



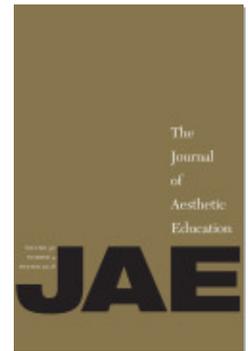
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The Journal of Aesthetic Education, Volume 50, Number 4, Winter 2016,
pp. 31-44 (Article)

Published by University of Illinois Press



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Time-Traveling Image: Gilles Deleuze on Science-Fiction Film

JOSHUA M. HALL

Gilles Deleuze claims in the preface to *Difference and Repetition*, “A book of philosophy ought to be in part . . . a kind of science fiction.”¹ And in regard to Deleuze’s relationship to film, Jean-Luc Nancy observes that “Deleuze’s interest in the cinema is not just appended to his work: it is at the centre, in the projective principle of his thought. It is a cinema-thought.”² Within the larger domain of science-fiction cinema in general, the present article focuses primarily on the subgenre of science fiction known as time-travel cinema, primarily inspired by the shared insight of science-fiction film theorists (from a variety of traditions and disciplines) that cinema, in its very structure, engages in and facilitates a kind of time travel. And in this way, this article ties directly into educational concerns, insofar as education in general can be productively understood as the student’s metaphorical time travel into the past, thereby to retrieve and reanimate historical truths, with which to project the student more effectively into the future.

The first section of this article focuses on the treatment of “time travel” in science-fiction literature and film as presented in the secondary literature in that field. The first anthology I will consider has a metaphysical focus, including (a) relating the time travel of science fiction to the banal time travel of all living beings, as we move inexorably toward the future; and (b) arguing for the filmstrip as the ultimate metaphor for time. The second anthology I will consider has a more political focus, arguing that the “special effects” form of science-fiction films, rather than the visual or narrative content of science-fiction-films, is truly imaginative and futural. The second section of this article ties together a variety of concepts and insights between time-travel cinema and Deleuze’s *Cinema 1*, suggesting (among other things)

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that (c) time-traveling characters in cinema function as a redoubled phenomenon of the “mobile sections” of Bergsonian duration (in reference to Henri Bergson), and (d) time-travel cinema vividly illustrates the imagistic nature of the entire world.³

The more specific educational implications of these analyses are twofold. First, they suggest that the medium of time-travel science-fiction cinema—qua a highly accessible popular art form—would make it an accessible and powerful vehicle for educating the general public in Deleuze’s work—qua a highly complex postmodern theory. Second, these analyses suggest that this medium of time-travel science-fiction cinema—qua a recent technological artistic medium—offers insights into temporality itself—which many theorists regard as a transcendently fundamental aspect of human existence per se. In short, this article suggests that popular art (such as time-travel films) can help us understand both technically complex philosophers (such as Deleuze) and also the timeless features of our existence (such as temporality).

I. Time-Traveling Science Fiction

Before reviewing the detailed analyses of time travel from this first of two anthologies, I begin with some brief insights from its introduction and two of its introductory chapters. In Robert E. Myers’s editor’s introduction to *The Intersection of Science Fiction and Philosophy: Critical Studies*, he claims that, although “science fiction and philosophy are not identical, some of their concerns and methodological claims intersect.”⁴ Myers also, interestingly in light of Deleuze’s interest in American pragmatism, cites John Dewey—arguably, the paradigmatic philosopher-educator—in discussing the overarching aims of Myers’s anthology.

In the first essay in that collection, “Philosophy and Science Fiction,” Philip Pecorino argues that there is a special subset of science fiction that he terms “philosophical science fiction,” in which “the exposition and investigation of values and philosophy become the dominant themes of the works” (*ISF*, 7). Pecorino further tightens this linkage between science fiction and philosophy by claiming that “the *Republic* is the oldest example of science fiction known” (*ibid.*, 11). And in this anachronistic move, understood as a recuperative repurposing of a canonical figure from the history of philosophy, Pecorino is engaged in the very exercise that defined the first major (alternative history of philosophy) phase of Deleuze’s career. Moreover, Pecorino’s example of the *Republic* is arguably (among many other things) the first major text in the philosophy of education.

