

Oraxiom: A Journal of Non-Philosophy

Vol. 1 No. 1 (2020)



Topic: The End Times

Edited by Bogna M. Konior, Jeremy R. Smith, and Michael Saunders

Oraxiom

A Journal of
Non-Philosophy



ABOUT EDITORIAL OFFICE

Oraxiom: A Journal of Non-Philosophy
Online ISSN: 2545-4668

Mission Statement

Oraxiom: A Journal of Non-Philosophy is an open-access, peer-reviewed international journal focused on non-philosophy.

Published annually, *Oraxiom* seeks non-philosophical scholarship in various fields across the humanities, sciences, and arts, as well as in various forms, including audio-visual, literary, and new media experimentations. Its goal is to investigate the current state and the genealogy of François

Laruelle's non-philosophy and to further explore the possibility of alternate instantiations of non-philosophy as an applied method of research and practice, not necessarily confined to the work of Laruelle. Alongside academic research, the journal is committed to publishing contributions in experimental formats, including but not limited to creative arts research, theory- and philo-fiction, translations, and documentation of collaborations. *Oraxiom* also accepts submissions from guest editors for special themed issues. The goal of the journal is to establish a space for the publication of non-philosophy and its iterations.

Editorial Statement

Why “Oraxiom”? To invent the future without delay is a task that demands consistency, but a consistency in experimentation. Oraxiom internationalizes non-philosophy, conjugating with the predictable and the unpredictable, the scientific and the artistic, the philosophical and the theoretical.

Through the unfixed algorithms of non-philosophy — genericity, mysticism, science, and heresy — it spells out a non-standard topology of worlds. Oracle, not as a prediction of the future, but a lesson in inventing it. Axiom, not as a starting point, but the incontrovertible true-without-truth.

As an open platform for the realization of non-standard thought, *Oraxiom* offers itself as a paradigm for practice — an axiomatic summoning of an oracle. Drawn from Laruelle's late oeuvre, “oraxiom” expresses the superposition between oracle and axiom, an ultimatum for the future liberated from overdetermined continuums that exist in the world.

In *Anti-Badiou*, Laruelle describes the oraxiom as “the lived decisions of the generic subject operating the science of philosophy” and “the superposition of axiomatic decision and philosophical decision, the quantum superposition that transforms concepts and their effects.” A centrifugal lived-in-motion, this perpetual mutation is an inconvertible basis for the future world.

Style, Submissions and Editorial Policy: see our website.

oraxiom.org
oraxiom@isshs.edu.mk

Editor-in-Chief: Stanimir Panayotov

Editorial Manager: Jeremy R. Smith

Editorial Board Members

Yvette Granata
Bogna M. Konior
Benjamin Norris
Stanimir Panayotov
Alice Rekab
Michael Saunders
Jeremy R. Smith

Advisory Board

Taylor Adkins, Independent Researcher and Translator, Atlanta, Georgia
Nandita Biswas Mellamphy, University of Western Ontario
Ray Brassier, American University of Beirut
Drew Burk, Translator, Writer and Editor, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Daniel Colucciello Barber, Pace University
Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, University of Surrey
Erik Del Bufalo, Simón Bolívar University
Alex Dubilet, Vanderbilt University
Rocco Gangle, Endicott College
Katerina Kolozova, Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje
François Laruelle, Paris Nanterre University
Benjamin Noys, University of Chichester
John Ó Maoilearca, Kingston University
Anne-Françoise Schmid, MINES ParisTech
Anthony Paul Smith, La Salle University
Eugene Thacker, The New School for Social Research

Cover | Logo: Sophia Yung

Layout | Typesetting: Risto Aleksovski

Website: Yvette Granata

Publisher | Contact

Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje
20 Oktomvri Str. No. 8, second floor
1000 Skopje
North Macedonia
isshs.edu.mk

License

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International

Oraxiom

A Journal of Non-Philosophy



Online ISSN: 2545-4668

Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje

IMPRESSUM

Oraxiom: A Journal of Non-Philosophy 1.1 (2020): The End Times

Volume: 1

Issue Number: 1

Edited by: Bogna M. Konior, Jeremy R. Smith, Michael Saunders

Authors: Bogna M. Konior, Jeremy R. Smith and Michael Saunders, Mark Pingree, Anne-Françoise Schmid, Jessie L. Beier and Jason J. Wallin, Matthew J. King, Adam Louis-Klein, Etienne Brouzes and Sylvain Létoffé, Andrew Santana Kaplan, Sven Läwen, Timothy Lavenz, David Roden and Bogna M. Konior, Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, Katerina Kolozova, Anthony Paul Smith and John Ó Maoilearca, François Laruelle (translated by Taylor Adkins)

Language(s): English, French

Pages: 192

Format: 210 x 297 mm

Publication date: 2020-10-16

Publisher: Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje

THE END TIMES

Edited by Bogna M. Konior,
Jeremy R. Smith and Michael Saunders

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Bogna M. Konior, Jeremy R. Smith, and Michael Saunders
(pp. 10-13)

ARTICLES

Disabling Philosophy

Mark Pingree
(pp. 17-30)

**La fin des temps philosophiques : comment changer la philosophie pour
la mettre en situation de contribuer aux problèmes du monde réel?**

Les philosophies et les problèmes du monde réel

Anne-Françoise Schmid
(pp. 33-40)

Pedagogy of the Negative: Pedagogical Heresy for “The End Times”

Jessie L. Beier and Jason J. Wallin
(pp. 43-58)

**Towards a Non-Baudrillard:
Theoretical Violence and the Gift**

Matthew J. King
(pp. 61-75)

**Globalization and Global Thought:
An Anthropological Extension of Non-Philosophy**

Adam Louis-Klein
(pp. 77-90)

Le futur toujours avant dernier

Etienne Brouzes and Sylvain Létoffé
(pp. 93-103)

**The Apocalyptic Tabula Rasa of Black Messianic Invention: Black Faith
and Pure Means in Fanonism's Insurrectionist Christo-Fiction**

Andrew Santana Kaplan
(pp. 105-121)

**Another Beginning of Philosophy is Possible:
Towards a Democratic and Disruptive History of Systems of Thought**

Sven Låwen
(pp. 123-134)

**Utopic Expressivity:
On Laruelle's Oraxiomatic Method and Paul Celan's Vision of Poetry**

Timothy Lavenz
(pp. 137-153)

INTERVIEWS

Non-Philosophy and Speculative Posthumanism: A Conversation with David Roden

Bogna M. Konior
(pp. 157-167)

Thinking alongside The Last Humanity: Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca in Conversation with Katerina Kolozova, Anthony Paul Smith, and John Ó Maoilearca

Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca
(pp. 170-180)

TRANSLATION

Who Are Minorities, and How Are We To Think Them?

François Laruelle, translated by Taylor Adkins
(pp. 185-192)

In the inaugural issue of *Oraxiom: A Journal of Non-Philosophy*, we pick up a subject that several theoretical disciplines have come to deem as the end times. While the challenges of environmental change and economic crises signal a paradigm shift, collapse thought is predominantly a characteristic of European and American academia, and the generation of scholars that it has trained over the last few decades. Are we truly witnessing the end times, or are we seeing a certain form of Western thought - under the name of philosophy with all of its methodological and identitarian characteristics - process its own end? What will grow in the barren land of philosophy? Non-Philosophy has long interrogated how philosophical thought presents itself as 'the real,' as the unshakable, inescapable given; it has already asked the question of the end of philosophy, or rather the perpetual loop of the death and renewal of philosophy, in the cracks of which non-philosophy finds exit routes.

The end times are no strangers to non-philosophy. As François Laruelle writes in his *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, the end times have been invented as a Hell on earth, where "[e]very man...has his 'hell' readily available, connivance, control, conformism, domestication, schooling, alienation, extermination, exploitation, anxiety, etc."¹ Laruelle notes the varying tendencies of all of these Hells, these specific, all too mundane End Times take place in the present rather than only in the theological-eschatological realm: Marxism's class struggle imposed by Capital, the disciplining of the human according to the Nietzscheans, and the instrumentalization of being according to phenomenology. these Hells are the infinite, singular, and universal harassments that confront the human.

¹ François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), 15-16.

Laruelle wants to challenge philosophy *with the tools of philosophy*, or rather with a perverted version of philosophy, a non-philosophical thought that reveals the artifice of philosophy. Scholarship by prominent Laruelle interpreters such as Katerina Kolozova, Anthony Paul Smith, and Eugene Thacker already dealt with the matter of the end times, showing us that Laruelle's non-philosophy is a method of thought rather than a collection of concepts. For Kolozova, for example, it is a way of bypassing philosophy's criminal history and refocusing thought towards material action that responds to real physical harm rather than the rhetorical 'hallucinations' of philosophy.² Smith, through a guide to Laruelle's thought, contributes to the vision of universalizing the Stranger-subject in non-philosophy, placing it alongside the militancy of Afro-pessimist thinkers, in the line of Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire's declaration to end the world, such as Frank B. Wilderson III, Saidiya Hartman, Hortense Spillers, Jared Sexton, and others, in order to present victimhood as the cause-of-the-last-instance for insurrection. Thacker, exploring the post-secular turn in non-philosophy, with its corresponding themes of mysticism, gnosis and eschatology, presents non-philosophy as a threshold where human thought meets the outside.³

If, for Marx, humanity's species-being was the ability to transform its conditions of existence, now in times of the discursive end of the world, the defining impulse of humanity appears as autophagy, that is, the ability to annihilate and cannibalize these very conditions. The future is thus held in suspense and the present is defined by the eschatology of an inescapable entanglement of the social, political, economic and ecological. Laruelle demands in *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*: "let us make

² Katerina Kolozova, *The Lived Revolution: Solidarity With the Body in Pain as the New Political Universal* (Skopje: Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, 2016).

³ Eugene Thacker, "Notes on the Axiomatic of the Desert," *Angelaki* 19, no. 2 (2014): 85-91.

a tabula rasa out of the future.” This task can be perceived as epistemological, political, ethical, or discursive as much as all of these terrains impose themselves onto the future, wanting to convince us that the future is done for. Dystopian assessments of racial and economic politics in the West are multiplying while at the same time we re-evaluate what we consider progressive or regressive, negative or positive, personal or collective. It is perhaps the sign of the times that (non)philosophical thought very visibly registers explicitly ethical and political desires - this is the moment that our first issue captures. The predominant question taken up by (non)philosophy today seems to be, not what exists or how could we know it, but what is to be done?

On this subject, we are excited to present a collection of texts by emerging non-philosophy scholars who take up in various ways the intersection of non-philosophy and proximate practices. The writers that we publish here show their faith in the agency of thought, and in the various kinds of undoings that non-philosophy allows cognitively. Their question is: how to under-determine what has been over-determined, to open up the space of possibility? As Laruelle asks in his *General Theory of Victims*: “*who deserves to arise, who is able to?*” Articles in this issue are insurrectional in orientation, explicitly interested in the question of the politics and ethics of thought and its practice. How can we organize our politics and ethics under the name of the Victim-in-person? This new scholarship concerns itself with non-philosophy’s many intersections as well as with operationalizing it for the purpose of current pressing concerns, discussing non-philosophy as compatible with indigenous ontologies, utopian poetry, Black studies, Marxism, anthropocene pessimism... Non-Philosophy becomes the meeting point.

Developing a non-philosophical theory of disability, Mark Pingree opens our inaugural issue and highlights some of its main concerns. Against

the violence of the philosophical thought-world, Pingree proposes a “disabling-(of)-philosophy,” a non-philosophical posture of thought “that places thought under the condition of the disabled victim-in-person.” To place thought under the condition of the disabled victim-in-person, Pingree contends, allows for a “radical political position”: a posture of thought as a “weapon of last defense” against the combined violence of the “capitalist forces of biospheric annihilation” and the philosophical thought-world. Pingree’s non-philosophical theory of disability therefore responds to and radicalizes one of the primary tasks of non-philosophy: the compassionate defense of and fidelity to a generic humanity.

In “*La fin des temps philosophiques: comment changer la philosophie pour la mettre en situation de contribuer aux problèmes du monde réel?*,” Anne-Françoise Schmid outlines ways in which philosophy itself can be changed with implementing and contributing itself to the problems of the real world. Here, she states that it is not a matter of destroying philosophy nor the real world but providing them new dimensions through a concept of genericity and collective intimacy between philosophy and the sciences, a type of “indisciplinarity” removed from the borders and frontiers of disciplinarity.

Confronting the question of the end times in a most direct manner, in “Pedagogy of the Negative: Pedagogical Heresy for ‘The End Times,’” Jessie L. Beier and Jason J. Wallin discusses the impact of the anthropocene both on pedagogy and everyday attitudes. Contrary to the optimistic discourse of hope that perpetually wills the same, holding thought hostage, they argue for the rejuvenation of the negative through non-philosophy and the intersecting practices of pessimism and heresy.

In his article, “Towards a Non-Baudrillard: Theoretical Violence and the Gift,” Matthew J. King poses a non-philosophical reading of the

French philosopher Jean Baudrillard. King envisions the revolutionary subject, man-to-come, as the counter-gift to symbolic exchange and capitalism. King's invention of a Non-Baudrillard provides a reinvigoration of Baudrillardian anti-capitalism that instantiates a theoretical violence against the myopic tendencies of theory, on the one hand, and the hypernormalization of capitalism.

In "Globalization and Global Thought: An Anthropological Extension of Non-Philosophy," Adam Louis-Klein welcomes the end times of ontological homogenization and aims at extending non-philosophy beyond its European relevance. Cross-reading non-philosophy and the ontological turn in anthropology, he argues for an alternative understanding of universality, not subjugated to localist and ethnocentric impulses.

Next, the co-written poetry-fiction and manifesto-fiction of ONPhI members Etienne Brouzes and Sylvain Létoffé with their "Le futur toujours avant dernier." In this experimental text, Brouzes and Létoffé introduce what they call a futurable ethics, a type of recuperation which produces a future human history. The human, to them, is a being of memory and history, and that the future tends to be confounded with the future of philosophy. Brouzes and Létoffé's contribution to our issue takes up the question of understanding ourselves in philosophy and the philosophy of time, seeking to reposition the question to that of a pre-vision of the future that is always before the last.

Conjugating Afro-pessimism and non-philosophy, Andrew Santana Kaplan's "The Apocalyptic Tabula Rasa of Black Messianic Invention: Black Faith and Pure Means in Fanonism's Insurrectionist Christo-Fiction" situates Frantz Fanon alongside Laruelle to focus on the function or logic of black faith through the deindividuated messianic subject present in *Christo-Fiction*. Santana Kaplan's contribution to our

issue makes explicit the demand for non-philosophy to engage the singularity of blackness in the wake of racial-chattel-slavery, posing the wager that if it does not, non-philosophy will maintain the philosophical decision governing modernity of anti-blackness.

Sven Låwen's "Another Beginning of Philosophy is Possible: Towards a Democratic and Disruptive Historiography of Scientific Thought" provides a summative approach to Laruelle's usage of quantum physics in non-standard philosophy, introducing an aspect of non-commutativity for thinking the quantization of philosophy. By doing so, Låwen's own non-commutative ontology of real time seeks to radicalize the liberty of the subject, to the point where even the past and the future are uncertain. In contrast to the theme of the End Times, where the slogan of "Another End of the World is Possible" Låwen's contribution urges us to think anew: another beginning of philosophy is possible.

Bringing together the oraxiomatic method of non-philosophy and the poetry of Paul Celan, Timothy Lavenz explores a radical mode of expression - a "utopic expressivity" - that would "voice a subjectivity 'of-the-last-instance.'" To this end, Lavenz constellates and develops a number of crucial features of Laruelle's project: messianity, utopia, the ultimatum, and a "use-of-silence." Elucidating a humble and lived practice of "vision-creation," Lavenz brings to expression the messianic dimension at the heart of Laruelle's thought. This is a vision, he tells us, of a "final loyalty," of the "humanly loyal" - of a "desire for person and language to form an indissoluble unity which is forever loyal to the human quest for utopia."

We also feature two conversations. In "Non-Philosophy and Speculative Posthumanism," Bogna Konior and David Roden discuss human agency, technology, biomorphism, and widely conceptualized posthumanism in relation to non-phi-

losophy, tackling a variety of topics, including transcendental computers, dark phenomenology, and how both non-philosophy and Roden's work diverge from other contemporary approaches to posthumanism. In "Thinking alongside *The Last Humanity*," Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, John Ó Maoilearca, Katerina Kolozova and Anthony Paul Smith discuss the wide-reaching project of Laruelle's upcoming text, *The Last Humanity* translated by Smith. In this text, Laruelle signals towards a new ecological science which unifies ecology and ethics in a way that challenges philocentric, anthropocentric, and biocentric overdeterminations. Instead, there is a degrowth of these overdeterminations which strives or forces [as in *forçage*] to think anew the ecological relations between the human, animal, and vegetal life.

Taylor Adkins has provided *Oraxiom* with a concluding translation of François Laruelle's essay, "Who Are Minorities and How Are We to Think Them?" Originally published in 1987 in the defunct French review *Études polémologiques*, Laruelle's essay coincides with his *A Biography of Ordinary Man* insofar as he seeks to simplify and define "Minorities" outside of the statist-unitary model. The inclusion of this text for this issue seeks, from the outset, to re-introduce the political underpinnings of Laruelle's work.

While non-philosophy is but one discipline alongside others engaged in these "end times," the guiding theme of our issue is not only the battleground of the future, but equally the future of non-philosophy. As an international journal of non-philosophy, *Oraxiom* is dedicated to being the platform for inventive challenges within this discipline and towards its consistent variations in its a priori defense of the human. Modifying Lacan's statement for non-philosophical invention, fiction progresses when enrooted in struggle with, for, and against the World. *Oraxiom*, as the fusion of oracle and axiom, is the announcement and performance of

futurity. Such is at stake in this issue and our next issues.

The co-editors wish to acknowledge our gratitude to the multiple reviewers, the other members of the editorial board, our advisory board members, and the contributors to this issue. Our appreciation is also extended to our sister publication, *Identities: Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture*, Katerina Kolozova, and the support of the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje. We thank Risto Aleksovski in developing the cover, layout, and design of our first issue. Lastly, we are indebted to both François Laruelle and Anne-Françoise Schmid for their inspiring non-philosophical visions.

Bogna M. Konior, Jeremy
R. Smith and Michael Saunders

Disabling Philosophy

Mark Pingree

Abstract: Drawing on a Laruellean symptomatology, this paper proposes a non-philosophical theory of disability that exposes and explores the relationship between debility, illness and the biopolitics of environmental contamination. The traumatic etiology at the basis of this relation – which can be traced through the slow violence of Anthropocene politics everywhere from Flint, Michigan to the nuclear disaster at Fukushima – is now ever more pressing as we find ourselves in the midst of a global pandemic. With these end times in mind, and inspired by Laruelle’s theory of philosophical decision, the essay argues for a “disabling-(of)-philosophy” that places thought under the condition of the disabled victim-in-person, a condition that demands a radical rethinking of our species-being in response to the inherent violence of the philosophical world and its catastrophic organization of the planet. The essay presents severe cognitive disability as a paradigmatic case of a non-philosophical “radical concept” where the immanent object (the disabled body) becomes the occasion for its own non-philosophical theory, one that by necessity and out of the urge for survival must reject all forms of philosophical decision. As a non-philosophical posture of thought cloned from the Real and effectuated by symptoms in the body, the disabling-(of)-philosophy proposed here can be mobilized as a radical political position, a “weapon of last defense” geared toward disabling the capitalist forces of biospheric annihilation.

Mark Pingree is a PhD Candidate in comparative literature at Stony Brook University writing a dissertation provisionally titled “Disability and Ecology at the End Times of Philosophy.” Drawing on insights from his experience as a cancer survivor, this research project exposes and explores the relationship between ecological collapse and disability through the theoretical lens of François Laruelle’s non-philosophy.

mark.pingree@stonybrook.edu

Keywords: Non-philosophy, François Laruelle, Disability studies, Environmental Humanities, Ecology, The Anthropocene

In some, it is their weaknesses that philosophize; in others, their riches and strengths. The former *need* their philosophy, be it as a prop, a sedative, medicine, redemption, elevation, or self-alienation; for the latter, it is only a beautiful luxury, in the best case the voluptuousness of a triumphant gratitude that eventually has to inscribe itself in cosmic capital letters on the heaven of concepts. In the former, more common case, however, when it is distress that philosophizes, as in all sick thinkers – and perhaps sick thinkers are in the majority in the history of philosophy – *what will become of the thought that is itself subjected to the pressure of illness?* – Nietzsche¹

Let there be a law that no deformed child shall live. – Aristotle²

A debate broke out at a 2008 philosophy conference between philosophers Peter Singer and Jeff McMahan and philosopher of disability Eva Kittay. Addressing the monumental challenges severe intellectual disability poses to philosophy, Professor Kittay presented a “report from the battlefield” as the mother of Sesha, a daughter born without the capacity to walk or speak. Kittay’s journey as philosopher-mother has often proved contradictory, at times nearly leading her to abandon philosophy altogether, so she was not surprised when McMahan argued for a two-tiered morality for persons and non-persons, or when Singer compared persons with intellectual disabilities to chimpanzees and concluded with the importance of the occasional euthanization of a child.³

Kittay, horrified that these philosophers “in all seriousness and with philosophical authority” were comparing her daughter “to a dog, pig, rat, and most flatteringly a chimp,” spoke out in defense of Sesha as a full human being, claiming “there is *so much* to being human. There’s the touch, there’s the feel, there’s the hug, there’s the smile... there are so many ways of interacting;” then, after a pause she added, “I don’t think you need philosophy for this.”⁴

One can almost hear the voice of François Laruelle in the margins of this debate. Philosophy follows a “hierarchical order,” he writes in *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, “inegalitarian and authoritarian, an order without democracy which speaks of democracy without doing what it says, and which is moreover conflictual in its essence.”⁵ The history of feminist and critical race studies provide ample evidence of this hierarchical order, yet disability, Licia Carlson argues, presents the most fundamental of all challenges to philosophy insofar as the disabled, particularly the intellectually disabled, “are consistently defined as lacking capacities that would render them ‘knowing subjects’ in any sense.”⁶ From positivist notions like cognitive ability to a faith in language as the “house of being,” philosophy is a practice rooted in ableist epistemology with historically violent consequences. From “defective infants” worthy of abandonment in Plato’s *Republic*, to “ideots” and “lunatics” unworthy of personhood or justice in Locke, to those incapable of either reason or morality in Kant, the disabled body represents what Carlson calls “the philosopher’s nightmare.”⁷ Let us follow Carlson

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 4-5.

² Aristotle, *Politics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2, 119.

³ Eva Kittay and Licia Carlson, *Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), ch. 19-20.

⁴ Eva Kittay, “The Personal is Political: A Philosopher and Mother of a Cognitively Disabled Person Sends Notes from the Battlefield,” in *Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*, ed. Eva Kittay and Licia Carlson (Blackwell, 2010), 397-408.

⁵ François Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 13.

⁶ Licia Carlson, “Philosophers of Intellectual Disability: A Taxonomy,” in *Cognitive Disability*, 320.

⁷ Kittay and Carlson, *Cognitive Disability*, 6.

and go one step further: *there can be no philosophy of disability*.

This opening provocation constitutes a provisional thesis toward the following investigation into what we can call a non-philosophy of disability. Toward this end, I argue for a Laruellean symptomatology of disability that works to demystify philosophical assumptions about the disabled by presenting intellectual disability as a paradigmatic case of a non-philosophical “radical concept” where the immanent object (the disabled body) becomes the cause of its own theory, one that by necessity and out of the urge for survival must reject philosophical decision. Because standard philosophy can only come into conflict with disability studies (an example of what Laruelle would call a “regional knowledge”), non-philosophy is poised to form a democratic alliance with disability theory through a reciprocity implicitly foreclosed to philosophy. This reciprocal alliance offers disability studies a way to radicalize its non-philosophical content, which is always already implicit in disability discourse, while demonstrating the ethical and political stakes of Laruelle’s central notion of philosophical decision, the suspension of which clears a way for thinking disability in a new way by dismantling philosophy’s hierarchical prejudice. In place of a philosophy of disability, we will consider the merits of a non-philosophy of disability – a transcendently diminished epistemology cloned from the Real that attempts to think *with* or *according to* disability rather than *for* or *on behalf of* the disabled.

The urgent stakes of the non-philosophy of disability addressed here must be located in the alarming context of capitalism-induced ecological collapse, a planetary eco-political event that even now perpetuates intentional, endemic forms of slow violence against the marginalized everywhere from Flint to Fukushima. In this context, disability emerges as a question of and for the end of the world. Following Jasbir Puar’s *The Right to Maim*, I argue against the false

assumption that disability is the result of some genetic or metaphysical misfortune and instead demonstrate how the debilitating effects of this ecological necropolitics specifically and intentionally targets the global poor. In response to the capitalist forces of extinction, I read the bodily symptoms of the climate victim through a Laruellean lens, turning to his figure of the “stranger” (or stranger-subject) as an example of who we might become in a future after the end of this world. Laruelle’s stranger, I claim, is a non-abled, non-reflective, and non-cognitive subject who can be mobilized as a non-philosophical force-(of)-thought against the violent forces of biospheric annihilation. This movement demands that we form political and epistemic alliances with the wor(l)dless to bring about the end of the World *on behalf of* the planet. Thus, this stylistic usage of an apocalypticism must not be mistaken for another tributary feeding into the rising tide of passive nihilism that threatens to engulf contemporary ecological thought. After all, to bring about the end of the World, according to Laruelle, is to actively bring about the end of the hegemonic philosophical World(-order), the thought-World of philosophy, which for our purposes will be shown to be ableist all the way down. This utopian gesture echoes Laruelle’s call in *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy* to “make a tabula rasa out of the future,” which is accomplished in and through the figure of the stranger understood here as the disabled climate-victim-in-person. As Anthony Paul Smith writes, “to live in the light of the end of this world is to live in the non-future as the modality of a certain kind of heretical subject.”⁸ Foreign to philosophy, this heretical stranger subject is a stranger kind of victim, one who in the very (f)act of her non-becoming opens new possibilities for a future beyond philosophical capture.

Disabling-(of)-Philosophy

As the task of this essay is not to offer another in depth exegesis on the “first names” of

⁸ Anthony Paul Smith, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 173.

non-philosophy but rather to put non-philosophy to work in the service of disability studies, we will only briefly review some central axioms of non-philosophy in order to demonstrate its efficacy vis-à-vis disability in order bring philosophy's standard model into greater relief. I use the term efficacy to indicate that non-philosophy is first and foremost a practical methodology. The good news of non-philosophy, paradoxically perhaps, is that it *fails* to present any novel (philosophical) content. But if its novelty can be located in its methodology rather than its content, this methodology – as is the case with all methodology – is inseparable from the field of vision it enables. In this sense, we might understand non-philosophy as a kind of epistemic technology, a “posture of thought” or a conversion of the gaze that *en-ables* a field of vision which has otherwise been foreclosed, or even *disabled* by philosophy. This converted gaze is radically foreign to philosophy and carries a specific name in non-philosophy, what Laruelle calls “Vision-in-One” but which goes by many names (the One, the Real, the Real-One to name a few). Non-philosophy, in other words, entails an implicit methodological *disabling-(of)-philosophy* which is, in the last instance, inseparable from its effectuations in the Real.

Rather than attempt to end or overcome philosophy, non-philosophy affirms all previous philosophies and claims to only overcome philosophy's *faith* in its own self-sufficiency to make hegemonic truth claims about the Real. In other words, non-philosophy deliberately mis-uses philosophy in a formal way by generalizing and suspending its central maneuver, what Laruelle calls “philosophical decision.” In refusing to make the (philosophical) decision, non-philosophy is not motivated by the disapproval of any philosophy in particular, nor does non-philosophy declare the death of philosophy, for “the ‘death of philosophy’ is the ‘principal affect’ proper to philosophy itself,” as Laruelle puts

it.⁹ How does philosophical decision work? In his *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, Laruelle describes the philosophical decision as “a structure combining a Dyad and an immanent *and* transcendent unity in the Dyad,”¹⁰ it “is the Idea of a *relative-absolute whole*... a structure in 2/3 terms, as a Dyad + One, as an empirico-transcendental mixture, a quasi-circular and topological doublet, etc.,” where the + One comes to stand for the non-philosophical One, the Real without relation which philosophy invokes only provisionally in various forms before insisting on the transcendental unity, the suture, in short, the relation itself.¹¹ Preparing for a series of cuts and stitches, standard philosophy “auto-positions” itself by shifting registers from empirical to transcendental, from the particular to the conceptual (being to Being, ontic to ontological, presentation to representation, body to mind, etc.). This transcendental shift is followed by an attempt to ground its concept through the construction of a “plane” (often of immanence), which then forms a dyad, also called a “philosophical admixture” or “amphibology,” which in the last step is overcome through a transcendental unification or dialectical synthesis through a third term. To participate in standard philosophy is to have always already participated in philosophical decision, thus the “auto” of auto-position rightly suggests that philosophical decision is not simply philosophy's enabling mechanism granting it authority to legislate authoritatively over other knowledge claims, it is its *disabling* mechanism preventing it from doing anything else.

Exposing philosophical decision, non-philosophy resists capture through the imposition of axioms (rather than philosophical theories or arguments) geared toward a democratic mode of thought by methodologically suspending philosophical decision, which simultaneously suspends philosophy's attempts to convert and

⁹ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 12.

¹⁰ Ibid., 244.

¹¹ Ibid., 232.

safeguard all knowledge claims under its own power-language. This move diminishes philosophy's rhetorical universalism making non-philosophy in its turn "the style of radicality enacted against the absolute," a style that reduces philosophy to the status of a simple material in the science of non-philosophy.¹² Suspending philosophical decision, then, does not refuse philosophy a *relative autonomy* in the economy of thought, a relative autonomy that can be put to work toward opening a truly democratic epistemology, one determined in the last instance by the Real rather than the philosopher, that aims at preserving "the heterogeneity of realms of experience... against the unitary and often totalitarian claims of philosophy."¹³

Disability exemplifies and, indeed, radicalizes non-philosophy's defense of heterogeneous realms of experience but if non-philosophy presents a challenge to philosophical anthropocentrism, it does not do so in the service of a post-humanism. The non-philosophical problematic is not that we need to transcend philosophy to overcome humanism, the problem is rather that standard philosophy's implicit human-*ism* (a notion derived from philosophical decision) can only *misidentify* what it attempts to name: the generic human being stripped of philosophical determination. Philosophy, in other words, tries to name the human, but because it hallucinates its attributes (white, male, abled) it has failed and *can only fail* to identify the rather more generic Lived instance of what Laruelle calls the Human-in-Person. Thus, Laruelle's defense of heterogenous realms of experience opens a margin of maneuverability for non-philosophy to non-cognitively "think" the Real, but not through the positive construction of another realist philosophy of immanence, nor through the negative construction of the Real

as gap, split or void; nor through a transcendental/immanent unity or synthesis, for all of these procedures only ever serve a larger transcendental project of philosophical world building. While non-philosophy concerns itself with "radical immanence," Laruelle's immanence, Alexander Galloway explains, "is an immanence *within methodology* – a rather startling and unprecedented undertaking to be sure – not simply an immanence of nature (Spinoza, Deleuze) or an immanence of the self (Fichte, Henry)."¹⁴ As an immanence within methodology, non-philosophy does not claim to bypass signification, rather it admits a "diminished" usage of philosophy's transcendental materials but axiomatically intervenes before philosophical decision can carry out its encroachment. Non-philosophy, therefore, simply imposes "final and minimal conditions" Laruelle states, but "for there to be what?" he asks, anticipating the philosophical reflex, "Something rather than nothing? Humanism rather than barbarism? No, a rigorous and liberating knowing rather than philosophical hallucinations."¹⁵

Rather than a conceptual hallucination, the non-philosophical category of the Real is a notion of the Real-without-realism, it is not the realm of Being-qua-Being but generic-existence-*without*-Being/Nothingness/Alterity, it is pure Identity without relation to thought or even, in the last instance, to itself. Unlike Deleuze's plane of immanence, Laruelle's One is not the One-All or the All-One, it cannot form a whole or a totality. Instead of a philosophical real-*ism*, the non-philosophical Real-One is a generalized Identity through which we are always already gripped prior to thought or language, a Real which is radically autonomous and indifferent to philosophy, the State, and the World (synonymous terms for Laruelle). It is this indifference of the One vis-à-vis

¹² François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burke and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2012), 13.

¹³ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 13.

¹⁴ Alexander R. Galloway, *Laruelle: Against the Digital* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 33.

¹⁵ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 13.

the thought-world of philosophy that relativizes and diminishes philosophy's attempts to subordinate or control it. The sole Real of non-philosophy, in other words, is not a metaphysical or ontological notion of the Real, it is simply the individual human being who is nevertheless *foreign* to philosophy. Contra contemporary theory's fascination with a speculative or ontological turn, Laruelle echoes Lacan's suggestion that "ontology implies 'being at someone's heel,' 'being at someone's beck and call.'"¹⁶ Psychoanalysis provides a helpful analogy here as it does not concern itself with all-encompassing ontological or metaphysical claims, but instead offers a methodology that may draw from philosophy but in the last instance must attend to the singular, radically immanent experience of an individual human being (the analysand). This immanent experience of the Real, what Laruelle calls "the Lived," subtends all representation let alone ontological formulation. The Lived implies a non-conceptual immanence that precedes philosophical determination and radically resists philosophical capture insofar as the Lived is ultimately co-incident with the One itself. "Let us assume now that the Real is not this objective identity, this sameness," Laruelle explains, "but that it is Identity in flesh and blood, Identity as such in its in-objective immanence; this is the sole Real which can undo the claims of philosophy."¹⁷ Thus, Laruelle would agree that ontology implies being under someone's heel and a very particular heel at that, according to Anthony Paul Smith, insofar as non-philosophy aims to disempower philosophy's "internal Eurocentrism and make of it a material that can be taken up outside of the European colonialism that philosophy has served for centuries, even in its radical forms."¹⁸

This challenge to Eurocentrism calls attention to the ethics and politics of non-philosophy

while bringing us full circle to the question of disability. With disability in mind, let us speak plainly about the effects of philosophy's internal Eurocentrism. After all, who in the auto-positioned world of Eurocentric philosophy stands as a subject? Who qualifies for personhood in the Republic? Surely, not the disabled who the philosopher deems incapable of reason, speech, self-reflection or participation in the symbolic. If reason is the glory of philosophy, it is the scandal of non-philosophy.¹⁹ It is a groundless ground that Hegel has called the "slaughter-bench" of history, and from the perspective of non-philosophy, reason is no less than the bloody knife-edge of philosophical decision. Reason is that which violently demarcates subjects from objects, the animate from the inanimate, and in terms of the disabled, the human from "the face of the beast." And while philosophy is aware of this violence, it attempts a resolution that only further demonstrates standard philosophy's (bad) faith in its own solutions. The philosopher's solution, after all, entails extending the category of reason to those it formerly abandoned (women, racial minorities, etc.), but while the marginalized have always been falsely accused of lacking a sufficient threshold for rational thought, extending this capacity to others only serves to legitimate the specious philosophical notion in the first place. Slowly expanding the net of philosophical reason to enclose the marginalized is a trap, a false framing of the problem that only conceals power by decentralizing it rather than offering a radical alternative. James Baldwin already laid waste to this kind of neoliberal integrationism by asking, "Do I really want to be integrated into a burning house?"²⁰ Authoritarian philosophy may console itself by attempting to offer the intellectually impoverished the riches it once safeguarded for itself, but the very nature of its historical privilege

¹⁶ In Alenka Zupančič, *What Is Sex?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 3.

¹⁷ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 7-8.

¹⁸ Smith, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought*, 29.

¹⁹ This is a play on C.D. Broad's well-known claim "induction is the glory of science and the scandal of philosophy."

²⁰ James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 94.

renders it constitutively ignorant to the illusory nature of the currency it conjured up in the first place. This is how the philosophical hierarchy reproduces its dyadic structure ensuring ever more violence.

The violence of philosophical decision, in other words, will not be solved by more philosophical decision(s), but through the axiomatic suspension of decision itself. In this way, disability dramatically demonstrates the stakes of this non-philosophical gesture, since disability entails new ways of “thinking” that may challenge everything we know and have inherited from philosophy about thinking itself. As Lennard Davis argues, “in thinking of disability, we have to consider the *disability of thinking*. Thought and modes of thought will necessarily contain within them their own disincentives to theorize disability;” thus, in theorizing disability “we must develop a different way of conceptualizing the visual field, of thinking about seeing, of perceiving thinking.”²¹ Toward this end, and in solidarity with the disabled, let us make explicit what is already implicit in non-philosophy and assert that philosophical decision has a real world analog in what is crudely named cognitive ability, the physical capacity for self-reflection or what we might call building on Laruelle’s language, the *physiological principle of sufficient philosophy*. This principle not only sets the baseline for who counts as a philosopher, but also for who counts as a subject or even a person. Philosophical decision and cognitive ability are therefore in a very real sense mutually reinforcing, or co-constitutive. They are both implicit conditions of standard philosophy as there can be no philosophy without self-reflection any more than there can be philosophy without decision. The democratic alliance forged between non-philosophy and disability lends the former a powerful demonstration of the political and ethical consequences of philosophical decision while lending the

latter a potentially powerful mode of thought it can wield against philosophy’s tyranny over the disabled.

Understood abstractly, philosophers are sometimes tempted to charge Laruelle with hypocrisy, to dismiss his project as all too philosophical, but disability proves the stakes of his claim in the *Principles* that philosophical decision must be understood in terms of *philosophical de-scission* insofar as the work of philosophy “*cuts its own body into a dead part and a healthy part*” chasing “away confusion only to establish it elsewhere.”²² In the very suspension of philosophical decision, standard philosophy is exposed as a mode of thought delimited by and in accordance to an exclusionary ableism. A non-philosophy of disability, by contrast, manifests as a mode of thought in accordance to disability, and in a sense, it is *dis-ability thinking itself* since the axiomatic suspension of philosophical decision is nothing less than a disabling-(of)-philosophy. It is simultaneously the non-philosophical suspension of philosophy (the literal act of dis-abling it) and a “disabling philosophy,” understood as non-philosophy itself. A non-philosophy of disability refuses to let philosophy legislate over the validity of its truth claims, but it does not do so through a philosophical game of logical refutation of premises or by attempting to overcome philosophy itself as a whole. Instead, non-philosophical disability studies asks that we bracket philosophy to clear the way for a more humble and rigorous mode of knowledge, one that draws from philosophy without succumbing to epistemological subordination. This is a form of refusal irreducible to negation and the antithetical contortions of the dialectic, a refusal irreducible to the stacked deck of philosophical auto-criticism. For while these gestures may push Western thought to its breaking point, they remain auto-positional gestures lying in wait to further the empowerment of philosophy. Thinking intellectual disability rigorously according to

²¹ Lennard Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London: Verso 1995), 15.

²² Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 21.

the non-philosophical project reveals the depths of non-philosophical refusal, a refusal worthy of Melville's *Bartleby* as it is a refusal that appears *non-sensical* to the powers of philosophy. Absolute refusal as philosophical heresy, a stranger thought – in short, a disabling-(of)-philosophy.

Stranger Subjects

If non-philosophy pulls the rug on the (physiological) principle of sufficient philosophy, it simultaneously rejects standard philosophy's exclusionary ableism and its corresponding interpretation of the subject. Who, then, is the subject of this disabling-(of)-philosophy? The framing of the question "who is the subject?" risks capture by philosophy for two reasons: first, because the notion of the "subject" is already (philosophically) incomprehensible without some version of self-reflection, and second, because the question relies on the tacit foreordination of a philosophical authority who inevitably makes man appear as a material *for philosophy* rather than philosophy as material *for man*. Thus, as we unpack the figure of the stranger-subject, we must maintain a fidelity to the strangeness of the stranger, a commitment to her status as foreign(er) to philosophy. Laruelle develops his figure of the stranger by emptying the traditionally "barred" or "split" subject of its transcendental content in order to locate and affirm the unitary (rather than transcendently unified), non-dualistic Reality of lived experience. Speaking of anything but the nonunitary subject in contemporary theory today may tempt the reader into mistaking Laruelle for something of a naïve realist. But even the most ardent social constructionist is (allegedly) not a substance dualist. She will admit, for example, that in the last instance the split subject is not *actually* split into two qualitatively distinct essences or substances. From this perspective, Laruelle's commitment to the unitary subject is simply a radicalization of what social constructionist philosophers already

themselves hold to be the case *in-the-last-instance*. As we know, there are crucial political stakes in preserving the notion of the split subject. Disability studies itself draws on these advantages in the "social model" of disability, for example, which goes beyond the naïve realism of the medical model and argues that there is no pure essence, no such thing as a defective body only defective socio-political systems, the effects of which can be seen in institutional ableism. The social model, therefore, attempts to escape biopolitical enclosure in part by drawing on the split, or discursive subject as this mode of subjectivity offers greater flexibility in defining the human beyond the hegemonic discourse of the medical model. But if the social model privileges the discursive, it must confront the difficulty that this discursive space is itself built on ableist qualifications like cognitive disability. The social model, in other words, is a discourse built and rebuilt by and for traditional subjects whose interpellation depends on the physical capacity for self-reflection. In this way, the social model runs the risk of acting against its interests through the implicit exclusion of intellectual disability.

A non-philosophical intervention in the debate does not subordinate disability discourse to non-philosophy. On the contrary, it only makes explicit what is implicit in disability studies while also bringing Laruelle's stranger-subject into greater relief by exposing the subtle work of philosophical decision in the construction of these binaries. We can see the work of philosophical decision, for example, in the medical/social model binary, and again in the corresponding body metaphors these models favor: the biocentric, reductionist image of the empirical body, on the one hand, and the dualistic (split) image of the discursive body on the other. What appears lost on all sides of the debate to a non-philosophical observer is the *actual real body itself*, the real body stripped of philosophical determination – both empirical *and* discursive – a

body that, therefore, challenges philosophy by challenging its representations of the disabled body on all sides. For Laruelle, staging a challenge to philosophy by staging a fundamental challenge to representation amounts to the same thing; thus, non-philosophy finds an ally in Tobin Siebers who argues that “the disabled body *changes the process of representation itself*” before adding, “recent body theory, whatever its claims, has never confronted the disabled body.”²³ The disabled body is a stranger kind of body that resists philosophical representation at every turn, a body without the sex appeal of life-affirmative vitalist philosophies of immanence, or the perverse romance of jouissance theory. Where we do find the disabled body, we often find it cast as a “subhuman” body, an animal body or perhaps in the best of the worst cases, a site of potential superhuman powers as in the image of the cyborg. Resisting these characterizations of disability, however, is not to fall back on an anthropocentric humanism out of fear of anthropomorphizing the non-human; after all, standard philosophy is also guilty of anthropomorphizing the human. According to John Ó Maoilearca, the standard model “philosophomorphizes” both the human *and* the non-human, morphing both into its own hallucinated image, whereas Laruelle’s anthropomorphism “is one that also mutates the human and the animal, not in a metaphysics of becoming, but in a continual ‘indefinition’ of both human and animal that allows both to escape philosophical domination.”²⁴ In this sense, non-philosophy can think disability without philosophomorphizing according to an image of the (dis)abled body. Strictly speaking, in fact, there can be no non-philosophical image of the

body precisely because the body is (as opaque as) the Real itself, which is to say beyond philosophical determination, foreclosed to thought.²⁵

The point to reiterate here is that the Lived body of the stranger is nothing less than the non-philosophical Real itself. Thus, the stranger-subject of non-philosophy is the unitary individual human being no longer estranged, alienated or erased by philosophy. A real immanent instance of the Lived, yes, but a more “generic orientation, human but not humanist or philosophical,” as Laruelle puts it, an orientation which “is centered on the notions of ‘Man-in-Person’ and ‘Victim-in-Person,’ *notions meant to avoid the classic definitions of man such as ‘rational animal,’ ‘political animal,’ ‘metaphysical animal’ and so on.*”²⁶ Unlike the traditional subject of philosophy, Laruelle’s Man-in-Person is utterly devoid of qualifying characteristics such as cognitive ability or the capacity for self-reflection. She is a stranger, a refugee of philosophy, the unitary “excess” prior to philosophical distinction, the lived-without-remainder who does not look at her reflection in the mirror. As Katerina Kolozova explains, “the Lived is the Experience. The pure Lived is anterior to Language: it is the *mute* experience before it takes recourse to transposing itself onto the Transcendental Plane, prior to the

²⁵ To be absolutely clear, we must insist here that the disabled are fully human in all senses of the term. The point is not to surreptitiously equate disability with animality through the destruction of all distinctions. Indeed, as Ó Maoilearca quotes Laruelle, “the identity of the Victim absolutely does not amount to this natural or bestial state” (188). The target of criticism here is philosophy’s latent anthropocentrism *after* it has been extended to both the abled and the disabled alike. Ó Maoilearca writes that Laruellean nonhumanism rests a “good deal more on a non-philosophical imperfectability than on man’s approximation to the divine, the infinite, and the perfect... the identity of the human is that of the Real – the simplicity of this statement belying the complexity of the thought behind it” (189).

This opens onto a larger discussion of Laruelle’s non-humanism, which cannot be exhausted here but is dealt with at length in Ó Maoilearca’s seminal work on the topic.

²⁶ François Laruelle, *General Theory of Victims*, trans. Alex Dubilet and Jessie Hock (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), xiv.

²³ Tobin Siebers, “Disability in Theory: From Social Constructionism to the New Realism of the Body,” in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard Davis (New York: Routledge Press 2006), 173-175.

²⁴ John Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 183-185.

effort of making sense.”²⁷ Thus, the stranger is a “radical subjectivity” rather than a transcendental person/individual, a concrete body in flesh and blood, but one which does not and cannot form an empirico-metaphysical doublet. Laruelle evades decisional philosophy, according to Kolozova, by arguing “for the rendering *chora*” of such philosophical admixtures which opens the way for non-philosophy to put to use the “unorganized, sheer transcendental material... in ways which are not doctrinally permitted but rather ‘succumb to the authority’ of the unpredictable, unruly Real.”²⁸ The “essence” of this Real is non-essential, it does not form a Whole or a metaphysics. Unrepresentable by philosophy and devoid of ableist qualifications for either personhood or subjectivity, the stranger is the solitary immanence of the Lived which can offer a rudimentary description of itself without forming an identity or attempting to reflect the Real in its totality.

Stranger Victims

Anthony Paul Smith might as well be writing of the intellectually disabled when he writes, “what we need in order to deliver on the wager of non-philosophical ethics, are ‘stranger victims’: victims who are foreign to the philosophical scene and impossible to capture philosophically.”²⁹ Because there can be no philosophy of disability, the disabled represent an exemplary case of these stranger victims while demonstrating what’s ethically at stake in the figure of the stranger. In his ethical works, Laruelle refrains from naming or otherwise overdetermining the identity of the stranger. Strangeness, after all, is an attribute of the non-philosophical. Should

the stranger lose something of her strangeness to familiarity, she would surely find herself at risk of philosophical capture. For this reason, in *Future Christ: A Lesson in Heresy*, Laruelle looks past the more popular victims often taken up by philosophers and addresses the radically forgotten of history as a heuristic for thinking the stranger. The erasure of the figure of the gnostic heretic offers one such heuristic. As Anthony Paul Smith observes, “by virtue of being forgotten, the gnostic heretics produce nothing. Since they are not exchanged, they do not circulate within the economy of ethical thought.”³⁰ They are the invisible victims of history, Smith argues, their historic and symbolic erasure offering very little by way of ashes and cinders which might otherwise preserve their memory. As stranger victims, the radical invisibility of the gnostic heretics shares something with the radical invisibility of the disabled, for the disabled are the invisible victims of each historical present. Invisibility, in fact, is largely a defining characteristic of disability, one which is more pronounced than any other marginalized identity. The disabled are uniquely confined to private spaces, for example, singled out for exclusion from public and civic life. They comprise the blank pages of the archive, the radically forgotten of history. More than this, the disabled are the forgotten also of the present, they are the invisible ghosts the abled overlook while racing up the stairs.

Of course, to think disability in relation to strangeness is not to pathologize disability. The disabled are not “strange Others,” for this is a designation which is always already thrust upon them by philosophy. Laruelle’s stranger, moreover, is not an other to be feared or fetishized, indeed, she is not, in the last instance, “an Other” at all. For if the disabled are stranger *subjects* vis-à-vis philosophy, they are also necessarily the stranger *victims* of the hegemonic discourse of the State-(philosophy). The stranger, there-

²⁷ Katerina Kolozova, *The Lived Revolution: Solidarity With the Body in Pain as the New Political Universal* (Skopje: Evro-Balkan Press, 2010), 33.

²⁸ Katerina Kolozova, “Figure of the Stranger: A Possibility for Transcendental Minimalism or Radical Subjectivity” in *The Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 11 no. 3 (Fall 2001): 61.

²⁹ Smith, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought*, 100.

³⁰ Smith, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought*, 105.

fore, must not be confused for another fictionalized or idealized notion of the victim, for these approaches, on Laruelle's account, falsely present reality as "deep, high, and hidden, and minorities as crushed by the State... individuals as a remainder, as a game, or as an effect of a game."³¹ This is a game staged by philosophy, particularly by what Laruelle calls "dominant intellectuals," those philosophers responsible for managing philosophy's "stato-minoritarian thought." These dominant intellectuals conjure up an idealized figure of the minority who appears only as a commodified image of the haggard victim awaiting rescue from the very Western benefactor complicit in the conditions of her haggardization.

Rather than seek the real individual person beneath the façade, however, the dominant intellectual perpetually carries out her erasure either through a process of mistaking her real identity for its commodified image, or through the philosophical mechanics of burying the individual in world history, dialectics, the State, etc. Because non-philosophy is unwilling to sacrifice the individual human person on the chopping block of philosophical decision, it looks beneath the fiction and locates the "Victim-in-Person." As Smith reads Laruelle, "the victim is not to be pitied, but co-suffered with (the literal sense of *compassion*)."³² These compassionate ethics do not result in a quietist politics, however, as Smith demonstrates, quoting from *General Theory of Victims*: "Laruelle tells us thought must come to think under the condition of the victim: 'For us the Gnostics and us-the-generics, this is the role of the ["determined" rather than "dominant"] intellectual: to help victims in this uprising, to imitate and prolong this uprising in the human dimensions of thought."³³ Thinking under the condition of the *disabled* victim is one

way we might summarize the political stakes of a non-philosophy of disability. For the imperative to think under the condition of the disabled victim is to describe the ethical and political dimensions of the disabling-(of)-philosophy outlined above. According to this logic, philosophy *cannot* think under the conditions of the disabled victim, a claim we can only grasp non-philosophically, it can only pity the disabled and is incapable of prolonging the uprising precisely because it cannot find the compassion necessary to locate and maintain a fidelity to a non-philosophical, non-ableist dimension of thought that must extend, in the last instance, to all of generic humanity as the stranger subjects non-philosophy attempts to awaken in us all.

Disability at the End Times of Philosophy

Because Laruelle takes for granted, as do most philosophers, that all philosophy is always already political (philosophy), he synonymizes the World with the State and with philosophy itself. As we have shown, to occupy the subject position of the stranger is to be in a position of distinction (without relation) to the hegemonic thought-World of philosophy. Perhaps the most destructive element of this hegemonic discourse today comes in the form of capitalogenic climate change and its accompanying forms of climate change denialism. From a non-philosophical perspective, standard philosophy is incapable of grasping ecological collapse, in part because of the Heideggerian legacy that falsely assumes "science cannot think," but also because philosophy appears unable to think under the condition of the climate victim. The reason for this, as I've argued elsewhere, is that philosophy shifts registers away from a real instance of destruction (ecological collapse) to the supposedly more horrifying realization that "the worst has always already happened."³³ This totalizing de-

³¹ François Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man: On Authorities and Minorities*, trans. Alex Dubilet and Jessie Hock (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018), 39.

³² Smith, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought*, 106.

³³ Mark Pingree, "Geohistorical Materialism and the End After the End," in *Provocations 1* (2017): 18-26.

structive event is confirmed only by philosophy itself as the inescapable, transcendental mode of thought that comes onto the scene too late and can only *reflect back* on (primordial) destruction itself. What a peculiar moment, a critical moment without precedent in the history of the species, to emphasize that the worst has always already happened – peculiar not only because we face an unfolding extinction event, but because the notion that the worst has always already happened is quickly becoming the official ideology of the State.³⁴ Would we be so naïve to observe in this situation a pernicious climate change denialism at work in contemporary philosophy? Are we wrong to raise an eyebrow at the philosopher who speaks of primordial destruction even as the rising tide laps against his lips?

Perhaps there's another way to think the crisis, a less philosophical and more grounded approach that fits our purposes here by exposing the relation between disability and ecological collapse. To think disability from a political perspective is to always already think the question of environment(s), it is to think that "it is not so much the person who needs fixing but the *environment* that needs adaptation."³⁵ In light of capitalism-induced ecological collapse, the demand to reform our environment must be expanded beyond questions of access to include *the* environment as such, after all, changes to the environment cannot be separated from changes to the human body. As Jason Moore, Rob Nixon and others have argued, the main driver of ecological collapse is not the human species, but the debilitating politics of the Capitalocene. Moore argues that capitalism is perhaps better defined

as a grand experiment in terraforming, a political mode of organizing and exploiting nature itself. Building on Moore, and because human bodies are a part of nature, we must read the poisoned, radiated, plastic-infused, debilitated bodies produced by metabolic rift as legible symptoms of ecological collapse.³⁶ As Rob Nixon makes clear, "climate change, the thawing cryosphere, toxic drift, biomagnification, deforestation, the radioactive aftermath of wars, acidifying the oceans, and a host of other slowly unfolding environmental catastrophes," are intentional forms of "slow violence" occurring "gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all."³⁷ Slow violence is not instantaneous, spectacular or explosive, its end is not to kill so much as to maim by enacting a slow form of necropolitics Jasbir Puar calls "slow death." This process amounts to a deliberate strategy to debilitate and disable. Thinking debility as both a physical condition and a political strategy, Puar's *The Right to Maim* demonstrates that debility is not only endemic, but "perhaps even normative to disenfranchised communities: not nonnormative, not exceptional, not that which is to come or can be avoided, but a banal feature of quotidian existence that is already definitive of the precarity of that existence."³⁸ Debility is therefore a strategic *end in itself* of an intentional violence directed primarily against the local and global poor. From poisoned drinking water saturated with lead and microplastics to radioactive fallout, from polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) to Monsanto-manufactured glyphosates – all of which have infiltrated both (non)human bodies

³⁴ Juliet Eilperin, Brady Dennis, and Chris Mooney, "Trump Sees a 7-Degree Rise in Global Temperatures by 2100," *The Washington Post* (September 28, 2018), www.washingtonpost.com. The Trump administration's own Environmental Impact Statement includes an admission that fossil fuel consumption at current rates will lead to a 7-degree temperature rise by the end of the century. The report admits the dire implications but asserts it is too late to do anything about it.

³⁵ Kittay and Carlson, *Cognitive Disability*, 5.

³⁶ Jason Moore's definition of nature in his *Capitalism in the Web of Life* (London: Verso, 2015) defines capitalism as a mode of organizing nature itself, where the term nature is expanded to evade naive nature/culture dualisms and necessarily includes human bodies as part of this catastrophic organization.

³⁷ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 2.

³⁸ Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 16.

and stratigraphic layers in the geologic record at a nearly ubiquitous scale – this violence confirms that we, and the global poor in particular, are the political targets of a form of illness and debilitation which is rising with the seas.

One rather shocking conclusion we can draw from this is that ecological collapse is a question of disability, and disability a question of the end of the World. Non-philosophy, as it turns out, offers an intriguing political symptomatology for this dramatic situation. As Katerina Kolozova explains, the non-philosophical response to the tyranny of philosophy's hegemonic discourse requires that one establish "a posture of thought in accordance with the Real which manifests itself as a symptom and is verified through the sheer experience (of trauma). One is called upon establishing a map of symptoms displayed by the body(/ies) of Multitude(s) in its (their) reaction to the power exercised by way of the ruling discourses of our times, and produce a thought (of) force responding to the cry of this body (or, these bodies)."³⁹ This force-(of)-thought is the final political aim of non-philosophy where in fidelity to the symptom, one becomes an aroused body, an unending force of opposition to the tyranny of the dominant order. To understand the scope of these bodily cries, we need only consider that the vast majority of disabilities are not congenital and that we are, as disability studies reminds us, only ever "temporarily abled." The ruling class would have us believe that all disabilities are either caused by spontaneous accidents or "natural disasters," but climate change has implicitly forced the realization that these disasters are not altogether as "natural" as we once thought. From this perspective, the disabled body provides a map of bodily symptoms as the result of slow violence under the watch of the philosophical World-order that even today struggles to overcome the delusional belief that the environment is nothing but a passive background the transcendental subject has left behind once and for all.

³⁹ Kolozova, *The Lived Revolution*, 26.

The problem for Laruelle is not that human beings are truly little more than indistinct objects in a flattened ontological mélange, but that "man really exists and he is really distinct from the World – a thesis that contradicts nearly every philosophy."⁴⁰ The task of locating the stranger-subject as the Victim-in-Person of the philosophical World is to discover our generic humanity for the first time. This process of (de) subjectivation is at once an ethical and political imperative, for in becoming stranger-subjects our task is nothing less than to bring about the end of the World, a task which takes on a heightened sense of urgency as the planet itself today appears to have become the Victim-in-Person of the philosophical World. But the strangeness of non-philosophy is concealed in this formulation and we are tempted by philosophical thinking to assume that bringing about the end of the World means bringing about the end of the planet, on the one hand, or ushering in yet another philosophical World, on the other. To avoid this temptation, we must recall that non-philosophy does not reject philosophy itself, as Rocco Gangle explains, "but only philosophy's self-legitimizing and hence thoroughly relative circumscriptions of its Other(s). The stranger thus does not opt out of the real world, but instead sees that the world itself as defined a priori by philosophy as a form of contest and enclosure (however infinite or horizontal in principle) in fact opts out of the ordinary human Real."⁴¹ This explains why non-philosophical withdrawal is not apolitical or monastic, for it is radically committed to real human beings while forcing philosophy to admit that its self-appointed definition of the human opts *out* of generic humanity.

Conclusion

We have covered a lot of ground in these pages and still managed only to sketch the surface of a non-philosophy of disability, an ambitious proj-

⁴⁰ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 1.

⁴¹ Rocco Gangle, "Laruelle and Ordinary Life," in *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy*, eds. John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2012), 78.

ect perhaps, and one we surely cannot exhaust here. What I hope to have offered is an example of a kind of Laruellean “philo-fiction” that offers a novel way to think common themes and goals that non-philosophy and disability theory hold in common without recourse to philosophical authority. The conditions of possibility for this philofiction are rendered legible in the present geohistorical epoch of the Anthropocene. In these precarious end times, thought must not hide itself in the hallucinated nostalgia of pristine nature, nor must it submit to the pervasive climate denialism at the heart of standard philosophy which assumes that the worst has always already happened. In contrast to these common eco-critical approaches, the non-philosophy of disability I call for here emerges as a consequence of the climate crisis and emphatically sides with the climate-victim-in-person, suggesting that environmental thought might begin not from nostalgic fantasies of health and wellness – positions rendered impossible by contemporary ecological science despite their persistence in both humanist philosophies and eugenicist narratives alike – but from the political reality of illness, debility and disability. In proposing such a theory, we have uncovered a stranger thought that thinks with or according to disability through the suspension of philosophical decision, identifying along the way an analog for what we have called the physiological principle of sufficient philosophy in the specious but thoroughly philosophical notion of cognitive ability. We have also uncovered a stranger kind of subject, one who avoids the ableist qualifications of decisional philosophy, and one who in herself becomes, as Katerina Kolozova puts it, an “inexhaustible source of unending rebellion against the all-encompassing Orthodoxy” of philosophy.⁴² This utopian subject is synonymous with a Laruellean force-(of)-thought of and for the end times, one who in

the act of her non-becoming mobilizes against the capitalist forces of extinction. In this way, the disabling-(of)-philosophy outlined here can be put to work in the service of generic humanity, a multitude without qualification who not only refuses the authority discourse of standard philosophy but wills the destruction of its catastrophic thought-world.

In conclusion, I would like to propose a response to the profound and enigmatic question raised by Nietzsche in the epigraph. For if the desire of standard philosophy, according to Nietzsche, is to “luxuriate in its own voluptuousness,” the apotheosis of this desire in light of catastrophic climate change is nothing less than to “inscribe itself in cosmic capital letters on the heavens” of the atmosphere itself. As a result of this philosophical violence, we the sick and the weak, we wor(l)dless strangers crushed by “healthy” philosophy’s cosmic destruction, *we* are the ones who need our non-philosophy “as a prop or a sedative, medicine, redemption, elevation, or self-alienation,” as a salve for the tyranny of philosophy.⁴³ “What will become of the thought that is itself subjected to the pressure of illness?” One intriguing possibility is that it will become a disabling-(of)-philosophy.

⁴² Katerina Kolozova, “Theories of the Immanent Rebellion: Non-Marxism and Non-Christianity,” in *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy*, 222.

⁴³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 33-34.

La fin des temps philosophiques : comment changer la philosophie pour la mettre en situation de contribuer aux problèmes du monde réel?

Les philosophies et les problèmes du monde réel

Anne-Françoise Schmid

Résumé: Nous faisons l'hypothèse que la philosophie et le monde réel n'ont pas de relations directe et nous élaborons les conditions pour que les philosophies puissent être en relation avec lui. Pour cela, nous faisons usage de la notion d'impossibilité, de la multiplicité de droit de philosophies, de la question de la suffisance de la philosophie, ainsi que d'un réel qui n'est pas le produit de la philosophie, ainsi que dans les philosophies non-standard. Nous réinterprétons ces résultats à l'aide de la notion de généricité et remplaçons le concept habituel de surdétermination de la philosophie par celle de sous-détermination, ce qui change les relations entre les philosophies et les autres disciplines. Elles ne survolent plus ces dernières, mais leur sont juxtaposées pour créer de nouveaux liens entre les philosophies entre elles et avec les autres disciplines.

Anne-Françoise Schmid is philosopher and epistemologist among scientists and artists. She has taught at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, at the University of Geneva, at the University of Paris-Ouest Nanterre, at the National Institute of Applied Sciences of Lyon. She collaborated with the National Institute of Agronomic Research (Jouy-en-Josas site). She is now associate researcher at the Chair of Theory and Methods of Innovative Design, MinesParistech, as well as member of the Poincaré Archives (University of Lorraine, UMR CNRS 7117). Her problem is the question of knowing how to avoid exclusions, exclusions of emerging scientific methods in science in view of what she saw in laboratories and research centers, exclusion of philosophies in the name of the supremacy of one of them. For this purpose, she expressed the hypotheses of classical epistemology (*L'Âge de l'épistémologie. Science, ingénierie, éthique*, Paris: Kimé, 1998, republished in 2019) and made extensions likely to take account of the 'generalized interdisciplinary of contemporary sciences (in collaboration with Jean-Marie Legay, biologist, Muriel Mambrini-Doudet, biologist, Armand Hatchuel, management sciences and Nicole Mathieu, geographer). She works in parallel with a philosophical style not in but with philosophies in their multiplicity. The last book is with Muriel Mambrini-Doudet, *Epistémologie générique. Manuel pour les sciences futures* (Paris: Kimé, 2019).

annefschmid@gmail.com

Keywords: philosophy, generic, real world, interdisciplinarity, under-determination, integrative object

Comment modifier la philosophie de façon qu'elle puisse avoir quelque impact sur les problèmes du monde réel ? Dans une telle question, il y a deux inconnues, la philosophie et le monde réel.

1. Traditionnellement, la philosophie a été pensée comme concernant le monde réel, pour la bonne raison qu'elle était censée non seulement l'identifier, mais collaborer à sa constitution par les moyens d'une dialectique ou d'une topologie. Mais cela engendrait quelques problèmes, justement ceux du monde réel. Une philosophie devait avoir raison contre une autre, puisque sa pensée collabore à la constitution du monde réel. On a donc une quantité de «mondes réels» en concurrence et qui peuvent se faire la guerre.
2. Les « problèmes » du monde réels désignent à la fois une sorte d'« impossible » pour la philosophie, mais qui lui est l'occasion de se surpasser, et de donner lieu à une nouvelle philosophie. Le problème du monde réel est considéré comme étant dans le discours et ne lui appartenant pas, ce que l'on circonviert avec une rhétorique, mais qui échappe radicalement à celle-ci.
3. Cette situation a pour conséquence que chaque philosophie pense arriver dans un monde réel qui se dégrade, « maintenant que la finance, maintenant que la mondialisation et la bêtise ont envahi le monde, etc... », chaque philosophie croit pouvoir donner ses solutions et asseoir sa maîtrise. Cela la met dans une contradiction, l'humanisme était la chose la plus bête qui soit, et pourtant le monde d'aujourd'hui est considéré comme déshumanisé. Dès qu'une philosophie s'explique publiquement, elle construit ce type de contradictions qui la dépassent dans son travail technique.
4. Le temps va vers des horizons toujours plus noirs, où les philosophies, comme des exceptions, pourront redonner quelque lueur. La philosophie donne ainsi aussi leur temporalité aux problèmes du monde réel.

La question n'est ni de détruire la philosophie ni le « monde réel », mais d'en défaire l'intrication, l'une et l'autre en auront de nouvelles dimensions, libérées par la mise entre parenthèses de la complémentarité et de l'opposition des deux notions.

Les problèmes 1-4 donnent quelque idée de la structure de la philosophie : elle se donne dans une double opposition, aux autres philosophies et au « monde réel » dans la mesure où celui-ci échappe à la lumière philosophique. Elle se donne avec ses propres frontières, comme si c'était elle seule qui les construisait. Pour chaque philosophie, il y a un double empirique : celui qu'elle met à distance, et celui que son transcendantal fait voir. Il y a une double temporalité, celle de la tradition, qui est son trésor, et celle qu'il faut surmonter à l'aide d'une philosophie, pour laquelle on prend ou ne prend pas parti, à l'aide de rappels dans la tradition (« je suis kantien », « j'étais sartrien et phénoménologue », etc...). Il y a ainsi un récit de la formation des philosophies qui part d'un point plus ou moins proche de la tradition pour l'allier à un impossible (comment penser à la fois la phénoménologie et le structuralisme, comment faire une place au « sujet » dans un système formalisé, etc...). C'est dans cette alliance impossible que naît chaque philosophie. Cette alliance impossible est excessivement intéressante, mais il faut la transformer en reprenant chacun des problèmes 1-4.

1. La raison philosophique doit être affirmée comme non seulement plurielle, mais comme étant nécessairement multiple, et de principe multiple, et ne pas rester étriquée. Sortons la philosophie à la fois de la tradition et de la noirceur du monde réel, pour lui donner une consistance de « forme » de pensée spécifiques, celle des contraires, de façon à neutraliser ceux-ci, mais de les poser soit dans leur indépendance réciproque soit dans leur identité. On tient compte des

contraires, mais en modifiant leur syntaxe. La conséquence d'une telle modification est qu'une philosophie n'a pas de poids face à un « problème du monde réel », mais qu'elle peut faire par contre des superpositions de fragments de philosophies pour les décrire indirectement. On invente une syntaxe de combinaisons philosophiques, parfois considérées habituellement comme contraires.

2. Admettons qu'il y a des problèmes du monde réel, mais sortons-les d'une interprétation philosophique. Cela signifie que ce réel précède la philosophie, et qu'il est l'occasion pour la philosophie de nouvelles alliances impossibles, mais permettant seulement indirectement de les décrire, en admettant les descriptions des autres. Cela ne signifie pas que toutes les philosophies soient équivalentes eu égard au monde réel, puisqu'il y a des superpositions, des systèmes de « couches » et de strates, que le problème et ses dimensions ne pourront être connu que par la synthèse sans synthèse des approches indirectes. On sait maintenant que beaucoup de problèmes scientifiques ne trouvent plus de synthèse définitive, notre médecine à affaire à des épidémies sans agent infectieux où la synthèse des connaissances n'est plus possible : l'obésité, la dépression, mais j'ajoute aussi, les objets que construisent les sciences contemporaines sur fond interdisciplinaire. Ce sont ces objets, sans statut philosophique ou éthique si ce n'est l'apparence objective de l'intention des chercheurs, que j'avais appelé « objets intégratifs ».
3. Il n'est pas nécessaire de considérer notre temps comme plus difficile qu'un autre pour asseoir l'autorité de la philosophie. On sait que les temps sont durs, mais il n'est pas nécessaire que cette conviction ou ce vécu soit accompagné d'une représentation linéaire et quasi-descendante du temps. Il peut y avoir de façon concomitante plu-

sieurs temporalités en acte. On peut voir, ce qui est le plus courant, le futur comme un a-venir, comme la suite du passé et du présent. On peut voir aussi le futur comme un mode qui induit une coupure dans le présent ou le passé, et mettre en œuvre ces deux représentations à la fois. Un futur vers lequel on va, mais qui en même temps « goutte » (c'est une expression de François Laruelle) dans notre présent et notre passé.

4. La philosophie a sans doute sa temporalité qu'il faudrait défaire entre traditions et futurs impossibles, mais les problèmes du monde réel ont aussi et suscitent des temporalités plurielles indépendantes de celles des philosophies et de ses multiplicités. Élaborer des dimensions temporelles et non pas une seule, des synchronisations, des dé-synchronisations, des mouvements musicaux ou des bruits, des mises en partition multiples. Il y faut une architecture sans suffisance, qui ne se donne pas simplement comme une ruine du futur, comme chez les Romantiques. Cette architecture limite la thèse générale selon laquelle la philosophie, comme la chouette, se lève toujours le soir tombé, lorsqu'il est déjà trop tard. Les philosophies sont là, une fois chaque fois. De la linéarité solitaire, on passe à une multiplicité construite et à construire, où les solitudes participent à un « intime collectif » sans fermeture, d'où l'on peut revenir aux philosophies, mais neutralisées, transformées en matériaux conceptuels pour comprendre indirectement le réel, et ses fameux « problèmes ».

Ces propositions n'ôtent pas de valeur à la philosophie, elles l'amplifient au contraire, à la condition d'admettre qu'elles n'ont pas d'action possible directement sur les « problèmes du monde réel », mais ne font pourtant pas rien en se constituant. Mais ce n'est pas leur unité, leur rationalité, qui font leur valeur, mais leur façon de créer des solutions à un problème impossible.

Le concept de généricité

Mais pour prendre sa valeur la philosophie doit être orientée vers un générique, elle doit trouver et créer un espace et un lieu où les concepts extraits de telle ou telle philosophie prennent un nouveau sens ou de nouvelles dimensions. Elle doit, dans ses rapports aux sciences, être accompagnée d'une épistémologie générique, relativement indépendante des disciplines particulières, qui ne prétend pas porter directement sur les sciences, ni tirer ses généralisations des seuls faits historiques. Elle doit aussi être accompagnée d'une éthique générique, dont la constante est l'équilibre des frontières disciplinaires, et non des jugements massifs en opposition. L'éthique introduit dans le travail philosophique et scientifique une démocratie, où les disciplines et les systèmes interviennent chacune et chacun pour le même poids. Ainsi comprises, les philosophies sont plutôt orientées-objet plutôt que du simple langage, des « trading zones » pour traiter des questions contemporaines. Neutralisées, les philosophies sont de nouvelles dimensions pour comprendre les objets, et pas seulement des langages pour construire des équivalences entre activités sociales, philosophiques, scientifiques. L'hétérogénéité est un élément du monde contemporain, et les concepts philosophiques sont des moyens indirects de donner des mesures aux disparités philosophiques, scientifiques, sociales.

Le générique est un rasoir d'Occam, il extrait les concepts de leur tissu théorique, en font un autre usage, minimal, où le réel est l'occasion du philosophique, où l'humain et le scientifique ne sont plus distincts.

Comment évaluer les objets de la «technologie» ?

Habituellement, lorsque l'on évalue les produits des nano-sciences et des nano-technologies, des biologies moléculaires, des biologies de synthèse, des biologies prédictives, on les traite dans une dynamique de risques, d'incertitude, de

coût/avantage. Ce qu'on laisse de côté, c'est leur caractère d'objet, qui appauvrit de beaucoup leur évaluation.

Bien entendu, la notion d'objet est elle aussi transformée. Il ne s'agit plus d'objets manipulables, où l'objet et le sujet sont séparés dans une distance phénoménologique. C'est, comme nous l'avons dit, un objet fait de superpositions de savoirs, mais aussi de non-savoirs, puisque chaque discipline est partiellement incompetente, où l'apparence d'unité est constituée des intentions des chercheurs, non synthétisable, non explicitable par la convergence de perspectives disciplinaires différentes, comme le sont les objets complexes. Il faut traiter dans ces objets autant nos connaissances que nos non-savoirs. Dans un Comité d'éthique, chacun s'exprime en expert, et pourtant il doit se prononcer sur des objets (et non pas seulement sur du langage) qui dépasse nos connaissances. C'est une donnée objective de l'épistémologie générique, il ne s'agit plus seulement de prouver ou de justifier en fonction de logiques disciplinaires, mais de postuler un objet inconnu, comme un X dont les propriétés se répartissent de façon inattendue dans les disciplines.

Pour l'évaluation d'un objet que nous appelons « intégratif », il ne faut surtout pas se précipiter dans la qualification en objet scientifique ou technique. Traiter un objet fabriqué vivant de technique trop rapidement, fait que l'on voit l'évaluation ne se poser qu'au dernier moment, lorsque tout est là et déjà fait, sans jamais revenir sur les dogmes scientifiques. Traiter un objet intégratif d'uniquement technique, c'est le voir comme suite et conséquence d'une discipline majeure, la « biologie moléculaire », la « biologie de synthèse », sans voir que pour toutes ces disciplines, le fonds interdisciplinaire et générique précède l'émergence disciplinaire. On traite les objets comme s'ils étaient les fruits d'une science mono-disciplinaire, et c'est ce qui fait qu'on ne peut les évaluer uniquement sur les résultats. Il

faut comprendre au contraire dès le début l'objet dans son hétérogénéité scientifique, technique, éthique, se donner une méthode expérimentale pour déterminer les dimensions de l'objet.

L'épistémologie générique a pour caractéristique d'éloigner les diverses dimensions d'une discipline, de la science, des objets, pour construire et postuler un espace générique. L'évaluation des objets scientifiques peut se faire si on postule toutes ces dimensions + 1, et non pas celles-ci comme des résultats sociaux de l'usage de ces objets. Qu'il y ait des avantages et des risques, c'est certain, mais ils prennent un autre sens, en conservant leurs dimensions. Cette méthode suppose une certaine lenteur, elle cherche à distinguer les dimensions, à comprendre les objets contemporains comme distincts des objets complexes, à tenir compte aussi bien des connaissances que des non-connaissances, de synthèses partielles et momentanées. Mais d'autre part, elle est aussi une méthode rapide, parce qu'elle permet de faire collaborer des disciplines sans que l'interdiscipline soit un effet d'après-coup, parce que l'on serait mécontent de l'insuffisance des résultats disciplinaires, qu'elle manifeste des flux de connaissances difficiles à décrire dans une hiérarchie de disciplines. Elle ne suppose pas de jugement tout faits sur ces objets, soit les produits d'un monde de plus en plus déshumaniser ou d'un monde de plus en plus confortable. L'humain, il est de toute façon là, et c'est à nous de nous engager dans la façon dont nous faisons usage de ces objets. En ouvrir les dimensions permet d'éviter les interprétations les plus courtes et les plus hiérarchisées.

La sous-détermination des relations entre philosophies et sciences

Une telle méthode suppose que nous ne considérons pas la philosophie dans son isolation. La connaissance de la philosophie ne peut plus être une « auto-modélisation » comme en rêvait Platon. La philosophie ne peut, comme les autres

sciences, être connue que dans l'élément de l'hétérogénéité. Pour connaître la philosophie, il faut bien quelque chose qui fonctionne comme « le monde réel », que nous ne pouvons représenter qu'indirectement par les autres disciplines. Ce n'est évidemment pas par des caractérisations positivistes d'une discipline sur une autre, il faut transformer génériquement les concepts de ces disciplines.

