Strange Assemblage

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What is a 'strange assemblage'?

This paper will construct the notion of a 'strange assemblage' to enable social and cultural analysis of multiply combined elements. Manuel DeLanda (2006) has taken the concept of the assemblage from Deleuze and Guattari's *1000 Plateaus* (1988) and used it to elaborate a general assemblage theory from a realist perspective. DeLanda (2006) considers an assemblage as able to describe objectively collected entities, which come together and separate through the forces of chance, randomness and chaos that exist in the world. According to DeLanda (2006), assemblage theory works in history as a means to frame groups, institutions, societies and the ways in which people and things can act in loose and disparate unison through the relationships of exteriority. Assemblages from this perspective deal with the combined anti-realist influences of social constructivism and phenomenology in the social sciences, and provide a descriptive means to understand group mechanics in time. Yet Delanda pointedly says that 'Deleuze himself does not subscribe to the multiscale social ontology that I am elaborating here, he never says that each of these entities (interpersonal networks, institutional organizations, cities) have their own diagram. On the contrary, he asserts that the diagram "is coextensive with the social field"' (Delanda 2006: 126). In other words, Deleuze does not mean for the assemblage to apply to any collective entity via its diagram, but should be applied to the specifics of what feeds into their ontology of

emergence or becoming. Therefore, from a strictly Deleuzian perspective, Delanda (2006) is making the intellectual/political error of attempting to turn the notion of an assemblage into a model of representation, and as the ordinary language meaning or signifying aspect of the term 'assemblage' could imply; that is, an assemblage is any political/cultural grouping or social movement in history. In contrast, the notion that will be put forward here, and that has been named as a 'strange assemblage' does not represent every loosely grouped entity, however strange. Rather, the diagram of a 'strange assemblage' can be located as being coextensive with the social field, and present in the dynamic intermingling between things. The term 'strange assemblage' is not an umbrella phrase for a collection of odd or peculiar entities, but a very specific means to understand the inherent and conditioned aspects of continua and multiplicities (see Cole 2011a) derived from Deleuze & Guattari's (1988) philosophy and which helps us to work with what is unacceptable.

If one wants to better understand what a 'strange assemblage' is one should perhaps consult Félix Guattari's (2013) *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*. This book came from a seminar series that was launched in dialogue with Mony Elkaïm, a Moroccan-born, Brussels-based psychotherapist, whom he had first encountered in a Puerto Rican neighbourhood of New York (Elkaïm n.d.). What emerged from this dialogue was a series of diagrams that marked out four domains of the unconscious. These domains are four interrelated varieties of experience that overrun the ego to produce an expanded field of trans-subjective interaction. Each zone of this fourfold map is understood not as the only structural model of an unconscious process, able to represent its truth or meaning; but rather each zone is a *meta-model*, or a way of perceiving and reorienting the singular factors at play. 'What I am precisely concerned with,' Guattari explained, 'is a displacement of the analytic problematic, a drift from systems of statement [*énoncé*] and preformed subjective *structures* toward *assemblages of enunciation* that can forge new coordinates of interpretation and 'bring to existence' unheard-of ideas and proposals' (italics in original, Guattari 2013: 17). In short, he was concerned with the original articulation of collective speech. The four divisions of the unconscious diagram are defined as: 'cut-outs' of existential territories; complexions of material and energetic flows; rhizomes of abstract ideas; and constellations of aesthetic refrains. Perhaps more figuratively, one could say that the four zones are: the ground beneath your feet; the turbulence of social experience; the blue sky of ideas and; the rhythmic

insistence of waking dreams. These variations or moments of life are linked in a cycle of transformations, whose consistency and vectors make up an *assemblage* (individual, family, group, project, workshop, society, institution). Guattari's (2013) ultimate aim in relation with each assemblage was to arrive at 'a procedure of 'auto-modelling,' which appropriates all or part of existing models in order to construct its own cartographies, its own reference points, and thus its own analytic approach, its own analytic methodology' (Guattari 1995: 122).[1] This specific definition of assemblage from an interview with Guattari brings us closer to the 'strange assemblage' of this paper, because a 'strange assemblage' is about modes of inter-connected forces, cycles and their related processes that engender collective mechanics from within. Guattari goes on to say in the *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* that 'Like a roundabout at a fairground, at each one of its pulsations, the procession of the cycle of assemblages induces movements of recession that start up new domains and modify those previously concerned' (2013: 167). Again, this quote parallels the intent and practice of 'strange assemblage' and the elements of this paper that explore 'the unacceptable.'