In the second essay of Myers’s anthology, “Science Fiction and Emerging Values,” Alexandra Aldridge too breaks down science fiction and chooses one subtype as the most philosophical, although she uses the phrase “utopian and dystopian science fiction” instead (*ISF*, 16). Such work, according to Aldridge, consists of “a register of newly emerging values,” and could thus

be described as a “fictive seismograph of not altogether visible social change before that change becomes institutionalized” (ibid., 16). Not only is this account suggestive of Deleuze’s political critiques in general, but the memorable phrase “fictive seismograph” in particular could be understood as combining his fondness for mathematical models (as in *The Fold*) and geography/geophilosophy (as in his and Felix Guattari’s late work *What is Philosophy?*).⁵

The second section of Myers’s anthology is devoted exclusively to essays dealing explicitly with the time-travel theme, and it is on the latter essays that I will focus for the remainder of this section. In the first essay in this time-travel section, titled “Cosmological Implications of Time Travel,” Gilbert Fulmer establishes, early on, a definitional point that has important implications for my linkage of time travel and Deleuze’s thought: namely, “time travel” in the technical sense must be “to arrive at some past or future time at which one would not otherwise be found” (*ISF*, 31). The important implication here is that all of us already travel through time, constantly in fact, specifically toward the future. This means, then, that the conventional phrase “time travel” must distinguish itself from ordinary forward-motion time travel that all of us experience. As Fulmer puts it, time travel “requires the separation of what David Lewis has called ‘personal’ and ‘external’ time” (*ISF*, 32). A similar distinction can be found in Deleuze’s contrast (in *The Logic of Sense*) between the linear time figured in Greek thought as the god Chronos and the evental time of the god Aion (with Chronos mapping onto Lewis’s external time, and Aion mapping onto Lewis’s personal time).⁶

Fulmer also raises an additional important point for my purposes, namely, that time travel “would also imply reverse causation”; that is to say, “travel to the past would require that an earlier event (the arrival of the time traveler at his destination) be caused by a later event” (*ISF*, 32). Of course, this would only apply to travel backward in time, but it brings to mind, again, Deleuze’s radically unorthodox readings of canonical thinkers in the history of Western philosophy. In Deleuze’s readings, ideas from his own twentieth-century position end up (literally and etymologically, via Chronos) “anachronistically” causing thinkers such as Plato to give birth to new ideas from their (for example, Plato’s) future.

Finally from Fulmer’s essay, and of the greatest importance vis-à-vis Deleuze, time travel “would make possible closed causal loops, in which the later event is caused by the earlier event, and the earlier by the later” (*ISF*, 33). With the notion of a loop, one is in the neighborhood (both mathematically and colloquially) of one of Deleuze’s central concepts: the singularity (a term from mathematical physics, designating the point at which a line crosses itself on a two-dimensional, Cartesian grid, thus forming a two-dimensional loop).

The next essay in the time-travel section of Myers’s anthology is Lee Werth’s “*Siddhartha* and *Slaughterhouse Five* (A New Paradigm of Time).” “Certain metaphors for time,” Werth asserts early on, “appear again and

again in the works of diverse cultures, and in unpacking these metaphors, in understanding their similar logic we can come to understand" above all "more about the nature of time and its relation to experience" (*ISF*, 46). Werth then discusses three of these pervasive metaphors—wheels, rivers, and light. All three, he claims,

symbolize two conditions: (i) a serial continuum of coexisting elements that constitute a permanent and unchanging order; (ii) a relationship of this series to ourselves, or to something, a relationship that changes at each instant, thus giving rise to transiency and flux of human experience (or the world). (*ibid.*, 47)

Even better than these metaphors, Werth adds—and thus "the most powerful metaphor for time"—is "a filmstrip" (*ibid.*, 48). More precisely, the metaphor is of the material strip itself, as opposed to the events thereon recorded. As an object or thing, Werth elaborates, the filmstrip "satisfies condition one" (from the previous quote), and condition (ii) "is met upon projection of the filmstrip" (*ISF*, 48). Critically (and counter-intuitively) here, all of the frames "coexist nontemporally" (*ibid.*, 49). Werth then offers, as another example of the latter, the case of integers, when considered precisely in themselves (rather than as an aspect of an event of conscious counting) (*ibid.*).

