

The Roguish Future of Queer Studies

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Since Jacques Derrida's death on October 8th 2004, my work has been moved by a responsibility to mourn and to think about the future of queer studies *after* Derrida and about the potential *rapprochements* between Derridean scholarship and Queer Theory (always *between*) as we negotiate his legacy (or more properly legacies). My thinking has also in the wake of Derrida's death sought to answer the demand to say his name over and over again in order to begin philosophy anew, and aimed to open queer theory up to futurity and to extend a welcome to *the impossible*¹. This project, a becoming-Derridean of queer studies and a becoming-queer of Derridean scholarship, is my *Kaddish* for Jacques Derrida, my *prayers and tears* for Derrida². His death was an event, one which left me reeling, turning, free wheeling, not quite knowing how to respond, at least not until I read the posthumously published translation of his two long essays "The Reason of the Strongest (Are there Rogue States?)" and "The World' of the Enlightenment To Come (Exception, Calculation and Sovereignty)" as *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* in 2004³.

(Parenthesis: In Between Derrida and Queer Theory)

But, before I begin I want, in performative Derridean style, to (re)turn full dorsal to the question of the *always*

"I will even go so far as to dream that fidelity, contrary to what we often tend to believe, is first of all a fidelity to come. Fidelity to come, to the to-come, to the future"

Derrida 2004a, 4

already Derrideanness of Queer Studies, lest it seem that I am saying, here and now in this text, that only now can the deconstructive character or turn of/in queer theorizing be recognized. In an article "Queer Theory's Loss and the Work of Mourning Jacques Derrida" (2005), written just two months after his death, I tried to come to terms with the spectral presence of Jacques Derrida in and around queer studies, to discern and commune with his ghost(s) hovering on its paregonal borders, as its constitutive outside. Indeed, I argued there, and I will revisit what I said in a moment, that, as Calvin Thomas (2006, 3) has put it more recently, "Jacques Derrida [is] a heterosexual' theorist without whom queer theory as we know it would have been unlikely".

Here's what I said in December 2004 (and return to in December 2006⁴): Martin McQuillan, in a 2002 *Textual*

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Practice review of Mandy Merck's *In Your Face: 9 Sexual Studies*, had this to say:

This book confirms that there is something queer about Derrida. Merck's frequent gesture is towards a deconstructive Freud underpinned by Derrida lite, with persistent references to spectrality and phantoms, rather than a full exploration of the queer destabilizing power of deconstruction. Merck's theoretical friends are Marjorie Garber, Eve Sedgwick, Judith Butler and Leo Bersani, rather than, say, the more obviously Foucauldian tendency in queer theory. However, the book remains to be written which will take full account of a queer Derrida, passing through notable indices such as 'Envois', 'Plato's Pharmacy' and the right-hand column of Glas.

However, a book which assesses Derrida's Queer Theory or a book which assesses Queer Theory's Derrida (and these are two separate projects with the ideal outcome being a dialogue between Derrideans and Queer Theorists) still (even after his death) has yet to be written or even contemplated. Despite nods in most introductions to Queer Theory (especially Nikki Sullivan's, the most recent) to the importance of Derridean deconstruction it is hardly surprising that Derrida tends to be supplanted by Foucault in most genealogies or discussions of the provenance of queer studies. The general indifference to Derrida's work among the queer theoretical 'community', if there is such a thing, is puzzling. It is all the more curious when you consider that, as McQuillan hints, queer theorizing and its destabilizing efforts, has its origins (if one can say such a thing about queer discourse) in lesbian and gay studies, (French) feminism, and what has come to be called (at least in the American academy) *French Theory*. Queer Theory's

most obvious critical genealogy can, of course, be traced to the poststructuralist thinking of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and Derrida. The impact of the work of Foucault and of Deleuze and Guattari's collaborative efforts have been acknowledged and given due consideration in genealogies of queer theory but the influence of Derrida has only been tacitly acknowledged and never patiently worked through.

Derrida's vast corpus has been implicitly or (less often) explicitly utilized by all the major queer theorists and has underpinned many of the key concepts of queer theory, including heteronormativity, but especially performativity. All the major foundational (again such a word is used cautiously) texts in queer studies are haunted by traces of Derridean ideas: Judith Butler's theories of citationality, iterability and reinscription in both *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's unpacking of the epistemology of the closet and the homo/hetero binary, especially in *Epistemology of the Closet*; Diana Fuss's formulation of the inside/outside binary; Jonathan Dollimore's transgressive reinscription, and Lee Edelman's homographesis.

As I have said, like a ghostly figure Derrida haunts Queer Theory, always just beyond and outside it, his work being the condition of possibility for it. That is to say, queer theory is *always already* Derridean (and that Derrida is *always already* queer *avant la lettre*). His writings shape and structure queer theorizing and his theories of deconstruction echo throughout some of the key concepts of Queer Studies: iterability, mimicry, speech act theory, sup-

plement, performativity, liminality/limitrophy, dissemination, difference/ *différance*, inside/outside dichotomies, the *pharmakon* and health/sickness binaries, fragmentation, *arrivance*, *l'avenir*, autoimmunity to name but a few which have left their trace and continually return (*revenir*) like revenants.

Any queering of Derrida, for me (and to supplement McQuillan's list), would have to pass through such notable indices as his interest in the destabilizing promise of the liminal in the discussion of hymen, the veil, invagination or the graft in *Dissemination* and "Law of Genre"; mimicry in "The Double Session"; his critique of Austinian speech act theory in "Signature Event Context" and in *Limited Inc* that laid out the notion of performativity Butler and Sedgwick and others operate with; his writing on sexual difference in *Spurs* (on Nietzsche); the *left*-hand column of *Glas* (on the neglected Hegel rather than the usual Genet); in "Geschlecht: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference" (on Heidegger); his consistent textual/sexual experimentation and polyvocality as explained in "Choreographies" and played out in "At this Very Moment in this Work Here I am" (on Levinas); his homoerotic encomia for other men (including Deleuze and Levinas) collected in *The Work of Mourning*, but especially his *Memoires for Paul De Man*; his erotics of looking and touch in *Le Toucher* (for Jean-Luc Nancy); the crypt in "Fors" with its obvious anal erotics; his anxiety over the scat(on)tological productions of Batailles and Heidegger; parergonality in *The Truth in Painting*; the (homo)erotics of eating in "Eating Well"; archivization and feeling in *Archive Fever*; his sodomitical

primal scene in *The Post Card* between Plato and Socrates; his 'animaling' (a verb analogous to *queering*) of the human/animal binary in "This Animal that Therefore I am (More to Follow)"; homosociality, the logic of the gift, and the traffic in women in *Given Time, Politics of Friendship, Of Hospitality*, and *Voyous*;; spectrality and hauntology in *Specters of Marx*; ethics in "Force Of Law"; his thoughts on same/sex marriage, Le PAC's, and civil unions expressed in his final interview "I am at War with Myself"; his fascination with the ethico-political promise of the incalculable *perhaps* in the *Politics of Friendship*; the destabilization of the logos in *Of Grammatology* which has inspired the queer theoretical destabilization of heteronormativity; community without community; his call for philosophers to talk about their sexuality; biopolitics and immigration; apocalypticism and HIV/AIDS; the gift; alternative forms of globalization; and friendship; his consistent slipping between interrogating the politics of form and the form of politics; his pleasure at the points when intelligibility begins to "fail" or break down, when the apparatus of meaning (or normativity) is revealed as ever incomplete, when the fractures and fissures erupt and the possibilities that come with that dehiscence emerge.