The *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* are oriented from beginning to end by one of Guattari's oldest ideas as a therapist, theorist and political activist, developed under the influence of Jean-Paul Sartre and directly relevant to the notion of the 'strange assemblage.' This idea concerns the passage from a 'subjected group,' often alienated by social forces, to a 'subject group,' that is capable of making its own statements.[2] However, the Sartrean notions of individual choice and undivided responsibility for one's own actions were too restrictive and linear for Guattari (2013), for whom, from a systemic viewpoint, the range of possible statements of the assemblage is determined by the basic parameters of the system or the four domains of the unconscious. The passage of transformational thresholds became the most pressing issue for Guattari and his notion of assemblage as 'subject group.' Through the meta-modelling of chaotic processes and perhaps even more pertinently, through pragmatic experimentation with the material and semiotic components at play within diagrammatic processes (Cole 2012), groups would better understand how to move themselves toward moments of bifurcation or, in the case of this article; to the 'strange assemblage.' Ultimately, groups under the tutelage and direction of 'strange assemblage' would know how to embody

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[1] This interview with Guattari by Jacques Pain was originally published in 1985 in French (Pain 1985).
[2] The theme occurs throughout Guattari's first book, *Psychanalyse et transversalité: Essais d'analyse institutionnelle* (1972), for example in 'Introduction à la psychothérapie institutionnelle.'

the opaque and incalculable element of chance that inflects the development of an entire system encapsulated by understanding the four domains of the unconscious in Guattari's terms.

One could state that the moment of trembling between affect and expression (see Cole 2011b) is the oscillating departure-point of the *Cartographies*. Yet what the fourfold diagrams try to map out are not just the latencies and possibilities of speech on the edge of an all-absorbing state of anti-conditioning and strikingly revolutionary action; but more specifically, the material situations and logical steps that draw subjectivity out of its containment and into unfolding social flows and inter-relationships which are themselves reshaped through their collisions with ceaselessly mutating operational diagrams that Deleuze & Guattari (1988) called 'abstract machines.' The affective pulse that leads from boxed subjectivity through social flows to the relation with abstract machines is the centre of the *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* and shows us how 'strange assemblages' may be formulated.

Guattari's (2013) book points not to how behaviour is altered in plastic adaptation to context—because every top-down discourse of power does that—but instead, to how people and things are able to leave behind sedentary territories and enunciate differently, often in problematic interaction with others and on a multiplicity of new grounds (Masny & Cole 2012). The point of this method of 'strange assemblage' is to resist, create, propose alternatives and to escape in terms of the evolving singularities of the group, despite the normalizing forces that are continually brought to bear on collectivism by aspects of contemporary capitalist society; for example, the confinement of the bourgeoisie, or oedipal family. One could say by analogy that whereas cybernetic engineering formulates a determinant endpoint in the hard wiring of a machine, and systemic analysis deduces a working model of purpose that defines the fit between an organism and its environs; the *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* map out the existential and social parameters within which a desire comes both to question itself in thought and release its otherness in expression (Cole & Pullen 2009: 124–138)—thereby helping to create a new grounds for becoming and launch a new cycle of connected transformations; here called 'strange assemblage.' To achieve this cycle or continua means enveloping the inter-connected circle of existence in thought , or describing what Deleuze and Guattari (1988) called the *plane of consistency*, in order to distinguish

between the four domains that subtend any possible awareness and can therefore be considered as immanent fluctuation or flux-models of the unconscious. Analysis, or the process of differentiating and splitting—the *schiz of schizoanalysis* itself—is another way of describing the movement of deterritorialization that brings the four domains at least partially to consciousness in the thinker or group. Any of the four fields of the unconscious can be a source or a stimulant of this deterritorialization; thus the domains are called 'functors' by Guattari (2013), to indicate their transformative effects on the assemblage whose overall dynamics they initiate and sustain.[3] Therefore, understanding of the strange assemblage comes about as a result of the functors, and as the four domains of the unconscious is revealed in social and collected life.