The temporal dimension of film, like time itself, according to Werth, "is logically derivative" (*ISF*, 49). The reason for this is that "temporal relations" depend on "an appeal to change of some sort," as in the case of the projected filmstrip (*ibid.*, 49). Indeed, Werth adds, "the only genuine change that is logically required is the change from one experience to another," and the only necessary change is found not in the physical world itself but in "the relationship between the physical world and ourselves" (*ibid.*). To relate this back to Deleuze, the filmstrip could be understood as what he terms a plane of immanence, or as the metaphor he notes in Bergson of the tornado-like inverted cone of memory. All of the raw materials for experience actually coexist constantly, whereas only our deployment of those raw materials transpires or takes place in time. From this, exciting possibilities follow, such as—for Deleuze—the world itself.

Werth begins to articulate some of these possibilities as follows: "A film loop can be constructed. A series of frames can be cut out and cause precognition to occur. Sections can be superimposed. Every frame can be superimposed which would be analogous to a mystical experience." Moreover, on Einstein's view of space-time, Werth explains, a physical object is "a four-dimensional solid," and "we can regard three-dimensional intersections of that four-dimensional object as the 'frames of the filmstrip.'" Like Kurt Vonnegut's "Tralfamadorians," we can understand "our long life" as "our long body" (*ISF*, 50). Moreover, if one were to graft Borges's thought experiment from "The Garden of Forking Paths" onto this account, then the "long

body" could be understood as having "branches," which is exactly what Werth himself proceeds to do. "(It is as though a filmstrip had branches)," he writes, which would, in turn, necessitate a "five-dimensional" view of the "long body" and that "the number of branches [be] infinite at the various forks" (ibid., 53). Werth is happy to concede both points.

I now turn to a second anthology, even more Deleuze-resonant than the first, titled *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*. In her editor's introduction, Annette Kuhn notes early on that science-fiction cinema resists easy genre identification, in part because it "overlaps with other types of films, notably horror and fantasy" (AZ, 1).⁷ Kuhn then clarifies that her own interest as editor, however, lies not so much in what science-fiction cinema *is*, as in what it can *do*. And she claims that this latter (doing) aspect, which Kuhn calls science-fiction cinema's "cultural instrumentality," is derived from science-fiction cinema's attributes of "narrative" and "cinema" (ibid., 2). This emphasis, I wish to suggest, is already Deleuzian insofar as Deleuze too (as, with Guattari, in *Anti-Oedipus*)⁸ advocates a strategy—perhaps derived, too, from American pragmatism—of deploying philosophy strategically, like a mechanic trying to fix a broken-down automobile.

Kuhn then notes that genre literary criticism, also known as "genre criticism," began with "a populist reaction to the perceived elitism of a film criticism which stressed authorship" (AZ, 2). As a result of this popular origin, genre criticism possesses "a sociological edge" (albeit one with a "theoretical trajectory" that "describes a move away from sociology [proper] and towards psychoanalysis as the dominant exploratory model") (ibid., 2). Deleuze also, of course, rejects an author-centric view (as in *Anti-Oedipus*, although as that title would suggest, he is stringently opposed to psychoanalysis). According to Kuhn, the most important such psychoanalytically inclined theorist is Steve Neal, who in 1980 "added a post-Althusserian consideration of the relationship between its social and economic conditions of existence" (ibid., 3). The benefit of this approach, Kuhn claims, is an appreciation of cinema "in its totality as a social practice," in which the spectators' enjoyment of a film can be located "within the whole 'machine' of the cinema" (ibid., 4). In this deployment of the concept "machine," one can hear another resonance with Deleuze, specifically with his later work with Guattari (including *Anti-Oedipus*).

From this machinic perspective, Kuhn then identifies the "key features" of science-fiction cinema as "its construction of particular types of fictional worlds and its enactment of certain narrative viewpoints and modes of address" (AZ, 4). In relation to this latter point, Kuhn finds that science-fiction cinema "is usefully looked at in terms . . . of the cinematic image . . . especially in terms of film's own 'language,' its 'specifically cinematic codes,'" which also echoes Deleuze's image-centric approach to cinema in

general (ibid., 6).⁹ More specifically, and counter-intuitively, Kuhn suggests that the “image merely signifies unfamiliarity through familiar sets of codes: strangeness is not as a rule proposed in the film narrative’s viewpoint” (ibid., 7).

