CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Beyond the human body: Claire Denis's ecologies
Authors	McMahon, Laura
Publication date	2014-06-01
Original Citation	McMahon, L. (2014) 'Beyond the human body: Claire Denis's ecologies', Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media, 7. https://doi.org/10.33178/alpha.7.06
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	10.33178/alpha.7.06
Rights	© 2014, The Author(s) - https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Download date	2026-11-02 17:49:14
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/5847

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

alphaville
JOURNAL OF FILM AND SCREEN MEDIA

Beyond the Human Body: Claire Denis's Ecologies

Laura McMahon, Gonville & Caius College, University of Cambridge

Abstract: *This article explores the work of Claire Denis beyond the focus on the human body through which it is commonly read. Addressing* Beau Travail *(1999) and* The Intruder *(2004), I examine an ecological impulse that manifests itself through a nonanthropocentric detailing of the coexistence of body and landscape, and a nonhierarchical attentiveness to the distributed agencies of humans, animals and things. I draw here in particular on Gilles Deleuze's notion of the crystal-image and on Jean-Luc Nancy's thinking of ecotechnics, as elaborated in his essay on* The Intruder *(a film inspired by Nancy's autobiographical essay, L'Intrus). In* Beau Travail*, Deleuzian crystals of time draw attention to the nonhuman histories of the landscape. In* The Intruder*, this crystalline structure persists, reactivating traces of nonhuman pasts, while a focus on canine gestures and responses signals nonhuman perceptual worlds in the present. Deleuze's "Desert Islands", another text that shapes* The Intruder*, offers a further way of reading the film's attentiveness to the nonhuman—an attentiveness that extends, as Nancy suggests, to a consideration of environmental crisis.*

Claire Denis's cinema is fascinated by the dramas and desires of the human, tracked through an unremittingly tactile focus on the dynamics of vulnerable, exposed and wounded bodies.[1] Yet Denis's cinema "of the body" (Martin) and "of the senses" (Beugnet, *Claire Denis* 132) is not limited to an anthropocentric perspective—it is also a cinema of ecology, of the nonhuman, and of thingliness, a cinema that stretches its sensory regimes beyond the human. In Denis's films, as Martin suggests, "'human nature' seems to drift", as "nominally differentiated entities are forever glimpsed in the process of dissolving into each other". Such a process of dissolution is often expressed in spatial terms: as Ian Murphy has noted, Denis's films deploy "still or 'empty' frames in which the human figure is frequently edged off the screen", privileging "depopulated spaces, inanimate objects, and natural or industrial environments".[2] Dissipating the very ground of the human, Denis's filmmaking resonates with recent philosophical debates about the ecological, unsettling what Jane Bennett, in her work *Vibrant Matter*, calls "the quarantines of matter and life" (vii) and "the onto-theological binaries of life/matter, human/animal" (x).

In the context of this issue on corporeal cinema, I wish to explore how Denis's cinema moves beyond the focus on the human body through which it is commonly read and envisages what Bennett calls "a more *distributive* agency" (ix; emphasis in original). Inspired by Spinoza's "conative bodies" (x),[3] Bennett invokes an expansive conceptualisation of agency and affect, described as "an aesthetic-affective openness to material vitality" (x), that crosses corporeal and taxonomical divisions of being. For Bennett, this expanded aesthetic model of agency and affect is political: it invokes a democratic attentiveness to different realms of being. This essay suggests that such a democratic attentiveness—and attendant nonanthropocentric politics—manifests itself in Denis's work through a particular attunement to nonhuman presences, and to resonances between human and nonhuman worlds. Though a concern with the nonhuman can be traced throughout Denis's work,[4] my focus here is on *Beau Travail* (1999) and *The Intruder* (2004), two films in which the "interconnectedness" of

the human and the nonhuman (Morton 7) is particularly foregrounded.[5] These films remain concerned, of course, with the desires, tensions and politics of the human—from the fraught neocolonial presence of the French Foreign Legion in *Beau Travail* to the troubled familial and national lineages in *The Intruder*. Yet by rescaling any uniquely human perspective, these films also reveal a nonanthropocentric detailing of the coexistence of body and landscape, and a democratic attentiveness to the distributed agencies of humans, animals and things.

While the recent ecological turn in film studies[6] and in the humanities more widely,[7] provides the broader context for my approach to Denis here, I wish to trace an ecological impulse in her work by turning to two thinkers in particular: Gilles Deleuze and Jean-Luc Nancy. In the readings of *Beau Travail* and *The Intruder* that follow, I draw in particular on Deleuze's notion of the crystal-image and on Nancy's thinking of ecotechnics, as elaborated in his essay on *The Intruder* (a film that is, in turn, loosely inspired by Nancy's autobiographical essay, *L'Intrus*).[8] In *Beau Travail*, Deleuzian crystals of time draw attention to the nonhuman histories of the landscape, gesturing to a time before and beyond the human. In *The Intruder*, this crystalline structure persists, reactivating traces of nonhuman pasts, while a focus on canine gestures and responses signals nonhuman perceptual, sentient worlds in the present. Nancy's reading of *The Intruder* in terms of ecotechnics foregrounds the film's questioning of the "natural" (thereby developing the initial inquiry of Nancy's *L'Intrus*). And alongside the more explicit intertext of *L'Intrus*, another text—Deleuze's "Desert Islands"—shapes *The Intruder*, as Denis has acknowledged in interview (Frodon 45). This text offers a further way of reading *The Intruder*'s attentiveness to the nonhuman—an attentiveness that extends to a consideration of environmental crisis, posing the urgent question, as Nancy intimates in his response to the film, of the possibility of continuing to inhabit the earth.[9]

Beau Travail: Nonhuman Histories

In an early sequence of *Beau Travail*, an image of quivering tufts of grass in the wind, accompanied by the operatic chorus of "O heave!" from Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd*, anticipates the movement of the Legionnaires' bodies in the next shot; indeed, we first encounter the shape of those bodies as a play of shadow across the sand. Following images of the Legionnaires moving in unison, a shot of seawater fills the frame. As commentary on the film suggests, *Beau Travail* reflects on the anachronistic position of the Legion in Djibouti and the after-effects of empire (see Beugnet, *Claire Denis* 103–124). Yet underlying—and curiously bound up with—this set of geopolitical meanings is the tracing of a movement that passes, cinematically, from wind to grass to shadow to the human to water. Being is understood here as a play of light and dark, movement and matter. Noting that the Legion's choreographic formation in this sequence is called "the dance of weeds" (114), and that "the legionnaires move in the wind like the weeds around them" (114), Beugnet writes that the bodies of the Legionnaires appear to be on the verge of being absorbed by their surroundings:

> the relationship between bodies and earth … signals the constant pull of the organic, the suggestion that, in its negation of change and in its cultural amnesia, this collective body is being reclaimed by the natural world … the body of the legion appears at risk of merging with the plants and the rocks. (*Claire Denis* 114)

Developing this reading in her later work, *Cinema and Sensation*, Beugnet suggests that the Legionnaires are "caught in the breathing rhythm of the desert" (138)—a phrase that

anthropomorphically activates the livingness of the surroundings. In this early scene in *Beau Travail*, the Legionnaires are figured as just one element within what Bennett calls a "political ecology of things" (or, to invoke Bruno Latour, to whom Bennett is indebted here, a "parliament of things" (Latour 142)), as the form of the film subtly subverts the hierarchical, anthropocentric logic of the Legion itself. Beugnet reads such moments of merger between body and landscape in terms of the "the inherently anti-anthropomorphic, anti-humanising drive" of Deleuzian processes of becoming (*Cinema and Sensation* 137–9). For Beugnet, *Beau Travail*'s various processes of becoming disrupt the static, timeless space of the Legion. This is how politics registers in *Beau Travail* simultaneously on both postcolonial and ecological levels, through an unravelling of positions of neocolonial *and* anthropocentric power.




Figures 1 and 2: From wind to grass to shadow... *Beau Travail* (Claire Denis, 1999). Artificial Eye DVD, 2000. Screenshots.

This subtle decentring of the human connects with the film's exploration of layers of nonhuman history buried within its landscapes. Reflecting on her fascination with Djibouti, where she lived briefly (for a year) while growing up as the daughter of a French colonial administrator, Denis recalls:

> I remember being dazzled by the beauty of the Red Sea, the desert. You don't forget a landscape like that. I always thought of Djibouti as a place where human history hasn't really begun yet—or perhaps it's already over. There's something in the landscape that's stronger than human civilization. There's no agriculture, for example, and there are live volcanoes. And there's the Legion. (Romney, "Who Wants to Be a Legionnaire?")

Denis's interest in Djibouti focuses here on the resistance of the land to human civilisation—a resistance mapped by the dusty, arid images of *Beau Travail*. Noting that only 0.4 per cent of the land in Djibouti is arable and that there is no cultivation of permanent crops, Susan Hayward suggests: " *Beau Travail* gives us a very full sense of the inhospitable torrid climate and the hard materiality of its landscape—we see the men breaking up the volcanic ground, being made to march across granite territory that is so unyielding to their aching feet" ("Filming the (Post-)Colonial Landscape" 171). The film suggests that the terrain of Djibouti is not only resistant to human activity in the present but also quick to erode traces of the human past. Early shots of deserted tanks —relics of human invention and military presence, now exposed to the desert winds and sands—suggest an erosion of human history itself.

Beau Travail's intimations of Djibouti's resistance to the human past and present, and Denis's reflection on the prehistoric dimensions of this landscape, invite consideration of how the film attends to nonhuman histories. In a reading of Patricio Guzmán's documentary, *Nostalgia for the Light* (*Nostalgia de la luz*, 2010), David Martin-Jones draws on Deleuze's concept of the "crystal of time" in order to address the film's nonanthropocentric exploration of history. Through a focus on Chile's Atacama desert and the stars above as part of a "giant archive" of the nonhuman past (712), Guzmán's documentary is seen by Martin-Jones to consider the history of the world as "a heritage of universal matter that stretches back beyond human origins" (707). Martin-Jones draws on Deleuze's notion of the crystal of time as a way of understanding "how landscapes function as archives of history" (713). Crystal images for Deleuze, following Henri Bergson's understanding of time, capture the division of a present that passes (the actual) and a past that is preserved (the virtual)—a division that simultaneously renders these layers of time fleetingly indiscernible: "The actual image and *its* virtual image thus constitute the smallest internal circuit ... Distinct, but indiscernible, such are the actual and the virtual which are in continual exchange" (*Cinema 2* 68; emphasis in original). For Martin-Jones, the crystalline structure of *Nostalgia for the Light* follows this logic of indiscernibility, uncovering coexistent layers of the past: the prehistoric, the colonial and the national.

Such a crystalline layering of the past is at work in *Beau Travail.* Framed in terms of Galoup's (Denis Lavant) unreliable narrative of events, the film adopts an elliptical, nonlinear structure, moving between Galoup's past in Djibouti and his present in Marseille. Yet the film also creates complex layers within these temporal strands, refusing to elucidate the narrative connections between those layers, for example in the sequence that cuts from Galoup in uniform, drunk, swaying in front of Forestier's (Michel Subor) car in the street in Djibouti, to Rahel (Galoup's lover played by Marta Tafesse Kassa) at the disco, to a procession of the Legionnaires at dawn, observed by Galoup now in black civilian clothes rather than uniform. Drawing on Deleuze's notion of the crystal of time, Beugnet observes that in *Beau Travail* "[t]he certainties of place and time dissolve in jarring cuts, superimpositions and backwash movements reminiscent of Deleuze's definition of the crystalline narration" (*Claire Denis* 122).[10] As Beugnet suggests, *Beau Travail*'s crystalline structure engenders what Deleuze describes as "the simultaneity of incompossible presents, or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts" (*Cinema 2* 127). For Beugnet, there are two key temporal planes that coexist in the film: the static world of the legion and "the historical, changing reality of the Djiboutians or of the life that Galoup re-enters as a civilian" (*Claire Denis* 118). This analysis might then be extended, I suggest, through a consideration of the nonhuman as a different kind of temporal layering that coexists with these human presents and pasts in a crystalline structure. Martin-Jones's reading of the relation between the crystal image and a nonhuman archive of the past allows for a development of Beugnet's observations in order to trace how *Beau Travail*'s crystalline structure animates colonial and national pasts yet also "stretches back beyond human origins".