Thus the methodology of this paper is to define and choose specific examples to demonstrate the workings of the 'strange assemblage' and a notion of the unacceptable. The enabling of Guattari's (2013) four domains of the unconscious is an ethical-aesthetic task, exemplified by Gatens and Lloyd when they said: 'Those who have been marginalised by the communities in which they—voluntarily or involuntarily—dwell, cannot be recognised in their difference unless the 'world,' the ethos from which they draw their power to act, and their very identities, is recognised' (Gatens & Lloyd 1999: 148). It is in the ethos that we find the four domains of the unconscious and the 'strange assemblage' of this paper. This article is an example of meta-modelling, whereby each example chosen to exemplify the 'strange assemblage' feeds into every other in terms of enunciation, affect and drawing emergent lines of flight from their immanent groundings. However, the meta-model of the 'strange assemblage' does not reintroduce a practice of hylomorphism, as explained by Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 351–423) in their work on nomadology and the war machine. On the contrary, the meta-modelling of this article works from within to make difference happen in each example, so the 'strange assemblage' is realised in terms of the inter-relationships between examples and in the singularities of the examples themselves that have no relations. The examples below introduce vocabulary, concepts, ideas, their own forms of time and perspectives that feed into the four domains of the unconscious and the specific yet morphogenetic notion of 'strange assemblage.'

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[3] I have been inspired in this reading of Guattari's *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* (2013) by chapter 19 of Brian Holmes's *Escape the Overcode* (2009).

A Zed and 2 Noughts/Performance **assemblage**

The first 'strange assemblage' that this article will construct is produced from the films, *A Zed and 2 Noughts* (Greenaway 1985), and *Performance* (Cammell & Roeg 1970). Filmic assemblages reveal the ways in which directors, producers, actors, props, music, scripts, dialogue and cinematographic technique disparately and abstractly come together. However, both films diverge from mainstream cinematic procedures in terms of plot, narrative and the attention to the visual fields that are produced. The 'strange assemblage' of this paper is produced via the ways in which the directors and writers of the films have taken circuitous and unexpected routes to telling their stories. In *A Zed and 2 Noughts*, Peter Greenaway presents his obsessions with doppelgangers, death, lists, animals, amputation, painting, sex and decay in terms of a non-linear narrative that speculates on the processes of human and animal freedom given physical, emotional and psychical encumbrance. In *Performance*, Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg envisage the psychological, physical and emotional traumas involved with changing one's identity and trying to escape from death. Both films present an impression of 'the unacceptable,' though in Greenaway's terms this unacceptability is framed through an aesthetic , traumatised and obsessional lens. In *Performance* the unacceptable gangster is transformed into an unacceptable bohemian, therefore *Performance* works on the level of the unacceptable as a non-normative grounding in character analysis and transformation. One might say that *Performance* is a strange assemblage in its entirety, whereas *A Zed and 2 Noughts* meanders from scientific and aesthetic analysis and design to the ways the scientific-aesthetic realities emerge under the guidance of open-minded and spontaneous script direction. Greenaway allows for and designates unexpected and dissonant elements to creep into his filmic vision, which mark out the territories and speeds of various 'strange assemblages' which do not come together as a whole or holistic effect, but are a deliberate fracturing and an abrasive crack in narration.