Before offering an example of these “codes,” Kuhn objects that the experienced science-fiction film viewer fully expects to see images of vaguely humanoid aliens and lifelike androids, which omnipresence disqualifies them from serving as science-fiction film’s distinctive codes. Instead, the latter lie, for Kuhn, “in special effects of sound and vision” (rather than, say, plot or characterization) (AZ, 7). Thus, the special effects perform the very “new or imagined future technologies” that their narratives typically attempt to describe and which their characters typically struggle to cope with/exploit (ibid., 7). The important thing to note about this, for my purposes, is that this use of cutting-edge technology as a code for futural technology could be understood as a further example of the metaphorical time travel posited above at the heart of science-fiction film.

Turning now to a sample essay from Kuhn’s anthology, Constance Penley’s “Time Travel, Primal Scene and the Critical Dystopia” begins with Fredric Jameson’s insight that our “love affair with apocalypse and Armageddon . . . results from the atrophy of utopian imagination, in other words, our cultural incapacity to imagine the future” (AZ, 116). That is, Penley affirms Jameson’s claim that we cannot seem to stop dreaming of the end of days because we cannot imagine that anything different or better could ever follow present-day, “late” capitalism. Penley’s example of such apocalyptic fixation, taken from the world of time-travel cinema, is James Camerons’s popularly and critically acclaimed *The Terminator* (1984).

Beyond its apocalyptic aspect, Penley finds importance in the fact that *The Terminator* could also “be called a ‘critical dystopia’ inasmuch as it tends to suggest causes rather than merely reveal symptoms” of the apocalypse (AZ, 117). In this way, *The Terminator* takes at least one step away from Jameson’s pessimistic conclusion. Illuminating a future event’s etiology implies that there may be other potentially actionable causes that could lead to a different, better outcome. Put in Deleuze’s terms, *The Terminator*’s apocalypse is always a virtual event and, as such, it may yet not occur for our world.

Penley concedes that *The Terminator*’s critique is flawed because it “limits itself to solutions that are either individualistic or bound to a romanticized notion of guerrilla-like small-group resistance” (AZ, 118). Nevertheless, she applauds the fact that it does not valorize “a Romantic opposition between the organic and the mechanical” (ibid., 118). Here, too, Deleuze would certainly be sympathetic, as suggested by his concept of the entire cosmos (including all organic beings) as “the mechanosphere.” Finally from Penley, it is also worth noting that she too makes the observation (as do Werth and Kuhn, above) that “cinema itself has the properties of a time machine” (ibid., 119).

To recap this first section, these science-fiction film anthologies articulate (a) a significant overlap between science fiction and philosophy (perhaps including Deleuze); (b) a connection to John Dewey, one of the founders of the American pragmatist school, which, via C. S. Peirce, is the central influence on Deleuze's *Cinema* volumes; (c) a Deleuzian anachronistic reading of Plato; (d) the figure of a fictive seismograph, reminiscent of Deleuze's fixation on mathematical and geographic models; (e) an emphasis on closed loops, the overlapping points of which constitute the central Deleuzian concept of a "singularity"; (f) an argument that time travel's best metaphor is the filmstrip, which forms the heart of Deleuze's later thought; (g) a conception of science fiction as a Deleuzian toolbox for cultural critique that minimizes the author's control; and (h) an understanding of the apocalypse as a Deleuzian virtual event in a world that does not distinguish the organic from the mechanical. On now to the other side of this article's equation, namely, a reading of time-travel film-relevant passages from Deleuze's *Cinema 1*.

II. Deleuzian Time Travel

In the "Preface to the English Edition" of *Cinema 1*, Deleuze defines cinema as "a composition of images and of signs, that is, a pre-verbal intelligible content" (C1, ix). Similarly, science-fiction cinema, as noted above, is the genre that most exploits and valorizes the unique imagistic capacities of cinema, as opposed to the narrative capacities that cinema shares with other media (such as theater and literature). Deleuze defines the type of concepts specific to cinema, which he terms "cinematographic concepts," as "the types of images and the signs which correspond to each type" (ibid., ix). One could argue, similarly, that science-fiction cinema too is the genre most interested in typology. Consider, for example, different species of alien, different kinds of planets, and the three phenomenological divisions of time—namely, past, present, and future. Deleuze too posits three types of images—"the perception-image, the affection-image and the action-image"—and all three have subject matters that necessarily take place in a travel through time (ibid.).

