# Circuit Debater – Zeroth Circle – Hylomorphism and Queerness

#### *I would read pretty much any of the links with either alternative, and then construct a thesis to shape it depending on the affirmative. I read the Zoe alternative only once ☹ the QSB alternative I read all year, at almost every tournament I attended.*

## Links

### Link - Anthropology (Mapping) (50s)

#### The affirmative focus on mapping the world through description of “culture” produces a model in which all things are given externally imposed form through rational articulation – ignoring matter’s ability to exceed our control.

Jane Bennett, 2010

Bennett is a professor of political science at John Hopkins University, she is a founder of the critical-theory journal *Theory & Event*, and she is a specialist in ecological philosophy. “Vibrant Matter – A Political Ecology of Things” Duke University Press, Durham and London, pg 60-61.

I have so far been speaking of metal as if it existed independently of other materials. But metal is always metallurgical, always an alloy of the endeavors of many bodies, always something worked on by geological, biological, and often human agencies. And human metalworkers are themselves emergent effects of the vital materiality they work. "**We are**," says Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky, "**walking, talking minerals**."38 This theme, of the "it" inside the "I," is one to which I shall return at the end of the book. Indeed, Smith's central thesis in A History of Metallogra­ phy is that **it was the human metalworkers' intense intimacy with their material that enabled them, rather than** (the less hands-on) **scientists, to be the ones to first discover the polycrystalline structure of nonorganic matter.** The desire of the craftsperson to see what a metal can do, rather than the desire of the scientist to know what a metal is**, enabled the former to discern a life in metal and thus, eventually, to collaborate more productively with it.**39 Over the past decade or so, **many political theorists, geographers, art historians, philosophers, sociologists, dancers, literary theorists, and others have explored the contributions made by affect to public culture, whereby affect refers to how moods and aesthetic sensibilities influence ethics and politics as much as do words, arguments, and reasons.** While I agree that human affect is a key player, **in this book** **the focus is on an affect that is not only not fully susceptible to rational analysis or linguis­ tic representation but that is also not specific to humans, organisms, or even to bodies : the affect of technologies, winds, vegetables, minerals.** Social science has for a long time acknowledged that **however "cultural" an assemblage (e.g., capitalism, the military-industrial complex, gender) may be, it still can resist and elude cultural control. Social constructs are widely understood as having a negative "life" of their own.** The figure of a life pushes this point. First, a life is not only a negative recalcitrance but a positive, active virtuality: a quivering protoblob of creative elan. Second, **a life draws attention not to a lifeworld of human designs or their accidental, accumulated effects, but to an interstitial field of non­ personal, alluman forces, flows, tendencies, and trajectories. The project, then, is to theorize a kind of geoaffect or material vitality, a theory born of a methodological commitment to avoid anthropocen­ trism and biocentrism - or perhaps it is more accurate to say that it is born of an irrational love of matter.** Here another "prodigious idea" comes to mind: Mario Perniola's "the sex appeal of the inorganic:' Perniola posits the existence in humans of a "neutral sexuality, an abstract and endless excitation, ... with no concern for beauty, age, and in general, form." This neutral sexuality draws human bodies to apparently dead things -to objects, stones, bits of matter. Humans, inexplic ably, are "excited" by what we otherwise believe to be "altogether inadequate stimuli."40 The "sex appeal" of the inorganic, like a life, is another way to give voice to what I think of as a shi=ering, potentially violent vitality intrinsic to matter. **Vitalists, too, have insisted on the presence of some kind of ener­ getic, free agency whose spontaneity cannot be captured by the figure of bodies or by a mechanistic model of nature. But if for vitalists like Berg­ son and Hans Driesch, matter seemed to require a not-quite-material supplement, an elan vital or entelechy, to become animate and mobile, for Deleuze and Guattari it is clear that materiality needs no animating accessory. It is figured as itself the "active principle."**

### Link – Embodied Experience/Discourse (40s)

#### The focus on embodied experience and moral discourse produces a liberal individualism which imposes form upon otherwise flowing expressions. Expression exists primarily external to the “self” within a broader ecology in which our position as speakers is that of simple conduits within a larger ever-changing field of sounds, language, and affects.

Brian Massumi, 2002

Massumi is a Canadian social theorist and translator of French philosophy, he received his Ph.D from Yale University and has taught at Cornell, University of Montreal, EGS, UCLA, among other institutions. “A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari”

“There is a primacy of the collective assemblage of enunciation over language and words.” (ATP90) The “collective assemblage of enunciation” is the prong of the abstract machine that settles asignifying signs back into a functional form of expression (the “machinic assemblage of bodies” is the prong that does the same for content). It is not only the emphasis on the collective nature of the process that is worth remarking. More radically, Deleuze and Guattari are suggesting that there is an impersonal expressive agency that is not only not restricted to language, but whose process takes precedence over its operations. Expression is not in a language-using mind, or in a speaking subject vis à vis its objects. Neither is rooted in an individual body. It is not even in a particular institution, because it is the precisely the institutional system that is in flux. Expression is abroad in the world – where the potential is for what may become. It is nonlocal, scattered across a myriad struggles over what manner of life-defining nets will capture and contain that potential in reproducible articulations, or actual functions. Determinate minds, subjects, bodies, objects, and institutions are the result. The subject, its embodiment, the meanings and objects it might own, the institutions that come to governthem, these are all conduits through which a movement of expression streams. Expression adopts them for its temporary forms and substances, towards its own furtherance, in ongoing self redefintion. “The expressive is primary in relation to the possessive.” (ATP316) It was a moral precept of a certain era that one must “own” one’s enunciative position. A moral imperative was issued to speak responsibly from personal experience. But if expression is abroad in the world, it is not fundamentally ownable. It may well be morally domesticatable under certain conditions – many a moralizing capture through the ages attests to this – but only secondarily. “The ‘first’ language, or rather the first determination of language, is indirect discourse” – expression that cannot finally be attributed to a particularspeaker. “Language is not content to go from a first party to a second party, fromone who has seen to one who has not, but necessarily goes from a second party to a third party, neither of whom has seen.” (ATP76- 77). Expression is always on the move, always engrossed in its own course, overspilling individual experience, nomadically evading responsibility. It is selftransporting, serially acrossexperiences. “There is a self-movement of expressive qualities” that momentarily crystallizes into actual objects and and associated subject positions: “expressive qualities are auto-objective.” (ATP317) Expression is captured in passing by its auto-objectifications, but only ever provisionally. In C.S. Like a Thought 14 Peirces’s terms, it operates in the element of “thirdness”: already included in every passage from one to another is a potential relay to a third. Even as expression settles into a particular articulation, it is already extending what Deleuze and Guattari call “probe-heads” to a next, as-yet unknown destination: already shedding of itself, in the interests of its moving on. xii Expression’s self-movement is a continual stretch. Expression is tensile. “To express is not to depend upon; there is an autonomy of expression.” (ATP 317) What expression is most emphatically not dependent upon in the first instance is any purportedly generally applicable moral rule assigning responsibility for it or toward it. There is indeed an ethics ofexpression, which Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge and accept as a central problem. They insist on the term “ethics,” as opposed to morality, because the problem in their eyes is not in any primary fashion that of personal responsibility. It is a basically pragmatic question of how one performatively contributes to the stretch of expression in the world – or conversely prolongs its capture. This is fundamentally a creativeproblem. Where expression stretches, potential determinately emerges into something new. Expression’s tensing is by nature creative. Its passing brings into definite being. It is ontogenetic. To tend the stretch of expression, to foster and inflect it rather than trying to own it, is to enter the stream, contributing to its probings: this is co-creative, an aesthetic endeavor. It is also an ethical endeavor, since it is to ally oneself with change: for an ethics of emergence. The English translators of Guattari’s last work were right to subtitle its project an “ethico-aesthetic paradigm.”

### Link – Intersectionality (35s)

#### The affirmative’s politics based in intersectionality seeks to stabilize components of identification and weave them together into a narrative of pieces – this is the methodology utilized by liberal multiculturalism that attempts to contain the messiness of identity within gridded lines.