Since I compiled this (admittedly partial) list we have "inherited" a number of texts which add to, complicate, or further texture Derrida's relationship (or non-relationship) to/with Queer Theory, most notably his *On Touching: Jean-Luc Nancy, H.C for Life, That Is to Say...* (on Cixous), *Rogues* and an essay for J. Hillis Miller called "Justices" where he explicitly mentions queerness for the only time,

to my knowledge, in his extensive and in many ways incalculable *oeuvre* (Derrida 2005). It seems especially urgent then, in the wake of Derrida's death, with which we are only coming to terms, that we reconsider this figure who has been outlawed by both feminist and queer criticism, yet has proven endlessly seductive and attractive to practitioners of both (if they are even to be separated). I want to argue that Derrida and his seductive body of work ought to become a central focus for queer theory as it begins to "search the state of its soul" as Derrida helped psychoanalysis to do in *Without Alibi*, and as we begin to think about the state of queer studies now and about its future (and about the future *in* queer theory)⁵. End of long parenthesis.)

Preface/Prayer: Veni, Come, Come

Beginning again, this article, a small part of this long work of mourning, is a kind of prayer or a call in response to, in fidelity to⁶ an event (Derrida's death) and an unforeseeable event (the future of Queer Theory), and everything in this article turns around an insistent call to come, around the question of democracy and around the question of queer theory *as* democracy (and the more urgent question of what's so queer about the queer studies to-come⁷). If I keep turning to the words to turn then we would do well to recall (calling again) that the roots of the word 'queer' go back to a twisting, a turning, a torqueing: As Eve Sedgwick puts it, "Queer is a continuing moment, movement, motive-recurrent, eddying, *troublant*. The word queer' itself means *across*-it comes from the indo-European root

twerkw, which also yields the German *quer* (transverse), Latin *torquere* (to twist), English athwart" (Sedgwick 1993, xii). Derrida reminds us in *Rogues* that "torture (*torqueo*, *tortum*, *torquere*), sometimes in the form of an inquisitorial questioning, never far from some Torquemada, some grand inquisitor, is always a matter of turning, of torsion, indeed of the re-turn of some re-torsion" (Derrida 2004a, 8). If it seems that I go on to privilege a queer theory which is *necessarily violent* then it is because I believe this violence is ethically imperative if queer studies is to make any intervention into other disciplines or languages⁸. Queer Theory is, I suggest, a lever in such alter-disciplinary and transversal moves: "Torture always puts to work an encircling violence and an insistent repetition, a relentlessness, the turn and return of a circle" (Derrida 2004a, 8). So, this is a call, a plea, if you will, for an ethically violent queer studies to-come⁹. David Wills (2006) might call this a dorsal politics, a non-conciliatory dissidence, a turning away in order to challenge identitarian regimes and perspectives. A politics of dorsality (which seems a particularly apt formation for queer theory and politics) always turns violently away (or behind) in order to turn *into* the political¹⁰.

And we might do well also to recall that Judith Butler (1993, 228) insists that the future of the name queer might be twisted or turned away from that usage in the unforeseeable future, in *Bodies That Matter* in which she asserts that Queer allows critiques to shape its for now unimaginable future directions: "if the term 'queer' is to be a site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings, it will have

to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purpose". So, "at the intersection of repetition and the unforeseeable, in this place where, each time anew, by turns [*tour à tour*] and each time once and for all, one does not see *coming* what remains *to come*, the *to come* turns out to be the most insistent theme of this book", Derrida (2004a, xii) writes in his prefatory prayer to *Rogues*. This article is as well as responding to a death (Derrida's or perhaps the often rumored demise of queer studies), also a meditation on what is coming to pass or what is happening today in Queer Studies but "these two addresses, here coupled together, leave, as if abandoned, an open correspondence. A correspondence to come and left hanging, open, unsettled and unsettling" (Derrida 2004a, xii) like a settling or unsettling of accounts (with Derrida, with Queer Theory, with the other to come). And all this talk of counting, accounting, settling accounts, should remind us of another recent and equally important charter for a queer studies open to the future, Judith Butler's *Giving an Account of Oneself*, in which she talks about responsibility for, exposure to, and vulnerability in the face of the wholly other, before that which is to-come and before the other who is to-come, an *arrivance* which can never be fully known or anticipated in advance: "Indeed, it would seem to me that there is some humility to be valued in recognizing that one's actions are not always completely and utterly originating with the 'I' that one is, and that, correspondingly, there is some forgiveness to offer to others and perhaps to oneself when and if it becomes

clear that giving a full account of oneself is impossible" (Butler and Kirby 2006, 156). Like Derrida in *Rogues* and Butler in her recent work I am concerned with questions of sovereignty, *mondialisation*, and a certain reason to-come. Queer theory is not, as far as I am concerned an anti-Enlightenment discourse but rather a making way for, an opening up to a new Enlightenment, a new reason to-come¹¹. This future (of Queer Theory, of reason) requires *a priori* "a certain unconditional renunciation of sovereignty" (Derrida 2004a, xiv) and what I am arguing for, inspired very much by John Caputo's recent work¹², is a *weak* queer theory and that "we think at once the unforeseeability of an event that is necessarily without horizon, the singular coming of the other, and as a result, a *weak force*" (Derrida 2004a, xiv), a pure event in Deleuzian terms¹³. This prayer for a queer theory without sovereignty is an "act of messianic faith-irreligious and without messianism" (Derrida 2004a, xiv) which Derrida gives the name *Khora*. *Khora* is a term sprinkled throughout his corpus which Derrida reworks from Plato's *Timaeus* where it is described as a receptacle, a space, interval or matrix/mother (Derrida 2004a, xiv). The latter gets taken up and critiqued by Butler and Kristeva but Derrida is perhaps more interested in the *khora* as a placeless place, the space of the outsider, the unintelligible. As Caputo puts it "*khora* is neither present nor absent, active or passive, the good nor evil, living nor nonliving-but rather atheological and nonhuman-*khora* is not even a receptacle. *Khora* has no meaning or essence, no identity to fall back upon. She/it receives all without becoming anything, which is why she/it can become the subject of neither a philosopheme nor mytheme. In short,

the *khora* is *tout autre*, very” (Caputo 1997, 35–36). If for Caputo Derrida’s *khora* is something like (a weak) God, then for me Derrida’s *khora* is queer, that is to say without an essence, an identity, (hospitable to the) *tout autre*/totally other. The “democracy to come would be like the *khora* of the political” (Derrida 2004a, 82) and after all queerness is “less an identity than a *critique* of identity”, an “anti-identitarian identity”, an “identity without an essence”, what can “never define an identity [but] only ever disturb one”¹⁴. This *Khoral* place or space (one is reminded of Butler’s reinterpretation of Plato’s *Timaeus* in her *Bodies That Matter*¹⁵) opens up an interval for a Bersanian anti-redemptive, powerless, self-shattering, a less ipso-ego-phallo-centric Queer Theory, calls for “a thinking of the event to come[and] this call bears every hope, to be sure, but it remains, in itself, without hope. Not hopeless, in despair, but foreign to the teleology, the hopefulness, and the *salut* of salvation” (Derrida 2004a, xv)¹⁶. Saving the name of Queer Theory, hoping against hope for its future may be foreign to the *salut* of salvation but it is “not foreign to the *salut* as the greeting or salutation of the other...not foreign to justice, but nonetheless heterogeneous and rebellious, irreducible, to law, to power, and to the economy of redemption” (Derrida 2004a, xv).

