

Lupine and Zig-zag Lines: Queer Affects in Alain Guiraudie's *L'inconnu du lac* and *Rester vertical*

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Abstract

In this article I investigate how a theory of becomings-animal operates in a number of contemporary queer French films by director Alain Guiraudie (*L'inconnu du lac* (2013) and *Rester vertical* (2016)). In particular I explore how a becomings-animal's association with a Deleuzian theory of affect enhances our understanding of queer intimacy. The aim of this article is to reposition queer intimacy as an ontology *outside* – outside synthetic and vertical lines of filiation and kinship and inside the disjunctive lines of the outside (what is irregular, random, rural, cosmic). Drawing at first on intimacy as an ontological non-relationality (Bersani 2008; 2009) and on the idea of separation as an ontological necessity of queer intimacy (John Paul Ricco 2017), I want to rethink queer intimacy as exposure outwards – an intimacy *to* and *towards*. Within this exteriorization of intimacy, my methodology will rely on the affective power of a Deleuzian theory of lines.

Dans cet article, j'explore comment une théorie du devenir-animal est à l'œuvre dans certains films français queer du réalisateur Alain Guiraudie (*L'inconnu du lac* (2013) et *Rester vertical* (2016)). Mon étude se concentre en particulier sur la façon dont l'association du devenir-animal à une théorie deleuzienne de l'affect améliore notre compréhension de l'intimité/des relations intimes queer. Le but de cet article est de repositionner l'intimité queer comme une ontologie du *dehors* – en dehors des lignes verticales de filiation et de parenté et à l'intérieur des lignes disjonctives du dehors (ce qui est irrégulier, contingent, rural, cosmique). En m'appuyant tout d'abord sur la notion d'intimité comme non-relationnalité ontologique (Bersani 2008; 2009) et sur l'idée de séparation comme nécessité ontologique de l'intimité queer (John Paul Ricco 2017), je souhaite réexaminer l'intimité comme exposition vers l'extérieur – une intimité *vers*. Au sein de cette extériorisation de l'intimité, ma méthodologie reposera sur le pouvoir affectif d'une théorie deleuzienne de lignes.

Introduction and context

In *Mille Plateaux* (1980), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari define affect against psychoanalysts: “Ils ont massacré le devenir-animal chez l'homme et chez l'enfant. Ils n'ont rien vu. Dans l'animal ils voient un représentant des pulsions ou une représentation des parents. Ils ne voient pas la réalité d'un devenir-animal. Comme il est l'affect en lui-même, la pulsion en personne, et ne représente rien” (Deleuze and Guattari 317). Affect (or “hécécité”) is the sum total of relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness – “un ensemble d'affects non-subjectivés” (320). Deleuzian affect is the absence of the body as a vessel of feeling and

emotion. Dethroning subject and spectator as registers of sense and reason, Deleuze and Guattari define the body by co-ordinates of longitude and latitude and as a body without organs (BwO): “un corps se définit seulement par une longitude et une latitude: c’est-à-dire l’ensemble matériels qui lui appartiennent sous tels rapports de mouvement et de repos, de vitesse et de lenteur (longitude); l’ensemble des affects intensifs dont il est capable, sous tel pouvoir ou degré de puissance (latitude)” (318). The BwO is the annulation of the body as an organized organism (including its sensory organs) in order to liberate new elements and energy in the body. Becoming – that which replaces the organized body – is not progress towards anything nor does it produce anything. Becoming does not operate at the level of subject, identity or being but at a molecular level of speed, intensity and movement.

An early cinematic example of a theory of becoming is *Zazie dans le métro* (1960) in which Louis Malle uses movement to convey the competing drives (“plans”) between meaning as a “molaire” (unified) construction founded in stasis, history, emotion, normativity, and affect as a “moléculaire” becoming-animal where nothing develops and nothing subjectifies, but where affects form according to the composition of movement and intensity. Malle’s use of different movements (from running, jumping, skipping, walking, fast-forwarding, spinning record players and rumour mills) as affective molecular energy that disrupts verisimilitude creates cinematic havoc and exposes the dangers of slow motion and its attendant molar subjectifications. Nomadic movement as affect signifies the erasure of Oedipal and subjective relationalities (including family, love and socio-cultural norms), and the embrace of a plane of immanence that is pre-thought, pre-personal and primitive. Malle pursues nomadic movement as an antidote to molar immobility particularly through the anti-representation of the human form. Transsexualism, bodies projected in infinity mirrors and broken and distorted mannequins enable Malle to explore the vitalism and multiplicity of nomadic movement and

particularly its affective impulses expressed in Zazie's (and Gabriel's) visual and symbolic becomings-animal (as cat, fish, rabbit, bear).

La Chatte à deux têtes (2002) by Jacques Nolot is set in a porn theatre in Paris. The action moves between the “guichet” as a defined space of light and stasis (designated as a space of “permanence” and discursive/psychoanalytic exchange) and the darkness of the projection theatre underground. There, movement shapes contact and interaction. Sexual “identity” is erased by a sexuality “qui passe par le devenir-femme de l’homme et le devenir-animal de l’humain” (341) and by a transvestism as a “a ligne de fuite ... entre les ordres, les actes, les âges, les sexes” (339). The film opens with a flock of pigeons pecking on breadcrumbs on the pavement outside the theatre. The camera follows the flock as it breaks off into flight above the boulevard. It seems an inconspicuous opening but this image of a multiplicity of pigeons in flight gestures to the potential for a deeper symbolic and sexual chaos at the heart of the film’s sexual meanings. In a number of contemporary French queer films, there is evidence, I would suggest, of a similar pattern in play – specifically a pattern where lines of movement (and variations of) emerge as markers of sexual, cultural and political shift. *Drôle de Félix* (2000) revolves around the use of the *détour* as a geographical and symbolic rejection of French republicanism and heteronormative value systems. Félix’s nomadic movement on his bike is a propitious precursor of his drift from the main – straight – punctual line implied by an autoroute that would have taken him more directly from Dieppe to Marseille (a punctuality that ironically his partner avails of by TGV).¹ The directors Ducastel and Martineau repeat this exploration of unorthodox lines of movement (also by bike) in their characterization of queer intimacy in their recent incarnation *Théo and Hugo* (2017) set during the night in the streets of Paris.² Irregular lines of movement are the footprint for the gay cruiser in Alain Guiraudie's *L'inconnu du lac* (2013) where cruisers follow daily the same circuitous route to the water’s edge where they strip, meet and have sex. Queer intimacy is also marked by movement away from the

vectors of the metropolis to the scalar quantities of the countryside. In some recent queer films, the outside (parks, woodlands and other natural settings) is reclaimed as a space for a nurturing queer intimacy, as we see in Sébastien Lifshitz's 2004 film *Wild Side* set on a farm in southwest France (see Reeser 2007). In the Anglo-American queer cinematic tradition, we see this irregularity of line in the outside too. In Yang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) and Francis Lee's *God's Own Country* (2017), queer intimacy is not only envisaged as a transition from the inside to the outside – from the private and the domestic to the visible and the rural/wild as the new frontier of queer intimacy – but intimacy is conveyed by images that are deliberately expansive (panoramic) in form and structure, and where lines of deviation (from rambling sheep herds to the jagged lines and peaks of the Canadian Rockies and Yorkshire moors) are being invoked to reframe intimacy's queerness.