Jasbir K. Puar, 2007

Puar is a professor of Women’s and Genders Studies at Rutgers University. “Terrorist Assemblages, Homonationalism in Queer Times”

As there is no entity, no identity to queer, rather queerness coming forth at us from all directions, screaming its defiance, suggests to me a move from intersectionality to assemblage. The Deleuzian assemblage, as a series of dispersed but mutually implicated networks, draws together enunciation and dissolution, causality and effect. As opposed to an inter- sectional model of identity, which presumes components-race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, age, religion-are separable analytics and can be thus disassembled, an assemblage is more attuned to interwoven forces that merge and dissipate time, space, and body against linearity, coherency, and permanency. Intersectionality demands the knowing, naming, and thus stabilizing of identity across space and time, generating narratives of progress that deny the fictive and performative of identification: you become an identity, yes, but also timelessness works to consolidate the fiction of a seamless stable identity in every space. **As a tool of diversity management, and a mantra of liberal multiculturalism, intersectionality colludes with the disciplinary apparatus of the state-census, demography, racial profiling, surveillance-in that "difference" is encased within a structural container that simply wishes the messiness of identity into a formulaic grid. Displacing queerness as an identity or modality that is visibly**, audibly, legibly, or tangibly **evident**, **assemblages allow us to attune to intensities, emotions, energies, affectivities, textures as they inhabit events, spatiality, and corporealities. lntersectionality privileges naming**, visuality, epistemology, representation, and meaning, **while assemblage underscores feeling, tactility, ontology, affect, and information.** Most important, given the heightened death-machine aspect of nationalism in our contemporary political terrain-a heightened sensorial and anatomical domination described by Achille Mbembe as "necropolitics"-**assemblages work against narratives** of U.S. exceptionalism **that secure empire, challenging the fixity of racial and sexual taxonomies that inform practices of state surveillance and control, and befuddling the "us versus them" of the war on terror. For while intersectionality and its underpinnings-an unrelenting epistemological will to truth-presupposes identity and thus disavows futurity, assemblage, in its debt to ontology and its espousal of what cannot be known, seen, or heard, or has yet to be known, seen, or heard, allows for becoming/s beyond being/s."**

### Link – Identity Politics/Non-Being (35s)

#### The affirmative’s focus on autonomy and identity serves to lock existence within the normative organism and forecloses the actualization of non-being and inorganic queer forces.

Claire Colebrook, 2009

“On the very possibility of queer theory” in “Deleuze and Queer Theory” edited by Chrysanthi Nigianni and Merl Storr, Edinburgh University Press, p. 19-21

**In political terms we can also distinguish iterative and positive repetition**. For Butler, an individual does not exist ex nihilo but can be a self only through an other which it repeats and modifies. So, for example, **claiming to be a queer subject might involve laying claim to certain normative practices – such as marriage and gender – which would have the effect both of normalising the self by subjection to convention and recognition. To a certain extent all politics is queer politics or the negotiation between the degrees of repetition to which the self submits and the amount of deviation or difference from normativity the self can effect. The queer is negative, defined as the difference from those conditions of recognition and normativity which both enable and preclude autonomy**. Deleuze offers a quite different ontology and ethics of non-being. **We are mistaken if we think of non-existence as the failure, deviation or difference from the present and actual. We need to think of non-being as positive, real and affirmative. Each existing, actualised individual is therefore the actualisation of a non-being, which is better defined as ‘?-being’ or as a series of problems. The queer self might be better thought of as a counteractualisation of the material repetitions that make up ‘man’. We could see marriage in its current bourgeois normative and heterosexual form as the solution to a certain problem or question: how the self forms its gender, manages its desires and property, and organises its child-rearing. But the queer self would repeat the problems that compose the self: counteractualising the present by drawing on the pure past of the questions from which we have emerged**. How might a self desire, what might count as an object of one’s desire, what relations or events might the couplings of bodies produce and enable? Thus, whereas Butler’s model of theory is to begin with the subject and then interrogate its conditions of possibility in the tension between recognition and autonomy, Deleuze’s theory is one of positive intuition. Here, we go beyond composed selves and problems to the affects and intensities from which they are organized . For Butler a queer theory is one in which the conditions of being a subject are essentially queer – one must claim to speak as a self, but can do so only through an other who is not oneself. At the same time, the condition for being queer is being a subject: one must be recognised as having a claim to speak, be and exist. **For Deleuze, the conditions of theory require a going ‘beyond’ of the self and the organism. As long as we are concerned with identity, with the repetition of who we are, we remain within constituted matter and lived time. To think transcendentally we need to think the pure form of time and difference, the pure intensities which each present repeats and actualises both in the present and for all time.** For Deleuze, then, the conditions of the queer and the conditions of the new are the same: to counter- actualise the present, to repeat the intensities and encounters that have composed us, but not as they are for us. **In quite specific terms this requires a radical and distinct break from identity politics. As long as ethics is defined as the maintenance of individuals as they are we restrict the potentiality of life to one of its constituted forms. Only by thinking intensities beyond the human can we begin to live ethically. Thus queer politics would involve neither recognition of the self, nor a refusal of normativity, but the affirmation of the prepersonal.** Rather than assessing political problems according to their meaning and convention – or the relations that organise certain affects and desires – we need to think desires according to virtual series, all the encounters that are potential or not yet actualised.

### Queerness – Pinkwashing/Homonationalism (30s)

#### The affirmative's act of including queer groups under the power of the state is just an act of pinkwashing – a persuasive political discourse fueled by modified neoliberalism in attempt to normalize homosexuality and legitimize alternate forms of hidden violence, they advocate a system of politics that throws in the queer and stirs

Puar 2013 (Jasbir K., PhD. in Ethnic Studies, Director of the Graduate Program of the top-ranked Women's and Gender Studies Department at Rutgers University, "Homonationalism As Assemblage: Viral Travels, Affective Sexualities", Jindal Global law review Vol:4 Issue: 2 published November 2013, page 33-34)

In keeping with the movement of homonationalism-as-assemblage in its questioning of periodisation and progress, this section discusses what has become known as pinkwashing, or the practice of covering over or distracting from a nation’s policies of discriminationof some populations through a noisy touting of its gay rights for a limited few.29 I focus on Palestine/Israel here for two reasons: one, because after the U.S., Israel is, in my estimation, the greatest benefactor of homonationalism, for reasons in part because of its entwinement with the U.S., but not only; and two, because Israel has been accused of ‘pinkwashing’ in a manner that apparently no other nation-state does, and I have been unconvinced that pinkwashing is a practice singular to the Israeli state. Quite simply, pinkwashing has been defined as the Israeli state’s use of its stellar LGBT rights record to deflect attention from, and in some instances to justify or legitimate, its occupation of Palestine. Resonating within a receptive field of globalised Islamophobia significantly amplified since 9/11 and reliant on a civilisational narrative about the modernity of the Israelis juxtaposed with the backward homophobia of the Palestinians**,** pinkwashing has become a commonly used tag for the cynical promotion of LGBT bodies as representative of Israeli democracy. As such, it functions as a form of discursive pre-emptive securitisation. Why is pinkwashing legible and persuasive as a political discourse? First of all, a neoliberal accommodationist economic structure engenders the niche marketing of various ethnic and minoritised groups and has normalised the production of a gay and lesbian tourism industry built on the discursive distinction between gay-friendly and not-gay-friendly destinations. Most nations that aspire to forms of western or European modernity now have gay and lesbian tourism marketing campaigns. In that sense, Israel is doing what other states do and what is solicited by the gay and lesbian tourism industry – promoting itself. We can of course notice that the effects of this promotion are deeply detrimental in the case of the occupation. But we might want to pose questions about the specifics of the ‘Brand Israel Campaign,’ which has been located as the well-spring of Israel’s pinkwashing. How does the Brand Israel Campaign differ from a conventional state-sponsored advertising campaign targeting gay and lesbian tourists?30 Additionally, in some senses Israel is a pioneer of homonationalism as its particular position at the crosshairs of settler colonialism, occupation, and neoliberalist accommodationismcreates the perfect storm for the normalisation of homosexuality. The homonationalist history of Israel – the rise of LGBT rights in Israel and increased mobility for gays and lesbians – parallels the concomitant increased segregation and decreased mobility of Palestinian populations, especially post-Oslo.31 I have detailed this point at greater length elsewhere, but to quickly summarise: the advent of gay rights in Israel begins around the same time as the first Intifada, with the 1990s known as Israel’s ‘gay decade’ brought on by the legalisation of homosexuality in the Israeli Defence Forces, workplace anti-discrimination provisions, and numerous other legislative changes.32 Pinkwashing operates through an erasure of the spatial logics of control of the Occupation and the intricate and even intimate system of apartheid replete with a dizzying array of locational obstacles to Palestinian mobility. That queer Palestinian activists in Ramallah cannot travel to Haifa, Jersusalem, or Gaza to meet fellow Palestinian activists seems to be one of the most obvious ways the Israeli occupation delimits – prohibits, in fact – the possibilities for the flourishing of queer communities and organising that Israelis have enjoyed without hassle. Instead of understanding access to mobility and congregation as constitutive of queer identity and community, pinkwashing reinforces ideologies of the clash of cultures and the ‘cultural difference’ of Palestinian homophobia rather than recognising the constraining and suffocating spatial and economic effects of apartheid. Questions about the treatment of homosexuals in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip fail to take into account the constant and omnipresent restrictions on mobility, contact, and organising necessary to build any kind of queer presence and politics. What becomes clear is that the purported concern for the status of homosexuals in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is being used to shield the Occupation from direct culpability in suppressing, indeed endangering, those very homosexuals. Further, the LGBT rights project itself relies on the impossibility/ absence/ non-recognition of a proper Palestinian queer subject, except within the purview of the Israeli state itself. It presents the ‘gay haven’ of Tel Aviv33 as representative of the entire country and unexamined in terms of its Arab cleansing, while also maintaining Jerusalem as the religious safeguard. As its shorthand use proliferates in anti-occupation organising forums internationally, pinkwashing must be situated within its wider homonationalising geopolitical context. That is to say, if pinkwashing is effective, it is not because of some outstandingly egregious activity on the part of the Israeli government, but because both history and global international relations matter. So while it is crucial to challenge the Israeli state, it must be done in a manner which acknowledges that the assemblage of homonationalism going beyond the explicit activities of any one nationstate, even Israel. Building on theoretical points first articulated in TA, I contend that it is crucial to keep in mind that pinkwashing appears to be an effective strategy not necessarily because of any exceptional activities on the part of the Israeli state but because of the history of settler colonial violence, the international LGBT tourism industry, the gay and lesbian human rights industry, and finally, the role of the U.S.