Autoimmunizing Queer Theory

In a recent issue of *Social Text* David Eng, Judith Halberstam and José Esteban Muñoz (2005, 1–17) ask “what’s queer about queer studies now?” and like Derrida’s reassessment of the syntagm “democracy to come”¹⁷ they

rethink the political utility of the term queer in ways which suggest that it is not yet presentable, but always deferred, to-come, *khoral*, something we are putting off until later. They call for, indeed demand a “renewed queer studies... calibrated to a firm understanding of queer as a political metaphor without a fixed referent” (Eng et al 2005, 1). This renewed queer studies which would be incalculable, without condition, would insist “on a broadened consideration of the late twentieth century global crises that have configured historical relations among political economies, the geopolitics of war and terror, and national manifestations of sexual, racial, and gendered hierarchies” (Eng et al 2005, 1). They seek to map out an urgently new political terrain for queer studies which would make it unfaithful or traitorous to the field as it is currently imagined, queer studies *in/as* America. As Derrida puts it in his “The University Without Condition” in *Without Alibi* “such an unconditional resistance could oppose the university to a great number of powers, for example, to state powers (and thus to the power of the nation-state and to its phantasm of indivisible sovereignty, which indicates how the university might be in advance not just cosmopolitan, but universal, extending beyond worldwide citizenship and the nation-state in general), to economic powers (to corporations and to national and international capital), to the powers of the media, ideological, religious and cultural powers, and so forth-in short, to all the powers that limit democracy to-come” (Derrida 2002, 204–205). Derrida sees deconstruction as a force (albeit a *weak* force) of resistance and of dissidence for the new humanities, the humanities to-come, in the university without condition¹⁸ and we

might also imagine, as Eng and the contributors to *Social Text* surely do too, that queer studies (if it attunes itself to world politics) could become a space or place of “irre-
dentist resistance...of dissidence in the name of a superior law and a justice of thought” (Derrida 2002, 208). Queer Theory, we could say *is* justice, just as this dissidence or resistance is what “puts deconstruction to work or inspires it *as* justice” (Derrida 2002, 208). Derrida often repeated no deconstruction without democracy and no democracy without deconstruction and if we are prepared to “re-
think queer critique in relation to a number of historical emergencies, to borrow from Walter Benjamin, of both national and global consequence” (Eng et al 2005, 1), then queer theory might be a privileged, roguish, delinquent, *roué*, even criminal, countersovereign analytical tool for challenging the powers of sovereign nation-states and the “phallo-paterno-filio-fraterno” (Derrida 2004a, 17) ipso-centricity of so-called democratic sovereignty.

In the *Social Text* special issue Tavia Nyong'o (2005) preliminarily maps what he terms a “Punk'd theory”, a kind of “street” theory which would oppose itself to straight theory, by yoking the anti-identitarian, permanently deferred referents “punk” and “queer”. I am arguing, similarly for a “Rogue'd theory” where the *voyou* (the rogue) and the *queer* are etymologically entangled¹⁹. As Derrida tells us the rogue is always leading astray, seducing, attracting, “luring off the straight path”, “pluming himself like a peacock in rut” and also that “the street... is the privileged place of the *roué*, the milieu and the path [*voie*] of the *voyous*, the road most often travelled by rogues, the

place they are most apt to roam” (Derrida 2004a, 20)²⁰. In his *Social Text* essay “Policing Privacy, Migrants, and the Limits of Freedom”, Nayan Shah (2005) discusses sodomy cases and the regulation of dissident sexuality in public, semipublic and private spaces: “During the first decades of the twentieth Century, thousands of men and boys from all over the world converged on small towns and new cities in western North America...[and] lived together in boarding-houses, bunkhouses and work camps. Male migrant sociability was entangled into the culture and mobility of the streets. The geography of the rapidly urbanizing town and city provided the settings and spaces for casual, fortuitous, and dangerous encounters between men of different ethnicities, classes, and ages. Migrant males encountered each other on the streets, alleys, and parks, at the train and stage depots and other public spaces where men congregated” (Shah 2005, 277). Shah sees a corollary between the queer spatial dynamics of “such temporary habitations as bunkhouses, SRO's and vehicles” and late twentieth-century cruising counterpublics. More importantly for my argument, he sees “early twentieth century migrants, tramps and hoboos as being policed in much the same way as early twenty-first century ‘illegal’ migrants, homeless, ‘enemy combatants’, and refugees awaiting asylum proceedings”, people *sans papiers*. He goes on to say that they “may be the most visible and vulnerable subjects of state power” (Shah 2005, 283). The rogue is always an outlaw, a bad boy or girl, a rascal, a suburban punk who mocks the law which is why the rogue must be policed, surveilled, subjected to neoliberal violence. As Martin Manalansan IV puts it: “This kind of violence transforms

the built environment, eradicating spaces imbued with meanings that coalesce around marginalized identities. For example, Samuel Delaney eloquently chronicled how new urban policies around Times Square have created new forms of policing that not only transformed the architectural landscape or built environment but also altered the lifeways of numerous groups of people of color who used to hang out on the sidewalks and corners of the area for sex, leisure, and other forms of commerce. Not only are these groups visibly disciplined, they are also sequestered at a safe distance and are typically dispersed when they are seen to be a 'nuisance' or are suspected of causing public annoyance or disturbance particularly to patrons and owners of new swanky businesses" (Manalansan 2005, 142). A Voyoucracy or rogueocracy is an anti-neoliberalist resistance to such (sexual and spatial) policing, "a corrupt and corrupting power of the street, an illegal and outlaw power that brings together into a voyoucratic regime, and thus into a virtual state all those who represent a principal of disorder—a principal not of anarchic chaos but of structured disorder, so to speak, of plotting and conspiracy, of premeditated offensiveness or offenses against public order" (Derrida 2004a, 66). In a late interview on the justice to-come Derrida, in an extension of his critique of the onto-theological foundation of the sovereignty of the nation state, it is no wonder that he privileges the anti-globalization movements, those rogues opposed to the International Monetary Fund, the G8, and the World Bank as the most voyoucratic incarnations and implementations of messianicity without messianicism, who might bring a queerer world into being. It is the weak

force of these intractable beasts who march against all the hegemonic organizations of the world, who offer the best figures for the democracy to-come in a time of global emergency (de Cauter 2004). Indeed one of Derrida's last public engagements was a speech he made on the occasion of *Le Monde Diplomatique's* 50th anniversary in which he talked about the counter-globalization movement against "all those sinister acronyms: IMF, OECD, WTO" and of the New Europe as "the harbinger of the new Enlightenment to come". More emphatically, he said, "That is my dream. I am grateful to those who help me to dream it; not only to dream, as Ramonet says, that another world is possible, but to muster the strength to do all that is needed to make it possible" (Derrida 2004b). These last calls to resist globalization and US hegemony in the name of Europe see Derrida place his faith in, his "bet on the weak force of those alter-globalization movements, who will have to explain themselves, to unravel their contradictions, but who march against all the hegemonic organizations of the world. Not just the United States, also the International Monetary Fund, the G8, all those organized hegemonies of the rich countries, the strong and powerful countries, of which Europe is a part".²¹ The radical messianic promise of queer theory resides in its potential to reshape material realities in unanticipatable ways and Queer Theory alongside the alter-globalization movements (with which it is inter-articulated) offers one of "the best figures of messianicity without messianicism, that is to say a messianicity that does not belong to any determined religion". In that late interview Derrida goes on: "What I call messianicism without messianicity is a call, a promise of an independent future

for what is to come, and which comes like every messiah in the shape of peace and justice, a promise independent of religion, that is to say universal” and he concludes his talk on “the Enlightenment Past and to Come” by praying that “some day, though the work may be long and painful, a new world will be born”. In their essay on the imbrication of crip and queer theories and methodologies Robert McRuer and Abby Wilkerson (2003) assert that “another world is possible” and they too privilege anti-globalization groups mobilizing for social and global justice against the IMF, World Bank and other forces of neoliberalism. But just as McRuer has insisted that crip (theory) must always be criped (in order to resist the forces of normalization and institutionalization²²) I would add that queer must always be redeployed, twisted, torqued, queered “in order to accommodate—without domesticating— democratizing contestations that have and will redraw the contours of the movement in ways that can never be fully anticipated in advance” (Butler 1993, 228), to “usher queer studies into its full critical potential” (Ferguson 2005, 85). Queer Theory, then, as I understand and deploy it, is world remaking, chafes against all regimes of normalization, is “a waiting without waiting, without horizon for the event to come, the democracy to come with all its contradictions” (de Cauter 2004). This queer theory would be *metaperformative*, an event beyond any performative, interrupting and disturbing any horizon or anticipation²³. This unconditionally hospitable queer theory to-come inhabits the time of the promise, the weak force of the *perhaps*, the *what if* (another world were possible?)²⁴. But, a queer theory premised on a kind of irreligious faith in the justice to-come, always

marked by its own contestability and resignification, an unforeclosable, *khoral* deontology, all according to Butler in “Critically Queer”, must itself relentlessly be queered.