Queer intimacy and the ontology of lines

In their respective works on intimacy in the context of barebacking (there are two consensual examples of barebacking in *L'inconnu du lac* and *Rester vertical*), Leo Bersani and Tim Dean advocate different viewpoints. Bersani disagrees with barebacking from an ethical perspective (“bum deal” and “the living tomb” as he calls it) and challenges the “civilising knowledge” that Dean ascribes to the practice (Bersani and Phillips 46-50). For Dean, barebacking is an act of communitarian and generational bonding (Dean 37). Bersani on the other hand writes off this teleology of a practice that claims philosophical and ethical investment. In Guiraudie's films both examples of barebacking go unchallenged. They are part of a wider pattern of acausality that is indicative of a political and identarian absence that runs through Guiraudie's rural fantastic. However, I would suggest that this absence also points critically to the possibility of an ontological investment elsewhere – in bodies rather than persons, in instinct rather than reason, and in movement rather than stasis.

Bersani's theory of impersonal intimacy is founded on two key ideas: firstly the end of the lover-loved binary, including love as past/nostalgia or knowability; and secondly impersonal narcissism as an exchange in which what is "shared" is not a feeling of mutual belonging but a universal singularity (i.e the experience of being outside boundaries) (Bersani 2008). The capacity to eschew identity and subject in oneself and in the other is key to Bersani's "ontology" of queer intimacy. Increasingly, queer intimacy is being framed in these ontological terms – not as an experience of inward reflection (or Heideggerean *dasein*) but as a turning to/toward a transcendent universal that overrides difference and boundary.³ John Paul Ricco endorses this ontological impersonal relationality espoused by Bersani in his articulation of intimacy as inseparable from separation (which he defines as the ontological condition of intimacy). What is of interest to me in this context is the way Ricco articulates intimacy's separation in terms of *exposure to the outside*:

Intimacy might then be understood not as an absorption by and interiorization of relations, but a *surplus* that while shared at the same time exceeds relation – including any form of attachment. Instead, we might go as far as to say that intimacy is not relational if, that is, relation implies the immanence of between-ness as shared enclosure. Instead, intimacy is relation's *pure leaving* or, more precisely, it is the force or touch of the outside as the rapport and sense of between as shared-exposure. (Ricco online) [my emphasis]

For Ricco's "surplus" and "pure leaving" we can read Bersani's transcendence of relations; the act of leaving something behind (a *self-consciousness*) whilst at the same time being part of something organic (a *blood-consciousness*⁴ or a universal singularity that is shared and ontological). Ricco claims that what is ontological in queer intimacy is the shared sustaining of separation between:

a “between” that is not always dualistic, and, in the multiplicity of its being-with, extends out *to-* and *toward*. Such that *being-with* is *being-to*, and being-to is the exposure and abandonment to the outside, not beyond. Thus intimacy exceeds any relational sense of “between-ness” and, as the pleasure and risk of bodily abandonment, intimacy is not the negative or repudiating movement of abandonment “from” but is abandonment “to”, without any given sense as *to* or *toward* what. Thus intimacy is without aim, goal, *telos*, or end. (Ricco online)

Abandonment to the outside is abandonment to a shared universal singularity. It is also abandonment to the dissolution and dispersal of a self in favour of an impersonal relationality described by Bersani as a “universal relatedness grounded in the absence of relations, in the felicitous erasure of people as persons” (Bersani and Phillips 38).⁵ Alain Guiraudie’s *L’inconnu du lac* exemplifies this erasure of people as persons in the practice of cruising. Franck’s lifestyle, multiple nameless lovers and cruising activities are symptomatic of a sexuality that transcends sex:

In cruising, we leave our selves behind [...]. Otherness, unlocatable within differences that can be known and enumerated, is made concrete in the eroticised touching of a body without attributes. A nonmasochistic *jouissance* [...] is the sign of nameless, identity-free contact – contact with an object I don’t know and certainly don’t love and which has, unknowingly, agreed to be momentarily the incarnated shock of otherness. In that moment we relate to that which transcends all relations. (Bersani 61)

L’inconnu du lac plays on a war between person and body, between a naïve and vulnerable Franck who wants a gay relationship and a wily and worldly Michel who does not. Franck invests in the person, Michel in the body. Despite their difference, it is difference itself that sustains their queer intimacy. What separates and sustains this intimacy is the force/touch *from*

the outside; the touch of another body (Bersani's "body without attributes") but also the touch of the outside *per se* – an outside formed of air, wind, water, land, sea, grass and trees.

We can read the material outside as a pastoral prop or as that which lends weight to an alternative spatial imaginary – a genteel queering of the countryside that challenges metronormative constructions of sexual identity (Boag 2003; Halberstam 2016; Gray, Johnson, Gilley 2016; Brady 2016). But there is another *line* of enquiry that the outside conjures for us and which informs a wider ontology circulating through Guiraudie's cinema. What is ontological in moments of queer intimacy is not only Bersani's "universal relatedness grounded in the absence of relations" but a deeper and structured abandonment to the anonymity of lines, in particular disjunctives lines and their molecular ontologies. Deleuze states: "On n'est plus qu'une ligne abstraite, ou bien une pièce de puzzle en elle-même abstraite. Et c'est en conjugant, en continuant avec d'autres lignes, d'autres pièces qu'on fait un monde, qui pourrait recouvrir le premier, comme une transparence" (Deleuze and Guattari 343). Sarah Ahmed in her work *Queer Phenomenology* (2006) points to this ontology of lines in her concept of orientation. Bodies, she argues, become "straight" by "lining up" (46) with lines that are already given. Straight lines function as forms of alignment (normativity, kinship, investment).⁶ Queer lines (we might include here Bersani's ethical "swerve" (Bersani 1990: 53) and Ahmed's "slantwise" (39)) deviate from straight lines, "leaving their own marks on the ground, which can help generate alternative lines, which cross the ground in unexpected ways. Such lines are traces of desire" (Ahmed 47).



Figure 1 *L'inconnu du lac*

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Figure 2 *L'inconnu du lac*

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The practice of cruising in *L'inconnu du lac* is one obvious example of this tracing. On one level the bucolic images that “form the backdrop” to gay cruising add textual depth to the locale. However in *being part* of the bucolic – where Guiraudie’s vision of nature is seen to transform

and inscribe its lines on sexual bodies engaged in sexual acts of fellatio and rimming (see Figures 1 and 2) – there is also a sense of *being apart*; apart from the molar aggregates of sex, self and identity construction in such a way that the neutrality of the bucolic is “marked” by the absence of discourse, time and self. Nature participates in and gives way to a transcendence of relations. I contend that the *outside* as visible in these images is the source of a shared intimacy (“surplus”) that exceeds the personal. In the absence of personal(ized) relations, Guiraudie finds in the forms of the outside a way of exploring an ontology of queer intimacy as a form of abandonment – a leaving of the self that is accompanied by an abandonment to the materiality of the earth. Specifically, these images direct us to a surplus of disjunctive lines that are created by the outside in the forms of waves on the lake, leaves fluttering in the breeze, clouds moving across the sky. The lines these images absorb in their uncoordinated and indiscriminate markings, shimmering and lingering intensity, enable us to preview an aesthetic (of *affect*) that deepens the ontological significance of the queer intimacy they gesture toward. The trade-off for the absence of a socio-political consciousness in this ecology of promiscuous sex is an ontological investment in the molecular – a shared, cosmic inter-relationality between (non-) human, animal and vegetal; queer intimacy’s becoming-animal.

