

Exhibition of Friends

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Abstract

This essay, which ultimately addresses activist curatorial practices, concerns a concept of friendship defined as an accounting of difference that counters the political formulation originally proposed by Carl Schmitt of friend/enemy, in which a doctrinaire absolute of violence demands the sovereignty of similarity. In the later decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, such thinkers as Chantal Mouffe and Jürgen Habermas have weighed antagonism and consensualism among citizens, contrasting means of negotiating social relations, while Judith Butler and Donna Haraway, for example, have chosen to focus on the sovereignty of difference in the construction of self and Other. All of these are social clockworks of affiliation, complexes of structure, form, and inscribed surfaces of rules that are essential to our thinking about the relational conditions implicit in the terms “political” and “friend.” They are essential to how we understand friendship as a politics and as a way of approaching the subject of “political imaginaries of exhibition.”

To speak of crisis is to speak of an urgency for unsameness. Sometimes we have remained so long in entrenched habits of life that we barely recognize what needs revision; sometimes we have repressed these routines or the burden of ruinous laws; sometimes the necessity for change is blatant, yet a crisis is needed to erupt and open up structures of repression. Now, when the world has been thrown into tumult, a reckoning has been made all the more legible and dire, and it touches every field. Art practices and the curatorial practices that seek to display and interpret artworks are sensitive tools for the exposure of samenesses that draw us together and press down on us and pull us apart. This tension at this moment of crisis in the world, in which virus and virality represent both biological danger and its dissemination, but also the revisionary possibilities of widespread and accelerated influence and change, implicitly informs my thinking about the nexus of politics and curatorial practices in light of unsameness, which leads me in turn to thoughts about affiliation and friendship.

The occasion for this thinking was the closing session of the workshop titled “handfuls thrown into air and scattered over earth,” which was part of the 2020 Bucharest Biennial. The original topic given was the vaguely Leninist sounding “exhibition as field of political operations,” which was then subtly reframed, dilated as “political imaginaries of exhibition.” My thinking begins with the difference between these two expressions. The first suggests the exhibition as a kind of militant action or intelligence gathering, with an activist sense of a will to transform or, more dramatically, unseat the state. It proposes aggression and cunning, the stratagems of the exhibition-maker as provocateur and antagonist to the ruling order. The reframing of the topic as “political imaginaries of exhibition,” as the site of interpretation of the political per se in relation to exhibition-making, opens out the approach, which may include curating as an expression of militancy, but also, in the broadest sense, as an apparatus of relations, and more specifically the *kinds* of relations among things, human and nonhuman, how they operate, and toward what ends.

It should be noted that the term “exhibition-maker” used here doesn’t necessarily refer to a Szeemannesque *auteur*, since one part of the immensely influential legacy of Harald Szeemann is the prominence of a new kind of curator, one whose own creativity is interwoven with that of the artists shown, rather than as a scholarly organizer or keeper of artworks in a distanced manner. But here I mean the more general profile of the curator who produces both conventional and experimental exhibition forms within and without institutions, including monographic, historical, contemporary, thematic, and group exhibitions, physical and online, and along with them, makes publications, organizes conferences, and so on.

I want to tie this complex spectrum of enterprises to what I’m currently thinking about in a time of pandemic, enforced distancing, and increased outcries against racism the subject of friends, of friendship, of what could be called “friendness.” The “of” in the title of this essay, “Exhibition of Friends,” means to capture this inclusiveness that links the curatorial task of association, alignment, affiliation, and conjunction of objects with the essential urge in humankind (and not humans alone) to affiliate, to enter into this activity of mutuality called friendship, and so to delve into what it means to be a friend, to enter into friendship, to be called by it, and to place it within both public and private socialities. In this sense, the curatorial task is always one of a sociality among things; a constellating that brings into visibility an amiability among objects, even if (as in friendships) this amiability is joined by frictions, by a tension at times that energizes if the relation lasts. This is to say that affective labor, this work toward making visible the charged attraction of objects and the companionable being of friends, is a shared *modus operandi* of exhibition-making and friendship and it will take some time to make my way from friendship as a social formation to an idea of a friendship among things in the sense of the curatorial.