Continuing Deleuze's allegiance to Peirce's three-ness, the first chapter of *Cinema 1* deals with what Deleuze terms Bergson's three "theses on movement" (C1, 1). The first of these theses is that "movement is distinct from the space covered," as a result of which "you cannot reconstitute movement with positions in space or instants in time: that is, with immobile sections" (ibid.). Fortunately, however, Deleuze adds, cinema offers a section "which is mobile," literally a moving part (ibid., 2). The virtue of time-travel cinema in particular, I would argue, is that it thematizes this additional something. Beyond merely illustrating the occupying of two different time-places, time-travel cinema focuses on what one might term the "jump" from one to another. Also resonant with time-travel cinema here, "mobile section" might

be a good phrase for describing the characters in a time-travel film who shift radically from one time-place to another. That is, time-travel characters double the movement (at the narrative level) of the superimposed time that takes place with the film itself (at the physical/technological level).

The second of Deleuze's Bergsonian theses on movement involves the historical transition from (a) relating movement to significant moments, or "privileged instants" (which Deleuze compares to dividing a given dance into "an order of poses") to instead (b) relating movement to what Deleuze calls "any-instant-whatevers" (like dividing a cartoon character's movement into a series of frames) (C1, 4). In this context, I would add that time-travel cinema could be productively understood as taking this historical transition to its logical conclusion. A time-traveling character can move from any-one-instant-whatever to any other without having to take a series of intermediary steps.

The virtue of the any-instant-whatever perspective, for Deleuze, is that "one must be capable of thinking the production of the new, that is, of the remarkable and the singular, at any one of these moments" (C1, 7). But this is precisely what drives the narrative of time-travel cinema in particular, namely, a desire to make something new happen (or have happened). Its characters try to subvert the tyranny imposed by particular, qualitatively significant moments on human lives, by repurposing other moments that had been comparatively insignificant. Time-travel cinema in particular is thus an ideal referent for Deleuze's description of "the organ for perfecting the new reality" (ibid., 8).

Bergson's third thesis on movement, according to Deleuze, is that "movement is a mobile section of duration, that is, of the Whole, or of a whole," and that, consequently, "each time there is a translation of parts in space, there is also a qualitative change in a whole" (C1, 8). Similarly, in time-travel cinema, what seem like the isolated movements of a life are revealed as segments of a four-dimensional body; and what seem like isolated lives in a world are revealed as intertwining threads of a world fabric. For Bergson, Deleuze adds (and here I would interpolate the time-traveling character as well), "the whole is neither given nor giveable" because "it is the Open" (ibid., 9). Moreover, Deleuze defines this Whole in terms of "Relation" and claims that duration "is the whole of relations" (ibid., 10). Similarly, time for the time-traveling character functions as a set of relations which can and should be changed (that is, should be made to relate to themselves in different ways). Like the dynamic movements of the time-traveling character, movement itself for Deleuze "relates the objects of a closed system" (such as the time-traveling character's world) "to open duration, and duration to the objects of the system" (such as the time traveling character) "which it forces to open up" (ibid., 11).

The second chapter of *Cinema 1* returns, in a sense, to its own beginning, by offering provisional definitions of key cinematic terms. The first section

of this chapter is called "The First Level: Frame, Set, or Closed System," and its first concept is framing, "*the determination of a closed system, a relatively closed system which includes everything which is present in the image—sets, characters and props*" (C1, 12). More simply, "framing" refers to a given frame of the filmstrip and to what is visually included therein. As such, framing can be correlated to a three-dimensional slice of four-dimensional space-time (that is, the closed system of the world of the non-time-traveling person).

As to the reason Deleuze adds the qualifier "relatively" to "closed" here, he explains that as "a general rule . . . there are many different frames in the frame" (C1, 14). Examples of these subframes include doors, windows, and mirrors. Crucially for Deleuze, these frames-within-frames allow for interconnections among otherwise closed-off frames (*simpliciter*), as when the same doorway appears in more than one frame, from more than one shot, or scene, in a film. This is intensely true, I would add, for time-travel cinema. The action of time travel almost always involves either a literally framed object (such as the doorway in a vehicle) or a metaphorically framing visual object (such as a bright line or doorway of light representing a rift in the space-time continuum). Perhaps another reason for Deleuze's "relatively" qualifier in the above quote is that the individual frames are also contained by a more inclusive level of framing, namely, "the screen, as the frame of frames" (*ibid.*, 14). This final layer, according to Deleuze, "ensures a deterritorialization of the image," perhaps akin to the deterritorialization of the time-traveling character (*ibid.*, 15).