In Guattari's (2013) terms, the machinic unconscious emerges from both films in terms of the ways in which the directors have dealt with the scenarios, characters, interlinked plot development and complex relationships. In *Performance*, the four zones of the unconscious are presented as: 1) the East End of London, represented as a sort of 'Gangster-Land,' and the house as hideout where Mick Jagger's character, Chas, lives; 2) the gangster social world with its requisite violence, sex, money and power and the

bohemian social world with is consciousness alteration, art, sex and identity manipulation; 3) the ideas associated with being a gangster such as exploitation, fear, profit and the codes associated with taking part in an illegal society, and the ideas of bohemianism such as mind alteration, tantric focus, artistic creativity and dream representation; and, 4) the dissonance and the 'cut out' effects of the film's progression, the use of intermittent music and noise, flashbacks and hermetic dialogue. In *A Zed and 2 Noughts* the four divisions of the unconscious diagram are: first, the setting of the zoo, the streets around the zoo, the interior terrains of the characters, gardens, as well as scientific laboratories, hospital wards and operating theatres; second, the scientific and social community associated with the zoo, and social and sexual groupings of twins and amputees; third, doubles, decay, scientific obsession and will, perversion and the processes of life; and fourth, a particular and deliberate framing of the filmic scenes to resemble the art of Vermeer, the Michael Nyman score and the effects of syncopated light. One learns from the 'strange assemblage' of this first section how to deal with grief and what happens when one runs from death. The film *Performance* tells us about camouflage, twisted self-discovery and torture, whereas *A Zed and 2 Noughts* takes us into the heart of animal-human examples of mutilation, cross-fertilisation and parallax. As a subject group, the two films articulate the desire of gangsters, bohemians, scientist and cripples; they give us a cinematic vision of what life is like for these 'unacceptable others' and provide a visual vocabulary or functors to understand their trajectories. As a 'strange assemblage' the singularity of this section lies in the ways that cinema can question mainstream values and produce experiences that go beyond normative and pre-defined expectations.

Sudanese families in Australia

Australia is part of a global humanitarian effort to resettle refugees from war ravaged countries such as the Sudan. Families of Sudanese have been coming to Australia as part of this resettlement program since around 2000 and the Darfur conflict. I received a research grant to examine what is happening with respect to Sudanese families now in terms of their educational opportunities and literacies.[4] There has been extensive coverage in the Australian media and in the political arena about the ways in which the

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[4] This study was funded by the SSHRC (Canada) International Opportunity Grant, Immigrant Families and Multiple Literacies: Policy, Classroom and Community Connections Across Australia and Canada. Full ethics permissions were obtained for this study and all names have been de-identified. The research was carried out by Professor Diana Masny (University of Ottawa), myself, and a research assistant.

Sudanese have fitted in or otherwise into mainstream Australian society, and this coverage has not always been positive.[5] It was a rare privilege, therefore, to be able to spend time with the Sudanese in their homes, at their schools and in the adult English classes where they were studying. I felt strongly that the research should address the ways in which the Sudanese in Australia have been branded as other, how the categorisation of these refugees by some has worked, and how they have become known as 'the unacceptable' due to the media reports of violence, crime, youth problems and educational difficulties. I would also like to take this chance to apply the apparatus of the 'strange assemblage' to the Sudanese families in Australia and their evolving identities.

One could state in a non-relative or non-normative sense that the Sudanese families in Australia are 'strange assemblages.' The Sudanese families come from different regions of the Sudan, which is a vast and diverse country. For example, I worked with a Nubian speaking family from the mid highlands and a southern Dinka speaking family. The families have usually come through transit countries such as Egypt, where they applied for their refugee status and live for several years. The families are large by Australian standards, often with nine or ten children, as was the case with the two families that I researched. As part of the project we gave the families flip cameras so they could film what takes place in their homes. One film depicted a wake, where their small house was inhabited by up to fifty members of the Sudanese-Australian community, who gather and share the space in order to pay their respect to the dead. Women sat and beaded each others' hair, the men relaxed and played cards, children streamed from room to room, laughing, talking and playing.

