Any form of economic engagement requires trade. Trade is the transfer of ownership of an object. In the modern economy this transfer is guided by exchange rates. However, look deeper and even so-called rational economic tools like supply and demand, interest rates, and speculation are destroying the system from the inside out. Rationality is an illusion, even the most structured of systems collapse upon themselves when run to the extreme.

Baudrillard 2009 (Jean, “The Transparency of Evil”, Pgs. 37-39 [NN])

Not the least of paradoxes, given this context, is to see the economy returning triumphantly to the agenda - though whether we can properly speak of 'economy' here is questionable. Certainly this glaring reality of today cannot have the meaning it had in the classical or Marxist accounts. Its motor is neither the infrastructure nor the superstructure of material production, but rather the destructuring of value, the destabilization of real markets and economies and the victory of an economy unencumbered by ideologies, by social science, by history - an economy freed from 'Economics' and given over to pure speculation; a virtual economy emancipated from real economies (not emancipated in reality, of course: we are talking about virtuality - but that is the point, too: today, power lies not in the real but in the virtual); and an economy which is viral, and which thus connects with all other viral processes. If the economic sphere has once more become an exemplary theatre of our present reality, it has done so as the locus of special effects, of unforeseeable events, of an irrational interplay of forces. Along with Marx, we too dreamt of the end of Political Economy - of the abolition of classes and the advent of a transparent social realm in accordance with the ineluctable logic of Capital. And then we dreamt of the end of the economy in terms of a disavowal of its basic tenets -a disavowal that threw out the Marxist critique into the bargain: on this view, primacy was accorded neither to the economic nor to the political- the economy was simply ushered out as a mere epiphenomenon, vanquished by its simulacrum of itself, and by a superior logic. Today we no longer even need to dream: Political Economy is coming to an end before our eyes, metamorphosing into a trans economics of speculation which merely plays at obeying the old logic (the law of value, the laws of the market, production, surplus-value, all the classical laws of capital) and there­ fore no longer has anything economic or political about it. A game and nothing but a game, with floating and arbitrary rules: a game of catastrophe. So Political Economy will indeed soon have come to an end - though not at all in the way we once envisaged: rather, through the exacerbation of its own logic to the point of self-parody. Speculation is not surplus-value, it is a sort of ecstasy of value, utterly detached from production and its real conditions: a pure, empty form, the purged form of value operating on nothing but its own revolving motion, its own orbital circulation. The self-destabilization of Political Economy is thus what puts paid, in monstrous and somehow ironic fashion, to all possible alternatives. What possible riposte could there be to such extravagance, which effectively co-opts the energy of poker, of potlatch, of the I accursed share', and in a way opens the door to Political Economy's aesthetic and delusional stage? This unexpected demise, this phase transition, this wild bull market, is fundamentally far more original than all our old political utopias.

Given the inevitable collapse of the neoliberal exchange order we should begin trade with the object easiest to evaluate: our lives. After all, since no one can externally measure your value to life it’s up to us to measure them ourselves. We measured our lives with rulers, protractors, and various weighted scales. We have concluded our own lives to be meaningless in those moments of protection. When life is packaged and placed on the universal scale of equivalence, it no longer means much of anything at all. After all, what’s the point of buying Grand Theft Auto V if you never take it out of the packaging?

Jean **Baudrillard** 19**76** (“Symbolic exchange and Death,” pg. 177)

Security is another form of social control, in the form of life blackmailed with the afterlife. It is universally present for us today, and 'security forces' range from life assurance and social security to the car seatbelt by way of the state security police force .39 'Belt up' says an advertising slogan for seatbelts. Of course, security, like ecology, is an industrial business extending its cover up to the level of the species: a convertibility of accident, disease and pollution into capitalist surplus profit is operative everywhere. But this is above all a question of the worst repression, which consists in dispossessing you of your own death, which everybody dreams of, as the darkness beneath their instinct of conservation. It is necessary to rob every one of the last possibility of giving themselves their own death as the last 'great escape' from a life laid down by the system. Again, in this symbolic short-circuit, the gift-exchange is the challenge to oneself and one's own life , and is carried out through death. Not because it expresses the individual's asocial rebellion (the defection of one or millions of individuals does not infringe the law of the system at all), but because it carries in it a principle of sociality that is radically antagonistic to our own social repressive principle. To bury death beneath the contrary myth of security, it is necessary to exhaust the gift-exchange. Is it so that men might live that the demand for death must be exhausted? No, but in order that they die the only death the system authorizes: The livings are separated from their dead, who no longer exchange anything but the form of their afterlife, under the sign of comprehensive insurance. Thus car safety· mummified in his helmet, his seatbelt, all the paraphernalia of security , wrapped up in the security myth, the driver is nothing but a corpse, closed up in another, non-mythic, death , as neutral and objective a s technology, noiseless and expertly crafted. Riveted to his machine, glued to the spot in it, he no longer runs the risk of dying, since he is already dead. This is the secret of security, like a steak under cellophane: to surround you with a sarcophagus in order to prevent you from dying.

There is hope for recovery. When we are willing to die we are at our most alive. Only when we are willing to exchange our lives for something else can they have meaning.

Fernando 2010(Jeremy, “*The Suicide Bomber; and her gift of death*” Pg. 125-126)

We might provisionally begin our glimpse into the phenomenon by considering the notion that suicide is the expression of a subject`s will towards death. One can even posit that since one is thrown into life, and that one has no control over the point in which one dies, suicide is the subject`s way of gaining some form of control-at least of telos of life itself. Of course the irony of the situation is, the very moment in which the subject gains a form of control over her/his life is also the very same moment in which her/his life is lost. This opens the question of whether one can think of suicide in terms of an economic exchange. E

ven though the opening gambit is that the subject exchanges life for control, the attempted control was over life itself: Hence, if life is lost within the very exchange that is taking place, is there even a transference that occurs; is there actually an exchange? Since both the losses-the life of the subject-and the gains-control over a no longer existent life-amount to an exchange of nothing-in the economic sense of zero exchange-this is strictly speaking an empty exchange. Hence, one needs to consider suicide as a ritualistic exchange, where one stakes one`s life in order to gain form of control: and here is where form is crucial, for surely there is no content in this emptiness, to this emptiness.

Giving up our lives does not remove us from circulation. Exchanging life for death is a market function to be included in our economic frame. Excluding the dead is an effacement of the self which props a culture of mourning and vampiric obsession with tragedy.

Butterfield 2002 [Bradley. University of Wisconsin, La Crosse M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, University of Oregon. The Baudrillardian Symbolic, 9/11, and the War of Good and Evil. PMC 13.1 2002. Project Muse.]