In addition to this first key concept of framing, a second (and related) key concept for Deleuze is the "out-of-field," defined as everything not visually present in a given frame, which is "neither seen nor understood, but is nevertheless perfectly present" (C1, 16). This out-of-field, Deleuze elaborates, is connected to the openness of the Whole or duration, because

when a set [that is, everything visually present in the frame] is framed, therefore seen, there is always a larger set, or another set with which the first forms a larger one, and which can in turn be seen, on condition that it gives rise to a new out-of-field, etc. (*ibid.*)

More specifically, Deleuze adds, "the more the image is spatially closed, even reduced to two dimensions, the greater its capacity to *open itself* on to a fourth dimension which is time, and on to a fifth which is Spirit" (*ibid.*, 17). I would argue that time-travel science-fiction films are perhaps the best and clearest examples of this phenomenon.

The second section (of this second chapter of *Cinema 1*), "The Second Level: Shot and Movement," introduces the most important concept of the entire book, namely, the shot, which he terms the "movement-image." Deleuze defines this concept as "*the determination of the movement which is established in the closed system, between elements or parts of the set*" (C1, 18).

In layperson's terms, the shot is what happens between turning the camera on and turning it off again, also known in the film industry as "a take." In time-travel cinema, the most distinctive use of the shot is the flashback, which valorizes the shot in relation to the other elements of the film, and which is usually presented as the protagonist's inner experience, more precisely as the catalyst for her/his time-traveling efforts. For example, in film adaptations of H. G. Wells's foundational time-travel novel *The Time Machine*, the recurring flashback is the untimely death of the protagonist's fiancée in an automobile accident. The movement involved here, Deleuze reminds the reader, concerns both "*the relationship between parts*" (in the case of Wells's novel, an example would be the fiancée's relationship with the car that kills her) and also "*the state [affection] of the whole*" (in the novel, an example would be the entire life arc of the scientist) (ibid., 19). Deleuze then describes the shot conceptually, in five separate steps, which constitute one of the book's subtlest and most difficult passages.

First, the shot is "the intermediary between the framing of the set and the montage of the whole" (C1, 19). That is, on one end, there are the objects arranged and captured in a single frame, and, on the other end, there is the entire film, composed of every frame in the filmstrip. The shot is right in the middle of the two. The titular time machine, too, could be productively viewed as the halfway point, or intermediary, between (a) objects stuck in their time and (b) the entire movie that depicts those objects' fantastic relocations in time.

Second, although the shot, according to Deleuze, acts "like a consciousness," the shot is nevertheless limited to the "consciousness" that could be imagined for a "camera" (C1, 20). In other words, if one were to imagine a movie camera that could think for itself, drawing exclusively from the sense perceptions that its technological makeup enables, then that would be what its consciousness would be like. And what *that* would be like, as it turns out, is a time machine, since the world it shows us is the world as it would presumably be experienced by a similarly conscious time machine.

Third, Deleuze claims that, for this movie camera-consciousness, it "is movement itself" that "is decomposed and recomposed" (C1, 20). Put differently, the machine consciousness of the movie camera takes movements that are initially frozen onto individual frames of the filmstrip and revives those moments in various creative ways. Analogously, a time machine liberates the movements of various phenomena from the isolation and fixed patterns in which commonsensical metaphysics binds them and frees up those phenomena-moments for spectacular new relationships.

Fourth, insofar as "it relates movement to a whole which changes," the shot is therefore "the mobile section of a duration" (C1, 22). Put simply, the shot is the basic part of the moving whole of the film—and even this most basic part moves too. By the same token, the time machine is the basic tool or machine around which the plot of the time-travel film moves. And it too

is in constant motion, as the physical object that is a motion picture film (originally in terms of the celluloid strip passing under the projector's viewing lens at every showing).

Fifth, the shot's "essence," according to Deleuze, is found in "extracting from vehicles or moving bodies the movement which is their common substance, or extracting from movements the mobility which is their essence" (C1, 23). That is, film's virtue as a medium is its foregrounding of the movements of a phenomenon (unlike, say, painting, which traditionally foregrounds a phenomenon's shape and color). In this vein, the time machine condenses or liberates the space-time movement capacity of the time-traveling character or condenses or liberates the relocation capacity of movement itself. Put differently, time-travel cinema exaggerates the power of spatiotemporal movement to create change, in order thereby to show the truth involved therein.

