**Gender, Nature, Culture Week 11 Questions**

Georgie Preston

**2. How do you understand the idea that coal is a ‘blood knowledge’ and the practice of ‘writing in/of the blood?’ How is this evident in the bodies and labour practices of coal miners and non-miners?**

To my understanding, coal is a ‘blood knowledge’ in that those who interact with it (which is in fact all of us whether directly or indirectly) contain, retain and cohere to the potentialities and actualities of sense that coal opens (p. 5.) “It’s in the blood” is a common refrain in mining communities (p. 22.) This refers not only to the familial and social bind of tradition and solidarity that coal mining demands and creates, but also in the deep corporeal connection whereby the body carries a trace of the other – the coal – and the two are intertwined and reciprocal. There is an intimacy of exposure between flesh and fuel (coal, though ‘inhuman’ should be seen as a living thing and not a dead rock) that cannot be forgotten, as exemplified by writing in/on the body and leaving physical marks such as wounds that act as tokens of a passage through the inhuman and its labours carried by miners (p. 6.) However, this blood line extends even further than the immediate marks of miners as political subjects, as it is a project of sociality (p. 29.) “Personal-political” connections of solidarity and community over coal have built systems of tolerance and understanding, such as with the London Lesbian and Gay Support the Miners (LGSM) group, which is specifically non-miners, and their relationship with the mining village Dulais. This is what is referred to as a ‘miner/minor’ blood statement, in which a reciprocal generosity is established through facing issues of being suppressed and ignorance within mining communities (p. 30) and instead highlighting the similarities of the LGBTQ+ community and miners in their identities as classes of shame that experienced great solidarity and intimacy amongst themselves. They are connected by the materiality of coal (e..g turn it on compagain).

**6. How does Yusoff’s account of coal change the conception of the Anthropocene?**

According to Yusoff, the inhuman (for which she uses coal as her major example) cannot be a *supplement* to human social power as it has a queer genealogy (p. 4). Therefore, she suggests that Anthropocene subjectivity should be understood beyond human life/death and inhuman beginning/ending dichotomies, which are inherently reproductive in nature, but rather in the multifarious forms of partial survivals and small deaths (p. 13.) One way that she approaches this is to view the Anthropocene as a “resurrection” (p. 13) of the Carboniferous period, through which we receive fossil fuels which in turn encourage us to be expressive in ways that use these fuels. This makes humans “zombie subjects” of the Anthropocene, the *un*dead Carboniferous reanimation and re-earthing of the released compact sunlight and the event of climate that this plant life contains – coming back to life. Humans thus live in and from the bodies of the dead (which has been made into coal) and their ‘solar bloodline’: we are possessed and by this fuel stock and have become forgotten subjects ourselves. To counter this, Yussof states that we must go back to the sexual life of the Carboniferous; face ‘our’ inheritance; assume responsibility, forge transversal solidarities.