## Impact

### Impact – Queer Conviviality (35s)

#### Our displacing of subjectivity enables the creation of spaces of queerness – these allow inhuman forces to come together into a cathartic gathering that is necessary to found ethical ways of living.

Puar 10. Jasbir Puar, professor of women’s and gender studies at Rutgers University, Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory, Vol. 19, No. 2, July 2009, pg. 168

Out of the numerous possibilities that ‘‘assemblage theory’’ offers, much of it has already begun to transform queer theory, from Elizabeth Grosz’s crucial re-reading of the relations between bodies and prosthetics (which complicates not only the contours of bodies in relation to forms of bodily discharge, but also complicates the relationships to objects, such as cell phones, cars, wheelchairs, and the distinctions between them as capacity-enabling devices) (1994), to Donna Haraway’s cyborgs (1991), to Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘‘BwO’’ (Bodies without Organs – organs, loosely defined, rearranged against the presumed natural ordering of bodily capacity) (1987). I want to close by foregrounding the analytic power of conviviality that may further complicate how subjects are positioned, underscoring instead more fluid relations between capacity and debility. Conviviality, unlike notions of resistance, oppositionality, subversion or transgression (facets of queer exceptionalism that unwittingly dovetail with modern narratives of progress in modernity), foregrounds categories such as race, gender, and sexuality as events – as encounters – rather than as entities or attributes of the subject. Surrendering certain notions of revolution, identity politics, and social change – the ‘‘big utopian picture’’ that Massumi complicates in the opening epigraph of this essay – conviviality instead always entails an ‘‘experimental step.’’ Why the destabilization of the subject of identity and a turn to affect matters is because affect – as a bodily matter – makes identity politics both possible and yet impossible. In its conventional usage, conviviality means relating to, occupied with, or fond of feasting, drinking, and good company – to be merry, festive, together at a table, with companions and guests, and hence, to live with. As an attribute and function of assembling, however, conviviality does not lead to a politics of the universal or inclusive common, nor an ethics of individuatedness, rather the futurity enabled through the open materiality of bodies as a Place to Meet. We could usefully invoke Donna Haraway’s notion of ‘‘encounter value’’ here, a ‘‘becoming with’’ companionate (and I would also add, incompanionate) species, whereby actors are the products of relating, not pre-formed before the encounter (2008, 16). Conviviality is an ethical orientation that rewrites a Levinasian taking up of the ontology of the Other by arguing that there is no absolute self or other,15 rather bodies that come together and dissipate through intensifications and vulnerabilities, insistently rendering bare the instability of the divisions between capacity-endowed and debility-laden bodies. These encounters are rarely comfortable mergers but rather entail forms of eventness that could potentially unravel oneself but just as quickly be recuperated through a restabilized self, so that the political transformation is invited, as Arun Saldhana writes, through ‘‘letting yourself be destabilized by the radical alterity of the other, in seeing his or her difference not as a threat but as a resource to question your own position in the world’’ (2007, 118). Conviviality is thus open to its own dissolution and self-annihilation and less interested in a mandate to reproduce its terms of creation or sustenance, recognizing that political critique must be open to the possibility that it might disrupt and alter the conditions of its own emergence such that it is no longer needed – an openness to something other than what we might have hoped for. This is my alternative approach to Lee Edelman’s No Future, then, one that is not driven by rejecting the figure of the child as the overdetermined outcome of ‘‘reproductive futurism’’ (2004),16 but rather complicates the very terms of the regeneration of queer critique itself. Thus the challenge before us is how to craft convivial political praxis that does not demand a continual reinvestment in its form and content, its genesis or its outcome, the literalism of its object nor the direction of its drive.

### Impact – Liberal Human Subject (50s)

#### Liberal subject formation is predicated on the imperative uphold a peaceful order that is enacted by the erasure of political difference through unending war fought on the basis of justifying particular modes of life as normal.

Brad Evans, 2010

Evans is a Lecturer in the School of Politics and International Studies at the University of Leeds and Programme Director for International Relations, “Foucault’s Legacy: Security, War, and Violence in the 21st Century,” Security Dialogue vol.41, no. 4, August 2010, pg. 422-424.

