, each companionless and hungry, looking for opportunities promised in the other.

Putting both Stockton and Deleuze into play, I want to pursue *Wendy and Lucy's* cinematic and narrative indeterminability, its "slow," durative progression as a strategy
for enacting the heteronormative critique Stockton identifies in her reading of the lesbian child's relationship with the family dog. Talking about Wendy's sexuality in these terms is difficult: stating that we never "see" her sexually or romantically involved with another woman implies that we are always assuming heterosexuality in the absence of identifiable queers, just as needing to "see" sex performed limits a reading of queerness to bedroom behavior. As I stated earlier, we can't fall into the trap of allowing the mere presence of a gendered canine in place of a male companion to symptomatically imply Wendy's being lesbian, as, to me, the far more interesting and queerer relation is precisely the one that Wendy and Lucy share: ambiguous, affectionate, interdependent, synchronous. "Slow," then, is a cinematic and narrative temporality articulating indeterminate becomings critical of evolutionary, economic, and filial modes of belonging.

Not long after Wendy and Lucy leave the train yard we see a close-up of Wendy's index finger tracing a highlighted route on a road map. She's chosen yellow for this task: it's neatly outlined by the marker, not veering off onto any adjacent routes. Wendy's finger traces her initial mark with a similar calculatedness, slowly, cautiously, letting her finger's memory absorb the texture of the paper. In another shot from the same scene we see Wendy meticulously counting her cash reserves, splitting the bills into neat piles of ones, five, tens, and twenties. Each bill passes through her fingers. The camera is close and so is the sound: with each draw we can feel the rhythm of Wendy's count; she has $525.00. Lucy falls asleep curled up on the passenger's side, while Wendy rubs her lean, worn foot and bandaged ankle. The next morning, we walk
with the couple to a local gas station, where Wendy washes her face, brushes her teeth, and changes her underwear. Back on the street, we follow Wendy as she and Lucy scout out abandoned cans to make a little extra cash at the recycling center. These scenes take time, and while they certainly give us information about the financially determined nature of Wendy's -- and, by extension, Lucy's -- life, there are more efficient ways of telling this story. Reichardt's careful attention to the materiality of surfaces -- maps, money, skin, bandages -- interpolates our own embodied experience of cinematic time as viewers, expressed in tics, fidgets, and glances at the clock. It is not simply that Wendy has to manage her finances, she also has to manage her time spent within that binding social relation.

Crucially, Wendy's attachment to money is not simply an attachment to class, but an attachment to Lucy as well, experienced as shared timing. Wendy's dramatically discombobulated domestic life refigures the security and stasis of familial space within tropes associated with travel and mobility: if a morning bathroom routine can be seen as recharging or, energizing, then Wendy's appropriation of a gas station toward that end should only emphasis her focus on movement. At the same time, her synchronization with Lucy places her at the center of an interspecies family. Elizabeth Freeman has described domestic time as a "moving watchworks, showcasing the precision of its routines and the synchronicity of its motions as evidence of intimacy"; however, she goes on to say "within the ideology of normative domesticity, the proper maintenance of cyclical schedules and routines produces the effect of timelessness" (40).
Despite their strange domestic arrangement, Wendy and Lucy, sleep together, eat together, labor together, and play together. "Goodnight babygirl," Wendy, falling asleep, tells Lucy as she notices her curling up on the passenger seat, burrowing beneath her paw. The next morning, parked on the street, Wendy puts out Lucy's food dish on the road, filling it with a jug of filtered water (which Wendy also drinks from) and a rather meager amount of food from an economy size bag of Pedigree. When Lucy begins to eat, Wendy leans against the car next to her, nibbling at a few tortilla chips from an increasingly thinning bag. Lucy finishes, smacks her lips and looks up at Wendy with a whimper, to which Wendy responds, "I know, I know Lu--." Wendy tends to the rhythm of daily chores for Lucy as she would a child, fixing her meals, managing the household expenses; but she also shares her money troubles with Lucy as a partner would. They're on the road together, sleeping together, eating synthetic food, sharing in the labor of hunger.

Wendy and Lucy's synchronous kinship mimics the shared temporality of normative domestic life while queering the generational arrangements of family. In a similar fashion, their shared schedule is indicative of their intimacy, but the condition under which that intimacy is shared makes it anything but timeless. Wendy and Lucy's domesticity isn't hidden, but public, just as their poverty can be plainly read on their clothes, locales, and hygiene. Caught sleeping in the Walgreen's parking lot, they are asked to leave the premises. It is here, before the Walgreen's security guard, that Wendy discovers her car won't start. She's up too early, her alternator won't turn, and the service station doesn't open for hours so she can't get a tow. Lucy, too, is alarmed.
by all these changes in schedule, darting up out of sleep with her partner. The rhythms of Wendy and Lucy's domestic life are subject to a publicity that is far more untimely than timeless. Wendy and Lucy share time, but the time they share is at odds with the time of others. Although these conflicting temporalities play as fits and starts on screen, bearing the look, at times, of bodies being jarred out of locomotive, continuous action, they are not played as a comedy of errors. In comparison to the expectation for a progressive narrative in which rhythms precipitate conclusions by meeting their goals, the domestic time of Wendy and Lucy seems pointless, ineffective, and shallow.

Lauren Berlant's essay "Slow Death" addresses intersections of timing and class, identifying the "wearing out" of populations simply trying to manage the amount of labor required in reproducing daily life. Increasingly, the psychic and embodied exhaustion experienced by lower and middle class lives throughout America has little to do with thriving, or achieving, but simply surviving. However, the proliferation of suffering as a form of historical existence or habituation is not to say that suffering has become any less ineffectual or traumatic. A scene of slow death is not a crisis or a banality, but "a domain of revelation where an upsetting scene of living . . . is revealed to be interwoven with ordinary life after all, like ants revealed scurrying under a thoughtlessly lifted rock" (761). The "slow" death Berlant articulates in these scenes of domestic suffering act as ones that supply predictable repetitions in accordance with domesticity's security and timelessness, while interpolating a historical moment in "life" as divorced from "health," "thriving," or any kind of identifiable pleasure.
I want to round out this section by investigating how Berlant's description of a "slow" death relates to the "slow" cinema I've been identifying with Reichardt in a scene from Wendy and Lucy where the reproduction of daily life, class, timing, and suffering assemble in a narrative turn that leads to Wendy's arrest and her eventual loss of Lucy. Killing time before the service station opens, Wendy and Lucy head to the grocery store. This ritual labor is shared, both in the time it takes to walk there, and the timing required of successful shoplifting. Wendy ties up Lucy to a bike rack outside the store, gives her a kiss goodbye and informs her of her role in this operation: "Stay here and be a good girl. Don't be a nuisance. We don't need that." Shoplifting is timing in the sense that you need to time your movements outside the gaze of authority, but it is also timing in that you have to look like a normal customer, keeping pace with the anxious clamor that often accompanies spending money. "Getting groceries" means working through a predetermined list as quickly as possible, being familiar with the contents of each aisle, moving efficiently from bread, to cans, to dairy, to vegetables, to the pet care aisle; there is no time to linger in the grocery store. Wendy's advice to Lucy, "don't be a nuisance," is indicative of her desire to not bother anyone and not be bothered, to lay low. However, Wendy misreads the temporal markers that might better protect her, since the logic of consumerism says that to be in a hurry, to be bothered at the experience of time's passing -- negotiating space with other shoppers, waiting in the checkout line -- is to be in time, always arriving, always moving in the future.