But first, a quick contemporary distinction should be made. The ontological identification of what it means “to friend” is, of course, far from the hollowing out of significance by the Facebook terms “to friend” and “friending,” which are synonymous with a shallow notion of connection an indication of the thinness of online connections among people that now seem so largely acceptable and makes itself vulnerable to distortions of fidelity in so many ways though we know that unmooring the physical offers new platforms for the imagination as well. But here, to consider what “to friend” is as such, this rendering of friendness concerns the intersection of “to be” and “to friend,” where being, the wellspring of embodied energy, is thought of both in the sense of the biological life of the organism (the Greek ———, *zoē*), and the *mode* of life, the *way* we live (the Greek ———, *bios*). Of course, these references relate to Michel Foucault’s ideas concerning biopower and biopolitics, and their subsequent interpretation by Giorgio Agamben.^[1] So there is life itself and how it influences this action “to friend” in the way that we live together, and particularly in consideration of the relationship of friendship and the political, symbolically and practically.

The structure of this relationship between friendship and the political can be thought of as kind-to-kind, for at the base of the political in its formation of alliances is the urge, even the violent urge, to instrumentalize resemblance and similarity in the name of exclusion. This involves race, or gender, or theological doctrine, or social ideology, or some combination of them. Fidelity is crucial to such kind-to-kind alliances. In its positive aspect there is a sense of intimate connection. Yet sameness of this kind is, of course, also tied to the rule of law, and so to systemic authoritarianism, repression, and sprawling subalternization. In this light, the politics of sameness offers the seduction of punitive actions to some a minus culture of fierce subtraction, which is also a culture of division.

Sameness and difference, inclusion and exclusion, affiliation and disjunction, *zoē* and *bios* in the balance of private connection and acrid politics are all imbricated in what “to friend” means. Carl Schmitt, the political theorist whose writings offered various rationales for Hitler’s subsequent aggressions, wrote in his extended

essay of 1932, *The Concept of the Political*, that violence is inimical to politics qua politics. He turns first to Hegel to embed the political in the concept of the state, writing “Hegel’s doctrine of the division of powers [...] signifies ‘the most vigorous penetration of all societal spheres by the state for the general purpose of winning for the entirety of the state all vital energies of the people.’”^[2] “Vital energies.” In other words, he is linking the state to the blood force of the people, the wellspring of embodied energy, to the idea that the blood within us feeds the body of the state it is instinctually vampiric and Schmitt goes on to propose that in the existential interests of the state a brutal division is required, the “specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.”^[3] The blood of the state, in Schmitt’s punitive thinking, has within it an impurity, a pollution, and there is the need to spill it in order to purify the society of sameness.

All things political, Schmitt claims, are distinct from all other things in society economics, religion, aesthetics and the state as the container of society and the political must be rooted in this always potential determination of the spilling of blood, friends and enemies perpetually at alert on the precipice of aggression, as hostility is the *sine qua non* of the political. This is the political understood as the necessity of violent security, the state as hypodermic and cudgel in existential need to secure itself, to enact its oath, its *pro patria*, through exclusion, punishment, war, and death. As Jacques Derrida writes in his 1994 book *Politiques de l’amitié*, or *The Politics of Friendship*, the brutal wages of the friend/enemy configuration are a “hyperbolization of the political,” and Schmitt’s framing of the political *in extremis* determines the extreme as normalized necessity.^[4] Even more so, this extremity of political praxis is grounded in the absolute of Schmitt’s concept of “decisionism,” stated ten years prior to *The Concept of the Political*, in his 1922 text *Political Theology* that begins with the solemn sentence that rumbles beneath every diktat of dictatorship, “Sovereign is he who decides on the exception.”^[5] In Schmitt’s conception of the political, society is built on the radical requirement of blood-to-blood, like-to-like, blood-against-blood, like-against-unlike, of minus culture par excellence, with the violent appetite for (Arian) sameness linked by decisionism to a sovereign absolute that defines his rigidity of *bios*, the mode of life framed by a catastrophic universality, the mode of life as hammer and nail.

That is one way to understand what “friend” might signify in the specific turn of the state, where it dwells in meaning with the word “citizen.” For “citizen” cuts two ways. First, if we were to live in the violent dichotomy of a Schmittian universe, a citizen would adhere unswervingly to the dictates of the political state. “Friend” and “citizen” become linked terms of brutish loyalty, of a favored horizontality imposing verticality beneath it, of sameness enforced by a punishing decisionism. And yet in the very origin of the word “citizen,” we find the Proto-Indo European root **kei* for the verb to “lie down,” which is tied to the sense of the beloved, of intimacy, while “friend” finds its first meaning in the verb “to love,” and took on in some languages the special sense of being free, not in bondage.

