

A Lesser Human Future: Posthuman Monstrosities in *World War Z* (2013) and *Annihilation* (2018)

By Christian David Zeitz, University of Toronto

Abstract

World War Z's (Palestinianized) zombies and *Annihilation*'s anthropocenic Shimmer *post* or *rework* conceptions of humanist and anthropomorphic monstrous bodies as sociologically knowable and biologically bound entities, as they are monstrosities of entanglement in nonhuman, informational, technological, ecological, and geological Latourian actor-networks. The monstrous of canonical monster theory, as a nonindividual discursive network of power, mediates a specific cultural body, whilst, in a conceptualization of monstrosity as actor-network, the monster would not be monstrous because it is the othered, not-quite-human alterity-body of humanity, but because it demonstrates (*monere*) the transcorporeality and nonhumanness of humans in the first place, as well as their status as nonexceptional and non-autonomous actors and actor-networks within larger-than-life actor-networks. The Jerusalem scene from *World War Z* links the posthuman *terrorist* becomings and resistances of the zombie and the (Palestinian) suicide bomber: the zombie bite, which collapses undeath into undeath, body and flesh into body and flesh, is comparable to the explosive death of the ballistic suicide bomber confusing boundaries between flesh, metal, life, death, and undeath. *World War Z*'s zombie and the racialized suicide bomber share the monstrous potentiality of posthuman contagion and networkability. In *Annihilation*, the Shimmer, the Alienocene as analogy of the Anthropocene, is a demonstrative monstrosity, cautioning that it is not simply humans changing the *morphism* of the Earth, but that the Earth itself is a nonhuman actor-network whose alterations effect alterations in the *morphisms* of the human. The monsters of climatological and geological change, the monsters of *what-we-have-done-to-the-earth*, will ultimately get *us*, precisely because we irreducibly intra-act with *our* Anthropocene.

1 The monsters of Marc Forster's *World War Z* (2013) – zombies – and Alex Garland's *Annihilation* (2018) – the Shimmer – lend themselves to two conceptualizations of posthuman monstrosities: zombies as the swarm-like excess of humanity, always-already “post(mortem)” (Lauro 233), as terrorist flesh-weapons and anthropocenic actants, and the Shimmer as an agential ecosystem-shifting force, an allegorical Anthropocene. Both zombies and the monstrosities of the Anthropocene *post* conceptions of humanist and anthropomorphic monstrous bodies as knowable and sociologically and biologically bound entities, as they are monstrosities of entanglement in nonhuman, informational, technological, ecological, and geological Latourian actor-networks.

2 In “Technologies of Monstrosity,” Jack Halberstam; writes that “monsters are over-determined, and open therefore to numerous interpretations, precisely because they transform the fragments of otherness into one body” (337). Halberstam's remarks are insightful in that they call

attention to the nonhuman or impersonal technologies of mediation that constitute monsters and monstrosities. Yet, the embodiment of the numerous technologies of monstrosity (which are/remain discourses of otherness) is still located in a body that remains a *bounded humanimal body*, a corporeal entity. Arguably, ‘monster movies’ have a longstanding history of subverting such logics of coherent monstrous physicality in the form of interplays between agential spatial formations, e.g. haunted houses or fogs, and small-scale embodied monstrous agents. In a sense, mediatic monstrosity has always-already been a network of irreducible, entangled posthumanist agencies, posting the cohering humanimal¹ body (vampire, werewolf, etc.) so prevalent in monster theory. The monster of monster theory is an unstable (yet stable enough), discursively constructed, permeable, liminal, becoming, but still strangely localizable, coherent, sociological, and organic body (Cohen, Shildrick). In as much as it disturbs self-presence, the Cartesian subject’s reduction to a(n) (anthropo)morphic body reinstates self-presence: it announces itself as *the body, the embodied as-such* of discursive monstrosity. Derrida agrees that “[the] presentation of the other as such, that is to say the dissimulation of its ‘as such,’ has always already begun and no structure of being [étant] escapes it,” which is a process of naming, categorizing, and mediating presence as the truth of being (Derrida, *Grammatology* 51). However, that “which can [...] only announce itself, *present* itself, in the species of monstrosity,” is never fully there, fully present, fully embodied, but a *presenting* trace of an event that will come to disrupt *present* and *presence* (5). The bound monstrous body is not really a monster but rather a *trace* of an irreducible absent present monstrosity (50-51)