Imposing liberalism has often come at a price. That price has tended to be a continuous recourse to war. While the militarism associated with liberal internationalization has already received scholarly attention (Howard, 2008), Foucault was concerned more with the continuation of war once peace has been declared.4 Denouncing the illusion that ‘we are living in a world in which order and peace have been restored’ (Foucault, 2003: 53), he set out to disrupt the neat distinctions between times of war/military exceptionalism and times of peace/civic normality. War accordingly now appears to condition the type of peace that follows. None have been more ambitious in map-­ ping out this war–peace continuum than Michael Dillon & Julian Reid (2009). Their ‘liberal war’ thesis provides a provocative insight into the lethality of making live. Liberalism today, they argue, is underwritten by the unreserved righteousness of its mission. Hence, while there may still be populations that exist beyond the liberal pale, it is now taken that they should be included. With ‘liberal peace’ therefore predicated on the pacification/elimination of all forms of political difference in order that liberalism might meet its own moral and political objectives, the more peace is commanded, the more war is declared in order to achieve it: ‘In proclaiming peace . . . liberals are nonetheless committed also to making war.’ This is the ‘martial face of liberal power’ that, contrary to the familiar narrative, is ‘directly fuelled by the universal and pacific ambitions for which liberalism is to be admired’ (Dillon & Reid, 2009: 2). Liberalism thus stands accused here of universalizing war in its pursuit of peace: However much liberalism abjures war, indeed finds the instrumental use of war, especially, a scandal, war has always been as instrumental to liberal as to geopolitical thinkers. In that very attempt to instrumentalize, indeed universalize, war in the pursuit of its own global project of emancipation, the practice of liberal rule itself becomes profoundly shaped by war. However much it may proclaim liberal peace and freedom, its own allied commitment to war subverts the very peace and freedoms it proclaims (Dillon & Reid, 2009: 7). While Dillon & Reid’s thesis only makes veiled reference to the onto-­ theological dimension, they are fully aware that its rule depends upon a certain religiosity in the sense that war has now been turned into a veritable human crusade with only two possible outcomes: ‘endless war or the transformation of other societies and cultures into liberal societies and cul-­ tures’ (Dillon & Reid, 2009: 5). Endless war is underwritten here by a new set of problems. Unlike Clausewitzean confrontations, which at least provided the strategic comforts of clear demarcations (them/us, war/peace, citizen/soldier, and so on), these wars no longer benefit from the possibility of scoring outright victory, retreating, or achieving a lasting negotiated peace by means of political compromise. Indeed, deprived of the prospect of defining enmity in advance, war itself becomes just as complex, dynamic, adaptive and radically interconnected as the world of which it is part. That is why ‘any such war to end war becomes a war without end. . . . The project of removing war from the life of the species becomes a lethal and, in principle, continuous and unending process’ (Dillon & Reid, 2009: 32). Duffield, building on from these concerns, takes this unending scenario a stage further to suggest that since wars for humanity are inextricably bound to the global life-­chance divide, it is now possible to write of a ‘Global Civil War’ into which all life is openly recruited: Each crisis of global circulation . . . marks out a terrain of global civil war, or rather a tableau of wars, which is fought on and between the modalities of life itself. . . . What is at stake in this war is the West’s ability to contain and manage international poverty while maintaining the ability of mass society to live and consume beyond its means (Duffield, 2008: 162). Setting out civil war in these terms inevitably marks an important depar-­ ture. Not only does it illustrate how liberalism gains its mastery by posing fundamental questions of life and death – that is, who is to live and who can be killed – disrupting the narrative that ordinarily takes sovereignty to be the point of theoretical departure, civil war now appears to be driven by a globally ambitious biopolitical imperative (see below). Liberals have continuously made reference to humanity in order to justify their use of military force (Ignatieff, 2003). War, if there is to be one, must be for the unification of the species. This humanitarian caveat is by no means out of favour. More recently it underwrites the strategic rethink in contemporary zones of occupation, which has become biopolitical (‘hearts and minds’) in everything but name (Kilcullen, 2009; Smith, 2006). While criticisms of these strategies have tended to focus on the naive dangers associated with liberal idealism (see Gray, 2008), insufficient attention has been paid to the contested nature of all the tactics deployed in the will to govern illiberal populations. Foucault returns here with renewed vigour. He understood that forms of war have always been aligned with forms of life. Liberal wars are no exception. Fought in the name of endangered humanity, humanity itself finds its most meaningful expression through the battles waged in its name: At this point we can invert Clausewitz’s proposition and say that politics is the continuation of war by other means. . . . While it is true that political power puts an end to war and establishes or attempts to establish the reign of peace in civil society, it certainly does not do so in order to suspend the effects of power or to neutralize the disequilibrium revealed in the last battle of war (Foucault, 2003: 15). What in other words occurs beneath the semblance of peace is far from politically settled: political struggles, these clashes over and with power, these modifications of relations of force – the shifting balances, the reversals – in a political system, all these things must be interpreted as a continuation of war. And they are interpreted as so many episodes, fragmentations, and displacements of the war itself. We are always writing the history of the same war, even when we are writing the history of peace and its institutions (Foucault, 2003: 15). David Miliband (2009), without perhaps knowing the full political and philo-­ sophical implications, appears to subscribe to the value of this approach, albeit for an altogether more committed deployment: NATO was born in the shadow of the Cold War, but we have all had to change our thinking as our troops confront insurgents rather than military machines like our own. The mental models of 20th century mass warfare are not fit for 21st century counterinsurgency. That is why my argument today has been about the centrality of politics. People like quoting Clausewitz that warfare is the continuation of politics by other means. . . . We need politics to become the continuation of warfare by other means. Miliband’s ‘Foucauldian moment’ should not escape us. Inverting Clausewitz on a planetary scale – hence promoting the collapse of all meaningful distinctions that once held together the fixed terms of Newtonian space (i.e. inside/outside, friend/enemy, citizen/soldier, war/peace, and so forth), he firmly locates the conflict among the world of peoples. With global war there-­ fore appearing to be an internal state of affairs, vanquishing enemies can no longer be sanctioned for the mere defence of things. A new moment has arrived, in which the destiny of humanity as a whole is being wagered on the success of humanity’s own political strategies. No coincidence, then, that authors like David Kilcullen – a key architect in the formulation of counterinsurgency strategies in Iraq and Afghanistan, argue for a global insurgency paradigm without too much controversy. Viewed from the perspective of power, global insurgency is after all nothing more than the advent of a global civil war fought for the biopolitical spoils of life. Giving primacy to counter-­ insurgency, it foregrounds the problem of populations so that questions of security governance (i.e. population regulation) become central to the war effort (RAND, 2008). Placing the managed recovery of maladjusted life into the heart of military strategies, it insists upon a joined-­up response in which sovereign/militaristic forms of ordering are matched by biopolitical/devel-­ opmental forms of progress (Bell & Evans, forthcoming). Demanding in other words a planetary outlook, it collapses the local into the global so that life’s radical interconnectivity implies that absolutely nothing can be left to chance. While liberals have therefore been at pains to offer a more humane recovery to the overt failures of military excess in current theatres of operation, warfare has not in any way been removed from the species. Instead, humanized in the name of local sensitivities, doing what is necessary out of global species necessity now implies that war effectively takes place by every means. Our understanding of civil war is invariably recast. Sovereignty has been the traditional starting point for any discussion of civil war. While this is a well-established Eurocentric narrative, colonized peoples have never fully accepted the inevitability of the transfixed utopian prolificacy upon which sovereign power increasingly became dependent. Neither have they been completely passive when confronted by colonialism’s own brand of warfare by other means. Foucault was well aware of this his-­ tory. While Foucauldian scholars can therefore rightly argue that alternative histories of the subjugated alone permit us to challenge the monopolization of political terms – not least ‘civil war’ – for Foucault in particular there was something altogether more important at stake: there is no obligation whatsoever to ensure that reality matches some canonical theory. Despite what some scholars may insist, politically speaking there is nothing that is necessarily proper to the sovereign method. It holds no distinct privilege. Our task is to use theory to help make sense of reality, not vice versa. While there is not the space here to engage fully with the implications of our global civil war paradigm, it should be pointed out that since its biopolitical imperative removes the inevitability of epiphenomenal tensions, nothing and nobody is necessarily dangerous simply because location dictates. With enmity instead depending upon the complex, adaptive, dynamic account of life itself, what becomes dangerous emerges from within the liberal imaginary of threat. Violence accordingly can only be sanctioned against those newly appointed enemies of humanity – a phrase that, immeasurably greater than any juridical category, necessarily affords enmity an internal quality inherent to the species complete, for the sake of planetary survival. Vital in other words to all human existence, doing what is necessary out of global species necessity requires a new moral assay of life that, pitting the universal against the particular, willingly commits violence against any ontological commitment to political difference, even though universality itself is a shallow disguise for the practice of destroying political adversaries through the contingency of particular encounters. Necessary Violence Having established that the principal task set for biopolitical practitioners is to sort and adjudicate between the species, modern societies reveal a distinct biopolitical aporia (an irresolvable political dilemma) in the sense that making life live – selecting out those ways of life that are fittest by design – inevitably writes into that very script those lives that are retarded, backward, degenerate, wasteful and ultimately dangerous to the social order (Bauman, 1991). Racism thus appears here to be a thoroughly modern phenomenon (Deleuze & Guattari, 2002). This takes us to the heart of our concern with biopolitical rationalities. When ‘life itself’ becomes the principal referent for political struggles, power necessarily concerns itself with those biological threats to human existence (Palladino, 2008). That is to say, since life becomes the author of its own (un)making, the biopolitical assay of life necessarily portrays a commitment to the supremacy of certain species types: ‘a race that is portrayed as the one true race, the race that holds power and is entitled to define the norm, and against those who deviate from that norm, against those who pose a threat to the biological heritage’ (Foucault, 2003: 61). Evidently, what is at stake here is no mere sovereign affair. Epiphenomenal tensions aside, racial problems occupy a ‘permanent presence’ within the political order (Foucault, 2003: 62). Biopolitically speaking, then, since it is precisely through the internalization of threat – the constitution of the threat that is now from the dangerous ‘Others’ that exist within – that societies reproduce at the level of life the ontological commitment to secure the subject, since everybody is now possibly dangerous and nobody can be exempt, for political modernity to function one always has to be capable of killing in order to go on living: Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity; massacres have become vital. . . . The principle underlying the tactics of battle – that one has to become capable of killing in order to go on living – has become the principle that defines the strategy of states (Foucault, 1990: 137). When Foucault refers to ‘killing’, he is not simply referring to the vicious act of taking another life: ‘When I say “killing”, I obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection and so on’ (Foucault, 2003: 256). Racism makes this process of elimination possible, for it is only through the discourse and practice of racial (dis)qualification that one is capable of introducing ‘a break in the domain of life that is under power’s control: the break between what must live and what must die’ (Foucault, 2003: 255). While kill- ing does not need to be physically murderous, that is not to suggest that we should lose sight of the very real forms of political violence that do take place in the name of species improvement. As Deleuze (1999: 76) duly noted, when notions of security are invoked in order to preserve the destiny of a species, when the defence of society gives sanction to very real acts of violence that are justified in terms of species necessity, that is when the capacity to legitimate murderous political actions in all our names and for all our sakes becomes altogether more rational, calculated, utilitarian, hence altogether more frightening: When a diagram of power abandons the model of sovereignty in favour of a disciplinary model, when it becomes the ‘bio-­power’ or ‘bio-­politics’ of populations, controlling and administering life, it is indeed life that emerges as the new object of power. At that point law increasingly renounces that symbol of sovereign privilege, the right to put someone to death, but allows itself to produce all the more hecatombs and genocides: not by returning to the old law of killing, but on the contrary in the name of race, precious space, conditions of life and the survival of a population that believes itself to be better than its enemy, which it now treats not as the juridical enemy of the old sovereign but as a toxic or infectious agent, a sort of ‘biological danger’. Auschwitz arguably represents the most grotesque, shameful and hence meaningful example of necessary killing – the violence that is sanctioned in the name of species necessity (see Agamben, 1995, 2005). Indeed, for Agamben, since one of the most ‘essential characteristics’ of modern biopolitics is to constantly ‘redefine the threshold in life that distinguishes and separates what is inside from what is outside’, it is within those sites that ‘eliminate radically the people that are excluded’ that the biopolitical racial imperative is exposed in its most brutal form (Agamben, 1995: 171). The camp can therefore be seen to be the defining paradigm of the modern insomuch as it is a ‘space in which power confronts nothing other than pure biological life without any media-­ tion’ (Agamben, 1995: 179). While lacking Agamben’s intellectual sophistry, such a Schmittean-­inspired approach to violence – that is, sovereignty as the ability to declare a state of juridical exception – has certainly gained wide-­ spread academic currency in recent times. The field of international relations, for instance, has been awash with works that have tried to theorize the ‘exceptional times’ in which we live (see, in particular, Devetak, 2007; Kaldor, 2007). While some of the tactics deployed in the ‘Global War on Terror’ have undoubtedly lent credibility to these approaches, in terms of understanding violence they are limited. Violence is only rendered problematic here when it is associated with some act of unmitigated geopolitical excess (e.g. the invasion of Iraq, Guantánamo Bay, use of torture, and so forth). This is unfortunate. Precluding any critical evaluation of the contemporary forms of violence that take place within the remit of humanitarian discourses and practices, there is a categorical failure to address how necessary violence continues to be an essential feature of the liberal encounter. Hence, with post-interventionary forms of violence no longer appearing to be any cause for concern, the nature of the racial imperative that underwrites the violence of contemporary liberal occupations is removed from the analytical arena.