A communality exists in the significance of these words. Linkage, attraction, and proximity developed through affinity can mean binding by affection in a free state of affiliation, or it can mean, through the lens of administration and governmentality, binding to and by the law. “Citizen,” of course, is tied to *civitas*, a body of citizens in a city-state, so that to be a citizen in the *polis*, which is the closed space of protection that sits on a promontory above the city, is to be in a political state, a public state of intimacy, of an idealized and implicitly verticalized visualization of friendship and belovedness (since the public are always visible, always lawfully legible). This is love for the bound juridical relation of citizen to citizen, whose sharing of this relationship as friend-citizens is proscribed by rules demanding a commonality of resemblance, of like-to-like, kind-to-kind, within its conditions of ruthless hierarchy. Yet it should also be noted that friend and citizen are not only and always joined in chain step, as we live our lives in private relationships at once aside from the political, while within the public sphere of the political. For the political, as I’ve just claimed, is always already in the realm of the

public, an outwardness of kind-to-kind.

Now let me step back to think about this sense of proscription of kind-to-kind, of resemblance and similarity, and that what is outward-facing in the public condition of the political does not have its origin there. Here I speak again of *zoē*, of the life itself of the organism. I want to propose that there is a biological imperative that is ultimately extruded as the political *bios*, as the way kind-to-kind considers friend-citizens as objectified containers and surfaces of binding rules linked one to another by the state. Of course, there is a literally sanguine topicality in this, for if we look at our new age of the pandemic, we see the conquest of an alien cellular body seeking by siege to replace in the blood the host's sameness of cellular being with a different sameness, a similarity on a cellular level and on a viral level of magnification, while the activity of antibodies seeks out difference to destroy it and protect the organism's sanguine sameness of kind. The virological instruction coded within our cells is to lock down this sameness toward a governed intimacy, a molecular relationship of coordinated agreement, a citizenry of cells, a friendship among them bonded in the blood. This is elaborated in interesting ways, as similarity is also expressed within the body as mirrored form, as like-to-like in a dance of reflection. This is known as "chirality."

Chirality is the term used in chemistry to describe the mirror form of one molecule with another. The word chiral comes from the Greek ——— (chéri) for hand. Just as your right hand can't be superimposed exactly on your left, the axial spin of molecules clockwise or counter-clockwise is called right-handed or left-handed. Chirality is essential in the formation of enzymes at the base of organic life, of DNA and RNA, of peptides and sugars, of polymers and their constituent monomers. As one scientific source states: "DNA could not be stabilized in a helix if even a single wrong-handed monomer were present, so it couldn't form long chains. It would not be able to store enough information, which means that it couldn't support life."^[6] Chirality is a symmetry in being.

Here again, on the fundamental level of *zoē*, the intimacy of forms that lie down together and mirror each other to affirm the citizenship of cells takes us from the order within to an order without, the biological signal translating into the language of the social. Back to Aristotle's *Poetics*, we already find principles defined of order, symmetry, definiteness, the perfection of forms. And these precepts of an immortal rightness continue to trace their way, such that Immanuel Kant writes in *The Critique of Judgment* "[b]ut a flower, for example a tulip, is held to be beautiful because in perceiving, one encounters a finality which, judged as we judge it, does not relate to any end."^[7] But the flower's beauty, of course, is in the judging itself. Judgment is the self-satisfying ouroboros of judgment and not far at all from what will emerge in Schmitt as another claim for an unimpeachable rightness of judgment, a circularity contained within his words, "Sovereign is he who decides the exception," for the sovereign is always already the exception who decides. What is decided in this mirroring is a politics of sameness, just as Schmitt says elsewhere, in his *Concept of the Political*, that in the basis of politics as the necessary structure of friend/enemy, the enemy is essentially "the other, the stranger; and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specially intense way, existentially something different and alien."^[8]

I know that what I am suggesting here is a biological essentialism that implies that the natural way of life is an organic *right to sameness*, and that therefore the politics of sameness is also right and inevitable a reductive conservatism in the worst, most narrowing sense. But I would reply that while this tendency exists and extrudes itself from within to without in an inflexibility of chiral symmetry and the order of like-to-like, kind-to-kind, it can also be said that it is countered by nature itself. I would reply that in nature is the foundational aporia of sameness and the efflorescence of plurality, of the superabundance of differences in genus and species.