Despite this transparent warning, in Symbolic Exchange and Death (1976) Baudrillard went on to sketch several examples of symbolic exchange in relation to death in today's political economy. The anagram in Saussure, the Witz in Freud, graffiti in New York, the Accident in the media are all treated by Baudrillard as symbolic events wherein death, denied and repressed, poses a challenge to life. From the standpoint of 9/11, his theory of death in primitive and modern cultures is most pertinent. Like Foucault, Baudrillard sees the history of Western culture in terms of a genealogy of discrimination and exclusion: At the very core of the "rationality" of our culture, however, is an exclusion that precedes every other, more radical than the exclusion of madmen, children or inferior races, an exclusion preceding all these and serving as their model: the exclusion of the dead and of death. (Symbolic 126) According to Baudrillard, the dead in primitive societies played integral roles in the lives of the living by serving as partners in symbolic exchange. A gift to the dead was believed to yield a return, and by exchanging with the dead through ritual sacrifices, celebrations and feasts, they managed to absorb the rupturing energy of death back into the group. But there is an irreversible evolution from savage societies to our own: little by little, the dead cease to exist. They are thrown out of the group's symbolic circulation. They are no longer beings with a full role to play, worthy partners in exchange....Today it is not normal to be dead, and this is new. . . . Death is a delinquency, and an incurable deviancy. (126) Modern Western cultures have largely ceased to exchange with the dead collectively, partly because we no longer believe in their continued existence, and partly because we no longer value that which cannot be accumulated or consumed. The dead have no value by our measurements. We give them nothing and expect nothing from them in return, and yet they remain with us, in our memories, obligating our recognition and response. How do we respond to the symbolic challenge of death and the dead, the challenge they pose to our conscious experience? This is the question of 9/11. The primitives, Baudrillard maintains, responded to this challenge collectively through symbolic exchanges with their dead and deities. Their belief in the sign's transparency, its symbolic singularity, can be seen in animistic practices such as voodoo, where the enemy's hair is thought to contain his or her spirit. If the dead are only humans of a different nature, and if the sign is what it stands for, then a symbolic sacrifice to a dead person is every bit as binding as a gift to a living person. The obligation to return is placed upon the dead, and they reciprocate by somehow honoring or benefiting the living. Most Christians believe in and employ this same mechanism when they pray to the resurrected Christ, but even they do not believe that their symbolic gestures are anything but metaphors. We no longer believe in the one to one correspondence of signifier and signified, and we know the loved one is not really contained in the lock of hair. Americans will doubtless commemorate the deaths of those killed on 9/11 as long as our nation exists, but we know that our gifts to the dead are only symbolic, which for us means imaginary. Baudrillard's postmodern-primitive symbolic, on the other hand, aimed to obliterate the difference in value between the imaginary and the real, the signifier and the signified, and to expose the metaphysical prejudice at the heart of all such valuations. His wager was that this would be done through aesthetic violence and not real violence, but having erased the difference between the two, there was never any guarantee that others wouldn't take such theoretical "violence" to its literal ends. Graffiti art, scarification and tattooing are just the benign counterparts of true terrorism, which takes ritual sacrifice and initiation to their extremes. Literalists and extremists, fundamentalists of all sorts, find their logic foretold in Baudrillard's references to the primitives. What the terrorists enacted on 9/11 was what Baudrillard would call a symbolic event of the first order, and they were undeniably primitive in their belief that God, the dead, and the living would somehow honor and benefit them in the afterlife. Unable to defeat the U.S. in economic or military terms, they employ the rule of prestation in symbolic exchange with the gift of their own deaths. But Americans are not "primitives"--we do not value death symbolically, but rather only as a subtraction from life. Capitalism's implicit promise, in every ad campaign and marketing strategy, is that to consume is to live. We score up life against death as gain against loss, as if through accumulation we achieve mastery over the qualitative presence of death that haunts life. Our official holidays honoring the dead serve no other function than to encourage consumption. When it comes to actually dealing with death and the dead, even in public, we do so in private. As Baudrillard points out, "This entails a considerable difference in enjoyment: we trade with our dead in a kind of melancholy, while the primitives live with their dead under the auspices of the ritual and the feast" (134-35). Because we devalue death and thereby the dead, we view them only as a dreaded caste of unfortunates, and not as continuing partners in exchange. Ultimately, however, it is not so much the dead but our own deaths, our negative doubles, that we insult by denying their value. When we posit death as the negation of life, we bifurcate our identities and begin a process of mourning over our own eventual deaths, a process which lasts our whole lives. The more we devalue our death-images, that is, the greater they become, until they haunt our every moment, as in Don DeLillo's darkest comedy, White Noise. This leads us, according to Baudrillard, to an obsession with death that can be felt in the media fascination with catastrophes like 9/11. Death "becomes the object of a perverse desire. Desire invests the very separation of life and death" (147). Political economy's inability to absorb the rupturing energy of death is thus compensated by the symbolic yield of the media catastrophe. In these events we experience an artificial death which fascinates us, bored as we are by the routine order of the system and the "natural" death it prescribes for us. Natural death represents an unnegotiable negation of life and the tedious certainty of an unwanted end. It therefore inspires insurrection, until "reason itself is pursued by the hope of a universal revolt against its own norms and privileges" (162). The terrorist spectacle is an example of such a revolt, in which death gains symbolic distinction and becomes more than simply "natural." We may not think we identify with the terrorists' superstitions about honor in the next life, but in events like 9/11, Baudrillard would suggest, we nevertheless identify despite ourselves with both with the terrorists and their victims: We are all hostages, and that's the secret of hostage-taking, and we are all dreaming, instead of dying stupidly working oneself to the ground, of receiving death and of giving death. Giving and receiving constitute one symbolic act (the symbolic act par excellence), which rids death of all the indifferent negativity it holds for us in the "natural" order of capital. (166)

Biological death is a fallacy – death is a social construction. Your body is an image, an illusion, perceived phenomena, and you are only dead when you are no longer perceived. This results in 2 paradoxes: 1. a biologically healthy body is still dead when it no longer has the power to act on the world and its perceptions are no longer perceived. 2. A biologically inactive body can still be very much alive so long as its perceptions continue and its ethos echoes throughout the socius.

The refusal to encounter death is the original formation of power – power over death and power over life are one and the same. Only when we can accept the exchange of death can we deflect the call of power. This is the ontological position which must be affirmed.

The system has demanded we live on its own terms, and so too die on its own terms. Those who take their own lives are mistaken or insane, those who live outside of the system are demonized and made barbaric. Even the internal self is refracted through the mirror house of capital accumulation, creating internal separation and hatred of the self. It is only by welcoming death, and the exchange of death, that we can live.