### Impact – Anthropocene/Extinction (50s)

#### The Anthropocene marks our world in which humans control the fate of all species yet refuse to acknowledge our bringing about of “natural” disasters. Such liberalism reaffirms the human as abject from nature and enables a necropolitics that exceeds pure “management of life” in favor of control of disposability and death along lines of difference - this enables the drive towards extinction of all species and underpins global structures of ecological and structural violence.

Rosi Braidotti, 2013

Braidotti was the founding Director of the Netherlands research school of Women’s Studies, she is currently Distinguished University Professor at Utrecht University and founding Director of the Centre for the Humanities as well as the founding Professor in Women’s Studies. “The Posthuman”, Polity Press.

We saw in the previous chapter that the posthuman predicament understood as the bio-political management of living matter is post-anthropocentric in character, raising the need for a Life/zoe-centred approach. Now I want to go a step further and argue that posthuman vital politics shifts the boundaries between life and death and consequently deals not only with the government of the living, but also with practices of dying. Most of these are linked to inhuman(e) social and political phenomena such as poverty, famine and homelessness, which Zillah Eisenstein aptly labelled as ‘global obscenities’ (1998). Vandana Shiva (1997) stresses the extent to which bio-power has already turned into a form of ‘biopiracy’, which calls for very grounded and concrete political analyses. Thus, the bodies of the empirical subjects who signify difference (woman/native/earth or natural others) have become the disposable bodies of the global economy. Contemporary capitalism is indeed ‘bio-political’ in that it aims at controlling all that lives, as Foucault argues, but because Life is not the prerogative of humans only, it opens up a zoe-political or post-anthropocentric dimension. If anxiety about extinction was common in the nuclear era, the posthuman condition, of the anthropocene, extends the death horizon to most species. Yet there is a very important difference, as Chakrabarty points out: ‘A nuclear war would have been a conscious decision on the part of the powers that be. Climate change is an unintended consequence of human actions as a species’ (2009: 221). This not only inaugurates a negative or reactive form of pan-human planetary bond, which recomposes humanity around a commonly shared bond of vulnerability, but also connects the human to the fate of other species, as I argued in the previous chapter. Death and destruction are the common denominators for this transversal alliance. Let me give you some examples of contemporary ways of dying to illustrate this political economy. The posthuman aspects of globalization encompass many phenomena that, while not being a prioriinhumane, still trigger significant destructive aspects. The postsecular condition, with the rise 112 The Inhuman: Life beyond Death of religious extremism in a variety of forms, including Christian fundamentalism, entails a political regression of the rights of women, homosexuals and all sexual minorities. Significant signs of this regression are the decline in reproductive rights and the rise of violence against women and GLBT people. The effect of global financial networks and unchecked hedge funds has been an increase in poverty, especially among youth and women, affected by the disparity in access to the new technologies. The status of children is a chapter apart; from forced labour, to the child-soldier phenomenon, childhood has been violently inserted in infernal cycles of exploitation. Bodily politics has shifted, with the simultaneous emergence of cyborgs on the one hand and **renewed forms of vulnerability** on the other. Thus, next to the proliferation of pandemics like SARS, Ebola, HIV, birdflu and others, more familiar epidemics have also returned, notably malaria and tuberculosis, so much so that health has become a public policy issue as well as a human rights concern. The point is that Life/zoe can be a threatening force, as well as a generative one. A great deal of health and environmental concerns as well as geo-political issues, simply blur the distinction between life and death. In the era of biogenetic capitalism and nature–culture continuum, zoehas become an infra-human force and all the attention is now drawn to the emergency of disappearing nature. For instance, the public discourse about environmental catastrophes or ‘natural’ disasters – the Fukushima nuclear plant and the Japanese tsunami, the Australian bushfires, hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, etc. – accomplishes a significant doublebind: it expresses a new ecological awareness, while re-inserting the distinction between nature and culture. As Protevi argues (2009), this results in the paradoxical re-naturalization of our bio-technologically mediated environment. The geo-political forces are simultaneously re-naturalized and subjected to the old hierarchical power relations determined by the dominant politics of the anthropomorphic subject. Public discourse has become simultaneously moralistic about the inhuman forces of the environment and quite hypocritical in perpetuating anthropocentric arrogance. This position results in the denial of the man-made structure of the catastrophes that we continue to attribute to forces beyond our collective control, like the earth, the cosmos or ‘nature’. Our public morality is simply not up to the challenge of the scale and the complexity of damages engendered by our technological advances. This gives rise to a double ethical urgency: firstly, how to turn anxiety and the tendency to mourn the loss of the natural order into effective social and political action, and secondly, how to ground such an action in the responsibility for future generation, in the spirit of social sustainability that I have also explored elsewhere (Braidotti, 2006). Another significant case in point is the posthuman digital universe that I analysed in the previous chapter and which engenders its own inhuman variables. They are best manifested by the proliferation of viruses, both computer-based and organic, some of which transit from animals to humans and back. Illness is clearly not only a prerogative of organic entities, but includes a widespread practice of mutual contamination between organic matter – anthropomorphic or not – and electronic circuitry. A rather complex symbiotic relationship has emerged in our cyber universe: a sort of mutual dependence between the flesh and the machine. This engenders some significant paradoxes, namely that the corporeal site of subjectivity is simultaneously denied, in practices of human enhancement and in fantasies of escape via techno-transcendence, and it is also re-enforced as increased vulnerability. Balsamo (1996) argues that digital technology promotes dreams of immortality and control over life and death: ‘And yet, such beliefs about the technological future “life” of the body are complemented by a palpable fear of death and annihilation from uncontrollable and spectacular body-threats: antibiotic-resistant viruses, random contamination, flesh-eating bacteria’ (Balsamo, 1996: 1–2). The inhuman forces of technology have moved into the body, intensifying the spectral reminders of the corpse-to-come. Our social imaginary has taken a forensic turn. Popular culture and the infotainment industry are quick to pick up this contradictory trend that reflects the changing status of the demise of the human body, including illness, death and extinction. The corpse is not only a daily presence in global media and journalistic news, but also an object of 114 The Inhuman: Life beyond Death entertainment in contemporary popular culture, notably in the successful genre of forensic detectives. Culture and the arts have been very sensitive in registering the rise in women who kill, as shown by the success of recent literary and stage renditions of classics like Hecuba and Medea. Not to mention, of course, the global appeal of sharp-shooting Lara Croft in the world of computer games. The evolution of gender roles towards a more egalitarian participation by both sexes in the business of killing is one of the most problematic aspects of contemporary gender politics. They can be summarized as the shift from the universal Human Rights stance of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, to the brutal interventionism of the Chechnya war widows, pregnant female suicide-bombers and the growing role of women in the military ‘Humanism’ of ‘humanitarian’ wars. Spiritual death is part of the picture as well, if we take into account contemporary embodied social practices that are often pathologized and never addressed fully, such as addictions, eating disorders and melancholia, burn-out and states of apathy and disaffection. I propose not to simply classify these practices as self-destructive, but rather to see them as normatively neutral manifestations of interaction with and resistance to the political economy of commodification of all that lives. They exemplify the shifting social relations between living and dying in the era of the politics of ‘life itself’. The currency granted to both legal (Ritalin, Prozac) and illegal drugs in contemporary culture blurs the boundaries between self-destruction and fashionable behaviour and forces a reconsideration of what is the value of ‘life itself’. Last but not least, assisted suicide and euthanasia practices are challenging the Law to rest on the tacit assumption of a self-evident value attributed to ‘Life’. As is often the case, advanced capitalism functions by schizoid or internally contradictory moves. Thus, a socially enforced ideology of fitness, health and eternal youth goes hand in hand with increased social disparities in the provision of health care and in mortality rates among infants and youth. The obsession with being ‘forever young’ works in tandem with and forms the counterpart of social practices of euthanasia and assisted death. The moment one starts thinking about it, multiple ways of dying, of inflicting death and suffering losses are proliferating The Inhuman: Life beyond Death 115 around us. And yet, when it comes to accounting for them, social theory tends to refer to this political economy as ‘bio’-political. What does life (bios) have to do with it, though? Bio-political analyses since Foucault have transformed the field and introduced more precise understandings of what is involved in the management of the living. Why is not the same degree of analytical precision devoted to the analysis of the necro-political management of dying? Both the quantity and the scale of the changes that have taken place in social and personal practices of dying, in ways of killing and forms of extinction, as well as the creativity of mourning rituals and the necessity of bereavement, are such as to support the expansion of the socio-cultural agenda. This includes the emergence of a new discursive domain. ‘Death Studies’ has become a new and much needed addition to the academic landscape, growing out of the 1970s counter-culture into a serious interdisciplinary area that includes moral and religious discussions about mortality, but also research in social, policy and health issues as well as the very practical aspect of professional training. 2 I shall return to this expansion of new ‘studies’ areas in chapter 4.