To wrap up my analysis of this key passage, I wish to suggest that it sounds as though Deleuze were speaking specifically of time-travel cinema when he writes that "it" (a) "expresses time itself as perspective or relief" and that (b) "time essentially takes on the power to contract or dilate" (C1, 234). Regarding (a), in the time-travel film, time becomes literally part of the background or scenery (as, for example, when some shots include ancient Roman buildings, while others include, instead, contemporary modern skyscrapers). And regarding (b), the times that the time traveler and other characters inhabit make them grow or shrink in stature, virtue, and narrative importance.

The final section of *Cinema 1*'s second chapter, though featuring the wordy and imposing title of "Mobility: Montage and Movement of the Camera," is comparatively brief, and only introduces material that is taken up more thoroughly in the next chapter, "Montage." Deleuze defines the latter concept, initially, as "the determination of the whole . . . by means of continuities, cutting and false continuities" (C1, 29). It is here, I would suggest, that one finds the artificial/fabricated work of time travel itself, rewriting the whole story of a world, by cutting and reconnecting parts of that whole via time travel. Later in this chapter, Deleuze defines montage again, this time as "the operation which bears on the movement-images [that is, shots or takes] to release the whole from them, that is, the image of time" (ibid.). Put more simply, montage consists of reassembling shots such that the viewer watches, indirectly, time itself transpire. The easiest example of this phenomenon is probably the cliché in Hollywood films in which gradual mastery of an ability is presented in a literal minute or less of viewing time, but in such a way that implies that in real life the training would have taken anywhere from days to years.

Chapter 4 of *Cinema 1* returns to Bergson, beginning with the latter's view that "all consciousness is something"—as a counter to Edmund Husserl's famous claim that "all consciousness is consciousness of something" (C1, 56). More precisely, with the rise of cinema, Deleuze writes, it is "the world

which becomes its own image, and not an image which becomes the world" (ibid., 57). In other words, a part of the world—namely, the movie camera—captures images of other parts of the world. Thus, the world becomes an image for (the movie camera) part of itself. This means not only that the world has literally become its own image but also that (as G. W. F. Hegel explores in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*) consciousness qua movie camera has become its own thing. This is similar to the effect in time-travel cinema wherein the world qua space-time continuum actually rearranges its entire four-dimensional self, by means of the actions of the time traveler qua part of itself (instead of the world being merely the backdrop against which a given character achieves adventurous importance).

Deleuze notes that Bergson's *Matter and Memory*¹⁰ begins with the humble phenomenological observation that every object and activity in the world (including even human brains) present themselves as images. For this reason, he characterizes Bergson's text as "the exposition of a world where IMAGE = MOVEMENT" (C1, 58). Building on this claim, Deleuze then defines an "image" as "the set of what appears," and claims that there is "no moving body [*mobile*] which is distinct from executed movement" (ibid., 58). In other words, if (a) we cannot assume a thing "beneath" an image, and (b) if an image is constituted by a certain kind or style of appearance (which appearance also presents itself as changing or in flux), then (c) all we really know are the visual movements that we reify as images. Or again, with Deleuze, each image "is indistinguishable from its actions and reactions: this is universal variation" (ibid.). That is, one only perceives an image via the dynamic equilibrium of its borders with other images; an atom, for example, "is an image which extends to the point to which its actions and reactions extend" (ibid.). Time-travel cinema, in this context, shows us images that are—both literally and narratively—radically relocated and re-juxtaposed vis-à-vis other images. That is to say, time-travel cinema helps us appreciate intuitively the imagistic foundation of what we mistakenly reify as "things in the world."

Even more radically, for Deleuze, each "I" can say the following: "[I] am myself image, that is movement" (C1, 58). The crucial implication of this, for Deleuze, is that images cannot be literally "in my consciousness" (ibid., 58). Instead, the world for Deleuze (as for Bergson) is an "infinite set of all images" or a "plane [*plan*] of immanence," in which world "the movement-image and matter are identical" (ibid., 59). Another way that Deleuze explains this point is that "*movement-image* and *flowing-matter* are strictly the same thing." In film terminology, one could make the point—perhaps most clearly illustrated in time-travel cinema—by saying that the world is nothing but an infinite series of takes. In conclusion, writes Deleuze, the "material universe, the plane of immanence, is the *machine assemblage of movement-images*" (ibid.). In short, "it is the universe as cinema in itself, a metacinema" (ibid.). Thus, like the futural dystopias of time-travel cinema, the world according to Deleuze is essentially a self-referential machine.