**Robinson 2012**

/Andrew, Political Theorist, Activist Based in the UK and research fellow affiliated to the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice (CSSGJ), University of Nottingham, “Jean Baudrillard: The Rise of Capitalism & the Exclusion of Death”, March 30, http://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-baudrillard-2/

**Symbolic exchange** – or rather, its suppression **– plays a central role in the emergence of capitalism**. Baudrillard sees a change happening over time. **Regimes based on symbolic exchange** (differences are exchangeable and related) **are replaced by regimes based on equivalence** (everything is, or means, the same). Ceremony gives way to spectacle, immanence to transcendence.¶ Baudrillard’s view of capitalism is derived from Marx’s analysis of value. Baudrillard accepts Marx’s view that capitalism is based on a general equivalent. Money is the general equivalent because it can be exchanged for any commodity. In turn, it expresses the value of abstract labour-time. Abstract labour-time is itself an effect of the regimenting of processes of life, so that different kinds of labour can be compared. Capitalism is derived from the autonomisation or **separation of economics from** the rest of **life. It turns economics into the ‘reality-principle’**. It is a kind of sorcery, connected in some way to the disavowed symbolic level. **It subtly shifts the social world from an exchange of death with the Other to an eternal return of the Same**. Capitalism functions by reducing everything to a regime based on value and the production of value. To be accepted by capital, something must contribute value. This creates an immense regime of social exchange. However, this social exchange has little in common with symbolic exchange. It ultimately depends on the mark of value itself being unexchangeable. Capital must be endlessly accumulated. States must not collapse. Capitalism thus introduces the irreversible into social life, by means of accumulation.¶ According to Baudrillard, **capitalism rests on an obsession** **with the abolition of death. Capitalism tries to abolish death through accumulation**. It tries to ward off ambivalence (associated with death) through value (associated with life). But this is bound to fail. General **equivalence – the basis of capitalism** – is itself the ever-presence of death. **The more the system runs from death, the more it places everyone in solitude, facing their own death**. Life itself is fundamentally ambivalent. **The attempt to abolish death through fixed value is itself deathly.** Accumulation also spreads to other fields. The idea of progress, and linear time, comes from the accumulation of time, and of stockpiles of the past. The idea of truth comes from the accumulation of scientific knowledge. **Biology rests on the separation of living and non-living**. According to Baudrillard, such accumulations are now in crisis. For instance, the accumulation of the past is undermined, because historical objects now have to be concealed to be preserved – otherwise they will be destroyed by excessive consumption. Value is produced from the residue or remainder of an incomplete symbolic exchange. The repressed, market value, and sign-value all come from this remainder. To destroy the remainder would be to destroy value.¶ Capitalist exchange is always based on negotiation, even when it is violent. The symbolic order does not know this kind of equivalential exchange or calculation. **And capitalist extraction is always one-way. It amounts to a non-reversible aggression in which one act (of dominating or killing) cannot be returned by the other. It is also this regime which produces scarcity** – Baudrillard here endorses Sahlins’ argument. Capitalism produces the Freudian “death drive”, which is actually an effect of the capitalist culture of death. For Baudrillard, the limit to both Marx and Freud is that they fail to theorise the separation of the domains they study – the economy and the unconscious. It is the separation which grounds their functioning, which therefore only occurs under the regime of the code.¶ Baudrillard also criticises theories of desire, including those of Deleuze, Foucault, Freud and Lacan. He believes desire comes into existence based on repression. It is an effect of the denial of the symbolic. Liberated energies always leave a new remainder; they do not escape the basis of the unconscious in the remainder. Baudrillard argues that indigenous groups do not claim to live naturally or by their desires – they simply claim to live in societies. This social life is an effect of the symbolic. Baudrillard therefore criticises the view that human liberation can come about through the liberation of desire. He thinks that such a liberation will keep certain elements of the repression of desire active.¶ Baudrillard argues that the processes which operate collectively in indigenous groups are repressed into the unconscious in metropolitan societies. This leads to the autonomy of the psyche as a separate sphere. It is only after this repression has occurred that a politics of desire becomes conceivable. He professes broad agreement with the Deleuzian project of unbinding energies from fixed categories and encouraging flows and intensities. However, he is concerned that capitalism can recuperate such releases of energy, disconnecting them so they can eventually reconnect to it. Unbinding and drifting are not fatal to capitalism, because capitalism itself unbinds things, and re-binds things which are unbound. What is fatal to it is, rather, reversibility.¶ **Capitalism continues to be haunted by the forces it has repressed**. Separation does not destroy the remainder. Quite the opposite. **The remainder continues to exist, and gains power from its repression. This turns the double or shadow into something unquiet, vampiric, and threatening. It becomes an image of the forgotten dead**. Anything which reminds us of the repressed aspects excluded from the subject is experienced as uncanny and threatening. It becomes the ‘obscene’, which is present in excess over the ‘scene’ of what is imagined.¶ This is different from theories of lack, such as the Lacanian Real. Baudrillard’s remainder is an excess rather than a lack. It is the carrier of the force of symbolic exchange.¶ Modern culture dreams of radical difference. The reason for this is that it exterminated radical difference by simulating it. The energy of production, the unconscious, and signification all in fact come from the repressed remainder. Our culture is dead from having broken the pact with monstrosity, with radical difference. The West continues to perpetrate genocide on indigenous groups. But for Baudrillard, it did the same thing to itself first – destroying its own indigenous logics of symbolic exchange. Indigenous groups have also increasingly lost the symbolic dimension, as modern forms of life have been imported or imposed. This according to Baudrillard produces chronic confusion and instability.¶ **Gift-exchange is radically subversive of the system**. This is not because it is rebellious. Baudrillard thinks the system can survive defections or exodus. It is because it counterposes a different ‘principle of sociality’ to that of the dominant system. According to Baudrillard, the mediations of capitalism exist so that nobody has the opportunity to offer a symbolic challenge or an irreversible gift. They exist to keep the symbolic at bay. The affective charge of death remains present among the oppressed, but not with the ‘properly symbolic rhythm’ of immediate retaliation.¶ The Church and State also exist based on the elimination of symbolic exchange. Baudrillard is highly critical of Christianity for what he takes to be a cult of suffering, solitude and death. He sees the Church as central to the destruction of earlier forms of community based on symbolic exchange.¶ Baudrillard seems to think that earlier forms of the state and capitalism retained some degree of symbolic exchange, but in an alienated, partially repressed form. For instance, the imaginary of the ‘social contract’ was based on the idea of a sacrifice – this time of liberty for the common good. In psychoanalysis, symbolic exchange is displaced onto the relationship to the master-signifier. I haven’t seen Baudrillard say it directly, but the impression he gives is that this is a distorted, authoritarian imitation of the original symbolic exchange. Nonetheless, it retains some of its intensity and energy. Art, theatre and language have worked to maintain a minimum of ceremonial power.¶ It is the reason older orders did not suffer the particular malaise of the present. It is easy to read certain passages in Baudrillard as if he is bemoaning the loss of these kinds of strong significations. This is initially how I read Baudrillard’s work. But on closer inspection, this seems to be a misreading. Baudrillard is nostalgic for repression only to the extent that the repressed continued to carry symbolic force as a referential. He is nostalgic for the return of symbolic exchange, as an aspect of diffuse, autonomous, dis-alienated social groups.¶ Death¶ Death plays a central role in Baudrillard’s theory, and is closely related to symbolic exchange. According to Baudrillard, indigenous groups see death as social, not natural or biological.  They see it as an effect of an adversarial will, which they must absorb.  And they mark it with feasting and rituals.  This is a way of preventing death from becoming an event which does not signify.  Such a non-signifying event is absolute disorder from the standpoint of symbolic exchange.  For Baudrillard, **the west’s idea of** a biological, **material death is** actually **an** idealist **illusion, ignoring** the **sociality** of death. Poststructuralists generally maintain that **the problems of the present are rooted in the splitting of  life into binary oppositions**.  For Baudrillard, **the division between life and death is the** original, **founding opposition on which the others are founded**.  After this first split, a whole series of others have been created, confining particular groups – the “mad”, prisoners, children, the old, sexual minorities, women and so on – to particular segregated situations.  The **definition of the ‘normal human’ has been narrowed** over time.  Today, nearly everyone belongs to one or another marked or deviant category. **The original exclusion was of the dead – it is defined as abnormal to be dead.**  “You livies hate us deadies”.  **This** first split and exclusion **forms** the basis, or archetype, for **all** the **other** splits and **exclusions** – along lines of gender, disability, species, class, and so on. This discrimination against the dead brings into being the modern experience of death.  Baudrillard suggests that death as we know it does not exist outside of this separation between living and dead.  The modern view of death is constructed on the model of the machine and the function.  A machine either functions or it does not.  **The** human **body is treated as a machine** which similarly, either functions or does not.  For Baudrillard, this misunderstands the nature of life and death. The modern view of death is also necessitated by the rise of *subjectivity*.  The subject needs a beginning and an end, so as to be reducible to the story it tells.  This requires an idea of death as an end.  It is counterposed to the immortality of social institutions.  In relation to individuals, ideas of religious immortality is simply an ideological cover for the real exclusion of the dead.  But institutions try to remain truly immortal.  Modern systems, especially bureaucracies, no longer know how to die – or how to do anything but keep reproducing themselves. **The internalisation of the idea of the subject** or the soul **alienates us from our bodies**, voices and so on.  It creates a split, as Stirner would say, between the category of ‘man’ and the ‘un-man’, the real self irreducible to such categories.  It also individualises people, by destroying their actual connections to others.  The symbolic haunts the code as the threat of its own death.  The society of the code works constantly to ward off the danger of irruptions of the symbolic. The mortal body is actually an *effect* of the split introduced by the foreclosure of death.  The split never actually stops exchanges across the categories.  In the case of death, we still ‘exchange’ with the dead through our own deaths and our anxiety about death.  **We no longer have** living, mortal **relationships with objects** either.  **They are reduced to the instrumental**.  It is as if we have a transparent veil between us. Symbolic exchange is based on a game, with game-like rules.  When this disappears, laws and the state are invented to take their place.  It is the process of excluding, marking, or barring which allows concentrated or transcendental power to come into existence.  Through splits, people turn the other into their ‘imaginary’.  For instance, westerners invest the “Third World” with racist fantasies and revolutionary aspirations; the “Third World” invests the west with aspirational fantasies of development.  In separation, the other exists only as an imaginary object.  Yet the resultant purity is illusory.  For Baudrillard, any such marking or barring of the other brings the other to the core of society.  “We all” become dead, or mad, or prisoners, and so on, through their exclusion. **The goal of ‘survival’ is fundamental to the birth of power.  Social control emerges when the union of the living and the dead is shattered, and the dead become prohibited**.  The social repression of death grounds the repressive socialisation of life.  **People are compelled to survive so as to become useful.**  For Baudrillard, capitalism’s original relationship to death has historically been concealed by the system of production, and its ends.  It only becomes fully visible now this system is collapsing, and production is reduced to operation. In modern societies, **death is** made invisible, denied, and **placed outside society**.  For example, elderly people are excluded from society.  People no longer expect their own death.  As a result, it becomes unintelligible.  It keeps returning as ‘nature which will not abide by objective laws’.  It can no longer be absorbed through ritual.  Western society is arranged so death is never done by someone else, but always attributable to ‘nature’. **This creates a bureaucratic, judicial regime of death, of which the concentration camp is the ultimate symbol.  The system now commands that we must not die** – at least not in any old way.  We may only die if law and medicine allow it.  Hence for instance the spread of health and safety regulations.  On the other hand, **murder and violence are legalised, provided they can be re-converted into economic value.  Baudrillard sees this as a regressive redistribution of death**.  It is wrested from the circuit of social exchanges and vested in centralised agencies. For Baudrillard, there is not a social improvement here.  **People are** effectively **being killed,** or left to die, **by a process which never treats them as having value**.  On the other hand, even when capitalism becomes permissive, inclusive and tolerant, it still creates an underlying anxiety about being reduced to the status of an object or a marionette.  This appears as a constant fear of being manipulated.  The slave remains within the master’s dialectic for as long as ‘his’ life or death serves the reproduction of domination.