However, unlike most shoppers Wendy isn't driven by the compulsion of consumption, she's driven by present hunger. She wants to take her time and linger
among the food. She wants to stroll along the meats, running her finger over the edge of the refrigeration unit, observing the color of the steaks. She walks down aisles just to see what's there. She flips through the entertainment and glamour magazines at the checkout counter. Her pace is both desire and boredom: she lingers because she wants the visual and nutritional plentitude the food offers, but she also has nowhere else to go. The magazine rack is as good as a library; the frozen food section as good as TV.

Thus, when, Wendy is "apprehended" by the young store clerk on her leisurely stroll back to Lucy, Wendy's body and its limited tempo, in addition to the dog treats she nabbed, become property of the establishment as dual evidence of her deliberate criminality. Explaining the situation to his supervisor, the clerk reports: "This customer neglected to pay for a few items. I watched the whole thing. I saw her since she came in the store." Wendy's crime is understood by the clerk, not simply as a criminal act, but a sustained criminal presence, "I saw her since she came in the store." He goes on: "if a person can't afford dog food, they shouldn't have a dog at all."

There is a sinister logic lurking behind this statement that seems to say: "if a person can't afford person food, they shouldn't have a person at all." And like the grocery store clerk, we too watched the whole thing: Wendy's hunger, her boredom, her taking pleasure in a kind of lingering that not only isn't healthful, but, in this case, actively detracting from her well-being. I have spent most of this chapter trying to argue that Wendy and Lucy's relationship rests on a precarious indeterminacy through which they are always becoming interspecies together. So in analyzing this section of the film, it strikes me how quickly and unthoughtfully Wendy is imparted a false
sovereignty before the law only to be stripped of it; how she is made human in order to be made animal, as she was neither to begin with.

**Erotohistoriography of the Wolfing Hour**

Throughout this chapter I have argued that *Wendy and Lucy* presents a human-animal relationship to which very little sticks. They are family, couple, companions, co-workers, partners-in-crime, students of each others' language, choreographers of a mutual and satisfying rhythm. Given this list, perhaps we could revise the previous statement to say that so much sticks to Wendy and Lucy that the meaning of the sticking falls to side of their ongoing emergence in and for each other. Thus, when Lucy is picked up by strangers during Wendy's arrest, the questions concerning Wendy's precarity that opened this chapter creep back in again. Lucy is gone; Wendy is alone. Because Lucy is absent, for the first time Wendy begins to emerge as a human carrying the ghost of canine. History and loss begin to swell around the margin of the frame, where before there was only the question of duration continually unmaking and inventing human-animal identity.

Wendy's time in jail is spent as lost time. As the police car pulls away from the grocery store, we see a POV shot of Wendy looking through the rear window, Lucy falling further and further out of view. On the electronic fingerprint machine, we watch a loading bar process and store Wendy's imprint -- ring, middle, index, thumb -- a
process the officers have to do twice, as a result of technological hiccups. The camera repeatedly moves to shots of the clock while Wendy just sits and waits. Once out of jail, she immediately attempts to recover that time, running off the bus back into town, across the parking lot of a car dealership, into the street. We see Wendy's face turn from determination to fear in a sharp inhale before we see Lucy's absence. In a breath, she's gone.

Or is it a swallow? Abraham and Torok's psychoanalytic theory of mourning makes use of the term "introjection," describing the grieving's desire to figuratively ingest the lost object, preserving it as ideally remembered, tomb-like in the ego. Given the distinct methods Wendy uses to stage Lucy's loss on and through the body, this seems like an appropriate enough model by which to read the latter sections of the film. However, Abraham and Torok pathologizing of introjection as a primitive form of mourning that must be overcome takes all the imagination and pleasure out of the exciting possibility of being able to swallow, or even sharply inhale history. For this task, I prefer Elizabeth Freeman's method of Erotohistoriography:

Erotohistoriography does not write the lost object into the present so much as encounter it already in the present, by treating the present itself as hybrid. And it uses the body as a tool to effect, figure, or perform that encounter. Erotohistoriography admits that contact with historical materials can be precipitated by particular bodily dispositions, and that
these connections may elicit bodily responses, even pleasurable ones, that are themselves a form of understanding (95-6).

I want to endorse Freeman here, since so much of the time Wendy and Lucy share throughout the first half of the film is already hybrid. As I have shown, their precarious emergence from one another as an assemblage of figures effectively shattering precepts of kinship, property, and coupling demands a reading of the present as permeable, always available for reinvention. Further, that those reinventions often present as experiences of embodied time, already set Wendy up for evoking the body as temporal lightning rod, drawing into her person trace scents and vibrations of Lucy from her environment. Her efforts won't ever quite make Lucy appear, as Lucy is not ever quite gone: she will affect the becoming she has already absorbed.

When Wendy finds Lucy absent from the bike rack where she watched her disappear, predictably, she runs around the town calling for her. Calling for a companion animal when they pursue a track out of sight is an entirely conventional response, but one that we perhaps don't put enough stock in as embodied historiographing. Wendy runs from scene to scene, backtracking the history of the film with stamps, claps and calls, until her voice is hoarse and she's lost her breath. It's not a particularly rational or objective search; its frantic, and historical vectors are pursued according to whiff, crunch, and vibration, perks of the ears and raisings of the nose that lie far outside the dominion of sight structuring human evidence of presence and absence. In this way too, Wendy isn't just attempting to pull a lost Lucy back into
contemporaneousness, she's bucking evolutionary and morphological stations to find Lucy within an imagined chronology affected by a bodily performance that, if not wholly pleasurable, is at least an erotic contact with a personal and interspecies history.