3 This paper is aimed at theorizing posthuman, and in that sense post-anthropocentric, post-body, post-personal, irreductionist, monstrosities, whilst keeping with Neil Badmington’s caution that “[t]he ‘post-’ is forever tied up with what it is ‘post-ing’,” what it is *reworking* (20). Monstrosity is not transformed into one body; rather this one reduced body, which is never just one bounded body, but an irreducibility of relationalities, is an actor and itself a network within an actor-network of monstrosity via Latour: “what is doing the moving and what is moved have no specific homogenous *morphism*. They can be anthropo-morphic, but also zoo-morphic, physio-morphic, logo-morphic, techno-morphic, ideo-morphic, that is ‘x-morphic’” (Latour, “Actor-

¹ Here, I use this term to designate not so much human-animal relationalites, but the visual blurring *and* fixing of human-animal boundaries in a single body of monstrosity, such as that of the werewolf as the definite corporeal unit from which monstrous effects and affects spread. The fixture of monstrous affectivity only reinstates the humanist notion of a reducible body, from which alone agency can emanate.

Network Theory” 380). The morphic body of agency is a retroactive attribution and reduction of an irreducible net of nonhuman agencies and interconnections to a homogenously agential humanoid shape. For Latour, agency exceeds “the *social* relations of *individual human* actors” in that it also belongs to actants, that is “*non-human, non-individual* [agential] entities,” and exceeds a privileged morphology and corporeality, meaning that, within an(y) actor-network, agencies are attributable to various corporeal and noncorporeal actors, which are actively networking, and radically open to being networked by other actors and networks: actors and actants are both actors within actor-networks and actor-networks themselves (380). The Halberstamian monstrous, as a nonindividual discursive network of power, mediates a specific cultural body, whilst, in a conceptualization of monstrosity as actor-network, the monster would not be monstrous because it is the othered, not-quite-human alterity-body of humanity, but because it demonstrates (*monere*), per Cohen (4), the transcorporeality² and nonhumanness of humans in the first place, as well as their status as nonexceptional and non-autonomous actors and actor-networks within larger-than-life actor-networks.

4 I would like to expand on monstrosity as actor-network by linking it to Deleuze and Guattari’s suggestion *to define bodies by counting their affects*:

In the same way that we avoided defining a body by its organs and functions, we will avoid defining it by Species or Genus characteristics; instead we will seek to count its affects. [...] We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body. (299-300)

Counting affects and conceiving of actors in terms of their affective relations displaces anthropocentrism of agency, and rather speaks to compositions and arrangements of human and nonhuman affectivity (as that which affects and is open to being affected), or what has been translated as *assemblage*.³ This does not just provide an understanding of nonhuman and material affectivity and activity, it also points to the ways in which human affectivity and activity are augmented or diminished by what exceeds human consciousness and embodiment. Jasbir K. Puar

² This is the term Stacy Alaimo uses in her *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times* to refer to the radical openness of (human) bodies in their exposure to and entanglement with various bodies and networks, human and nonhuman.