In the second half of *Beau Travail*, as the film's crystalline structures of memory become more layered and complex, the landscape adopts a more central role. As Beugnet observes, earlier shots tend to focus on the body, "downplaying the sense of location, as well as perspective and depth", but as the film progresses, "the *mise en scène* opens up [as] the legion is revealed moving aimlessly through a misunderstood and barren landscape" (*Claire Denis* 110). This shift to focus on the landscape is marked in particular by the Legionnaires' expedition to Lac Goubet, a journey initiated by Galoup in order to "get Sentain away from

Forestier". Galoup describes the desert in voiceover: "I looked out at the desolate Goubet, thinking my dark thoughts. People tell many stories about this terrible cul-de-sac: the devil, evil spirits, evil eye." Galoup's words—as though shaped by the animist beliefs prevalent in the region—conjure up a sense of the land as active. (As Hayward notes, Lac Goubet is "known locally as the 'Pit of Demons'" ("Filming the (Post-) Colonial Landscape" 172)). We see the Legionnaires, dwarfed by the landscape, digging into the rocks of the Goubet; clouds of sand and dust rise up around them, as though buried histories are being excavated, releasing nonhuman spirits and untold pasts.

Beau Travail brings us into contact with layers of time that coexist with and extend beyond the human. Over shots of the Goubet region, including its volcanoes, Galoup recalls in voiceover: "It was an arid plateau overlooking the sea, lined with the remains of workers' barracks. We set up camp in this desolate terrain. The three volcanoes kept guard—sentinels." Galoup's voiceover draws attention to the agency of the landscape: there is a sense that the volcanoes watch over, bear witness, to the human histories that unfold below them. This intimation of nonhuman agency may remind us that these volcanoes were once more forcefully active, erupting with magma, shaping the land that the Legionnaires now inhabit (and that *Beau Travail* now documents). When Denis speaks of "something in the landscape that's stronger than human civilization" above, she refers to "live volcanoes"; she recognises the land as living, active. *Beau Travail* works to activate this layer of nonhuman history, giving us a sense of a past that extends back beyond the more recent histories of colonisation and national independence. Denis Lavant, who plays Galoup, has referred in interview to the "volcanic rhythms" of the film (Romney, "Claire Denis Interviewed"). One wonders if his dance in the final scene is an attempt to incorporate something of those volcanic rhythms. The criss-crossed, mirrored surfaces of the disco in which the dance takes place invoke Deleuze's crystal of time (Davis 196). In a hall of mirrors that seems abstracted from the desert landscapes of Djibouti, a volcanic force erupts: within this crystal-image, the movements of the body and the earth, the human and nonhuman, coexist, fleetingly indiscernible. If Galoup's dance figures the instability of the postcolonial moment (Hayward, "Claire Denis's 'Post-colonial' Films" 48), it also channels a time before the colonial and the emergence of the national—a nonhuman history of a volcanic forging of the earth.

Revealing human time as embedded within broader strata of geological time, *Beau Travail* unfolds diverse temporalities of becoming across different categories of being. In the latter stages of the film, the visual and narrative focus turns to another part of the landscape shaped by volcanic activity: Lac Assal. This is where Sentain (Grégoire Colin) lies down, exhausted, having lost his way with the broken compass given to him by Galoup. A volcanic crater lake in central-eastern Djibouti, Lac Assal is situated at 155 metres below sea level (it is the lowest point in Africa). The lake has been shaped by a human history of salt extraction and trade by the Afar nomad tribes (like the group of Afars that we see rescuing Sentain). Yet Lac Assal is also a repository of a nonhuman past that extends far beyond this, archiving a history of geological evolution that brought the salt lake into being (through subterranean flows and possible flooding by the sea). The film emphasises the vast scale of the lake in a long-distance shot slowly panning from left to right and eventually locating the miniscule figure of Sentain at the water's edge, kneeling for a drink that is too salty to quench his thirst. The scale and slow movement of the panning shot suggests a sense of Sentain coming into contact not only with an expanse of saline space but with a stratum of deep time. Two shots later, we see his salt-encrusted body lying on the ground. As the salt eats away at his skin, the division between body and landscape dissolves, in an extreme extension, as Beugnet notes, of the merger between the human and the nonhuman initiated by the film's early scenes: "nature

seems to reclaim the legionnaire's body, to absorb it as if it was mere, undifferentiated matter" (*Claire Denis* 123). Here the film intimates, as Beugnet suggests, processes of "becoming-mineral" or "becoming-earth", tracing "the slow, inexorable rhythm of organic alteration" (*Cinema and Sensation* 139).[11] As "[t]he quarantines of matter and life" (Bennett) appear to dissipate, human time merges with geological time. This is, as Beugnet puts it, Sentain's "near-death, his 'crystallisation'" (*Claire Denis* 122). Between the shot of Sentain drinking from the lake and the shot in which he lies dying, the film gives us an overdetermined example of a crystalline image: an expanse of white salt crystals fills the frame; the image itself becomes crystal. Yet this is also a Deleuzian crystal-image in its expression of simultaneous "incompossible presents": this is the "becoming-mineral" of both body and landscape; the two are temporarily indiscernible. The crystal-image signals an entanglement of the actual and the virtual, and of human and nonhuman temporalities. It is an image that simultaneously absorbs and evacuates the human, troubling the ground of the anthropocentric.



Figures 3 and 4: Lac Assal: crystals of time. *Beau Travail*. Artificial Eye DVD, 2000. Screenshots.

The Intruder: Perception, Environment, World

A nonanthropocentric impulse is developed further in *The Intruder*, in relation not only to the environment but to nonhuman animals as well. When we are first introduced to the protagonist, Louis Trébor (Michel Subor), his face is upturned to the sunlight, emphasising in tactile terms the effect of warm light upon skin. Two white huskies arrive, and Louis lies against a tree with them; as he turns to embrace one of the dogs, the film extends regimes of tactility, perception and affect across species lines. The sound of Louis's breathing mingles with the sounds of the forest (birdsong, twigs crackling); here, as Beugnet suggests: "Trébor appears to exist in sensual harmony with the elements, his body almost merging with its surroundings" ("The Practice of Strangeness" 41). Though *The Intruder* is careful not to invest uncritically in the "natural" (not least through its exploration of the heart transplant that Louis undergoes as a form of *techné*), this scene announces an "interconnectedness" of human and nonhuman being (Morton 7) that foregrounds the ecological thinking of the film.