Power is not found in the bringing of death but rather the imposition of life. To let live is to foster life and to disqualify death from the social.

Lotringer 2007 (Sylvere, "Exterminating Angel"; Introduction to Forget Foucault)

By the time Baudrillard conceived this collapse, the general outlook of society had changed drastically. By the early 60s, workers were already becoming eager consumers. Surplus value no longer arose from hard labor; it was created through the commodity. Semiotic equivalence became more real than reality. As "communication" replaced production, workers were being "alienated" not at work, but at home in their daily lives. Class struggle no longer applied. It was the beginning of the assembly-life, social life colonized by the commodity. Baudrillard's thought enj oys a special status in French theory, providing a bridge between the high modernist thinkers of the 30s and 40s and post-structuralist thought, which sought to revise Marxian analysis in light of the increased abstraction of capitalism. While the Situationists sought to reclaim life through their detournements, Baudrillard turned to death as an ally. Re-reading Hegel through Nietzsche, he realized that debts always preceded exchange. A spared slave could never be free of the master's gift of his life. Foucault said the same thing in conclusion to his Will to Knowledge, the book Baudrillard was ostensibly 􀍞hallenging. Foucault reminded his readers that, in ancient cultures, the right to kill was a dissymmetrical one. In reality, it was "the right to take life or let live." And Baudrillard says: "Contrary to what we might imagine, power is never the power of putting someone to death, but exactly the opposite. " Power consists of "unilateral giving (of life in particular) " (5E, pp. 40, 42) . Foucault was talking about death's absolute form during periods when the sovereign could exercise the right to kill in order to ensure his own survival. In modern times, this symbolic right subsisted but, Foucault estimated, only in a "relative and limited" form. The mechanisms of power had dramatically changed. Instead of destroying life, the mechanisms of power managed it in all sorts of ways. As a result, to "let live" was substituted a power to "foster life, " thereby disqualifying death and the rituals that accompanied it. "Now it is over life, through its unfolding," Foucault wrote, "that power establishes its dominion; death is power's limit, the moment that escapes it; death becomes the most secret aspect of existence, the most "private."9 While Foucault went onto explore what "to seize hold of life" really meant in terms of the administration of bodies and lives, this point became pivotal in Baudrillard's thinking. But could these disciplined bodies, these lives newly modulated by a creative bio-power, still be called lives? Foucault briefly envisaged the possibility of a "resistance," but never elaborated on its possible nature or the conditions in which it could be exerted. One could argue that Foucault vindicated Baudrillard's thesis by default. Only life pushed to the limit, to moments that escaped the system of equivalence, could render power powerless. Giving one's life away-a counter-gift-was the only present that couldn't be reciprocated.

To reclaim ourselves from the travesty of life we must push it to its limits. Trading our lives with Cuba is a potent action not because of what is given but why. Consider the recipients: maybe the Cuban people are barbaric animals who will eat our children, maybe they are crazed communists who will force us to have healthcare and feed the poor, or maybe, just maybe, they are a bunch of people not so different from you and I who just want to play Xbox. Refusing this calculation is what matters. We give our lives to Cuba no matter what they give us in return – this is the foundation for a consummate ontology which refuses Cuba as an object of manipulation and consumption.

**McNeil ’10** (Calum, PhD candidate in International Relations @ McMaster University, *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1, “To engage or not to engage: An (a)ffective argument in favour of a policy of engagement with Cuba” [SG])