As Wendy runs out of steam, we see her sitting at a cafe writing out a sign advertising Lucy's disappearance. With the camera positioned from behind Wendy, her head obscures the picture of Lucy so that all we can make out is Wendy's hand penning an SOS, followed by a list of bodily coordinates: "I'M LOST; floppy ears; sharp eyes; yellowish-brown; friendly face." Reichardt intentionally confuses the subject of the declaration, "I'm lost," going on to describe a set anthropomorphic features emphasizing the manner in which Wendy views Lucy as -- more than simply human -- equivalent companion, affecting her appearance with subjective qualities such as "friendly face," that may not resonate with others. When we do get to see the finished poster, the picture of Lucy includes a caption of her name at the bottom with an arrow referring back to the picture, as if to add a note of clarification as to who is lost and who is present, who is human and who is dog. She places these posters on a recursive track back through familiar locales, retracing her time in this town in which she had never meant to arrive and is now, seemingly, perpetually stuck. It is as if, by posting these flyers, she's creating wormholes, enacting her desire to be ahistorically present, providing opportunities for alternative pasts and futures at previous sites of encounter.

The unnamed Walgreen's security guard, whom Wendy befriends in Lucy's absence, tells Wendy that, as a child, when his dog would go missing, his father would put his coat out in the woods and eventually the dog would smell the coat and return.
At this suggestion, Wendy creates a second set of historiographic portals, this time reaching deeper into the filmic past, and deeper into her own capacity for embodying history. She wraps a pair of jeans around the bike rack near Jack's grocery. She leaves an undershirt hanging on a branch in the industrial clearing featured in film's opening sequence. Finally, reaching the degree zero of the film's diegetic history and her bodily proximity, she makes a bed of cardboard boxes and blankets on an embankment over the train yard, setting herself out to be encountered as a body of historiographic method, object, and subject all at once. In the night, a transient man finds her and rummages through her clothing, threatening to throw her onto the tracks. Wendy whimpered beneath the blanket; he receives her affective gesture and moves on. Freaked, Wendy packs up her things and runs for what must be miles, as landscapes -- industrial, highway, neighborhood, town -- transform before our eyes. Wendy pulses through these shared, sleeping temporalities to the safety of her own domestic space, the gas station bathroom. Once inside she begins to hyperventilate, crying, heaving, tearing her sweatshirt, money belt, and other trappings of human sociality from her person.

In the section of *A Thousand Plateaus* on "Becoming Intense--Becoming Animal" Deleuze and Guattari write: "who has not known the violence of these animal sequences, which uproot one from humanity, if only for an instant?" (240). Running cold water over her hands and splashing her face, Wendy looks into the mirror: "How you doing, girl? I'm okay. You okay, girl? I'm okay." At the film's conclusion, Wendy will eventually find Lucy -- the *real*, material body of Lucy -- but, in this moment, she has returned as they have always known each other, neither human nor
canine, neither fully present nor fully absent, but only and always within and for each other.
Old Joy: Pleasuring the Death Drive

"Anyone who accepts it as something self-evident that their dreams should put them back at night into the situation that caused them to fall ill has misunderstood the nature of dreams."
-- Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle

"Ah, Carl, while you are not safe I am not safe, and now you're really in the total animal soup of time--"
-- Allen Ginsberg, Howl

"A Bird in Hand ...," On Making Animals Appear

My previous chapter on Wendy and Lucy took up some of the problems that arise when we start to read Wendy's perceived precarity through and as a result of the appearance (and disappearance) of Lucy. As I stated in my introduction, this thesis takes the animal as a figure for reading queer futures and beings-in-time that heterosexuality nor capitalism can fully describe. The delicate power of Wendy and Lucy is that neither species comprising the film's titular couple comes to fully mark the other as anything less than ongoing mutual emergence; bound by proximity, each embrace intimate embodied, temporal becomings that skirt any fixed category of sexuality, labor, or knowledge in the current normative chronosphere. As remarkable as all that may sound, I dealt with Wendy and Lucy first even though it follows Old Joy in Reichardt's oeuvre because, relative to Old Joy, Wendy and Lucy is a bit easier to pin down. Given my chosen method for reading Reichardt's cinema, which values indeterminacy above all, I'm not sure if I can say whether or not being relatively easily pinned-down makes Wendy and Lucy a less successful film than Old Joy. What I can
say for certain is this: if the previous chapter examined the problems associated with animals and humans appearing together, the task of this chapter is to examine the problem of making the animal appear.

The relative simplicity or difficulty of this charge is entirely dependent on how paranoid you prefer your readings. The problem of making the animal appear in Old Joy is not to say there aren't animals lurking, often tellingly, within its frames. Take, for instance, the opening scene of the film. A repetitive gong and the ambient sound of birds fill the opening credits, and as the film's inaugural image comes into view, we see a close-up of a chickadee perched on a rain gutter. As the bird makes its departure, the image quickly cuts to one of the film's protagonists, Mark, sitting in the lotus position, trying to meditate in his backyard. Reichardt then moves to a close-up of a garden hose lying in the grass, its inner cork exposed and rotting, covered by ants. The final shot of this opening sequence returns to a much closer view of Mark, who seems to be having some trouble getting into the spirit of transcendence, as a longish wisp of hair keeps nudging against his face. Bird's eye view, to human, to worm's eye view, and back to human: the breadth of the suburban American ecology, living in what feels a bit like forced symbiosis. Yet, the inauthentic, suburban-human worlding linking Mark's doomed communion with "nature" to the presence of the chickadee who seems wholly unaware of or unimpressed by the resonance of Mark's "om," is not only suggested structurally through Reichardt's arrangement of images, but textually, as the broken, phallic hose lying in the grass clearly references the opening scene of David Lynch's suburban thriller Blue Velvet (1986).
Blue Velvet's rather famous opening sequence uses a backyard hose to take us out of sprawling, individuated suburban space and into the teeming, populated soil where whole ant societies operate unseen by the human eye. Lynch's film characterizes the ant presence as sinister, an intruding mass always threatening to overflow into the quiet, uncanny splendor of anytown America, but that very splendor is equally the object of Lynch's critique: suburban life's crystalline sheen is less hiding a porous, undesirable element beneath the surface -- consciously projecting an unreal fantasy -- than it is irreal, frozen, placid, capable of nothing other than reproducing the image by which it is named. Most of Lynch's film work focuses its efforts on exalting familiar genre codes into a hyper-conductive reverie to the point that they seem strangely surreal in their earnestness. Thus, in the world of Blue Velvet, normative, domestic time nor the lovingly obscene genre time spent in Lumberton's criminal underbelly make decisive claims on what is authentic or inauthentic, there is only dynamism or stasis, pleasure or its lack.