Several early texts in queer studies, from a moment arguably now passed²⁵, have shared Butler’s messianicity without messianism: David Halperin in *Saint Foucault*, his hagiographization of Michel Foucault, argues that queer is a way to point ahead without knowing for certain what to point at: “Queer does not designate a class of already objectified pathologies or perversions... rather, it describes a horizon of possibility whose precise extent and heterogeneous scope cannot in principle be delimited in advance... Queerness constitutes not just a resistance to social norms or a negation of established values but a positive and creative construction of different ways of life” (Halperin 1995, 62). Queering, awkwardly and provisionally named as such, is a roguish way of reading, a prophetic-messianic critical perversion, an “unstoppable alterity” (Patton 2002, 210) which “brings immense resources to the analysis of, engagement with, and critique of normativity, resources precisely calibrated to the degree to which ‘queer’ is deployed as a catachresis, as a metaphor without an adequate referent” (Villarejo 2005, 69–70). Queering is a perverse projectile²⁶, a stealth bombing, a ballistic approach, or what Sedgwick calls “an immemorial current”, continually “renewing and reinventing itself in response to changing social and political climates” (Ramlow, 2007). The continual queering, reframing and reinterpretation of queer points to the social and political potential of queering as a methodology and to “new ways of being (or of always becoming), new ways of life, social arrangements and dis-

tributions of power” (Ramlow, 2007). Queering shows that another world (without calculation, without sovereignty, of the Enlightenment to come), a world shaped otherwise, is possible.

Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz name some such pressing global emergencies for those demanding a new or different order of things as “the triumph of neoliberalism and the collapse of the welfare state; the Bush administration’s infinite ‘war on terrorism’ and the acute militarization of state violence; the escalation of U.S. empire building and the clash of religious fundamentalisms, nationalisms, and patriotisms; the devolution of civil society and the erosion of civil rights; the pathologizing of immigrant communities as ‘terrorist’ and racialized populations as ‘criminal’; the shifting forms of citizenship and migration in a putatively ‘postidentity’ and ‘postracial’ age; the politics of intimacy and the liberal recoding of freedom as secularization, domesticity, and marriage; and the return to ‘moral values’ and ‘family values’ as a prophylactic against political debate, economic redistribution, and cultural dissent” (Eng et al 2005, 2)²⁷ and pointedly urge queer theorists to refocus their “critical attentions on public debates about the meaning of democracy and freedom, citizenship and immigration, family and community, and the alien and the human in all their national and global manifestations” (Eng et al 2005, 2). Their urgency is shared by Derrida in *Rogues* where he admits that “in the necessarily finite time of politics and thus of democracy, the democracy to come certainly does not mean the right to defer, even if it be in the name of some regulative Idea, the experience

or even less the injunction of democracy” (Derrida 2004a, 29). If the key question Eng and the others ask is “What does Queer Studies have to say about empire, globalization, neoliberalism, sovereignty, and terrorism?” (Eng et al 2005, 2) I am arguing that queer studies ought to make *Rogues* an important touchstone for thinking about these broad social concerns, ones which queer theory has rarely, if ever, addressed.

At the end of their introduction Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz suggest that Queer Studies must produce a politics of “epistemological humility” which recognizes the dangers of a “consolidation of U.S. Empire, as well as the insistent positing of a U.S. nationalist identity and political agenda globally” (Eng et al 2005, 15). Quoting Butler’s messianico-Levinasian *Precarious Life* they urge an ethics of humility which means to “place ourselves in a vividly ‘de-centered way’ in a world marked by the differences of others” (Eng et al 2005, 15)²⁸. I want to conclude, somewhat controversially but I hope no less ethically, by suggesting that Queer Studies needs to autoimmunize itself as part of this project of decentering or “searching the state of its soul” (Derrida 2002, 238-280). It needs to resist itself, fold back on itself in order to resist itself, “to inhibit itself, in a quasi-autoimmune fashion”²⁹. Autoimmunity is a somewhat new and ambiguous term in the Derridean lexicon which he uses in several contradictory ways across a range of his later texts after the so-called ethico-religious turn (a turn Derrida explicitly rejects in *Rogues*)³⁰. According to David Wills’ capacious definition autoimmunity is a term:

used by Derrida in his later work [especially Acts of Religion and

Rogues] meaning the self-attack of an entity in the name of its own self-preservation, often in relation to questions of religion but more specifically where religion intersects with politics and technology. It may also be understood to some extent in the context of his earlier ideas of parasitism and the virus. The term "autoimmune indemnification" is also used, emphasizing both exemption or self-protection ("immunity" referred originally to exemption from public service or taxation such as that bestowed on religious entities) and a sense of the holy or sacrosanct (indemnis is Latin for "unscathed" or literally "un-damned")³¹. The term's most explicit reference [as Derrida admits in *On Touching: Jean-Luc Nancy*³²], is to the biological process: if the immune system produces antibodies to fight off foreign antigens, auto-immunity is the means by which the organism attacks its own immune defences in order to protect itself (from its own self-protection). It is thus the double bind of self-protection that amounts to a confusion between what threatens from inside or from outside, but which becomes necessary to avoid the body's rejection of a transplanted organ. In "Faith and Knowledge" (1996) auto-immunity is used to describe the nationalist or fundamentalist rejection of technoscience-without which religion can no longer, and in fact could not ever function- as a phenomenon of reaction against the machine, which reaction being as "automatic (and thus machinal) as life itself". By extension, life itself opens itself to the autoimmune supplementarity of what is beyond it, both to the automaton and to religion. In *Voyous* (2003) Derrida returned to the idea in the context of the "auto-co-immunity" of the community, and more particularly democracy's attempts at self-protection against the threat of terrorism, attempts which often involve the supposedly temporary and expedient sacrifice of democracy itself (Wills 2005a, 44)³³.