Par exemple, la philosophie non-standard combine en une matrice les variables « philosophie » et « quantique ». Pourquoi « quantique » ? Sans doute parce qu'elle est la première science à nous apprendre que son formalisme ne porte pas directement sur les phénomènes naturels, mais sur des états et sur des opérateurs. Il a fallu l'invention par les physiciens d'interprétations et même de langages naturels pour exposer leurs concepts fondamentaux. La question philosophique n'est pas tant de savoir si les concepts n'ont que valeur opératoire, mais plutôt que nous ne pouvons pas porter nos connaissances directement sur des objets considérés comme naturels.

Connaître la philosophie, c'est être capable de la mettre en relation à des connaissances autres sous ces connaissances, pour ne pas recréer les oppositions classiques, qui donnent « raison » à telle philosophie plutôt qu'à une autre. C'est une façon non pas de nier sa tradition, mais de la redistribuer en divers matériaux, et en diverses dimensions. L'interprétation quantique de la philosophie permet de donner sens aux superpositions, à la non-commutativité des disciplines, à l'imaginaire qui en fait une synthèse par quart de cercles.... Une éthique où « d'homme » est le « réel ». Une épistémologie quantique, où les notions fondamentales ne sont plus celles de théorie et d'expérience, de théorie et de fait, mais d'ordres de grandeurs distincts, de virtuel, de futur, de superpositions, d'oscillations de pensée. Pour revenir aux objets pour lesquels nous proposons une méthode d'évaluation, nous pourrions revenir à l'hétérogénéité que présente la

biologie d'un point de vue épistémologique. Habituellement, la biologie est jugée au travers d'autres structures disciplinaires, la mécanique, la physique, la chimie, et en général dans cet ordre. Le résultat en est que l'on regrette la non-unification de la biologie par une théorie, c'est un rêve qui revient de temps à autre sous la forme d'une biologie théorique. Ou alors on la voit passer de descriptive à construisant, comme la chimie, sa propre ontologie. Le résultat est que d'aucune façon on ne fait un caractère propre et fort de la multiplicité de ses disciplines, de ses diverses génétiques. Qu'une science puisse être faite de multiplicités explicites est hautement intéressant. Par exemple, cela permet de donner un statut épistémologique aux « données », qui contrairement aux faits, ne font pas « face » à une théorie, et peuvent être l'objet d'interprétation de bien des disciplines. On ne voit pas que ses concepts sont à la fois informatiques, mathématiques, et expérimentaux dans une intrication qui ne dépend plus d'une seule des théories biologiques.

Nous pouvons alors mettre en matrice ces particularités de la biologie et celles de la philosophie, et transformer ainsi les multiplicités philosophiques.

On peut mettre en matrice aussi les concepts de l'épistémologie traditionnelle et ceux de l'épistémologie générique, et former ainsi des concepts qui, indirectement, nous dirons quelque chose de ces sciences sur fond interdisciplinaire.

Ces relations entre philosophies et sciences pour la modélisation des disciplines ne sont pas de l'ordre de la surdétermination. Nous n'allons pas surdéterminer la philosophie par la physique et la biologie pour mieux la rendre semblable à la science. Non, nous admettons l'hétérogénéité de ces domaines neutralisés, et leur mise en rapport peut nous aider à modéliser leurs différences. Ces rapports sont de sous-détermination parce que justement nous admettons les formes

d'hétérogénéités. La philosophie ne devient pas science, la science ne devient pas philosophie, mais elles peuvent fonctionner ensemble dans les problèmes dits « du monde réel ».

Alors, plutôt que de se demander ce que serait l'évaluation d'un objet du point de vue philosophique, on peut tirer les conséquences de ce que serait une évaluation sans la philosophie, sans l'éthique, sans les sciences. Cette sous-détermination est une façon de mieux voir ce que chacune apporte à cette évaluation.

Philosophie disciplinaire ou indisciplinaire ?

Nous avons affirmé d'une certaine façon la particularité de la philosophie, comme double frontière, comme alliance de l'empirique et de l'impossible, l'éthique comme ayant pour constante l'équilibre des frontières, mais c'est pour mieux les plonger dans les interdisciplines contemporaines. Faire trop vite des continuités entre les disciplines ne permet pas de faire voir la richesse de leurs liens possibles et impossibles. Elles représentent des dimensions des objets dont il faut tenir compte pour leur évaluation.

Que dire alors de la philosophie disciplinaire ? Cela n'aurait pas de sens de la supprimer comme une vieillerie, car elle est une source indéfinie des concepts et méthodes philosophiques que l'on perdrait probablement sans elle. La philosophie continentale nous donne le geste philosophique à travers son histoire, la philosophie analytique, au travers des méthodes des autres sciences, la logique mathématique, la sociologie – mais toujours avec l'idée qu'elles portent directement sur les problèmes du monde réel. Mais il faut tenter de limiter les effets autoritaires de la philosophie institutionnelle, en admettant de façon militante la pluralité des régimes philosophiques et scientifiques, en transformant ses énoncés de façon à leur priver de leur autorité, en prolongeant les philosophies comme autant de formes pour la

compréhension indirecte à la fois des philosophies et de ce qui leur est le plus hétérogène. On voit alors que d'être dans le « contemporain » est pari, un engagement et non pas seulement une situation descriptive et positiviste. Comprendre qu'être dans le contemporain, ce n'est pas simplement avoir surmonté un retard, mais le mettre à côté de nous comme sans force temporelle, comme on peut faire « goûter » le futur dans ce contemporain.

Remerciements en lien direct avec cette contribution :

- A François Laruelle pour avoir construit une modélisation de la philosophie qui ne soit pas une auto-modélisation, et d'avoir constitué les premiers corpus de la philosophie non-standard.
- A Armand Hatchuel pour sa théorie C(oncepts)-K(nowledge) de la conception, qui montre que si l'on donne une interprétation générique des concepts, les inventions scientifiques et techniques sont l'une et l'autre des questions de conception entre concepts impossibles et connaissances.
- A Muriel Mambrini-Doudet, pour son concept de lieu naturel d'interdiscipline, qui permet de projeter un espace où le management conserve la science et ses métiers.
- A Marie-Geneviève Pinsart pour avoir établi l'importance épistémologique du non-savoir dans le fonctionnement des Comités d'éthique.
- A Léo Coutellec pour réintroduire les pluralités du temps dans les objets intégratifs et sa constitution de leur évaluation non-standard, et avoir produit sur les conditions éthiques et épistémologiques de l'intégrité des sciences (PhD.) à paraître.
- Aux ethnopsychiatres de la troisième génération (« Clinique de la multiplicité »), d'avoir réintroduit et donné un sens disciplinaire et ouvert au concept d'« intimité collective ».
- A Robin Mackay (éditeur de la revue *Col-*

lapse) pour avoir donné une interprétation des objets intégratifs en esthétique.

Bibliographie :

Academos, dir. Anne-Françoise Schmid. *Épistémologie des frontières*. Paris: Pétra, 2012.

Hatchuel, Armand et Benoît Weil. *Les nouveaux régimes de la conception. Langues, théories, métiers*. Paris: Vuibert-Cerisy, 2008.

Laruelle, François. *Philosophie non-standard. Générique, quantique, philo-fiction*. Paris: Kimé, 2010.

Laruelle, François. *Introduction aux sciences génériques*. Paris: Pétra, 2008.

Legay, Jean-Marie et Anne-François Schmid. *Philosophie de l'interdisciplinarité. Correspondance (1999-2004) sur la recherche scientifique, la modélisation et les objets complexes*. Paris: Pétra, 2004.

Mathieu, Nicole, et Anne-Françoise Schmid des., *Modélisation et interdisciplinarité. Six disciplines en quête d'épistémologie*. Paris: Quae, collection "Indisciplines", 2014.

Pinsart, Marie-Geneviève et Céline Kermisch, eds. *Les nanotechnologies, vers un changement d'échelle éthique*. Bruxelles: Ed. EME, 2012.

Schmid, Anne-Françoise et Muriel Mambrini-Doudet. *Épistémologie générique. Manuel pour les sciences futures*. Paris: Kimé, 2019.

Sélection d'articles :

Schmid, Anne-Françoise. "The Science-Thought of Laruelle and its Effects on Epistemology." In: *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy*, edited by John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith, 122-142. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.

Schmid, Anne-Françoise, Muriel Mambrini-Doudet, and Armand Hatchuel. "Une nouvelle logique de l'interdisciplinarité." *Nouvelles*

perspectives en sciences sociales 7, no. 1 (2011): 105-136.

Schmid, Anne-Françoise. “Epistémologie générique: De l’ego à l’« intimité collective » de la science.” *Philosophie et culture* 5, no. 41 (Mai 2011): 145-156. Texte en Russe.

Schmid, Anne-Françoise. “Couturat’s Reception of Leibniz.” In *New Essays on Leibniz Reception in Science and Philosophy of Science 1800-2000*, edited by Ralph Krömer & Yannick Chin-Drian, 65-84. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2011.

Schmid, Anne-Françoise and Armand Hatchuel. “On Generic Epistemology.” *Angelaki: The Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 19, no. 2 (2014): 131-144.

Coutellec, Léo. “Une anticipation interdisciplinaire de la question des poissons génétiquement modifiés.” *Natures sciences sociétés* 19, no. 3 (2011): 266-271.

Coutellec, Léo and Isabelle Doussan. “Legal and Ethical Apprehensions Regarding a Relational Object. The Case of the Genetically Modified Fish.” *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* (2011): 861-875.

Coutellec, Léo. “Au-delà de l’évaluation des risques: incertitudes, valeurs, pluralisme,” in *Acte du colloque « Éthique et évaluation »* organisé par le Comité Éthique, Économique et Social (CEES) du HCB, 2012.

Pedagogy of the Negative: Pedagogical Heresy for “The End Times”

Jessie L. Beier & Jason J. Wallin

Abstract: At its foundation, the field of educational studies remains thoroughly committed to the idea of hope as a privileged pedagogical disposition. Despite the convergence of crises now gathering force and speed across the globe, there remains a pressure to position education as that holy space where hope is born, affirmative mantras proliferate, and a posture of unquestioned optimism prevails. Through such affirmationist tendencies, it appears today that the industry of education, or what we term in this paper the Educacene, has failed to think alongside rapidly changing planetary realities, reifying instead the modern educative proclivity to combat the world by overcoding its pulsions via a will-to-nothingness, or rather, a mode of desire that perpetually “wills the same.” Where hope springs eternal, this commonsense positivity not only fails to adequately address the material conditions of our contemporary existence, but also actively constructs negativity as an anathema to pedagogical thought. Yet, this abhorrence of negativity overlooks both the persistence of the negative, and further, the potential import of negativity as a mode of thought that might engage in forceful ways with the prevailing cultures of hope and optimism that have come to undergird contemporary pedagogical life. Drawing on developments in (cosmic) pessimism, speculative heresy, and non-philosophy, this essay will attempt to re-join the significance of the negative for pedagogical thought in order to say “no” to the images of affirmative standardization that maintain and perpetuate the futureless repetition of educational thought today. In short, this non-philosophical engagement aims to relaunch pedagogical thought so as to harness its potential for un-becoming, which necessitates in its first instance the mutation of ideas from their standardized regulation, and secondarily, the heretical elaboration of an “outside” thought from which such standardization is inoculable. By attempting to articulate an approach to pedagogy via negation, pessimism, and the forms of resistance to which these (non)philosophical vectors might give rise, this project will develop an alternative set of conditions for enacting and thinking about pedagogy for “the end times.”

Jason J. Wallin is Professor of Media and Youth Culture in Curriculum in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta, Canada. He is the author of “A Deleuzian Approach to Curriculum: Essays on a Pedagogical Life” (Palgrave Macmillan), co-author of “Arts-Based Research: A Critique and Proposal” (with Jan Jagodzinski, Sense Publishers), and co-editor of “Deleuze, Guattari, Politics and Education” (with Matt Carlin, Bloomsbury).

jjwallin@ualberta.ca

Jessie Beier is a teacher, artist, writer, and conjurer of weird pedagogies for the ‘end times.’ Beier is currently a PhD Candidate at the University of Alberta (Canada) where she also teaches undergraduate courses in the Faculty of Education and the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies. Jessie’s current research — *Teaching at the End of the World: Weird Pedagogies for Unthought Futures* — investigates the unthinkable pedagogical problematics through which educational futurity is today conditioned, with the aim of fabricating weird speculations on how pedagogical life might be thought otherwise while also counter-actualizing methodology-as-usual within the field of educational research. For more info, visit: jessiebeier.com

jbeier@ualberta.ca

Keywords: Pedagogy, Educacene, negation.

1. Twilight of the “Educacene”

1.1. “It is, I promise, worse than you think”

In November of 2017, over 15,000 scientists and scientific researchers issued a collective “warning to humanity.”¹ Outlining the precarious ecological circumstances of life on planet Earth, the warning implores immediate collective action on a host of environmental concerns arguing that, “by failing to adequately limit population growth, reassess the role of an economy rooted in growth, reduce greenhouse gases, incentivize renewable energy, protect habitat, restore ecosystems, curb pollution, halt defaunation, and constrain invasive alien species, humanity is not taking the urgent steps needed to safeguard our imperiled biosphere.”² It might be said that the catastrophic state of planetary life articulated in the 2017 report is scarcely news, having been precipitated by a similar appeal by the Union of Concerned Scientists and more than 1700 independent scientists in 1992. Indeed, the detrimental impacts of anthropogenic climate change are not a recent “discovery,” having been understood as early as 1979, when the world’s major powers came “within several signatures of endorsing a binding, global framework to reduce carbon emissions - far closer than we’ve come since.”³ The 2017 report is also not the last. Since first drafting these words, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a “Special Report” (in November 2018) outlining the life-or-death difference between a 1.5 and 2.0 degree warmer world, calling for global “system transitions” in order to avoid climate catastrophe. In November 2019, yet another alarming statement was released, this time

backed up by 11,000 scientists and published in the journal *BioScience* on the 40th anniversary of the first world climate conference. In this more recent headline-proliferating statement we are told that people face “untold suffering due to the climate crisis,” which “is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity.”⁴

While international organizations continue to issue various warnings and wake-up calls, researchers across scientific disciplines are also chiming in with various reports of the coming (or in some cases, current) catastrophes. Data gathered in nature reserves across Germany, for instance, demonstrates how the total flying insect biomass has plunged by three-quarters over the past 25 years, putting us “on course for ecological Armageddon.”⁵ Meanwhile, in a 2018 *Nature* article, Australian scientists show how in the aftermath of record-breaking heatwaves in 2016, more than half of the corals in the northern third of the Great Barrier Reef have been wiped out within a span of just two years.⁶ Unprecedented heat waves have also impacted northern climates to the point that 2018 saw the North Pole thawing mid-winter as temperatures smashed previous records,⁷ while peat fires burned in Greenland, posing risks to the island’s ice sheet due to falling carbon soot, which has been linked to hastened glacial melting via accelerating feedback loops.⁸

¹ William J. Ripple, et al., “World Scientists’ Warning of a Climate Emergency.”

² Caspar A. Hallmann, et al., “More Than 75 Percent Decline Over 27 Years in Total Flying Insect Biomass in Protected Areas,” *PLoS one* 12, no. 10 (October, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0185809>.

³ Terry P. Hughes, et al., “Global Warming Transforms Coral Reef Assemblages,” *Nature* 556 (April 2018): 492–496, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-018-0041-2>.

⁴ Kirsten Fenn, “North Pole Thaws Mid-winter as Temperatures Smash Records in the Arctic,” *CBC News* (Feb 28, 2018), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/north-pole-thaw-1.4554864>

⁵ Megan Gannon, “Greenland’s Biggest Fire is a ‘Warning’ For its Future,” *Scientific American* (April 14, 2018), <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/greenlands-biggest->

¹ William J. Ripple, et al., “World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice,” *BioScience* 67, 12 (Dec 2017): 1026–1028.

² Ibid.

³ Nathaniel Rich, “Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change,” *New York Times* (August 1, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/01/magazine/climate-change-losing-earth.html>

This is just the weather. As the world simultaneously burns and floods, political responses oscillate between conservative nostalgia - *Make The Planet Great Again!* - and “cruel optimism,”⁹ between outright denialism (resulting, for instance, in the hollowing out of environmental protections agencies) and hopeful appeals to all-too-human techno-scientific ingenuity. As Andreas Malm puts it, “[o]ne after the other, the matches are lit and held to the fuses, seemingly at the very same pace as we learn of the disastrous consequences: on one page of a newspaper, the science is relayed to the public; on the next page, it is all business-as-usual.”¹⁰ All of this is to say, as Wallace-Wells asserts in the highly circulated *New York Magazine* article (turned book¹¹) “The Uninhabitable Earth,” “it is, I promise, worse than you think.”¹²

1.2. False Alarms and Abiding Commitments

While these sobering reports attempt to communicate both a sense of urgency and a general posture of reticence that seemingly undergirds climate change discourse today, they have also been critiqued for being “alarmist,” or worse, flat-out wrong. Following the publication of Wallace-Wells’ *New York Magazine* article, for example, critics argued that he “exaggerate[d]

fire-is-a-warning-for-its-future/

⁹ Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Andreas Malm, “Socialism or Barbecue, War Communism or Geoengineering. Some Thoughts on Choices in a Time of Emergency,” in *The Politics of Ecosocialism: Transforming Welfare*, ed. Kajsa Borgnäs, Teppo Eskelinen, Johanna Perkiö and Rikard Warlenius (Basingstoke: Routledge, 2015), 180-194.

¹¹ In 2019, Wallace-Wells released the book *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming*, which was inspired by the *New York Magazine* article and speculates on the outcomes of today’s dire climatological predictions of global warming in order to paint a picture of what life might be like on Earth in the near future given current climate models and forecasts.

¹² David Wallace-Wells, “The Uninhabitable Earth,” *New York Magazine* (July 10, 2017), <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/07/climate-change-earth-too-hot-for-humans.html>

the evidence,” asserting that “climate scientists nearly universally say that there is still time to avert the worst consequences of global warming” and that “studies have shown ... doom and gloom only leads to fear and paralysis.”¹³ On Twitter, commenters responded with sentiments such as “[c]limate change is a real/present issue but I think we can reach a broader audience by talking about impacts/solutions rather than hyperboles,”¹⁴ while in a widely-shared Facebook post, climate scientist Michael Mann wrote: “I am not a fan of this sort of doomist framing. It is important to be up front about the risks of unmitigated climate change ... but there is also a danger in overstating the science in a way that presents the problem as unsolvable, and feeds a sense of doom, inevitability and hopelessness.”¹⁵ Still others commented on the misguided focus of the article in terms of the “real climate dangers” we face today. In the *Jacobin* article titled “New York Mag’s Climate Disaster Porn Gets It Painfully Wrong,” for instance, Cohen agrees that things may be “worse than we think,” but argues that Wallace-Wells’ article “selectively fetishizes natural science” instead of drawing attention to the political power of “a vicious right-wing minority [that] will impose an order that privileges the affluent few over everyone else.”¹⁶

While these critiques and caveats are important for understanding how alarmist discourse may work to distract and obscure from more urgent questions around geo-social futurity and the fact that “environmental catastrophe is already here - it’s just not evenly distributed,”¹⁷ the backlash

¹³ Andrew Freedman, “No, New York Mag: Climate change won’t make the Earth uninhabitable by 2100,” *Mashable* (Jul 10, 2017), <https://mashable.com/2017/07/10/new-york-mag-climate-story-inaccurate-doomsday-scenario/>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Michael Mann (July 10, 2017), <https://www.facebook.com/MichaelMannScientist/posts/1470539096335621>.

¹⁶ Daniel Aldana Cohen, “New York Mag’s Climate Disaster Porn Gets It Painfully Wrong,” *Jacobin* (July 10, 2017), <https://jacobinmag.com/2017/07/climate-change-new-york-magazine-response>.

¹⁷ Rory Rowen, “Extinction as Usual?: Geo-Social

against this so-called “doomist framing” also points to the ways in which today’s ecological situation is not only increasingly uninhabitable, but also increasingly *unthinkable*. That is, while writers such as Wallace-Wells are charged with the cardinal sin of alarmism, such accusations also point to a limit-case for thought today, particularly in light of the planetary transformations now taking place in the so-called Anthropocene era. For instance, the warnings issued in the IPCC’s 2018 “Special report” have already been denounced for being overly optimistic.¹⁸ Further, the unfathomable impacts of accelerating climatological feedback loops have produced yet more headlines asserting that it is, indeed, “worse than we thought,” and as such, it appears that what was once deemed alarmist - inflated, exaggerated, overstated - is perhaps nothing of the sort. Given the proliferation of ongoing “alarm bells” and “wake-up calls,” which, as we have already begun to unfold, are nevertheless dismissed or downplayed for being either overly optimistic or unduly pessimistic, what is perhaps most perplexing about today’s increasingly unthinkable situation is how ecocatastrophic abolition is disregarded and discounted via particular fidelities that undergird what is possible to think in the first place.

In short, it appears today that despite the convergence of ecological, and by extension, civilizational crises that are now gathering force and speed across the globe, abiding commitments to

Futures and Left Optimism,” *e-flux journal* #65
 SUPERCOMMUNITY (May–August 2015), <http://supercommunity.e-flux.com/texts/extinction-as-usual-geo-social-futures-and-left-optimism/>

¹⁸ A number of scientists, for instance, have asserted that the IPCC’s recent reports on “pathway modelling” fail to account for all of the warming that has already taken place, and further, that they do not adequately address the economic costs of severe storms and displacement of people through, for instance, drought and deadly heat waves. With this in mind, Wallace-Wells has asserted that the “new report’s worst-case scenario is, actually, a best case” or even “beyond-best-case scenario” due to the fact that, save some magical technological innovation, even the 2 degree target to limit global warming is now unattainable.

ultimately “positive” “human” futurities, which, as many have noted,¹⁹ are always-already unequally distributed, have come to monopolize, and thus *disappear* the Real of today’s very particular “end times” scenario. This monopolizing process is perhaps best exemplified by what we term here the “industry of education,” or what might be speculatively dubbed *The Educacene*.

1.3. *An-archaeology of the “Educacene”*

If a then extinct human species might be read from the vantage of some future alien archaeologist, as a sort of *an-archaeology*, the industry of education, or the *Educacene*, might appear perplexing. Here, we borrow from Bensusan’s (2016) “speculative anarchoeology”²⁰ to denote the excavation of *what could have been*, or the un-grounding of different pasts that invite us to consider the ways in which alternative versions of the past have disappeared in favor of dominant moods, idealisms, and doxa. For Bensusan, speculative anarchoeology can be parsed out in three different ways: *anarcho-ology*, or the study of that which is unruly, ungoverned, and undetermined; *an-archo-ology*, or the excavation of that which does not have foundational grounding (Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* offers an example here); and *an-archeology*, or the study of the past in all of its alien and potentially

¹⁹ As Martinez-Alier points out, environmental risks are not randomly spread, but instead disproportionately fall on the poor and other oppressed and exploited bodies. Similarly, and as critics of Anthropocene discourse have highlighted, the very naming of a geological era after the *anthropos* assumes that *all* humans are equally responsible for anthropogenic climate change instead of recognizing, as Zoe Todd writes, “the distinctions between the people, nations, and collectives who drive the fossil-fuel economy and those who do not.” See Joan Martinez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2002). See Zoe Todd, “Indigenizing the Anthropocene,” in *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies*, ed. Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin (London: Open Humanities Press, 2015), 244.

²⁰ Hilan Bensusan, *Being Up for Grabs: Speculative Anarchoeology* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2016).

counterfactual versions.²¹ In our own an-archaeological digging, we borrow from this third parsing, in order to excavate the originary decisions and theoreticist idealisms that have come to monopolize educational realities, in turn defining and delimiting educational research, practice and thus the Educacene itself.

Riffing off the proliferation of names that have been proffered in response to the Anthropocene designation, the Educacene signals the era wherein education has been subsumed under a standardized “business ontology,”²² which is nevertheless naturalized as “the way things are,” thus limiting potentials for future pedagogical life to unfold otherwise. In this way, the Educacene not only refers to the now ubiquitous neoliberal imperatives that have come to undergird educational practices, spanning across K-12 classrooms, university learning spaces and teacher “training” programs alike, but also references how the very conceptualization of what we call “education” has itself become equated with the production of “goods and services” that have become commensurate with what counts as “good” or “necessary” pedagogy today. Put briefly, the term Educacene provides an index for understanding the contemporary industry of “education,” where education not only refers to practices of schooling, but also to the development of philosophies and theories, which in turn contribute to a body of knowledge that defines and delimits the field.

We wager that while the geological strata of the Anthropocene will register the tumultuous planetary transformations endemic to the era, an an-archaeology of the Educacene will simultaneously record a trenchant *reactivity* in educational thought and practice that manifests in terms of a general *non-confrontation* with the challenges of anthropogenic climate change. In-

deed, we today witness in educational thought the conservation of a stable image of the world characterized by standardization, mastery, and ultimately, a positive future for “us.” Where the Real of anthropogenic planetary change might otherwise be read as a pressing impetus to challenge such doxa as affirmationism and human exceptionalism (in which the overt text of the Anthropocene consists), the Educacene appears to forgo this encounter, instead doubling-down on a profusion of extinct concepts and moods from which the planet will already have been seen to recede. In this way, the Educacene incongruously allies with what Nietzsche dubs the *will-to-nothingness* or rather, a mode of pedagogical desire that perpetually “wills the same.”

Digging in to the an-archaeological site of the Educacene, then, we conjecture that a future an-archaeology would find education’s non-confrontation with the challenges of encroaching ecocatastrophe less the product of denial or a will for ignorance than the byproduct of an inherent alliance with a set of axiomatic idealisms that are fundamentally *nihilistic*. Put another way, where educational thought is endlessly structured by standardization and the eternal return of the same, it might be argued that the industry of education is, in fact, a *nihilist* project. In lieu of transforming such foundational predilections, the impulses of standardization inherent to educational philosophy and practice have accelerated their circulation in the educational imaginary, in turn formatting a relation to the Real that is coextensive with the oppression and exploitation of material life. Herein, the conceptual alliance of standardization with the image of a stable world rejoins the will-to-nothingness in that the image of life produced has been rendered obsolete by an unstable, precarious, and inhuman futurity. More pointedly, education’s philosophical standardization has thus far failed to think alongside rapidly changing planetary realities, reifying instead the modern educative proclivity to combat the world by over-coding

²¹ Ibid., 67.

²² Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009), 17.

its pulsions within the circuits of *ressentiment*. Examined in a non-philosophical manner, this will-to-nothingness might be understood as one of the key philosophical decisions that has come to define current educational realities, albeit one disappeared through non-recognition.

1.4 Towards Non-Philosophical Intervention

As Laruelle writes, “[p]hilosophical practice has become the archaeology of its own ruin, an archeology of utopias without a future.”²³ Regarding the Educacene, the same might be said of educational philosophy, which endlessly “encloses itself, consummate[ing] itself as a form of technique, leaving behind an empty space for a new experience of thought.”²⁴ Put another way, and drawing on Laruelle, every philosophy is necessarily “bound to a specularity that it mistakes for the real, bound to a primacy and priority of theory as reflection of that real” and in turn economized so as to disappear those fundamental axioms from recognition.²⁵ In the Educacene, educational philosophy is likewise bound to a set of concepts that are mistaken for the Real, or “the way things are,” but nevertheless explained, economized and practiced as if they are the Real. In this way, the Educacene’s non-recognition with the Real of anthropogenic climate change not only points to its own insufficient philosophical decisions, but also what Laruelle might express as a transformed relation to the Real where “the real [doesn’t] seem to matter as much as the image.”²⁶ That is, the Educacene’s non-confrontation with the inhuman futurity characteristic of post-Anthropocene

times is made possible by a hallucinatory specularity that mistakes the fantasies of human affirmation, superiority, ingenuity, and *permanence* for the Real, in turn naturalizing these “theoreticist idealisms”²⁷ as axiomatic and fundamental.

Further, and as Laruelle asserts, where “Man” is “an answer without a question”²⁸ (educational) philosophy remains caught by a narcissism that assumes it can intervene in reality, in turn disavowing the notion that what philosophy calls “reality” is but a *concept* of the world. As Laruelle writes:

“[t]hrough this concept, philosophy projects a *reality in itself*, which is to say, one that has been constructed in the realm of *operational transcendence*, within which it claims to intervene, and in terms of which it gauges all possible intervention. But the real content of philosophy, once the illusion of the in-itself has been bracketed, is this very correlation between itself and the world.”²⁹

Following Laruelle, we therefore ask: how to think education, how to think pedagogy, separate from or alternatively to what educational philosophy currently allows us to think?

As a starting response, in order to liberate educational thought from those philosophical delusions that have come to undergird its fundamental aims and commitments requires emancipation from educational philosophy itself. Following, we might ask how to suspend the authority of the industry of education, or the Educacene, through non-philosophical thinking in order to articulate a very different register and thus possibility for educational thought. The point here, and as Laruelle reminds us, is not to

²³ François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2012).

²⁴ François Laruelle, “What Can Non-Philosophy Do?,” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 8, no. 2 (Jun 2010), 173.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.

²⁶ Drew S. Burke, “Translator’s Introduction,” in François Laruelle’s *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2012), xii.

²⁷ Laruelle, “What Can Non-philosophy Do?,” 173.

²⁸ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, 12.

²⁹ Laruelle, “What Can Non-Philosophy Do?,” 183.

“get out” of or escape philosophy, but instead to realize that we were perhaps never “in it” in the first place. This is Laruelle’s non-philosophical proposal. As Laruelle writes, the attempt here is not to create a new philosophical paradigm, nor is it a “philosophical taking of sides and thus inside philosophy,”³⁰ but instead, to endeavor towards the “transformation of philosophy.”³¹ As Ó Maoilearca writes on Laruelle’s “criminally performative” thought, “while standard philosophical approaches take their conception of what proper philosophy is and then apply it to all sundry objects – what Laruelle calls the ‘*Principle of Sufficient Philosophy*’ – non-philosophy is a ‘style of thought’ that mutates with its object.”³²

From the vantage of non-philosophical mutation, then, what the Anthropocene reveals is not only the unprecedented impacts of (some) human activities on the geological record, but, and perhaps more importantly, how “all our positions, those little compressed bundles of opinion and analysis, practice and experience, crumble – as positions.”³³ In educational domains, for instance, the very proposition that the planet can, and should, be conserved and defended has become suspect, or as educational theorist Nathan Snaza puts it, perhaps “the Earth is not “ours” to save.”³⁴ As Snaza writes, “we have to let go of our desire to plan, to act in ways that conform to a priori rules or maxims, to act only in the (false) certainty that our actions are just because they are oriented toward some good

which we cherish.”³⁵ Such an educational orientation requires both a radical refusal of human planetary dominion and an investigation of how an all-too-human “we” and “ours” has failed to acknowledge the differential experience of human beings. Put another way, and as American environmentalist Bill McKibben elides,³⁶ in an era of mega-fires, drought, and acidifying oceans, it has become necessary to rethink planetary life in a manner that no longer evokes a sense of positive futurity, familiarity or nostalgia for “us.”

Given this background, we wager that educational thought today requires a form of *heretical thinking* that is capable of effecting a real transformation, not through “better” reflections of or de/constructions of “reality,” but through “a philosophical poetics,” or non-philosophical experimentation, that strives to “take on the blind-spots of actuality as seismographs of man’s relationship with the world.”³⁷ Non-philosophy provides a mode of resituating educational thought as the struggle against its own limits and parameters as they have come to think on our behalf, and thus, non-philosophical educational thinking employs philosophy as a way of effecting “a real transformation of the subject [so as] to break the spell of its bewitchment by the world and enable it to constitute itself through a certain struggle with the latter.”³⁸ Once again, the goal here is not to further monopolize the Real, for instance by developing a more nuanced or “critical” representation of the world, but to articulate a different order for thought and subjectivity, both of which must be conceived as being “in-struggle.”

In short, what is necessary in this twilight moment of the Educacene is not further wake-up calls and alarm bells, but the introduction of an

³⁰ François Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou: On the Introduction of Maoism into Philosophy*, trans Robin Mackay. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 45.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

³² John Ó Maoilearca, “Laruelle’s ‘Criminally Performative’ Thought: On Doing and Saying in Non-Philosophy,” *Performance Philosophy*, 1, no. 1 (2015): 161-167.

³³ Alejandro de Acosta, “Green Nihilism or Cosmic Pessimism,” *The Anvil* (November 20, 2013: para. 5), <http://theanvilreview.org/print/green-nihilism-or-cosmic-pessimism/>

³⁴ Nathan Snaza, “The Earth Is Not ‘Ours’ to Save,” in *Interrogating the Anthropocene: Ecology, Aesthetics, Pedagogy, and the Future in Question*, ed. Jan Jagodzinski (London/ New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 339 – 359.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 352.

³⁶ Bill McKibben, *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2011).

³⁷ Burke, “Translator’s Introduction,” xiv.

³⁸ Laruelle, “What Can Non-Philosophy Do?,” 179.

alien conceptual apparatus into the educational frame, one that is capable of derailing those axioms and idealisms that have come to over-determine the ordinary language of “education” today. In what follows, we endeavor towards this mode of heretical thinking, particularly in relation to the highly standardized and overtly affirmative field of educational philosophy as it has come to circulate within the industry of education. Through the development of a philo-fictional educational framework, what we call here a *pedagogy of the negative*, we experiment with possibilities for a non-philosophical intervention within educational thinking itself so as to ask questions and pose problems previously unthinkable.

2. Hope After “Us”

2.1. Happy Inoculations and the Doxa of Affirmationism

In order to optimize the nihilistic impulses through which the Educacene seemingly operates, educational thought must propagate an overarching and largely unremarked “affirmationist doxa,”³⁹ which simultaneously systematizes positivity while painting traditions of critique and negation as passive, reactionary, and/or unproductive. This celebration of affirmation is evidenced by, for instance, how the thought of Deleuze, or more specifically, *Deleuzianism*, has become increasingly popular in educational circles. While the work of Deleuze (with Guattari) remains relevant, particularly in terms of providing (anti)methodological or even non-philosophical approaches to *doing* educational philosophy, the “rhizomania”⁴⁰ that now pervades much contemporary educational theorizing concomitantly marks a co-optation of Deleuzian

concepts that divest them of their most radical political and ethical import. For example, where “rhizomatics” are now mobilized in educational spaces as a mode of recognizing a multiplication of “diverse” identities, rhizomatic thinking becomes but a “hand-maiden of neoliberal capitalism.”⁴¹ Here, imperatives for the creation of pluralist subjectivities, such as those promoted in contemporary arts-based educational research (i.e. the artist-teacher-researcher), are not as much radical as they are perfectly optimized for a socio-economic vehicle that requires such post-structural, self-styling “schizo-identities.” At risk here is not simply the reduction of “rhizomatics” into yet another set of educational clichés, but also the domestication of Deleuze (and Guattari’s) concepts within pre-established fantasies of all-too-human creativity, liberation and redemption.

Instead of offering divergent “lines of flight” and alternative becomings, the facile translation and idealistic tropes of *Deleuzian* thought within educational theory and practice work to reinscribe the prerogatives of pre-established circuits of power under the guise of “difference,” where difference is always-already positioned (in a manner antithetical to Deleuze’s thought) as that which essentializes and reattaches otherwise multifaceted flows to unitary identities and consolidated traditions. The ubiquitous talk of rhizomatic connectivity, positive affirmation, action and expression, gaps and slippages, chaos and contingency tend towards registering only the “happy becoming” of the world, a now compulsory mode of thinking that has traded the otherwise “dark” impulses of Deleuze’s thought for the lightness of “California Buddhism.”⁴² In a contemporary moment of epidemic depression that might partly constitute a response to the strife of existence today, this compulsive co-optation is but one example of how the in-

³⁹ Benjamin Noys, *The Persistence of the Negative: A Critique of Contemporary Continental Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

⁴⁰ Jason Wallin, “Rhizomania: Five Provocations on a Concept,” *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education* 7, no. 2 (2010): 83-89.

⁴¹ Wallin, “Rhizomania,” 84.

⁴² Andrew Culp, *Dark Deleuze* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 7.

dustry of education dispatches the anachronisms of satisfaction and contentment as a strategy of enfrauding the polis and inoculating against a disposition of saying “no” to the *given* world.⁴³ The alliance of education with happy inoculations and a doxa of affirmationism perpetrates a doubling of resentment, divesting the antagonisms of hatred, refusal, and (eco)catastrophe from educational consideration while simultaneously occulting institutional indifference to misery. Where some educational scholars claim that “it is still possible to be optimistic about education today” by developing “a new version of optimism,” or an “optimism that optimizes,”⁴⁴ such affirmations merely work towards an acceptance of the *given* world, or a saying “yes” to the world *as it is*. This acceptance of the way things are not only invests the Real with specular delusions of affirmation, but also reveals a radical detachment from prevailing dispositions of depression, misery and the challenge to jettison the odious values of contentment and satisfaction historically linked to the exploitation and dominion of material life for “us.”

2.2. *Hope at the End of the World*

Alongside the dominance of happy affects that work to withdraw from the potential of “wish[ing] a happy death on calcified political forms, no-good solutions, and bad ways of thinking,”⁴⁵ the lightness of *hope* transpires as a privileged axiom within educational philosophy and, by extension, practice. For instance, in our own province of Alberta, Canada, the ministry of education positions schools and schooling as spaces wherein educational subjects can and should be able to “adapt to the many changes in society and the economy with an attitude of *optimism* and *hope* for the future.”⁴⁶ Despite the con-

vergence of crises already taking shape across ecological, social, and mental domains, there remains a pressure to position education as that holy space where hope is born, happy affects circulate, affirmative mantras proliferate, and a posture of unquestioned optimism prevails. While hope has been critiqued for its presupposition that the future will actualize the image of the present, it appears today that hope has nevertheless been rallied in fidelity to a human futurity that betrays an increasingly alien future.