Figure 5: Affect across species lines. *The Intruder* (Claire Denis, 2004). Tartan DVD, 2005. Screenshot.

While exploring issues of identity, belonging, border-crossing and geopolitical tensions, *The Intruder* registers the movements of the nonhuman through a focus on environments (particularly the mountainous terrain of both the Jura and Tahiti) and the bodies and winds that cross them. During the scene above, a low-angle shot (suggesting Louis's point of view) reveals wind rustling through trees in the Jura; later, we see a similarly low-angle shot, intimating Louis's point of view again, of wind moving through the trees in Tahiti. This resonance of movement signals in nonhuman terms the border-crossing concerns of the film. While these conjoined movements encrypt the fantasmatic ties between these places that shape Louis's subjectivity, his longings and his regrets (as he rejects his son in France and idealises a perhaps imaginary son in Tahiti), they also suggest, not least through the repeated low-angle shot, something much bigger than the human—the dynamics of climate and a form of worldly resonance that extends beyond the anthropocentric.



Figures 6 and 7: Low-angle shots in the Jura and Tahiti. *The Intruder*. Tartan DVD, 2005. Screenshots.

The Intruder's attentiveness to nonhuman realms may be read in relation to Deleuze's "Desert Islands", an essay that Denis cites as an influence on the film (Frodon 45) (though she does not explicitly address the text's nonanthropocentric dimensions). In that essay, Deleuze draws a contrast between continental islands, "born of disarticulation, erosion, fracture", and oceanic islands (which are "originary, essential") (9). Of the oceanic islands he writes: "Some are formed from coral reefs and display a genuine organism. Others emerge from underwater eruptions, bringing to the light of day a movement from the lowest depths. Some rise slowly; some disappear and then return, leaving us no time to annex them" (9). Oceanic islands serve as a reminder "that the earth is still there, under the sea, gathering its strength to punch through to the surface" (9). Here Deleuze maps the agency of the earth—its liveliness, its movement, its force. For Deleuze, islands forge histories that stretch before and beyond the human: "humans can live on an island only by forgetting what an island represents"—that is, "the active struggle between earth and water" that has brought the island into being. And thus: "Islands are either from before or for after humankind" (9).[12]

The Intruder awakens these nonhuman histories of agency, movement and formation. In search of his son, Louis travels to Tahiti—an oceanic island created by undersea volcanic activity over three million years ago, forged by the kind of "underwater eruptions" of which Deleuze writes. Thus, like Djibouti, Tahiti is a terrain violently shaped not only geopolitically by French colonisation but also geologically through a history of volcanic activity. And like *Beau Travail*, *The Intruder* works to activate layers of this nonanthropocentric past. One long take begins by ranging over the fractured surfaces of the island's basaltic rock formations—like the salt crystals in *Beau Travail*, the rocks fill the screen. The mobile shot slowly works its way along the water's edge and then towards the mountains in the background. In lingering over fractured basalt, coastline and volcanic peaks, the long, mobile take reanimates traces of "the active struggle between earth and water" to which Deleuze refers. The following sequence cuts to footage of *Le Reflux* (Paul Gégauff, 1965), an unfinished film starring Subor, showing him arriving on a boat in Polynesia, roughly forty years before the making of Denis's film. The inclusion of *Le Reflux*—grafted, like a transplanted heart, onto *The Intruder*—reveals a crystalline structure, a splitting of time, excavating entwined layers of human and nonhuman pasts. As R. Emmet Sweeney suggests, Louis's "presence marks time, marks the landscape, as the landscape and time are now more clearly marking him" (Sweeney). The time of Subor's ageing indexes the time of the landscape and vice versa. The sudden emergence of *Le Reflux* cues us to read this landscape retroactively, through intertwining, crystalline formations of agency and memory.




Figures 8 and 9: Volcanic histories. *The Intruder*. Tartan DVD, 2005. Screenshots.

These crystalline structures at work in *The Intruder* invite a reading of latent and manifest forms of resonance across species lines. This intersects with Nancy's reading of *The Intruder*, as he traces connections between different kinds of activity (movements, sounds) across the film:

> Passage, displacement, changes of place through irruption and flight, displacement across countries and oceans …, languages coming into contact (we hear French, Russian, Korean, Tahitian, and dogs) … this mobile, fluid, agitated ensemble acts as the film's guiding scheme. Gliding through water or on a bicycle, cars moving, dogs racing, flights and boat crossings, wanderings, surfing: the film's movement, its *kinaesthesia*, is a movement of movements and of sensations of movements. ("*L'Intrus* selon Claire Denis")

Nancy's reading suggests a democracy of movement, and a democratisation of the film's images and sounds. It resonates with Bennett's model of "a more *distributive* agency" (ix), revealing *The Intruder* as a film that attends to the vibrant materiality of things. The film's "agitated ensemble" crosses not only territories and oceans, but species boundaries too.

Nancy's reading is attentive to the sounds and movements of the nonhuman, and of dogs in particular. Elisabeth Cardonne-Arlyck suggests that canine movement provides the central "dynamic vector" of *The Intruder*: "deliberate or idle, circular or rectilinear, it rhythms the film" (605). The final scene of the film, in which the Queen of the Northern Hemisphere (Béatrice Dalle) rides a sleigh drawn by huskies through the snow, emphasises a coincidence between rhythms of human, canine and cinematic motion.