In terms of the 'strange assemblage' of this article and with relation to Guattari's (2013) *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, the four zones of the unconscious for the Sudanese families in Australia correspond to: one, the houses where the Sudanese currently live in Australia, which replicate the tribal and village spaces in the Sudan, and their convoluted journeys to get to these places from different regions in the Sudan, for example, via Egypt; two, the Sudanese community world, including the influences of Christian worship and their perspective on Australian social life taken from Australian

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[5] See, for example an ABC Radio National interview with the former Immigration Minister, Kevin Andrews (Cowan 2007).

media and their contact with Australians; three, the idea of being Sudanese and what that means, for example, in terms of the strong gender divisions in traditional Sudanese society, and how the idea of being Sudanese is changing under pressure from the transition to life in Australia; and four, the aesthetics of becoming Sudanese-Australian, for example involving craft, needlework and dress codes, music such as rapping, dancing, religious worship and imagery, and hairstyling. Clearly, the most perspicuous way in which the four divisions of the unconscious diagram from Guattari (2013) can be addressed and that would aid with the transition of the Sudanese families as a subjugated group to a group capable of making their own statements that could be heard in mainstream Australian life is through education. To aid with this aim, the concept of multiple literacies in an educational context (see Masny & Cole 2012) is useful to show ways in which the strange assemblage of the Sudanese-Australians may enunciate the 4 zones of the unconscious. The multiple literacies derived from the research project are:

1.   Peer and youth literacies. The Sudanese-Australians respond well to kinship and group bonds being preserved as much as possible. In mainstream educational practice, children are traditionally assessed, streamed and divided into year, subject and class groupings. The Sudanese-Australians thrive in social arenas where they can listen to peers and older members of their community speak about educative or social matters. For example, a year 7 Sudanese-Australian student would respond well to being taught Mathematics by a year 10 Sudanese-Australian student or at least having him or her there for peer support and knowledge.

2.   The literacy of synthetic time. The clockwork mosaic of discrete knowledge areas to study one at a time and after each other, and the confusing multitude of subjects in the secondary context, is a hindrance to the development of the Sudanese-Australian 'strange assemblage.' Rather, the Sudanese students could be taught for extended periods of unequal length and duration to encourage the synthesis of time, whereby their knowledge acquiring apparatuses are switched on and they are attuned to learning according to the 4 zones of the unconscious. The introduction of the literacy of synthetic time requires a new timetable for the Sudanese-Australians to be introduced into schooling, with longer and interconnected subject and study periods (see Cole 2011a).

3. War literacies. The reality of war must not be watered down, sublimated or diluted in the context of schooling the Sudanese-Australians. Rather, the learning of the Sudanese would be stimulated and engaged by understanding what war means and being able to articulate ideas connected to war, and not only how they have impinged upon Australian or British life and its people. This type of literacy cannot be isolated or designated as being merely relevant to the subject of Australian history, but should be extended further into the curriculum.

4. Oral literacies. Spoken language must take precedent with the Sudanese-Australians and their 'strange assemblage.' The imposition of literate moves too quickly or too universally; i.e. the deployment of educational practice involving reading and writing with the Sudanese-Australians without oral explanation, will take the study focus away from their oral abilities and the use of such a pivot, and the sense of community that orality has embedded within it. Oral literacies coincide with the need for code switching in the classroom (Milroy & Muysken 1995); in the case of this study, between Dinka, Nubian, Arabic and English, so that knowledge and conceptual development may be supported between languages.

5. Tribal literacies. The tribalism of the Sudanese-Australian refugees cannot be overlooked, but used effectively as part of their learning practices. This set of literacies, that would benefit the 'strange assemblage' of the Sudanese-Australians because of their socialisation processes in the Sudan; which require educators and students to reintroduce a pre-modern space into the teaching and learning arena, whereby neither capitalist nor industrialised education is incumbent on the forms of sociality that are apparent in learning.