However radically divergent its techniques from Blue Velvet, Old Joy's opening scenes similarly present less an authentic ecology of its characters' environment than a microcosm of the film's larger strategies for rejecting easy distinctions between the natural and the synthetic world. Reichardt's directorial touch is far more ginger than Lynch's, favoring natural light, outdoor settings, and understated, nuanced performances that lend Old Joy in particular an invisible, unaffected realism. But even the ostensible ease of that realism isn't without its complications. Mark's attempt at serenity gives way to the harsh whirr of a blender from inside the kitchen where his pregnant wife, Tanya,
prepares some kind of greenish-brown nutritional drink which, based on her reaction, doesn't taste particularly good. Country music plays softly in the background as the camera cuts back to Mark, still committed to his lotus position. The phone rings, and finally, we see a second shot of the chickadee resting on a telephone wire, while the soundtrack fills with Mark's affirmative response to nature's call: "yeah, I could use a day in the woods."

It's easy to read as disjunction Mark's use of contemporary communications technology to make arrangements for a pseudo-spiritual, anthropocentric romp in the "woods," a space, here, seemingly extant only to emerge as "open" for humanity's timely escape from modernity. Just as it is easy to read the bird's presence on a telephone wire as evidence that humanity's techno-social appropriation of natural spaces compromises precisely the autonomous alterity it unscrupulously demands from undomesticated, non-human ecological systems. If Lee Edelman was leading this hypothetical analysis, he might imagine our lone chickadee rallying others and swooping onto Mark, Tanya, and their unborn child, pecking at the phone and effectively canceling Mark's future plans for a meaningful venture in the forest at the expense of its animal inhabitants (see No Future). But Reichardt's bird(s) don't seem to read rain gutters and telephone wires as much other than a place to land: their movement through suburban space is casual, self-interested, embodied in fits and starts within Reichardt's varied use of camera positions, ambient noise, and durative cross-cutting. Here, the chickadee's "natural" habitus is no more a preserved, rigidly signifying space than the contents of the whirring, domestic blender eviscerating garden
vegetables into a muddy green mixture reminiscent of the green-brown assemblage of ant, rubber, cork and grass signaling Mark's position in the yard. Still, I can't help but identify *Old Joy*’s opening image of bird with the closing image of *Blue Velvet*: the plainly mechanized body of a stuffed Robin chewing on an insect. *Blue Velvet*’s male protagonist, Jeffery (Kyle MacLachlan) spots the Robin sitting on a windowsill of his parents' suburban home in the company of his heteronormative love interest Sandy (Laura Dern), after ending a far darker affair with a local jazz singer, Dorothy (Isabella Rosellini). The Robin's stilted, inauthentic body seen fruitlessly trying to digest a writhing bug provides an absurd image to reflect back on the film's absurdly mawkish conclusion. *Blue Velvet* asserts an aesthetic economy where worn-out, hyperbolized characterizations constitute mutually excluding environments alternately offering safety and sadism, platitude and pleasure, but never allowing one to take precedence over another, implicating each in a rapturous inauthenticity.

I take up *Blue Velvet*’s robin with *Old Joy*’s chickadee in order to return to the problem of making animals appear. Lynch's stuffed, mechanized Robin is an exemplary cinematic animal because its abject "natural" body allegorizes the excess of human influence necessary in making any screened animal *appear* as anything more than mute, biological object. *Wendy and Lucy* and *Old Joy* both feature Lucy, albeit the latter in a much smaller role. In the previous chapter, I discussed the various ways Wendy and Lucy's relationship bucks any strictly filial arrangement. However, *Old Joy* casts Lucy as part and parcel Mark's domestic imaginary: like a child, she is relegated to the backseat in long driving scenes, left to "play" in the woods, and given commands to
"stay put" when her presence is inconvenient. She seems present only to act as placeholder for Mark and Tanya's ability and intention to reproduce. Yet, despite her radically divergent characterization and relations across films, she is listed in the credits as portraying "herself." Without lines, without human language, Lucy's body is simply a dog body, less appearing than made to appear at the moment of human coupling. In *Wendy and Lucy* these moments of appearing are given appropriate time and space to develop in place of an overriding human coupling narrative.

In contrast, rather than making *Old Joy's* appearing-marginal animals fit, which is simply another method of denying their presence, I want to know what it means to make the powerfully indeterminate human-animal becomings of *Wendy and Lucy* appear in *Old Joy* in the absence(s) of animals. As mentioned in my introduction, a galvanizing discovery in the conception of this project was noting *Old Joy* categorized in my Netflix queue under "Gay and Lesbian Films," yet the only whiff of sexuality we get in *Old Joy* is a scene near the film's conclusion that bears a good deal of homoerotic build, but no explicit or implied release. Further, as I have already tried to show in the case of the chickadee, as well as *Wendy and Lucy*, a large part of Reichardt's narrative and cinematic project is finding ways of making sticky categories unstick, or mutate and bend through unconventional and unexpected pairings and relations. However, I have my suspicions that part of the reason "Gay and Lesbian" sticks to *Old Joy* lies in the difficulty of describing the film's other protagonist, Kurt.