Rather than embracing a negative use of the term which always has some murderous and suicidal connotations, I would like to *work* the autoimmune double bind (rather like you can with the term *pharmakon* which means both poison and cure³⁴) to suggest that Queer Studies needs to suicide itself but not in a "ruinous... fashion" (Derrida 2004a, 45). Indeed, if Derrida insisted that the future of psychoanalysis depended upon the performative failing then we would do well to look at a late text on Genet (and thus another important index for a queering of Derrida to pass through) where he says:

Where there is an event, the performative must fail... the subject of a performative act by definition masters the event it produces, it is supposed to produce. Well, that very mastery neutralizes the event it produces. Where there is mastery, there cannot be an event. Nothing happens. An event must happen or touch me unexpectedly, unanticipatably, that is, without horizon, with no horizon of waiting, like the other's coming. When the other comes, there is no performative. The other's coming outstrips any performative force or power. In this sense, the event, the other's unexpected coming, never signs or countersigns. Thus the word countersignature can assume another meaning, neither that of authenticating confirmation, the performative "yes yes" to a signature, mine or another's; nor merely (or more) the dialectical opposition to the signature; but the very event that designates, countersigns in another sense the countersignature itself, that "suicides" the signature, so to speak, carries it away, undoes it, exceeds it, effaces it, derides it. It is suicide itself...It must take place, if it takes place, unexpectedly, invisibly, secretly, wordlessly, without a patronymic or matronymic name (Derrida 2004d, 39)

And, Derrida himself sees the possibilities of “threat and chance, not alternatively or by turns promise and/or threat but threat *in* the promise itself” (Derrida 2004a, 82) suggesting the “autoimmune contradiction” (Derrida 2004a, 83) may be constitutive of the democracy or justice to-come, of the messianic promise, the surprise of Queer Studies itself. This opens up the possibility that we might suspend or defer democracy or queer theory for its own good, and the very aporicity of its structure opens it “to taking up its intrinsic plasticity and its interminable self-criticizability, one might even say its interminable analysis” (Derrida 2004a, 25)³⁵. The queer theory to-come then would, with humility, welcome “in itself, in its very concept...the right to self-critique and perfectibility” (Derrida 2004a, 86–87). This metaperformativity frees queer theory from any binding teleo-chrono-phenomenology³⁶ and “implies another thinking of the event (unique, unforeseeable, without horizon, un-masterable by any ipseity or any conventional and thus consensual performativity), which is marked in a to-come that, beyond the future (since the democratic demand does not wait), names the coming of *who* comes or of *what* comes to pass, namely, the newly arrived whose irruption should not and cannot be limited by any conditional hospitality on the borders of a policed nation state” (Derrida 2004a, 87). A roguish, unconditionally hospitable, weak queer studies would open up its borders, render itself porous (this would involve of course an openness to other languages and a critique of the sovereignty of any given language, of English as the *lingua franca* of Queer studies), even open up to the possibility of, as Butler might suggest, “perhaps one

day abandoning the inheritance or heritage of the name, of changing names” (Derrida 2004a, 89). This metaperformative, perverse, or *perperformative*, letting come about, turns “sovereignty against itself”, compromises its immunity and reminds us that democracy is *always* in the process of autoimmunizing itself (Derrida 2004a, 101). If we are in any doubt as to the positive, deviant, perverse potential of the autoimmune gesture, what I would like to call an *ethics of autoimmunity*, then listen to Derrida at the end (which is also always a beginning) of *Rogues* and also keep in mind Butler’s most recent book *Giving an Account of Oneself*: “If an event worthy of this name is to arrive or happen, it must, beyond all mastery, affect a passivity. It must touch an exposed vulnerability, one without absolute immunity, without indemnity; it must touch this vulnerability in its finitude and in a non-horizontal fashion, there where it is not yet or is already no longer possible to face or face up to the unforeseeability of the other. In this regard, autoimmunity is not an absolute ill or evil. It enables an exposure to the other, to *what* and to *who* comes-which means that it must remain incalculable. Without autoimmunity, with absolute immunity, nothing would ever happen or arrive; we would no longer wait, await, or expect, no longer expect one another, or expect any event” (Derrida 2004a, 152). Insofar as autoimmunity breaches the self’s autonomy and sovereignty, it opens it up to the other-to the event that is, to the incalculable or unconditional. With this question of the unpredictable coming of the other autoimmunity becomes the condition of a democracy that is not based on autonomy (which by welcoming only citizens, brothers and compeers excludes the others) but is instead open to

the excluded, the other, *any* other. Autoimmunity, the turn of the self against itself, is what secures the possibility of self-critique, perfectibility, and thus the historicity of democracy³⁷. This perfectibility is the perverse effect of the autoimmunitary itself, or “perhaps it would be better to say ‘pervertibility’ so as to name a possibility, a risk, or a threat whose virtuality does not take the form of an evil intention, an evil spirit, or a will to do harm” (Derrida in Borradori 2003, 109), and the future, as Derrida often warned, can only be anticipated in the form of an absolute danger (Derrida 1976, 5).³⁸

To tympanize Queer Theory, to lend an ear to the absolutely other, to *any* other, will mean then a certain suicide of queer theory³⁹, of democracy but in a quasi-autoimmune affirmation: “democracy has always been suicidal, and if there is a to-come for it, it is only on the condition of thinking life otherwise, life and the force of life” (Derrida 2004a, 33). In her *Social Text* essay Queer Times, Queer Assemblages Jasbir Puar (2005, 127) argues for a monstrous future through the figure of the suicide bomber who is a kind of rogue: “With the unfurling, viruslike, explosive mass of the terrorist network, tentacles ever regenerating despite efforts to truncate them, the terrorist is concurrently an unfathomable, unknowable, and hysterical monstrosity, and yet one that only the exceptional capacities of U.S. intelligence and security systems can quell”. Drawing on Achille Mbembe’s (2003) “Necropolitics”⁴⁰ which like *Rogues* is concerned “precisely with the relationship between the *politikon*, *physis*, and *bios or zoe*, life-death” (Derrida 2004a, 109) traces a “shift from biopower to necropolitics (the subjugation of life to the

power of death), noting that the historical basis of sovereignty that is reliant on a notion of (Western) political rationality begs for a more accurate framing: that of life and death” (Puar 2005, 128). In the machine-flesh assemblage of the suicide bomber Puar sees “self-annihilation as the ultimate form of resistance and self-preservation. This body forces a reconciliation of opposites through their inevitable collapse—a perverse habitation of contradiction. As a figure in the midst of already dying even as it is in the midst of becoming, like the homosexual afflicted with HIV, the suicide bomber sutures his or her status as sexually perverse” (Puar 2005, 128–129). By speaking of autoimmunity, Derrida too “specifically wanted to consider all these processes of, so to speak, normal or normative perversions quite apart from the authority of representative consciousness, of the I, the self and ipseity” (Derrida 2004a, 109–110)⁴¹. The future is a monster and the promise of monsters, as Haraway and Halberstam have argued⁴², is that they are always becoming and it is a matter of “thinking the coming [*venir*], the to-come [*avenir*], and the becoming [*devenir*” (Derrida 2004a, 135), a matter of exposing ourselves to the monstrous *arrivant*, to that “which comes, the event of *what* comes and of *who* comes, of what arrives or happens *by* reason and *to* reason...and at the end of the horizon, of teleology, the calculable program, foresight, and providence—one no longer sees *it coming*, no longer horizontally: *without prospect or horizon*” (Derrida 2004a, 135)⁴³. The roguish future of or for queer studies will mean a refraining from the institutionalization of the discipline (which would be a kind of disciplining), but rather an undisciplined inclining toward the *auto-co-immunity*⁴⁴ of

the queer studies to-come, a queer studies which believes in the solicitation of the *tout autre* and places its faith in the democracy to-come and the justice to-come⁴⁵. Of the rogue and *Rogues* in Queer Studies I hope and pray that there will be more to-come.

(Prosthetic parenthesis: Queer Theory without conditions

A settling of accounts between Queer Theory, deconstruction and philosophy is what is at stake in this *entretien* between deconstruction and queer theory which turns on the *always already* Derrideanness of Queer Studies with which I began. If, as I have argued, Queer Theory has *always already* been Derridean, then I am not necessarily pushing for an enfolding of queer theory onto its past. Rather I am saying that queer theory needs to reactivate or return to its past (the messianicity without messianism you find in the early texts I discussed) in order to open up its virtual, potential future or to, as Deleuze would say, actualize the absolutely new⁴⁶, to tap into what Bernard Stiegler might call its “tertiary memory”. In his article “Derrida and Technology: Fidelity at the Limits of Deconstruction and the Prosthesis of Faith” Stiegler (2001, 263) adopts this term to unpack the Derridean corpus and concludes:

An intelligence of faith-which is impossible, which we can do nothing but promise, which we have to promise in its very default-must/fails to account each time for the conditions in which faith yields to the trust that we have or do not have in tertiary memory. No politics of memory or of the archive, of hospitality or of home,

no future is, perhaps, promised outside this ‘must/failure’ of life that the dead haunts in life’s technicity. The tertiary trace refers to the arche-trace...it refers always to the absolute past. But the absolute past only constitutes itself ‘as such’ through this referral. It is why a logic of the supplement, without ever simply being such a history of the supplement in its epochs, epochs that are each time singular and must each time form the object of a technical history constantly renewed. Faith and tele-technology are for this reason mutually insoluble and mutually inseparable-transductively (re)constituted by each other. It is why, finally, fidelity is always at the limits of deconstruction qua undeconstructible justice. Such would be faith: at the limits of deconstruction. Such would be faith at the limits of deconstruction.