The shifting dynamics of human–canine relations are central to *The Intruder*'s narrative meanings and sensory effects. The Queen of the Northern Hemisphere, the female customs officer, the unnamed girl in the woods and Louis are all accompanied by dogs, and the barks of these various dogs lend a particular disjunctive aural rhythm to the film. As both Nancy and Cardonne-Arlyck suggest, the presence of dogs in *The Intruder* connects with the central motif of intrusion: the dogs protect territories and safeguard borders; they alert their human companions (and the viewer) to possible danger. Yet human-canine bonds are also broken: Louis's eventual abandonment of his dogs, when he embarks on his journey to Tahiti, symbolically repeats previous abandonments of others in his life. Signposting the film's general thematic concerns, the dogs thus serve a symbolic function within this framework of human narrative meaning. In this sense, narrative signs in *The Intruder* domesticate the nonhuman animal, extending a speciesist hierarchy that also operates through the control of dogs within the film's action. As the Queen of the Hemisphere rides through the snow with her huskies, cracking her whip, we are reminded that the history of the dog is a history of domestication by the human.[13]

Yet canine worlds also appear in this film on their own terms. In an early scene before the opening credits, Antoinette (Florence Loiret-Caille), the customs officer, works with a dog to detect drugs in a car at a checkpoint on the French–Swiss border. As Cardonne-Arlyck suggests, the montage of panning shots and close-ups confers on this sequence "a kinetic energy that connects the animal and the woman on equal terms" (606). The form of the film itself suggests a mode of cross-species cooperation, resonating with Donna Haraway's theorisation of human–animal companionship, shared labour and agential interplay. And not only this: the world of the dog here appears as something in excess of its function within the symbolic economy of the film. The scene suggests purposeful, perceptual worlds that extend beyond the realm of the human, recalling Jakob von Uexküll's notion of the *Umwelt*.[14] For Uexküll, each animal inhabits a realm simultaneously perceived and produced by that animal: "[t]hese two worlds, of perception and production of effects, form one closed unit, the *environment* [*Umwelt*]" (42; emphasis in original). The *Umwelt* denotes what is accessible, perceptible and meaningful to the animal. Uexküll demonstrates this in his discussion of the female tick in her quest to suck the blood of a mammal: blind and deaf, she extracts from her otherwise meaningless surroundings meaningful "perception signs" transmitted via smell, temperature and touch (47). For Uexküll, animal environments, like human environments, are thus shaped by "purely subjective realities" (125). As Brett Buchanan writes, Uexküll's project is thus one of "articulating the meaning of the environment beyond a strictly human perspective" (1). Here, in *The Intruder*, what is intimated to us is a world of the senses (particularly a world of smell) to which we do not have access. Though commentary on Denis has often focused on the sensory dimensions of her work, the senses have been implicitly conceived as human. From the very beginning of *The Intruder*, the film asks us to think—and to sense—otherwise. The senses of the patrol dog register the presence of objects in ways that extend beyond the limits of the anthropocentric.[15] The film plays with this gap between canine and human perception: Louis's dogs often seem alert to presences just outside the realm of the awareness of the human (characters and viewers); their barks, growls

and whines sound out and bring into focus this awareness of unheard, unseen presences. In this way, *The Intruder* invokes a layering of the actual and the virtual, connecting with the earlier discussion of the Deleuzian crystal-image.[16] The film's unfolding of various *Umwelten* (human and nonhuman) suggests a crystalline splitting of time that reveals the coexistence of different perceptual worlds. If Uexküll's project is one of "articulating the meaning of the environment beyond a strictly human perspective", then the film's intimation of canine perception opens up a further way of reading the crystalline pasts and presents of *The Intruder*'s environments.

While attending to nonhuman perceptual worlds, *The Intruder* also asks questions about the status of the natural—an issue raised by *L'Intrus*, the autobiographical essay that loosely inspires the film. As Nancy documents the series of medical and technological interventions to which he is exposed, as he undergoes a heart transplant and the cancer that follows it, he traces a displacement not only of the self but of the human:

> I am the illness and the medical intervention, I am the cancerous cell and the grafted organ, I am the immuno-depressive agents and their palliatives, I am the bits of wire that hold together my sternum, and I am this injection site permanently stitched in below my clavicle, just as I was already these screws in my hip and this plate in my groin. I am becoming like a science-fiction android, or the living-dead, as my youngest son one day said to me. (*L'Intrus* 13)

Here the human becomes thing-like, dispersed among so many technological supplements, in a radical unsettling not only of self-identity but of what constitutes the natural. Yet, as Nancy reminds us in his reading of Denis's film, this is an interruption of propriety and the natural that has always already taken place:

> The "intruder" denotes an irreducible yet incorporated alterity, for which the transplant only acts as a figure within a more general process of transformation, which affects all that one believed to be able to designate as "natural", entering into the general reign of that which I name elsewhere our ecotechnics. ("*L'Intrus* selon Claire Denis")

Ecotechnics—a concept explored by Nancy in works such as *Corpus* and *Being Singular Plural*—denotes an originary technicity of being that disrupts any notion of "nature", "essence" or *oikos*. In Denis's *The Intruder*, questions of ecotechnics are approached not through the literal process of the heart transplant itself (Denis chooses not to show the operation), but through an insistence on the links between supposedly distinct spaces of nature and of capital (to which I return below), through an unravelling of concepts of home (focusing on various intrusions into Louis's cabin in the Jura and, more broadly, the movement of immigrants across borders), and also through a reflection on various mutations of the "natural". For Nancy, key here is the film's exploration of interruptions within bloodlines, as Louis rejects his "real" son, Sidney (Grégoire Colin), in favour of the lost (perhaps imaginary) son in Tahiti. Ecotechnics thus emerges through the film's destabilisation of *oikos* and its privileging of hybridity over heredity—what Nancy refers to as a process of "denaturing" [*dénaturation*].[17] For Nancy, *The Intruder* can thus be read as a deconstructive reflection on the natural:

> If filiation can be considered as an image (both metaphor and metonym) of the natural in general, then how can we fail to acknowledge that the film turns the very idea or hypothesis of the natural into a question, an enigma, placing it in suspension? And

> beyond this we could ask if the film is not about the natural in general. The amplitude and beauty of the landscapes of the two hemispheres lend a force to their images which is something other than that of aestheticising scenery: the question is posed—for example, by the long static take of dawn over the islands and the violet sea—of the nature of nature for us today, if I can put it that way, and of the possibility or not of continuing to inhabit the earth. ("*L'Intrus* selon Claire Denis")

The shot that Nancy has in mind, I think, is the one that takes place towards the end of the film—a long take of the sea, dark mountains and light breaking through the clouds (the shot appears to be framed from a boat; contrary to Nancy's claim, the shot is slightly mobile, swaying gently). Nancy's reflections here seem shaped both by his understanding of the image as a setting "apart" or rendering "distinct" (*The Ground of the Image* 1), and of cinema specifically as a mode of taking "care of the real" (*The Evidence of Film* 18). In its setting apart of such images, Denis's film asks questions about "the nature of nature for us today"; here cinema's mode of taking "care of the real" assumes an ecological dimension. In the long take identified by Nancy, the exhaustive duration of the image's setting apart of land and sea works to activate a sense of deep time (in resonance with the nonanthropocentric layers of history explored by *Beau Travail*).