Transposed to the Educacene, the imperative to hope might therefore be questioned both in terms of its ability to confront current anthropocenic realities, as well as its decisional structure, which relies on a commitment to education’s emancipatory potential and thus the reinscription of the very regime of inequality it seeks to overcome. Education is, after all, predicated on a particular sense of hope, especially in its critical instantiations.⁴⁷ Traditional approaches to critical pedagogy, for instance, enact a kind hermeneutical pedagogy, wherein the educator assumes the other (i.e. the student) lacks the means to understand their own oppression, in turn reaffirming the educator’s own superior position: “the pedagogue assumes the role of one who is required to lift the veil; what they lift the veil from, however, is a status quo on which they stand in external judgment.”⁴⁸ In the domain of critical pedagogy, then, hope and optimism have come to characterize the idealist theoreticisms that underscore educational futurity by actively constructing negativity and nihilism as an anathema to pedagogical thought.

2.3. *Human Preservation*

The reinscription of an endlessly hopeful subject at the heart of the educational project today emerges along multiple trajectories, not the

⁴³ Culp, *Dark Deleuze*, 17.

⁴⁴ Emile Bojesen, “A New Version of Optimism for Education,” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 37, no. 1 (Feb 2018): 8.

⁴⁵ Culp, *Dark Deleuze*, 13.

⁴⁶ Italics added. Alberta Education, “Ministerial Order on Student Learning (Order #001/2013)” (2013), <https://education.alberta.ca/policies-and-standards/student-learning/everyone/ministerial-order-on-student-learning/>.

⁴⁷ Naomi Hodgson, Joris Vlieghe, Piotr Zemojski, *Manifesto for a Post-Critical Pedagogy* (Punctum Books, 2017).

⁴⁸ Ibid., 18.

least of which are those modes of educational philosophy that remit the question of how we might learn to die⁴⁹ by insisting ultimately on the narrative frames, scales, and registers of *human permanence*. That is, it is simply taken for granted that educational thought will forever be founded on the conservation and triumph of human beings and thus the field continues its dedication to the industry of human preservation. Such preservation exceeds the aim of becoming more fully human, an aim that is intimate to critical pedagogy (such as in Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed⁵⁰), extending into the presupposition that by re-routing destructive humanity, and its improper capacities, a *new* humanity will emerge.⁵¹ Critical education, for instance, often presumes a future polis after-man that is nevertheless underscored by an expression of education's having become an industry of human preservation. In this case, expression and narrative become honed upon the limits of human agents, while the scale of history is narrowed upon the purview of anthropic life. Following Laruelle's argument on philosophical insufficiency, such scaling might be seen as a moral commitment regarding our conceptualization of ecological events and the conceptualization of a "standard" future.⁵²

In education, such commitments might be seen as a form of general reactivity subverting the otherwise inhuman frames, scales, and complexities of the Anthropocene upon their all-too-human significance. Such "anthropic subversion"⁵³ inheres in the field of educational philosophy, where the dominance of human creativity con-

joins with the popular fetishization of positivity, unity and mindfulness by which we perpetually find ourselves *after* ourselves.⁵⁴ For example, in response to the advent of the Anthropocene, contemporary educational theory and research is currently experiencing a movement towards the integration of topics like "sustainability" into policy and curriculum, an intervention that not only works to reaffirm a progressive human futurity, but also assumes that education will forever be tied to the project of human perpetuation, and ultimately permanence. In this way, the Anthropocene has not led to an upheaval of or interruption in educational thought, but has, instead, become the impetus for "envisioning a sustainable human presence on Earth in which humans would no longer be 'invaders' but rather participants in shaping the natural environment."⁵⁵ As part of the broader "Good Anthropocene" narrative, education here is re-positioned as a technology that can and should be re-directed towards more sustainable practices. As Leinfelder writes, given the Anthropocene moment, "[s]ociety will have to legitimize science and technology, focusing in particular on education as one of the most powerful tools for transformation, in order to make the Anthropocene long-lasting, equitable, and worth living."⁵⁶

With this in mind, we wager that the Educacene's hopeful disposition is not only defined by happy inoculations of affirmationism, but also married to the educational industry of human preservation through which it is simply assumed, or made a fact of the Real, that a new humanity can and will emerge *in spite of* the destructive anthropogenic impacts altering the planet today. This decision towards preservation that now structures much of educational phi-

⁴⁹ Roy Scranton, *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2015)

⁵⁰ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

⁵¹ Clare Colebrook, "What is the Anthro-political?" in *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols*, ed. Tom Cohen, Clare Colebrook and J. Hillis Miller (London: Open Humanities Press, 2016), 83.

⁵² Colebrook, "What is the Anthro-political?"

⁵³ Eugene Thacker, *In The Dust Of This Planet: Horror of Philosophy*, vol. 1. (Winchester: Zero Books, 2011).

⁵⁴ Colebrook, "What is the Anthro-political?"

⁵⁵ Reinhold Leinfelder, "Assuming Responsibility for the Anthropocene: Challenges and Opportunities in Education" in *Anthropocene: Exploring the Future of the Age of Humans*, vol. 3, ed. Helmuth Trischler (Rachel Carson Center Perspectives, 2013), 9.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 10.

losophy is not only implicit to approaches such as critical pedagogy, but is dispersed across an array of educational thought allied to “sustainable” practices and the political more generally. Indeed, across the field of contemporary educational thought, the claim that we will emerge from beneath the yoke of destructive humanity and the time of pernicious petro-capitalism has gained significant, if not ubiquitous traction. However, the presupposition that a standardized ‘we’ will emerge post-capital or post-man or post-Anthropocene recommitments to the pathological self-interest of human exceptionalism. The condemnation of man and capital now seemingly automatic in educational scholarship still reiterates the tenets of humanism by reasserting the agency of anthropos, or otherwise, by articulating as the telos of critical inquiry the emergence of anthropos ‘proper’ (standard man *after* man).

Such presumptions now constitute a new orthodoxy in educational philosophy and research expressed through the assumption that by triumphing over capital, ecological degradation, the misuses of democracy, the destructive forces of humanity, and nihilism itself, a humanity-to-come will actualize. In resentment of civilizational collapse and ecocatastrophe, the redemption of humanity perpetuated in such educational thought reiterates an image of the future for “us,” or worse, a future in which the Real is monopolized by the anthropocentric conceits of academic educational thought, which presumes to articulate both the conditions of salvation and its subject. Against the momentum of this orthodoxy, the twilight world of the Anthropocene issues a more-than-critical educational challenge.

3. Towards a Pedagogy of the Negative

3.1. *Death of the Given World*

The antagonisms raised by ecocatastrophic and civilizational end conspire to not merely extend the circuits of anthropic production and salva-

tion, but break them by actualizing a non-communicative distance between the world for “us” and an unfathomable world “without-us.”⁵⁷ In this way, the distance between the Educacene’s allegiance to the preservation of the human and the misanthropic realisms of planetary transformation not only rejoin to the “Death of Man,” as pronounced in post-human thought, but as Culp extends, to the Death of the *Given* World.⁵⁸ The staid thinking of Roy Scranton posits a corollary approach, which interrupts the continuation of the *given* world by suggesting the need for a pedagogical encounter with the question of how we might learn to die.⁵⁹ For Scranton, this encounter is not about ringing the alarm, nor is it about throwing our hands up and welcoming “the end times,” but instead, coming to terms with the fact that there is no single event, invention, or, in the case of this paper, educational philosophy, that will save us from the future.

The short-circuiting heresy produced by calls for the death of the given world and questions such as how we might learn to die are, however, demonstrably unpopular in educational thinking. As Burke reminds us, referencing Laruelle, “[heresy] is harder than it sounds.”⁶⁰ Laruelle is clear about this point, asserting that, indeed, “philosophy will not relinquish its privileges without being forced to, and the abandonment of its authority will be an expensive price to pay.”⁶¹ In the case of this exploration, for instance, the Educacene relies on human continuation, preservation, and exceptionalism as a positive condition of its very existence, and thus the fashions of vitalism and affirmation by which educational philosophy has been theoretically reanimated (i.e. through a certain instrumentalization of Deleuzian pedagogy, for instance), protects pedagogical life from the conditions of extinction that otherwise grip planetary existence.

⁵⁷ Culp, *Dark Deleuze*; Thacker, *In the Dust of this Planet*.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁹ Scranton, *Learning to Die*.

⁶⁰ Burke, “Translator’s Introduction,” xviii.

⁶¹ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, 6.

It is here where a pedagogy of the negative enters the fray. As a philo-fictional experiment in non-philosophy, or non-standard philosophy, a pedagogy of the negative does not aim towards creating a new theory, or meta-theory, of and for education, but instead endeavor towards alternative educational practices so as to re-vision and re-launch what counts as educational thought in the first place. While this experimental practice draws on various modes of negation and pessimism, a pedagogy of the negative is not a negation of educational philosophy *per se*, but instead its expansion into anomalous realms of thought. Following Laruelle, we endeavor to “use philosophy as a material (as one would use space or color, as a materiality) for an art that would be of a piece with conceptual thought without making a new aesthetic or a new philosophy.”⁶² The philosophical material employed here is drawn from a range of contemporary thought committed to negation and the “non,” albeit in divergent and sometimes even contradictory ways. In this way, and following Laruelle’s non-philosophical impulses, a pedagogy of the negative is not defined by a logical identity, nor is it “theoretical nor practical nor aesthetic, etc., in the sense whereby philosophy defines separated regions of experience,”⁶³ but is instead understood as the practice of mutating and bifurcating ideas from their standardized regulation via the heretical elaboration of an outside thought from which such standardization is inoculable. In this way, a pedagogy of the negative is not opposed to practice or pragmatism, which are themselves always already theoretical, but instead, this practice is able to “determine in the last-instance the philosophical forms of theory

and their combination with empirical practice.”⁶⁴ In what follows, we elaborate on this alien practice by unfolding three potential mutations composed from various philosophical materials including Noys’ “praxis of negation,” Culp’s “dark Deleuze,” and, finally, Laruelle’s “science of the non.”

3.2. *The Praxis of Negation*

To begin, a pedagogy of the negative is one that takes seriously the persistence of the negative through what Noys calls a “praxis of negation,”⁶⁵ or, a practice that repositions negation as “the destruction of existent positivities through the performance of immanent ruptures.”⁶⁶ As Noys asserts, at the core of “unconditional” or “high” affirmationism lies a number of common features, including the insistence that philosophy begins from affirmation, which necessitates the downgrading of negativity and critique as “life denying.”⁶⁷ Against this “affirmationist doxa,” Noys works to excavate negativity as the necessary condition for re-articulating a thinking of agency, one that might be able to traverse and contest the structural and geopolitical pressures of the present. For Noys, this excavation involves examining theorists that have been highly influential in their articulation of affirmative thought, including Deleuze, in order to assess and refract their construction of affirmationist theory “through the prism of the traces of irreducible negativity that [nevertheless] mark their work.”⁶⁸ That is, Noys examines the affirmationist idealisms expressed through Deleuze (among others) in order to excavate the angles of resistance that do not subsume negation under a teleological dialectic in opposition to positivity and affirmation, but instead provide points of fissure where negativity might link to mutation points that cannot be automatically reconfig-

⁶² François Laruelle and John Ó Maoilearca, “Artistic Experiments with Philosophy: François Laruelle in conversation with John Ó Maoilearca,” in *Realism Materialism Art*, ed. Christoph Cox, Jenny Jaskey and Suhail Malik (Berlin: Sternberg/CCS Bard, 2014), 177.

⁶³ François Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013) 285.

⁶⁴ Laruelle, “What Can Non-Philosophy Do?,” 179.

⁶⁵ Noys, *The Persistence of the Negative*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

ured as positive lines of flight. Through such mutation points, Noys reconstructs Deleuze's "disavowed"⁶⁹ negativity in order to develop "a more *strategic* thinking of subjectivation ... one that would take into account negativity" by recuperating the possibility of "void-points" as sites of potential (un)becoming.⁷⁰ It is though Noys' intentionally suspicious and somewhat heretical excavation that a praxis of negation might offer a crucial non-philosophical mutation of and resistance to the exhausted intellectual options of the present.

Transposed to the site of the Educacene, Noys' praxis of negation raises important provocations about the role of negation, and by extension the role of critique, within educational philosophy, which as we have unfolded above, tends to fetishize the positive-in-itself, in turn painting critique and negation as reactionary and/or unproductive. Of course, and as many thinkers have pointed out, there is good reason to be weary of negativity and critique, both within the field of education and beyond. As Isabelle Stengers notes, for instance, critique too often functions as a mode of "heroic combat" that is incapable of generating new questions and new possibilities due to the way in which it seeks to ratify "*something that has already happened*."⁷¹ Or, as Noys asserts, critique is too often denigrated, particularly within the humanities and social sciences, for a lack of production and/or a failure to contribute "positively" or "affirmatively" to society. Indeed, even while writing these very words we are weary of how our own nay-saying may be taken as just another form of alarmism, inaction, resentment, or even a childish reactionary penchant for destruction. Further, and as Harney and Moten assert, where critique itself has been subsumed under the guise of "good" and/or professional academic practice, where "a

professional education has become a *critical* education," it is important to be both "weary of critique [and] at the same time dedicated to the collectivity of its future, the collectivity that may come to be its future."⁷² This is not unlike the claims made by both Deleuze and Guattari, who also name "those who criticize without creating" as "the plague of philosophy."⁷³ Even in Laruelle's critique of "philosophies of difference," he does not simply criticize and dismiss this philosophical work, but aims to re-invent the concept of difference itself in terms of those philosophical decisions and consequent mixtures that have come to define concepts of difference in the first place.

In addition to happiness and satisfaction, then, proactivity, thinking positive, and creative and/or emergent solutions have also become 'order' words that help to oil the wheels of neoliberal capitalism, while producing an unquestioned culture of affirmation that necessarily occludes what Noys calls the persistence of the negative. While Noys acknowledges such limits of critique, including Deleuze's warning that "[n]o book *against* anything ever had any importance,"⁷⁴ he nevertheless asserts that the precise point of his immanent critique is that "affirmationism in no way exhausts these thinkers' work, individually or collectively."⁷⁵ Indeed, critique and negation cannot, and should not, be things that are argued for in any simple sense as this will only work to either subsume them under a teleological or idealist dialectic against affirmation, or worse, produce a self-fulfilling prophecy where the negative further perpetuates a will-to-nothingness. In short, if a pedagogy of the negative requires

⁶⁹ Noys, *The Persistence of the Negative*, 53.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁷¹ Isabelle Stengers, *In Catastrophic Times: Resisting the Coming Barbarism*, trans. Andrew Goffey (London: Open Humanities Press, 2015), 111.

⁷² Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013), 32.

⁷³ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press: 1994), 28.

⁷⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, trans. Mike Taormina (Los Angeles and New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 192.

⁷⁵ Noys, *The Persistence of the Negative*, 16.

the death of the given world, it also requires the ability to recognize, critique, and ultimately say “no” to the commitments that structure what is perceived as given in the first place.

3.3. *An Un-becoming Proposal: Towards a Dark(er) Deleuze*

A praxis of negation might be further elaborated via Andrew Culp’s *Dark Deleuze*, which looks to Deleuze’s oeuvre to “rehabilitate the destructive force of negativity”⁷⁶ and “say “no” to those who tell us to take the world as it is.”⁷⁷ By extending and mutating Deleuze’s nondialectical negation, Culp advocates the “complete cutterage” from our idols, a strategy paralleled in Claire Colebrook’s⁷⁸ suggestion that the conceptual and intellectual idols of the Anthropocene have entered their twilight. For Culp, the death of idols, including those that have become cliché within the trajectory of Deleuzian theory, constitutes a necessary response to the failure of optimism to engage the challenges of the contemporary era, an assertion that extends to our own advocacy to jettison the obsolete conceptual idols of hope, compulsory happiness, and the “human” venerated by the industry of education. Yet, the murder of idols extends beyond the rejection of those concepts destined for ruin insofar as it implicates also those educational thinkers that would monopolize the Real by operationalizing philosophical categories that neutralizes outside thinking.

Put another way, the dogmatic autoproduction of reality enacted by an academic aristocracy demands unlearning, or better, a mode of unrelenting heresy capable of producing non-standard images of the Real. With this in mind, Culp’s *Dark Deleuze* provides a sketch for how we might learn to overturn doxa of affir-

mationism in favor of negation, or what Culp might call modes of cultivating hatred for the *given* world.⁷⁹ As Culp develops, it is today insufficient to rely on affirmation, lines of flight, or becoming as modes of happy liberation in that such concepts are fundamentally ambivalent. Affects can be ruled by tyrants, molecular revolutions can be made fascist, and nomadic war machines conscripted to State apparatuses.⁸⁰ Extending the importance of destruction in Deleuze, Culp therefore articulates the role of hatred as a necessary countermeasure to cliché, if not the values of compulsory happiness and usefulness in which education is imagined more generally. Not unlike Noys’ praxis of negation, then, the function of negation here becomes an integral mode of resistance for overturning the will-to-nothingness undergirding the Educacene and its projection of a happy future that endlessly wills the same.

Taking off from the “happy Deleuze,” which has also come to undergird much Deleuzian pedagogy, Culp advocates for the destruction of iconoclasm and the cultivation of hatred, which, applied to pedagogical dispositions might be thought of as modes of *un-becoming*.⁸¹ Culp’s notion of un-becoming might be seen as an oblique parallel to Scranton’s proposal of “learning to die in the Anthropocene” in that each posits the necessity of short-circuiting assemblages that would autoproduce the very contingencies of becoming. More directly, the idea of un-becoming responds to the challenge of rethinking what it means to be human when such autoproducer terms are beset by a host of problems at the level of the species and “its” milieu.⁸² For Culp, a measure of un-becoming includes dissipating the connective tissues between the subject and its orthodox referents in “identity,” a caveat that might be understood in terms of standardized

⁷⁶ Culp, *Dark Deleuze*, 1.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁷⁸ Claire Colebrook, *Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction, Vol. 1* (Open Humanities Press, 2014).

⁷⁹ Culp, *Dark Deleuze*, 8.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 8.

⁸¹ Ibid., 26.

⁸² Colebrook, “What is the Anthro-po-political?”

identifications with the human at a species level. In discord with the identitarian idea that “I’m this or I’m that” of which Deleuze and Guattari were consistently critical, Culp advocates the mobilization of corrosive affects capable of dissolving the automatic correspondence of the subject to a name that would designate “the sum of [its] capacities.”⁸³ The corrosive affects advocated by Culp are transpired through the outside thought of ecological and civilizational upheaval in the Anthropocene, where the connective tissue of the human to “its” referential world is dissolved.

As Scranton develops, the “truth of our end” forecast by the precursors of climatological and civilizational collapse wrest the subject from its habitual autoproduction in permanence, hope, stability, pleasure, attachment, and the future.⁸⁴ The affective solvent of inhuman scales, narratives, and registers at the twilight of “man” therefore hold the capacity to commence a mode of un-becoming that palpate conditions for the recommencement of educational thought, not the least of which is the thought of (un)becoming that has nothing to do with entrenching the subject within the cul-de-sac of identitarian thought or the aspiration to become more human.⁸⁵ Rather, the affective solvent of cosmological and metaphysical dilation brought about by planetary transformation founds new conditions for resistance to the present fashions of both affirmationism and all-too-human thinking. Put another way, un-becoming circumvents the habitual entreaty to continually find ourselves *after* ourselves in what has become a new imperative in the era of the Educacene.

3.4. Non-Philosophy and Pedagogical Heresy

Drawn from a darkened Deleuze and underscored by a praxis of negation, the idea of

un-becoming also leads us back to Laruelle, who advocates that the very structure of philosophical thinking can only be grasped “non-philosophically.”⁸⁶ While the idea of un-becoming is punctuated by a world receding from the ambit of human will and desire, Laruelle’s call for non-philosophical intervention, or a “science of the non,” entails the *pedagogical task* of de-philosophizing educational philosophical discourse and, by extension, those idealisms (i.e. affirmationism, the human) on which it relies.

For instance, and as Laruelle articulates, “as a philosophical concept, man is a humanoid traced from the dyad of the anthropoid, which has hardly gone beyond Greek anthropological thought, and of the Judeo-Christian ‘creature.’”⁸⁷ Along similar lines by which Cohen, Colebrook and Miller⁸⁸ demonstrate how the idea of the Anthropocene rehabilitates the myth of a universal humanism, the idea of the human is, for Laruelle, “standardized” through its philosophical classification and by intellectual elites that monopolize, or lay claim to the Real.⁸⁹ Where the idea of the Anthropocene suggests a universal human - *anthropos* - and educational thought works to reproduce a standardized humanism, each commit to the anthropomorphization of the Real. In contradistinction, Laruelle’s advocacy for a non-philosophy of the human posits that despite claims to the Real, both the Real and the human are themselves not given for “us” and that the anthropomorphism of “man” given by philosophy must be rebuked through a process of “indefinition,” which remits the idea of metaphysical becoming for continual indefinition.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ François Laruelle, *Philosophies of Difference: A Critical Introduction to Non-Philosophy*. (London/New York: Continuum, 2010).

⁸⁷ François Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy* (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2013), 78.

⁸⁸ *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols*, eds. Tom Cohen, Claire Colebrook and J. Hillis Miller (Open Humanities Press, 2016).

⁸⁹ Laruelle, *Philosophies of Difference*.

⁹⁰ John Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

⁸³ Culp, *Dark Deleuze*, 27.

⁸⁴ Scranton, *Learning to Die*, 92.

⁸⁵ Culp, *Dark Deleuze*, 28.

For Laruelle, there is no positive correlation of the human to the idea of the human ($a = a$), but only a non-standard, “non-anthropocentric” humanism ($a = z, q, r$, etc...) that is itself resistant to givenness. While “philosophy wants the inhuman, the pre-human, the all-too-human and over-human” it fails to recognize the “ordinary” nothing-but-human”⁹¹ and thus “where there is the human, thought must be made axiom and renounce its sufficiency.”⁹²

Read stereoscopically with Culp’s notion of un-becoming, and underscored by Noys’ praxis of negation, Laruelle’s “science of the non” might be understood as a mode of saying “no” to the image of standardized humanism inhering both the project of education and its institutional aims, while concomitantly perpetrating a heresy against the enlightened norms and authority of the academic literati. Put another way, against the uninhabitable world of non-contingency and categorical obstruction produced by philosophical thinking, Laruelle’s non-philosophy posits in the place of being the mutation of “man” from under its conceptual entrustments. Transposed to the Educacene, the function of pedagogy might be revised via Laruelle’s project so as to harness its potential for un-becoming and, ultimately, alternative trajectories for educational thought. Given today’s situation, defined as it is by the endless recuperation of any new thought under market logics, where “thought has to sell itself to be called ‘a thought’ in the first place,” a pedagogy of the negative might be actualized through non-philosophical practices that are anomalous to habitual standardizations, instead working to a rhythm and logic of their own creation.⁹³ In this way, a pedagogy of the negative provides a mode of challenging the idea that education is but the preparation for a series of market-driven futureless repetitions, in

turn opening up an actual space of inquiry for rethinking the very role, purposes and methods of education.

Returning to the an-archeological site of the Educacene, we speculate that viewed from the vantage of the future, the industry of education will be simultaneously defined by unprecedented planetary transformations and the “happy becoming” of such changes through which a stable world for us is endlessly reproduced and maintained. While the Educacene might be traced in terms of its non-confrontation with ecocatastrophic abolition, a pedagogy of the negative aims to grapple with the persistence of the negative characteristic of today’s “end times” situation, for instance, by confronting the non-existence of the human and the specular qualities of educational futurity. In this way, a pedagogy of the negative actively works against the doxa of affirmationism that has come to pervade the educational imaginary, which nevertheless redoubles the Educacene’s nihilist impulses. A pedagogy of the negative does not see negativity as an anathema to pedagogical thought, as something to be problematized and overcome, but instead recognizes such moods and attitudes as the milieu from which a necessary interruption might arise. By short-circuiting the articulation of only tolerable thoughts, thoughts that endlessly select for the positive and happy-becoming of a world for us, a pedagogy of the negative endeavor towards the death of the given world by exercising a praxis of negation, which recuperates negativity and critique as necessary ruptures within dominant educational postures in order to bring about practices of un-becoming, non-philosophical thinking, and ultimately, pedagogical heresy against the given world.

Press, 2015).

⁹¹ Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, 78.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 79.

⁹³ David Cole, “Educational Non-Philosophy,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 47, no. 9 (2015): 1009 - 1022.

Towards a Non-*Baudrillard*: Theoretical Violence and the Gift

Matthew J. King

Abstract: Against the difficulty of thinking outside conditions of the contemporary age, this paper develops a non-philosophical cloning of concepts introduced in Jean Baudrillard's philosophy, with the aim of introducing a (counter-)gift against the present system's reproduction. Rather than locating a revolutionary subject in the conditions of reference determined by the (capitalist) system, but also rejecting the catastrophic and nihilistic counter-gifts proposed by Baudrillard himself, this paper performs a cloning of a philosophical decision implicitly present in Baudrillard's thinking between symbolic exchange (that which haunts the system), and sign-exchange/political economy (the system itself and its simulations), towards developing a non-classical revolutionary "subject" rooted in a plurality of knowledge practices. The cloning presents two new first names of the Real as "exchanged-without-exchange" and "(counter-)gifted-without-giftedness." These are then taken as tools for orienting thought for imagining the outside of a capitalist/semiotic decision and bringing forth an unbound "man-to-come." The paper thus situates future post-capitalist planning within a democracy of knowledge practices irreducible to the practices of thinking promoted by the system alone. These are already "(counter-)gifted-without-giftedness" to resist, with a theoretical, but not fatal, violence, the congealed thinking of status quo capitalism and fantastical unplanned alternatives.

Matthew J. King is an MA student studying Philosophy at the University of Bristol. He has recently published on Baudrillard and Speculative Realism in *Open Philosophy*, and has further forthcoming papers exploring the potential for Baudrillard to inform contemporary philosophical and practical discussion via the encounter of his own conceptual frameworks with those of other contemporary figures. Other research and publication interests include the nature of technological objects and tendencies in human conflict, the ontology of gender, philosophy of medicine, and sexual ethics. He will be commencing a PhD studying Kantian sexual ethics in October.

thematteo99@gmail.com

Keywords: symbolic exchange, post-capitalism, fatal strategy, nihilism, post-modernism

Introduction

Jean Baudrillard's philosophy has, to some degree, fallen out of fashion in the contemporary scene and his theory is no longer as prevalent as French contemporaries Badiou, Derrida, Deleuze and so on. This is perhaps because of a turn from radical politics towards a nihilistic and ironized pessimism which, according to Anthony King, demonstrated "exactly what critical theorists must not do"¹ and, according to Scott Lash, actually proliferated an "uncritical and even irresponsible celebration"² of the postmodern. His philosophy no longer seems as radical, but it remains interesting to reconsider him as a quintessential thinker of the end times. This involves critically reassessing many of the strategies that he proposed against those conditions he diagnosed which have remained inescapable even today, including the intractability of modern capitalism and cynical nihilism in particular.

Whilst such analysis should not return to Baudrillard merely to repeat him, the inquiry envisions something more radical in a rethinking of his basic philosophical concepts from a "non-philosophical" perspective, putting him into communication and exchange with contemporary concerns in new and previously un-conceived ways. The project undertaken thus seeks to reconstruct Baudrillard via François Laruelle's non-philosophy, conducted through a dualysis of Baudrillard's concepts of symbolic exchange and sign-exchange, gift and counter-gift. The purpose, from a pragmatic perspective, being to develop a revolutionary subject evading the coordinates of the current capitalist system and its so-called "reality," the need for such a subject being justified in the first section out of the apparent failures of Baudrillard's fatalistic post-structuralist renunciation.

¹ Anthony King, "Baudrillard's Nihilism and the End of Theory," *Telos: Critical Theory of the Contemporary*, 112 (1998): 89-106.

² Scott Lash, *Sociology of Postmodernism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 2.

Conceiving of this subject, close readings of Baudrillard's theoretical concepts (the code, sign exchange and symbolic exchange alongside his proposal of "fatal strategies") will be attempted and followed by a justification of their relative limitations. A non-philosophical cloning of the materials of Baudrillard's philosophy of sign and symbolic exchange, gift and counter-gift, marks a key step towards the revitalization of Baudrillardian anti-capitalism. Yet, any new revolutionary subject, to be existing beyond the system's auto-critique and rendering achievable an alternative future to our contemporary capitalist horizon, ought not be recognizable in a classical sense (that is, be representational and naively divided from objects in a leftover from dualist metaphysics), as shall be demonstrated. How, prior to all this though, might two very different thinkers be aligned in the interests of a common task?

Theoretical violence

Such alignment is conceivable around the question of heresy against the manifest and an assessment of whether radical thought ought to be "theoretically violent/terroristic," this being defined as a radical ("violent") dismantling of manifest and ordinary ways of thinking and theorizing, forcing significant reorientation. It is hard to neatly define this without already undermining its intention by returning to theoretical clichés which might undermine said "violence" in returning to convention. The best way of capturing it, however, is by way of explicating a Deleuzian approach of giving to a thinker "a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous,"³ but understood at the level not just of mutated thinkers, but also of a society or politics as a whole. To be theoretically violent is then to take seriously the apparent nihilism or closure of conditions but, using these very conditions, to mutate them in some way that shows them only instead as contingent, as something which is mutated to be 'monstrous' against its apparent

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 6.

closure and completeness. This article moves from the term monstrous towards the term of “violence” because of associations between violence and terror(ism), the latter being something which can be used to orient both thinkers, and the former something which, in their own ways, their theory could be accused of lacking, even in this theoretical way.

Laruelle, considering this violence/terrorism with regard to theory complains in interview with Derrida that “[y]ou tell me that I am practicing terror [...but in fact there] are two readings of my text, obviously. There is a philosophical reading, one in which I do practice terror. And there is a non-philosophical reading, which is obviously my reading. And from the latter point of view, I am reluctant to concede that I am practicing terror.”⁴ He denies an accusation of terror, suggesting it to be a misunderstanding and implying the terroristic act is in fact philosophical rather than non-philosophical. His project was not to declare war on philosophy, to engender fear in it by bringing it to an execution (a question of a complete rejection of philosophy) nor to petrify/“terrorize” it. Rather, it was primarily a specific *employment* of philosophy. Philosophy in the service of a kind of subject in a non-classical sense, “Ordinary man [...] stripped of his qualities or attributes by a wholly positive sufficiency” but not stripped of “his essence,”⁵ and thereby of the means or want to practice philosophy altogether.

Non-philosophy is merely the corresponding mode of practice enabling one to do this, and it is the alternative (philosophy) which, for Laruelle, could be considered terroristic since it pushes everything to signify for the system at hand, as a

result of the structure of philosophical sufficiency (auto-determination of philosophy discussed later). Laruelle’s practice is heretical in resisting forced signification into invariant structures, but wishes to be neither terroristic nor theoretically violent, at least insofar as it does not belong to a structural violence of philosophy and its production of a petrified inability to think outside present coordinates. To consider a non-philosophy as a mode of “terror” itself in a more positive way, striking fear into a corrupt, oppressive or otherwise congealed system preserving certain binaries and power structures is not necessarily something Laruelle is interested in doing, at least directly.

Conversely Baudrillard, contra Laruelle, revels in such a “terroristic” position, naming himself explicitly as “a terrorist and nihilist in theory.”⁶ Indeed, his self-description seems warranted both in terms of his criticism of popular Marxist and structuralist thought, striking fear into any proposed escape from or critique of the system within their coordinates (or decision(s), in Laruelle’s terminology) and his violent pessimism, arguing such escape is possible only through so-called “fatal” strategies, which I address later. Unlike Laruelle’s heresy, however, Baudrillard actually falls short of weaponizing what he also names “[t]heoretical violence,”⁷ giving us instead only strategies that are *superficially* violent instead of genuinely violent against the *status quo*. He produces strategies that are largely impotent for striking fear into the capitalist system or the congealed form of theorizing that accompanies it.

Against this, the project of a non-Baudrillard is one which emphasizes the potential radicality of a theoretical violence which might in fact re-establish potent opposition to the *status quo*, as in Baudrillard, yet relinquish its reliance on fatality

⁴ François Laruelle and Jacques Derrida, “Controversy over the Possibility of a Science of Philosophy,” trans. Robin Mackay, <https://pervegalit.files.wordpress.com/2008/06/laruelle-derrida.pdf>, 5.

⁵ François Laruelle, “A Rigorous Science of Man,” in *From Decision to Heresy*, ed. and trans. Robin Mackay (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2012), 48.

⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra & Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 163.

⁷ Ibid.

and fatal strategy which held him back. Laruelle, rather than Baudrillard, was the properly heretical thinker, but Baudrillard, rather than Laruelle, began from a (philosophical) perspective much more rooted in urgent contemporary concerns (particularly those of the questions of capitalist realism, terror and crisis in meaning), presenting an ambition for radicality which was laudable, but lacking in concrete praxis which was concerning. An adequate synthesis is rendered possible through an elucidation of this new subject hinted at above and named the “man-to-come.” Initially though, a detailed elucidation and criticism of the concepts of a standard (philosophical) Baudrillard requires attention. With the alignment of the thinkers and an elucidation of a general project now complete, that analysis can finally take place.

Baudrillard

The section is split into two. It first considers Baudrillard’s political economy of the sign and how it unearths the limitations of Marxism and the reign of semiotics. This will define the employment of the code and sign exchange in Baudrillard and commence an analysis of symbolic exchange, highlighting its potential utility for articulating a new kind of anti-capitalism. The end of this part indicates to the contrary the failures of this and why it resulted instead in a turn to fatal strategy, particularly due to the limitations of Baudrillard’s “anagrammatic” approach. The second subsection considers these fatal strategies, including the acceleration of the subject’s demise, terror and fiction-theory in particular, addressing their impotence and justifying the need for a new subject facilitating a turn to non-Baudrillard.

Political economy of the sign

Baudrillard employs the concept of a “code” in referring to system(s) of control which constitute the “reality” we experience. Andrew Rob-

inson interprets Baudrillard’s theory of the code as a system which “rests on a claim to programmatic infallibility – the ability to pre-programme reality. It is a “total descriptive universe.”⁸ The concept changes subtly throughout Baudrillard’s career, but it is given even as early as *The System of Objects*, where he argues that the “objects-cum-advertising system” of consumer society is “basically a code,”⁹ one which is “a universal system for the identification of social rank: the code of ‘status’.”¹⁰ Here he distinguishes the code from the system of language, suggesting that it lacks the necessary syntax.¹¹ Later, however, it becomes clear the distinction is not as obvious. To see why, it is necessary to approach Baudrillard’s turn to structuralism to articulate the functioning of the code.

Baudrillard, taking a two-sided distinction in the functioning of the sign developed by Ferdinand de Saussure¹² proposes two dimensions along which language may be understood:

The structural dimension of language (L_1): any term is relative to any other term, “internal to the system and constituted by binary oppositions.”¹³

The functional dimension of language (L_2): every term is related to what it designates.

L_1 refers to relations between signifiers (Sr) whilst L_2 designates the function of the signi-

⁸ Andrew Robinson, “An A to Z of Theory: Jean Baudrillard: The Code,” *Ceasefire Magazine* (April 2012), <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-baudrillard-5>.

⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 2005), 212 [*Le Système des objets* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), 270.] Reference to French editions given for selected texts where their position in Baudrillard’s oeuvre is relevant.

¹⁰ Ibid., [271].

¹¹ Ibid., [270].

¹² Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 76–77.

¹³ Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (London: Sage Publications, 2017), 28.

fied (Sd), meaning that which is denoted by the word. Together they constitute the concept of the sign. For Baudrillard, L_2 mirrors Marxian theorization of use-value (UV), playing “the role of the horizon and the finality of the system of exchange-values” (EV),¹⁴ suggesting that L_2 also finalizes structural relations held together by L_1 . This is a significant identification and is introduced because Baudrillard defends the idea that, as Anthony King puts it, theory “must go beyond Marx to see that claims to material objectivity are themselves part of capitalist hegemony.”¹⁵ Baudrillard wishes to justify this in maintaining that ideology “can no longer be understood as an infra-superstructural relation between a material production (system and relations of production) and a production of signs (culture, etc.), which expresses and masks the constitution at the ‘base’.”¹⁶ In other words, ideology is not, for Baudrillard, the masking over of “true” material conditions at the base, but rather the “*very form* that traverses both.”¹⁷ Ideology thereby “*lies already whole in the relation of EV to UV, that is, in the logic of the commodity*, as is so in the relation of Sr to Sd, i.e., in the internal logic of the sign.”¹⁸ It is precisely these oppositions (EV to UV, Sr to Sd), reproduced at different levels, which highlight the structuring of any *critique* of ideology as *always already structured ideologically*, i.e. that attempts to critique the alienation at the level of exchange, or in the systems of cultural capital picked out in L_1 , cannot simply be conducted from a posited pure viewpoint of “material objectivity” itself. This would perhaps explain why material analysis (and revealed contradictions) do not, on their own, produce adequate opposition to social, economic and emerging environmental

catastrophes, since the true functioning logic of the “material” system is always already obscured. If this is convincing, what would be the path of escape? Baudrillard’s bind seems to mirror the bind of “capitalist realism” identified by Mark Fisher and Slavoj Žižek,¹⁹ a defining issue of our time requiring theoretically violent strategic responses. Baudrillard’s most productive but ultimately impotent proposal for addressing this was to try understanding capitalism, and its sign logic granting objects a kind of “aura”²⁰ fundamentally connected to the reproduction of class, in terms of the obfuscation of a more fundamental *third* form of exchange, one which was symbolic rather than sign-related or economic.

Whereas for Baudrillard sign exchange operates with the split between L_1 and L_2 , Sr and Sd, where the primary term (L_1) represents the play of signifiers (general equivalent) and L_2 merely sustains the fantasy of a real kernel beyond L_1 , symbolic exchange, characteristic according to Baudrillard of primitive societies, operates differently. The reduction of meaning to general equivalency, one that is always deferred, is the logic and functioning of sign exchange, yet conversely symbolic exchange is supposed to function in terms of a “collective movement of exchanges,” as opposed to exchange functioning expressed in “the law of the Father and the individual psychical reality principle.”²¹ In other words, symbolic exchange is a *social* exchange without general equivalent (in law), i.e. without a totalizing structure. It does, however, still have a general structure apparent with each individual exchange. This is best identified in Marcel Mauss’s theory of the gift as “the obligation to give, the obligation to receive and reciprocate.”²² For Baudrillard, symbolic exchange is a

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Anthony King, “Baudrillard’s Nihilism,” 90.