If, as I have hope to have shown, queer theory and deconstruction are “mutually insoluble and mutually inseparable” then what are the philosophical stakes of their transductive reconstitution by each other? In a survey of recent work on deconstruction Peggy Kamuf (2006, 1) claims that “it is not at all obvious that deconstruction names a field” and she asserts, that like queer, “it is a name, for the time being, of what undoes the institution of names; thus, a precarious, finite, mortal name for an impossible thing, the ‘thing which is not’”. Jean-Luc Nancy (2004, 44) sees deconstruction similarly, but goes further: “philosophy always institutes itself through a mixture of decision and indecision with regard to itself, and ‘deconstruction’ is ultimately born with and alongside philosophy since it constructs itself on the basis of the consideration that it has to be anterior both to its construction and even to its own plan [*plan*]”. Queer Theory, too, I am asserting needs

to be anterior to its own construction and its plan, autoimmunitively “open to something other and more than itself...the space and time of a spectralizing messianicity beyond all messianism” (Derrida 1998, 51), roguishly relational in its opening to its disciplinary neighbours in “an infinite series of possible encounters, one without limit and without totalization, a field without the stability of margins”⁴⁷, open to the other, the future, death, freedom, the coming or the love of the other (Derrida 1998, 51). Hence, queer theory must, as Kenneth Reinhard (2005, 67) says “open in *infinity*, endlessly linking new elements in new subsets according to new decisions and fidelities” (indeed perhaps fidelity, alongside event, is the keyword of this essay). To speak like Nancy (2004, 44), who speaks like Badiou, Queer Theory might “come to pass without ever arriving [*évenir sans jamais advenir*],” take a step back into the immemorial [current] and a step forward into unarrival [*l’inadvenir*]. Queer Theory in/as the future (of philosophy, of reason), like Nancy’s adestinal philosophy *sans* conditions ought to be “unachievable” and its “immobility stretched in the absencing of its provenance and its end”. (Nancy 2004, 44–45) Nancy, and I will give him the last word as the one who sur-vives Derrida, had this to say when asked in a 2005 interview “can one philosophize about the future of philosophy?” (and one can substitute queer theorizing or deconstruction here):

Of course: philosophizing always turns itself towards the “to-come” (avenir) of philosophy. But this coming is not exactly the future. A future is predictable, calculable, appreciable, or imaginable. A “coming” is incalculable and inappreciable. In a sense, philosophy, is always, in essence, “to-come”. (Nancy 2005, 162.)

In a sense, after Derrida and the messianic turn, queer theory, too, is always, in essence, if one can say such a thing, to-come).

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Notes

1. For an initial and in many ways inadequate attempt to respond see my *Queer Theory's Loss and the Work of Mourning Jacques Derrida, Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 10 (May 2005) <<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue10/orourke.htm>>

2. This is of course a reference to *the* very best book on (the religious dimension to) Derrida's work, John D. Caputo's *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion* (1997). For another act of mourning for Derrida which engages the autoimmunitary see Lawrence R. Schehr's Kaddish, *Contemporary French Civilization* (2005).

3. All subsequent references refer to the English translation and will appear in parentheses as 2004a.

4. All references in the following paragraphs on Derrida's queer theory and queer theory's Derrida can be found in my *Queer Theory's Loss and the Work of Mourning Jacques Derrida*.

5. My forthcoming collection of essays *Derrida and Queer Theory* continues this critical rumination upon the open conversation between the enemy-friends of Derrida's writing(s) and queer theories and more broadly tries to contribute to the ongoing debate about potential (as yet unthought) horizons for a queer studies futurally imagined but which we cannot pretend to know in advance.

6. Derrida's fidelity to the event to-come arguably brings him closer to Badiou on the event than Deleuze. As Gabriel Riera explains, "if in Heidegger the irruption of the event is totalised by the self-present futurity that Dasein deploys throughout time, in Badiou it is the future anterior, a future having retroactive effects that accomplishes the temporal synthesis between two moments of which the event is an interval". See his introduction to *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and its Conditions* (Riera 2005 1–19, at 10). The Derrideanness of Badiou's fidelity can be discerned in Alexander García Düttman's (2004, 202–207) brilliant *What Remains of Fidelity after Serious Thought*. There is not space to consider the relationship between Derrida and Badiou around questions of temporality, undecidability and multiplicity, différance and void, the impossibility of and fidelity to the event and

democracy to-come, but for a start on some of these affinities and tensions see Antonio Calcagno's (2004, 799–815) Jacques Derrida and Alain Badiou: Is there a relationship between Politics and Time? I do, however, return to some of these questions in my conclusion.

7. As Janet Jakobsen (2005, 287) trenchantly puts it: "While queer politics initially promised an alternative to the problematics of gay liberation, as a number of scholars and activists have now concluded, and as the editors of this special issue make clear, queer politics has too often failed to live up to that early promise. Queer resistance has all too rarely embodied the possibility of connections across multiple identities that the shift from gay to queer hoped to produce". I am in full agreement that queer studies (as opposed to lesbian and gay studies) has flatlined and that its promise for renewed life lies in an engagement with global politics and a deprivileging of sexuality as its *only* proper object of critical inquiry and theoretical scrutiny. I would like to thank Diarmuid Hester for many conversations about this. For a refreshing counter to this trend see Elizabeth A. Povinelli's (2006) *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy and Carnality*. As Lisa Rofel puts it in her endorsement for the book: "Povinelli strives to make all the intellectual moves that need to be made today: connecting studies of sexuality to other phenomena that seem to be unrelated, thus opening out what gets to count as sexuality".

8. As an anonymous reader helpfully pointed out to me the relationship between ethics and violence is a central question for Derrida's own relationship to the work of Emmanuel Levinas. In his essay *Violence and Metaphysics* Derrida (1978) calls for a philosophy of ethical responsibility which is also, I am arguing here, the "unbreachable responsibility" (Derrida 1978, 80) of queer theory. In autoimmunitary fashion Derrida (1978, 146) claims that there is no pure non-violence since violence always already haunts non-violence which is, he says "a contradictory concept". So, in order to answer the demand for ethical responsibility it is necessary, according to Derrida's logic, to do violence to the other. Far from closing down ethics, however, this violence committed toward the other is the very beginning of ethics and the ethical relationship. For more on Derrida's relationship to Levinas, the question of ethics, responsibility and the *tout autre* see

Derrida's (1999a) *Adieu: To Emmanuel Levinas*.

9. I am indebted to Paul Bowman's (2006) *Deconstruction is a Martial Art* which argues for working within the other's language ("the monolingualism of the other") and alter-disciplinary interventions which would involve making contact with other disciplines and journals outside one's discipline.