Figure 10: Deep time and dawn. *The Intruder*. Tartan DVD, 2005. Screenshot.

If Nancy's reading positions *The Intruder* as an ecological film concerned with the possibility of inhabiting the earth, Denis insists, beyond the beauty of the landscapes that she frames, on the complex politics of this question. For in resonance with Nancy's reflections on ecotechnics, the film gives us to understand how these supposed "natural" spaces are infiltrated by capital. Beugnet reads Louis as an example of a recurrent trope in recent French cinema—that of the vampiric, inhuman figure within "an era of intensified transnational circulation and deregulated greed" ("Figures of Vampirism" 77). The film returns obsessively to financial motifs of investment, credit, debt and global capital. We understand that Louis pays for an illegal heart transplant—he will thrive on a life bought from others. Yet the film suggests that such debts can never be repaid. Just after Louis has made another expensive purchase—a wristwatch in Geneva—we witness a hallucinatory scene, which sits uneasily between dream and reality, in which Louis is dragged through snow by his Russian nemesis on horseback. When the woman finally releases him, untying his feet, Louis murmurs (in Russian): "I have already paid". She replies: "No. You'll never pay enough."

In the context of the film's broader emphasis on the circulation of global capital, Louis's credit deficit functions as a sign of an impossible debt that the West can never repay. Here, as in *Beau Travail* (and throughout her work more broadly), Denis allows for histories

of empire, colonialism and exploitation to come into focus. When Louis arrives in Tahiti, where he appears to have fathered a son when he was young, he is told that he no longer belongs there. As Beugnet suggests in her reading of the film, Louis's return to Tahiti acts as a metaphor for France revisiting the repressed memories of a colonial past (*Cinema and Sensation* 86). Viewed in this postcolonial context, the resonance between the trees in the Jura and in Tahiti takes on a new meaning—a traumatic, historical conjoining of disparate geographies. As the film weaves together individual and collective histories, the ecological becomes inseparable from issues of colonial violence and global capital.

In switching between these individual and collective levels in such a way, *The Intruder* explores what Timothy Clark describes as the "derangements of scale" that shape our contemporary era of ecological crisis (150). As Clark argues, the scale effects of climate change are so disorientating and impossible to calibrate that concepts of human agency, responsibility and action find themselves radically displaced. And thus, Clark suggests:

> the difficulty of conceptualizing a politics of climate change may be precisely that of having to think "everything at once". The overall force is of an implosion of scales, implicating seemingly trivial or small actions with enormous stakes while intellectual boundaries and lines of demarcation fold in upon each other. (152)

Indeed, the shape and force of *The Intruder*'s ecological thinking appears to lie in what Clark calls an "implosion of scales, implicating seemingly trivial or small actions with enormous stakes". The film's ecological impetus is linked to its formal movements between scalar imaginaries. In the early sequences set in the Jura, *The Intruder* establishes a fluid yet disjunctive movement between close-ups of bodies and extreme long shots of landscapes, implicitly mapping each surface onto the other, working "to collapse optical into haptic vision" (Beugnet, "The Practice of Strangeness" 42–3); as Beugnet notes, "the scale—the scale of things, the scale of shots—is crucial" (*Cinema and Sensation* 122).[18] This grammar of scale-switching then allows the film to explore the disorientating intrusion of times and spaces upon one another. While Louis is in Geneva, the film cuts between the smooth, geometric spaces of capital and the wild, violent territory of the Jura. In a series of crystal-images expressing "incompossible presents", a dismembered heart—eaten by Louis's abandoned dogs—and corpses below and on the ice (the bodies, respectively, of a man killed by Louis and of the girl from the woods—both of whom intruded into Louis's cabin at different points) are linked to the abstract space of global capital, signalling in oneiric terms a brutally instrumentalising system reliant on disposable lives and relentless consumption. Given Deleuze's description of crystal-images as "inorganic", this crystalline structure of narration aptly articulates a "denaturing" mode of ecotechnics. Ecotechnics emerges through the crystalline form of the film, as *The Intruder* strives, in a nontotalising mode, to think "everything at once", grappling with the relations between capitalism, globalisation and biopolitical violence through different kinds of scalar imaginaries.

If such scaling up or down poses the question of how to inhabit the earth, it also asks how we might inhabit these images. A fleeting image of the lights outside the *Beau Rivage* hotel in Geneva, where Louis stays, appears to be framed from Louis's point of view, suggesting a briefly subjective vision. But it is so brief and unstable as to defy our inhabiting of this image, of this perspective. Similarly, the sequence of Louis dragged through the snow also works—through its epistemological and visual instabilities—against a mode of spectatorial inhabiting. Such moments suggest the tension between subjectifying and desubjectifying impulses that Martin has traced in Denis's work, as "the connective tissue

establishable between the preceding and subsequent shots seems to loosen, to drift, to give away" (Martin).

Simultaneously subjectifying and desubjectifying, the form of *The Intruder* works through a curious logic of invitation and expulsion—it is by turns hospitable and hostile. *It invites us to imagine what it might be like to be expelled from a world.* This resonates in biological terms with the heart transplant's dynamics of acceptance and rejection, and in intersubjective terms with a sense of Louis not belonging. It also registers on a geopolitical level through the film's reflections on migration and the illicit movement of bodies and organs across borders. Yet at the same time, the film's aesthetics of hostile hospitality (or hospitable hostility) speaks to us on an ecological level, and it returns us to Nancy's question about the possibility—or not—of continuing to inhabit the earth. For Nancy, it is the image of the violet sea at dawn that poses this question in particular, but, as he suggests, *The Intruder*'s implicit reflection on ecological crisis emerges more broadly through a sustained engagement with ecotechnics. The question of our (in)ability to inhabit a world runs through the film. It is posed from the very beginning, through the intimation of a purposeful, perceptual, sensory world to which we do not have access. And it is posed through the film's "oceanic" structure (Chakali), its mapping of nonhuman histories and the various derangements of scale that it enacts. Both *Beau Travail* and *The Intruder* are profoundly shaped by an intermingling of body and landscape, human and nonhuman, the geopolitical and the geological. In resonance with the insights of Deleuze and Nancy, both films attend to times that stretch before and beyond the anthropocentric—a time that includes volcanic eruptions in the past and possible species extinctions in the future. Denis's cinema "of the body" and "of the senses" remains fascinated, of course, by the dramas, desires and politics of the human, but *Beau Travail* and *The Intruder* give us the most striking examples to date of the way in which her filmmaking also radically decentres the human. An ecological attentiveness emerges through this rescaling of our vision.