³ *Arrangement* is a better translation of the original French *agencement* than Brian Massumi’s *assemblage* (Philippe 108-109). I will, however, retain *assemblage* due to its wider accepted usage.

theorizes, in this vein, “multiple bodies”: “the visual, representational body,” the body of visible, potentially intersecting identitarian integrities, and “the affective body,” the assemblage of “multiple registers” of affectivity that exceed the biological and sociological coherent human body: things, media(tedness), information, surroundings, etc. that are not simply *extensions* of a biologically bounded body, but, on the contrary, overlapping constituents “of organic and nonorganic machinic” assemblages: the monstrosities and terrorisms of these assemblages lie in their affectivity or their potential to enter into new networks of affectivity, which are always-already uncountable, becoming, however, the target of surveillant counting (199-200). This sense of incalculability and futurity is also reflected in Derrida’s remark “that the future is necessarily monstrous: the figure of the future, that is, that which can only be surprising, that for which we are not prepared, you see, is heralded by species of monsters. A future that would not be monstrous would not be a future; it would already be a predictable, calculable, and programmable tomorrow” (“Passages” 5). The monstrous is not there, not here and now, it is necessarily breaking with the *present* and *presence*, “a world to come,” a constant deferral (*Grammatology* 5). Networking and being networked are the preconditions for imagining the body-as-actor-network (or the body-as-assemblage), as the stuff of futurity, or as radically open to futural entanglements and futural (nonhuman) events. This can also be related to Jane Bennett’s new materialist negotiation of *impersonal affect* and *affective materialities* in her book *Vibrant Matter*. Bennett’s “focus [is] less on the enhancement to human relational capacities resulting from affective catalysts and more on the catalyst itself as it exists in nonhuman bodies. This power is ... impersonal, an affect intrinsic to forms that cannot be imagined (even ideally) as persons” (xii). Thus, nonhumans and matter can be designated as affective, whilst their affects are of an impersonal nature, for what is affective or possesses affective capacity is not a human *person* alone, but the nonhuman arrangement with which the latter is in ontological relation, such as the stuff of both material culture and the environment. The notions of the assemblage and impersonal affectivity help understand bodies as posthuman – that is human-nonhuman reworked – nonexceptional actor-networks within wider nonhuman actor-networks and help accentuate acting as a networking and coextensive activity, and an ongoing consequence of being networked again and again by *beyonds*.

5 In *World War Z* zombies are monsters of impersonal and incalculable affectivity, as well as actor-actants – questionably human-nonhuman, corporeal-noncorporeal – in the actor-network monstrosity of an agential Anthropocene. The opening sequence of the film already negotiates a

relationship between *culture* and *nature* or *environment*, and, in that sense, life-worlds imagined as either exclusively human or nonhuman.⁴ The editing suggests relationalities as well as (enforced) *cuts* and *dissolves* between culture and nature, human and nonhuman, which, however, are thereby revealed as the consequences of (Derridaean) writing, of cinematography, of a humanist mediation of dualism. The medially recycled *talk* and denial of environmental catastrophe and *the doomsday* – in its talkshow, expert interview, news footage, wildlife documentary mediality – and the intermixing of images of *strange* occurrences among both humans and nonhuman animals, points at once to the mediation/mediatedness of human life-worlds by nonhuman media technologies, which also make the very human vs. nonhuman dualism possible in the first place, as well as to the surfacing of an epistemologically sidelined yet ontologically relevant collapse between cultural or human and natural/environmental yet also technological or nonhuman worlds and agencies. What is foregrounded is the impersonality and nonhuman mediation of humans, as well as the *undeath* of the Anthropocene, the repressed natureculture – both given form through the coming zombie and the zombie apocalypse. For this paper, I will relate the *terrorist* posthuman becomings of the zombie and the (Palestinian) suicide bomber, rather than focusing on the eco-zombie as a materialization or actant of the Anthropocene.⁵

6 I specifically turn to the scenes in which the zombies make their way into the city of Jerusalem, which, because of its walled protection system, remains one of the few zombie-free zones in the world. When Gerry (Brad Pitt) arrives in Jerusalem, a Mossad agent, Jürgen Warmbrunn (Ludi Boeken), tells him that Israel built its wall(s) preemptively, after receiving information about a potential zombie outbreak from India, which constructs an implicit analogical relationship between the monstrous futurities of Palestinian (terrorist-coded)⁶ and zombie (terrorist-coded) risk. Following Sherryl Vint, the zombie-Palestinian analogy manifests itself in their status as “abject posthuman figures—most evident in the reconfiguration of zombies from

⁴ Donna Haraway deconstructs these retroactively constructed dualisms by insisting on the ontological relationality and inseparability between nature and culture, coining the term *natureculture* (see Haraway’s first chapter, “Emergent Naturecultures,” in her *Companion Species Manifesto*)

⁵ There are two outstanding papers which work through this relation, namely Phillip McReynold’s “Zombie Cinema and the Anthropocene: Posthumanist Agency at the End of the World” and Sarah Juliet Lauro’s “The Eco-Zombie: Environmental Critique in Zombie Fiction.”