10. See also his Full Dorsal: Derrida's *Politics of Friendship*, *Postmodern Culture* 15.3 (2005) <<http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/current/issue/15.3wills.html>>

11. The term "New Enlightenment" is Derrida's. As John Caputo and Michael Scanlon explain "this is a 'new enlightenment'...that is enlightened about the Enlightenment and resists letting the spirit of the Enlightenment freeze over into dogma. Derrida seeks an Enlightenment 'of our time'... in which the 'certainties and axioms' of the old Enlightenment require reconsideration, translation and transformation." See Caputo and Scanlon (eds) *God, the Gift and Postmodernism*. The second essay in *Rogues* takes up this question at great length.

12. Especially John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (2006). What a weak queer theory, a weak force as distinguished from sovereign power, does is to unsettle the powerful sovereign subject and nation state so that "those who are strong are weak, and those who are weak are strong" (Caputo 2006, 24).

13. For just a couple of examples of a weak queer theory see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (2003) and José Esteban Muñoz's *Feeling Brown, Feeling Down: Latina Affect, the Performativity of Race, and the Depressive Position* (2006).

14. The quotes are from respectively Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (1996, 131); Leo Bersani, *Homos* (1995, 101); David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (1995, 62); and Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2004, 17).

15. In the eponymously titled chapter *Bodies that Matter*. For Derrida's most sustained treatment of the term, see *Khora* (1993).

16. I am referring especially to Leo Bersani's classic essay *Is The Rectum a Grave?* (1987). For a critique of *Rogues* from a feminist perspective see Penelope Deutscher's *Derrida's Impossible Genealogies* (2005a) but arguably it is Derrida's most sustained engagement with feminism (of the Irigarayan-Sedgwickian kind) and sexual difference. See especially the critique of Nancy in the chapter *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or, How Not to Speak in Mottos*, (Derrida 2004a, 56-62). In fact, sexual difference, or better sexual *différance*, has always been at the heart of Derrida's thought. See Anne-Emmanuelle Berger, *Sexual Differances* (2005).

17. See the dazzling chapter *The Last of the Rogue States: The 'Democracy to Come', Opening in Two Turns* in *Rogues* (Derrida 2004a, 78-94).

18. See Pablo S. Ghetti's *From the Posthumous Memoirs of Humanity: 'Democracy to Come'* (2005, 208-220) on, among other things, the humanities to-come, the unconditional university and the event.

19. A cautionary note on semantics: Although *voyou* and *rogue* are used interchangeably it is important to remember that *voyou* carries a condemnatory nuance which *rogue* does not. I would like to thank Larry Schehr for pointing this out to me.

20. For an unpacking of the etymological roots of the words *roué* and *voyou* see Derrida 2004a 19-21 and 63-70.

21. In a text written with long time enemy-friend Jürgen Habermas Derrida also called for resistance to US unilateralism saying that Europe must "exert its influence in shaping a coming global politics by pressuring institutions like the UN, G8, WTO, World Bank, and IMF". Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas, *Nach dem Krieg: Die Widergeburt Europas*. (2003). For discussion of these texts see Ross Benjamin and Heesok Chang, *Jacques Derrida, The Last European* (2006).

22. See Robert McRuer's *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (2006, 199-208), especially the epilogue *Specters of Disability*, where he hopes that "the disability to come... perhaps, will and should always belong to the time of the promise... it's a crip promise that we will always comprehend disability otherwise and that we will,

collectively, somehow access other worlds and futures.” I would like to thank Bob for pointing out to me, in 2004, that my work on queer futurity had a connection to Derrida on the democracy-to-come.

23. In his later work Derrida deploys the term metaperformative to complicate and put to rout the orders of the constative and performative. Since Austin’s speech act theory has been so influential for queer studies, particularly the work of Butler and Sedgwick, this is a significant shift. And one which must be reckoned with as I try to do throughout in my thinking on the event. See *University Without Condition*, 209 and *Psychoanalysis Searches the State of its Soul*, 278 in Derrida 2002.

24. As Avital Ronell avers in *Activist Supplement* a “true ethics of community would have to locate a passivity beyond passivity—a space of repose and reflection, a space that would let the other come”. Diane Davis explains that this means embracing a mode of radical passivity that would allow the other, the event to come. See D. Diane Davis, *Confessions of an Anacoluthon: Avital Ronell on Writing, Technology, Pedagogy, Politics* (2000).

25. Although there are many more recent examples of which I will cite just a few. John Paul Ricco (2002, 141) in Blanchotian mood sees “queer theory as an unavowable community of thought, one that is always coming never arriving”. See *The Logic of the Lure*; similarly, William Haver (1997, 284) sees queer research as “constituted in a departure without destination” in *Queer Research*; or, how to practice invention to the brink of intelligibility in Sue Golding (ed) *The Eight Technologies of Otherness*; Sarah Dillon (2005, 258) argues for the “palimpsestuousness of queer” as an endlessly involuted identity perpetually open to reinscription. Gavin Butt’s (2005, 164–165) definition of gossip as flirtatious is perhaps the best anti-definition of queer I have seen in some time (just substitute queer for gossip): “My point has been to largely avoid theorizing and pinning down gossip, and to defer from making it a respectable subject or new methodology of academic inquiry (though I may have flirted with the dangers of all these things). It would be so easy to betray gossip in this manner. Instead, my desire is to remain true to it by ending the book without too much closure, perhaps even without too much of an ending (my

turn to the language of fidelity here paradoxically suggests my desire to be faithful’ to gossip at the very least)... To try to wrap things up in some formal conclusion would therefore fly in the face of gossip’s flirtatious informational economy, which resides precisely in its lack of definitiveness... that’s flirtation for you: one never knows for sure whether it’s the beginning of something or not, or where—if indeed anywhere—it’s going to go.”

26. See Jasbir K. Puar and Amit S. Rai (2004), *The Remaking of a Model Minority: Perverse Projectiles under the Specter of (Counter)Terrorism*.

27. It is worth noting that Derrida covers most of these issues in Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *De Quoi Demain... Dialogue* (Paris: Galilée, 2001) translated as *For What Tomorrow... A Dialogue* (Derrida 2004c), and in *Paper Machine* (Derrida 2005) reminding us of how much we will miss him as an analyst of pressing global emergencies and crises. See in addition the *Social Text* special issue essays by Chandan Reddy, Gayatri Gopinath, Teemu Ruskola, Joon Oluchi Lee, Hiram Perez, Michael Cobb, Karen Tongson, and Judith Halberstam which I have not had space or time to engage here.

28. This recalls the quote from Butler in her interview with Kirby above in which she is discussing *Giving an Account of Oneself*.

29. In *Psychoanalysis Searches the State of its Soul*, Derrida (2002, 242) piles up “allusions to the United States, where the destiny of psychoanalysis is waging its most critical and perhaps, on more than one front, its most decisive battle” (Derrida 2002, 267) and he concludes, as I do for Queer theory, that “The hospitable exposure to the event, to the coming, to the visitation of the unpredictable *arrivant* cannot be made into the horizon of a task, not even for psychoanalysis, although it claims some privilege in the experience of the unpredictable coming of the other, at the arrival of the *arrivant*. But what may, *perhaps*, become a task, tomorrow, for psychoanalysis, for a new psychoanalytic reason, for a new psychoanalytic Enlightenment, is a revolution that, like all revolutions, will come to terms with the impossible, negotiate with the non-negotiable that has remained non-negotiable, calculate with the unconditional as such, with the inflexible unconditionality of the unconditional” (Derrida 2002, 276–277).