Notes

[1] I am indebted to the organisers of "Film-Philosophy 2013: Beyond Film" (University of Amsterdam, 10–12 July 2013) for the opportunity to present an earlier version of this article, and to delegates for their useful comments. All translations from French are mine unless otherwise indicated.

[2] See also Beugnet's discussion—in relation to Pascal Bonitzer's concept of *décadrage*—of the decentring of the human figure in Denis's work (*Claire Denis* 169).

[3] Spinoza writes: "Each thing [*res*], as far as it can by its own power, strives [*conatur*] to persevere in its own being" (*Ethics*, part 3, proposition 6; cited in Bennett 2).

[4] Denis's films are particularly attentive to the presence of nonhuman animals: chickens in *Chocolat* (1988), the rabbit in *Nénette et Boni* (1996), the fighting cocks in *No Fear No Die* (1990), the cat in *35 Shots of Rum* (2008), the pig, dogs and chickens in *White Material* (2009).

[5] Beugnet describes both *Beau Travail* and *The Intruder* as films that "stress the kinship of

the human figure with beasts, plants and minerals" (*Cinema and Sensation* 131).

[6] For an excellent account of this burgeoning field, see Pick and Narraway.

[7] See for example Morton and Bennett, as suggested above.

[8] On the dialogue between Denis and Nancy, see, for example, the special issue of the journal *Film-Philosophy* (Morrey); and McMahon 114–54. Beugnet suggests that Deleuze's thinking of cinema "haunts the dialogue" between Nancy and Denis ("The Practice of Strangeness" 45n21).

[9] Nancy reflects on environmental crisis in a more sustained manner in *L'Équivalence des catastrophes* (2012). In turning to the ecological via Nancy, I am inspired by this text and also by Chris Heppell's excellent work on connections between Nancy and Morton. While not explicitly addressing the ecological, Henrik Gustafsson offers an insightful reading of landscapes in Denis, drawing on Nancy's "Uncanny Landscape" (*The Ground of the Image* 51–62).

[10] For further readings of *Beau Travail* in terms of the crystal-image, see Rooney and Davis.

[11] See also the discussion of the earth's (de)stratification in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* ("10,000 B.C: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)", chapter 3).

[12] Drawing on Deleuze's "Desert Islands", Saad Chakali writes of *The Intruder*'s "oceanic montage", which constructs a "dialectic of the emerged (that which we see, knowing that this view is partial) and the submerged (that which we guess but do not—or no longer—see)".

[13] For a history of human–canine relations, see McHugh.

[14] I am indebted here to recent work by Pick that explores the film theoretical potential of Uexküll's insights ("Animal Life in the Cinematic *Umwelt*").

[15] On animals and film more broadly, see in particular Pick, *Creaturely Poetics*, and Burt.

[16] Deleuze's debt to Uexküll further invites a reading of links between cinematic temporality and animal worlds (though these links are not pursued explicitly by Deleuze). On the influence of Uexküll on Deleuze's thought, see Buchanan.

[17] See the discussion of technicity in *The Intruder* in McMahon, 136–50.

[18] I am inspired here also by Emma Wilson's reading of Denis's filmmaking in terms of "a new reckoning with scale" (Wilson 222).

Works Cited

Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things.* Durham and London: Duke U.P., 2010. Print.

Beugnet, Martine. "The Practice of Strangeness—Claire Denis (2004) and Jean-Luc Nancy (2000)". *Film-Philosophy* 12.1 (2008): 31–48. Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <http://www.film-philosophy.com/2008v12n1/beugnet.pdf>.

---. *Cinema and Sensation: French Film and the Art of Transgression*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P., 2007. Print.

---. "Figures of Vampirism: French Cinema in the Era of Global Transylvania". *Modern and Contemporary France* 15.1 (2007): 77–88. Print.

---. *Claire Denis*. Manchester: Manchester U.P., 2004. Print.

Britten, Benjamin. "O Heave". *Billy Budd.* London: Royal Opera House. 1 Dec. 1951. Performance.

Buchanan, Brett. *Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze*. New York: SUNY Press, 2008. Print.

Burt, Jonathan. *Animals in Film*. London: Reaktion, 2002. Print.

Cardonne-Arlyck, Elisabeth. "'Des bêtes se tiennent au seuil du symbolique': L'intrus de Claire Denis & Les yeux sans visage de Georges Franju". *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 16.5 (2012): 603–13. Print.

Chakali, Saad. "À corps ouvert(s)". *Cahiers du cinéma* 22 Apr. 2005. Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <http://www.cahiersducinema.com/article398.html>.

Clark, Timothy. "Scale". In *Telemorphosis: Theory in the Era of Climate Change*. Ed. Tom Cohen. Vol. 1 (2012): 148–66. Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.10539563.0001.001>.

Davis, Nick. *The Desiring-Image: Gilles Deleuze and Contemporary Queer Cinema.* Oxford and New York: Oxford U.P. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. London: Continuum, 2005. Print.

---. "Desert Islands". In *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953–1974.* Ed. David Lapoujade. Trans. Michael Taormina. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004: 9–18. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota P., 1987. Print.

Denis, Claire, dir. *35 Shots of Rum* [*35 Rhums*]. Soudaine Compagnie, Pandora Filmproduktion, Arte France Cinéma, 2008. Film.

---. *Beau Travail*. Tanais, SM Film, La Sept Arte, 1999. Film.

---. *Chocolat*. Cinémanuel, MK2 Production, 1988. Film.