The purpose here is not simply to illustrate positive or negative functionality, however, but to stress the degree to which emotional commitments are implicated in American and Canadian foreign policy toward Cuba—and how this process fails to acknowledge, but is a product of, the way power, emotion and context shape subjectivity in differing contexts. A basic premise of the hot cognition approach is that all political stimuli are affectively charged. This means that perception, interpretation and reaction are both cognitive and affective; thought devoid of emotional content is also devoid of meaning—it is an abstraction and consequently cannot compel us to act consistently in one way or another. It is not surprising, then, that certain emotionally laden normative commitments would inform both Canadian and American foreign policy. It is also not surprising they would not be acknowledged as reflective of a pervasive ideology, but rather as the natural order of things—so natural that they become subconscious and unquestioned, and are deployed in ways which uncritically presuppose their universality. The geopolitical context has changed radically since 1989. The collapse of Soviet communism opened up policymaking possibilities while creating new problems, some unforeseen. For Cuba, the end of the Cold War was an unmitigated disaster. Protected by its strategic and economic relationship with the Soviet Union from the full effect of the US economic embargo since the 1960s, Cuban policymakers suddenly found themselves exposed to the unfiltered force of US hostility. With its economy imploding, Cuba sought alternative sources for economic and political support. Domestically, Cuba instituted the Special Period in Time of Peace, and began to alter the structure of its economy to correspond to new realities. The key impetus in Cuban foreign policy became strategic diversification, wherein Cuban policymakers sought to maximize their decision-making options by avoiding over-dependence on a single bilateral relationship with a more powerful state (Erisman, & Kirk, 1991: 2-4; Entwistle, 2009: 292-293). It was partly in relation to this changed context that both American and Canadian policies toward Cuba during the 1990s were reformulated. Canadian policy has traditionally treated Cuba like any other state in Latin America. What makes the policy interesting is the consistency with which it has been adhered to, given the American hostility to the Castro-led government. During the 1990s, the Chrétien liberals sought to re-engage with Cuba just as American policy veered toward strengthening its embargo. In this context, empathetic dialogue and a renewed Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) presence, combined with public and private criticism of Cuban human rights violations, were understood as politically and symbolically advantageous (Sagebien, 1997: 67). The essence of the approach was balance. As Robert Wright (2009: 197) argues: “[Chrétien] … calculated that a pragmatic re-engagement with Cuba along lines similar to Pierre Trudeau’s policy would carry limited political liability if it was paired with a strong, explicit Canadian objection to Cuban human rights abuses.” In this way Canadian officials believed that Canada could demonstrate its autonomy internationally, while influencing Cuba to liberalize its economy and democratize its political system (Wylie, 2009: 16). This dovetailed nicely with Cuba’s desire to diversify its foreign relationships, and the necessity Havana faced in replacing lost Soviet/Come con trade and investment. Canadian policy toward Cuba since the Revolution has functioned as a means of asserting Canadian autonomy vis-à-vis the United States (Molinaro, 2009; Entwistle, 2009). From the Canadian perspective, relations with Cuba necessarily and unavoidably reflect the policy decisions undertaken in Washington. Yet the nature of Canadian policy is also idiosyncratic in that it reflects the domestic culture and context within which policymaking takes place. This concern is evident from a reading of the parliamentary debates regarding the question of Cuba throughout the 1990s. As Christine Stewart, the then Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) noted in response to the proposed Helms-Burton legislation that was making its way through Congress: We hope there will be amendments to this legislation before it is pursued in the United States. However, we have made it very clear that Canada will be pursuing and will continue to pursue an independent foreign policy. This is very well respected world-wide. (Canada, 1995a. Italics added for emphasis). The emphasis on policy autonomy is marked, as well as the assumption of its importance To Canada’s image abroad. What it reveals is a parochial tendency to conflate an inflated fear of infringement upon Canadian autonomy, with a parochial understanding of Canadian values and their universal applicability—generally in juxtaposition with the United States. Here we see a tendency to assume that others see Canada as Canada would like to see itself. It is interesting in this regard to consider Christine Stewart’s conflation of self-interest with an ostensibly altruistic foreign policy to Latin America. She argues: I believe that Canada should continue to support regional initiatives in favour of human rights, environmental protection and trade development… in this process, we should also make sure that poor countries are not marginalized. Marginalization of less developed countries can result in instability and massive movements of populations away from poor countries and into rich ones, and could also jeopardize emerging economies. Such situations have repercussions all over the world … Cuba poses another challenge. The Cuban economy has undergone serious deterioration. Economic reforms have been limited as have human rights improvements. However I believe we cannot afford to marginalize any country in this hemisphere. Careful evaluation is necessary to encourage the full reintegration of Cuba into the hemispheric family, a process that will require significant change (Canada, 1995b. Italics added for emphasis). The perceived threat noted in failing to engage the developing world—of which Cuba is a part—is combined with an assumption concerning the terms of reintegration, terms which require careful evaluation by Canada if full reintegration is to be achieved. The objectification of Cuba, and the privileging of the Canadian subject position are quite stark in this example; the terms of reintegration are to be determined by careful Canadian evaluation as a means—ironically—of circumventing their marginalization. That this hassled to a position of some hypocrisy is highlighted by Peter McKenna and John Kirk when they note that: … Cuban authorities also know that the Canadian government does not do Washington’s bidding and that it does not intend to do anything to destabilize the Castro regime or to punish the Cuban people; instead, it aims to work constructively by dialoguing with the Cubans (2005: 159). There is a logic in the fear Ottawa has of destabilizing the Cuban government, insofar as it might also destabilize the region; a dialogue-based incremental approach would seem to have the advantage of mitigating this outcome—yet this logic still fails to acknowledge how unreceptive Cuban policy makers are to encroachments into their domestic politics, regardless of the form they take (Klepak, 2009: 33-34; Entwistle, 2009: 292). Given the implicit commitment to regime change inherent in the constructive engagement policy, it is difficult to see how Canadian policy can be understood as not having the effect of destabilizing the Cuban government; what has been characteristic of Canadian constructive engagement is not dialogue but monologue—a policy characterized by an implicit and uncritical assumption that the terms of the discussion should be shaped by the normative commitments underpinning the constructive component of the engagement policy. This dynamic is perhaps nowhere better evidenced than in the Chrétien visit to Cuba in April 1998. The high profile visit came in the wake of the 1997 fourteen-point Joint Declaration, fostering state-to-state cooperation in areas including human rights and standards of good governance (Wylie 2009: 48). The Declaration seemed to validate the constructive engagement approach of the Chrétien Liberals insofar as it included measures aimed at strengthening bilateral ties—including a willingness to discuss human rights. The visit itself was therefore undertaken as a high profile and symbolic means to demonstrate the efficacy of engaging in this way with Cuba so as to secure both economic and political/human rights gains. It would also serve as a means to position Canada in relation to Cuba “on the right side of history” (Wright 2009: 217). The decisive moment of the visit occurred when Chrétien publicly humiliated Castro by confronting him with a demand to release four jailed Cuban dissidents (Wright 2009: 210). Humiliated and shocked though he may have been, the move failed in its desired effect and the dissidents were not released. The visit, argues Mark Entwistle, accomplished “practically nothing” (2009: 289). In the fall of 1999, then International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew still maintained that constructively engaging could achieve the ends sought(and assumed inevitable) by Canadian policymakers. He argued, “The best way to help [Cuba] to [implement reforms] … is to engage them and integrate them into world markets” (quoted in Kirk & McKenna, 2005: 155). What this also seems to indicate is that the perception of policymakers in Ottawa is affectively shaped by the context in which they are situated. Regardless of their dispositions, a key attribute of all policy makers is loyalty to the state—that is, a performed (emotional) commitment to serving the national interest. This necessarily inclines policy to be informed in the first instance by the perceived material interests of the state (i.e., preserving autonomy, and securing new markets for Canadian business), and in a broader sense by the perceived values and their associated norms which define Canadian-ness at home, and it is assumed, abroad. Lana Wylie (2004: 42) argues that “… the Canadian self-image as a good international citizen, peacekeeper, and as distinct from the United States, all contribute to a certain perception of the Cuban situation, and the Canadian-Cuban relationship, and consequently to a corresponding set of norms.” Although these norms help us to explain some of the character of the relationship, they do little to explain how these ideas become entrenched and gain legitimacy and how they possibly morph overtime. What they also point to, when taken in conjunction with an understanding of the relationship between emotion, reason, and socio-cultural context, is that a culturally informed normative parochialism is perhaps a pre-condition of the necessary affective dynamics inherent in the relationship between individuals and the state. That this dynamic has been self-defeating in the Cuban context requires a consideration of how power, emotion and culture can act in the Cuban context to preclude the inevitability of regime change. Before we can consider this, it is important to consider the above dynamics from the American perspective. The two most contentious pieces of legislation pertaining to Cuba are embodied in the 1992CDA and the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996. The CDA, in some ways, reflects the systemic and domestic contexts of the early 1990s. With the Cold War over and the Soviet bloc transitioning to market-based economies and representative democratic political systems, it was assumed that Cuba—deprived of Soviet subsidies and hopelessly isolated—would eventually follow suit. As the CDA notes: The fall of communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the now universal recognition in Latin America and the Caribbean that Cuba provides a failed model of government and development, and the evident inability of Cuba's economy to survive current trends, provide the United States and the international democratic community with an unprecedented opportunity to promote a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba (CDA, 1992: §6001(6)). Thus, it seemed the revolutionary Cuban government would be unable to withstand the tide of history, and would eventually be swept aside in the inevitable march toward a relatively uniform global political economy broadly consistent with the norms prevalent in Western capitalist democracies. Domestically, the key factors engendering an inclination toward adopting the CDA were the influences of the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF) and the political manoeuvring of both candidates vying for the 1992 US presidential election. The Act itself attempts to strengthen the economic pressures brought to bear on the Cuban state (known as Track I), with attempts to increase bilateral relationships at the non-governmental level (known as Track II). The Track I CDA legislation affected Canada and other states trading with Cuba by preventing subsidiaries of American corporations from trading with Cuba, and by preventing foreign ships docking in Cuban ports from unloading or loading cargo in US ports for six months (CDA, 1992: Sec. 6005). This extra-territorial component to the CDA angered US trading partners by challenging the primacy of both domestic law and policy autonomy in those countries (Morley \*& McGillion, 2002: 45). The Track I components of the Act were meant to hasten the demise of the current government and to bring about a quick transition to the US government’s preferred form of political system for the island. The CDA is quite clear in this regard stating that the President may waive the sanctions and take steps toward ending the embargo if he determines that the Cuban state has met the standards for democratic transition set forth in the Act. Amongst these include the holding of “free and fair elections under internationally recognized observers…[and movement]toward establishing a free market economic system” (CDA, 1992: § 6006). Track II diplomacy, by way of contrast, involves the “unofficial interactions between people from countries or groups in conflict for the purpose of promoting peaceful solutions to international disagreements” (Blight & Brenner, 2002: 170). Although the CDA’s provisions for increased interpersonal interaction between Americans and Cubans are framed in humanitarian terms, these Track II provisions also embody a belief in the potential for people-to-people contacts to develop a Cuban civil society capable of challenging and ultimately overturning the Cuban government (CDA, 1992: § 6004g). William LeoGrande (2005: 37) points to this element of the CDA when he argues “from the outset, Washington conceived of these contacts as a way to subvert the Cuban government. That was how the policy was promoted when first introduced by Congressman Robert Torricelli, author of the CDA”. It is the transparent political intent of this legislation that makes it ultimately self-defeating. The Cuban government was well aware of the purpose of Track II—and cracked down on dissidents accordingly. More interesting still, LeoGrande points to one unanticipated outcome of President Clinton’s decision to allow travel to Cuba for religious, humanitarian and people-to-people contacts: the emergence of a constituency in the United States advocating a change in the hard-line US policy (2005: 27). It is the uncritical presumption that the Cuban government would not recognize the threat constituted by the CDA’s Track II provisions and that these interactions would necessarily hasten the demise of the Cuban government that are so problematic and self-defeating Helms-Burton represented a further tightening of the economic noose—this time with a more explicit commitment to the character and content of a future non-Castro Cuba. This particular piece of legislation was passed into law four years after the CDA, and strengthens the extra-territorial implications of the CDA so as to increase the risks involved for foreign corporations that seek to conduct business with Cuba and the United States. In particular, Title III of the Act provides a means through which American citizens can sue investors in property found to be expropriated by the Cuban government after the Revolution, and Title IV of the Act allows Washington to ban business people and their families from entering the United States if they are found to be trafficking in expropriated property (Helms-Burton Act 1996:Title III, § 302;Title IV, § 401). In addition, Helms-Burton specifically excludes either of the Castro brothers from any role in the transition process or a future non-revolutionary government, and provides the President with the right to determine whether or not a transition is actually taking place (Helms-Burton 1996: Title II, § 205-207). Although Title III was, and has continued to be, suspended every six months, it is still in effect—as is Title IV. Both Title III and IV outraged Canadian, Mexican and European policymakers as blatant attempts to impose US law extra-territorially. Robert G. Wright, then Canadian Deputy Minister for International Trade, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade stated the Canadian position in regard to Helms-Burton succinctly: The Interamerican Juridical Committee … found the legislation to be inconsistent with international law in a number of different respects. Key among these were the following: First, domestic courts are not the appropriate forum for resolution of state-to-state claims; second, the committee found that a claimant state, in this instance the United States, does not have the right to espouse claims of persons who were not their nationals at the time of the taking; and third, the committee found that the exercise of jurisdiction by a state over acts of trafficking by aliens abroad under circumstances whereby neither the alien nor the conduct in question has any connection with its territory is not in conformity with international law (Canada, 1996). However, the Deputy Minister continues that: … Canada and the United States share common objectives with respect to Cuba. Both countries would like to see steps taken toward democracy, economic reform, and a greater recognition of human rights. We differ in the approach. The United States has adopted a policy of isolation; Canada, on the other hand, believes in a policy of engagement (Canada, 1996). The thrust of the Canadian position is that Helms-Burton