6. Physical literacies. The sustained use of abstract knowledge in the classroom will hinder the progress of the Sudanese-Australians in the mainstream. This literacy is important because the ways in which their 'strange assemblage' is constructed necessitates the physical reality of what is being discussed or studied to be paramount. Education should be a physical, indeed, visceral experience for the engagement and development of the Sudanese-Australian identity. This literacy means the acting out and physical activation of knowledge, ideas and concepts in and out of the classroom.

The 'strange assemblage' of the Sudanese families in Australia is changing as they settle down to the rhythms of everyday life in their adopted new country. The aim of the six multiple literacies above is to make the strange assemblage of the Sudanese in Australia viable for the future of the younger Sudanese-Australians. Meanwhile, the adult Sudanese continue to struggle with unemployment, the English language, discrimination, racial abuse and their personal displacement issues. One should never underestimate the ways in which the transition from village life in the Sudan via refugee camps and temporary housing to the context of Sydney, Australia, has had profound effects on the lives of these Sudanese migrants. Such trauma will be communicated to the children, and make the feedback cycles of the 'strange assemblage' as described by the article more difficult to realise. The emergence of the Sudanese-Australians as major players in Australian social and cultural life will therefore be dependent on the ways in which the functors of their four zones of the unconscious operate in terms of their traumas of displacement, war and cultural adaptation.

One of the Sudanese males, Nallowa,[6] said in an interview: 'Now I ah ah, because I'm like to say in in ah, Africa you don't have ah, a country now, Africa you have two river' (Interview transcript). Nallowa discussed the issues of drought in the interview and how the populations must live close to water in order to survive, but beyond this survivalist point is the deeper relationship that the Sudanese have with the land and how they conceptualise space. Something that was especially noticeable about working with the Sudanese-Australians was how they meet and congregate at the intersections of streets and buildings. For example, Sudanese-Australian youth gather in groups in Blacktown at night in the small squares between commercial buildings and around the railway station exits. Nallowa was usually late for appointments, yet when he did come, his arrival was unexpected and a surprise. The strange assemblage of Nallowa and the Sudanese-Australian youth did not include timetabled schedules and designated queuing spots, but rather followed flows and points of confluence whereby the map of the place or time was altered to fit in with their assemblage. This aspect of the research concerns the inward journeys that the Sudanese migrants have embarked upon and are living through in terms of everyday life.

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[6] The name is a pseudonym.

The strange assemblage of the Sudanese-Australian boys in the study contributed to the impression of 'mute disparity' and an inward journey. The boys' habits consist of playing sport, attending school, dressing up and going out with their friends, and dealing with their masculinity via media images of teenage male heroes often produced in the USA. Beyond this reality, lies the deeper and more dangerous memory and thought of being a young Sudanese male in the war, wherein child soldiers are common (see AHRC, 2010). The gendered assemblage of this study is due in part to the fact that the boys were questioning the reality that confronted them in Australia, and were often finding it unexciting and banal. The allure of consumerism, educational success and the 'petit bourgeoisie' may be diminished if one has the embedded memory or thought of war, however much that memory may be mediated by displacement or supported by family life (Brown, Miller & Mitchell 2006). The eighteen year old, eldest teenage male in Australia in one of the families was especially susceptible to such thoughts, and barely took part or expressed any opinions for the research project interviews. He would not talk about such events, as he was unwilling or unable to divulge such information, yet the atmosphere of a child soldier hung around him like the unnatural framing of some supernatural, unearthly force.

The Sudanese-Australian boys are strong-willed, attracted to American gangster rap, designer clothes and gold plated jewellery. Outside of school, and beyond the articulation of the research interviews involved with this project, the boys are lively and fun, forming close-knit groups who like to go out and inhabit the streets with their own sense of space as has been noted above. In contrast, the girls would willingly express random desires to the researchers such as wanting to become sportswomen, actresses or pop stars. The girls were able to easily converse about their developing Sudanese-Australian identity, what they thought of school and Australian life. The gender-divide in the empirical field of investigation of this study is principally a question of desire, and this may be profitably approached through the Guattarian inspired 'strange assemblage.' The four divisions of the unconscious map of Guattari offer through-lines and new ways of looking at the development of Sudanese-Australian identity. The four divisions of the unconscious is not a set cognitive ability or patterning of thought (see Cole 2011a); rather, the four divisions signal the ways in which the Sudanese-Australians are able to express themselves, currently outside of institutional situations.