¹⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1981), 143; [*Pour une critique de l’économie politique du signe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 173].

¹⁷ Ibid., 144 [173].

¹⁸ Ibid. [174].

¹⁹ Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009); Slavoj Žižek, *Like a Thief in Broad Daylight* (London: Allen Lane, 2018).

²⁰ Baudrillard, *For A Critique*, 120 [140].

²¹ Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange*, 156.

²² Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, trans. W. D. Halls (Oxon: Routledge, 2002), 50.

form of gift and counter-gift and the fatal strategies introduced later are formed as a kind of “counter-gift” to what the system “gifts” us, an attempt to re-introduce an antagonistic dimension against its supposed totalizing identity. It is through this maneuver that Baudrillard hopes to escape the “orgy of differences” making up what he terms the “‘invention’ of the Other,”²³ something noticeably important in a contemporary situation where alternative futures feel inconceivable and there is no proper antagonistic force contra general equivalency.

There is, however, a significant issue with this “primitive” symbolic exchange which might be said to haunt the general equivalency of an impotent present. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner characterize this in their criticism of Baudrillard through the word “dreaming,” which cannot but convey the proposal’s naivety: “Baudrillard is positing – or dreaming of – another break in history as radical as the rupture between symbolic societies and capitalism which would constitute a return to symbolic societies as his revolutionary alternative.”²⁴ This is “dreaming” because, as Baudrillard himself seems to recognize, if one is not able to “give anything back,” that is, return the gift (counter-gift) to capital, “they are nothing,” and since humans have “put an end to this dual relation”²⁵ by being subsumed, according to Baudrillard’s totalizing logic, by general equivalence, escape strategies have, rather than become revolutionary, instead become *impossible* (or else based purely on contingency or chance). “Everything starts from impossible exchange.

The uncertainty of the world lies in the fact that it has no equivalent anywhere.”²⁶ There might

be “another break in history” but there is no means of controlling it, of revitalizing the “Dual Form” (“revisability internal to the irreversible movement of the real”).²⁷

This dual form, symbolic exchange, thus haunts the sign exchange (and its maximal logic, that of the simulacrum, complete disappearance of reality) but hence always already appears lost, resulting only in “dreaming.” At this point, it is hard to see how radical politics could be satisfied with this bleak and totalizing account, although it might be tempting in light of recent revolutionary failures. Yet, Baudrillard does not intend to suggest there is no appropriate strategy to revive it. Instead, there is an anagrammatic strategy and a turn later to “fatal” strategy which must also be assessed.

Firstly, it is necessary to briefly address the anagrammatic, understood as a way of revitalizing the symbolic through a reestablishment of a mode of poetic language which is not language in its current signifying form (signifier/signified, L_1 and L_2). Baudrillard explicates Saussure’s theory of anagrams²⁸ extending their application beyond Saussure’s analysis of Saturnine poetry towards a general strategy mirroring the primitive symbolic gift-exchange outlined above. Illustrating how anagrammatic strategy is intended to function Baudrillard highlights several principles, the key being that a “vowel has no right to figure within the Saturnine unless it has its counter vowel,”²⁹ paralleling how there was no excessive (deferred) element in the primitive (symbolic) gift-exchange either. Distinguished from ordinary language, whose signs carry an excessive meaning in the interrelations and word associations made between signifiers, the poetic anagram ensures cancellation, hence the crucial element of the law, that “*nothing remains of*

²³ Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1993), 124.

²⁴ Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 115-6.

²⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *The Intelligence of Evil*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 148.

²⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2001): 3.

²⁷ Jean Baudrillard, *The Intelligence of Evil*, 16.

²⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange*, 213-57.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

it.”³⁰ Everything is effectively and smoothly exchanged without any general equivalent, unlike Baudrillard’s totalizing “code” whose exchange value must always have one.³¹ That the poetic is thereby “irreducible to the mode of signification”³² is meant to elucidate the possibility for a language, mode of communication, existing beyond the totalizing code, a way of speaking beyond its “reality.” Yet, clearly, there are some apparent limitations.

Foreshadowing his later nihilistic turn, it seems Baudrillard is quite happy to abandon the concepts of “value,” progress, meaning and so on in his strategy of “poetic” resistance against signification. The poetic is heavily reduced and, in its turn, restricted to a specific logic, one which challenges the system’s code but only in its nihilism, ensuring “nothing remains of it.” To be more specific, it is a variant of nihilism paralleled by Georges Bataille’s theory of excess. Bataille proposes that “Man’s disregard for the material basis of his life [...] assigns to the forces it employs an end which they cannot have. Beyond our immediate ends, man’s activity in fact pursues the useless and infinite fulfillment of the universe,” suggesting moreover that “if the system can no longer grow [...] it must necessarily be lost without profit; it must be spent, willingly or not, gloriously or catastrophically.”³³ Comparing this to Baudrillard’s anagrams, there is both a sense of the futility of projects beyond their immediate functionality (the gift-exchange, or the vowel and the counter vowel) and also of the need for a *complete return*, or sacrifice, whether that be poetic or literal. In either the system’s code, or Baudrillard’s anagrams, there remains no possibility for a subject not immediately and completely returned (sacrificed/lost). Whilst this may be an improvement on the system’s reproduction, simulating only its own *signs*

of functionality (“meaning” and so on), Baudrillard’s poetic language cannot transmit meaning beyond its functionality (its structural system) either. It remains difficult to envisage how it can offer sufficient solutions for long-term planning, something desperately needed to face up to modern threats of ecological catastrophe, mass poverty and so on.

Whilst such global resource shortages and inequalities mean Baudrillard and Bataille are undoubtedly right to raise the significance of the “material basis” for our lives (and our general misunderstandings of it), one must be sceptical of strategies not facilitating global mobilization needed to address that which is so significant. If Baudrillard finds a route back to symbolic exchange only in old, generally long discarded, Latin poetic forms and examples of ritual practice, potlatch, etc. these should be treated as little more than the “dreaming” depicted by Best and Kellner before. There is no obvious possibility of return, and primitivism offers no adequate replacement for the failed Third Worldism Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari were so critical of, disparaging the withdrawal from the world market as “a curious revival of the fascist ‘economic solution’,” urging us instead “to go further,”³⁴ rather than seek naïve escape in the sheer contingency of such perceived withdrawal.

The anagrammatic strategy is unsatisfactory and its parallels with Bataille perhaps foreshadow Baudrillard’s own obsession with excess and transgression, something which Lyotard in “Energumen Capitalism” convincingly critiqued in terms of its impotence.³⁵ Such failure in this regard is even more apparent coming to fatal strategy, where interrelated critiques will receive further address.

³⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 276.

³⁵ Jean- François Lyotard, “Energumen Capitalism,” in *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader*, trans. and ed. Robin Mackay and Armen Avanessian, 2nd edn. (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2017), 203.

³⁰ Ibid., 218.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: Volume 1* (New York: Zone Books, 2013), 21.

Fatal strategy

Best and Kellner interpret “fatal” strategy as the pursuit of “a course of action or trajectory to its extreme, attempting to surpass its limits, to go beyond its boundaries.”³⁶ This approach is, in a broader and more ambiguous way, present as early as *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, where there is already a hint of the extremity which must supposedly be reached if one seeks to overcome the “functional and terrorist organization of the control of meaning.”³⁷ Radical action must, according to Baudrillard, take place through a “total revolution, theoretical and practical” where even signs, the system of language itself, “must burn.”³⁸ Yet, it remains unclear precisely what this “revolution” must look like and, as Baudrillard’s career progressed, his conception of “total revolution,” or even if it should be *revolutionary* at all, would vary quite significantly. Revolutionary strategy became fatal strategy and two key exemplars of this are in terror and the turn to the radicalized object.

The question of terror is prevalent in Baudrillard’s work and his understanding of the phenomenon is quite complex. To begin, the relationship between evil and terror should be considered since, as Baudrillard puts it, “the real problem, the only problem, is: where did Evil go? And the answer is: everywhere.”³⁹ Elucidating this, there are parallels which can be drawn between Baudrillard and his compatriot Alain Badiou, who challenges the contemporary understanding of evil similarly, arguing that the entirety of “contemporary ethical ideology is rooted in the consensual self-evidence of Evil.”⁴⁰ Evil is seen as an *a priori* determination which is only the grounding for a “stodgy conservatism” that “prohibits every broad, positive vi-

sion of possibilities”⁴¹ in strategy. This could be read as a tendency amongst ethicists to reduce conceptions of Evil down towards a general equivalency (*sign* of Evil) against which everything can be measured, such as, for example, the horrors of Nazi Germany. Yet, as Badiou lucidly suggested, this is just to “subordinate the question of Evil,”⁴² not to truly address it. Evil is not found in a “measure without measure”⁴³ of a general equivalent but rather as a multiplicity of singularities irreducible to a single measure. There are many types of Evil, but the “code” of the system, in Baudrillardian terms, reduces it merely to one and, as Baudrillard claims, man can thereby no longer speak of Evil, but merely “discourse on the rights of man – a discourse which is pious, weak, useless and hypocritical.”⁴⁴

Terror, conversely, can be understood as symptomatic of a society where adequate expressions of systematic evil seem impossible and only “violent form[s] of abreaction”⁴⁵ are conceivable alternatives to the code. If evil is “everywhere,” the only transgressive act becomes a (fatal) terrorism which is, in a sense, merely a more accelerated, perhaps the *most* accelerated, form of the system itself. This does not necessarily make terror a potent strategy though, and it can be said, as Baudrillard does, that terrorism already “exists potentially in the emptiness of the screen,”⁴⁶ that is, in that which is made possible and necessitated by mediatization. It is thus not really an external force to capitalism but, as previously suggested, a *symptom* of it: “such violence is not so much an event as the explosive form assumed by an absence of events,”⁴⁷ an absence immanent to the system. There is, however, crucially still a sense in which the system doesn’t *want* to be pushed towards its own limits and to push it

³⁶ Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory*, 131.

³⁷ Jean Baudrillard, *For A Critique*, 163 [199].

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *Transparency*, 81.

⁴⁰ Alain Badiou, *Ethics*, trans. Peter Hallward, (London: Verso, 2001), 58.

⁴¹ Ibid., 14.

⁴² Ibid., 63.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *Transparency*, 85.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 75.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 76.

in this way is, thereby, still more radical than to attempt merely to negate the system in favour of coordinates assumed to be more “natural” or objective.

By accepting the represented (assumed “natural”) logic of the system and categories of labor, it seemed to Baudrillard as if “capital itself whispered these pedantic distinctions to Marx, while never being stupid enough to believe in them itself.”⁴⁸ Instead, capitalism, as Baudrillard identified it, was concerned purely with the reproduction of the *sign* of labor, not with labor purported ends. On this basis alone, there might have been some radicality found within acts of extreme violence, against an economic situation where “life [itself is] taking death hostage,”⁴⁹ reproducing again and again the repressive *sign* of labor and the exploitative systems accompanying it within modern capitalism. The fatal act of terrorist violence is thereby an act *refusing* these coordinates, of reproduction and the identity of the same, becoming instead a *symbolic* act. Yet, at the same time, escaping identity becomes here merely a choice of passive capitalist participation or nihilistic destruction, with no hope of truly escaping or evading the code. Terrorism, then, is still purely nihilistic.

Whilst the function of death in Baudrillard’s primitive society saw its members living with their dead “under the auspices of the ritual and the feast,”⁵⁰ the ritual function of killing (sacrifice) is quite distinct from anything modern, all existing within a dual-relation now having been extinguished. Violent terrorism is, conversely, merely a “monstrous double”⁵¹ of this primitive form, having no potent methodology for sustained liberation at all. Interestingly, however, Baudrillard attempts a rekindling of “terroristic” strategy from the angle of what this inquiry has

called theoretical terror. This has two key modes of approach, both interconnected to some degree. Firstly, it is a “fiction-theory”⁵² exploring a fatal logic with, perhaps, the hope of engendering a rupture bringing about a new proper dual (symbolic) relation. Secondly, employing elements of that former approach too, it is a turn towards the object and a radicalisation of the *fatality* of the subject.

Considering the terror of “fiction-theory,” this is exemplified in the later writings on America,⁵³ which Mike Gane argues to be “the most problematic of all Baudrillard’s writing” and even amount to the “complete abandonment of academic, scientific styles of work.”⁵⁴ That it is “shocking to read” and a “rapid escalation of stakes”⁵⁵ is notable and, perhaps, even a suggestion of its success in engendering a theoretical terror, albeit only if it carries genuine strategic potential. Gane suggests that the “gains come in the theory of simulation,” but from the perspective of radicality this might rather be an even further fall into the trap of impotent totalization, where “it is not even of the slightest relevance to say, at this juncture the real world still exists.”⁵⁶ This reproach is convincing since there is no longer even any hinted gesture at positing a revolutionary theory. A criticism of “postmodern suspicion[s] of positive programmes for social action and emancipation” being “a ‘mere trap’ for rejecting all forms of politics and hence for supporting the present state of affairs,”⁵⁷ a view Best and Kellner trace to Félix Guattari, is thereby even more damning. Fiction-theory might be defended insofar as by forcing “readers to experience the stifling incoherence of a culture of simulacra [...Baudrillard terrorizes the reader]

⁴⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange*, 39.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 151.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 155.

⁵¹ Jean Baudrillard, *Intelligence of Evil*, 145.

⁵² Mike Gane, *Baudrillard’s Bestiary: Baudrillard and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2003), 94.

⁵³ Jean Baudrillard, *America*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2010).

⁵⁴ Mike Gane, *Baudrillard’s Bestiary*, 94.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory*, 97.

forcing them to acknowledge the true nature of their culture,”⁵⁸ as Anthony King suggests, yet this is still not a way out but instead, as King proposes, a way of no longer situating modern capitalism in a historical context and instead absolutizing it, believing its “own self-definition.”⁵⁹

This could only be defended if, in horror of this, the work understood as creative literature became able to mobilize action and open up the world to new possibilities. Yet this is precisely what King suggests is lacking, since “his later writing cannot really be said to be creative prose [...] They do not open up a fragmented world, but rather stand back from that world, offering detached criticisms and generalizations about it.”⁶⁰ Accepting this critique means agreeing that Baudrillard’s turn from representation of the world, in standard academic mode, to a rejection of the very notion of “real world,” as Kane suggested, is still stuck in a representational mode. The last fatal strategy, the theoretical terror engendered by turning away from the representational subject towards the object shows the impotence of such a strategy even if it were to be actualized.

The turn to the object is an attempt to capture and perhaps even accelerate what is termed the “revenge of the object.”⁶¹ Kellner depicts this as “a bizarre metaphysical scenario concerning the triumph of objects over subjects within the ‘obscene’ proliferation of an object world so completely out of control that it surpasses all attempts to understand, conceptualize and control

it.”⁶² Whilst this metaphysical approach is not without interest,⁶³ the inquiry here is concerned with whether it offers radical *theoretical violence*.

Baudrillard draws on a “fatal reversibility of the object” that “lies in wait for us”⁶⁴ and this logic seems to make sense in terms of questions of climate change and ecological catastrophe although, again, it remains unclear why such an approach would actually properly rekindle symbolic exchange in a way that makes escape seem conceivable. Rather, “fatal reversibility” appears only to signify a “fatal” solution instead of an imaginative escape. If the object for Baudrillard, as Kellner argued, “surpasses all attempts to understand,” then does this not render the crises and contradictions of contemporary capital unsurpassable? In merely following or even accelerating this logic Bryan S. Turner and Chris Rojek are right in suggesting that “Baudrillard fatalistically [presents] himself as a symptom instead of a solution,”⁶⁵ and they draw attention here to Baudrillard’s writings on America too, where his “restless circling through the high-ways of America parallels the circlings of the sign in the sign economy,”⁶⁶ simply reproducing the same totalized inescapability.

Richard G. Smith identifies Baudrillard’s thought as an attempted “nonrepresentational theory,”⁶⁷

⁵⁸ Anthony King, *Baudrillard’s Nihilism*, 97.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 94.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 99.

⁶¹ Guy Bellavance, “Revenge of the Crystal: An Interview with Jean Baudrillard,” in *Revenge of the Crystal: Selected Writings on the Modern Object and its Destiny 1968-1983* ed. and trans. Paul Foss and Julian Pefanis (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 18.

⁶² Douglas Kellner, “Jean Baudrillard,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2015), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/ baudrillard/>>.

⁶³ For a proper address of the metaphysical/ontological significance of objects in Baudrillard’s work see Matthew King, “Object-Oriented Baudrillard? Withdrawal and Symbolic Exchange,” *Open Philosophy* 2 (2019), 75-85.

⁶⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, trans. Philip Beitchman and W. G. J. Niesluchowski, ed. Jim Fleming (London: Pluto Press, 1990), 72.

⁶⁵ Chris Rojek and Bryan S. Turner, “Introduction: Regret Baudrillard?” in *Forget Baudrillard*, ed. Chris Rojek and Bryan S. Turner (London: Routledge, 2004), xii.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Richard G. Smith, “Baudrillard’s Nonrepresentational Theory,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21 (2003), 69.

and this mode is particularly apparent in these fatal strategies where Baudrillard turns away from the representational subject to try to escape the logic of the sign via acceleration of the object's *revenge* instead. Yet, in the two previous discussions, his writings were demonstrated not to have achieved a fully non-representational approach and, in analysing the revenge of the object, regrasping symbolic exchange remained impotent and symptomatic rather than genuinely theoretically violent as was hoped. This can all be explained by suggesting that symbolic exchange has become itself a kind of "haunting" failure for Baudrillard, a "real kernel" that only acts as an alibi for sign exchange in the same way that Sr functioned for Sd and EV for UV. In fact, the critique of Baudrillard's totalizing logic of the regime of the sign, the code, could find a new expression in precisely the idea that such totalization is only *assumed* to be the case (by Baudrillard or by us, in more pessimistic moments) insofar as one remains stuck in that earlier ideological relationship shifted to an even more fundamental structure (decision) of sign and symbolic exchange themselves.

However, if there is no return to classical theory and if, in a nihilistic age, there seems no escape from the bind of the end times and imminent catastrophe (even and especially in fatal strategy), it should not mean giving up entirely nor returning to naivety instead. Rather, diagnosing symbolic and sign exchange as a philosophical "decision," a *unilateral dualysis* might, with non-philosophical work, (re-)conceive of a Real irreducible to capitalist reality but without returning to naïve "objective" representation. This is the turn to Laruelle and non-Baudrillard that will now be attempted. The heretical, theoretically violent, solution is not in a return to representational theory, but going still further and, in Laruelle scholar Ray Brassier's terminology, "unbinding the void"⁶⁸ structuring manifes-

tation and representation as such. The classical (revolutionary) subject seems impotent in the face of continued failures and Baudrillardian critique, but the removal of resistant subjectivity altogether proves naïve. Instead, there is perhaps room for a different kind of subjectivity, a subject now as a collective orientation of praxis, something for which a non-Baudrillard might lay fertile ground.

Non-Baudrillard

A brief orientation in Laruelian discourse is first required, preparing for the dense content that follows. For Laruelle the major limitation of standard philosophy is its decisional character, wherein "philosophy claims to determine itself beyond all its empirical determinations," such determinations already being prescribed by itself via an "auto-validation."⁶⁹ The decision leaves no counter-gift to the system (in Baudrillardian terms) and thus puts everything at the service of philosophy rather than at the service of man. Instead, non-philosophy aims to "found philosophy on man rather than the inverse, venture a history of the human existent that no longer owes anything to unitary prejudices."⁷⁰ It seeks to recover that which is "anterior to all decision"⁷¹ and the process of achieving this is called cloning. To clone a decision one must identify a *unilateral dualysis* wherein an identity *in-the-last-instance* to the Real-One is possible. To achieve this, the terms are (re-)considered "as transcendental theorems insofar as they constitute the unilateral duality that accomplishes this identity,"⁷² as theorems of philosophy but no longer ones held to be sufficient. Given this, duality is "unilateral"⁷³

⁶⁸ Ray Brassier, *Nibil Unbound* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 97.

⁶⁹ François Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 4.

⁷⁰ François Laruelle, "Rigorous Science," 46.

⁷¹ François Laruelle, "What Is Non-Philosophy?" in *From Decision to Heresy*, trans. Taylor Adkins, 186.

⁷² François Laruelle, "A Summary of Non-Philosophy" in *From Decision to Heresy*, trans. Ray Brassier, 290, sec. 2.1.5-2.1.6.

⁷³ Ibid.

since it is in-the-last-instance identical (to) the Real-One. This cloning carried out on the basis of a vision-in-One, grasping at this Real-One in its foreclosure from philosophical thought.

This inquiry proposes cloning symbolic exchange and sign exchange, gift and counter-gift to generate two *first names*, each producing some new axioms. This is followed by a brief elucidation of why such dualysis functions (and how identity is only in-the-last-instance). The theoretical violence that this offers the inquiry will then be made apparent.

Non-philosophical dualysis

First names are for Laruelle “non-conceptual symbols [cloned] on the basis of the intuitive and naïve concepts of philosophy,” but with the aim of “the suspension of their philosophical sense.”⁷⁴ To realize a non-Baudrillard, it is necessary to propose first names in order to suspend the “naïve concepts” of Baudrillard’s philosophy, which resulted only in fatal strategies and radical impotence, but without abandoning his contemporary import or theoretical insight. Non-Baudrillard aims to propose a non-fatal vision-in-One irreducible to the manifest decision of signified/signifier or symbolic exchange/sign exchange, the latter of which being only a re-engendering of the problems of the former, as suggested earlier. Two first names of a non-Baudrillard might be “exchanged-without-exchange” and “(counter-)gifted-without-giftedness.”

1. exchanged-without-exchange. This is a first name for the Real but from the angle of exchange and exchangeability. The Real is “exchanged-without-exchange” and from this the following axioms can be formulated: a) there is a fundamental exchanged which in its very fundamentality excludes exchange, b) because it is exchanged-with-

out-exchange and (in)-One, it does not exchange in or outside of itself.

2. (counter-)gifted-without-giftedness.

This is another first name for the Real, now cloned from Baudrillard’s philosophical concepts of the gift (of capitalism) and the counter-gift (thus far only having been fatal). The Real is “(counter-)gifted-without-giftedness and from this the following axiom can be formulated: c) there is a fundamental (counter-)gifted which in its very fundamentality excludes the giftedness (of capitalism).

These are attempts at capturing the immanency of the One prior to decision, in other words, of splitting “the identity of thought, on the one hand, and those practical consequences that thought habitually enunciates or programmes for the world, on the other,”⁷⁵ splitting the mental repetition and (re-)instantiation of a programme of (gifted) contemporary capital (and sign exchange) from an identity of collective or immanent thought (collective insofar as private language is impossible). This reveals that the decisions were only regionally determinate and thus absolutely indeterminate (in-the-last-instance) with regard to the identity of the Real. Yet how does the unilateral duality of each, guaranteeing identity only in-the-last-instance, function?

Taking first exchanged-without-exchange, its unilateral dualysis can be established, addressing the apparent aporia of impossible exchange and sign exchange, by guaranteeing sign exchange through granting it an autonomy but relative to a fundamental or “*transcendental* essence,”⁷⁶ located in the (symbolically-)exchanged-without-(sign-)exchange. Cloning on this basis escapes, or rather *transcendentalizes*, the deferral of sign exchange

⁷⁴ François Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2013), 150.

⁷⁵ François Laruelle, “What Can Non-Philosophy Do?” *Angelaki* 8, no. 2 (2003), 182.

⁷⁶ François Laruelle, *Principles*, 23.

by a radically exchanged of the One that is “absolutely outside-Being or outside-thought.”⁷⁷

That is, whilst sign exchange retains relative autonomy, there is a demonstrated “*unilateral*” character of the causality of the first over the second,⁷⁸ as Laruelle would put it, which unbinds the exchanged itself from the absolute supremacy of the sign (exchange). Likewise, the reversal of the giftedness of capitalism in-the-last-instance to an already (counter-)gifted of the One makes capitalism only an *occasional* cause of the Real. The decision is not closed or sufficient and rather “is no longer primary or determining; it is instead unilaterally directed by a now radical undecided,”⁷⁹ already counter-gifted by the One which is in-the-last-instance exchanged with it, at least, when rendered undecided by the vision-in-One.

Where, then, is the possible conditioning of a new subject, understood as a practical and oriented conditioning of collective action? This new “subject” should be founded as immanent to the radically undecided in-the-last-instance of exchanged-without-exchange, as a counter-gift against capital, but it is unclear that Laruelle’s non-philosophy offers the true theoretical violence by which to bring this through, since it perhaps lacks the “monstrosity” (returning to the Deleuzian term) of radical breakage or refusal. Thus, a few remarks on a provisionally named man-to-come will be given returning to a general register, albeit one now “unbound” from the decision of capitalist sign exchange and ready to grasp philosophy as a tool for new and more radical trajectories.

Man-to-come (the counter-gift)

This concluding section takes up contemporary questioning concerning revolutionary structural change and the obstacles this faces. It strives to

substantiate that an unbounded non-Baudrillard, exchanged-without-exchange and (counter-)gifted-without-giftedness, may offer the theoretical violence prerequisite to face them.

One specific problem encountered by those proposing structural revolution is an essentially theoretical one, concerning predicting life’s requirements under post-capitalism and developing new structures which can mutate to meet emerging demands whilst simultaneously addressing the transitioning from current conditions. In Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams’ *#Accelerate*, a bold vision for non-sentimental “Promethean politics”⁸⁰ is declared, proposing an employment of technological automation to meet growing societal demands within an accelerated post-capitalist future. Yet this politics is not inevitable with technological progress but rather necessitates “post-capitalist planning” needing “both a cognitive map of the existing system and a speculative image of the future economic system,”⁸¹ the latter imagined from outside the apparent sufficiency of the present. There are two key points of concern, one of a contemporary “map” and one of a future “image,” but it can be argued that a non-Baudrillardian project provides interesting clarifications and strategic approaches with both.

Initially, non-Baudrillard can aid the development of a “cognitive map” of the present via understanding and reframing the logic of sign exchange and code found to play a key part in modern capitalist functionality. The reframing of sign exchange shows that it can characterize a logic or tendency of philosophy and intersubjective communication under capitalism without sufficiently overdetermining all disciplines and practices *tout court*. This is because unilateral duality between symbolic and sign exchange does

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁰ Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, “#Accelerate: Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics,” *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader*, ed. Robin Mackay and Armen Avanessian, 2nd ed. (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2017), 360.

⁸¹ Ibid., 356.

not require repeating a naïve position but rather permits, in-the-last-instance, identity to and thus non-sufficiency over other regional domains of knowledge production. This allows the philosophical analysis of a precession of simulacra and the regime of the sign under capitalism (and the disappearance of symbolic exchange which is also an anthropological analysis) to complement, or rather be complemented by, alternative knowledge-producing practices such as scientific endeavors, normative formulation and technological creation. This becomes crucial, particularly in the context of a Promethean project referred to above, since it permits an unbinding of regional sciences or practices from the sign exchange as totalizing logic and thus permits alternative knowings to map the delineations of such logic, firstly, but also, secondly, begins to speculate on an image of possible escape.

Furthermore, non-Baudrillard unbinds the possibility for a radical counter-gift founded in practices immanent to the Real from which a subject, non-representational collective, in fidelity to them can turn *against* capitalism. The possibilities unlocked by technological knowledge production (unconfined by semiotic capitalism) were already mentioned briefly with relation to Srnicek and Williams, but another interconnected broader example can be found in Brassier. He suggests how unbinding a scientific image from the manifest (phenomenological, for Brassier) image provides major theoretical and pragmatic advantages.⁸² Likewise, unbinding scientific knowledge-making practices from sign exchange, in the service of a more utopian and collective knowledge production, no longer reproducing the same oppressive structuration, seems similarly advantageous. The supremacy of the sign is already exchanged-for by the counter-gift of such practices, whose immanent potential need only be brought out – this is what a non-Baudrillard legitimates.

Lastly, therefore, non-Baudrillard takes form,

⁸² Ray Brassier, *Nihil Unbound*.

as its new subject, in this very act of returning to immanent regional knowings anew, from the perspective of a man-to-come recognizing philosophical and capitalist insufficiency in a double sense: decision as insufficient in-the-last-instance and capitalist sign exchange as insufficient normatively, as being inadequate to knowledge production by proliferating the limitations of the manifest image and, according to Srnicek and Williams, holding back technological progress too.⁸³ This facilitates both aspects of post-capitalist planning and is genuinely theoretically violent insofar as it does violence to common theory, refusing to accept naïve or impotent theorizations by returning to classical subjectivity or accepting the totalizing logic presented fatally by Baudrillard. It offers a (counter-)gift to the giftedness of capital in the form of a violent “terrorizing” of congealed thinking and an opening of heretical strategy, or at least more democratic knowledge production, the speculative site of this new subject this article proposes. The work of establishing this having barely begun, but a speculative groundwork at least now laid.

Conclusion

Reinvigorating a thinking of an escape from the end times requires proposing a counter-gift offering theoretical violence against the manifest and closed imagination of theory and capitalism’s *status quo*. This involves re-interrogating Baudrillard’s thinking with regard to sign and symbolic exchange, gift and counter-gift but a rejection of his fatal strategies as being only superficially terroristic towards the manifest, ultimately only pushing totalization and self-destruction further. Escaping this, a non-Baudrillard was proposed which cloned Baudrillard’s concepts into the structures of unilateral dualyses which suspended their philosophical sufficiency. This opens up the potential for a new subject through an unbinding of the manifest, the beginnings of which being examined specu-

⁸³ Srnicek and Williams, *#Accelerate*, 335, sec. 03.3.

lately under the name of a man-to-come.

Assembling all this together entailed examining the conditions of a counter-gift immanent and already-exchanged within exchange itself, suggested to be located in the plurality of knowledge practices, capable of engineering a non-totalizing escape. Future inquiry must push further still, rejecting the sufficiency of philosophy not at the service of man, but also pushing for a subject and image of man (and man in capitalism) which is no longer classically human, with all its histories of racial and gendered exclusions, but rather (in-)human. An (in-)human pragmatic subject as given in the radicality of its knowledge practices, not from a presumed essence located in our primitive past.

Globalization and Global Thought: An Anthropological Extension of Non-Philosophy

Adam Louis-Klein

Abstract: Non-philosophy is a theoretical practice that provides an alternative account of universality in an age of globalization and cultural homogenization. In this article, the author conjoins non-philosophy and ontological anthropology to think a uni-versalist globality against particularist, nationalist, and ethnocentric reactions to globalization. In making an anthropological usage of non-philosophy, the author intends to extend François Laruelle's notion of philosophy as "Greco-Judaic transcendence" beyond its Eurocentric relativity and toward the global field of ontologies. A non-philosophical treatment of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's concept of Amerindian Perspectivism prepares the way for a unified theory of philosophy and anthropology, a discipline simultaneously transcendental and empirical. In trying to articulate a variational and matrixial approach to indigenous ontologies, the author aims at a decolonial and generic extension of non-philosophy.

Adam Louis-Klein has an M.A in anthropology from the University of Chicago and an M.A in philosophy from the New School for Social Research. His work focuses on cosmopolitics, comparative ontology, non-philosophy, and Northwest Amazonian cosmologies. He is interested in studying ontologies empirically in order to develop a non-modern and cosmic style of thought. He is inspired by indigenous cosmology and ancient forms of shamanism, while engaging directly with thinkers of the Western tradition of philosophy, such as Parmenides, Plato, Hegel, Heidegger, or Deleuze. Louis-Klein seeks to make use of Non-philosophy in order to further the ontological turn in anthropology's project of formalizing the open multiplicity of transcendental worlds and in expanding the domain of the thinkable.

kleia731@newschool.edu

Keywords: Non-Philosophy, The Ontological Turn, Ontological Pluralism, Speculative Realism, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro

Introduction

The dialectic of the global and the local poses a question simultaneously logical and political, at once philosophical and anthropological. As Capital extends its domination upon practically all living humans, it produces a combined reaction in the form of particularisms, nationalisms, and ethnocentrisms, limiting the global scope it unfolds. The question of relativism or universalism becomes a pertinent one, and it begins to make sense again, at least in some way, to ask about the meaning of universal humanity as an idea and as a global project.

The scientific means of non-philosophy are well-posed to confront such issues for they make possible a properly *transcendental* usage of anthropological materials, that is, a combination of both empirical data on human beings in their immense diversity and a philosophical concept-space that takes “relativism” beyond itself through unfolding the symmetrical equality of ontological worlds. In disciplinary terms, non-philosophy provides the first part of the equation, the ontological turn in anthropology the second.

The ontological turn in anthropology is a theoretical approach that has developed means to compare ontologies from all over the world while attempting to maintain their radical conceptual autonomy. Transforming anthropology from a discipline that studies a plurality of cultures while assuming the basic naturalist ontology of Western thought in the form of the nature/culture dualism, thinkers in the ontological turn recursively critique Western naturalism from the standpoint of non-Western ontologies that do not recognize the same dualism. The ontological turn has achieved such pluralism through constructing inventive, comparative matrices, as so many fictions in which putatively incompatible ontological worlds can co-exist. Non-phi-

losophy also takes a variational approach and decomposes philosophy into a set of possible variants, such as “philosophies of difference” or “philosophies of multiplicity,” or the Judaic vs. Greek experiences of Being and the Other. Non-philosophy has not, however, thus far been expanded towards non-Western ontologies, and remains limited by a provisional Western localism of self-critique, in danger of repeating Europe’s critical over-reflexivity that it has tried to challenge. This article combines these two discourses in order to perform an extension of non-philosophy towards the global field of varying ontologies, while also developing a criticism of the ontological turn that isolates its own premature modalities of closure, despite its theoretical advances. While non-philosophy so far has limited treatment of philosophy to that of European “Greco-Judaic transcendence,”¹ the goal in this article is to expand the discipline toward the global field of ontologies as a plural space of ontologies that is *uni-versal* and irreducible to reactive, identificatory typologies that accompany the contemporary processes of globalization. As I develop below, non-philosophical tools allow us to situate *local transcendentals* as consisting within a *global(-without-globalization) matrix* of thought, under-determining those sorts of closure that either confuse the domains of the local and the global or pre-maturely localize a global field of possibility. I focus on Viveiros de Castro’s concept of Amerindian Perspectivism² as an instance of localizing closure even as it makes crucial advances in thinking an unbound multiplicity of transcendental worlds.

The extension of Non-Philosophy towards a global matrix of ontology requires defining

¹ Cf. François Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction: The Ruins of Athens and Jerusalem*, trans. Robin Mackay (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

² In this article, I treat Amerindian Perspectivism as a concept developed by Viveiros de Castro on the basis of ethnographic accounts of Amerindian systems of thought, later expanded to a general ontological theory and method of anthropological comparison. My capitalization of the term aims to highlight a certain distance between this concept and the ideas of Amerindians themselves.

the notion of “transcendental world” or “local transcendental” as exceeding European “Greco-Judaic transcendence,” and simultaneously developing the non-philosophical formalism. I introduce the concept of the “local transcendental” to refine the concept of ontology to include the aspect of an ontology that renders it lived, constitutive, and bounded by conceptual limits. I also link the local transcendental to non-philosophy as a transcendental thought that works upon existent transcendental structures. Following methodologies laid out in Martin Holbraad’s *Truth in Motion: The Recursive Anthropology of Cuban Divination*³, the anthropologist in the field confronts *ethnographic alterity*, inconsistencies of conceptualization that demand comparative matrices to render alien ontological worlds intelligible. Building on Holbraad’s methodology of ethnographic alterity, but also anticipating the transcendental formalization that I develop in this article, I define alter-transcendental worlds as follows: 1) transcendental *limits* to the ethnographer’s indigenous transcendentials, 2) phenomenological “fields,” “spaces” or “worlds” as much as conceptual systems “lived through” by really existing humans, 3) consisting of (relatively) autonomous semantic contents and structures.

Non-Philosophical Formalism

What follows is a description of non-philosophy that places non-philosophy in dialogue with the concepts of ontological anthropology, and paves the way for a unified formalization of these two discourses. I offer this formalization as a new usage and illustration of non-philosophy that expands its operations to the domain of non-Western ontologies and anthropological matrices of comparison. The key innovation is the decomposition of philosophy into discrete units termed *logemes* and *philosophemes*, which I un-

derstand to be analogous to *mythemes* as defined by Claude Lévi-Strauss in his structural analysis of mythology.⁴ In principle, there should be *transformational relations*, formal relationships that transform one variant into another or “generate” a total set, between these units and the various *semes/semantic contents* of non-Western ontologies. The terms *logeme* and *philosopheme* suggest a rooting in Western philosophy but these hypothesized transformations (which would also be *trans-lations*) extend the non-philosophical concept of philosophy to full-scale alter-ontologies composed of such *semes*.⁵

According to Laruelle, philosophy *qua a priori* invariant is defined by *auto-position*. Philosophy divides “reality” into at least two terms that can be called “thought” and “being” and it aims to *correlate* and *synthesize* the two terms by one of them, “thought.” Since thought is responsible for both division and synthesis, auto-position is the transcendental “loop” of conceptual thought: a *circular* and *tautological* self-sufficiency.⁶ This self-relation can be called a 3/2 or 2/3 transcendental arithmetic of terms and relations, two terms by a relation, provided that terms may

⁴ Lévi-Strauss defines the *mytheme* on analogy with the phoneme as a bundle of distinctive features, distinguished from other mythemes on multiple, qualitative axes (such as compact/diffuse, grave/acute for phonemes, or raw/cooked, dry/wet for mythemes). However, whereas the phoneme serves to differentiate meaning without necessarily possessing any semantic content itself, the *mytheme* is *intrinsically semantic* and imposes a “grid of intelligibility” upon experience. The *logeme* is like the *mytheme* in being both semantically-saturated and an organizer of experience, the term *logeme* simply highlighting the *transcendental* function of *logemes*. In the end, mythology may be equally transcendental, a point which, however, cannot be sufficiently demonstrated in this article. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Jealous Potter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 142-148. See also Roman Jakobson, *Fundamentals of Language* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002).