violates Canadian autonomy, and is in this specific way against Canada’s national interest. The need for Canada to be perceived as distinct from the United States is also evident in above quotations; a display of Canadian autonomy has been a primary impetus to Canadian Cuba policy since the Revolution (Wylie, 2009: 62). Moreover, the Canadian position in relation to Cuba differs from the United States primarily as a preference of process to the same end: democracy and market-oriented economic reform. It is interesting that, even as the Canadian position demands respect for its own sovereignty, it also advocates a foreign policy toward Cuba predicated upon interference in that state’s domestic affairs. The passage of the Act was far from smooth, as the US public, exporters and many policymakers were also concerned with what seemed extreme and potentially self-defeating legislation (Gott, 2004: 303-307). It is indeed unlikely that Helms-Burton would ever have been enacted into law had it not been for the shooting down of two aircraft operated by the anti-Castro group, Brothers to the Rescue. As Lana Wylie (2004: 46) stresses: Prior to the shooting down, the only pressure to sign Helms-Burton was coming from the Cuban-American community. Despite their electoral clout, Clinton had opposed the bill. However, like their policymakers, the American public reacted viscerally to the shoot-down. Emotions were running high and Clinton’s advisors felt they had no choice but to get behind the legislation. This response seems understandable, until one considers the situation from the Cuban perspective. Jose Basulto, the founder of the Brothers to the Rescue, was initially a CIA trained operative as a part of Operation Mongoose during the 1960s (Blight and Brenner, 2002: 165). In August of 1962, Basulto had been involved in a botched attempt on Castro’s life and in the 1980s worked again for the CIA in Nicaragua. Brothers to the Rescue was founded as a means to facilitate the rescue of Cubans seeking to leave Cuba during the Special Period. Yet this humanitarian initiative became increasingly politicized as Clinton moved closer to normalizing relations with Cuba. As a result, Basulto began dropping leaflets regularly over Havana to encourage the Cubans to rise up against their government (Blight & Brenner, 2002: 167).Given this history, and despite repeated protests to the United States government by Cuba, nothing was done to stop this provocation. Although it is unclear whether the aircrafts were over Cuban airspace when they were shot down, the Cuban reaction, although severe, was at least somewhat more understandable, given the broader context. The affective quality of the response to the shoot-down fits snugly within the broader assumptions about the character of the Cuban state, and Castro in particular, as framed by his detractors. The embargo itself facilitated the entrenchment of a particular vision of Cuba to the American public by limiting their contact with the island, and magnifying their reliance upon highly politicized groups, like the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), and right wing neoconservative politicians, like Jesse Helms, for information. This lack of empathy was still in evidence after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Even when the Cuban state denounced terrorism and expressed sympathy toward the United States after the attacks, the United States government did not respond in kind. Instead the Bush administration increased its rhetoric against the Cuban government and continued to label it a terrorist-supporting nation (LeoGrande, 2005: 32). What the above analysis points to is the degree to which emotion and context have shaped the rather problematic relations between Canada, the United States and Cuba. If, however, we find problematic the notion that the current political system in Cuba has little legitimacy domestically, and no hope for survival in the medium term, we must address the question of why this is so. Robert Damasio argues that for the somatic marking process to function, a capacity to order criteria relevant to the stimuli encountered by the subject is required. This ordering criterion is determined via a combination of emotion, working memory and attention, which are reflective of biological drives and cultural socialization. In a sense, every decision we make is influenced by a combination of logic (one would hope) and affectively charged analogical reasoning. Worded concisely, somatic markers act as a kind of heuristic psychological culling device functionally integrated into our decision-making process; its use facilitates more efficient decision-making in cognitively complex scenarios by a priori eliminating the appeal of certain courses of action. The process of somatic marking outlined here, therefore, seems particularly apt to a foreign policy-making context. This is so, given the cognitive complexity of foreign policy decision-making, wherein policy-makers must contend with not only the likely actions and outcomes beyond the state in the relevant issue area, but also the domestic, bureaucratic, and even dispositional constraints placed on the array of choices available to them. Negative somatic markers juxtaposed alongside specific future outcomes—say the elimination of an embargo—can alert the individual against that particular course of action; conversely, positive somatic markers can act as a “beacon of incentive” influencing the subjects’ decision-making toward that particular outcome (Damasio, 1994: 174-175). This process of somatic marking functions both consciously and subconsciously, influencing those elements in the brain which incline us to approach behaviour, and mitigating the likelihood of making what we are culturally inclined to believe is a wrong decision (Damasio, 1994: 188). We have already seen the doggedness with which Canadian policy makers have clung to the belief that constructive engagement can result in political and economic change in Cuba, despite much evidence to the contrary. Similarly, the tone and tenor of US relations with Cuba have been characterized by a profound lack of empathy—a characteristic which, when combined with the tremendous material power of the American state, could aptly be termed pathological parochialism. Canada has at least adopted an approach which goes further in acknowledging the legitimacy of the Cuban government—yet even its policies how a self-defeating desire to combine an ardent commitment to pursuing the national interest (with a marked affective commitment to policy autonomy relative to its southern neighbour) with a normative commitment to engendering the re-construction of the Cuban political economy in ways which correspond more closely to its own. Given that both states have expressed a commitment 11 in principle (if not always in practise) to regime change, and given that this change is uncritically expected to result in a Cuban political system mirroring the basic principles that their own systems embrace, it seems logical for both state’s policies to be geared toward achieving this end as effectively as possible. Yet neither embargo nor constructive engagement seems capable of achieving the end of transforming the Cuban political system. It is my contention that, in the case of American and Canadian relations with Cuba, the state is singularly ill equipped to foster the kind of empathy required to bring about the ends it seeks. It may be that the most effective means to win the battle for hearts and minds in Cuba—if indeed such a battle can be won—is to extricate the state from the interactive process. If it is true that liberal democratic capitalism, to paraphrase Fukuyama, is the “only game in town”, then allowing Canadians and Americans—and their attendant dispositions—to engage Cubans in unstructured (and therefore relatively de-politicized) ways should have the desired and inevitable effect. Of course, an underlying premise of this paper is that neuroscience and neuropsychology has rendered problematic any universal assumptions about rationality. In particular, Robert Damasio’s somatic marker hypothesis indicates that the relationship between emotion, reason, and the process of social learning, facilitated by interpersonal interaction, problematizes universal rationality assumptions. As a consequence we cannot a priori assume the outcome of an engagement policy between Canada or the United States and Cuba. As Damasio (1994: 200) argues: The automated somatic-marker device of most of us lucky enough to have been reared in a relatively healthy culture has been accommodated by education to the standards of rationality of that culture. In spite of its roots in biological regulation, the device has been tuned to cultural prescriptions designed to ensure survival in a particular society … [the device] has been made rational relative to social conventions and ethics. Thus an inadvertent effect of the US embargo has been to forestall the sharing of lived experiences between Americans and Cubans; the embargo has skewed the acquisition of somatic marking, and both magnified the degree to which Cuban policy elites fear and mistrust US initiatives toward their country, and facilitated the ability of both states to frame the significant other in a negative fashion for public consumption.