Having laid out the building blocks of the world-as-movie, Deleuze then articulates the central features and parts of this movie-world, beginning with the stage. At a more concrete level, Deleuze writes, this plane of immanence, "is entirely made up of Light," so that the "image is movement, just as matter is light" (CI, 60). Put more prosaically, since $E = mc^2$ and light is a form of energy, then matter could be understood, scientifically, as a kind of light slowed to frozen solidity (or at least what appears to be frozen). Similarly, an image is merely dynamic movement perceptually frozen into apparent solidity. Time-travel cinema is uniquely able to dramatize this phenomenon because it both (a) brings the past (conventionally understood as merely images in memory) into dynamic movement via the time traveler, and also (b) translates this time-traveling movement into directly and immediately perceptible imagery.

Having set the stage, Deleuze then turns to the scenery, the furniture of the world. On this plane of immanence, this field in which image is movement, the basic units of this movement (that is, shots) are constituted of, not "bodies or rigid lines, but only lines or figures of light" (CI, 60). To paraphrase this in terms of the previous matter:light::image:movement analogy, the entire world for Deleuze is best understood as an orchestration of movements whose appearance is their entire being. This is not so much, perhaps, Berkeley's famous "to be is to be perceived"; it would come closer to the truth to say, "to be perceived is to be." In time-travel cinema, again, this truth is not only performed but also thematized, specifically through the incessant special effects. This is especially true of those special effects involving various technologies of lighting.

Returning to these illumination-bodied shots, Deleuze identifies them with "[b]locks of space-time," and describes them as "images in themselves" that are just waiting for their light to be reflected to be seen (CI, 60). When this reflection happens and these "very special images will have stopped or reflected the light," then one arrives at "consciousness, immanent to matter" (or matter-as-flow) (ibid., 61). The reason for this is that consciousness in this world is precisely a variety of image/movement defined by the fact that it reflects the light (rather than absorbing, refracting, or allowing it to pass through unhindered). The time-travel machine, again, does this literally, allowing the time traveler (directly) and the viewer (indirectly) to see the movements/images of the past, as these movements/images are reflected back into the perspective of the (traveler's) contemporary world.

With these primary elements of his movie-world thus elaborated, Deleuze is then ready to define the plane of immanence, as follows: "a set of movement-images; a collection of lines or figures of light; a series of blocs of space-time" (CI, 61). What this means, surprisingly, is that, according to Deleuze, science fiction in general and time travel in particular are not ultimately fictional after all. They are, on the contrary, the most accurate metaphysical depiction of our real world that we have at our disposal. Thus,

for Deleuze, the world really is the way it appears in time-travel cinema, namely, a (movie camera) machine-assembled collection of images, in infinitely creative recombination.

III. Conclusion

To recap the insights from my introduction, the results of this investigation have direct education implications, namely, that Deleuze can help us see that we should follow the example of time-travel science-fiction films, by tapping into our latent ability to time travel into the past to empower ourselves for the future. In other words, as the two science-fiction film anthologies above explain, we are always involuntarily time travelers into the immediate future. Therefore, we should become aware of this fact and engage in time traveling voluntarily in order to accomplish our own ends. Moreover, we should remain open to the new ways of being which cutting-edge technologies are helping us to realize have always been at our unconscious disposal. In this way, time-travel science-fiction film stands ready to teach us much about both the difficult and important work of Deleuze and also about the temporality that inescapably structures our existence.

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze, "Preface," in *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), xx.
2. Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Deleuzian Fold of Thought," in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), 110.
3. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) (hereafter cited in text as *C1*); and Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy M. Paul and W. Scott Palmer (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004). First published in 1912.
4. Robert E. Myers, ed., *The Intersection of Science Fiction and Philosophy: Critical Studies*, ed. Robert Myers (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1983), xi (hereafter cited in text as *ISF*).
5. See Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992); and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia, 1996).
6. Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).
7. Annette Kuhn, ed., "Introduction," in *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema* (New York: Verso, 1990), 1 (hereafter cited in text as *AZ*).
8. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen Lane (New York: Penguin, 2009).
9. See note 3 above and Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1989).
10. See note 3 above.