⁵ *Semes* is the general concept, *logemes* and *philosophemes* being cases of “semes” (see footnote 4).

⁶ François Laruelle, *The Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2013), 39.

³ Martin Holbraad, *Truth in Motion: The Recursive Anthropology of Cuban Divination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 237-259.

also act as relations and relations as terms; that is, “term” and “relation” are here reversible.⁷ In my usage of non-philosophy, $3/2$ will mean that the synthesis is termed explicitly, $2/3$ that it is performed implicitly.

I call the *terms* of the invariant structure of philosophy *philosophemes* or *logemes*. *Logemes* are the onto-logical concepts that might form the general stock of any formal and/or fundamental ontology. In Western philosophy, their semantic status and function serve as the subject of perennial “debates.” An improvised list might feature: Quantity, Quality, Relation, Property, Substance, Form, Content, Class, Extension, Intension, Sense, Reference, Subject, Object, Sameness, Difference, Opposition, Discrete, Continuous, Essence, Existence, and so on. The invariant philosophical structure is a set of *relations* between *logemes* that stand under a central *philosopheme*, itself a *logeme*. The *philosopheme* is the *operator of unification* for the *logemes*, or the “principle” of their *relation*. Synthesis by “thought” is *due to the philosopheme*. Generally, the philosopheme is that *logeme* which itself describes the *relation* between logemes, such as Opposition, or Difference (e.g. in Viveiros de Castro) as various figures of “Relation” itself.

Every philosopheme is a logeme. Philosophy splits reality into “thought” (a set of *logemes*) and “being” (inhering in the Real-One, but the concept of which is a *logeme*). The central *philosopheme* is either explicit or implicit, in one case, as a centrally stated term of a philosophy, in the other, implicit in the performances or “gestures” of that philosophy. *The statement that every philosopheme is a logeme is equivalent to the statement that philosophy is a structure of double transcendence or $3/2$ ($2/3$) transcendental arithmetic.*

⁷ Anthropologists may recognize in the $3/2$ or $2/3$ structure of philosophy something similar to Louis Dumont’s concept of “hierarchical encompassment.” Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

Non-philosophy starts with an axiom that posits the Real as irreducible to, and distinct from, the act of division internal to philosophy: the One is *given as radically undivided*.⁸ This statement effects an *epoché* or bracketing of the philosophical “relating” of terms and relations insofar as any *relation* presupposes at least a *division* of terms to be related. Every philosophy involves a pre-posed de-cision (related to the idea of scission or dividing) to effect itself as philosophical auto-position.⁹ Granted that thinking involves relation or transcendence (as in the very act of thought as it transcends toward an “object of thought” or “the world” generally), the One is *foreclosed* to thought. The Real-One being taken, however, as a *given*, I develop a “hypothetico-deductive” *modelling* using operationally defined concepts themselves drawn from the now transcendental-reduced discourse of philosophy. I also show below how non-Western ontological worlds can be modeled in a similar way.

The axiom of the One’s indivision implies that the diverse forms of Philosophy reduce to an *a priori* invariant of division and auto-positional synthesis, an induction warranted from the perspective of the One.¹⁰ If the basic structure of Philosophy is invariant, one can construct at the same time systems of *variants* as combinatorial transformations (permutations of *logemes*) of an isomorphic form (each permutation remains $3/2$). The science of ontologies takes each ontology (= philosophy, in its minimal form and

⁸ Note that this makes non-philosophical formalism essentially different from a logico-mathematical formalism in which the syntactical constraints of the language are given *prior* to the stating of axioms. Non-Philosophy relies on certain axioms that themselves condition the rules of a conceptual (i.e. intrinsically semantic) syntax.

⁹ François Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 231-244.

¹⁰ An *induction* because philosophies appear in their empirical diversity, from which is extracted an *a priori* identity. “Induction” moves *from the empirical* to the *a priori*, or at least to the general; *deduction* moves fully within the *a priori* (developed below in the form of the clone).

definition)¹¹ as a *local model* of the One, or to use another first name, the Human. Indeed, these are already the sorts of ontologies that thinkers of the ontological turn have begun to isolate. In terms of non-philosophy, the matrix of ontologies constructed here will be *global*, rooted in the axiom of the Human *indifferent to the auto-position of any particular, local ontology, or any given de-cision*. The “relation” between local ontologies is non-local or global by being immanently “in-One,” for the One is the immanent and non-relational core of any relational matrix, in which the matrix “inheres.” In other words, the reduction of the diversity of philosophies to the identical philosophical invariant, now linked to the One, *unbinds* the closure that each philosophy effects, while at the same time making it uniquely intelligible in terms of an invariant formalism.

Anthropological Matrices of Comparison

Decomposing philosophy into a structure of relations and terms allows me to connect the non-philosophical concept of philosophy explicitly to the models of non-Western ontologies proposed by the ontological turn. The problem of relations and terms has been an important theme in the ontological turn. For example, in Marilyn Strathern’s matrix of Western versus Melanesian ontologies of the person, a gift/commodity duality frames an inversion between a Western schema that takes individuals as given terms to be deliberately “relationized,” in the form of “society” (relations as compositionally structuring the social whole) and a Melanesian conceptuality that takes relations as given, and in which (in)dividuals emerge through purposeful acts of exhibition and exchange.¹² She con-

structs an inversion between term/relation, two possibilities of a 2x2 matrix *term/relation vs. given/produced*. The *comparanda* are different articulations of relation/term: Westerners take terms as given and relations as produced, Melanesians would take terms as produced and relations as given.¹³ The comparison is *itself* a relation, what Viveiros de Castro calls “the relation of anthropological comparison.”¹⁴ In this case, the terms of this relation are themselves relations of relation and term: the relation of anthropological comparison inverts the relation between term/relation in each case.

The relation of anthropological comparison in certain ways poses the same problem as the 3/2 (or 2/3) structure of philosophy that non-philosophy isolates. Viveiros de Castro writes how anthropology constructs itself as a relation between two discourses, that of “the anthropologist” and that of “the native,” as two structural positions.¹⁵ The position of the anthropologist is in general “doubled” because the anthropologist not only produces the relation but attempts to determine the common horizon of its two objects. Generally, the anthropologist and the native confront one another as members of two different “cultures,” but it is the anthropologist who, in the last instance, refers the relation to the referential background of “nature” of which the former knows but the latter is held to be ignorant.

I hope to underdetermine as much as possible the over-determining effects of the relation of anthropological comparison using both non-philosophical tools and the anthropological concept of *symmetrization*. Symmetrization is a way of rendering Western and Non-Western

¹¹ The concept of philosophy in non-philosophy is extended to global ontologies, in terms of the formal definition of philosophy as auto-position and the minimal definition of alter-transcendentals described above.

¹² Cf. Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

¹³ This is of course a very formal rendering that does not capture what is specific to Strathern’s description of Melanesian personhood, but I offer it here to work out the basic structural moves needed to develop the unified theory of anthropology and philosophy.

¹⁴ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “Perspectival Anthropology and The Method of Controlled Equivocation,” *Tipiti: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 2, no. 1 (2004): 3-22.

¹⁵ Ibid.

conceptual frames as inverse variants of each other, thus in a non-hierarchical relation of equality. An important instance of symmetrization links it to the criticism of the nature/culture dualism. If it is “the anthropologist” who refers relations between cultures to a common substrate of “nature” and arbitrates this relation through a “third” instance or meta-language, many thinkers in the ontological turn have found a way to *invert* the dualism. In Viveiros de Castro’s thinking, if Western naturalist ontology can be described as a position of “mononaturalism and multiculturalism” (multiple perspectives on a single nature), the confrontation with the ethnographic alterity of Amazonian ontology reveals an inverted structure of “monoculturalism and multinaturalism” (a single form of personhood but a multiplicity of kinds of bodies).

However, for Viveiros de Castro, relationality ends up being an ontology in itself *via* the ontologization of alterity. Rather than a modelling of plural ontologies, Viveiros de Castro’s perspectivism is an “ontology of ontologies” as the ontology that accounts for the relation between ontologies themselves. On the contrary, I follow Levi-Strauss’s method in the *Mythologiques*¹⁶ in rendering the structure of relations and terms open and untotizable in the last instance, irreducible to a single ontology of ontologies.¹⁷ In

¹⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques*, 4 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1964, 1966, 1968, 1971).

¹⁷ This strategy suggests a different relationship between the ontological turn and Levi-Strauss’s work than that developed by Viveiros de Castro. The untotizability of the matrix of ontologies arises from the application of transformational method to ontologies in their multiplicity and plurivocity, rather than a local ontologization of “transformation” as “Becoming” or “Difference.” Viveiros de Castro highlights Levi-Strauss’s emphasis upon untotizability and disequilibrium in the generativity of mythology, but he seems to think this feature of Levi-Strauss’s method derives entirely from its *content* (Amerindian mythology or Amerindian ontology itself), as if the dynamic disequilibrium of *the model* could be simply identified with *perspectivist ontology*. Viveiros de Castro here typically *fuses model and thing* – the method of transformational analysis as *explanans* and Amerindian thought as *explanandum* – whereas it was precisely Lévi-Strauss’s contention that the untotizability of myth results from the inability of thinking to subsume the Real.

other words, *the relations between ontologies themselves must remain non-local*.

A Symptomatic Reading of Viveiros de Castro’s Concept of Perspectivism

I will now trace Viveiros de Castro’s development of the concept of Amerindian perspectivism to determine precisely where and how his differential ontology winds up in auto-position. I develop a “symptomatic reading” of Viveiros de Castro’s trajectory that locates the uncontrolled generalizability of Amerindian Perspectivism – initially an intra-Amazonian ethnographic heuristic but then expanded to a general ontological theory – as a symptom of auto-positional structure, after which I isolate the tautological structure of his developed theory through the thought experiment of a dialogue between a perspectivist and a naturalist. I thus critique the premature localism of Viveiros de Castro’s concept of perspectivism, while attempting to build on it as a method to think the multiplicity of local transcendentals, a global matrix of ontologies.

The trajectory starts from Viveiros de Castro’s early ethnography on the Tupian Arawaté in a study titled, *From the Enemy’s Point of View*.¹⁸ In this work, Viveiros de Castro unveils an ontology essentially “open to the outside,” a *socius* structured by radical alterity, but here he does so *via* a comparison *internal* to the field of Amazonian ethnology. A distinction between Tupi and Ge societies underlies the conceptual scheme of the study. Viveiros de Castro considers Tupi societies to be “metonymic” and “sacrificial,” founded on historicity and the diachronic unfolding of a series, while the Ge, he claims, are metaphoric and “totemic,” characterized by synchronic classifications and analogical relationships. While Arawaté society roots itself in an individualist eschatology of destiny and futurity, exemplified by the “killer-singer” who tries to

¹⁸ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy’s Point of View: Humanity and Divinity in an Amazonian Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

attain the status of *Mai* cannibal gods of sky, Ge societies, with their cross-cutting dualisms and concentric village structures, interiorize social totality through a mirror-like dialectic of self and other. Whereas the Tupi *socius* opens itself essentially to alterity and vehemently desires the Other, Ge society attempts closure. I sense that part of what underlies this comparison is not merely the metonymic/metaphoric and sacrificial/totemic oppositions, but a sort of Amazonian variant of Deleuze against Hegel, *difference vs. identity*.

Viveiros de Castro's 1998 article, "Along the Spider Thread: Virtuality, Actualization, and the Kinship Process in Amazonia" provides substantial evidence that it is the Tupi side of the comparison that he has generalized.¹⁹ In this later essay, Viveiros de Castro aims to show that *Amazonian societies in general* exist through a kinship process that attenuates diffuse and virtual relations of affinity through socializing acts of kinship, rooted in a cosmology in which affinity precedes and encompasses kinship. Amazonian societies actively work over kinship from the background of a potentially threatening otherness that extends beyond the human, an open multiplicity of animals, spirits, and the dead, the spiritualized realm of "virtual affinity."²⁰ Viveiros de Castro reverses the classic matrix of kinship:affinity::nature:culture in the sense of kinship as *given* blood relations or descent groups and *produced* affinal alliances and reciprocities, arguing that Amazonian sociality is a kind of "pre-elementary" kinship structure, supplementing the typology of the *Elementary Structures of Kinship* ("elementary" as rooted in prescriptive alliance, "pre-elementary" in so far as alliance is prior to kinship).²¹ In the Amazon, affinity comes first as a given and kinship reveals itself as a corporeal labor, the active molding of

the body. If affinity is prior to kinship, Viveiros de Castro explicitly interprets this as the notion that difference is prior to identity:

The real significance of the idea of affinity as the given...is that it constitutes a privileged instantiation of the ontological premises of Amazonian life-worlds. The first and foremost of these premises is: identity is a particular case of difference. Just as cold is the relative absence of heat, but not vice-versa (heat is a quantity with no negative state), so identity is the relative absence of difference, but not vice-versa. Put otherwise, only difference exists in greater or lesser intensity: this is the nature of the measured value. Transposing this analogy to the domain of kinship - and taking "kinship" as a convenient abbreviation for what, in Amazonia, would be better to call a theory of *generalized relationality* - I could say that consanguinity is a limit value of affinity.²²

So, the structure of Amazonian *sociality* is a kind of *ontology*, a set of "premises" in which difference precedes identity as analogous to affinity preceding kinship. The primacy of alterity will later become the primacy of *divergent perspectives* in the concept of "equivocation," the model expanding far beyond its specific utility as a heuristic to understand Amazonian societies at the local level. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro moves from the level of Tupi-Ge comparison to Amazonian kinship and ultimately a transcendental theory of "generalized relationality" in the mode of "equivocation."

The Ge societies appear to have dropped out from the model, perhaps symptomatic of a widening and uncontrolled generalizability. Viveiros de Castro gives only minute indications that the

¹⁹ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds* (Chicago: Hau, 2015), 97-138.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

²¹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

²² Italics added. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Relative Native*, 111-112.

Ge can be fitted into this model, when he refers to Elizabeth Ewart's dissertation on the Panara, *Space and Society in Central Brazil: A Panara Ethnography*.²³ Ewart does much to show the degree to which the anthropologists of the Ge, such as those of the *Dialectical Societies* collection,²⁴ may have exaggerated the self-sufficient and stabilizing function of the concentric and dyadic organization of Ge societies.²⁵ In an admirable reading of Levi-Strauss's reflections on the relation between concentric and asymmetrical dualisms, Ewart shows how the center of a Ge village might be a locus exteriority and transformation, while it is the periphery which represents the "we" of Panara society. In addition, Ewart understands the moiety relations of Panara within the broader category of *hipe* ("others") as a mode of exteriority. It is not clear, however, that Ewart's thesis is enough to settle the question as to the comparability of Ge and Tupi societies. At the very least, the relation of her work to the specificities of Viveiros de Castro's model is not explicit.

Viveiros de Castro's Arawaté-inspired model privileges Tupinamba asymmetry over the symmetrical or mirror-like dialectic of Ge societies, a move that has consequences for the further development of the model. In my view, Viveiros de Castro appears to reduce *dualistic opposition* to *divergent difference*, and he subsumes *opposites* within the general idea of *perspectival divergence*. In his work on the Arawaté, Viveiros de Castro describes a practice in which the aim of the killer-singer is to see himself from the enemy's point of view. The killer's songs take on

the voice of his victim as he describes, as in one haunting case, the enemy seeing his killer before him as he lies dying in the "great patio" of the vultures (the clearing in the forest where they descend upon their carrion).²⁶ But all of this is through the mouth of the killer who thereby sees *himself*, but through the vision of his enemy. The killer treats himself as an enemy in the sense of *an enemy to the enemy* (his divinization and approximation to the *Mai*). Viveiros de Castro describes the "becoming-other" at the heart of Tupi eschatology as a movement of *the othering of the other* (seeing oneself as other to the other, by *becoming that other*). Yet, if one accepts the contrast between the "dialectical" self-mirroring of self and other of the Ge and Tupian "metonymic" historicity, then it seems that this othering of the other must be in a sense *without symmetry, without reflection*.²⁷ Viveiros de Castro can only see such symmetry as a "narcissism," and Tupinamba cannibalism, as the Dionysian divinization of "the raw" (external to "culture"), can only be a torsion without reflection, the undoing of all symmetry:

I shall attain fullness of being only after...I have devoured (slain) an enemy on earth, which turns me into an enemy, then a god. The system is like a twisted circular band with no side: the deceased

²³ In a footnote, no. 46, p. 137 of *The Relative Native*, Viveiros de Castro cites Elizabeth Ewart, *Space and Society in Central Brazil: A Panara Ethnography* (London: A&C Black, 2013).

²⁴ *Dialectical Societies: The Gê and Bororo of Central Brazil*, ed. David Maybury-Lewis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

²⁵ Cf. Terence Turner, "Kinship, Household, and Community among the Kayapó," in *Dialectical Societies: The Gê and Bororo of Central Brazil*, ed. by David Maybury-Lewis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 179 - 214.

²⁶ Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View*, 243.

²⁷ Contrast the example of Bororo cosmology, in which a "becoming-other" is central to the experience of the *aroe* souls (timeless categorical, or "totemic" forms that define clan-belonging), whereby persons of different moieties impersonate the deceased of the other moiety, truly "becoming" them, incarnating their souls, and taking on their social personality upon death. In general, in Bororo cosmology, I can encounter my own personal identity only in the other, through members of the other moiety who adorn themselves with my own clan-specific ornamentation and symbolic paraphernalia and impersonate me upon death. But all of this takes place thoroughly within a *reciprocal* cycle of prestations, founded on the *symmetrical* relation of the two moieties in a system of "restricted exchange." Christopher J. Crocker, *Vital Souls: Bororo Cosmology, Natural Symbolism, and Shamanism* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985).

is the enemy, the enemy is the god, the god IS the deceased, and the deceased is the self. *The cannibal cogito does not express the narcissistic geometry of representation, but the topological torsion of other-becoming.* The peculiar inversion of Arawaté perspectivism, which posits the human subject as the object of divine anthropophagy, suggests something that was already evident in the Tupinamba case: that Tupi-Guarani cannibalism is the opposite of a narcissistic incorporation; it is an alteration, a becoming.²⁸ (my emphasis)

Viveiros de Castro claims fidelity to Levi-Strauss's concept of the dynamic disequilibrium of Amerindian mythology, an influence on the model of virtual affinity in its foregrounding of asymmetry and the primacy of difference. Levi-Strauss did not extract the problem of duality from a complex "interplay" between asymmetry and symmetry, however. Indeed, if symmetrization thinks the equality of local ontologies, for Viveiros de Castro, this symmetry *appears to be reduced to the specific asymmetry of Amerindian perspectivism*. Thus, Viveiros de Castro's perspectivism treats ontologies not equally or "symmetrically" but hierarchically, in terms of the asymmetry of perspectivism itself. A symptom of this hierarchy is the way the model oscillates between an empirically specific heuristic and a global-transcendental internalization of plurality and multiplicity as "perspectival divergence" and "generalized relationality:" perspectivism always seems capable of doing too much, expanding itself as an unbounded generality to relate all ontologies to each other in terms of divergence. In contrast, the non-philosophical approach emphasizes the asymmetry or unilaterality between *thinking and the real* as the basic asymmetry, and as a means to *underdetermine* the auto-position of the model.

Viveiros de Castro gives the most explicit elaboration of the theory of Amerindian perspectivism

in his texts on cosmological deixis and on the concept of equivocation. I will summarize the basic and schematic points of this theory, in order to then locate as precisely as possible its tautological structure and complete my critique.

In the West, nature and culture relate to each other in a natural manner (culture being a break from nature while also an extension of it), while in the Amazon, they do so culturally; this is an inversion of "encompassment" of the nature/culture dualism by one or the other of its terms.²⁹ According to Western naturalism, humans differ from non-human beings *via* their distinctive predicates of mindedness and culture, while sharing with those beings a physical consubstantiality on the given plane of Nature (e.g. in the universality of physical laws). Inversely, in the Amazon, humans and animals share common *humanity* in the form of personhood and perspective, though differing in corporeal forms, habits, and affects. This inversion of encompassment is analogous to the inversion of the given and the produced, the conditions of agential action versus the intentions of those agents, as in Marilyn Strathern's matrix. Westerners take Nature and natural beings as *givens* (e.g. the genetic code), but aim to produce or "construct" culture (e.g. "cultural norms"), differentiating "customs" and "points of view" from a generalized background of physical reality. In other words, nature as a *ground* makes way for cultures as differentiating *figures*. However, in Amazonia, culture is a given (potential humanity lurks everywhere in the multiplicity of animals, spirits, and the dead) while "nature" must be produced through the work of differentiating bodies, as in practices of body modification, face paint-

²⁹ It is inherent in Western naturalism to oscillate between the discontinuity and continuity of culture with nature. Marilyn Strathern, "No Nature, No Culture: The Hagen Case," in *Nature, Culture and Gender*, ed. Carol P. McCormack and Marilyn Strathern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 174-222.

²⁸ Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View*, 254.

ing, masks/ornamentation, the couvade, etc.³⁰ Everything in the Amazonian ontology carries a potential “point of view,” figured in the idiom of cultural relationships – animals have kin and affines, drink beer, live in houses – while bodies are specified as figures, an application of Roy Wagner’s concept of a figure-ground inversion, transformed in this case from a perceptual-semiotic inversion to a fully ontological one.³¹

In the Western ontology, natural beings are given, so the problem is how to correctly perform “cultural constructs” which are “adequate” to them. Multiple cultures elaborate different interpretations or worldviews, but a common field of *referents* act as the objective poles and standards of such interpretations. On the other hand, in the Amazonian ontology, while every entity might see itself as human, not everything these beings see is itself the same. Subjects perceive through a common cultural idiom, but *the content* of that perception is different, for each subjectivity is to be specified by differing bodily habits and affects. The *sense* of what subjects see is the same, a culturalized field of meanings, but the *referents* differ: what I see as blood, a jaguar sees as manioc beer; what I see as a termite hill, an ant-eater sees as lunch.³² “Blood” would be a “homonym,” hiding an equivocation of two referents (two different *entities* being referred to), as opposed to a mere polysemy relative to a referential pole (two different ways of looking at the same thing). The “morning star” and the “evening star” are simply “synonyms,” multiple senses of a single referent.³³

“Cultural relativism” is part of the Western schema, for the unifying referent of a “thing in-itself” underlies the difference between cultural

points of view as an epistemological limit of knowledge. Amazonian perspectivism, according to Viveiros de Castro, rejects a thing-in-itself and the epistemology of representation that goes along with it, instead positively ontologizing perspective as the basic substrate of reality. Amazonian ontology abounds in the disjunctive divergence of equivocal meanings, a multiplicity not of worldviews but *genuinely different ontic worlds*. The method of controlled equivocation treats positively the inherent tendency to misunderstanding between conceptual frameworks and ontologies. If alter-transcendentals pose limits to our conceptualities, these limits are differential relations of equivocation. “Being” is an infinite field of such limits, the divergent continuum itself. For Viveiros de Castro, the limit of the Other is ontologized and transcendence remixed with immanence.

The Tautology of Equivocation, A Thought Experiment

I offer the thought experiment of a dialogue between a perspectivist and naturalist to demonstrate the tautological quality of Viveiros de Castro’s concept of Amerindian Perspectivism. The naturalist enters the dialogue simply by offering a counter-ontology to perspectivism, thus proposing a *limit* to perspectivist ontology. There are two possibilities to how the dialogue could unfold: first, the proponents begin a “genuine” dialogue in which some criteria of decidability between such ontologies is available; second, the proponents realize the equivocal and radically incommensurable relationship of their two positions, embracing a productive equivocation. In the first case, *the very conditions* of the dialogue should be *rejected* by the perspectivist. The dialogue presupposes a *naturalist* ontology of common reference, a criterion of referential “truth” and “falsity” for various “worldviews” that aim to cognize a pre-given objectivity. The consistent perspectivist should reject the dialogue altogether and instead propose an “anti-dialogue,”

³⁰ Aparecida Villaça, “Making Kin out of Others in Amazonia,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 8, no. 2 (2002): 347-365.

³¹ Roy Wagner, *Symbols That Stand for Themselves* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

³² Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, no. 3 (1998): 469-488.

³³ Viveiros de Castro, “Perspectival Anthropology.”

the result of which is the productive equivocation. According to the conditions of the anti-dialogue, the perspectivist has *won by fiat*: the perspectivist's ontology describes the relationship between the two ontologies themselves, *the structure of the anti-dialogue itself*. While, on the other hand, the conditions of the *dialogue* might be said to have guaranteed victory for *the naturalist* by fiat since a "genuine" dialogue means nothing but the mutual presupposition of common referents or some universal standard of evaluation. Each schema demonstrates its horizon of circular, auto-positional foundation and the result might be described as an *aporia*. The authority of any given philosophy reveals itself as radically *undecidable* and, from the standpoint of non-philosophy, each de-cision is to be taken as equivalent.

One of the great strengths of Viveiros de Castro's model, nevertheless, is the way it asks us to consider how Amazonian perspectivism might transform our ontological premises. Perhaps trying to think the purely symmetrical equality of global ontologies risks losing the benefits of allowing the native's ontology to transform that of the anthropologist, the "rebalancing" return-effect of native thought upon the analyst, what Holbraad calls the "meta-recursive" step.³⁴ The neutrality and balance of symmetrizing strategies seem to conceal the constitutive *imbalance* of the relation of anthropological comparison, for is it not after all the anthropologist who constructs the putatively "neutral" relation?

The dilemma of a return-effect versus neutral equivalence captures nicely the difference between Viveiros de Castro's and Phillipe Descola's respective approaches to the ontological turn. Looking at the differences between these two approaches and the possible aporias they create will allow me to reconsider the question of the hierarchical or non-hierarchical relations between ontologies.

³⁴ Martin Holbraad, *Truth in Motion*, 237-259.

Instead of generalizing an ontology of ontologies on the basis of a local model, Descola constructs a 2x2 table of four different possible ontologies as four symmetrical variants, though leaving the performative status of his method relatively unexplicated.³⁵ By means of the *logemes* (my interpretation) physicality/interiority and continuity/discontinuity in the relation between humans and non-humans, there are four possible ontologies, which Descola claims are ethnographically attested: analogism, based on the discontinuity of both physicality and interiority between humans and non-humans; totemism (*locus classicus*, Australia) on the basis of their continuity; naturalism (*locus classicus*, Modernism) with physicality continuous and interiority discontinuous; and animism (*locus classicus*, Indigenous America) with interiority continuous and physicality discontinuous.

Nonetheless, Descola's model seems to risk a similar relativity, or re-localization of the matrix, and a hierarchical privileging of its perspective. Indeed, the table represents the logic of classification, one tied to the naturalist ontology that insists on constituting the field of phenomena as consisting of objectifiable "natural kinds." The work of scientific classification in the naturalist ontology aims to "construct" models that correspond (*adequatio intellectus et rei*) to the pre-given types (in part the very epistemology of "representation" that Viveiros de Castro finds issue with). "Scientific constructions" should "make the right cuts" that pick out natural units.³⁶ Classification, however, is not completely alien to the operations of transformation: for Descola, a set of transformational inversions characterize the

³⁵ Cf. Phillipe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

³⁶ Cf. Elizabeth Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002). See also Adam Louis-Klein, "The Paradoxes of Identity Politics: A Critique of Recognition," *Public Seminar* (October 2018), <http://www.publicseminar.org/2018/10/the-paradoxes-of-identity-politics/>.

differencia specifica of the four ontologies. Yet, as long as the models are conceived of as “generalizing constructions” to capture “existent kinds,” the local ontology of naturalism risks prevailing as implicit in the performance of its method (2/3). I propose to radicalize the method of operational transformation at the level of ontologies and afford transformation a greater power of genericity and performativity, extracting the matrix of variance from a reduction to the logic of classification.

Indeed, an aporia arises between these two options: a reduction of the matrix of local ontologies to a hierarchically privileged ontology which would think their relation, such as perspectivism, and second, a neutralizing taxonomic table that would implicitly reassert Western naturalism at the performative level. The solution must involve allowing a transformation of the anthropologist by the native, as Viveiros de Castro proposes, while avoiding the tautological and re-localizing structure of Amerindian Perspectivism. I navigate these two alternatives by means of the non-philosophical concepts of the clone and the force-(of)-thought. The key here is to see how these operations of Non-Philosophy generalize the concept of transformation as it applies to symmetrizing classification (Descolla), while at the same time realizing each ontology as a concrete thought-possibility that affects the subject of anthropological thought (Viveiros de Castro).

Local Transcendentals as Clones of Human Immanence

Following Laruelle in *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, the force-(of)-thought should be understood as a dual structure composed out of two “causes:” the first, the causality of the Real, operating by simple indifference of the Real; the second, an *occasional* cause, the contingently given conceptual material that philosophy or ontology pro-

vides as a means for thought.³⁷ The Real causes Non-Philosophy to be “seen-in-One” as a *clone* of the One: the performance of thinking *adds nothing* to the One (idempotency or $1+1=1$). The “identity” of thinking is exactly that it “adds nothing,” allowing theory to be related to the One as irreducible to it in-the-last-instance. This complex structure clarifies the syntax of unilateral duality. It becomes possible to affirm indivision as the status of the clone’s relationship to the One, while also affirming duality as the discrete division operated by transcendence, the characteristic of occasional material. The clone is, in fact, just the identity (with the one) of the discrete material. The relationship between clone and material is *unilateral*, working *from* the One, which is given-(to)-itself in radical autonomy. The axiomatic statements of this knowledge condense the dual structure described above, indexing the identity of transcendence with the basic immanence of the One, while composed out of occasional material as a set of operationally defined concepts (*logemes/philosophemes* or *se-mes*). At the end of this article, the reader will find a set of axioms that can be read in the way explicated here.

Since the One does not admit division into discrete units, to speak of syntax is to speak, in fact, from the point of view of transcendence. Seeing syntactical matrices or transformation groups in-One (i.e. from the perspective of the clone) suggests a sort of “non-structuralism.” The term “non-structuralism” understands the cross-cutting character of the relation of unilateral duality in its submission to a *non-relational* and thus *pre-syntactical* core. The uni-tax opens the un-totalizability of the syntax of ontologies, rendered as a grammar of transformation. A non-structuralist understanding of variance, ultimately seen-in-One as a uni-tax, is a kind of generalized structuralism.

The non-structuralist concept of variance relies neither on a differential (or relational) ontology

³⁷ François Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 23.

nor on classification. Rather, both forms themselves reduce to *local transcendentals* (e.g. “perspectivism” or “naturalism/naturalistic taxonomy”) which possess relative autonomy as *clones* of the One. The relative autonomy of transcendence derives from the relative autonomy of *the Other as limit* (ethnographic alterity), the limit being transcendence both of a given transcendental and of the purely immanent One, which is irreducible to the transcendental. There is a positional status to *transcendence* – positional in the sense of structuralist positional value (transcendental structures are thus *positional variants* within the grammar).³⁸ The relative autonomy of the Other when it enters the structures of non-philosophy is the performative manifestation of the force-(of)-thought, the subject of non-philosophical thinking or the Stranger, *its virtual existence or consistency within the model but with its sufficiency reduced*. The Stranger is the Other seen in-immanence, the Other which we immanently “are.”

The unified theory of anthropology and philosophy remains a perspectivism then, as it aims to comprehend the compatibility of transcendental stranger-perspectives as *clones of human immanence*. As identical in-the-last-instance to the One, each local transcendental is a way in which the force-(of)-thought might manifest when transcendence is localized there as a positional variant within the immanent matrix. The unified theory of anthropology and philosophy meets Patrice Maniglier’s apt description of anthropology as “the formal ontology of ourselves as variants.”³⁹ Its modelizations are so many “anthro-fictions”⁴⁰ of what the human can mean, be, or become, as so many variations

on alter-transcendental worlds. Native ontology affects the anthropologist through seeing perspectivism in-One, recalibrating the matrix of ontologies and expanding one’s lived and conceptual possibilities. The One, in its immanent indifference and lack of transcendent unity, opens an unbounded chaos of anthropological inventions, each relatively autonomous, though consistent and compatible. Perspectivism affects thought, but the relation between ontologies remains symmetrical: the aporia between Viveiros de Castro and Descola is reconciled.

Conclusion: The Fractal Structure of the Global

In this final section, I clarify the global(-without-globalization) structure of the matrix of ontologies. Making the classificatory table but one local possibility, and with it the ruses of identity and its politics of recognition, the unified theory does not tell indigenous people, or anyone for that matter, “what they are.” *Subtracted from the taxonomic relation of the universal and particular*, anthro-fictions are *singularities*, immanent “particles” of ontological creativity. If every ontology is a local and singular particle of theoretical consistency, then the “relation” between these ontologies is fractal as the level-decomposition of the logical hierarchy implicit in the universal/particular relation: gross units like “Amazonian ontology” and “Melanesian personhood” are “fictions” without any essential difference at the level of subsumption or scale, a *fractal identity* between the thought of Davi Kopenawa, Yanomami thought, or Amazonian thought *rather than a “containment hierarchy.”*

The fractal structure of global(-without-globalization) also clarifies the specifically spatial, geographical and mereological modalities of the local/global problematic, with which I started this article. If scale, and the accompanying distinction between the micro and the macro, relies on a containment hierarchy of the par-

³⁸ That is, each transcendental is defined – from the point of view of the model – solely by its relative position to others, without supposing a relational ontology.

³⁹ *Comparative Metaphysics: Ontology After Anthropology*, ed. Pierre Charbonnier, Gildas Salmon and Peter Skafish (New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016), 109-133.

⁴⁰ Cf. Bogna Konior, “Generic Humanity: Interspecies Technologies, Climate Change & Non-Standard Animism,” *Transformations: Journal of Media, Culture and Technology* 30 (2017): 109-126.

ticular and the universal converted into space and sub-space, set and sub-set, part and whole, singularity eludes these processes of scaling: *the global is not a whole of which localities are parts, not a superior instance that generalizes them spatially*; it is not “the globe” as an encompassing Whole. While particularism and ethnocentrism assume a kind of universalism to *subsume* the particular (even if denied or repressed), *uni-versalism* reveals in a superpositional chaos. Uni-veralist *a priori*s are identities attained through the One, identities-(of)-variation.⁴¹ According to this *non-logic*, an *identity of the micro and the macro* emerges and spatial scale collapses with logical level. To speak of the global-without-globalization is to speak of an open uni-verse and a future science, unbound from today’s parochialisms.

Statements of a Unified Theory of Anthropology and Philosophy

- The One (or The Human) has nothing Greek about it, nothing Amazonian, nothing Melanesian, nothing Totemist, nothing Analogist, etc.
- The One in its radical autonomy admits a relative autonomy of the entire sphere of the Other. It admits an unbounded sphere of stranger-subjects and anthro-fictions at any scale.
- The chaos of anthro-fictions does not compose a classificatory table, a differential relation, or a holographic metaphor, etc.
- There is an identity (according to the One) of the micro and the macro, such that anthro-fictions form singularities.
- This chaos of singularities is a uni-verse, a space in which multiple cosmologies mingle without mixture.
- The global-without-globalization is not a transcendent and objectifying “world-picture,” but is seen in-immanence. Our unified theory is an ecology.
- All thoughts are equal, not by general equiv-

alence, but by singularity. Our unified theory is a symmetrical anthropology.

⁴¹ Correlative to the uni-tactic reduction of syntax or syntactical transformations (the “grammar” of the transformation group).

Le futur toujours avant dernier

Etienne Brouzes et Sylvain Létoffé

Abstract: Enonçons d'emblée notre argument : le futur, c'est n'importe quand !

Et comme (un)possible, le futur peut être n'importe quoi que nous imaginions ou non. Surtout que nous ne connaissons pas déjà, à quoi nous nous ne attendons pas. De là, angoisses et fantasmes alimentent nos conceptions de l'avenir et l'idée que nous nous faisons de notre futur. Justement, mon futur dans le futur sera inévitablement mort. Que deviendra mon être et notre être ? Si nous devons tous mourir, si l'univers doit disparaître une fois pour toutes, qu'est-ce que nous pouvons en apprendre aujourd'hui ?

Nous tenterons de traiter quelques messages nociceptifs comme occasion d'envisager un demain sans projection, un futur autre qu'un futur prospectif.

Entre crises et soulagements, fuites ou dispersements, euphories et délires, se dresse un savoir qui échappe à la philosophie au mieux, qu'elle rejette sinon. Nous ferons droit ici aux ombres et aux spectres, à l'erreur et la faute tout autant qu'aux croyances ou connaissances floues. Nous mettons en oeuvre une pensée par accidents, par surprises et résistances ; nous inaugurons une éthique futurible.

Ce qu'il nous faut annoncer, c'est la possibilité d'un soin venu du futur pour notre futur.
Comment (se) guérir du futur philosophique, comment ressusciter du Monde ?

Notre « bonne nouvelle » est guérison.

Etienne Brouzes and Sylvain Létoffé are members of l'Organisation Non-Philosophique Internationale (ON-Phi). Sylvain received his PhD from Université Paris-Ouest Nanterre in Aesthetics, and his dissertation « Politique et non-politique », supervised by François Laruelle, soon to be edited. He currently works with a group of researchers at the Université de Savoie Mont-Blanc studying the theme of free spaces. Etienne is a computer scientist who has published in *Philo-Fictions* and is a poet. Etienne has also written a dissertation entitled « Esthétique et non-esthétique du Créateur ».

e.brouzes@onphi.org
letoffé_sylvain@yahoo.fr

Keywords: Nociceptif, Soins, Demain, Expérimentation, Dire, Escatologie

La nuit, vivre. Vivre comme une nuit. Tout dort.

Écrire une phrase qui a du sens. Écrire une phrase qui n'a pas de sens.

Le sens de la vie. Progression et régression.

Abandonner certaines choses. Abandonner certaines causes.

Ce qui nous cause tant de malaise.

Vouloir utiliser les mains.

**

Vouloir.

Silence.

Silence est vouloir. Vouloir est silence.

Vouloir et silence. Silence et vouloir.