Guiraudie’s “minor” cinema: *Rester vertical*

“Minor literature” is a concept developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their work *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure* (1975). Primarily a writing practice for Deleuze and Guattari (and de Certeau 1975), minor literature is an act of dismantling – of forms and of categories that determine “great” literature. Drawing on Walter Benjamin’s essay on Kafka in *Illuminations* (1999) in which he sketches another way of reading that takes into account space as a metastable force (“a movement of translation that belongs to preindividual forces” (112)),

Deleuze and Guattari resisted the temptation to “interpret” meaning in Kafka’s work (notably *Der Process* [*The Trial*] 1925) by proposing the concept of minor literature – a reversal of interpretation – that does away with dualisms, binaries, rifts (psychoanalytic and epistemological) and promotes the “remplacement du centre de gravité par une ligne abstraite” (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 27). Alongside a strong deterritorializing factor that is rooted in a language of subversion, Deleuze and Guattari also point to two key ideas that define minor literature: breaking forms and encouraging ruptures at the levels of the family and politics. Alain Guiraudie’s cinema raises some interesting parallels with this concept of minor literature. The prevalence of rural locations as spaces where mature gay men interact with heterosexual men sets the tone for a geo-graphic/political and symbolic deterritorialization. However, it is in Guiraudie’s use of line and movement as his cinematic *modus operandi* to challenge the traditional family and heteronormative sexual politics wherein lies this cinema’s minor power.⁷

Guiraudie’s cinematic canvas is the French countryside. *Du soleil pour les gueux* (2001) is set in the Causse landscape and features an unemployed hairstylist walking across the terrain in search of a shepherd who has lost his flock. The backdrop to *Ce vieux rêve qui bouge* (2001) is a run-down factory on the outskirts of a village and the threat of closure for its workers. *Pas de repos pour les braves* (2003) is a small-town detective drama set in Provence. *Voici venu le temps* (2005) – a fantastical medieval drama – is framed by the mythical presence of the Purple Mountains. For Guiraudie, the countryside maps the freedom of the outside and the possibility of new sexual/political relationalities, in particular the propensity of mature men towards sexual experimentation. In *Le Roi de l’évasion* (2009), Armand, a middle-aged chubby gay man, falls in love with an underage girl (Curlie). In *Ce vieux rêve qui bouge* and *Pas de repos pour les braves*, mature “heterosexual” men masturbate with other “heterosexuals” in the forest; and what begin as friendships between younger men and older men turn into sexual intimacies. The freedom of the outside enables these new relationalities to emerge. The

unpredictable lovers of *Le Roi de l'évasion* escape to the forest and everything is fine while they are outdoors. But when they fall asleep in an empty shack, their love spell ends. Fogo Lompla, the mysterious medieval warrior of *Voici venu le temps*, prefers to sleep in the wild, without a sheltering roof over his head. Living in the open air is his preferred modality of existence and he only yields this to sleep with one of his two lovers. Even in *Ce vieux reve qui bouge*, the factory about to close its doors seems a part of the environment surrounding it; it is an open and permeable factory, a place invaded by what lies outside of it, where the workers “inside” use parasols to be protected from the sun. In his online essay “Cinema of the Outside: On Alain Guiraudie Films” (2014), Roger Koza claims that “open spaces are shown as a dimension of [Guiraudie’s] reality where everything can be reinvented: genders and genres, languages, desires, time.”

For a film entitled *Rester vertical*, we spend a lot of time moving and moving by car. In the opening shot, a car driven by the main protagonist Léo emerges from a winding road in the deep French countryside and comes to rest outside a farmhouse. It is followed by multiple scenes of driving along winding mountain roads with the car coming to a rest at its destination. Driving is the means used to connect people from remote parts of the countryside, and also to connect people to the nearest city and beyond. What is remarkable about the act of driving however is the relation between straight roads and winding roads. Most of the driving scenes we see are on winding/curved roads. We often see scenes of driving on these roads repeated two and three times, and shot from the driver’s perspective. On one level, it seems an insignificant even trivial detail to mention but the way the film is structured (formally) invites us to extrapolate meaning and affect from these scenes. In her work *The Forms of the Affects* (2014) Eugenie Brinkema expands on Deleuze’s theory of affect as becomings-animal, claiming that affect is not experienced by a viewing subject but *inheres* in forms (structures and objects): “Affects do not need an experiencing subject – there are forms and there are

affects, and the affects have forms just as much as they inhere in forms” (Brinkema 25). According to Brinkema, structural forms not only resemble forms but *are* forms; form feels, grieves, cries, laughs. Form is a sentient being. Brinkema invites us to rethink form and affect in terms of lines: “What lines of thought might be set loose by interrogating the relationship between a cinematic grid of color and the most visceral of the negative affects, disgust? How might the straits of anxiety be a matter of broken horizontal line?” (xvi). By paying more attention to form (as we have seen already in the forms of nature but also as a structural principle) we are better placed to attend to how queer intimacy works in Guiraudie’s cinema, beginning for example with the distinction to be drawn between straight lines (“lignes droites”) and turns (“virages”) as signifiers of a series of filial, ideological and sexual shifts that define Guiraudie’s cinematic space and his affective queer imagination. Lines acquire an ontological significance that we can take forward in the way we map queerness and queer intimacy. The structural principle informing *Rester vertical* – as the film’s title infers – is the straight line, a vertical linearity founded on filiation and kinship. Ahmed writes:

The vertical axis is itself an effect of being “in line”, when the line taken by the body corresponds with other lines that are already given. The vertical is hence normative: it is shaped by the repetition of bodily and social actions over time. The body that is “in line” is one that can extend into space, at the same time that such spaces are effects of retracing those lines, which is another way of describing “extension” [...]. (Ahmed 66-67)

Set on a farm in south-west France (a favourite location for Guiraudie’s cinema and a deliberate snub to metronormativity), *Rester vertical* can be seen as a defence of vertical lines of filiation and protection. Father and daughter live together, rearing sheep and trying to keep out wolves. The wolf is such a threat that the daughter and farmer are forced to rear sheep inside farm buildings. Attempts to protect and insulate the sheep fail. In spite of the father’s and daughter’s efforts, a number of sheep are killed by a pack of wolves.⁸ The Oedipal

analogy/ontology is reinforced by the arrival of Léo, a young screen writer who has retreated to the countryside for inspiration. At the beginning of the film, Léo is seen wandering this landscape. He runs into the farmer's daughter Marie. She wants to shoot wolves, he wants to protect them. What ensues in this demarcation of geographical, ideological and ontological territory is Léo's emergence as someone who, in spite of the reality of the wolf's threat, sides with their alienation and nomadic drifting as well as their particular packness (or pack multiplicity).⁹