In a discussion of the emergence of queer time in the wake of the AIDS epidemic, Judith Halberstam defines queer lives and subcultures as those "allowing their
participants to believe that their futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience -- namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death" (2). Reproductive futurism in particular tends to see members of the social body without children as children, lacking the teleology of "experience" that supposed accompanies the raising of a child. Though they've been friends since adolescence, in comparison to Mark, who is married with a child on the way, Kurt seems to embody the whimsy and appearance of a child. Mark arrives at Kurt's father's house expecting to find him there per their arrangement, but Kurt isn't where he's supposed to be. Mark encounters him some time later, crossing the street with a cooler, dragging behind him a child's red wagon containing an old TV and blankets. Mark is dressed in muted tones, wearing khaki slacks, a brown fitted shirt, and an expensive looking waterproof jacket: he is, by all accounts, a respectable adult. Kurt, who has a think unruly bread and mutton chops, wears a misbuttoned, light blue demin shirt over a pink thermal. Despite whatever association this description may provoke, Kurt doesn't embody the punk pugilism Halberstam identifies in relation to counterhegemonic and queer lives; rather, Kurt is gentle, generous and, at times, affecting a profound vulnerability putting him at odds with the rhythm and content of common conversation. Following Bourdieu, Elizabeth Freeman argues that degrees of social belonging and cultural competence are measured "through mastering the cultural norms of withholding, delay, surprise, pause, and knowing when to stop" as "institutionally and culturally enforced rhythms, or timings, shape into legible, acceptable embodiment" (4). Throughout the film, Kurt's exclusion from normative life is very much a matter of
"timing," performed not just as an uncertain future, but a failure to keep tempo with the cadence of chit-chat, anecdotes, and other socio-cultural trials determining one's ability to narrate a present, and in turn, a potential future.

Mark accompanying Kurt on this excursion into the wilderness pulls Mark's time away from his pregnant wife, such that Kurt's inability or unwillingness to abide an itinerary that would find them home by day's end becomes indicative of Kurt's larger failures in time. While in the car, Kurt tells Mark about a hot springs he had visited in Arizona where no one is allowed to talk. Perhaps appropriately, Mark responds with an extended silence that reads equally as envy and mistrust. Earlier in the film, Mark asks Kurt "how was Ashland?," to which Mark responds "Amazing. Transformative. I'm at a whole new place now, really." Given the scene of Mark's meditation earlier in the film, he seems jealous of Kurt's relative domestic freedom which would allow him to transform. When Mark initially receives a call from Kurt, he pleads with Tanya to bear witness to his desire to join Kurt, even if it means leaving Tanya at home "to suffer" while he "enjoys himself." It is clear from the pauses and aporias in their speech that Kurt is a figure haunting the domestic, grounded temporality of a weekend spent, presumably, not-suffering at home. However, it is equally clear that whatever thrill Mark receives from indulging the threat Kurt poses to his stake in a reproductive future, he doesn't trust Kurt to effectively narrate his own life. Elizabeth Freeman argues that, according to the logic of reproductive futurism, the past functions as little more than the raw materials for building an economically viable, state-sanctioned future. Further, laying claim to that future entails having an ability to narrate it as "event-centered, goal-
oriented, intentional, and culminating in major epiphanies and transformations. Thus, when Kurt's inability to narrate the proper route to their destination sets them back a day, Mark explains to Tonya, "well, he thought he knew the way, but you know who we're dealing with."

Kurt, seeming to read all this from Mark's silence, follows his story about the hot springs with a clear gesture toward the forward-looking rift between them: "They wanted me to come back and work as a chef sometime. I had a whole menu worked out for them, and . . ." Kurt leaves the sentence at that open-ended conjunction, waving his hand as if to dismiss the opportunity or dismiss the obligation affected by Mark's silence to prove that he could secure an opportunity in order live within an "and," to reproduce the trajectory of meaning Mark is hoping to secure through in his child. To Kurt's nakedly affective plea for acceptance, Mark responds: "Yeah, I think I read about it in a magazine one time."

Given this treatment of the relationship between Mark and Kurt, it's easy to read Mark as representative of a heteronormativity that fears and actively works to restrict lives that fail to meet the teleological stature of his own. Yet, as I tried to indicate in my brief summary above, the film often portrays Mark as the film's most tragic character, desperately trying to wrench time into a future from which he increasingly feels apart. In this way, Kurt and Mark share a temporal continuity, even if that continuity is less shared than expressed as a feeling of mutual exclusion from their collective past and the lives they have since tried to create for themselves. The narrative of *Old Joy* tell us that Kurt and Mark are to arrive at a destination, but
extended shots of scenery in the car pry against the inertia of arriving. We see movement in the towns and billboards that pass us by, but when that movement is figured against the expectation for narrative movement, the "progress" we anticipate begins to feel like stasis. In many ways, this stasis is precisely the destination *Old Joy* desires and encourages the viewer to accept as a kind of pleasurable duration of its own accord. Mark and Kurt seem to miss each other in time largely as a result of the expectations each brings to the other, often encountering their time and space together as circuitous, veering to the side of their previous arrangements. Yet, crucially, for Mark to embrace the precarious intimacy Kurt often asks of their relationship, is to betray the sanctity of a domestic future demanding -- not simply a child -- but *reproduction*, categorical sameness that leaves no room for intimate friendships outside of filial enclosures. Lee Edelman, too, has emphasizes the connection between reproduction and repetition: "Futurism thus generates generational succession, temporality, and narrative sequence, not toward the end of enabling change, but, instead, of perpetuating sameness, of turning back time to assure its repetition" (60).

Kurt doesn't self-identify as "Gay or Lesbian," and, by Halberstam's standard of queer lives belonging to an identifiable subculture with its own alternative archive and reserve of non-(re)productive, refusedly inefficient practices, "queer" misses the mark for Kurt as well. One begins to ask the same questions of Kurt as one does of Wendy: What will happen to him? Bearing the mark of child rather than bearing a child, what kind of future will Kurt inherit? Kurt doesn't seem to belong *anywhere*, and his attempts at intimacy with Mark, which are physical, even erotic, deny any clear reading
as contingent to a professed or implied queer identity. Yet, because Kurt's desire for indeterminate intimacy requires a timing out of joint with Mark's investment in a reproductive future, Kurt is abandoned, left out in the cold, feral. Thus, the animal I am attempting to make appear in the following reading of *Old Joy* is not a set of morphological characteristics, or a Deleuzian becoming, but a deep exclusion from intimacy or identity with any time making the human appear.

"Getting Yourself into Something You Cant Get Out Of": Pleasuring the Death Drive

I don't think I'm risking any scholarly credibility by provocating that, in spite of its title, Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* has been the most stubbornly visible and controversial volume to appear under the moniker of queer theory in the last decade. Along with Judith Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Place*, it was one of the first full books to take up the subject that would soon after be deigned "queer temporality." Further, *No Future* was perhaps the book to orient queer temporality as a discourse primarily of futures, whether they take on aggressive, anti-social, even nihilistic features, as in the case of Edelman and Halberstam, or embrace perpetually-renewing queer utopias, as in the case of José Esteban Muñoz and Tim Dean. The arguments of Edelman's detractors have been well rehearsed, most notably in the 2006 issue of *PMLA* documenting the roundtable discussion on "The Anti-Social Thesis in Queer Theory," which includes statements from all the scholars listed above.
Common to all these arguments is a stake in what kinds of futures queers envision for themselves -- which are almost always expressed in the multiple -- in distinction to the absent future allotted the queer in heteronormativity's fashioning of reproduction as time's self-revealing plentitude, as a historical telos performing within and for its own propagation.