⁶ After all, Israel has built and is building walls to keep out Palestinian *threats*. Warmbrunn also states that Israel’s tactics of Zombie pre-emption stem from having learnt from previously misrecognizing or underestimating looming Arab-terrorist and Arab-military threats, such as the Munich massacre or the Jom Kippur War.

the living-dead to the infected-living—[that] deconstruct the binary of living and death: surviving, but not really alive, they persist in a future without hope, a paradoxical future without a future” (174). Agreeably, the zombies and Palestinians (or more generally, populations on the wrong side of the biopolitical and necropolitical caesura⁷) are posthuman and (figuratively and literally) quasi-posthumous in their shared abject state of life-in-death. But I wonder how the *infected-living*, as actor-networks of risk and contagion, and thereby futural monstrosity, are *without a future*: both zombie and Palestinian resistance fighter/suicide bomber are monstrously futural in that their *undeath* or *death* might collapse others into *undeath* or *death*, in that they are monstrously contagious and networking. For Vint, the zombie is an allegory of dehumanization under biopolitical racism and late capitalism, but the question is whether that makes it posthuman or speaks to posthuman ontologies and entanglements. In a different vein, Sarah Juliet Lauro and Karen Embry write that what makes the zombie posthuman is its “irreconcilable body (both living and dead) [which] raises the insufficiency of the dialectical model (subject–object) and suggests, with its own negative dialectic, that the only way to truly get posthuman is to become antisubject” (396). The antisubject, here, is what disrupts bounded corporeality, puts into question clear-cut boundaries between subject and object, and rather figures as a an open and networkable body, an actor-network whose agencies and interactivities exceed the supposed coherence of the body-as-organism and the autonomous subjectivity of Man.⁸ *Undeath* is a form of (involuntary) resistance that is thoroughly posthuman because it collapses the boundaries between life, death, and undeath, the organic-corporeal and inorganic-incorporeal (the contagious virus embodied), flesh and/as weapon, as well as body, space, and time; a body that is spatially and temporally out of itself in that it is spatially and temporally between life and death, spatially dependent on both the multitudinal being of the zombie herd and on the act of transcorporeal feeding, and temporally dependent on the futurity of infecting others.

7 Jasbir K. Puar’s (Mbembe-influenced) comments on the Palestinian suicide bomber are insightful when trying to read the *terrorist* suicide bomber into the *terrorist* zombie:

[A] a body machined together through metal and flesh, an assemblage of the organic and 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 (216).

⁷ See lecture eleven in Michel Foucault’s “*Society Must Be Defended*” and Achille Mbembe’s “Necropolitics.”

⁸ This very much in line with Herbrechter’s proposal of a critical posthumanism in his *Posthumanism*.

[...]

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 (220).