In "Un seul loup ou plusieurs?", Deleuze critiques Freud's reduction of the Wolf Man to Oedipal or coital representations and relates the significance of the wolf to the pack. He claims that "devenir-loup" (wolf-multiplicity) is the extent to which one/a subject is part of a pack – at the periphery of it but also attached to the pack. We can draw a number of implications from this idea of multiplicity. Firstly, Deleuze is using the figure of the wolf to extract from it its figurativeness. The Wolf Man and wolf multiplicity are ways of exploring the modus operandi of the unconscious (or affect) – an unconscious for Deleuze founded not on molar unities (of father, lack or oneness) but on multiplicities of line and movement based on speed and intensity. Léo's "devenir-loup" is a way of demonstrating the potential ("puissance") of breaking out of the organization of the unconscious and producing new lines of "déterritorialisation". Pack multiplicity therefore is about dispersion, crossings-over and metamorphosis. It is also crucially linked to affect:

Le loup comme appréhension instantanée d'une multiplicité dans telle région, ce n'est pas un représentant, un substitut, c'est un *je sens*. Je sens que je deviens loup, loup parmi les loups, en bordure des loups, et le cri d'angoisseté [...]. Le loup, les loups, ce sont des intensités, des vitesses, des températures, des distances variables indécomposables. C'est un fourmillement, un lupullement. (Deleuze and Guattari 45)

Affect is not a personal feeling or capacity to identify with someone or something. It's a pre-personal intensity. It is the symbolic power of the pack to throw the self into upheaval ("involution"). The pack, as opposed to the one wolf, develops and forms its own borders, not based on filiation or emotion but by universal relatedness and free association (Deleuze uses the word "contagion" to express this multiplicity). Léo's contagion is twofold. Kissing leads to casual sex and an unplanned baby; no disease is spread by this copulation. Figuratively however, another type of contagion has taken hold. Léo has infected stable social and Oedipal relations. He unsettles routines and disrupts domestic order, habits and ways of living. Léo enters other people's houses unannounced. He makes contact with people but never makes friends. He never stays long enough anywhere. He tries unsuccessfully to seduce a younger man (Yoan) and takes advantage of events to sodomize an older man who dies afterwards. He is seen talking with Marie's father, crossing the land inexplicably in a tractor with him. Later, the father makes a pass at Léo by rubbing his thigh. There is the suggestion that the father could replace his daughter and join with Léo to rear the child (similar to the social behavior evident in wolf packs – monogamous but adaptable, open to adoption and homosexual activity). We learn to see and read Léo's contagious, queer intimacy figuratively; his movement is not, as Ahmed claims, a regulated "extension" into space but an unsystematic veering and cross-contamination of lines ("une intension" (299)) across a rugged landscape where movement is not determined by intention, motive or desire but is spread by a process of multiplicity, intensity, and slowness followed by fastness. This movement is the antidote to causality and is the means by which Guiraudie conveys affect. Deleuze's use of affect in the context of "transsexuality" is also helpful in capturing the idea of intimacy as impersonality and imperceptibility. Later in this article I develop this argument to incorporate the idea of the transsexual as an apt expression of queer intimacy in Guiraudie's cinema. Transsexualism enables us to read Léo's movements ontologically (in his slippage from one body, form, gender,

age to the next without any investment in anything other than a shared transcendence of relations).



Figure 3 *Rester vertical*

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Figure 4 *Rester vertical*

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As in *L'inconnu du lac*, queer intimacy's affective transcendence of relations is not only expressed in terms of exposure to an outside of the self but also to an outside *per se* – as evident in these two images of the Causse landscape in *Rester vertical* (Figures 3 and 4)). The outside matters for Guiraudie, particularly the rural outside. In the rural outside, the body is shorn of “arborescence”¹⁰ and exposed to the abstract cartography of the elements: “Latitude et longitude sont les deux éléments d’une cartographie” (318). It is significant that one of the opening shots in this film is of Léo scoping the French countryside with his binoculars looking for wolves. There are multiple panoramic scenes like this where the camera hovers over the landscape. Some of the land is farmland; for agricultural use, rearing of livestock and production of crops. But alongside this systematic and controlled use of the land is the nonarable land that is unsuitable for farming. The distinction between the arable and nonarable is one determined primarily by the natural elements (nonarable land is subject to lack of water,

lack of direct sunlight, pollution, rock-stone build-up). The lines of differentiation are clear to see even though these lines of demarcation are far from straight lines. In fact, the lines are formed naturally according to the quality of the earth, the contours of the land and the elements. Given what we have sketched thus far in respect of Deleuze's analysis of wolf-multiplicity as a response to Freud's Wolf Man and an alternative cartography of the unconscious, I would posit at this point that these repeated camera shots of the countryside can function as Deleuzian diagrams ("images-pensées") of Léo's unconscious. The countryside illustrates not only the competing territories represented by arable and nonarable land (and their respective molar and molecular symbolics) but it is also a formal space (in Brinkema's use of form) where the transsexual dynamics of Léo's queer migrations are played out. The pack multiplicity of wolves has the potential to challenge the dominant one wolf/Wolf Man by virtue of the natural contagion of the pack to criss-cross arable and nonarable boundaries, infiltrate new land and proliferate at will.¹¹



Figure 5 *Rester vertical*

We see Léo emerging *in the middle* of straight lines. Implicitly he “reorientates” these lines (Ahmed 35) and creates new lines that challenge straight, filial and (national)¹² directions. This image (Figure 5) of Léo boarding the tractor with Marie’s father and disappearing in a straight line across the well-tilled land prefigures his subsequent deviations. It also echoes the way Deleuze configures his theories of affect and schizo nomadism. Deleuze states: “Une héccéité n’a ni début ni fin, ni origine ni destination: elle est toujours au milieu. Elle n’est pas faite de points, mais seulement de lignes. Elle est rhizome” (321). The schizo has the capacity to slide over, across, (in) between and through other bodies. Sliding along the surface of the body challenges the ideational logic of depth as a complement of Oedipal triangulation: “Le rhizome est une antigénéalogie” (18). In *Logique du sens* (1969), Deleuze introduces his alternative phallus – “le soc de charrue” (the “plowshare”). Deleuze’s plowshare does not penetrate the land. When applied to the thin fertile layer of the earth (as we see in this image), it traces a line at the surface. The effect of the plowshare, Deleuze reminds us, is to reconstitute and mend at the level of the surface (of the skin) the destructive drives of the phallus.¹³ In *Rester vertical*, our eye-line rarely moves above the horizon of the Causse landscape. We remain at the level of rolling land, dykes, tides, piers and drifting sands. These lines invite us to think of the relationality between line demarcation and intimacy. Léo’s unstraight lines throw into relief the deeper punctual lines that connect to Oedipal and filial directions.¹⁴ His unstraight lines dissolve these directions (their formations and linkages) and move us towards lines that are in perpetual motion (or a state of becoming). In another example, after the birth of Marie’s baby, the mother is unmoved by the baby’s crying leading eventually to her abandoning the baby and Léo. Léo becomes-mother, nurturing the child, feeding him, carrying him in his baby-grow through the town, replete with blankets, holdalls and milk bottle. The birth of the child, graphic in its intensity, is hollowed of emotive and parental depth.