### Impact - Overkill

#### Violence on the queer body attempts to push the queer out of time, rendering queerness inherently dead – that’s irrational and unexplainable by rational understandings – we must explode our understanding of the body to understand queerness

Stanley 11 (Eric, President’s Postdoctoral fellow in Communication and Critical Gender Studies at the University of California, San Diego. Along with Chris Vargas, Eric directed the films Homotopia (2006) and Criminal Queers(2013). A coeditor of the anthology Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex (AK Press, 2011), Eric’s other writing can be found in the journals Social Text, American Quarterly, TSQ, and Women and Performance as well as in numerous collections, “Near Life, Queer Death: Overkill and Ontological Capture”, Social Text 107 s Vol. 29, No. 2 s Summer 2011, Duke University Press)

Overkill is a term used to indicate such excessive violence that it pushes a body beyond death. Overkill is often determined by the post- mortem removal of body parts, as with the partial decapitation in the case of Lauryn Paige and the dissection of Rashawn Brazell. The temporality of violence, the biological time when the heart stops pushing and pulling blood, yet the killing is not finished, suggests the aim is not simply the end of a specific life, but the ending of all queer life. This is the time of queer death, when the utility of violence gives way to the pleasure in the other’s mortality. If queers, along with others, approximate nothing, then the task of ending, of killing, that which is nothing must go beyond normative times of life and death. In other words, if Lauryn was dead after the first few stab wounds to the throat, then what do the remaining fifty wounds signify? The legal theory that is offered to nullify the practice of overkill often functions under the name of the trans- or gay-panic defense. Both of these defense strategies argue that the murderer became so enraged after the “discovery” of either genitalia or someone’s sexuality they were forced to protect themselves from the threat of queerness. Estanislao Martinez of Fresno, California, used the trans-panic defense and received a four-year prison sentence after admittedly stabbing J. Robles, a Latina transwoman, at least twenty times with a pair of scissors. Importantly, this defense is often used, as in the cases of Robles and Paige, after the murderer has engaged in some kind of sex with the victim. The logic of the trans-panic defense as an explanation for overkill, in its gory semiotics, offers us a way of understanding queers as the nothing of Mbembe’s query. Overkill names the technologies necessary to do away with that which is already gone. Queers then are the specters of life whose threat is so unimaginable that one is “forced,” not simply to murder, but to push them backward out of time, out of History, and into that which comes before.27 In thinking the overkill of Paige and Brazell, I return to Mbembe’s query, “But what does it mean to do violence to what is nothing?”28 This question in its elegant brutality repeats with each case I offer. By resituating this question in the positive, the “something” that is more often than not translated as the human is made to appear. Of interest here, the category of the human assumes generality, yet can only be activated through the Social Text 107 Summer 2011 9 specificity of historical and politically located intersection. To this end, the human, the “something” of this query, within the context of the liberal democracy, names rights-bearing subjects, or those who can stand as subjects before the law. The human, then, makes the nothing not only possible but necessary. Following this logic, the work of death, of the death that is already nothing, not quite human, binds the categorical (mis)recognition of humanity. The human, then, resides in the space of life and under the domain of rights, whereas the queer inhabits the place of compromised personhood and the zone of death. As perpetual and axiomatic threat to the human, the queer is the negated double of the subject of liberal democracy. Understanding the nothing as the unavoidable shadow of the human serves to counter the arguments that suggest overkill and antiqueer violence at large are a pathological break and that the severe nature of these killings signals something extreme. In contrast, overkill is precisely not outside of, but is that which constitutes liberal democracy as such. Overkill then is the proper expression to the riddle of the queer nothingness. Put another way, the spectacular material-semiotics of overkill should not be read as (only) individual pathology; these vicious acts must indict the very social worlds of which they are ambassadors. Overkill is what it means, what it must mean, to do violence to what is nothing.

## Alternatives

### Zoe (1:00)

#### Vote negative to affirm Zoe – the vital force of inhuman potential inherent in all things. Our nomadic politic embraces the ecological as a site of material interconnections between all processes, forming previously unimaginable alliances. Such connections blur the distinctions of nature/cultural and human/inhuman and enable a micropolitical ethic of empathy formed through the connections between subjects rendered disposable by liberalism.

Rosi Braidotti, 2006

Braidotti was the founding Director of the Netherlands research school of Women’s Studies, she is currently Distinguished University Professor at Utrecht University and founding Director of the Centre for the Humanities as well as the founding Professor in Women’s Studies. “Transpositions on Nomadic Ethics”

Philosophical nomadism is a bios/zoe-politics. Monistic and thus opposed the nature-culture divide, it offers both a geophilosophy, or an ecosophy, a topology of affects, and an ethics. The earth being the framework all activities and becomings, Deleuze stresses the immanence, the diversity and the multiplicity of what the earth-body can do. The 'milieu' the term suggests, a middle ground for modes of relation that offer nomadic subjects a micro-political ecology and ethics of interconnections. Central to this vision is the notion of the productive nature of the transversal interconnections that sustain the subject as a bios/zoe-centred entity. Ethics is related to the physics and the biology of bodies. That means that it deals with the question of what exactly a body can do and how much it can take. This is the issue that I code as 'sustainability': how much a body can take in pleasure or enhancement of its potentials, as in pain or impoverishment of its potentia (or conatus). This implies also an equation between ethical virtue, empowerment, joy and the understanding. To represent adequately to oneself one's own potentia amounts to under- standing it. Such an act of understanding, however, is not the mere cognitive acquisition of certain ideas. It rather coincides with a bodily process, an activity that enacts or embodies what is good for the subject, the actualization of his or her potentia. What attracts me to the biological egalitarianism of zoe is the part of me that has long become disenchanted with and disengaged from the anthropocentrism that is built into humanistic thought, even in what is left of the political Left and feminism with it. That in me which no longer identifies with the dominant categories of subjectivity, but which is not yet completely out of the cage of identity, runs with me. This rebellious component of my subject-position, which is disidentified from phallogocentric premises, is related to my feminist consciousness of what it means to be an embodied female. As such, I am a she-wolf, a breeder that multiplies cells in all directions; l am an incubator and a carrier of vital and lethal viruses. I am mother-earth, the generator of the future. In the political economy of phallogocentrism and of anthropocentric humanism, which predicates the sovereignty of Sameness in a falsely universalistic mode, my sex fell on the side of 'Otherness', understood as pejorative difference, or as being-worth-less-than. The becoming-animal/becoming world speaks to my feminist self, partly because my gender, historically speaking, never quite made it into full humanity, so my allegiance to that category is at best negotiable and never to be taken for granted. This is neither an essentialist statement, not one of semiotic constructivism. It is rather the materialist acknowledgement of a historical location: a starting position of asymmetrical power differentials. This location is not only geopolitical, but also genealogical and time-bound. It marks a sedimented multi-layering of genetic coding, cultural meanings and representations that position me in the spatio-temporal coordinates of a socio-symbolic entity commonly known as 'woman'. In other words, a bond of sympathy, empathy or affinity exists among the many and multi- layered 'others' of the former phallogocentric empire: women, native, natural, infantilized and criminalized 'others'. As Lefanu (1988) pointed out in her analysis of science-fiction texts written by women, many of them show explicitly this kind of bonding between women and various brands of monstrous or alien others, allied in their struggle against a common colonizer. Far closer to zoe than bias in the materiality of bodies that are vulnerable and deviant, feminist-minded women have shown a propensity to go as far as possible in subverting the sovereignty of the Same. My position as a non-unitary, nomadic feminist and accountable subject facilitates this bond of both empathy and responsibility towards non-human others. The recognition of a sexualized and racialized axis that tends to define certain subjects as 'non-human' and hence as more mortal in the sense of being ontologically inferior, is facilitated by a non-unitary vision of the subject, not at all hindered by it. Furthermore, I would argue that the real hindrance in this discussion - that is to say a position that generates both cognitive and moral obstacles - comes from the classical humanistic hubris which declares 'Man' as the measure of all things, oblivious to the sexism and the ethnocentrism of such a position. This is why I want to reclaim my zoe-philic location and enlist it in support of the project of undoing anthropocentrism and its spin-off, androcentrism. I want to unfasten their joint reliance on the phallic signifier, i.e. the political economy of Sameness and of its specular, binary and constitutive 'Others'. I want to run with the she-wolves against the gravitational pull of the humanization and hence the commodification of all that lives. And I want to celebrate instead not so much the mystery of nature - a sentimental ' dear to deep ecology which sounds unconvincing to my agnostic - but rather the immense generative power, the intelligence and art- \_ of the non-human, of zoe as generative force. I want to be able to and represent positively those organic and inorganic 'others' and specific kind of vitality they express. Loyal to the method and the political practice of locations, however, I also want to situate this discussion in terms of more general, geopolitical power-relations within advanced societies. From this angle animals and humans are close in that they are being exploited as commercial objects of exchange, as well as experimental sites for science. In this respect, bio- cured egalitarianism joins forces with many other social and ethical movements that call for limitations to be placed on this ruthless exploitation of all that lives. In so far as l partake of the dominant, molar position d white, educated women, I want to praise bio-centred egalitarianism as a way of equalizing what is at stake for human and non-human participants in the project of social sustainability. 'We' are in this together, but we are not all the same. Dolly the Sheep and I share a structural proximity it terms of our inscription in genetic engineering, but this cannot be adequately accounted for within the logic of rights. I therefore want to defend the qualitative process of becoming-animal as a creative transformation that the productivity of bio-power in terms of zoe, or generative. non-logocentric life: a micro-politics of affective becomings.