In the realm of the political, we can also speak against the glaring tyranny embedded in restrictive kind-to-kind

social administration. Flexibility insinuates itself into the interruption of juridical legibility, just as Édouard Glissant calls for a politics of opacity to interrupt the power dynamics of administered sameness. He writes: “Widespread consent to specific opacities is the most straightforward equivalent of nonbarbarism. We clamor for the right to opacity for everyone.”^[9] He would replace the winnowing transparency of sameness with the generosity of the *somethingelse*, the expansiveness of the yet-to-be-defined that redirects what “to be” and “to friend” can mean when they signify the enactment of Otherness that is against the againstness, one might say, of Schmitt’s decisionist sovereignty of sameness made violent in the ultimate minus at the heart of the concept of friend/enemy.

Friendness as I am defining it here is an accounting of difference in its own inflection of *bios* as the way of life that revises kind-to-kind. In the later decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, such thinkers as Chantal Mouffe and Jürgen Habermas have weighed antagonism and consensualism among citizens, contrasting means of negotiating *bios*, while Judith Butler and Donna Haraway, for example, have chosen to focus on the sovereignty of difference itself in the construction of self and Other. All of these are social clockworks of affiliation, complexes of structure, form, and inscribed surfaces of rules that are essential to our thinking about the relational conditions implicit in the terms “political” and “friend.” They are essential to how we understand friendness as a politics, and as a way of approaching the subject of “political imaginaries of exhibition.” Though in doing this, we can include the aggression intrinsic to “exhibition as a field of political operations” even using that sense of tension and conflict as a means by which friendness comes to negotiate and accommodate the Other.

So let me reiterate for a moment some of the terms and contrasts emerging in this thinking about the conjunction of friend/politics/exhibition as they apply to humans and nonhumans, as we are talking about people both as sentient beings with social agency and as juridical objects, and artworks as objects that also have relational affect and are governed by any number of technical, aesthetic, and ideological systems. In every case of these societies of human and nonhuman things, we note arrangement, we note intersection and adjacency, and therefore the dynamic relations of rule, negotiation, contingency, and chance. We can speak of friend-citizens in this way just as we can of artworks that are placed in space and whose temporalities, appearances, and subsequent meanings are perceived in these relations of intersection, adjacency, contingency, and the chance interactions among them. And so our terms and contrasts must include: intimacy and distance, affiliation and tension, fidelity and diversity, identity and projection, transparency and opacity, horizontality and verticality, relations with and without relation, along with our definitions of friend, friendness, citizen, *civitas*, *polis*, and politics.

Each of these reflects relations of containment and the possibilities of decontainment. They present anxieties for and against the loss of legibility as a political strategy, of shape and surface becoming unreadable, and this unreadability, this opacity, directly impinging on the sureness of controls and the authority of control, while it yields potential forms of freedom. The strained intimacy of lying down together in the condition of the citizenship of kind-to-kind now opens out into the ruptures of un-sameness, or and this is a crucial or this sameness yields itself to the elasticity of forms intersected by other forms, of a blossoming notion of kin. For within the word “kind,” the word “kin” awaits its chance in the sense Haraway notes that “kin is an assembling sort of word,” which, in fact, allows for dis-assembly, re-thinking, re-vision.^[10]

To speak, for example, of relations without relation is to think of a politics of unsameness in which kinship is claimed through a disruptive breaking and broadening of genealogical connections; a taxonomic apparatus for the re-relation of objects; an assembling of Others and an otherness of assembling. And here in the case of

exhibition-making, genealogical connectors include the specific taxonomies of art—historically defined movements and schools, time periods, genres, mediums, and disciplines, all of which, in any case after Duchamp, were unmoored, and art’s sameness to itself, was to a degree inverted, so that picture-as-world became world-as-picture.

Therefore, fidelity and diversity, intimacy and distance, and transparency and opacity all take citizenship in a curatorial world whose virological condition of contagion among objects both human and nonhuman, intersecting, adjacent, contingent, and touched simultaneously by rule and by chance, has brought us here, where kin-to-kin is not bound by the *telos* of kind-to-kind, but by an expansive deviation in that most positive aspect of sameness: sharing. In this sense, blunt polarity gives way to an ecology of extracellular symbiosis, “facultative symbiosis,” in which the evolved interaction of distinct species find a mutuality of being in partnership, sharing energetic resources, resource-to-resource, though they can live independent of one another. This trophic mutualism asserts the friendliness of strangeness, the recurrent optimism in a new permission for intimacies beyond genealogical chains; what friends might be in the construction of new relations.