Filial/maternal lines are cauterized and anoedipalized. Bodies are reduced to consecutive images of orifices and genitals bearing no relation to persons, faces or subjectivities, including that of the couple that Léo and Marie never become.

Filiation, disaffiliation and Deleuze's couple

In *Francis Bacon: logique de la sensation* (1981) Deleuze claims that the visual in Bacon's paintings is not a question of form and matter but materials and flows. Breaking with figuration in his paintings, Bacon seeks a pure form – the purely figural which is achieved in the isolation of the figure, even as a couple. The deconstruction of the figure can be seen in the way Bacon dismantles the face in order to give prominence to the head, or in the way he unravels the skin in order to reveal flesh and meat. Bacon's figures are the visual equivalent of bodies without organs. They carry in them the materiality of affect; imageless, organless and non-productive, with the exposure of human meat the most graphic (violent) example of the body as molecular and impersonal flow. There is nothing as graphically violent as Bacon's images in Guiradie's *Rester vertical*. However the disconnected, de-faced and de-personalized images of childbirth and the recurrent images of female genitalia as a line/cut attest to a universal impersonality at work.



Figure 6 *Rester vertical*

© Alain Guiraudie

In the childbirth scene (Figure 6), Guiraudie takes us graphically to the point between pre-birth and birth in order to focus on the fragility of the lines that determine filiation and custody. This birth is not a joyful experience in which parents delight in the moment and in what the birth signifies in terms of parenthood, family and genealogy. Nurses replace family. A blood membrane/vein replaces an umbilical cord. The birth is bloody and gruesome. It is filmed in such a way as to emphasize the raw energy of the event. Flesh and nerve take precedence over form and gender. For Guiraudie, this birth punctures filial lines and exposes the body to the contingency of external forces, in particular what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the affective athleticism of sensation as an invisible force on the body.¹⁵ Shorn of a mother and father to cradle entry into life, this birth prefigures a nomadic trajectory that counteracts traditional vertical filial lines. No sooner has the figure of the baby escaped from the mother (as filial line) than the body of the baby is drawn out by forces affecting it. It starts life alone and on the move.

Until such times as the baby is returned eventually to the mother and her new partner, “its” life is at the mercy of Leo’s nomadism, homelessness, (homo)sexual drives, flight from the authorities, including Léo’s use of the baby as bait to trap wolves who have killed sheep. The birth scene illustrates the live tensions between Deleuzian synthetic lines that seek to normalize and direct the baby’s life within pre-determined vertical filial lines, and disjunctive lines that expose the body to the unpredictability of the unknown and multiple lines of flight.

The difference between synthetic and disjunctive lines is also at work in Guiraudie’s description of the couple. For Deleuze, the persons forming a couple are isolated, separate desiring-machines. A couple does not form to make a unit; rather, each body *in the relation* is rendered indiscernible by the extreme position of their *lines*, each of which acquire an autonomy in relation to the body, like a diagram whose lines would bring together nothing but sensation. Bodies merging as a couple are not only non-narrative and non-illustrative but they follow a different affect whereby flow, energy, materiality and crucially the impersonal and the singular take prominence. Marie and Léo are a “couple” defined by disjunction, with distance affirmed as that which relates the two as different. Their distance matters; distance performs the effect of de-individualizing them as a couple and the lines that shape this distance enable Guiraudie to intuit other (non-filial) lines. After Marie’s unexplained departure, Léo brings up the couple’s baby himself. Her departure leaves open the possibility of her father bringing up the baby with Léo in a same-sex relationship. This redrawing of filial lines (what Deleuze refers to as alternative anoedipality) is not confined to the father, Marie, Léo triangle. The lines of other surrogate relationalities, involving the older man and Yoan (whom we suspect to be his gay “twink”) are reconfigured when Yoan unexpectedly becomes Marie’s new partner enabling them to take custody of Léo’s baby, and when Léo sodomizes the older man after a long discussion about how men can cope without women in their lives. In the absence of any causality or judgement (moral or other) on these events, indeed in the absence of any familial,

contextual history to any of these characters, we adapt not only to the “thrownness”¹⁶ of Guiraudie’s queer ontology but also to its trajectory through abstract lines; straight, broken, interrupted, incongruous lines that are free and flexible to connect with other lines and create new proximities and inter-disciplinarity. Only on one occasion does Guiraudie suspend this “thrownness” and invite us to synthesize cause and effect. Driving along a country lane, the father catches sight of Léo’s car (with baby inside unattended) parked on the side of the road. Léo is inside the old man’s house sodomizing him. The father eventually drives both Léo and baby away and in the process asks Léo about his past life and if he ever felt responsibility for anything or to anyone. We watch the scene unfold as spectators in the back of the car. The father drives in a straight line along an endless dual carriageway. Léo does not reply to any questions. He is instead distracted by the “virage” sign they pass en route. Conversation gives way to looking at the countryside – a Guiraudian default image that redirects us away from the dual carriageway and the synthetic lines of its symbolism towards other disjunctive lines of mis-communication that the countryside offers in its undulating terrain, dirt tracks, coast lines and byroads.

Queer, transsexuality, affect

In an interview with the French magazine *Têtu* in 2017, Guiraudie wrote the following about *L’inconnu du lac* and *Rester vertical*:

Mon film [*Rester vertical*] peut dérouter tout le monde, pas que les hétéros. C’est mon film le plus queer, ça peut tout aussi bien dérouter les homos. Avec *L’inconnu du lac*, ce n’était pas un film queer alors qu’on m’avait filé La Queer Palme. Là, je ne suis pas du tout dans le catalogue LGBT. Mon film convoque d’autres formes de sexualités. C’est ça qui m’intéresse. J’aime bien l’idée que ça ne fasse pas de nous un hétéro

d'avoir un enfant avec une nana, ça ne fait pas de nous un homo de coucher avec un mec. Léo, je ne l'ai pas traité comme un homo ou comme un hétéro. (*Têtu*, online)

It may come as a surprise that Guiraudie sees *Rester vertical* as queerer than the sexually explicit *L'inconnu du lac*. The former has one same-sex scene, the latter multiple and graphic. *Rester vertical* is set inside the family; *L'inconnu du lac* is set in a cruising spot in the woods. What is queer about both films is that sexuality is outside categorization and binary opposites but *Rester vertical* illustrates this idea more effectively in the way it explores sexuality *across* the sexes. We are minded in this regard of Deleuze's intervention on this theme:

[La sexualité] s'explique mal par l'organisation bisexuée des sexes, et pas mieux par une organisation bisexuée de chacun des deux. La sexualité met en jeu des devenirs conjugués trop divers qui sont comme *n* sexes, toute une machine de guerre [...]. *La sexualité passe par le devenir-femme de l'homme et le devenir-animal de l'homme*; émission de particules [...]. (Deleuze and Guattari 1990 : 341-2)