30. For two excellent essays on the potential if incalculable legacies of the term autoimmunity see Samir Haddad's (2005) *Inheriting Democracy to Come* and Derrida and Democracy at Risk (Haddad 2004, 29–44). The latter, written before Derrida's death, concludes: "Autoimmunity is still a very new term in Derrida's lexicon, and is no doubt still in development. It is likely that it will appear again (although this is by no means certain) and we do not yet know how it will be used in this possible future. I am a little wary of this future, but I may well be wrong in holding this somewhat pessimistic view. Much will depend on what is to come in Derrida's theorizing of democracy and autoimmunity, both in the texts that will appear under his signature and in those from readers in response" (Haddad 2004, 41). The following have also helped me to think through the aporias of autoimmunity: Alex Thomson's (2005), 'What's to become of Democracy to Come?', R. John Williams', *Theory and the Democracy to Come*, Rodolphe Gasché (2004), 'In the Name of Reason': *The Deconstruction of Sovereignty*, Vincent B. Leitch, (2007) *Late Derrida: The Politics of Sovereignty* and Genevieve Lloyd (2005), *Providence Lost: 'September 11' and the History of Evil*.

In a brilliantly provocative paper, *The Derridean Contre* and the Potential Impasse of Democracy's Autoimmunity, presented at the Counter-Movements: Institutions of Difference Conference at the University of Portsmouth (July 2006), Jennifer Cooke raised two serious objections to *Rogues* while seeing the usefulness and political efficacy of the autoimmunitary for working the contradictions in democracy: the first is that autoimmunity metaperformatively lets come about and is therefore passive. However, this reinstatiates an active/passive binary which *Rogues* is at pains to deconstruct (but that Cooke asserts it continually falls back on) and assumes that deconstruction and messianism are passive when Derrida is quite clear that they are not (or at least not just so since activity maintains an irreducible passivity within it and as I have argued throughout the weak force of deconstruction approximates a Nietzschean radical passivity) both in *Rogues* and anywhere he has talked about the decision (there is, of course, a difference between "*making come* and *letting come*... which lies "in making while letting, in making come while letting come", Derrida 2006, 66). The second (related) reservation Cooke has is with messianicity without messianism and its Judaic context which she argues it cannot be shorn of (she favors using expectation

or awaiting rather than waiting). I think Derrida has quite clearly demonstrated how messianicity without messianism is without the concrete, determinable messiahs of the religions of the book, and that it is a waiting without waiting which is not passive, but which dilates the time of the now by resisting historicism, progressivism, teleologism. If one eschews passivity in favor of activity as Cooke does the danger, as I see it, is that this will shore up the sovereignty of the I, the ego, the patrilineal, the fraternal, and everything that *Rogues* is deconstructing in the name of an indeterminable future. The long essay *Marx & Sons* serves as a good example with which to refute each of Cooke's claims. In it Derrida outlines the weak messianic power he borrows from Benjamin in order to fracture the temporal order but he warns there that he does so to draw on the weak force of the messianic rather than retaining any of its religious sense of anticipation. It is he emphasizes "a waiting *without* waiting" (Derrida 1999b, 251) and although his messianism without the messiah doesn't drain off the Jewish legacy of the word in Benjamin Derrida finds within this lineage "a universal structure of experience... which cannot be reduced to religious messianism of any stripe" (Derrida 1999b, 248) and this very irreducibility suggests that Derrida's debt when it comes to his messianicity without messianism is to speech act theory rather than to religious thought. It is the promise he says "which is the horizon of waiting that informs our relationship to time—to the event, to that which happens [*ce qui arrive*], to the one who arrives [*l'arrivant*], and to the other" (Derrida 1999b, 251). Messianicity is "anything but utopian, [it] mandates that we interrupt the ordinary course of things, time and history here-now; it is inseparable from an affirmation of otherness and justice" (Derrida 1999b, 249). I would like to thank Jennifer for her engagement with me on these questions.

31. This should alert us to be cautious about detheologizing the term or emptying it of its religious content. See Jacques Derrida (1998), *Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone*.

32. He says there: "With regard to the contagious and contaminating, immunity and immunosuppression, see e.g. Nancy's *L'Intrus* and *Corpus*. The latter is thus also a book about organ transplantation, AIDS, and even autoimmunity and all that follows". Jacques Derrida,

On Touching: Jean-Luc Nancy (2005, 370 n.10). This is not the place to consider the phenomena of gift giving, bug chasing, and barebacking in the context of autoimmunization but for a start see Gregory Tomso (2004), Bug Chasing, Barebacking, and the Risks of Care. While I am arguing that *Rogues* ought to become an important text for queer studies I would suggest in passing that *On Touching* will prove an inexhaustible resource for the field in the years to come. For an important beginning see Linnell Secomb (2006), Amorous Politics: Between Derrida and Nancy.

33. David Wills (2005, 44), Auto-immunity. For another helpful guide through autoimmunity's biological, social, and religious meanings listen to J. Hillis Miller on *Beloved*, Politics and Iraq on the Rabble Podcast Network.

34. On the *pharmakon* see Plato's Pharmacy in *Dissemination* (1981, 63–171). Elizabeth Rottenberg (2006, 12) points out that the term autoimmunity comes to us now in (the) place of 'différance', 'aporia', 'double bind', or 'deconstruction' and if anything this should alert us to the dangers of suggesting that there is an early or late Derrida (even if I do privilege the later texts in this essay).

35. On plasticity and opening up the future of Hegel see Catherine Malabou (2000), The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, Dialectic.

36. On queer temporalities see Elizabeth Freeman (2005), Time Binds, or, Erotohistoriography. As Reinhard (2005, 20–21) puts it Benjamin's weak messianicity is "a kind of temporal bomb which the historical materialist can throw into teleological historicism... Redemption is not the final cause of history, but the interruption of the false totality of historical causality by acts of critical creation and constellation".

37. For a careful reading of perfectibility and the barely there promise of the democracy to-come see Penelope Deutscher's *How to Read Derrida* (2005b, 100–111).

38. See the discussion of nanoparasitism and autoimmunity in Nicholas Royle (2006), Jacques Derrida's Language (Bin Laden on the Telephone).

39. Zizek has argued that a "countermovement requires striking at oneself", quoted in Bowman's (2006) Deconstruction is a Martial Art.

40. See also Jasbir K. Puar and Amit S. Rai (2002), *Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots*.

41. Via Mbembe and Spivak on the ballistic body and the multivalent textuality of suicide Puar asserts in *Queer times, Queer Assemblages* that "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 denaturalised through the impermanence, the transience of the suicide bomber; the fleeting identity relayed backward through its dissolution" (Puar 2005, 130).

42. Donna Haraway (1992), *The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others* and Judith Halberstam (1995), *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. See also Amit S. Rai (2006), *The Future is a Monster*.

43. On Derrida and the promise of the monstrous *arrivant* see James K.A. Smith (2005), *Jacques Derrida: Live Theory*.

44. "Community as *comm-on auto-immunity*: no community <is possible> that would not cultivate its own auto-immunity, a principle of sacrificial self-destruction ruining the principle of self-protection (that of maintaining self-integrity intact), and this in view of some sort of invisible and spectral sur-vival. This self-contesting affirmation keeps the auto-immune community alive, which is to say, open to something other and more than itself" (Derrida 1998, 51).

45. On Derrida's (queer) refusal to belong to family, civil society, state, nation, and elementary forms of kinship see J. Hillis Miller's *Don't Count Me In: Derrida's Refraining*, plenary lecture presented at the Counter-Movements: Institutions of Difference Conference, University of Portsmouth, July 2006. As Derrida argues the meaning of rogue extends to plants and animals whose "behavior appears deviant or perverse. Any wild animal can be called rogue but especially those such as *rogue elephants*, that behave like ravaging outlaws, violating the customs and conventions, the customary practices, of *their* community.

A horse can be called a rogue when it stops acting as it is supposed to, as it is expected to" (Derrida 2004a, 93).

46. I owe an enormous debt to the second reader for asking me to frame

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my conclusion in these terms.

47. Slavoj Zizek, Eric Santner and Kenneth Reinhard, Introduction, *The Neighbour*, 8.

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