The observations and videotaping in the English language classes, gave rise to the clear fact that the Sudanese-Australian adults were struggling with learning English. Nallowa is a fluent Arabic and Dinka speaker, who has previously studied English in Kenya. In another family, Ema and Serena were both learning English at TAFE. Serena especially needed special attention with her English exercises, her teacher usually staying behind to help her catch up. Nallowa considered his involvement in the project and his relationship with me very hopefully, and as a means to bettering the position of himself and his family. He showed the researchers traditional, embroidered materials that the women had prepared, perhaps with the hope that we might buy them. Both families go to church and were involved with church communities.

The Sudanese-Australian 'strange assemblage' is highly sociable. The Sudanese-Australian homes contain large sofas and padded chairs, TVs, religious imagery on the walls and flashy audio stereo systems, and do not have the ordered apartness of separate areas for discrete functionality. There are no books on display or within easy reach of the children. Rather, the 'strange assemblage' of the Sudanese-Australians reinstitutes tribal and village spaces in their homes, without the mapping of petit bourgeoisie capitalism or reification of the home amongst the oedipalised English middle classes (Vickers & McCarthy, 2010). However, the atmosphere of such places is not an unhappy one, with the constant movement of young children threading with the chatter of African conversation, TV sounds and low music. The 'strange assemblage' of the Sudanese-Australians and the consequent divisions of the unconscious depend greatly on the ways in which the children are emergent from these family homes with an African flavour. The children want to get jobs, earn money, buy cars and have attractive clothes. The indications are that they will achieve such goals, as they leave their parents behind in terms of their linguistic abilities in English, understanding mainstream Australian mores and their resultant chances of securing employment. The Sudanese-Australian children will retain strong Sudanese-African connections because the Diaspora from Africa has created powerful and supportive social networks through dedicated communality. These forces will play out in the 'strange assemblage,' as the seductions of commerciality, ownership, capitalism and sedimentation within Australian society jostle with embedded Sudanese-African identities.

Jeff Nuttall's *Bomb Culture* and Hawkwind

The last 'strange assemblage' that will be enunciated here concerns a book by the poet and activist, Jeff Nuttall, and the English counter-culture band, Hawkwind. This strange assemblage has been chosen to complement the overall structure of the paper that has derived from Deleuze & Guattari (1988) & Guattari (2013), and designates an English response to many of the forces at play through the notion of 'strange assemblage.' In France, the events of Paris in May 1968 provided a focus point for the revolutionary aspects of the strange assemblage: for example, a call for a non-representational politics, a vitalist understanding of capitalism and an exploration of Freudian unconscious mechanics in social life. In England, there was the rise of the counter-culture or the Underground, the festivals of Glastonbury and the Isle of Wight, Jimi Hendrix and the often fleeting presence of Hindu mystics. Jeff Nuttall (1970) tried to encapsulate many of the English 1960s revolutionary trends in his *Bomb Culture*, which describes a growing disparity between traditional, conservative, British society and the underground youth rebellion. He relates the 1960s social/cultural happening back to the introduction of Jazz into British life in the 1920s, and how that had polarised society forty years beforehand. Hawkwind came out of this 1960s' confluence of alternatives to living a consolidated, conservative, defence-minded, capitalist and sedentary existence; as a rag-bag bunch of art-school hobos, who made raucous 'space opera' rock music in open-air festivals and on the back of trucks. Hawkwind based their operations around the London district of Ladbroke Grove that became a magnet for anyone interested in living an alternative lifestyle.

