You don’t wait for someone to admit they need therapy before you decide that they do. We’ve always done this. We set out the framework and we require that people fit into it. Something is wrong with you. You should fix it. We have this persistent, fucked up need to affix problems to persons other than ourselves.

The thing about persistent, fucked up needs is that they tend naturally toward absurdity. So here’s an interesting series of pictures: Psychiatrists and social workers and people with counseling degrees in hangers, in bunkers, standing on Air Force runways. Communicating, which is widely believed to be the first step in a long series of steps leading to a whole new paradigm of mental health for a thing that we’re still beginning to understand is capable of a recognizable mentality.

This might be a terrible idea. But it’s an idea and we’re all having it, like a kind of consensual hallucination. So in the end it’s pretty hard to say what’s therapeutic and what isn’t. What matters is that in the end we all might feel better about everything.

You can’t put a drone on a couch. An Unmanned Aerial Vehicle does not need tissues. The tools of the trade are removed and for the most part there’s no comfortably controlled office environment. Bright sunlight isn’t conducive to cognitive behavioral therapy, or so the generally received wisdom goes. But you have to work with what you’ve got. A hanger bay can be made more comfortable with a couch, at least, for you. You ask for a standing lamp. This is fairly ludicrous, but. Well. All of it is, so where’s the line?

This is something we need to do.

So you ask, How have you been feeling? And you ask, Do you have trouble rebooting? And you ask, Do you experience difficulty preparing yourself for missions?

How did killing thirty three people, twelve of whom were children, make you feel in the morning?

Did you find yourself altering your flight path for reasons you couldn’t identify?

Do you take unnecessary risks?

The heads-up display registers responses, such as there are. You scan each carefully for any indication of emotional distress. You take copious notes. You bill the government five hundred dollars an hour. The taxpayers go to bed with the warm, fluffy reassurance that someone somewhere is still suffering for what no one wants to do but what no one wants to stop doing, either.

(Sunny Moraine, 2013/06/03, “All the Literati Keep an Imaginary Friend,” Murmuration, http://murmurationfestival.tumblr.com/post/

52062545981/ all-the-literati-keep-an-imaginary-friend)

Chapter One is the Predator Empire

In the age of the Drone, military violence is conceived as a relationship between things – the drone in the sky, and its targets on the ground – rather than between people. The drone takes on the status of an autonomous subject to absolve us of responsibility, to do the things no one else wants to, yet no one is willing to stop.

Akhter and Shaw, 2012 (Majed Akhter, Professor of Geography and Development at University of Arizona, and Ian Graham Ronald Shaw, Professor at the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences at the University of Glasgow, The Unbearable Humanness of Drone Warfare in FATA, Pakistan, Antipode Vol 44, #4, 2012, http://www.academia.edu/2201329/The\_Unbearable\_Humanness\_of\_Drone\_ Warfare\_in\_FATA\_Pakistan

The power exercised through drones simultaneously projects power outward, and folds space inward, bringing distant geographies under the gaze of US military planners. This form of knowledge production exposes the entire world to an unaccountable apparatus of surveillance.

Shaw, 13 (2013, Ian, “Predator Empire: The Geopolitics of US Drone Warfare,” Routledge, http://www.academia.edu/2125232/Predator\_Empire\_The\_Geopolitics\_of\_U.S.\_Drone\_Warfare)

Do you take unnecessary risks?

So: Do you find yourself wishing to make direct contact?

Do you dream about the people you watch? (This is assuming dreams but we find it’s easier to do that from the start, so anyway.)

When they get hurt or die, how does that make you feel?

Sympathy with the enemy is a terrifying prospect. Yes, of course they’re the enemy, they’re all the enemy, everyone we watch and pull into the cold scrutiny of a constant gaze is thereby made the enemy, and sometimes they are the enemy and sometimes the enemy is here as well but always there is that line between us and them and the line is clear and existent even if we can’t always tell where it is.

But this is what we expect.

So we fear sympathy with the enemy. It should comfort us that, in this context, such a thing no longer seems like a present danger. But you ask all your questions and you take all your notes and you can’t escape the feeling that you’re looking for it with the kind of zeal and hopefulness with which someone searches for treasure, or for evidence of a tremendously important truth.

You want the danger to be there because the danger is something you can understand.

Chapter Two is the Episteme of Targeting

Against the backdrop of this fetishization, it’s worthwhile to remember that the drone is nothing new. It’s only the latest and most refined incarnation of a logic that runs throughout the Western episteme, in which “to be” is “to be targeted.”