When the zombies climb the wall and topple into the *World War Z*'s Jerusalem, they are animated by tonalities, a song performed by a hijab-wearing (thereby machined as Palestinian or Arab) woman. The scene metaphorically links zombies and suicide bombers on the three posthumanizing levels outlined by Puar. 1. They are animated and networked by sensorial and impersonal technologies, the soundwaves of the woman's song, that are agential beyond the woman's body and beyond their bodies, which creates an actor-network or an assemblage that is neither reducible to the woman's body nor the song nor the zombies, but rather forms an impersonal affective network of monstrous futurity. 2. They fall into the city as ballistic bodies, as zombie-bombs, as flesh-weapons ("body-weapon[s]" per Puar [217]) whose ontology (rather than metaphoricity) makes distinctions between flesh, body, weapon, and machinic (metaphorical) bomb untenable. The zombie really *is* the bomb, meaning that its *fleshy organicity*, which is always-already self-destructively put on the line, works as a *perfect* analogy of the organic-inorganic ballistic suicide-bomber-assemblage (217). 3. The zombie's contagious undeath, in the act of infecting through the bite, is a death scene without a terminal death which, however, does away with the self/other dialectic within the 10 seconds it takes to become infected/zombified, a scene in which the death of the human becomes the shared undeath of zombiehood. If, in the unfolding event of suicide bombing, "there are no sides, and [...] the sides are forever shifting, crumbling, and multiplying, disappearing and reappearing, unable to satisfactorily delineate between here and there" (218), then the zombie bite, which collapses undeath into undeath, body and flesh into body and flesh, is comparable to the explosive death of the ballistic suicide bomber confusing boundaries between flesh and metal, as well as a self-other binary where everyone supposedly *dies alone*: rather, the death-scenes are thoroughly posthuman in that multiple human-nonhuman and life-death boundaries dissolve, constantly mutate. An actor-network of death becomes analogized by an actor-network of undeath. It is not my aim to celebrate murder and violence here, but I do intend to stress the significance of death- and undeath-events as posthuman resistances that dispel Vint's *no-future* argument: both the zombie and the suicide bomber "overcome[s] [or at least mobilize] his [sic!] own mortality," "laboring under the sign of the future" (Mbembe 37), in that their deaths

and undeaths posthumanize the futural play of resistance. I have not so much embraced the zombie (uncritically) as a posthuman monstrous promise but simply shown that theorizing the zombie as posthuman must go further than the act of pointing to its dehumanization as disposable (non-)life, especially when linking it to bio- and necropolitical racialization. What is at stake is both the zombie's and the racialized suicide bomber's monstrous potentiality and posthuman contagion and networkability.

8 Alex Garland's *Annihilation*, based upon Jeff VanderMeer's eponymous 2014 novel, constructs an incorporeal extraterrestrial force, the Shimmer, that causes human and nonhuman life forms on earth to mutate and to refract each other and be refracted by the Shimmer. Despite its designation as an alien or extraterrestrial force, I would argue that the Shimmer can be read as an agential Anthropocene, as a moving and moved Earth (Latour, "Agency" 2-3), that effects biological, ecological, and geological wide-scale changes beyond human control (Davies 1-8), managing these changes through monstrous appearances, such as mutated nonhuman animals, plants, as well as becomings-nonhuman of humans, whilst being an irreducible Anthropocene monstrosity. The term Anthropocene suggests an epoch, a rewriting of geological time, measurable in stratospheric changes, and how humans have effected a change in history or histories that are purely relational – both human and more so nonhuman -- and beyond their control (Davies 1-4), a shared *geostory*, as Latour would have it ("Agency" 3). The Anthropocene is as much about human exceptionalism and its (self)destructive effects, as it is about the non-exceptionalization of the human and a redistribution of agency and *life* to nonhumans, small- and large-scale, as well as the interactivity of humans and nonhumans in human-nonhuman actor-networks composed of always newly emergent actor-networks. The Shimmer's designation and turn-out as extraterrestrial or alien is telling in that it works in line with designations of terrestrial or -terrestrial agencies, nonhuman agencies that displace human exceptionalism, as alien and unthinkable, precisely because they put into question the centrality of humans as exceptional agents of change as well as nonhuman passivity: the idea of a living and effecting Earth as actor-network, which goes beyond human control and re-networks humans into human-nonhuman networks, is so monstrous that it can only be imagined as alien and thereby as at once quasi-human and nonhuman, higher-human, alien-specific. Intervention from the planetary outside works as an analogy for intervention from the inside (human capitalism), which, however, claims a radical *outside* to, disentanglement from, or ontological superiority over the nonhuman (in all its varieties), but is unprepared and shattered

by a sudden posthumanization of what counts as agency. I will turn to selected scenes to make clear how the monstrosities of *Annihilation* are those of *bodies tumbled into bodies*⁹, of human-nonhuman relationalities and entanglements, and the incorporeal Shimmer's re(net)working and diffracting of supposedly distinct corporealities, species, biologies, and ecologies.