In this possibility, friendliness offers a thinking about exhibitions as sites of unsameness that can include sameness, that afford the accommodation of handedness within the unevenness of the world. In this appetite for the inversion of signs, and certainly for the process of opposition, comparison, and adjustment, the power of positionality of the juxtaposition of materials, styles, of optical effects and ideological poles at their points of confrontation and refraction is essential to the not-rote, to the agility of the symbiotic reflex. When curators deploy artworks, objects, and ideas in their exhibitionary assembly, what is physically shown and what is semiologically projected can breach that Hegelian shackle of master and bondsman that underlies Schmitt’s recourse to the political as solely a dialectic of friend/enemy in what seems a facetless and unrelinquished opposition. In place of this is an unfolding wildness of kin as a curatorial strategy that presents the politics of the *somethingelse* as a way forward for politics itself.

Elsewhere, I have spoken of this multivalent friendliness of relations as network aesthetics. Network aesthetics offers the concept of nodal linkage between asymmetrically powered containers of information, sensation, and instruction sets that are temporally diverse, reactive to contingencies and chance. Network aesthetics constellates the bridging of like to unlike based on communicative acts of distributed technics. Where *technē* and *poiesis* meet is in the exploit, the hack, the flower of reinvention in the midst of rules. We can easily make that bridge not only in thinking about the ways in which artists message, massage, interrupt, reconvene, and alter the disciplinary history of making whether it is painting, video, performance, drawing, installation, and so on but also in the ways curators create that constellation of objects, bringing those things into the friendship of networked intimacies, a *polis* of new politics among them. It is interesting in light of network aesthetics to think of *zoē* and *bios* again in terms of self-interest, in which this interest of self may be the life of the sentient organism attending to its survival at the same time that we imagine in the imaginary of this new politics, a self that, by contagion or contiguity, by viral distribution of communicative interdependency, is at once and also and already a way of living as plurality, a *civitas* of selves, a “lovence,” in Derrida’s term for friend desiring friend, a communality of the *somethingelse*, the unsame citizen, the re-kinned.^[11]

In all of this, polarities, conjunctions, and the potentialities of the unsame I’ve described have assumed *engagement* the dynamic of interaction, conflictual or consensual, that averts indolent indifference. The problem of coldness to the life of interaction is its resistance to a porous receptivity in spirit and stance; an entropic detachment within that severs the prospective influence of external energies, and with it the capacity for genealogical breach. But friendliness as a politics of the unsame, of course, requires difference in place of

indifference, requires that viewer and citizen are enlivened by polarity and are actively sensitive to the bounty of symbiotic re-relations. Without that, citizens are cowed and overrun by the oppressive might of decisionism, or, in a less traumatic register, they give themselves to the boredom of aimless drifting through exhibitions, the works dead before their eyes.

I would like to embody these theoretical abstractions for a moment, taking this notion of the re-kinned, of objects in the condition of friendliness by which opacity and plurality enter the ontological openness I've discussed as same-to-unsame. As an example, I think of one of the more remarkable shows I've seen in recent years, Udo Kittelmann's 2017 exhibition, "The Boat Is Leaking. The Captain Lied" at Venice's Fondazione Prada. Three artists produced the work and collaborated with Kittelmann to create this mazelike, dreamlike show: the photographer Thomas Demand, the writer and film director Alexander Kluge, and the set and costume designer Anna Viebrock.

The exhibition's trope is that of life in the continual status of collision, driven toward the rocks, on the brink of shipwreck. This was the case all the more so there, as the show was anchored mistakenly in a misinterpretation of the 1882-83 painting by Angelo Morbelli titled *Giorni... ultimi!* (Last... Days!), a postcard of which Demand sent to Kluge and Viebrock as a proposed launching point for their imaginings, suggesting that retrospection would be the vantage point and *Weltanschauung* of the project. In Morbelli's painting, we see old men at long tables or desks, something like a schoolroom. But somehow the three artists came to think these were not just old men, but specifically retired seamen, which was not the historical fact. There was no maritime reference at all. Instead, the painting is a commemoration of Italy's first retirement home. Yet everything in the artists' subsequent creation was founded, or rather foundered, there.