Deleuze's view of sexuality is transsexual. In contrast to sexuality's social and psychic (molar) organizational associations, Deleuze invokes sexuality's molecular (chemical) and ritual properties. Sexuality is a passing through and a crossing over (a process of becoming that Deleuze captures in a variation on the same language: "traverser", "transvestisme", "travestissement". "*Le devenir-femme de l'homme et le devenir-animal de l'homme*" relocates sexuality outside form, gender and location. "*Devenir-femme*" of the man is about demonstrating the potential of sexuality as a transsexual inclusivity – which is what, I suggest, we find in the topologies of *Brokeback Mountain*, *God's Own Country*, *Wild Side* and *Rester vertical*. In these films, we see queer male protagonists migrate across sexual, gender and occupational lines; a transsexual prostitute falls in love with an Algerian hustler and a Russian lover while she lives on a farm and cares for her dying mother; farmers and farm-hands have

sex with each other when they are not tending to their flocks; cowboys and farmers nurse and nurture ewes and babies including swaddling and sleeping with these animal and babies. These actions are not examples of male passivity, vulnerability, effeminization, admirable parenting skills nor (as Guiraudie has claimed) political statements that men can be as good carers as women or indeed that gay men can be good parents. It is more the case that queer is a point on a transsexual line and “c’est en termes de devenir qu’il faut comprendre le phénomène” (340). In *Rester vertical*, Léo becomes woman, mother, baby, sheep, wolf, father and sexual predator. His queerness is human but equally non-human. His queerness is a symbiosis of “voisinages” (342) in which he participates. In claiming that *Rester vertical* is his queerest of films, Guiraudie is carving out a queerness that not only transgresses and traverses boundaries of subject, self and identity but, in its capacity to “devenir-tout”, Guiraudie expands how we understand queer intimacy by seeing it as extending outwards to include the natural, vegetal, material and cosmic.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the significance of this extension is twofold. Firstly, it eliminates human and non-human form as bodily measure and opens up molecular, elementary and cosmic relations. Lupine cosmology is one of the film’s subtexts and Deleuze uses the lupus constellation in his constitution of the molecular.¹⁷ Secondly, in extending sexuality’s field of reference – in becoming-everybody-everything – Léo reaches Deleuze’s highest “plateau” of transsexuality; imperceptibility (“la fin immanente du devenir, sa formule cosmique” (342)). Whilst “queer” from a Deleuzian perspective is no different from “straight” along a transsexual spectrum, the aim to become imperceptible (blend in, go unnoticed, unseen, unfelt, unheard) from a politically queer perspective can be more problematic. “Devenir-imperceptible” (342) challenges the politics of gay pride, identity and visibility. But as we have seen in the context of these films, his wider corpus and statements, Guiraudie has a more dynamic vision of what queerness is and which resonates with Deleuze’s three virtues of

transsexualism: imperceptibility, indiscernibility and impersonality. Imperceptible queerness (a *queer* feeling and not a *feeling* queer) is to not only want to be like everybody/thing else (or go unnoticed as Deleuze claims¹⁸) but to arrive at a point where the goal of “feeling” (affect) is to eliminate the capability of being too-noticed/perceived – i.e. the subjectivity that roots persons in themselves as molar unities (including a queer molar unity). Deleuze and Guattari state: “Car tout le monde est l’ensemble molaire, mais *devenir tout le monde* est une autre affaire, qui met en jeu le cosmos avec ses composantes moléculaires” (342). Fixity of self or space defies the ever-evolving relationality between body and its longitudinal/latitudinal coordinates, including attempts to assign a permanence of feeling or emotion to this body. For Guiraudie, I maintain that the primary agency experienced in being/feeling queer is in fact displaced to the imperceptibility of a *queer* feeling that has nothing to do with feeling as such and more to do with the positive absence of feeling and the creation of a world founded in this absence: “On a fait du monde, de tout le monde, un devenir, parce qu’on a fait un monde nécessairement communicant, parce que l’on a supprimé le soi” (343). This evacuation of feeling (Oedipal, filial, emotional, social and sexual) takes us back to the Deleuzian BwO and the theme of lines and movement as a reductive and dynamic force in Guiraudie’s cinema: “se réduire à une ou plusieurs lignes abstraites qui vont continuer et se conjuguer avec d’autres lignes, pour produire immédiatement, directement, *un monde*, dans lequel c’est *le monde* qui devient, on devient *le monde*” (343).

Détours, lines, packs

Deleuze states: “Rien que le monde des vitesses et des lenteurs, sans forme, sans sujet, sans visage. Plus rien que le zig-zag d’une ligne” (347). Movement as imperceptibility is evidenced in the cruiser’s promiscuous footprint in *L’inconnu du lac* and in Léo’s random emergence, intersections and exits throughout *Rester vertical*. Cutting through the deep contours of feeling and filiation, Léo’s imperceptibility is built on avoiding causal links to his actions. Causal links

are replaced by lines that conjugate new lines in a creative acausality of lines. We are reminded in this instance of Léo's mission in this film to write a screen play of which we see the opening line as he composes it on his laptop in his hotel: "La longue ligne droite, jour..." (the rest of the page is blank). This mission leads Léo by river into the countryside with the baby in search of psychotherapy. There the screen play is completed and delivered to his manager in return for his "release" (and that of the baby) back to reality and the farm. It is an uncanny episode that is repeated twice in the film. Guiraudie uses this rural retreat to the forest to maintain the film's very basic plot structure. Léo's screen play needs to be written and this is as good a "therapeutic" place as anywhere to achieve that. But, the fact that this resolution of a completed film script happens as part of a fantastical *détour* in the film (repeated twice) underlines the importance of a theory of lines. The screen play with its opening line ("la longue ligne droite...") presumes a metanarrative with a causal direction, including the recourse to psychoanalysis to explain Léo's nomadic lifestyle. However, the *détour* into the forest offsets the logic and causality of the "longue ligne droite" metanarrative, including the alternative lines that have already conjugated Léo's journey up to this point. Guiraudie uses *fantasme* as *détour* (a common trait in his cinema and literature¹⁹) to undermine the search for causality and meaning at both narrative and psychoanalytic levels. On one level, *fantasme* as *détour* enables us to replace at the centre of the film synthetic lines with disjunctive lines, as well as the potential for pack-multiplicity that the subtext of the wolves underscores. Léo's unstraight lines disconnect meaning and content from perception and filiation. His unstraight lines dissolve forms and invite us to move away from lines that connect points (sex, relationality, filiation and memory) to post-filial lines. The post-filial is not abandonment of the sexual, the social or history. It is another way of being human through imperception that is not tethered to feeling as the precondition of experience. Deleuze elaborates on this point distinguishing between a point-system and a line-system: "Le système-ligne (ou bloc) du devenir s'oppose au système-

point de la mémoire. Le devenir est le mouvement par lequel la ligne se libère du point, et rend les points indiscernibles; rhizome, l'opposé de l'arborescence, se dégage de l'arborescence. *Le devenir est une anti-mémoire*" (360).