**When we are willing to die, we are free from the confines of power and the chains of equivalence no longer bind us to have to mean or be anything at all. We are willing to die, a disposition which refuses the common standards of cause and effect. Our decision may be beyond reason, but if so, that only proves it’s working.**

Jeremy **Fernando** 20**10**(*“The Suicide Bomber; and her gift of death”* Pgs.:137-139)

**When someone is willing to give up their life, when someone is willing to give themselves as a gift of death, what defense is there any longer?** And more than that**, how can one even begin to deal with a phenomenon that not only escapes one’s comprehension, but that is beyond understanding itself**. **It is of no coincidence that the most feared figure of the Second World War was the Kamikaze pilot. For not only was the pilot willing to die**—in some way all soldiers who enter a war zone, either willingly or not, enter a complicity to death, accept in some way the possibility of their death—but more profoundly, **the Kamikaze pilot was indeed of a divine wind, of a divine nature, because he was already dead. Before each squadron was sent off, the Kamikaze pilots would gather for a last meal, a last cigarette, a last cup of sake and a bow to the Emperor.** By **the time the pilot** actually **climbs into his cockpit, he is already** a **dead** man: **his life and his death—has already been offered** during the ritual. The typical **Western analysis usually involves pointing out the fact that before flying, the pilots were pumped full of amphetamines in order to allow them to fly their planes directly into targets. However this misses the point as it assumes that it is only due to the drugged state that the pilots become suicide bombers, that it was the drugs that made them into suicide bombs. Even if they , had gained a measure of Dutch courage’ from the amphetamines, there is no denying that the pilots themselves were fully aware of their status** as the order of the Divine Wind the moment they began their training, the moment they become pilots. Hence, from that point onwards, their lives had already been offered as a sacrifice: if the amphetamines had anything to do with it, it was merely an instrument which aided their task; the sacrifice had long ago been made. And it is the ritual— of which there are echoes of a Last Supper; or a last meal of a condemned inmate-which allows the Kamikaze pilot to sever himself from the real order, to offer her/his self—as a stake. **And like any true stake, the Kamikaze pilot has no idea what the reciprocation is, what the effects of his sacrifice are: all that he knows is that he has offered himself: everything else he remains blind to, remains in the dark from. The attempt to** explain away, **ascribe, his actions to the effect of drugs**—another favorite **is social pressures**, or brainwashing by the Japanese military machine—or any other cause is **an attempt to re-inscribe the actions of the Kamikaze pilot back into a cause and effect analysis, to return it to the order of reason.** We are never quite as afraid when something opposes the order of reason: in fact by opposing it, the underlying assumptions are strengthened. And this is what the offering of drugs as a reason attempts to do: by claiming that the pilots are flying in a drugged state, **one is trying to establish that their actions are the result of an illusion, a change in mental state: in that way reality is preserved, and one can then ascribe this action- an action that is beyond explanation** itself- to another reason: more importantly, reason itself is preserved. **What frightens us the most is when there is no reason for action, when the action itself is beyond reason**, beyond explanation, beyond knowing: for in that way it always remains an enigma to us, **and we have no ability, no hope, of being able to discipline it**, of putting it under us, **of controlling it**. But before we go on thinking the figure of the suicide bomber, **we have to make a momentary diversion, and open another register of thinking, that of what is to be dead; and the question of, what is this very moment of death, the instant of death itself?**