What remains less examined is Edelman's appropriation of Freud's increasingly resilient theory of endings as a collective pulsion producing "the negativity opposed to every form of social viability" (9). Articulating a politics of the death drive means specifying exactly which iteration of the death instincts constitutes any given analysis. The Edelman of No Future writes as a devout Lacanian, pulling nearly every concrete reference to a Freudian death drive from Lacan's Seminars, which route "death" away from drives and into the signifying failures of the Symbolic, thereby producing the excess Edelman cites as destabilizing the external pressures of Symbolic Law. Expanding on the citation featured above, it is this destabilizing force, constituted in and by desire, that Edelman then reunites with the death drive:

"The drive -- more exactly, the death drive -- holds a privileged place in this book. As the constancy of a pressure both alien and internal to the logic of the Symbolic, as the inarticulable surplus that dismantles the subject from within, the death drive names what the queer, in the order of the social, is called forth to figure: the negativity opposed to every form of social viability" (9).
Writ large, Edelman, I think, intentionally glosses Freud's death drive for his real interest, Lacan's *jouissance*, while retaining the tag of the former as "death drive" affects an alliterative hostility lost in the recursive swells of French enjoyment. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud is very clear that the death instincts historically and structurally precede external demands resulting in the unpleasure that it is the Pleasure Principle's function to abate. In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud pits the death instinct against a life instinct, Eros, but their mutual functionality is a less clear binarism than we might expect: "it would be possible to picture the id as under the domination of the mute but powerful death instincts, which desire to be at peace and . . . to put Eros the mischief-maker, to rest; but perhaps that might be to undervalue the part played by Eros" (658, emphasis added). Throughout *The Ego and the Id*, Freud characterizes the death drive as "mute," worn-out, antagonized by the life instincts which disrupt the ego requiring sedation on behalf of the pleasure principle. It is not until *Civilization and Its Discontents*, published in 1930, that Freud elaborates a socially *destructive* impulse, which, even then " . . . is not a derivative of the contradiction -- probably an irreconcilable one -- between the primal instincts of Eros and death" (768-9). My aim here is not to unhelpfully nitpick Edelman's scholarship; after all, it was Freud himself who, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, wrote that the existence of a death instinct is little more than "far-fetched speculation" (606). Rather, precisely in that spirit of imagining futures unbound to convention, I wish to suggest that there are interpretations
of the death drive up for grabs that don't automatically require the rejection of meaningful interpersonal or collective approaches to time.

The death drive Edelman paints as disruptive, decentering and anarchic is portrayed by Freud as working in precarious proximity to the psychic well-being of the subject and its development. Coupled with the Pleasure Principle, the death drive retains its ostensibly morbid connotations out of concern for the subject, conserving cathectable energy, binding psychic pain to physical mastery, ultimately awaiting and constantly seeking, however impossible, release from the demands of others, escape from the trauma inherent in becoming a member of a social body while fastidiously working to protect the boundaries of one's own. Freud describes the proximity of this work not just in relation to the delicate staging of trauma, but a force distributed within the physical body, a struggle between the body's desire to walk a reverse chronology and time's continued revelation of age. Freud writes:

It seems . . . that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external forces; this is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or, to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life . . . Every modification which is thus imposed upon the course of the organism's life is accepted by the conservative organic instincts and stored up for further repetition. Those instincts are therefore bound to give a deceptive appearance of being forces tending
towards change and progress, whist in fact they are merely seeking to reach . . . an old state of things, an initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return by the circuitous paths along which its development leads (612-3).

Contra Edelman, the death drive I hear in this passage from Freud strikes me as nothing if not affecting some measure of compassion for "the organism" figured into the chronic loop of repetitive gestures toward an ending that is already past, a "progress" that only tears the subject further from its intended destination. Yet, I think here, too, we can make some time for pleasure, as well as compassion. I'm interested in the possibilities a film titled "Old Joy" can offer the attractive prospect of bending the time of promissory future's striving -- its mad driving and maddening drive -- toward a destination, making it circle, detour, stretch, and pit-stop, in addition to Edelman's desire to simply make it breakdown.

Once Mark and Kurt make it onto the highway, getting some real ground behind them, Kurt asks Mark: "How's your dad doing?" It's both a question and a gesture, as Kurt knows Mark's father has recently left his mother. Mark responds: "For some reason at age 70 he decided he didn't want to be married anymore so he moved out . . . then he ended up with these fucking blood clots on his brain . . . they showed up for awhile and then they just dissolved, went away. It really put my mom through the ringer." Kurt then offers, "Yeah, I bet. It's sort of like when an old eskimo goes off to
die alone." We clearly see Mark's face turn and he shoots a look at Kurt while Kurt packs a small bag of pot he bought earlier on the trip into a glass bowl.

One of the difficulties of taking *Old Joy* as a critical object is that most of its characterization and narrative action are reified into a moment when Kurt gets restless and adjusts his sitting position, or abandons one train of thought and pursues another, or a well-timed look Mark shoots across the increasing cultural and interpersonal distance between he and his old friend. Because we know Mark and Kurt are traveling to the hot springs, we interpret the car's movement as momentum, pulsing forward through time and space toward an established telos, a meaningful arrival: yes, two old friends will find each other's rhythms and generate new ones on the journey to an unfamiliar place; I know precisely where I am. But even Reichardt's camera denies a visual confirmation of progress. Employing a similar technique to the one used in the trainyard in the opening of *Wendy and Lucy*, depending on whether Kurt or Mark is offering dialogue to the scene, the car seems to be moving alternately right to left, then left to right. Again, the feeling of movement coupled with the knowledge that there is a destination creates the effect of progression through a narrative, but in fact, what we are seeing is an ebb and flow, the strained exchange of two men attempting to account for how they've spent their time.