The rooms constructed inside the Fondazione Prada flowed in confusing ways, sometimes offering multiple doors, as if the visitor was always coming back to the same space through a side entrance or exit a phenomenological calling to the notion of return, of retrospection. To use Derrida's term "hauntology," here was the production of spectral emissions, ghostly *mise en scènes* invoking the cascading sense of containment, decontainment, and recontainment, the past haunting a hallucinatory present. Films, photographs, paintings, and theatrical installations all mirrored one another, a stage within a stage within a stage, representations mirroring physical objects, physical objects mirroring representations, representations as objects in their ontic presence and also as memory palaces and distortions of fact. Viewers saw Demand's photographs of the rooms they were standing in or rooms like other places. They exited the gallery of Morbelli's paintings and entered the space depicted in *Giorni... ultimi!*, made again in partial replica by Viebrock, with Demand's 2013 photograph *Attraction* on one wall showing a carnival ride's empty car in mid-air, the world upside down, while at each seat a monitor was installed that showed Kluge's films for television, and so on, one thing involuting with another.

What unfolded was the stop-and-start of the real and the phantasmal, of opacity and revelation through continuous reorientation, of rule and misrule. This was an ultimacy of re-kinned relations among contents, but also the re-kinning of the exhibitionary itself, in which the exhibition's event of an emerging knowledge based itself in the symbiotic, seamless curatorial dramaturgy that made theater and film and photography newly volatile, newly labile and porous, their modes and boundaries of telling eroded and re-formed.

In this way, Kittelmann's exhibition underscores, I think, what the unlocking mechanism of friendliness is. And now, it seems, the era of the pandemic and heightened racial protests only intensifies the conditions for reformulation that this exhibition portended. For the old order of kind-to-kind depends on the totalization of the absolute regulatory bond as the only bond. But there is no going back now to the Before Times. To speak in the most

practical terms about exhibition-making, since that is our subject, even artworks are forced by this new era of the pandemic to follow distancing protocols, to offer a weakening of ossified practices that allows both new mediations and greater noise, interjections and interludes, encounters of chance that dilute absolutes. Whatever the vectored dynamics of network aesthetics, of the re-imagined links between disparate objects in material closeness, there is an elasticizing of closeness now required in the most practical sense of curatorial work, particularly the requirement of social distancing, which means fewer artworks placed farther apart for fewer viewers over longer viewing times, as well as online exhibition-making all further loosening the strictures of *was* and *always*, of a phratry, a pathogenic and political tribalism.

From there, we can extrapolate to think of longer distances of relation from strict kind to wilder kin, so that entrenched, binding regulations that we find no longer acceptable can also yield to an upending, a refusal of indifference and withdrawal, a refusal of minus culture and the rise of co-relations that are correlatives not only to how we remake our shows, but also to how we remake the city of thought, the *polis* of laws. Curatorial embodiment in this imaginary of friendness as a politics, as a network aesthetics of an ongoing reassembling of same and unsame, is an allowance for the *desire* for friendship itself as a charmed intimacy among things of all kin, an unraveling and re-raveling of taxonomies, a new politics of exhibition, a new politics exhibited.

Footnotes

1. See Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York, NY: Pantheon Books. 1978. For example, in the fifth section of the book, titled “Right of Death and Power Over Life,” Foucault proposes the evolved role of sovereign power and governmentality in Western cultures by which the sovereign authority over individuals “to *take* life or *let* live” subsequently shifts to a pervasive and complex order of atomized interventions in which individual lives are administered via “precise controls and comprehensive regulations.” (pp. 136–137) After Foucault, Giorgio Agamben argues for an essential explanation of human sociality in which the distinction between sovereign decisions over life and death and more complex mechanisms of control must be seen through the distinction of bare life, *zoē*, and its social elaborations as *bios*; in fact, that all individual subjectivities and social alliances are productively grounded in this way. This rendering of bare life and political existence touches the particular form of social alliance we know as friendship, and Agamben is quick to offer as a corrective to Carl Schmitt’s fundamental reduction of politics to the friend/enemy formulation this broader and deeper biopolitical approach to human relationships within governmental organization, or as he puts it “the entry of *zoē* into the sphere of *the polis*.” Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 1998. p. 10.
2. Schmitt, Carl. *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 2007. pp. 25–26.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 26
4. Derrida, Jacques. *The Politics of Friendship*. Translated by George Collins. London: Verso. 2005. p. 130.
5. Schmitt, Carl. *Political Theology*. Translated by George Schwab. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 2005. p. 5.
6. Thiemann, Wolfram. “International Symposium on Generation and Amplification of Asymmetry in

Chemical Systems, Jülich, Germany. September 24-26, 1973." *Origins of Life and Evolution of Biospheres*. No. 6. 1975. pp. 455-457.

7. Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgment*. Translated by Nicholas Walker. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 2007 [1790]. p. 67.
8. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, p. 27.
9. Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. 1997. p. 194.
10. Haraway, Donna. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2016. p. 103.
11. Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, p. 69.