---. *The Intruder* [*L'Intrus*]. Ognon Pictures, Arte France Cinéma, 2004. Film.

---. *Nénette et Boni*. Dacia Films, La Sept Cinéma, 1996. Film.

---. *No Fear No Die* [*S'en fout la mort*]. Cinéa, Pyramide, Les Films du Mindif, Caméra One, La Sept, 1990. Film.

---. *White Material*. Why Not Productions, Wild Bunch, France 3 Cinéma, 2009. Film.

Frodon, Jean-Michel. "Trajectoires de *L'Intrus*". *Cahiers du cinéma* 601 (2005): 45. Print.

Gégauff, Paul, dir. *Le Reflux*. 1965. Unproduced film.

Gustafsson, Henrik. "Points of Flight, Lines of Fracture: Claire Denis's Uncanny Landscape". Forthcoming in *The Films of Claire Denis: Intimacy on the Border*. Ed. Marjorie Vecchio. London and New York: I.B. Tauris. Typescript.

Guzmán, Patricio, dir. *Nostalgia for the Light* [*Nostalgia de la luz*]. Atacama Productions, Blinker Filmproduktion, Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR), Cronomedia, 2010. Film.

Haraway, Donna. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003. Print.

Hayward, Susan. "Claire Denis's 'Post-colonial' Films and Desiring Bodies". *L'Esprit Créateur* 42.3 (2002): 39–49. Print.

---. "Filming the (Post-)Colonial Landscape: Claire Denis' *Chocolat* (1988) and *Beau Travail* (1998)". In *Cinema and Landscape*. Eds. Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner. Bristol: Intellect, 2010: 161–75. Print.

Heppell, Chris. "The Withdrawal of Sense in Michelangelo Frammartino's *Le Quattro Volte* (2010)", "Film-Philosophy 2013: Beyond Film", University of Amsterdam, 12 July 2013. Conference presentation.

Latour, Bruno. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Trans. Catherine Porter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 1993. Print.

Martin, Adrian. "Ticket to Ride: Claire Denis and the Cinema of the Body". *Screening the Past* 20 (2006). Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/20/claire-denis.html>.

Martin-Jones, David. "Archival Landscapes and a Non-Anthropocentric 'Universe Memory'". *Third Text* 27:6 (2013): 707–22. Print.

McHugh, Susan. *Dog*. London: Reaktion, 2004. Print.

McMahon, Laura. *Cinema and Contact: The Withdrawal of Touch*. Oxford: Legenda, 2012. Print.

Morrey, Douglas, ed. "Special Issue: Claire Denis and Jean-Luc Nancy". *Film-Philosophy* 12.1 (2008). Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <http://www.film-philosophy.com/index.php/f-p/issue/view/11>.

Morton, Timothy. *The Ecological Thought*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard U.P., 2010. Print.

Murphy, Ian. "Feeling and Form in the Films of Claire Denis". *Jump Cut* 54 (2012). Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc54.2012/IanMurphyDenis/text.html>.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Being Singular Plural*. Trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne. Stanford, CA: Stanford U.P., 1993. Print.

---. *The Evidence of Film: Abbas Kiarostami*. Brussels: Yves Gevaert, 2001. Print.

---. *L'Intrus* [2000]. Trans. Susan Hanson. *The New Centennial Review* 2.3 (2002): 1–14. Print.

---. "*L'Intrus* selon Claire Denis". *Remue.net* (2005). Web. 24 Apr. 2014. Originally published at <http://www.remue.net/article.php3?id_article=679>. Archived at <http://www.missingimage.com/node/250633>.

---. *The Ground of the Image*. Trans. Jeff Fort. New York: Fordham U.P., 2005. Print.

---. *Corpus*. Trans. Richard A. Rand. New York: Fordham U.P., 2008. Print.

---. *L'Équivalence des catastrophes (Après Fukushima)*. Paris: Galilée, 2012. Print.

Pick, Anat. *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film*. New York: Columbia U.P., 2011. Print.

---. "Animal Life in the Cinematic *Umwelt*". Forthcoming in *Animal Life and the Moving Image*. Eds. Michael Lawrence and Laura McMahon. Typescript.

Pick, Anat, and Guinevere Narraway. *Screening Nature: Cinema Beyond the Human*. Oxford: Berghahn, 2013. Print.

Romney, Jonathan. "Who Wants to Be a Legionnaire?" *The Guardian* 27 Jun. 2000. Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2000/jun/27/artsfeatures3>.

---. “Claire Denis Interviewed by Jonathan Romney – Part Two”. The Guardian 28 Jun. 2000. Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2000/jun/28/guardianinterviewsatbfisouthbank1>.

Rooney, Caroline. “From the Universal to the Cosmic: The Surroundings of *Beau Travail*”. *Journal of European Studies* 34.1/2 (2004): 106–27. Print.

Spinoza, Baruch. *Ethics: Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect, and Selected Letters*. Trans. Samuel Shirley. Ed. Seymour Feldman. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992. Print.

Sweeney, R. Emmet. “The Hither Side of Solutions: Bodies and Landscapes in *L’Intrus*”. *Senses of Cinema* 36 (2005). Web. 24 Apr. 2014. <http://sensesofcinema.com/2005/feature-articles/intrus/>.

von Uexküll, Jakob. *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans with A Theory of Meaning*. Trans. Joseph D. O’Neill. Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota P., 2010. Print.

Wilson, Emma. “*État présent*: Contemporary French Women Filmmakers”. *French Studies* 59.2 (2005): 217–23. Print.

Suggested Citation

McMahon, Laura. “Beyond the Human Body: Claire Denis’s Ecologies”. *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media* 7 (Summer 2014). Web. ISSN: 2009-4078.

Laura McMahon is a College Lecturer in French at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. She is the author of *Cinema and Contact: The Withdrawal of Touch in Nancy, Bresson, Duras and Denis* (Oxford: Legenda, 2012) and the coeditor (with Michael Lawrence) of *Animal Life and the Moving Image* (forthcoming). Her essays have been published in *Screen*, *Paragraph*, *French Studies*, *Film-Philosophy* and *New Review of Film and Television Studies*. Her current research project explores the politics of the nonhuman in contemporary French film and philosophy.