9 In *Annihilation*, Lena (Natalie Portman), a biology professor at Johns Hopkins University and ex-Armed Forces member, is brought/abducted to Area X after her husband, Sergeant Kane, an Armed Forces soldier, returns home almost-terminally ill from a covert mission into the Shimmer. The Area X facility, run by the government agency Southern Reach, is located close to the Shimmer, a steadily expanding force-field whose boundaries are *shimmering* nebula-like iridescences, and sent-in missions have a history of not returning from it: in fact, Kane is the first life-form to reappear alive from the Shimmer. Given the state her husband is in and driven to get behind its cause, Lena decides to join an all-female mission, consisting of Dr. Ventress (Jennifer Jason Leigh), Southern Reach's head psychologist, Cass (Tuva Novotny), a geomorphologist, Anya (Gina Rodriguez), a paramedic, and Josie (Tessa Thompson), a physicist, headed into the Shimmer/to a lighthouse in it from which said Shimmer is said to have expanded. The scene of going into the Shimmer – visualizing a sense of human exceptionalist expedition spirit, of the penetration of a nonhuman (eco-)system by knowing or at least knowledge-seeking subjects -- is radically contrasted with the first scene of *being* in the Shimmer, where human agencies are completely *at the whim* of the nonhuman Shimmer: the women suffer memory and temporal loss, as their food inventories indicate that they spent three days in the Shimmer, whilst neither the women nor the spectator, given the on-screen absence of these three days, can experientially recollect these three days. Further, they are unable to communicate with the *outside world*, as the Shimmer blocks, or as we later learn, refracts, or probably rather diffracts, “through one another,” per Karen Barad (30), radio signals (their networking activity is reduced by their implication in a wider actor-network, the Shimmer, which networks them inadequately, or rather in a way that is at odds with human, anthropocentric intentionality). In Barad's agential realism, both (self-)knowledge and knowledge production and transmission are “matter[s] of differential responsiveness,” which do not come “from above or outside or even seeing from a prosthetically enhanced human body,” rather [k]nowing is a matter of intra-action” (149). Knowing as intra-

⁹ See Heather Swanson, Anna Tsing, Nils Bubandt, and Elaine Gan's “Bodies Tumbled into Bodies,” in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*.

action, as “the mutual constitution of entangled agencies” between the human expeditioners and the Shimmer, which, at least after entering it, “recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action” (33), is monstrous in that it renders obsolete and nonexistent, non-ontological in some way, the distinct agencies and autonomous subjectivities (of knowing) structuring the expeditioners’ epistemological framework of being-in-the-world, their anthropocentric *world picture* in Heideggerian terms.¹⁰ Not-knowing and not-remembering what happened, when something clearly happened (indicated by the food inventory), gives human agency and intentionality over through their intra-acting with the Shimmer: the expeditioners do not know what happened because they were not the primary actors but rather actors within the actor-network of the Shimmer, within an intra-agential/intra-active human-Shimmer activity, which renders (purely) individual acts irretrievable, thereby epistemologically and ontologically impossible.

10 What the team discovers in the Shimmer are, above all, what Lena, the biologist, identifies as *mutations*: different plant species growing from the same branch, an oversized crocodile with the concentric teeth rows of sharks, a bear-like creature which, after killing Cass, absorbs the pained, agonic sounds of her last moments, deers on whose antlers flowers bloom, microscopic samples of Lena’s blood cells parting at increasing pace and *shimmering* in iridescence, as well as Anya realizing that her hands begin to *shimmer*. The Shimmer is radically changing the morphic structure of the beings it encompasses, and much to the surprise and shock of the expeditioners, their DNA, causing the expeditioners, as Gry Ulstein points out, to enter relationships of *kinship* with the Shimmer (71-73). The Shimmer functions as what Timothy Morton would call a *hyperobject* in that it is at once *nonlocal* and incorporeal but also *viscous* in that it manifests itself and sticks to all kinds of being, human and nonhuman, altering their genetic and structural being, not by eliminating it but by diffracting it through itself (1-3). At one point, the expeditioners discover plant structures that have grown in the shape of human bodies. The following dialogue (mostly between Lena and Josie) ensues:

Josie: That leaf in your hand ... do you know what you’d get if you sequenced it?