Substantification du verbe vouloir. Qu'est-ce qui change ?

Les archaïsmes. Les vieilles choses, les vieilles causes.

Victime de son bon vouloir.

Vouloir bien, vouloir le bien. Et encore ?

Jusqu'à quand ? Jusqu'à quand ce tintamarre ?

Jusqu'à quand cela va-t-il durer ? Perdur (pair-durer) ? Présence du non-sens au sein de la personne.

Présence du sens, sens de la présence.

Un désordre. Une gabegie. Orchestrée.

Par qui, pour qui, pour quoi ?

Dès que nous nous sentons malheureux, est-ce un signe du non-sens ? Du non-sens de quoi ? De notre propre non-sens, du non-sens de notre vie ? Peut-être empruntons-nous une mauvaise direction ? Et la vie serait là pour nous avertir ? Cela ressemble à des sables mouvants.

Nous nous mouvons dans une atmosphère industrielle que certains voudraient détruire. Une atmosphère d'usine, pas gaie du tout, car les êtres qui s'y meuvent ne font qu'effectuer des gestes machinaux. On nous appelle machin-chose dans une débauche de bavardages. Et il faudrait admettre cette « parole ». La « parole » qui n'en est pas une, puisqu'elle n'est que la répétition des absurdités de notre temps. D'ailleurs, avons-nous ou sommes nous dans le même temps ? Ou le temps du même ? Ou le temps de l'autre ? L'autre âge. Le moyen-âge. Un âge super moyen. Ou les humains sont nommés moyens de productions, ressources. Parlons des ressources qu'il y aurait « en nous » et que des « motivateurs » viendraient pour nous apprendre à y puiser. Ne seraient-ils pas, finalement, des sortes de néo-tortionnaires. Ils nous arracheraient des forces... Non, ils nous provoqueraient pour que nous réagissions. Nous regardons le spectacle du monde, ou plutôt la mise en spectacle du monde avec une parfaite indifférence. Le fait que nous ne regardions pas nous regarderait. Cela nous regarderai, dans notre for-intérieur sécuritaire. Penser nécessite-t-il un sauf-conduit ? Je ne le pense pas, voilà pourquoi certains diront que je ne pense pas... et ils auront raison.

Un délire absurde nous embastille. Plus sûrement que les pantins vus à la télé. Nous délivrer de ce cauchemar cauchemardesque... d'une pensée qui fait monde, qui nous fait vivre dans un monde immonde, un monde de saloperies ou nous vivrions dans et de la saloperie ?

Et toutes les prières, et toutes les croyances, tous les standards de la pensée, va-t-on nous inter-dire de ne pas penser *comme* ça plutôt que *comme eux* ? En abondance règne la règle de la vie par-faite, de la vie qui se perfectionne, in the time, just in time. Une vie d'amélioration progressive pour arriver à l'extase, sorte d'orgasme collectif ou *in fine* Tout est fini. Le tout se fini dans l'ordure. Et demain il n'y aurait plus de demain. Sans demain.

Nous ne ferons pas ens(e)igne de tous les aujourd'hui passés pour arriver à maintenant. Cette remémoration hasardeuse et plutôt arbitraire nous ne la jugerons même pas obsolète, elle est déjà plutôt une fois emplantée dans un chaos de phrases qui ne sont que des phrases pour dire le monde, toujours le monde, que nous voyons.

Autrefois, un certain parti, avait pris comme slogan le « désir d'avenir »... philosophème au final assez enjôleur pour nous avouer que le capital avenir avait déjà eu raison de la philosophie de l'avenir et de ses thuriféraires. Dans quoi nous mettons nous ou dans quoi on va nous mettre nous qui serions mis dans le marché, prêt à être employé au cours de la vie, pour une fonction et des buts qui seraient ou pas les nôtres. Circuits et bruits, contremaîtres et chefaillons, encore des images de théâtre philosophicum qui nous mène dans les coulisses elles-mêmes cinématographiées.

On dirait que n'importe quoi passe. Le philosophe continue de qui de quoi de questionner. Tandis que nous passons.

Dé-finir le futur, pour un philosophe revient à chercher à savoir de quoi demain sera fait. Nous sommes alors dans le domaine de la pré-vision, ainsi que de la pré-diction. Pré-diction et pré-vision sont relatives à la sur-venue d'un événement dans l'espace du monde. Or, demain sera ou bien identique à aujourd'hui, ou bien différent. Serai-je identique demain à un lendemain identique, ou identique demain à un lendemain différent, différent, différent ? Comment concevoir un futur toujours avant dernier ?

Toujours différent, identique à la différence, ou un dit-faire qui n'est pas un faire dire.

Dire refaire, faire redire, faire refaire, dire dire faire des prédictions, prédirefaire

Le futur constitue, pour un philosophe un objet qu'il s'appliquera à entrevoir, il essaiera de

construire une vision du futur, une vie qui se modifie sous la contrainte de l'histoire, de la politique, des techniques et autres autorités. Ce que le philosophe entrevoit est une vie qui s'adapte ou non au monde, c'est-à-dire, *in fine*, à la philosophie.

Nous pouvons peut être envisager un autre destin à la philosophie et au futur qui est trop souvent le futur de la philosophie qui s'inverse en philosophie du futur, où le futur est devenu un temps mondain.

Futur pénultième est futur avant futur potentiellement ultime.

Futur pénultième est futur avant échéance. Dans échéance où il y a la possibilité de l'échec ou de la chance.

Possibilité de s'occuper des messages nociceptifs pour les traiter comme occasion à chaque pas.

La perception d'une douleur à exister, d'une douleur d'exister dans ce monde, douleur potentiellement limite est un schéma philosophique tendanciellement limité qu'il s'agit alors d'accueillir aux dimensions de l'univers.

La pensée du futur se lie ou se mélange à des considérations matérielles et à leur mode de manifestation pour une sorte de matérialisme contemporain et médiatique. Ces considérations sur un monde rationalisé par les techniciens et les ingénieurs de toutes sortes apporte au philosophe son lot de déceptions car il voit que le monde futur qui se présente comme horizon abandonne bientôt son activité conceptuelle qui finit par trouver de moins en moins d'adeptes. Pourtant, la philosophie répare de manière automatique puisqu'il est souvent question de repenser la société et les humains qui y vivent.

Le concept de futur s'accompagne d'une image-rie. Les personnes qui s'envisagent dans le futur,

les personnes qui ne prévoient pas ou plus, et qui se laissent guider ou balloter dans le tourbillon du monde et de ses forces lasses.

Les hommes de pouvoir fabriquent un certain visage aux conceptions du futur que nous pouvons forger. (Visagysme ... Paysagym ...).

Pour autant que nous le pouvons, nous essayons de penser le futur, notre futur. Le temps présent peut être consacré à la méditation du futur qui sera bien souvent une forme figée de la vie et une copie du passé.

N'importe quand et n'importe où.
Ce qui solliciterait une faculté de saisir ce que donne le destin.
Saisir ou ne pas saisir.

Que nous livre le destin ? Que nous livre le futur ?
De quoi sera-t-il fait ?

Futur Grand futur petit
Hier et demain
Futur gros futur maigre
Futur aujourd'hui
Futur de main
Futur de corps
Futur de
De loin
Futur de toi
Sois futur
Toi futur
Futur toi
Futur t'es toi
Futur t'ait toi et tire toi
Futur toi et futur t'es nous
Futur de l'ancienneté
Regard futur sur le monde
Hagard rieur en suspend

Futur pensé futur pensable impensable
Futur loi foi anneau
Futur délai
Futur aujourd'hui, futur lever, futur coucher, futur manger, futur dormir, futur futur,

Futur qui peut être prié
Futur qui peut prier
Futur plié, prié
Futur allant
Allant futur
Futur de Dieu
Futur allant de soi
Sans ego. Conjoncture non-égotique
Il y a quelque chose. Déterminer : «il y a quelque chose» ?
Une réalité. Des réalités. Il y a des réalités. Il y a des réalisations de la réalité. Quelque chose dans et hors selon la philosophie communication du dedans et du dehors de la psyché ou de l'homme intérieur. Affection.
Les affects et les affections, les désaffections les ...
Des textes incomplets.
Le texte nous affecte dans la philosophie monde.
Amour
Condition
Illusion
La préciosité
Ne plus savoir rien
C'EST NE PLUS SAVOIR RIEN
Un savoir un rien.
Un savoir sur rien ?
Un savoir sans rien.
Un savoir de rien
Un savoir sur le rien sur le futur serait-il peuplé de néant ?

Futur - exaltation - Futur - apparition - apparaître du futur - apparaître futur - futur apparent -

Apparence de futur - les problèmes - apparence des problèmes du futur - apparence d'un individu dans le futur - futur le futur dans le présent d'une apparition - une apparition du futur dans la conscience - une apparition du futur que nous habitons - faire le tour du Futur - la croyance en un futur déjà là, déjà fait - faire le futur - fabriquer du futur - la figure de l'homme fabriquant le futur en pensant le futur.
Le futur, un monde en construction, volonté de.

Volonté de voir le monde tel qu'ils le pensent,
Projet ? Projection.

Le futur et les projections psychologiques ou
médiatiques.

Un vide à combler.
Une crête à gravir.
Une disposition psychologique ?

L'homme serait une psychologie, un individu qui
se voit vivre plus tard et qui en tant que tel essaie
de combler le vide entre maintenant et ce plus
tard. Utilement et jalousement. En quête d'un
bonheur.

Se voir vivre dans un monde qui vous voit vivre
fait de vous le monde chère philosophie mais
pas un ego

Se voir sentir
Se voir sortir
Auto
Se voir voir
S'auto-voir et s'entrevoir
Centre voir
Voir le futur ne pas voir.
Le futur ne te vois pas.
Le futur nuit. noir.
Le futur vision.

Le futur du moi présent au moi présent.
La pensée du futur à la pensée du futur moi.
La pensée angoissante d'un futur sans angoisse.
Angoisse de ne pas s'en sortir.

L'angoisse de ne pas s'en sortir et renoncement
font système ?
Angoisse de ne plus avoir rien,
ANGOISSE LIÉE À L'AVOIR

Le prochain être. La redite de l'être que je suis
et qui pense.
Futur est.
Le futur est l'être qui est futur, un être qui est et

qui n'est plus et qui sera.

Le futur que je suis sans être va à l'être.

Allons à l'être monde à l'être cercles.
Les cercles du monde et de l'être du monde de
l'être et du monde que le je vois.
Je ne vois pas le monde. Le monde en son entier.
Le tout.
Le demain
Les hiers d'enfer
S'en faire des hiers
Un enfer
Demain chant configuration du futur et figura-
tion dans le futur.
Figarer figer.
Figer le temps.

Travailler pour s'en sortir. Sans sortie sans en-
trée.
Produire pour consommer.
Agir sous la contrainte.
Les explications de la philosophie.

Générique.

Futur collectif/futur individuel.

Fonction futur. Futurer. Futuriser.
Pression
Sur pression - sous la pression... le poids... La
masse... que l'on pèse.
Création collective Future. Le poids..
Dans la conception politique classique, une
masse pèse quelque chose... une masse pèse
peu... ou pèse beaucoup dans le processus dé-
cisionnel. Si elle pèse beaucoup ou de tout son
poids, alors nous parlons de démocratie. Si elle
ne pèse pas, alors nous parlons d'autoritarisme.
Le travail de la décision. La décision des travail-
leurs définis par rapport à des non-travailleurs.
Les travaillant et les travaillés.

Sera
Serons ce rond
Serez ce ré

Être au futur
Grammaire
La grammaire de notre sens intime
La conjugaison de nos histoires

Traversée traversière
Géo Science
Science des lieux
Lieux de la science
Science est sans lieu
Loco Logie
Loco-Moteur Loco-moto-logie
Appareil sensori-moteur

Sera serons serez
Serré comme un café
La métaphore ? Sans métaphore.

*

Paradis des paradoxes
Enfer des paradoxes
Irons rirez ira

Dissipation dispersive
Textes dispersifs
La logologie de nos narrations
Et pôles. Plus et moins.

Un texte dispersif. Le fait de faire des textes dispersifs rassemble les idées, les paroles.
Un texte dispersé, un texte par un dispersé.
Un texte sur le fait de ne pas arriver à écrire ?
Ecrire une langue intelligible. En une langue.

Les messages nociceptifs ?
Emmêlé de mêlées démantelant des mélanges.
Géo graphie démantelée.

**

Futur philosophique.
En soi par soi pour soi.
Est un paradoxe de la philo-monde.
Ou plutôt un cercle.

Un texte pour le dernier.
Un texte du dernier.
Le dernier texte de la langue. Le corps du texte de la langue ?
La langue du dernier texte. Une langue neutre. Neutre de quoi. De tout ce qui se trimballe.

Écrire n'importe quoi peut-être, pour apprendre à (dé)crire une texte. Désécriture du texte que nous retransformons.
L'auteur écrit-il un texte avec des mots ? Les mots que nous foulons en marchant.

Praxis de l'écriture du temps. Temps de sentir le frisson de l'exister étranger.
Temps sans ego pour le vivre, vécu sans vie.
Temps qui n'est pas temps de l'histoire.

Temps de l'histoire monde unilatéralisé.
A chaque occasion une fois.

Aller à la conjoncture qui peut être amour politique esthétique ou autre.

Et la déterminer en dernière instance.

Développement sur la notion de message nociceptif:

Il pourrait relever de la nuisance et créerait de la déstabilisation demandant ainsi une forme d'indifférence que le sujet philosophique devrait adopter en tant qu'il perçoit quelque chose. Ce sujet hypersensible et qui se froisse de tous ses nerfs à l'atmosphère des ambiances traversée est par définition mutant et transformable en fonction des occasions qui le déterminent.

La nociception ou la perception de quelque chose de nocif ou de supposé tel par le sujet, crée, toujours, dans la démarche philosophique un effet de retrait ou de contre. C'est une logique de la place et de la position à la fois dans un espace physique et dans la sphère de la pensée connectées l'une l'autre.

Où nous ne philosophons plus. Mais est-il encore possible de ne plus philosopher ? Ne philosopherions-nous pas comme malgré nous, de manière spontanée ? Future est une pensée qui prend acte de l'occasion philosophique de penser et qui vis à vis de la philosophie qui arrive, pouvons nous dire provisoirement, prend ses distances avec elle. Il s'agit d'une quasi manière de pensée phénoménologique, mais qui prend comme occasion et symptôme la philosophie phénoménologique ou autre pour penser autrement qu'elle. Et cela, d'une manière qui soit universelle.

Si le futur attise certaines méfiances, c'est que la philosophie est déjà une certaine méfiance à l'égard de la manière doxique de penser. Maintenant, nous nous méfions de nos philosophies, mais nous n'en restons pas là : tirant de là une pensée qui ne sera plus réglée philosophiquement. Le futur sera fait de philosophies transformées en dernière Instance, une philosophie faisant office de matériau dont la méfiance à l'égard duquel ne peut pas supporter un trop plein de vigilance comme si la philosophie arrivait telle une ennemie destinée à nous tromper voire nous corrompre. Elle est plutôt une amie dont les enseignements nécessitent un effort pour prolonger sa pensée et lever ce qui pour elle est la fin de tout, c'est-à-dire le monde, son attention, son soin, son auto-saisie, son auto-nomination, son auto-position.

Nous dirions volontiers que la pensée philosophique a pour vocation d'agir (contre) les hommes pour qu'ils atteignent ses propres buts et la perfection qu'elle pense ou non inaccomplie sur la terre.

Nous dirons qu'il y a une certaine croyance à la philosophie qui fait que l'expérience de philosopher est si monstrueuse. C'est que la philosophie quand elle se veut rassurante finit par ne plus rassurer et que les mots dont elle use finissent par ne plus seoir, elle qui aura fait du

langage et de la parole des mondes, comme elle a tant l'habitude. Fin des temps philosophiques avec les mondes philosophiques il y aura ; il y aura des pensées-Monde et des déterminations de cette pensée qui se veut claire et rigoureuse. Nous aurons à expliquer des philosophies d'une manière plus rigoureuse qu'elle a coutume de se penser, l'auto-représentation qu'elle a d'elle-même étant encore monde, voire mondaine.

La philosophie est vectrice de monde dont le supposé agent doit s'occuper, prendre soin, ou lutter contre. Elle est toute une imagerie de guerres et de tonnerre fascinant l'imagination, promettant le bonheur de vivre à qui sera celui qui s'y sera occupé sa vie durant, excluant de ce simple décret ceux qui n'étant pas philosophes, philosophent tout de même, mais sans le savoir. Le philosophe sait qu'il philosophe mais il sait qu'il ne sait pas ou sait ne rien savoir du monde. Son métier est de partir de ce point pour effectuer une trajectoire dont la philosophie ou sa philosophie privée le conduira à la publicité par une transcendance dont la philosophie a le secret pour qu'il devienne un honnête homme ou rien du tout. Ce n'est ainsi pas tant, pour Nietzsche, que Schopenhauer est éducateur, que sa philosophie, l'homme faisant rapidement défaut aux yeux d'un autre philosophe. La philosophie accusera rapidement les hommes de ne pas l'être encore, ou de ne l'être encore que trop, donc pas assez sur-humain. Elle est une formidable machinerie, visant l'usinage de la forme Homme en Homme ou en autre homme. Elle veut tant sa transformation qu'elle invente des méthodes, des systèmes, voire bientôt des applications. Elle est celle qui cherche l'homme dans le Monde, quand il n'y est pas. L'être mondain dont elle parle n'est en fait qu'un anthropoïde sorti de son imagination. Mais d'une imagination transcendante, l'imagination des hommes et des femmes *dans* un monde.

Expérimentale est inévitablement une pensée future qui devrait aussi décrire la philosophie

d'une manière qui n'est plus philosophique, mais d'un genre de pensée qui n'est pas philosophie, mais selon la dernière instance que chacun (nous sommes) sans être. Nous avons certainement à inventer dans la philosophie, quelque chose qui ne vient pas d'elle, mais plutôt de la science, qui est ici partagée par chacun, une manière qui est de ne plus d'inclure ou d'exclure à l'humanité les sujets existant étrangers au monde mais pas à la généralité de l'homme.

Le futur est donc n'importe quand, n'importe quoi. L'occasion sera à déterminer une fois chaque fois. L'occasion étant cette philosophie-ci ou celle-là, rencontrée et humanisée. L'homme n'aura donc plus à - se - philosopher, mais il aura à humaniser la philosophie-monde.

Place est donc faite à une certaine surprise, et peut-être pour une autre sorte de Bonheur, si la conjoncture du Bonheur se présente et elle ne manquera pas de se présenter. Comme celles du pouvoir, du devoir et des autres concepts dont il nous reste à savoir de qui ils parlent.

Construire des quasi-systèmes qui sont comme autant de moyens de penser à l'aide de la philosophie sans pour autant adhérer à son principe de Suffisance. Bâtir un quasi système n'est pas la même chose que de bâtir un système bouclé sur soi, refermé sur lui-même, c'est plutôt un moyen de connaître les philosophies qui, il faut bien le dire, ont tendance à faire l'objet de notre croyance. En expliquant nos croyances, nous formulons des propositions non plus générales, mais des propositions génériques, déterminées en dernière Identité. Ces croyances, il nous faut en quelque sorte les générer mais pour les décrire ou les expliquer. Le champ d'application de cette science concerne le continent philosophie et les régions du savoir qu'il investit, l'anthropologie, l'éthique, l'épistémologie mais aussi la politique.

Le futur est susceptible d'être pensé philosophiquement. Cela commence par une question :

qu'est-ce que le futur ? Ou une autre : Que sera le futur ? Toujours de manière philosophique on peut essayer de préciser le futur comme ce temps qui n'a pas encore (eu) lieu : alors le futur aura lieu, mais on ne sait pas ce qu'il sera. Raisonner de la sorte est faire du futur une chose pensable ou impensable, un objet, un objet (qui est) un monde pré-occupant. La pensée se donne alors pour tâche de le penser pour se préparer à y ou le vivre. Et quand elle sera dans le futur elle envisagera encore le futur comme objet préoccupant. La préoccupation précède alors l'occupation du temps. Elle est une certaine agitation et le trouble cherche à être apaisé. En mode grec, le penseur doit se définir comme ataraxique quoi qu'il arrive ou quoi qu'il puisse arriver. Son âme éprise de sécurité envisage et écarte divers scénarios.

Pour une certaine philosophie, le monde se présente comme monde présent dans un certain état. Après, nous, dans ce monde dans un autre état, nous serons dans un certain état. Le philosophe se sent dans un état dans un monde dans un certain état et il envisage le monde dans ses états futurs. Il imagine donc aussi son propre état futur. Pour lui, c'est le monde qui est futur, toujours dans un certain état, avec lui aussi dans un certain état. La préoccupation va autant en direction de soi ou de l'état de soi, que de l'état du monde. En bon ou en mauvais état, en service ou hors service, le monde et le moi forment un monde. Ou, aussi, le moi et l'imagination d'un monde où sera le moi font un monde, un monde étant un système de relations réciproques.

L'image du monde varie. Les effets concomitants de cette image varie les états du moi, euphorique ou dépressif. Alternative, alternance, altération, ces concepts nourrissent, et leur image aussi, une psychiatrie pour sujets philosophiques. Un sujet philosophant ne pouvant se penser que dans un monde franchissant d'états vécus en états pensés ou inversement les états précédents, transcendant bientôt l'expérience de

vivre, se sent capable de parler de tous ceux qui franchissent ou non ces états ou étapes. L'expérience de vivre (dans un monde) se pose alors comme le standard à partir duquel des variations pourront être opérées, des variations de pensée qui seront aussi autant de vies possibles. La pensée sera alors reconnue comme ayant une certaine efficacité sur celui qui la pense, et l'homme comme penseur philosophique le standard pour une pensée industrielle autant qu'industrielle.

La projection ou prospective envisage un homme qui fait monde dans un monde qui n'est précisément déjà plus ce monde. Il est déjà un monde du passé qui s'envisage comme étant dépassé, sa pensée avec lui faisant cercle. Si le penseur philosophique se trouve en instance d'être dépassé dans une sorte de régime de concurrence ou marché des marchandises de la pensée pour une vie possible dans un monde déjà pensé alors il ne peut concevoir une vie future que lorsque sa pensée s'accordera à ce futur monde réel. Nous pouvons résumer ainsi : le futur est toujours futur d'un monde réel dans lequel je me meus et me pense déjà comme un monde dans ce monde ou empire dans un empire. Ou non. Dans ce dernier cas, je serai et je penserai dans un monde réel comme me concluant de ce monde. Je me conclurai de tout ce monde d'actions et de passions sans me considérer moi-même comme une chose vraiment importante. Toujours il y aura ce regard sur une vie visible en terme de choses qui se concluent d'états de choses et de corps. Ce corps ne peut que se persuader de persévérer à être dans son être moyennant toujours un certain décalage avec son grand voisin qu'est La Substance ou Le Monde. Ou encore, s'envisage une communication universelle de mondes à mondes, de petits mondes et de grands tout.

Si nous pouvons déterminer un sujet philosophant, nous pouvons aussi le décrire lorsqu'il envisage la fiction d'un monde futur, par rapport auquel il se pose et se positionne. Le discours philosophant philosophe le réel dont il

se veut ou désire dire la vérité. Ce régime de la vérité dans le discours ou du discours de vérité détermine des politiques de toutes sortes, mais pas encore une modélisation rigoureusement pensante. Souvent politique (monde-cité), la forme-monde de la pensée en se prononçant se veut efficace et se positionne comme réel pour autant qu'elle se trouve efficace. Dans cette orgie de choses efficaces et de pensées du même acabit, le monde qu'elle arpente devient de plus en plus malsain et incertain ce qui provoque immédiatement un réflexe de sécurité ou le monde, ce vieux monde que nous essayons d'abandonner revient comme une sorte de berceau ou nous pourrions trouver repos.

Pour la grammaire philosophique, le futur est un temps qui se conjugue. Cette conjugaison de ce temps, est, dans le même mouvement un procès de conjugaison. La pensée imitant le monde dont elle est censée dire quelque chose à tout moment, n'imité que la philosophie qui toujours s'est imitée elle-même. Nous pouvons alors poser que l'imitation du monde n'est pas encore une modélisation de la pensée-monde. Nous distinguons la pensée-monde d'une pensée modélisante qui précisément ne cherche pas à imiter le monde. La pensée qui imite le monde veut se sentir réelle par rapport à lui, qui la mesure et qui l'évalue sans cesse à l'aune de ses valeurs transcendantes que sont, qui sait, l'excellence, le bonheur, la justice etc... les idées de vertu... de vertu dans un monde encore grec.

Le mouvement de la pensée oscillante d'une thèse à son antithèse – figure grecque – a, finalement, toujours essayé de donner un visage à la fin des temps... et quand elle ne règne plus, la philosophie veut encore régner. La philosophie se posera comme dernière philosophie du temps, dans une série, long processus historique qui s'annonce aussi comme la clôture d'un discours qui ne peut pas aller plus vite que le temps lui-même. La philosophie croit alors regarder le temps qu'il fait et de toute manière, le temps re-

garde la philosophie et les philosophes soucieux d'actualité fût-elle elle-même intempestive. En régime de philosophie abondante, la pensée se fait rare. Et la fin des temps apparaît alors que le clou du spectacle de la misère et de la gabegie. Souvent historisante, la philosophie ne cesse de comparer les époques les unes avec les autres et croit voir dans le temps qu'elle nomme présent le vrai temps qui se répète. Son économie et son langage, son langage économique ne peut qu'être qu'une incitation à philosopher en philosophe plutôt que ne pas philosopher du tout. Cela apparaît alors comme une manière de survivre par rapport et dans un temps qui n'en finit pas de se montrer comme horrible et inhumain.

A chaque époque, philosopher revient à philosopher à propos du commencement du temps et de la fin. La philosophie qui essaie de penser sa fin et sa finalité, se montre de bonne volonté pour essayer de coïncider dans le temps avec le temps en fournissant à chaque fois une interprétation de celui-ci. Le temps qu'elle passe à philosopher, elle le philosophe. S'en écarte pour y revenir. Co-incider avec le temps revient à le penser pour ce qu'il est en tant qu'il est. Ou en tant qu'il est toujours identique ou toujours autre. C'est pour elle un temps de vie, le temps d'une vie, à séparer le bon du mauvais, à faire une sorte de carte, ou une mémorisation si ce n'est une mémorialisation. Le temps de vivre à philosopher la vie, c'est penser, et une vie sans philosophie ressemble pour la philosophie, à une non vie, à une vie qui n'est pas tout à fait la vie. Arriver à penser philosophiquement relève pour elle d'un défi qu'elle se lance sous la forme d'un problème, comme si ce problème était constitutif des humains. Puisqu'il s'agit de penser, à savoir réellement penser, il faut penser le réel tel qu'il est, tel qu'il apparaît, tel qu'il apparaît dans son être ou tel qu'il est dans son apparaître. Regarder le réel, et le penser ensuite, la philosophie s'y entend. Regarder le temps et le penser pour coïncider avec lui programme un devenir philosophique de l'homme, comme une sorte d'aug-

mentation de sa puissance à être qu'est, selon elle, cet être-ci ou là. Mais le regarder réellement, conformément au réel qu'il est quand il coïncide dans le temps avec le temps. Des choses (causas) arrivent ainsi en même temps, au même moment, et donnent à la vie philosophique son lot d'étonnements. Elle conclut que cet étonnement est le début grâce auquel elle va pouvoir enfin se développer, se développer en l'homme, et le transformer.

Philosopher le temps c'est toujours penser dans l'élément d'une réciprocation ou d'une réversibilité, d'un renversement qui est aussi un sur-montement, du temps et de l'homme. Philosopher le temps, plus particulièrement sa fin, c'est voir sa fin avec celle de l'homme dans ce temps, sa fin comme finalité aussi bien que sa mort. Voir la philosophie en-homme, la philosophie du temps en-homme, c'est penser en-homme la philosophie du temps qui prétend le déterminer et programmer ou veut programmer son destin, sa vie, ses affects, elle qui ne peut le voir que de la sorte. Souvent, d'ailleurs, elle ne peut, comme on dit, le voir en peinture tellement l'image fétichiste qu'elle s'en fait ne correspond à ce qu'elle croit qu'il est.

Donc, plutôt que de nous comprendre dans un temps philosophique, qui serait aussi la fin des temps, nous essayons d'expliquer la philosophique pensée du temps sans nous comprendre en ce temps. Nous essayons de déterminer un peu plus ce la philosophie entend par futur, ce qu'elle croit voir quand elle pense le futur, ou quand elle dit le penser. Nous déterminons cette pensée d'une manière qui n'est plus celle de la philosophique détermination des choses... des choses comme le temps, l'avenir de l'homme, la fin du monde. Alors s'ouvre à nous une pensée qui n'est plus philosophique à proprement parler, mais une pensée qui explique les représentations philosophiques et qui cesse alors de les confondre à chaque fois avec le réel.

Pendant qu'elle essaie de penser le temps, du temps s'écoule, de la philosophie du temps s'écoule aussi. Elle pense alors l'homme comme rapport à un temps qui s'écoule, irréversiblement, mais dont l'homme a aussi ou fait aussi mémoire. Mémoire, mémorisation, elle se donne des tâches pour savoir comment elle a cheminé jusqu'à ce point, et fait de l'homme un être de mémoire et d'histoire. Un être qui se rapporte à une histoire où cette histoire lui est propre, qu'il a en propre comme sa propriété.

The Apocalyptic Tabula Rasa of Black Messianic Invention: Black Faith and Pure Means in Fanonism's Insurrectionist Christo-Fiction

Andrew Santana Kaplan

Abstract: Modernity is structured around a prior decision to which it is constitutively blind: the World's perverse invention and simultaneous foreclosure of blackness. This is Afro-pessimism's non-philosophical insight—informing its oraxiomatic demand for the end of the World. But Afro-pessimism's apocalypics should be understood etymologically as well as connotatively: its apo-kalupsis is a radically immanent un-covering of the World's anti-black grammar that constitutes Society's katechontic restraint of gratuitous freedom. Before Laurelle demanded we “make a tabula rasa out of the future,” Fanon gestured toward gratuitous freedom's radical break in describing the “tabula rasa which from the outset defines any decolonization.” Fanon models as much in observing that, as an incarnation of blackness, “I am endlessly creating myself” in accordance with his oraxiom of “introducing invention into existence.” In these ways, I suggest Fanon is practicing a black-christo-fiction. Accordingly, I non-philosophically take up James H. Cone black theology of liberation: if modernity's cross is the lynching tree, then Afro-pessimism's apocalyptic thought is immanently messianic. As such, the black is paradigmatic of the (Christ-)Victim-in-person. Therefore, the invention of generic justice is necessarily immanent in the abolition of anti-blackness, making the paradigmatic affirmation of blackness the World's fundamental heresy.

But how does one inhabit the black messianic in Afro-pessimism's apocalyptic announcement? “In its ultimate essence,” Laurelle suggests, “faith is messianic: it is an immanent praxis for a deindividualized messiah.” Faith is the cloning function of Afro-pessimism's black-christo-fiction—a faith experiment that is “a sort of nonacting or nonreaction to the world, but one capable of acting by transforming the world without, therefore, [re-]creating it.” That is, following Afro-pessimism's model, Black faith is the heretical means by which one under-goes the generic-cloning of messianic-blackness. I argue that black messianic faith is the oraxiom of a paradigmatic fidelity to blackness, which, in-the-last-instance, immanently enables the coming insurrection.

Andrew Santana Kaplan (they/them/their) is a doctoral student in Comparative Literature at Emory University, studying at the intersections of radical black thought/aesthetics, continental philosophy (of religion), and Lacanian psychoanalysis. Their first article, “Notes Toward (Inhabiting) the Black Messianic in Afro-pessimism's Apocalyptic Thought,” initiates a project elaborating the apocalyptic/messianic signatures in black study to theorize a radical fidelity to blacks' singular positionality and destroying the (anti-black) World - which this Oraxiom piece attempts to extend and elaborate. Subsequent essays currently under review further extend this paradigm through what Andrew posits as ‘anagrammatical liturgies of allegorical reading.’ Each of these pieces respectively engage Richard Wright's novella, *The Man Who Lived Underground*, the season four finale of *Black Mirror*, «Black Museum,» and Alex Garland's film, *Annihilation*, as allegorical liturgies that can anagrammatically attune readers to (inhabiting) the exigent demand for an apocalyptic tabula rasa of black messianic invention.

andrew.santana.kaplan@gmail.com

Keywords: Afropessimism, Frantz Fanon, Christo-Fiction, Apocalyptic, Messianic

[W]e have decided to describe the kind of tabula rasa which from the outset defines any decolonization.¹

- Frantz Fanon

[L]et us make a tabula rasa out of the future.²

- François Laruelle

I should constantly remind myself that the real *leap* consists in introducing invention into existence.³

- Frantz Fanon

Christ is the exit from Christianity [as religion]. Let us take a step further, fulfilling this insurrection. It is up to us to invent his impossible coming.⁴

- François Laruelle

I. Argument and Non-Philosophical Genealogy

Modernity is structured around a prior decision to which it is constitutively blind: the World's anthro-philosophical foreclosure of blackness. This is Afro-pessimism's non-philosophical insight, informing its oraxiomatic demand to destroy the World. That is, this demand is the coincidence - or, in Laruelle's terms, *superposition* - of an oracle and an axiom. As such, Afro-pessimism's apocalypics should be understood etymologically as well

as connotatively:⁵ its *apo-kalupsis* is an axiomatically immanent "un-veiling" of the World's hallucinatory anti-black grammar, which constitutes Society as the restrainer (*katechon*) holding back the end of the World.⁶ Afro-pessimism's apocalyptic-revelation thus oracularly exhibits both the hallucination of anti-blackness and the abyssal indeterminacy of the Real this hallucination veils. The structural antagonism between hallucinatory anti-blackness and the Real yields Afro-pessimism's demand for a clean slate that fundamentally breaks (from) the anti-black World in the name of abyssal *gratuitous* freedom.⁷ Before Laruelle's non-philosophical demand for a tabula rasa, Fanon oraxiomatically invoked it

⁵ Though the apocalyptic is a rich and overdetermined/polysemous figure in the history of Western thought, my primary interest in this essay is a minimalist usage of the concept to elaborate Afro-pessimism/Fanonism's radical intervention through the coupling of its etymological meaning - to "un-veil" - and its association with the end of the World. In a previous essay (see fn. 8), I do engage a more sophisticated discussion of the apocalyptic as a figure of revolutionary thought/politics using Jacob Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, trans. David Ratmoko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009). For a useful overview of recent debates on the meaning/function of the apocalyptic in the Apostle Paul's thought, see, *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich and Jason Maston (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016).

⁶ Here I am drawing on and modifying Carl Schmitt's politico-theological function of the State: "I do not believe that any historical concept other than *katechon* would have been possible for the original Christian faith. The belief that a restrainer holds back the end of the world provides the only bridge between the notion of an eschatological paralysis of all human events and a tremendous historical monolith like that of the Christian empire of the Germanic kings." *Nomos of the Earth: In the International Law of Jus Publicum Europaeum*, trans. G. L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press, 2006), 60.

⁷ As Frank B. Wilderson III argues: "There is no philosophically credible way to attach an experiential, a contingent, rider onto the notion of freedom when one considers the Black. [...] The Slave needs freedom not from the wage relation, nor sexism, homophobia, and patriarchy, nor freedom in the form of land restoration. ... The Slave needs freedom from the Human race, freedom from the world. The Slave requires gratuitous freedom." *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 23, 141.

¹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2005), 1.

² François Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction: The Ruins of Athens and Jerusalem*, trans. Robin Mackay (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), ix.

³ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markman (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 179.

⁴ François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2012), 137.

as the fundamental (pre)condition of decolonization *qua* the introduction invention into existence. In this way, I suggest Fanon is practicing a christo-fiction of black messianic invention that precedes and subtends any non-philosophical messianics in the wake of racial-chattel-slavery.

Afro-pessimism's paradigmatic analysis shows that the black-as-slave is the singular condition of possibility for modernity's hallucination of civil society. Therefore, Laruelle's non-philosophical project of generic justice needs to be understood as fundamentally immanent (to the) abolition of anti-blackness. I contend that the affirmation of blackness is the modern World's paradigmatic non-philosophical heresy. I call this fundamental heresy of modernity *the black messianic*, which I theorize as tacit in Afro-pessimism's apocalyptic analysis of anti-blackness and its accompanying singular wish to destroy the World.⁸ This essay's approach to non-philosophy is situated within my nascent project on the black messianic, which is posited *via* a constellation of key concepts between Afro-pessimism and contemporary theorists of the Apostle Paul. I argue that to truly think the Apostle's apocalyptic-messianic call *in modernity* necessitates the paradigmatic analysis of anti-/blackness. Among these constellations, I claim: 1) that blackness is the singular messianic remnant of modernity; 2) that Pauline *now time* coincides with the black time of slavery "without duration;"⁹ and 3) that black faith is the decisive function for inhabiting this black-now-time in radical fidelity to destroying the World. One of my aims in this essay is to elaborate the function/logic of black faith through Laruelle's non-philosophical/non-theological conception

in *Christo-Fiction*. "In its ultimate essence," he argues, "faith is messianic: it is an immanent praxis for a deindividualized messiah."¹⁰ Following Laruelle, I suggest that faith is the deindividuating cloning function of Afro-pessimism's black-christo-fiction. More precisely, what I call *black faith* is the heretical, experimental means by which one under-goes the black-messianic-cloning-of-blackness. I thus claim that black messianic faith is the oraxiom of a paradigmatic fidelity to blackness, which, in-the-last-instance, immanently demands the coming insurrection.