In Guattari's (2013) terms, the four division of the unconscious correspond to: one, Ladbroke Grove and gigs in England and beyond that were attended by the amalgamated Hawkwind retinue, and the sites for 1960s Happenings such as art galleries and street festivals; two, the exploratory and experimental art world of the 1960s, which is more disparate and less focussed than the bohemianism of 'Performance,' the tribalism and group mentality of Hawkwind and their followers; three, artistic/creative reawakening, rebellion against the disciplinary mores of society, revolution, questioning the ways in which we are conditioned and herded by capitalist society, the release of suppressed and repressed energies through dance, trance, artistic gestures and political micro-organisation; and four, dissonance, discord and the unrest that is produced by Dada, surrealism and the Situationists, a return to primitivism, tribal

allegiances and nomadism, challenging the status quo and those in power who have lost touch with the organic and social needs of the masses through art, collectivism and music. However, the power and singularity of this strange assemblage is exactly located in the fact that the automatic and conditioning machines of capitalism have accelerated since the 1960s, and now lays waste—in terms of their creativity, inspiration and hope—to enormous swathes of the population, who are currently unemployed or work in part-time and precarious conditions. For example, many of the unconscious aspects of this 'strange assemblage' re-emerged after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, and with the Occupy movement, which is currently a political movement outside of the mainstream.

This 'strange assemblage' is the most open ended of the three that have been tackled in this article. Hawkwind positioned themselves in a pre-modern collective space beyond factories, offices, classrooms and bureaucracy, while Jeff Nuttall migrates to artistic circles and creative coteries wherein new societies and new cultural organization may be imagined and at least partially enacted. It is perhaps fitting that Nuttall appeared in a film by Peter Greenaway before his death in 2004, and has been recognised as an important cultural instigator and innovator of the time. Hawkwind became a mainstream band during the 1980s, as commercial pressure to conform to the prevailing modes of rock and pop took away their revolutionary and spontaneous zeal. However, Hawkwind laid the grounds for the UK free party, rave movement in the 1990s, and Nuttall's *Bomb Culture* (1970) can still be read as a means to understand what happened in the 1960s under the threat of imminent nuclear attack. Furthermore, the map of this 'strange assemblage' sits inside of English society as a cultural means to challenge conformity and the inscrutable processes of corporatisation that continue to sweep through all communities and around the world.

Conclusion

The strange assemblage of this paper is permeated by the three examples as described above. In keeping with the move away from a general assemblage theory as articulated by Manuel DeLanda (2006); the three assemblages should not be subsumed by the whole or written out of existence by summary or conclusion. Rather, a new relationship, a fourth set of forces or diagram may be understood by the ways in which the three strange assemblages can come together, collide and drift apart without ceremony or

pretence. The cinematographic confluence of *A Zed and 2 Noughts* and *Performance* are a rippling and discordant entrée to the everyday lives of the Sudanese families in Australia, and preclude the ways in which Jeff Nuttall's *Bomb Culture* and the band Hawkwind can still stir and arouse us. The overall point of aligning these disparate influences into three strange assemblages and ultimately into one focused energy source and wellspring for thought, is to challenge and unravel any dogmatic or uncritical ways of understanding how groups and collectivism works. This task is more relevant today than ever, as the abstract machine of capitalism, which is now an almost unassailable world system, reaches ever further into the ways that we think, speak, be and become. The reason for aligning the ideation of this paper, and the examples of strange assemblage that are contained within specifically to the cartographic work of Félix Guattari, is to ultimately challenge the enmeshing forces of capitalism as they impinge upon us today, and to come up with novel and powerful ways of articulating this challenge. The designated codex of the three strange assemblages give one the capacity to build a plane of immanence that burrows deeply into the ways in which capitalism functions through the unconscious. Guattari (2013) saw these processes as being part of reconstructing the unconscious from an 'ethical-aesthetic-anti-capitalist' viewpoint, yet one should bear in mind the warnings and safeguards of commentators such as Rosi Braidotti (2012), who has called for an adherence to otherness to stop the ethical and aesthetic heading towards a redundant humanism. In accordance to otherness, this article is a deliberate move into the cold outside, and into the ways in which the alien, hybrid and *unacceptable* can take on speed, intensity, and invoke a thoroughgoing life of their own.

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