These structural interventions Reichardt places on the progression of narrative become all the more poignant considering the nature of Mark and Kurt's dialogue, detailing Mark's father's own regressive movement through a late, already reproduced future: Mark's statement, "for some reason at age 70 he decided he didn't want to be
married anymore," uncannily recalls the brief scene of Mark's own strained marriage, presenting a rather clear picture that, for Mark, being or not being with a fragment of his past is hardly a matter of deciding. Mark feels his future assuming a pace and direction that requires a continued reinstatement of familial values, repeatedly locating the seat of his intimacy and drive with in a heterosexual, capitalist pulsion potentially at odds with the body's capacity for mutating, recursive futures through the precarious appearance and disappearance of blood clots. Blood clots are figures for the coagulation of vitality and time. They are less an absolute symbol of stasis, metonymy for the impending death at which one arrives, than a form of embodied testimony that "death" is, to resurrect Elizabeth Grosz's term, an "ongoing provocation," pushing from within, spoiling the illusion of temporal mastery offered in the reproduction of identity. In spite of his perceived insensitivity, Kurt's comment, "It's sort of like when an old eskimo goes off to die alone," reminds me of nothing so much as Freud's assertion that the work of the death drive "is to assure that the organism shall follow its own path to death, and to ward off any possible ways of returning to existence other than those which are immanent in the organism itself" (614).

As a total figure, then, the death drive in Old Joy is a force that spoils, decenters, and perhaps makes foolish externalized attempts to narrate or direct the body's limited, duration as any trajectory other than immanent return. Crucially, then, and contrary to Edelman, the appearance of a queer relation within that system -- an indeterminability anterior to dominant models of fixed identity -- cannot possibly come from "embracing" the death drive, since the death drive can only reveal itself in failures of mastery that
attempt external reproduction of a distributive force that is, by its very nature, preceding the objectifying work of the senses. As we see in Mark and Kurt's relationship, what the death drive offers to queer theory is a mode of falling out of futures with another in mutual immanence; that is, finding meaning and pleasure in a shared duration that is neither reproductive nor productively non-reproductive, but affirmative of a stillness arising from shared proximity with otherness.

It seems impossible to call this stillness "animal" without once again reserving animality as a discourse to which the exemplary human can stage a return, or taking up Edelman's suggestion that we "embrace" systemic categories of exclusion as a strategy for disruption. I want to return to a reading of *Old Joy* before elaborating on this problematic. However, I will say briefly that the "stillness" to which I refer is not necessarily a characteristic of non-movement, or even a characteristic of non-intention. Addressing the animal is difficult; it takes work, practice and, I think, requires embodied modes of knowing in need of experimentation. An attempt at stillness can appear as physical as sex, cooking, or fetch, it could also appear as sedentary as reading, writing, and sleeping. Stillness can appear as all these things because its rest is not non-mastery but acceding to a losing battle with the drive. Stillness is temporality attuned to *limited duration* without foreclosing on the pleasures inherent in movement, dynamism, and transformation in the presence of others.

By way of elaboration and conclusion I want to explore the emergence of colliding temporalities within the durative, "progression" of a scene in *Old Joy*, one pivotal to our understanding of Kurt and Mark's relationality, but also one willing to
take its time, appreciative of the fact that spreading one's wings is also stretching one's arms. When it becomes clear that they won't reach the springs before nightfall, Mark and Kurt decide to camp. Veering deeper into circuitous, forest roads, they stumble upon a strangely domestic space offering a couch and a firepit, as well as few stumps. In the scene elaborated below, Kurt sits on the edge of the couch with Mark nearby on a cooler, each settling into a can of cheap beer. They're centered laterally within the shot, but backgrounded slightly by the fire, which intermittently pops and leaps in the foreground.

Kurt: So, are you looking forward to fatherhood?

Mark: Yeah. Sure, I mean we're both stretched so thin with work its almost impossible to imagine, but it will have to work itself out. We'll just [spreads arms] find another rhythm. We'll do whatever it is people do.

Kurt: That's so fucking brave, man. I've never gotten myself into anything I couldn't get myself out of. It's just, having a kid is so fucking for real.

Mark: Yeah.

It seems clear from Mark's response to Kurt's question that, while together, they inhabit two entirely separate temporalities. Kurt asks Mark if he's "looking forward," to fatherhood, a spatial-temporal metaphor that we all understand as happy anticipation; if
you can "see" something in your future, it implies that you want it there and you're shifting your senses toward it, the eventual interaction with an imagined child. Yet, despite Mark's affirmative, he seems to be queerly feeling backward to the child's birth, which, in the logic of reproductive time, should unquestionably structure his future, not his past. Mark gives up the visual metaphor, since "it," the child, seems "almost impossible to imagine," adopting an embodied one, accepting the rhythmic demands that will make him "a person." Even more strangely, he seems to answer the question reflecting back to Kurt from this position of personhood, adopting the family speech of "we," and the necessary "working out" informing familial cohesion, when, in fact, the question was asked of Mark, himself, in the present. It's only as a result of Kurt's rather brilliant response, "I've never gotten myself into anything I couldn't get out of," that Mark recognizes not only the fixity of child-centric futures, but the sexual logic that produces them. The scene continues as Kurt tells Mark about his experience in a physics class he'd recently taken:

Kurt: . . . the universe is falling, man. The entire universe is in the shape of a falling tear dropping down through space . . . I don't know how it happened but that's just the way that it works. It's this tear, it's been dropping now forever, it just doesn't stop.

Mark: So did you tell them that? Your [pause] theory about the tear-shaped universe?
Kurt: Did I tell them? Who the hell am I? They don't care about my theory. It doesn't mean shit to them. I don't have any numbers for it.

A long silence: Mark contentedly drinks his beer. Kurt is huddled over himself, affecting a groan that feels more like a growl. Mark chuckles at Kurt's, unaware of what's coming. Then, at the next line, Kurt fully captures Mark's attention, moving the camera into close-up:

Kurt: [groaning and wincing] I miss you, Mark. I miss you really, really bad. I want us to be real friends again, there's something between us and I don't like it. I want it to go away.

Mark: [touches Kurt's shoulder] Hey man, what are you talking about? We're fine.

Kurt: Man, are you serious? Do you really think that?

Mark: Of course I do. We're fine, we're totally fine.

Kurt: [shaking head] I don't know. [pause] I'm sorry. I'm just being crazy. [Groans several times] I'm sorry. I'm just being crazy. I know.

We're fine. Everything's totally fine.