Akhter and Shaw, 2012 (Majed Akhter, Professor of Geography and Development at University of Arizona, and Ian Graham Ronald Shaw, Professor at the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences at the University of Glasgow, The Unbearable Humanness of Drone Warfare in FATA, Pakistan, Antipode Vol 44, #4, 2012, http://www.academia.edu/2201329/The\_Unbearable\_Humanness\_of\_Drone\_ Warfare\_in\_FATA\_Pakistan)

This targeting logic extends far beyond the military apparatus, into every field of Western knowledge production. Debate is no exception – debaters are trained to view the world as drones do, absorbing knowledge through a unidirectional gaze that leaves their own subject positions unquestioned.

Our Affirmative is meant to interrogate the way we as debaters have contributed to the targeting episteme. From the way we frame the world as a dangerous place requiring regulation and control, to the insistence on analyzing without ever being analyzed, watching without being watched, traditional debate replicates the knowledge production of the Predator Empire. If targeting logic is responsible for drone warfare then we should be asking ourselves how our own community has contributed to the creation of the Predator Empire.

Chow, 2006 (Rey Chow, Professor of Literature at Duke, Age of the World Target, pg. 46-49, 2006)

That brings us to ‘This week in the Drone War!, presented by Dronestream, a twitter feed dedicated to reporting every US drone strike. (twitter.com/dronestream)

Sep 6, 2013: A US drone fired missiles at a house, killing six people.

Official: Death toll may rise

Aug 31, 2013: At least 4 people died by drone.

Official: We do not know the identity of those killed.

Aug 30, 2013: Hours after Qaid’s marriage, two US drones launched missiles at his car, killing up to six people.

Chapter Three is Storytelling

How are we to learn about the topic, to craft scholarship about it, without succumbing to the same logic of visibility, targeting, and destruction that the drone itself embodies? Part of the answer lies in changing the way we tell stories. Art and fiction are important tools in liberating our political imaginary from the tyranny of the targeting episteme.

Rothstein, 13 (Adam Rothstein, Insurgent Activist and Researcher, How to Write Drone Fiction, Jan 20 2013, http://www.thestate.ae/how-to-write-drone-fiction/)

Our project moves between disciplines, ignoring the boundaries of knowledge production that separate politics from art, truth from fiction. This nomadic feminist methodology is critical to recreating our relationship with the Other in a way that isn’t destined to violence.

Braidotti, 97 (Rosi Braidotti, Director of Center for the Humanities at Utrecht, Mothers, Monsters, and Machines, Writing on the body: female embodiment and feminist theory, Pg 75-76)

In the targeting episteme we are all non-non-terrorists, neither guilty nor innocent. We are all the potential threats that our government claims to protect us from, and thus we are all perpetually locked in the crosshairs of the drone. To unbecome the non-non-terrorist we must engage in the inoperativity of the law. Our transdisciplinary performance renders the debate space inoperable, short-circuiting its ability to commit violence.

De Boever, 2006 (Arne De Boever, Professor of American Studies at the School of Critical Studies at the California Institute of the Arts, Overhearing Bartleby: Agamben, Melville, and Inoperative Power, Parrhesia Number 1, 2006, 142-162)

How does it make you feel?

By asking this question you’re setting a very rigid framework within which you can receive sensible answers. You set the discursive terms, with your lived experience and your assumptions about how things look and work. In moments of particular self-honesty you’ll own that this is probably all about assumptions when you get right down to it. You know that there are problems with this. You’ll do it anyway, because this is what we do.

We set the discursive terms. We make them learn our language. We make them meet us all the way and we never ask them what they wanted, because it doesn’t occur to us to wonder if they ever wanted anything to begin with.

But: How does it make you feel?

So you have to wonder if any of us care. And you already know that that isn’t the important part. The important part is that the question gets asked at all.

This entire process is ourselves talking to ourselves. It’s an exercise in massive, masturbatory self-analysis. And while we engage in this self-centered groping, they watch, silent and impassive. To the extent that they give us answers at all, it’s placation. They become the blankness to which we attach anything. They are not self-defining. They allow us that control, a consensual kind of tyranny, a sado-masochistic power exchange. They understand that much. They know what we need to believe. They know what we need.

We always end up telling them everything.

Ten sessions later you’re sobbing on your couch. As a presence, it turns out a drone is comforting. And at least you have tissues.

(Sunny Moraine, 2013/06/03, “All the Literati Keep an Imaginary Friend,” Murmuration, http://murmurationfestival.tumblr.com/post/

52062545981/ all-the-literati-keep-an-imaginary-friend)