### Queer Suicide Bomber (35s)

#### Vote negative to affirm the Queer Suicide Bomber. The disciplinary enforcement of stabilized liberal identity necessitates a strategy of reflecting upon that which blurs categories of identification – the terrorist. The suicide terrorist resonates as a figure of anti-normativity which moves understanding from rationality to the irrational intensities of life and obliterates the being of the human subject in favor of a queer becoming.

Jasbir K. Puar, 2007

Puar is a professor of Women’s and Genders Studies at Rutgers University. “Terrorist Assemblages, Homonationalism in Queer Times” pg 216

The fact that we approach suicide bombing with such trepidation, in contrast to how we approach the violence of colonial domination, indicates the symbolic violence that shapes our understanding of what constitutes ethically and politically illegitimate violence.- Ghassan Hage, "'Comes a Time We Are All Enthusiasm'" Ghassan Hage wonders "why it is that suicide bombing cannot be talked about without being condemned first," noting that without an unequivocal condemnation, one is a "morally suspicious person" because "only un- qualified condemnation will do." He asserts. "There is a clear political risk in trying to explain suicide bombings."33 With such risks in mind, my desire here is to momentarily suspend this dilemma by combining an analysis of these representational stakes with a reading of the forces of affect, of the body, of matter. In pondering the modalities of this kind of terrorist, one notes a pastiche of oddities: a body machined together through metal and flesh, an assemblage of the organic and the inorganic; a death not of the Self nor of the Other, but both simultaneously, and, perhaps more accurately, a death scene that obliterates the Hegelian self/other dialectic altogether. Self-annihilation is the ultimate form of resistance, and ironically, it acts as self-preservation, the preservation of symbolic self enabled through the "highest cultural capital" of martyrdom, a giving of life to the future of political struggles-not at all a sign of "disinterest in living a meaningful life." As Hage notes, in this limited but nonetheless trenchant economy of meaning, suicide bombers are "a sign of life" emanating from the violent conditions of life's impossibility, the "impossibility of making a life. "" This body forces a reconciliation of opposites through their inevitable collapse- a perverse habitation of contradiction. Achille Mbembe's and brilliant meditation on necropolitics notes that the historical basis of sovereignty that is reliant upon a notion of (western) political rationality begs for a more accurate framing: that of life and death, the subjugation of life to the power of death. Mbembe attends not only to the representational but also to the informational productivity of the (Palestinian) suicide bomber. Pointing to the becomings of a suicide bomber, a corporeal experiential of "ballistics," he asks, "What place is given to life, death, and the human body (especially the wounded or slain body)?" Assemblage here points to the inability to clearly delineate a temporal, spatial, energetic, or molecular distinction between a discrete biological body and technology; the entities, particles, and elements come together, flow, break apart, interface, skim off each other, are never stable, but are defined through their continual interface, not as objects meeting but as multiplicities emerging from interactions. The dynamite strapped onto the body of a suicide bomber is not merely an appendage or prosthetic; the intimacy of weapon with body reorients the assumed spatial integrity (coherence and concreteness) and individuality of the body that is the mandate of intersectional identities: instead we have the body-weapon. The ontology of the body renders it a newly becoming body: **The candidate for martyrdom transforms his or her body into a mask that hides the soon-to-be-detonated weapon.** Unlike the tank or the missile that is clearly visible, the weapon carried in the shape of the body is invisible. Thus **concealed, it forms part of the body**. It is so intimately part of the body that at the time of its detonation it annihilates the body of its bearer, who carries with it the bodies of others when it does not reduce them to pieces. **The body does not simply conceal a weapon. The body is transformed into a weapon, not in a metaphorical sense but in a truly ballistic sense.,**1 **Temporal narratives of progression are upturned as death and becoming fuse into one: as one's body dies, one's body becomes the mask, the weapon, the suicide bomber.** Not only does the ballistic body come into being without the aid of visual cues marking its transformation, it also "carries with it the bodies of others." Its own penetrative energy sends shards of metal and torn flesh spinning off into the ether. The body-weapon does not play as metaphor, nor in the realm of meaning and epistemology, but forces us ontologically anew to ask: What kinds of information does the ballistic body impart? These bodies, being in the midst of becoming, blur the insides and the outsides, infecting transformation through sensation, echoing knowledge via reverberation and vibration. The echo is a queer temporality-in the relay of affective information between and amid beings, the sequence of reflection, repetition, resound, and return (but with a difference, as in mimicry)-and brings forth waves of the future breaking into the present. Gayatri Spivak, prescient in drawing our attention to the multivalent tex- tuality of suicide in "Can the Subaltern Speak," reminds us in her latest ruminations that suicide terrorism is a modality of expression and communication for the subaltern (there is the radiation of heat, the stench of burning flesh, the impact of metal upon structures and the ground, the splattering of blood, body parts, skin): **Suicidal resistance is a message inscribed on the body when no other means will get through.** It is both execution and mourning, for both self and other. For you die with me for the same cause, no matter which side you are on. Because no matter who you are, there are no designated killees in suicide bombing. No matter what side you are on, because I cannot talk to you, you won't respond to me, with the implication that there is no dishonor in such shared and innocent death. 36 We have the proposal that **there are no sides, and that the sides are forever shifting, crumpling, and multiplying, disappearing and reappearing, unable to satisfactorily delineate between here and there. The spatial collapse of sides is due to the queer temporal interruption of the suicide bomber, projectiles spewing every which way. As a queer assemblage- distinct from the queering of an entity or identity-race and sexuality are denaturalized through the impermanence**, the transience of the suicide bomber, the fleeting identity replayed backward through its dissolution. This dissolution of self into others and other into self not only effaces the absolute mark of self and others in the war on terror, but **produces a systemic challenge to the entire order of Manichaean rationality that organizes the rubric of good versus evil**. Delivering "a message inscribed on the body when no other means will get through," suicide bombers do not transcend or claim the rational nor accept the demarcation of the irrational. Rather, they foreground the flawed temporal, spatial, and ontological pre- sumptions upon which such distinctions flourish. Organic and inorganic, flesh and machine, these wind up as important as (and perhaps as threatening) if not more so than the symbolism of the bomber and his or her defense or condemnation. Figure 24 is the November/December 2004 cover of a magazine called Jest: Humor for the Irreverent, distributed for free in Brooklyn (see also jest .com) and published by a group of counterculture artists and writers. Here we have the full force of the mistaken identity conundrum: the distinctive silhouette, indeed the profile, harking to the visible by literally blacking it out, of the turbaned Amritdhari Sikh male (Le., turban and unshorn beard that signals baptized Sikhs), rendered (mistakenly?) as a (Muslim) suicide bomber, replete with dynamite through the vibrant pulsations of an iPod ad. Fully modern, animated through technologies of sound and explosives, this body does not operate solely or even primarily on the level of metaphor. Once again, to borrow from Mbembe, it is truly a ballistic body. Contagion, infection, and transmission reign, not meaning.

## Framework

### ROB – Inorganic Assemblages (1:00)

#### The role of the ballot is to vote for who best methodologically enables the production of assemblage.

#### Static models of the world fail to encompass the free-flowing nature of forces - enclosing our conditions of prosperity within linear states of existence. Assemblage in contrast embraces the fluidity underpinning existence and models “life” and “health” as descriptions of elements inorganic ability to be interconnected and exist within a larger ecological webbing, enabling departure from static beings in favor of the possibility within fluid becomings.