Figure 7 *Rester vertical*

© Alain Guiraudie

Deleuze and Guattari use the word “arborescence” to convey restriction and classification (“arbre classificatoire généalogique”) (292). The word also refers to a model of thought that ties the subject to history and memory. Arborescence is also specifically linked to the point-system of memory. In *Rester vertical*, *fantasme* as *memory* is the representation of a psychoanalytic arborescence to which Léo retreats in search of memory and its *punctual line* of contact with his present life. This contact however between past and present – between subjectivity and genealogy – breaks down. He/we are invited to return to the line-system (a multi-linear pack system) that breaks free from point of origin and contact, and which is captured in the film’s dénouement. The consequence of *fantasme* as *détour* (or line-system) is

the exposure of *fantasme* as *memory* (point-system). The distinction is a key one because it implies that it is only via *détour* that we understand the resistance to psychoanalysis and memory via affect at the heart of Deleuze's theory of anti-Oedipus and Guiraudie's cinema. Léo's recourse to psychoanalysis via eco-therapy (Figure 7) in the forest as a means of giving meaning to his past life and behavior is comic and ironic.²⁰ The image of Léo rigged up to a tree with the aid of branches, roots and leaves compounds the entanglements of a point-system linked to memory and psychoanalysis. It is a comic way of undermining psychoanalysis as a school of thought in matters of sexuality. However, in keeping with Guiraudie's valorization of the rural turn in his wider cinema, the image also works as a space of freedom and escape from the "scaffold imaginary" (Brady 123)²¹ of republican universalism and psychoanalysis. The scene establishes nature as an authentic infusion and interlocutor for Léo and is a direct counterpoint to pseudo medical interventions.

The tensions between synthetic lines and disjunctive lines are played out in the final scene of the film in the interaction between Léo, wolf and pack. The scene brings together two key ideas examined in this article: the film as a map of the unconscious in which the structure of multiplicity disrupts the punctual lines pointing in Oedipal and filial directions; and secondly, the film as an experiment in a queer transsexuality. In this scene, Léo-sheep is seen approaching a lone wolf perched on a rock (Figure 8).



Figure 8 *Rester vertical*

© Alain Guiraudie

As he gets closer to the wolf, Léo stops. A standoff ensues. Léo is then joined by Marie's father at which point the film ends. Léo's straight-line movement toward the wolf on the rock can be viewed as an attempt to appease the wolf or be reconciled with it. It can also be seen as a gesture of reverence toward the stationary wolf (Freud's Wolf Man) and the implicit acknowledgment of the legacy of psychoanalysis. However, this punctual line of contact between Léo and wolf is complicated by the movement of a circling *pack* of wolves that enters the scene from the side. The scene is significant for a number of reasons. It highlights the power of movement in the film, not only straight line movement but different and irregular lines of movement. It also privileges suspension (of movement) over conclusion or resolution; spectator and narration are left in limbo right to the end. However, what the scene brings to light most emphatically is the movement in being still. Deleuze and Guattari expand on the power of movement in "Un seul

ou plusieurs loups?”, in particular the relation between stationary and mobile movement. They draw our attention to the position of the subject in relation to the pack, whether the subject joins or does not join the pack, and how far the subject stands from the pack. Critically, standing still on the periphery of the pack is not a position of stasis or disengagement. On the contrary, Deleuze and Guattari define it as a position of suspended *animation* (“motion perpétuelle” and “bonheur vertigineux” (48)).²²

Leo’s retreat from the lone wolf (or Wolf Man) to the periphery of the pack where he stands still is a value-bearing movement that re-engages the viewer in the film’s line-system as a movement of becoming. In the same way that becomings-animal is not about identification with animals *per se* but the acknowledgement of the capacity for multiplicity in the unconscious, the presence of wolves in this scene is a reminder of the proximity between the figure of the wolf as representation and its figurativeness, and how this proximity lends itself to redefining the film’s filial, Oedipal and sexual lines. The film’s rugged landscape – with its pylons, dykes, tidal follows, piers and drifting sand lines – is part of this figurative realignment, inviting us to rethink the relationality between line demarcation and intimacy. We may be tempted to view this final scene as a representation of the superiority of the wolf spatially and symbolically. The introduction of the pack however – coupled by the use of the camera to capture the rapidity, chaos and threat of the pack – breaks the representational logic. Exposed and demoted by the pack, the single wolf returns to the pack. Echoing the title of Deleuze’s chapter “Un seul ou plusieurs loups?”, the scene demonstrates graphically how the film seeks to use line, movement and space to reroute a history and legacy of Oedipal triangulation towards an open, multiple and transsexual antigenealogy. The scene ends as the opening scene of the film begins – with an image of crossing over and through (“traverser”); in-between lone wolf and the pack; in-between pack multiplicity as mobility and lone wolf as stasis; in-between

a straight line and a winding one; in-between the unconscious as a multiplicity and the unconscious as Oedipal triangulation.

Conclusion

Alain Guiraudie's cinema shocks because of the way its transgressive sexual content targets the family and rural communities. However, it is precisely the familial and rural particularity of his cinema – not least in *L'inconnu du lac* and *Rester vertical* – that gives his cinema its unique/minor power. Guiraudie's fascination with the French countryside allows him to open up new ways of thinking about the ontology of queer intimacy; firstly as an exposure to a shared universality beyond the self, and also as an exposure/abandonment to the universal materiality of the outside, and the added-value of this outside to queer intimacy. Bearing all the hallmarks of a Deleuzian “minor literature” in its subversion of the family and sexual politics, Guiraudie's cinema reclaims rural space²³ in flagrant fashion, realigning queer intimacy with new lines of affect that challenge traditional Oedipal lines of filiation and the fissured sexual politics of heteronormativity. Being in-between lines – being *in touch with everyone and everything* – is to be queer in Guiraudie's cinema. Deleuze's theory of transsexuality points to this potentiality, drawing its power from all things human and non-human. Transsexuality is the highpoint of Deleuzian anoedipal sexuality. It overlooks and passes through all sexual designations, resisting the molar pull of face, subject and origin whilst advocating a new “généalogie matérielle” (379) that engages with the generalized drift and cross-currents of queer desire.

NOTES

¹ Florian Grandena (2013) draws on the work of Deleuze and Guattari to formulate a theory of touristic nomadism to characterize Felix's journey from northern to southern France. For Grandena, nomadism is deployed as a means of “problematizing normative social discourses on the family, blood lineage and ethnicity, and consequently the supposedly sacrosanct role of familial culture in the construction and the expression of one's identity” (42).

² Todd Reeser (2018) claims that Ducastel and Martineau reopen the largely lost tradition of a male-loving Orpheus (myth) and thus upend a system of male-female love. Reeser draws on a Marcusean “fuller Eros” who protests against the repressive order of procreative sexuality (4). Significantly, Reeser

articulates his reworking of the myth of Orpheus by invoking forms of movement - specifically that of never looking back (or moving forward, “On va de l’avant”) towards a new futurity. He constructs this argument using varying movements of lines (looking directly, not looking directly, one character leading the other or side-by-side movement that replaces one leading the other). Reeser also uses circular movement and random lines to challenge the orthodoxy of the linearity of the Orpheus myth (8).

³ The first part of the film *Théo and Hugo* illustrates this theme of impersonal narcissism. When the two main characters meet in a sex club, they both sodomize a different partner but end up looking at each other and “making out” while sodomizing two different partners. This scene is powerfully queer in terms of the idea of “ontologie du dehors” and the broader theme of queer intimacy at stake in this article.