Lena: What?

Josie: Human Hox genes.

Anya: Hox? What is ... ? What’s Hox mean?

Lena: They’re the genes that define the body plan, the physical structure.

Josie: And the plants have human body plan. Arms attached to shoulders, legs to hips.

¹⁰ See Heidegger’s “The Age of the World Picture.”

Lena: It's literally not possible.

Josie: It's literally what's happening. The Shimmer is a prism, but it refracts everything. Not just light and radio waves. Animal DNA, plant DNA, all DNA (1:04:30-1:05:55).

For Lena, Josie's explication (which is not just anthropomorphic, as different morphisms overlap) summons "an event" of "the form of the unacceptable, or even of the unacceptable, or even of the intolerable, of the incomprehensible, that is, of a certain monstrosity" (Derrida, "Passages" 387), precisely because it summons a radical becoming-nonhuman of the human, displaces the human exceptionalism of an autonomous subject, and *promises* not so much a future without humans as a lesser human future. The refraction or rather diffraction (which is probably more fitting a term as multiple DNA *waves*, plant, human, and potentially more overlap when meeting the shimmer) of distinct human and nonhuman species agencies, leading to their heightened and absolute intra-action (Barad 30). What is evoked here is (strangely) reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari's (somewhat Darwinian) rendering of "a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp": "There is neither imitation nor resemblance, only an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome [...]" (9). After all, what Josie describes is an intra-acting of DNAs, a becoming-human of the plant and a becoming-plant of the human, something all-together and neither-nor, emanating from the same rhizomatic structure of the Shimmer; monstrosities that *post* human singularity and exceptionality in their becoming-nonhuman.

11 The ending scenes of the film help sum up the monstrosities of the actor-network, intra-action, and becoming-nonhuman: when Lena returns from the lighthouse as the sole survivor, having supposedly defeated the alien life form, the question of whether this is Lena or not looms large. First, the alien, which is scripted as the force behind the Shimmer, mirrors and diffracts Lena, creating itself as a Lena-look-alike. Second, when Lena meets her recovered husband, Kane, they answer each other's respective questions "Are you Kane?" and "Are you Lena" with "I don't know." In either case, a becoming-Shimmer of Lena and a multispecies diffraction of her DNA, which Lena discovered herself under a microscope, has happened and is under way, the coming of a monstrous, both alerting and promising, human-nonhuman future is under way.

12 I tried to sketch out a theory of the monstrous which posts a bounded and coherent humanoid (sociological and biological) body; in that sense, a theory of monstrous futurity in Derridean terms. In my analysis of the Jerusalem scene from *World War Z*, I have drawn

comparisons between the posthuman *terrorist* becomings and resistances of the zombie and the (Palestinian) suicide bombers. In their posthuman becomings, life and death fuse into each other, just as being a body and being a weapon become one in a transcorporeal contagion/infection: networks of undeath become a resilient way of life (or undeath). Zombie-ism and terrorism are monstrosities of a human-nonhuman future, that might collapse into the present at any point and without fore-warning. In *Annihilation* the Shimmer, the Alienocene as analogy of the Anthropocene, is a demonstrative monstrosity, cautioning that it is not simply humans changing the *morphism* of the Earth, but that the Earth itself is a nonhuman actor-network whose alterations effect alterations in the *morphisms* of the human. The monsters of climatological and geological change, the monsters of *what-we-have-done-to-the-earth*, will ultimately get *us*, precisely because we irreducibly intra-act with *our* Anthropocene.

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