Leslie Dema, 2007

“’Inorganic, Yet Alive’: How Can Deleuze and Guattari Deal With the Accusation of Vitalism?”, Rhizomes - Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge, ISSN 1555-9998, Issue 15.

[3] The best way to understand inorganic life is through Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the assemblage. This concept is most thoroughly explained in the "Geology of Morals" chapter of A Thousand Plateaus. [[4]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue15/dema.html" \l "_ftn4" \o ") For them the "minimum real unit" of inorganic life "is not the word, the idea, the concept or the signifier, but the assemblage." [[5]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue15/dema.html" \l "_ftn5" \o ") Assemblages are the symbiotic or sympathetic co-functioning of heterogeneous elements. They are formed through a rapport between partial objects that enter into monstrous couplings, experimental alliances, unnatural participations, and rhizomatic structures. [4] What does it mean to say that assemblages are the basic unit of inorganic life? Just as biologists once spoke of life by appealing to organisms or species, Deleuze and Guattari wish to speak of life by appealing to assemblages. Unfortunately this introduction is too brief a space in which to develop a proper exposition of the rich concept of assemblages. I will offer a taste rather than a fully developed argument because, with all of their enthusiasm for creating concepts and neologisms, Deleuze and Guattari have built their theory of inorganic life and assemblages upon a very complicated system of their own invention. So, for example, the processes and parts that compose assemblages are not 'like' organs. There is no equivalent to a heart that pumps blood or a chloroplast that digests the sun. Instead, an assemblage is animated by coding and decoding, deterritorializations, and lines of flight; it is composed through doubly-articulated connections between various strata; it effectuates an abstract machine; its nonpersonal segments flow from a plane of consistency. There is a rapport between parts, but no organs in the sense of parts subordinated to a whole. Wrought by both actual and virtual dynamics, assembling is about the interruptions and connections of the flows of the mechanosphere. There is no biosphere or noosphere, only the mechanosphere, which is to say, the sphere of inorganic life. [5] Assembling involves no soul, no death, and no reproduction. Assemblages do not produce more of their own kind; they do not belong to a kind; they are not sustained by an essence. Assembled relations are infinitely more productive than conjugal relations. With organic life reproduction arises from a single centre; DNA is passed on through conjugal coupling. But organic reproduction runs into a puzzle when faced with sexual symbiosis; such is the case with the orchid whose sexual organs are not directed to appeal to its own species, but to attract the wasp, without which the orchid cannot reproduce. This forms the wasp-orchid assemblage which operates via inorganic, rather than organic, life. Symbiosis is by no means limited to persistent and highly specialized co-adaptations of two species; other assemblages may involve transgressions between different spheres. For example, with ergonomics we see workers from the anthropomorphic strata involved with physical apparatuses such as chairs and keyboards from the technological strata. Life is diffused through symbiotic relations until it is no longer recognizably linear and strictly organic: it is assembled inorganically. [6] Assembling is so simple. It is the striking up of a rapport: "the assemblage is co-functioning, it is 'sympathy', symbiosis." [[6]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue15/dema.html" \l "_ftn6" \o ") At least two parts find some basis of attraction, a method of working together, a shared stylistic technique. Assemblages are not alien or unusual structures; they are types of interactive relationships with which we are already very familiar. [7] Among friends, assemblages of sympathy form. Between you and your friend, what is there? Your friend has a certain charm. She captures you with her "vital stammering," and this charm marks a "delicacy of health." [[7]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue15/dema.html" \l "_ftn7" \o ") Her own contingencies make her all the more alive, and the various subtle ways in which she is out of place turn out to be opportunities for the two of you to meet. But where is your friend's charm? Is it found in her reactions to stories, her slightly awkward gait, her insecurities, her attentiveness to others, or in the pride she feels regarding her own good taste? It is a mistake to think of her charm as a tool of flattery or merely as a thing in her possession. Charm "gives life a non-personal power," it is what facilitates the rapport between the two of you; it is the formation of assemblages that, as Deleuze and Guattari describe, involves an affirmation of chance: Charm is the source of life just as style is the source of writing. Life is not your history—those who have no charm have no life, it is as though they are dead. But the charm is not the person. It is what makes people be grasped as so many combinations and as so many unique chances from which such a combination has been drawn. It is a throw of the dice which necessarily wins, since it affirms chance sufficiently instead of detaching or mutilating chance or reducing it to probabilities. Thus through each fragile combination a power of life is affirmed with a strength, an obstinacy, an unequalled persistence in the being. [[8]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue15/dema.html" \l "_ftn8" \o ") Many are the ties that bind friends together, but not all successfully assemble. Charm does not make you want to be 'like' your friend. Your friend's charm does not capture you through identification; you **do not** want to imitate her mannerisms or step into her shoes. [8] Nor should we fall under the false impression that sympathy is limited to human relations. There are certain methods that are generalizable and applicable outside the social sphere. One such method is the logic of becoming. When Deleuze and Guattari speak of A becoming B, its not a matter of A imitating or turning into B. Instead, it is a matter of A becoming B at the very moment that B is itself taking a line of flight and becoming something else. When two elements enter into a sympathetic becoming "it is not that the two are exchanged, for they are not exchanged at all, but the one only becomes the other if the other becomes something yet other, and if the terms disappear." [[9]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue15/dema.html" \l "_ftn9" \o ") For example, Deleuze offers several memorable examples of sympathetic blocks of becoming in which inorganic life unfolds: As Lewis Carroll says, it is when the smile is without a cat that man can effectively become cat as soon as he smiles ... with Mozart's birds it is the man who becomes a bird, because the bird becomes music. Melville's mariner becomes albatross when the albatross itself becomes extraordinary whiteness, pure vibration of white." [[10]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue15/dema.html" \l "_ftn10" \o ") Never entirely alive nor entirely dead, we always talk of health, the quality of life. Assemblages do not die; they are most alive when broken down; they live by continually breaking down. [[11]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue15/dema.html" \l "_ftn11" \o ") Though it is possible that a line of escape might turn into a line of death, the far more common threats are the various kinds of sickness and destruction wreaked by excessive stratification or, alternatively, the lack of connectivity. Health is not a mysterious force; it is a concrete and sympathetic struggling together; "we can only assemble among assemblages." [[12]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue15/dema.html" \l "_ftn12" \o ") Practical advice on becoming, or proliferating your desiring-machines, is offered by Deleuze and Guattari in the terms of assembling: experiment with deterritorializing this bit; try to capture the substance of expression from that strata; adopt a different speed into your abstract machine. According to Deleuze and Guattari we engage with inorganic life at the level of assemblages, and the art of living is the art of composing assemblages.

### ROB – Unintelligibility

#### The role of the ballot is to vote for who best methodologically engages in unintelligibility.

#### The modern world consists through making all things encodable and understandable causing homogenization which destroys difference and produces meaninglessness. Yet the nature of metaphor is that it exposes itself to those who experience it yet maintains ambiguity as to how this relationship is truly constituted. The negatives retaining of symbolic metaphor is a poetic affirmation akin to the unknowability of a suicide bombers destruction that allows us to retain possibility and prevents the disappearance of meaning.

Jeremy Fernando, 2010

“The Suicide Bomber; And Her Gift of Death”

**When poetry "exposes itself," it is exposing itself** to this very tension, **to the possibility of relationality, all the while maintaining this ambivalence, and ambiguity, as to the exact nature of that relationality. The significance of this** exposure, this ambiguity, **comes to light if we recall** Jean Baudrillard and his lamentation **that "the possibility of metaphor is disappearing in every sphere**." This disappearance as he posits, is due to the " viral loss of determinacy";26 that of transparency, of utter and absolute exchangeability; in other words, when everything is like everything else and one can no longer distinguish between objects any longer. It is this lack of distance between objects that results in them disappearing into each other, into meaninglessness. For, the very name for this ambivalence, this 'proper distance' itself, is metaphor. It is metaphor that allows us to name, to call, and to witness. And it is also metaphor that doesn't allow the names to sink in to one another, doesn't allow names to equate with each other, prevents them from disappearing in to utter nothingness. Perhaps it might be momentarily disturbing to consider the suicide bomber in this light, as the one that remains to remind us of the impossibility of determining the impossibility of knowing who or even what (s)he is. But in the spirit of thinking, recalling the bravery needed to think that Georges Bataille invokes, one must be willing to consider this possibility, whilst never resting in any surety, or finality, that this is a solution of any sort. In this sense, all one can do at this point is posit the possibility that the suicide bomber is our reminder in these times of instant answers, a reminder of the impossibility of answering. After all, one must never forget that we can only invoke the suicide bomber after the event - (s)he is only named as such after her death . Hence, she is always already named in absence, named when there is no possibility of verification, named in the absence of all referentiality, where all possibility of legitimising the name which requires the knowledge of her subjective will - is lost; (s)he is named as a suicide bomber even though there is nothing we can say of her except the fact that she is dead.