⁴ The term “blood consciousness” has been used to convey the physiological thinking of D. H. Lawrence (who believed in the duality of human consciousness – blood and mental) and the dynamics of homosexual desire in the work of Guy Hocquenghem.

⁵ Compare Guy Hocquenghem’s metaphor of anality as a form of impersonal relationality that is unsexed, ungendered and radiant in *Le désir homosexuel* (2000).

⁶ Compare Foucault’s use of the tree diagram in *Surveiller et punir* (1975) to signify how abnormal bodies indicate the need for correction.

⁷ In Deleuze’s theory of cinema, movement (“mouvement-image”) is one of the concepts that the “cinéma-système” produces. Lines are the components of the Deleuzian “mouvement-image”. Felicity Colman (2011) describes these components as “the generative process of cinematographic consciousness” (14).

⁸ Wolves also symbolize the wider threat of socio-political fragmentation and a breakdown of values and traditions, what one critic calls the “anomal” (deviation) in Guiraudie’s cinema (Nicot 2016).

⁹ Grandena sees a similar process at work in *Drôle de Félix*: “Being constantly on the move and searching for impermanence, Félix rejects any lasting commitment with his temporary family members and enacts a deterritorialisation within the family” (Grandena 43).

¹⁰ Deleuze uses the word “arborescence” as part of the molar system of thought to convey the human subject as constitutive of memory. I discuss this notion later in the context of Guiraudie’s critique of psychoanalysis.

¹¹ Grandena explores this criss-crossing movement in *Drôle de Félix*: “The character’s experience of defamiliarisation and such destabilisation is central to the film’s protagonist who, as both a tourist and a nomad, experiences and enjoys the spatial liminality and the deterritorialisation inherent to the (criss)crossing of spaces” (Grandena 45).

¹² Grandena elaborates on the idea of Félix’s “in-betweenness” in *Drôle de Félix*, and points to Félix’s movement as an attempt, among other things, to reconstruct a new version of the nation: “Not only is the protagonist a nomad—his in-betweenness being central to his experience of both space and human communities—he is also a tourist who, eager to break away from the capitalist networks of remunerated employment, enjoys the bucolic purity of his immediate environment in a romantic and idealising manner.” (Grandena 45). My focus in this article is on in-betweenness as part of a queer transsexuality.

¹³ Freud’s phallus (The Oedipal complex) is an image of both symbolic depth and height. Deleuze seeks to rethink the destructive and violent nature of this phallic cartography by repairing and restoring its impact in ways that the phallus brings about a lining at the surface (see Deleuze’s chapter “Vingt-unième série: les bonnes intentions sont forcément punies” in *Logique du sens* (236-244)).

¹⁴ Grandena writes: “It is by staying away [straying] from long-term commitment with his immediate and ever-changing environment and the various encounters made during his existential journey that Félix succeeds in reviewing positively his relation to the world. Félix is rooted in uprootedness, allowing (re)territorialisation through deterritorialisation” (48) (my parentheses).

¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari use the phrase “affective athleticism” to refer to how a body as a non-organism produces sensation through spasm, force and movement.

¹⁶ “Thrownness” is a concept introduced by Martin Heidegger to describe humans’ individual existences as being thrown (*geworfen*) into the world.

¹⁷ “C’est que la sexualité a la capacité de faire communiquer l’élémentaire lupin et le cosmique: précisément parce qu’il opère une dissolution de la forme qui met en rapport les longitudes et les latitudes les plus diverses, les vitesses et les lenteurs les plus variées, et qui assure un

continuum en étendant la variation bien au-delà des ses limites formelles” (Deleuze 1990 : 379).

¹⁸ In *Le rose et le noir* (2008), Frédéric Martel used the word “indifférence” to signify gay invisibility (integration) as the desired objective of gay people. The differences between Deleuze’s imperceptibility and Martel’s indifference are numerous, not least the implication of Martel’s use of indifference as a sop to heteronormative republicanism.

¹⁹ For more on the role of fantasy in Guiraudie’s literary output, see McCaffrey (2016).

²⁰ The forest is a common trope in French cinema, and particularly the cinema of Jean-Luc Godard (*Weekend* (1967), *Dans la forêt* (2010) and *Les saisons* (2015)). His most recent feature films, *Film socialisme* (2010) and *Adieu au langage* (2014), are striking for their prominent imagery of nature: recurring images include water and forests, and one of the principal “characters” of *Adieu au langage* is a dog. The forest also features prominently in the recent cinema of Céline Sciamma (*Tomboy* (2011)). The forest, nature generally, has often been overlooked in Paris-centred French cinema, appearing as “a mere dot on the cinematic horizon” (Hayward 163). However, the forest is being reclaimed not only as a space of freedom and escapism for youth but as “a space of lyrical encounters and immersive perceptual episodes in opposition to the banal world of names, objects, roles and socialized identities” (Palmer 9). Vincent Borel’s novel *Un urban noir* (1995) offers a vision of nature as a balanced and self-sustaining system to which all living creatures belong, and which offers an order that is preserved by co-existence rather than cultural practice.

²¹ The “scaffold imaginary” – a metro/hetero normative construct – invokes a fixed verticality and a linear temporality. Guiraudie challenges this scaffold by shifting the focus to networks (horizontal) of relationalities, and the instructions and flows between people, events and sites of their coming together. The flat landscapes and hinterlands that are features of Guiraudie’s cinema are sympathetic to the way he reimagines queerness and queer intimacy; away from the hierarchies of individual identities and in coexistence with mutualities; away from linear temporalities and inside an “interbraiding” of temporalities (Mary Pat Brady 123).

²² Deleuze also draws a distinction between types of multiplicity (crowd multiplicity being organized and territorial whereas pack multiplicity is indicative of dispersion and metastability). Specifically, Deleuze differentiates between the wolf as pack leader and the wolf as crowd leader, the former operating singularly move by move in which the pack is constituted by lines of flight which are value-bearing. Each wolf is both alone and part of the pack. Each wolf rotates between centre and periphery in a constant mobility (each with its back always to the wilderness – this being the optimum schizo position). By contrast, the wolf as crowd leader moves according to carefully judged and inherited manoeuvres and assumptions. For the crowd leader, lines are clearly designated and integrated and are ascribed with negative value. In contrast to the positive schizo position of wolf as pack leader, the crowd leader is defined by paranoia, fear and threat. In other words, the subject identifies with being a leader and the group with a leader; being part of the crowd is security as well as fear of the periphery.

²³ Queer Studies have witnessed a “rural turn” in the last decade. Synonymous with traditional perceptions of gender and sexuality, the “rural turn” has embraced a critique of metronormativity and its spatial hegemony (Halberstam 2005; Boag 2003). In particular, critics have identified an alternative to heteronormative time in a “queer time” that is out of joint with sexual reproduction and family institutions. In particular, queer time challenges the linearity of heteronormative time. “The rural turn” takes into account the ways in which the spatial imaginary of queer studies may be troubled by a vertical metric. The concept of the rural, like all scalar and aggregate forms, are imbedded within the vertical hierarchy of a dangerous “scaffold imaginary” (Mary Pat Brady 114).

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