This significant exchange begins with the universe falling and ends with everything being "totally fine." Is there is a better metaphor for the kind of tidy transformations reproductive futures desire from an immanent state of being ever-
proceeding to origins which they can no longer fully remember or name? Yet, no matter the intensity of approximations I can muster to articulate the death drive, they are always just that -- approximations, metaphors, forced appearings. The death drive is made visible throughout this scene, but it is neither the falling universe nor shallow affirmations: the death drive can only be recognized as the force that makes cracks emerge between conflicting masteries. For Kurt, the truth of a falling universe is felt, that's clear enough in the force with which wants to communicate it to Mark. Kurt's difficulty, the cracks in his mastery, lie in his need to put his affective, embodied knowledge into the language of reproducibility in order for Mark to recognize him, which, based on the turn the conversation takes, is what he's really after. The fits and starts of Kurt's speech, its detours and derailments, absorbs the skepticism he feels Mark emit, a skepticism and subtle shaming Mark affects in his question: "Did you tell them that? Your [pause] theory about the tear-drop shaped universe?" Mark's pause disassociates or makes ingenuine the sovereignty between the possessive and its object; he isn't dismissing Kurt's theory, he's dismissing Kurt.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick provides the following definition of shame in Touching Feeling: "... shame attaches to and sharpens what one is, whereas guilt attaches to what one does" (37). At the heart of feelings of shame is a gesture toward recognition that is denied, a glancing away that glances "toward painful individuation, toward uncontrollable relationality" (37). If we can sense a denial of something in Mark's response to Kurt, we can also assume there is a kind of invitation, though we can't entirely be sure of what. On one hand, Kurt wants Mark to accept him on Mark's terms;
this paradox reflects back to Sedgwick's observation that shame doubly binds us to ourselves as well as the contingency of another. If Mark can't make a space for Kurt within his imagined pulsion into a reproductive future, then Kurt is, quite literally, history, left behind, without relation, not just temporally behind Mark, but foreclosed from participation in any kind of future.

In this way, Kurt's agonized attempts at putting his embodied knowledge into the language of scientific discourse is exclusively for the benefit of recognition within an arrangement of time from which he is excluded. Yet, it is only by trying out this mastery and failing for another that he can eroticize the tear-shaped universe circulating within him. I also want to emphasize that, since, in this arrangement linguistic failure is necessary for eroticizing embodied knowledge, we have to understand pleasure as something other than the look non-reproduction, inefficiency. What Kurt truly wants is for Mark to meet him in the time of his failure. He wants Mark to let go of the compulsion to reproduce and try out some facet of interaction that makes better use of the mouth than simply talking, whether it be whimper, growl, song, or, perhaps, kiss.
Stan Brakhage's 1963 experimental film, *Mothlight*, is just over one minute of pure flicker. Light and dark splotches of frames flash across the screen, each different, 24 times a second. Ribbons of material come in and out of view, taking shape only to transform into other arrangements. The film's most distinct image comes at the start -- the words Moth and Light -- the former stacked on top of the later, nicely filling out the frame. It's the most distinct image since, relative to Brakhage's admittedly experimental technique, it's the most conventional, in that it makes use of the projection apparatus' capacity to produce a simulacra of animation from profound stillness. Narrative cinema employs both camera and projector to create a stunning, fluid verisimilitude from the thousands and thousands of still images comprising a standard film reel. The power of the camera is that it can capture those frames quickly and sequentially enough that, when projected at an appropriate speed, flipbook becomes lifeworld.

Unlike the remainder of the film, Brakhage's titlecard aspires to recreate the continuity of still images produced by the film camera. Lasting just two seconds, the relative permanence of the words "Moth Light" would have had to have been painted over the film strips 48 times as carefully and consistently as possible. The rest of the film was constructed in a similar fashion, fixing various materials on the celluloid, arranged in no particular order. Thus, it's Brakhage's play on stillness, fixity, and repetition against the rapid movement of the projector that gives *Mothlight* its sublime
tenuousness, merging and disassembling over and over again in patterns impossible to track, yet necessarily static, never changing in sequence or duration during the course of any given viewing.

Yet, *Mothlight*, quite literally, *is* the material body of a moth. According to his recorded commentary on the Criterion Collection's *By Brakhage* DVD, Brakhage began to notice a collection of moths' carcasses collecting near a light in his studio. Thus, as a work of mourning and commemoration, Brakhage inserted the moth wings, grass, flower petals, and other bits of organic material between two strips of mylar film. The resultant projection, then, is both a re-animation of moth, as well as a statement of its absence. The "animated" moth is comprised of a multitude of moth bodies and non-moth bodies, even though, in monumental logic, the presence of many pretends at the preservation of one. The question of "which moth" further raises the question of "which moth for whom?"

What we see in *Mothlight* is the collection of moth bodies, always already understood by Brakhage -- whether trash, clippings, or corpse -- as belonging to him, *transformed* into the perception of moth movement and behavior by humans. While there is a temptation to say that *Mothlight* opens moth, or "animal" subjectivity to human subjectivity, drawing the viewer into a fascination with the light, perhaps a Deleuzian becoming-moth, what the film truly opens is human subjectivity onto itself. It renders "perception" the making of profoundly alterior, ecologically interdependent forces, practices, and bodies into a homogenized experience of "animal," setting down a
natural(ized) discourse to which the human might return, in order to better view its exemplarily cultural and ecological dominion.

I've presented these dual arguments in order to imagine the limits of formal, cinematic analysis and Posthuman discourse in making a cinematic animal appear. Without a clear understanding that cinema is precisely embodied duration, time shared with an image, the cinematic animal becomes either a disembodied flicker, or a body conjured only to be exported to a supposedly Posthumanist discourse, which seems never to tire of raising anthropocentric critique in a language of discourse made by and for the human. We don't readily problematize films peopled by humans because we understand their re-animation -- and it is always a re-animation in spite of how fully we invest in cinema's life-like qualities -- as self-evident as the sovereignty with we license that investment: a choice, a decision, I'm going to the movies. Animals, to my knowledge, don't go to the movies, or fill out Netflix queues. The moth takes no offense to its mode of memorialization in Mothlight. However, if the moth would find its way into the theatre, it would likely draw up to the light, not in identification, but encounter, assuming a rhythm animated in time with the bodies on screen. And, human, too, might be drawn to that rhythm, asking questions of the primacy of its own desire, the autonomy of its own body, and the ways it is animated in language, labor, and sex, its daily interactions with the rhythms continually instating and unmaking individuals with a social body. It might not know itself as human or moth, but something in
between, something tied to others, emerging precariously, moment to moment, intimately bound to time.
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