As an update of his continual concern for contemporary risk society since 1980s, Ulrich Beck's latest work World at Risk (2009) alerts us to the deterritorializing effects of global risk on national, geographical, and disciplinary boundaries. On an increasingly global scale, risk mixes up natives and foreigners, while risk calculus connects natural, technical and social sciences, and incorporates almost all aspects of everyday life. Fear, accordingly, spreads out as a kind of carrier that binds so-called global, multicultural civil society; it even prospers as a lucrative risky business. Such an era has witnessed a structural transformation of the roles of the state and various biopolitical institutions, of life itself, of subjectivity and agency. Drawing on Žižek's theory of ideology critique and radical ethics and politics, this paper firstly presents a critical survey of contemporary biopolitics, focusing on how health needs contagion as its uncanny double to define and immunize itself, and on how new forms of biomedical experts and knowledge of life flourish with uncertainty and administer our body and life. All of these will be discussed in relation to theoretical accounts of the contemporary risk society and culture of fear to critically look at how risk and fear function as depoliticizing biopolitical instruments for disavowing social antagonism. Theorists such as Judith Butler and Roberto Esposito caution us against the (auto) immunitary biopolitical logic and call for vulnerability, precariousness and finitude to be adopted as the ethical principles for a “positive” biopolitics, while this paper will query whether human subjects are victimized and depoliticized in their discourses. The final part of this paper will turn to Žižek's recent formulation of radical ethics and politics to address the possibility of reinventing the political in contemporary biopolitics.
Risk, Fear and Immunity: Reinventing the Political in the Age of Biopolitics, Concentric, 37(1), 黃涵榆(2009/12). “Rethinking Radical Politics and Ethics: Some Badiouian Perspectives by Way of Žižek”, Revue Appareil, 4, 黃涵榆(2009/06). “The Banality of Radical Evil in the Name of Enjoyment: Hannah Arendt Revisited through Ethics of Psychoanalysis”, “A Zizekian Plea for Ethical Violence in the Age of Multiculturalism”, the Eighth Annual Wenshan International Conference on Ecological Discourse, National Chengchi University, 黃涵榆 (2008/05/23-2008/05/24). “Don DeLillo’s Underworld and the Psychoanalytic Ethics of Waste”. The Fourth Tamkang International Conference on Ecological Discourse, Tamkang University. 學術研究計畫: Immunity is thus always contaminated by the risks to life it attempts to contain, in a sense always already biopolitical, continually supplemented and reinforced rather than opposed. The differences in the interpretations of ‘biopolitics’ and its ‘beyond’ that the four books propose emerge out of the different problematizations that each text attends to. For many of the authors in Clough and Wilsie’s book, and for Debrin and Bader, the problem is that of excessive and ordinary violence, death and destruction. It is the ‘negative’ rather than the ‘positive’ biopolitics that dominates here. The