Latent in the nascent thought of the black messianic was a preoccupation with the potential contact between Fanon's decolonial violence, Benjamin's divine violence, Agamben's development of the latter's "politics of pure means,"¹¹ and Afro-pessimism's demand for gratuitous freedom. David Marriott's recent *Whither Fanon?*¹² became a rich vehicle for thinking through this potential constellation given his passing connections between Fanon and Benjamin's thought, together with his related conception of Fanonism as a messianics subtracted from any teleology or eschatology. I then saw an opportunity to elaborate my notion of black faith through Laruelle's christo-fiction as a pure means for non-blacks to "become" black by cloning the Real. As Alexander Galloway suggests in discussing "the black universe" of the Real, non-philosophy evokes that "great saint of radical blackness, Toussaint Louverture, and return[s] to the Haitian Constitution of 1804, which stated that all citizens will be called black regardless of color."¹³ And this dovetails with James H. Cone's imperative to non-blacks: "There will be no peace in America

⁸ Andrew Santana Kaplan, "Notes Toward (In)habiting the Black Messianic in Afro-pessimism's Apocalyptic Thought," *The Comparatist* 43 (Oct 2019): 68–89.

⁹ Calvin L. Warren, "Black Time: Slavery, Metaphysics, and the Logic of Wellness," in *The Psychic Hold of Slavery: Legacies in American Expressive Culture*, ed. Soyica Diggs Colbert, Aida Levy-Hussen and Robert J. Patterson (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 54.

¹⁰ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction*, 68.

¹¹ Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," in *Selected Writings, 1: 1913–1926*, trans. and ed. Marcus Paul Bullock and Michael William Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 245.

¹² David Marriott, *Whither Fanon? Studies in the Blackness of Being* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).

¹³ Alexander R. Galloway, *Laruelle: Against the Digital* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 145.

[or the World] until whites begin to hate their whiteness, asking from the depths of their being: ‘How can we become black?’”¹⁴ Such is, I argue, the function of black faith’s radical fidelity to the black messianic tabula rasa in the name of *inhabiting and rupturing the (epistemic) wake of the Middle Passage*.¹⁵

Following this intellectual trajectory, I present a speculative genealogy of non-philosophical practice - both past (Fanon, Benjamin) and contemporary (Agamben, Marriott) - that I hypothesize can contribute to an elaboration of non-philosophy’s insurrectionist aspiration. It is by way of this genealogy that my essay arrives to and culminates in a commentary on Laruelle’s *Christo-Fiction*. First and foremost, among the contributions I aspire to make is the need for Laruelle and non-philosophy to explicitly engage the singularity of blackness *in the wake of racial-chattel-slavery*. Otherwise, for all their radical interventions, Laruelle and those taking up his project will inescapably reinforce *the* philosophical decision/division that constitutes and governs modernity: anti-blackness.¹⁶ Such is the contention of Afro-pessimism.

II. The Fanonian Black Messianic Moment of the Abyss

Toward the end of *Whither Fanon?*, Marriott recapitulates what could be called the double-helix of Fanon’s project. Marriott dedicates his study to reconstructing Fanon’s commitments to decolonial therapy (“*therapeutics*”) and revolution (“*messianics*”) as inextricable - in contradistinction to the vast majority of engagements with Fanon that usually privilege one aspect to the neglect of the other. Marriott writes that these “are not contraries, for both are concerned with what disturbs, or dissipates, the foundations and principles of colonial culture.”¹⁷ He then adds that *invention* is the paradigm of Fanonism’s therapeutic-messianics in its “calling attention to the psychic and political limits of [ontometaphysical] racialization.”¹⁸ The revelation of these hallucinatory limits in therapeutic-messianic invention dissipates the paralyzing fear inhibiting the colonized’s wish “to state a refusal” by making “their disobedience evident.”¹⁹ Finally, Fanon’s simultaneous analysis *and* phenomenology of disobedient-invention, Marriott continues, “reveal[s] a new organization of the body, whose very existence (at the level of voice, facial expressions, gestures, and musculature) reveals a new order of work and energy, and a new fidelity and faith.”²⁰ In Marriott’s summation of Fanonism, there appears to be a radically immanent causality - or radical immanence as such - with decolonial-invention and its new faith: the causality proper to the Real that Laruelle calls Determination-in-the-last-instance, which exerts itself upon what is given - i.e., the colony/World - as *non(-Real)*.²¹ In the space of this essay, though I will be explicitly focusing on Fanon’s messianics, there remains the latent investment

¹⁴ James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation - Fortieth Anniversary Edition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), ix.

¹⁵ Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 18. Though I at times use or cite “the Middle Passage” as a signifier for the anti-black event horizon of (Eurocentric) modernity, it should be noted that: 1) the advent of anti-blackness in racial-chattel-slavery begins circa the 8th century in the Arab slave trade; and, relatedly, 2) the globalization of anti-blackness is not confined to the transatlantic slave trade. See S. E. Anderson and Vanessa Holley, *The Black Holocaust For Beginners* (Danbury, CT: For Beginners, 2007); Michelle Wright, *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

¹⁶ For a related critique concerning Laruelle’s potential susceptibility to a Christian supersessionist logic, see Daniel Colucciello Barber, “Mediation, Religion, and Non-Consistency In-One,” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 19, no. 2 (Sep 2014): 161-174.

¹⁷ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 244.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ François Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Adkins, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 10.

in how the exigency of decolonial-invention reveals the World as a mass hallucination - one engendered by a philosophico-political decision that introduces an *a priori* Manichean division retroactively naturalized in anti-blackness.²² At the same time, the seeds of a new faith is itself a condition of taking and sustaining the real leap of invention into the indeterminate abyss of the Real. It is precisely a radically immanent faith in something other than the Manichean World that enables the colonized to psychically and politically leap from the naturalized-hallucination of colonial culture into an uncompromising fidelity to the Real.

On the way to elaborating the radically immanent faith of black messianic invention, it is important to note that the Manichean logic of anti-blackness could be considered the teleological fulfillment of anti-Judaic Christian supersessionism.²³ Accordingly, Fanonism's messianics of invention are antithetical to Christianity's *katechontic*²⁴ civilizing project of colonization predicated on the notion of the non-Christian. It is colonial-Christianity's very universalizing humanist logic that subtends Fanon's claim that *for the black man there is only one destiny, and it is white*.²⁵ As Marriott glosses in his foreword: "blackness can only find its ontological fulfillment by no longer being black - or by entering its own abyssal significance."²⁶ Whereas this ontological fulfillment marks the psychic teleology of colonial supersessionism that constitutes the (modern) World, blackness's abyssal significance ruptures

every teleology - first and foremost that of eschatological supersessionism, which subtends modernity's hallucination of (secular) progress. Accordingly, Fanonism's messianics of abyssal invention implies a psychic destitution of the hallucinatory imperative to not be(come) black.

Before proceeding with Marriott's study, I want to constellate his prefatory comments with aspects of Agamben's commentary on the Apostle Paul. The following constellation is a gesture to be developed elsewhere, but I believe it nonetheless contributes to this study's understanding of Fanonism's - and thus Afro-pessimism's - messianic comportment. Marriott writes in his foreword of "the fall, the catastrophe, through which blackness has unfolded from its origin in the Middle Passage until its awaited arrival in the New World, an arrival for which we are still waiting, because such a possibility has to be invented if it is not to be missed."²⁷ The first thing to note is the articulation of catastrophe—notably, together with the fall - and the disposition of awaiting an arrival, which brings to mind Agamben's Homo Sacer project that interrogates the conditions for the messianic in biopolitical catastrophe.²⁸ Recalling Heidegger's invocation that *where the danger is grows the saving power also*,²⁹ it could be said that, for Agamben, the latent potential for immanent messianic inoperativity is to be found in anthropogenic catastrophe,³⁰ with the messianic *parousia* (presence, arrival) manifesting in the (collective) demand to render the biopolitical economy of death inoperative.

This dynamic can be brought into sharper relief when one considers his commentary on

²² On the notion of philosophical decision's hallucinatory imposition of division onto the Real, see François Laruelle, "A Summary of Non-Philosophy," trans. Ray Brassier, *PLI* 8 (1999): 138-148. https://plijournal.com/files/laruelle_pli_8.pdf

²³ For a genealogy of this trajectory, see Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 257-337.

²⁴ Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*, 59-62.

²⁵ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 4.

²⁶ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, xviii.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *The Omnibus Homo Sacer* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

²⁹ From Friedrich Hölderlin's "Patmos," in Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Garland, 1977), 28.

³⁰ For a study of this coincidence, see Jessica Whyte, *Catastrophe and Redemption: The Political Thought of Giorgio Agamben* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013).

Pauline temporality, which is composed of a “paradoxical tension between an *already* and a *not yet*.”³¹ Though the messianic event has already occurred, its fulfillment necessitates “an additional time.”³² This additional time is *the time that remains* in the messianic interval between the time of the World and its end - which in this context would be blackness’s true arrival in the New World. For Fanon, waiting is the condition of inhabiting this interval between catastrophe (“Nothingness”) and arrival (“Infinity”).³³ Yet, Marriott posits that “this awaiting also seems to me to be a suspense and an anticipation of waiting itself.”³⁴ What does it mean for an awaiting to be in suspense and anticipation of itself? He describes and calls this dynamic “the Fanonian moment, a moment that is always awaited, always to come: the abyssal.”³⁵ I would like to suggest that invention is what (temporarily) actualizes this abyssal moment by making use of the-messianic-temporal-interval-that-remains in the suspense(-ion) of awaiting that immanently “anticipates” its end. Here, one finds a reiteration of the radical immanence - or Determination-in-the-last-instance - of a new (*black*) faith/fidelity in invention: assuming the Fanonian position of awaiting is itself a faith-driven-leap into arrival *qua* abyssal moment of invention.³⁶ Given this radically indeterminate immanence of faith/awaiting/invention/arrival, the abyssal messianic moment renders any sense of *teleological* arrival - and, accordingly, eschatological redemption - incoherent and untenable. Rather,

black messianic invention commences a vertiginous tabula rasa that fundamentally dissolves the catastrophe and its wake - while remaining radically immanent in the World’s decomposition. As Marriott elaborates:

If Fanon needed to say or announce that the time has come for a complete and utter tabula rasa, then he implies that in some way that necessity, the having-come of the time that has come, is not so redemptive, not so predictable. If he needed to tell us that the revolutionary moment is a tabula rasa, then this implies that decolonization is itself a time when things are decomposing or dissolving, ... [a moment] whose structure is enigmatic, and outside teleology or eschatology.³⁷

The impossible arrival of the wretched’s abyssal moment necessarily coincides with an asynchronous erasure that Fanon oraxiomatically describes as “the real *leap*” of faith that introduces “invention into existence.”³⁸ And, to reiterate this dynamic’s connection to messianic time, I am suggesting that the *not yet* of the “darkness to come”³⁹ is radically immanent in the catastrophic *already* that demands erasure. The one who waits-*qua*-leaps thus inhabits *the black time that remains* in a paradoxical suspense-ion of awaiting - in leaping - by immanently anticipating - in awaiting - the abyssal moment of erasure and invention. Perhaps the figure that best conveys this paradox is the Möbius strip, where the “traversal” of waiting in(to) leaping is indistinguishable in *its radical immanence (to) itself*.⁴⁰ Such a black messianic leap into (awaiting) abyssal invention is thus constitutively untimely and enigmatic within the World’s eschatological hallucination of redemption - within which there is neither need nor place for invention.

³¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 69.

³² Ibid.

³³ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 108.

³⁴ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, xviii.

³⁵ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 2.

³⁶ Consider the etymology of invention: “noun of action from past-participle stem of *invenire* ‘to come upon, find; find out; invent, discover, devise; ascertain; acquire, get earn,’ from *in-* ‘in, on’ (from PIE root **en* ‘in’) + *venire* ‘to come’ from a suffixed form of PIE root **gwa-* ‘to go, come.’” Online Etymology Dictionary, “Invention,” <https://www.etymonline.com/word/invention>

³⁷ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 3.

³⁸ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 179.

³⁹ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 2.

⁴⁰ Laruelle, “A Summary of Non-Philosophy,” 14.

Marriott goes on to connect his discussion of Fanonism's revolutionary tabula rasa in passing with Benjamin's notion of *lawmaking violence*. Though I want to take this cue in articulating Fanon with Benjamin, I am going to develop it through the latter's notion of divine violence. It is outside the scope of this essay to explore how this difference manifests itself - a task I would like to take up elsewhere. However, it is worth noting that perhaps one of the important things at stake in Marriott's preferred articulation of "the concept of tabula rasa ... to the famous Benjaminian notion of *die rechtsetzende Gewalt*"⁴¹ is the fact that there is no getting around the spilling of blood in decolonial violence. This, of course, would appear to be at odds with, according to Benjamin, (pure) divine violence's [*die göttliche reine Gewalt*] "being lethal without the spilling of blood"⁴² - the paradigm for which is the general strike. Yet, I am going to bracket this important tension and pursue an equivocal articulation of divine and decolonial violence for the sake of prioritizing how the tabula rasa - as an event that "fundamentally alters both law and time"⁴³ - necessarily suspends the "opposition between means and ends."⁴⁴ And it is precisely in the theorization of divine violence that Benjamin elaborates this suspension as a *politics of pure means*. On this point, I want to briefly continue the dialogue between Marriott and Agamben by returning to the question of how one awaits in a mode of suspense-ion and anticipation of itself. As aforementioned, Marriott responds with invention. I believe one can further understand Fanonism's enigmatic modality of waiting when its black messianic politics of invention are read through the Benjaminian logic of pure means - which Agamben has assumed the task of elaborating.

III. Toward a Non-Philosophical Politics of Pure Means

Here I draw on Agamben's commentary in his post-Homo Sacer study, *Karman: A Brief Treatise on Action, Guilt, and Gesture*,⁴⁵ which culminates with a discussion of Benjamin's politics of pure means in the essay "Beyond Action." One can understand the stakes of this study in Laruelle's terms of undoing the philosophical decision that introduces an *a priori* division: Aristotle's distinction between means and ends that founds the biopolitical hallucination-machine. After cursorily stating how Aristotle initiates this division in his definition of the human as a political animal, I will advance to Agamben's discussion of Kant, whom Benjamin's politics of pure means are in response to. Further, Agamben's discussion lends itself to a metacommentary showing how in Kant's attempt to think through the means/end apparatus, his presupposed idea of the human - and the political theology of perpetual peace⁴⁶ it gives way to⁴⁷ - is predicated on anti-black supersessionism. Therefore, I suggest that to undo the philosophical decision dividing means from ends coincides with undoing the Western machine's philosophical anthropology that hallucinates the human contradistinguished from the Real *qua* blackness.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle arrives at his definitive understanding of the human in attributing to it the privileged sphere of political praxis as the means by which the ultimate good is achieved: happiness, "that for the sake of

⁴¹ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 4.

⁴² Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," 249.

⁴³ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 4.

⁴⁴ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 368, n6.

⁴⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Karman: A Brief Treatise on Action, Guilt, and Gesture*, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018).

⁴⁶ Seán Molloy, *Kant's International Relations: The Political Theology of Perpetual Peace* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017).

⁴⁷ Immanuel Kant, "Toward Perpetual Peace," in *Practical Philosophy (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel)*, trans. Mary J. Gregor Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 311-52.

which everything else is done.”⁴⁸ He goes on to specify that “happiness appears to be something complete [*telos*] and self-sufficient [*teleios*] and is therefore the end of all actions.”⁴⁹ Completion and self-sufficiency are thus definitive of the good as something that needs to be achieved. This is of significance because it entails that happiness - as the ultimate end of human praxis - can never become a means unto itself. Therefore, as Agamben writes, “we are dealing with an apparatus that founds and simultaneously constitutes as absolute the opposition between ends and means.”⁵⁰ As a consequence of this absolute opposition, the human is constitutively divided from happiness in an irreparable fracture that action *qua* politics “seeks incessantly to fill.”⁵¹ Recalling the title of his final essay, “Beyond Action,” Agamben emphasizes that to render the teleology of action inoperative necessitates a dismantling of (political) praxis’s logic of purposiveness - i.e., the purpose of achieving the ultimate good of happiness - which is the idea that governs politics in the History of the West and thus its global hegemony in modernity.

Agamben’s critique of the concept of purposiveness brings him to Kant. Kant’s teleological thought - that is to say, a thought governed by and oriented toward the idea of an ultimate end - traverses his tripartite-critiques of reason, morality, and judgment (the last of which, as Arendt has argued, takes the form of a political philosophy⁵²). But it is on the thematic of morality that Kant most clearly initiates his attempt to bypass the fracture between end and means. In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, he posits the human being as an *end in itself* [*Zweck an sich*

selbst].⁵³ Further, as Agamben observes, “connected with the idea of an end in itself is that of a final end (*Endzweck*), to which the whole second part of the *Critique of Judgment* is dedicated.” There, Agamben continues, “the only being that can be thought as “ultimate purpose of nature, in reference to which all other things constitute a system of ends” is the human being as a moral being.”⁵⁴ In other words, for Kant, all of nature is subordinated to fulfilling the final-end that is the human as end-in-itself. Here final-end and end-in-itself coincide without remainder in humanity’s moral purpose, amounting to what Agamben calls an “absolutization of the idea of purposiveness.”⁵⁵ The absolutization of purposiveness in the human effectively takes Aristotle’s anthropology to the providential extreme of Christianity’s anthropocentric cosmology: replacing the Aristotelian good with the modern supersessionist human⁵⁶ (yielding the appropriately called Anthropocene in the process).

Though Agamben neglects the racialized implications of Kant’s definition of the human, he incidentally helps bring them into sharp relief. For instance, Agamben observes how “Kant could not fail to realize that by defining the human being as an end in itself, he situated the human being in an aporia, that is, literally in an absence of way.”⁵⁷ As I read it, this aporia names the impossibility to *become* human unless one is already constituted as such by nature. Perhaps for this very reason, Kant keeps this aporia intact and seals his supersessionist vision of the human “by making recourse to the theological idea of a final end”⁵⁸ to which all of nature is

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport: Focus, 2002), 19.

⁴⁹ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 20.

⁵⁰ Agamben, *Karman*, 63.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1989.

⁵³ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A German-English Edition*, trans. Mary J. Gregor and Jens Timmermann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁵⁴ Agamben, *Karman*, 72.

⁵⁵ Agamben, *Karman*, 71.

⁵⁶ For a critique of Kant’s supersessionist political anthropology, see J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 79-121.

⁵⁷ Agamben, *Karman*, 75.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

subordinated as its means - existing, as Heidegger describes, in a state of “standing-reserve” [*Bestand*].⁵⁹ By formulating the human-*qua*-moral-being as simultaneously an end-in-itself and the-final-end-of-nature, Agamben observes that Kant,

reintroduced the means-end apparatus that he had perhaps at first intended to call into question. “Without the human being,” he writes, “the chain of mutually subordinated purposes would not be complete as regards its ground. Only in the human being, and only in him as subject of morality, do we meet with unconditional legislation in respect of ends, which therefore alone renders him capable of being a final end, to which the whole of nature is teleologically subordinated” (*Critique of Judgment* §84). That the human being as final end is the guarantor of the perfect hierarchy between means and end that defines what he calls an “ethical theology” (*Ethikothologie*) could not be affirmed more forcefully. The determination of the human being as moral being thus coincides with the definitive triumph of purposiveness in the sphere of action.⁶⁰

Following Agamben’s analysis of this paradigmatic passage in Kant’s anthropocentric thought, I argue that the absolutization of purposiveness in this ethical theology of the human - as *the guarantor of the perfect hierarchy between means and end* - is best understood as (re)constituting the sphere of action upon a grammar of anti-blackness. Case in point, consider what Marriott states at the start of his study: “anti-blackness is the thing against which the universal, the human, the ideal, etc., is enunciated and created; it is the means through which the racial discourse

of being is articulated as spirit.”⁶¹ Accordingly, Kant’s absolute reification of the hierarchy between means and end is secured with anti-blackness. That is, the metaphysical synonymy of blackness/slavery/nature as standing-reserve becomes, in modernity, the fundamental politico-philosophical means by which human-purposiveness is onto-theo-logically guaranteed as final-end - to which the whole of the Real is teleologically (divided and) subordinated.

In contradistinction to Kant’s teleology, Benjamin wants to conceive a politics of pure means. Benjamin approaches this prospect through a critique of the two principle forms of violence: law-making and law-preserving, which correspond to constituent and constituted power. Both forms of violence essentially govern our horizon of political thought in the dialectic of oppressed and oppressor. And, as Agamben writes, each “share the false presupposition that it is possible to link (legitimate) means to (just) ends.”⁶² Instead, Agamben continues: “It is as a paradigm of ‘pure mediality,’ namely, one that is removed from every immediate relation with an end, that one must understand the violence that ... Benjamin calls ‘pure or divine violence,’ which neither founds the law nor conserves it, but ‘deposes’ (*entsetzt*) it.”⁶³ What does it mean to “depose” the law in a politics of pure means? Agamben explains that “the violence that was only a means for the creation or conservation of law become[s] capable of deposing it to the extent that it exposes and renders inoperative its relation to that purposiveness.”⁶⁴ In other words, if violence is the political means toward the ends of the law - whether it be for constituent or constituted power - then suspending the mediality of violence from its end-in-law exposes the primacy of violence in our existence and renders “pure” violence available for alternative, singu-

⁵⁹ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*.

⁶⁰ Agamben, *Karman*, 75.

⁶¹ Marriott, *W/ither Fanon?*, x.

⁶² Agamben, *Karman*, 81.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Agamben, *Karman*, 82.

lar uses without purposiveness. The difficult and dangerous thought here demands suspending the hallucination of purposiveness - the notion that one can link legitimate means to just ends - which inevitably *reacts* (in the Nietzschean sense) to such a proposition with the objection that this implies something like a wanton celebration of violence for violence's sake.

In antagonism to this hallucinatory reaction, Fanonism throws its katechontic-function into sharp relief. I argue decolonial-divine-violence exhibits itself as such in the wretched's "agenda of total disorder"⁶⁵ that abyssally interrupts/suspends the Kantian final-end-in-the-human-as-end-in-itself with an "unconditional, absolute, total, and seamless" destruction of "one 'species' of mankind by another."⁶⁶ That is, decolonization's deposing of the law exposes and renders inoperative any notion of human right(s) in "a social fabric that has been changed inside out."⁶⁷ A Fanonian politics of divine violence exposes the violence in anti-black gratuitous violence - the violence subtending Kant's humanist ethical theology - and opens that violence to a new singular use: neither law-making nor law-conserving, but the pure means of gratuitous freedom as such. To exist without regard to the law in a new faith-in/fidelity-to the wretched *is* pure violence in the eyes of the (anti-black) World. This is the violent leap of *endlessly* introducing invention into existence - singularly and collectively - in the abyssal tabula rasa that from the outset defines any decolonization. Further, as Marriott writes of the wretched's laying hold of gratuitous violence: "From social death to tabula rasa, for Fanon, destructive violence is the process through which the socially dead acquire a new symbolic form."⁶⁸ I call this new form *the black messianic*; or, in Laruelle's terms, which evokes the Fanonian imperative of endless in-

vention: the laying hold of gratuitous violence in gratuitous freedom is *black-christo-fiction's* politics of pure means. Thus, by turning the social fabric inside out, Fanonism's divine violence non-philosophically deposes and renders inoperative the gratuitous violence of politico-philosophical division - between means and end, constituent and constituted power, social death and human life - in the abyssal tabula rasa of invention's pure mediality. In this way, "[a]t a descriptive level, therefore, any decolonization is a success."⁶⁹

IV. The Fanonian Black Messianic Leap into Faith

I suggest one can constellate Laruelle's conception of non-philosophy as a heresy of the philosophical World with Fanon's conception of the wretched's new symbolic form of pathology. In Fanon's new concept of freedom and - or perhaps *as* - pathology, Marriott writes, "we should note that liberation does not merely consist in freeing people from their symptoms, but also involves ... asking why the promise of freedom traumatizes those bereft of it."⁷⁰ The wretched's heresy of divine violence is pathologically traumatic precisely *because* it deposes the racial-imperial-horizon of the World that gives us our sense of knowledge and meaning - i.e., the perverse "inverted epistemology"⁷¹ of anti-blackness—and thus exposes it as the mass hallucination that asymmetrically structures existence. Accordingly, destroying the World entails destroying ourselves, whether that means the ontometaphysical death of the human or the depetrification of the socially dead, both of which are impossible within the World's hallucinatory horizon. As Marriott continues: "the need is to work at patiently tracing out a new psychopolitical form that is the new space of a *pathology* (the very essence of liberation as Fanon defines it)"

⁶⁵ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 2.

⁶⁶ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 72.

⁶⁹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 2.

⁷⁰ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 191.

⁷¹ Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 18.

because the “necessities of revolution call forth obligations that necessarily have to be fulfilled, imperatives of knowledge, method, and ideological reinvention.”⁷² This new psychopolitical form of pathology - *gratuitous freedom* - structurally tarries at the threshold of psychosis (with the inherent risk of inducing it) in responding to the black messianic imperative to invent a new *ethico-onto-epistem-ology*.⁷³ Given that there is no getting around the truth that such revolutionary heresy is fundamentally traumatic - especially to the colonized in their (always) already being-deprived of (any) freedom - patiently tracing out this new psychopolitical form-of-existence is decisive for understanding how the wretched can straddle nothingness and infinity so as to use (its) nothingness (in invention) without being-consumed by it (in psychosis).

This new psychopolitical-form-of-existence is thus a pathology of invention that, as Laruelle says of the Real, is foreclosed to knowledge, and takes its cue from such foreclosure in remaining suspended over the abyss of blackness. As Marriott explains, this pathological comportment runs throughout what Fanon conceives as the leap, where

the black is thus able to cross, without ever arriving on the other side, the abyss between nothingness and infinity. ... [O]nly the one who leaps can take charge of [their] identification without consecrating the compensations of either [prior to X]passive nihilism or universal humanism]. This is why the Fanonian situation, described by [Jared] Sexton as an affirmation made in the full awareness of despair, is less an example of *amor fati* than one of endless transvaluation.⁷⁴

In radically refusing the coordinates of moder-

nity’s hallucination that offers the false-choice of universal humanism or abject nothingness, the wretched’s new symbolic form paradoxically *is* the tabula rasa as such in their endless (demand for) transvaluation *qua* invention. The pathology at the core of the wretched’s divine violence is in its pure means of transvaluation without end. Such pure means maintains a radical fidelity to the Real’s abyssal foreclosure to knowledge and refuses any presumption of something like the human that could be philosophically or theologically set apart from this abyss as nature’s final-end.

Fanon’s invocation of the Kierkegaardian figure of the leap in this context brings one to the function of faith and its role in the wretched’s new psychopolitical form of pathology. Though I will take up faith more directly in the next section on Laruelle’s *christo-fiction*, it can be cursorily noted in the meantime that faith is tacitly decisive for Fanonism’s fundamental refusal of Kantian teleology. Here one may recall the long-standing philosophical distinction between faith and reason; however, it should be stipulated that the role of faith in Fanonism, as I understand it, is not played in simple opposition to reason, which would preserve the hallucination of their distinction; rather, Fanonism’s refusal of Worldly Reason is ultimately a refusal of the very division between faith and reason. More to the point, I argue Fanonism tacitly shows that faith is the condition of possibility for any radical thought of invention - which is to say any decolonial politics of pure means. The Kierkegaardian leap is that of paradoxically knowing there is no ground (but only a tightrope), a ground that philosophical reason needs to presuppose in order to secure its hallucination of knowledge. But more radically, the Fanonian leap understands that, for its faith of/in invention, there is no God to inspire the confidence sustaining Kierkegaard’s knight of faith. Though Kierkegaard’s God is admittedly ineffable - and the whole paradoxical exercise of faith concerns

⁷² Marriott, *W/bither Fanon?*, 191.

⁷³ Karren Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 185. Kindle Edition.

⁷⁴ Marriott, *W/bither Fanon?*, 204.

Its unknowability - God nonetheless serves as both the precondition and the motivation for the leap as is evident in the fundamental role the parable of Abraham and Issac plays in *Fear and Trembling*.⁷⁵ Whereas for Fanonism, I want to suggest, if God is not dead then It is an anti-black racist⁷⁶ - and in either case, the Fanonian leap is one of radical immanence in a (tacit) refusal of an appeal to or desire for God. However, this should not be understood as a conventional atheistic-existentialist position, but rather, I propose, as a *non-theism* that begins with the understanding that God Itself emanates from the abyss⁷⁷ - which, I would add, is the original sin of supersession from the Real that humanity inherits in their being (fraudulently) made in

⁷⁵ Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling: Dialectical Lyric by Johannes De Silentio*, trans. Alastair Hannay (London: Penguin Classics, 2014). Space does not suffice for me to elaborate this distinction here, though I plan to take this up as the focus of a future essay. My primary motive in making this passing gesture to Kierkegaard is: 1) to disclose the tacit function of faith in Fanonism given his own allusion to the leap of/into faith; and 2) to emphasize how the black messianic (or black-christo-fiction) practices a faith subtracted from any relation to God - apophantic or otherwise—precisely in that it concerns the radical immanence of the abyss that precedes and subtends (the transcendence of) God Itself (see fn. 77). I also want to express my gratitude to one of my anonymous readers who drew my attention to the work of Peter Kline on Kierkegaard's apophantic thought - as well as Kierkegaard's *theologia crucis* christology, which would speak directly to my messianic reading of Fanon and how I want to elaborate it through James Cone's constellation of the crucifixion and the lynching tree (see below). Although I do not have the space here to do justice to these rich connections, my hope is for these gestural engagements to indicate paths of future research and writing. See Peter Kline, *Passion for Nothing: Kierkegaard's Apophatic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017).

⁷⁶ See William R. Jones, *Is God A White Racist?: A Preamble to Black Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).

⁷⁷ Here I draw on David Kishik's commentary on pre-Abrahamic Genesis, which highlights its opening three words: "Bereshit created God" [*Bereshit bara elohim*]. As Kishik writes: "Bereshit is not a constituent power that can establish a new world order. Genesis 1-11 teaches that the basis of everything is an abyss. Bereshit is not the ground on which things stand but the hand that pulls the rug out from under them." *The Book of Shem: On Genesis Before Abraham* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 11.

God's image.⁷⁸ Fanonism's (leap of) faith is thus radically abyssal, which is why, as Jared Sexton notes, it is actually "a leap *into* faith."⁷⁹ Put otherwise, Fanonism is a leap into the abyssal indeterminacy of the radically immanent Real as a new conception of freedom(-as-gratuitous) in the pathology of invention - a leap that amounts to a fundamental faith in the inexhaustible (unthought) potentiality of abyssal blackness for endless transvaluation.

Having broached the matter of faith in Fanonism, I want to continue an elaboration of its messianics through a consideration of the symbol of the noose (*qua* lynching). To frame this consideration, let me note that the constellation of the messianic cross and the gratuitous anti-black violence of the lynching tree has been powerfully made by James H. Cone,⁸⁰ the founding thinker of *black theology*.⁸¹ Yet, in a non-philosophical use of this constellation, my conception of the black messianic understands blackness to be subtracted from the *eschatology* of the oppressed at the core of Cone's black liberation theology.⁸² For an example of Cone's eschatological thought, consider his notion that "liberation is not a human possession but a divine gift of freedom to those who struggle in faith against violence and oppression. Liberation is

⁷⁸ As Kishik suggests: "when God is said to create life, a job for which he seems to be unqualified, it should be understood as an overreaching or even mutiny on his part. It can be compared to humanity's occasional attempts to act like the diety. Divine creation, which should not be conflated with [Bereshit's] meta-divine creation, may therefore be perceived as the *original* original sin." *The Book of Shem*, 21.

⁷⁹ Daniel Colucciello Barber and Jared Sexton, "On Black Negativity, or the Affirmation of Nothing." *Society and Space* (September 18, 2017), <https://societyandspace.org/2017/09/18/on-black-negativity-or-the-affirmation-of-nothing/>.

⁸⁰ James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017).

⁸¹ James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation - Fortieth Anniversary Edition* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017).

⁸² James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed: New Revised Edition* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997).

not an object but the *project* of freedom wherein the oppressed realize that their fight for freedom is a divine right of creation.”⁸³ What I am suggesting, however, is that liberation *qua* gratuitous freedom is neither a human possession nor a divine gift, but “the black task of thought”⁸⁴ toward endless transvaluation through the (re)introduction of invention into existence. Though I agree with Cone’s emphasis that “[w]e know what the end is when we face it head-on by refusing, at the risk of death, to tolerate present injustice,” Fanonism departs from any eschatological notion of God’s “promised future.”⁸⁵ Rather, Fanonism is an abyssal aspiration that necessarily defies the logic of last things (*eschatology*) – and, with it, an investment in the divine economy.⁸⁶ Once again, as with my passing engagement with Kierkegaard, space does not suffice here to do justice to Cone’s rich and pathbreaking thought, which I intend to take up elsewhere in my ongoing elaboration of the black messianic; but I nonetheless find it important to acknowledge his significance and influence while suggesting that, from a non-philosophical-Fanonian perspective, Cone’s investment in theology, though unquestionably radical, remains reliant on the divine economy of eschatology that, I believe, remains a fundamental apparatus of anti-blackness; in this vein, I follow Audre Lorde’s conviction – which deeply informs Afro-pessimism – that *the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house*.⁸⁷

Therefore, while the figure of crucified blackness is paradigmatic of modernity’s *katechontic* constitution, from the black messianic perspective of Fanonism and Afro-pessimism’s thought, blackness is foreclosed to any escha-

tological promise of redemption.⁸⁸ In this way, I simultaneously follow and depart from Cone in suggesting that Fanonism is a black messianic politics of pure means wherein the noose of the lynching tree is constellated with the messianic scene of crucifixion as an exhibition of how blackness is absolutely forsaken.⁸⁹ In absolute forsakenness, the black’s only recourse for (gratuitous) freedom is in the radical abyss of invention. This is how one can read Fanon when he writes: “Here is my life caught in the noose of existence. Here is my freedom, which sends me back to my own reflection” where the “density of History determines none of my acts. I am my own foundation. And it is going beyond the historical and instrumental given that I initiate my cycle of freedom.”⁹⁰ Marriott’s gloss of the above passage shows how Fanon’s use of the first-person functions paradigmatically for the black as such, which thus demarcates the noose of/around black existence as a site of traversal into unthought gratuitous freedom:

This noose in which black existence appears to be captured is not merely a constriction, but more importantly, nor can it be fled from or escaped. It is only by means of being seized by such a stricture – at the point where one is about to fall into nothingness – that the condition

⁸³ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 127.

⁸⁴ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 362.

⁸⁵ Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 137.

⁸⁶ For a genealogy and deconstruction of Christianity’s divine *oikonomia*, see Agamben’s *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa with Matteo Mandarini (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁸⁷ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007), 110–114.

⁸⁸ As Wilderson contends: blackness is “both barred from the denouement of redemption and, simultaneously, needed if redemption is to attain any form of coherence” insofar as black “inhumanity stabilizes the redemption of those [whites] who do not need it, just as it mobilizes the narrative [or eschatological] project of those [non-blacks] who strive to be re-redeemed.” “Afro-pessimism & the End of Redemption,” *Franklin Humanities Institute* (May 25, 2017), humanitiesfutures.org/papers/afro-pessimism-end-redemption/.

⁸⁹ Though the *theologia crucis* is a rich figure, beginning with Martin Luther’s coinage, in the thought of Kierkegaard and Cone (among others) that warrants deeper engagement, my primary interest in the available space of this essay is to use it to elaborate Fanonism’s black messianic thought of the noose.

⁹⁰ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 203, 205.

for achieving that higher, more complex form of freedom opens one's reflection to a new kind of vertigo. Noosely invoked here as the figure for what surrounds black internal life, what could it possibly mean to see in the image of a lynching the image of a fall reversed from that of expiation to that of freedom?⁹¹

I argue that it is in the very acceptance of one's absolute forsakenness in the hallucination of anti-blackness - not only despite but precisely because such acceptance is unbearable - that the image of a fall in the noose of existence opens onto the apocalyptic wish for a tabula rasa in the black messianics of invention. With such unflinching acceptance of the noose that sends one back to one's own reflection - demanding an abyssal leap into faith - comes the revelation (*apo-kalupsis*) that History's determinism is a mass hallucination and fidelity to the Real can initiate its radically immanent messianic cycle of gratuitous freedom. This is Fanonism's heresy of black messianic faith.

V. Toward a Non-Philosophical Black-Christo-Fiction

Before engaging *Christo-Fiction*, I would like to transition from Fanonism to Laruelle by way of Alexander Galloway's commentary on "Of Black Universe."⁹² As Galloway programmatically writes: "According to Laruelle we must jump further, not from light to dark but from dark to black, from the darkness of philosophy to the blackness of science."⁹³ Science here speaks to the non-philosophical method of engaging the Real's indeterminacy in contradistinction to philosophy's metaphysical claims (of access) to

Truth. And since this Real is foreclosed to knowledge, it is insufficient to maintain the dialectic of light and darkness - which goes back to Plato's allegory of the cave - by simply privileging the latter to the former, but instead take the real leap into the abyss of blackness. As Galloway goes on to elaborate in a manner recalling Fanonism's apocalypics: "Such is the generic darkness of the abyss, the void and vacuum, the darkness of catastrophe and cataclysm. It is a cosmological blackness, the black of Satan, the black of absolute evil, the black of nonbeing."⁹⁴ Though Galloway does not connect these connotations of blackness and malevolence with racialization - aside from a fleeting though interesting invocation of Toussaint Louverture cited at the start of my essay - it should be made explicit that his (and by implication, Laruelle's) description is parasitic upon anti-blackness's positioning of blackness as the locus for these signifiers. While I find non-philosophy's embrace of blackness compelling and by no means arbitrary, it must think blackness not simply as metaphor or abstraction but in the wake of racial blackness so as to attend to the inherent risk of reinscribing modernity's anti-black structure. While blackness is not reducible to its epidermalization, any attempt to think it without regard to the black's singular historicity of gratuitous violence is condemned to preserving the World's anti-black grammar - thus serving its *katechontic* function.

With that said, I see my essay as an attempt in part to attend to this unconscious parasitism by taking up christo-fiction's black universe with anti-blackness not only in full view but as the primary philosophical decision/hallucination that non-philosophy must explicitly contend with. In this way, Fanonism - and its contemporary theoretical incarnation in Afro-pessimism - presents itself as the paradigm non-philosophy must assume if it is to "make a tabula rasa out of the future."⁹⁵ That is why any christo-fiction must

⁹¹ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 212.

⁹² François Laruelle, "Of Black Universe in the Human Foundations of Color," in *Hyun Soo Choi: Seven Large-Scale Paintings* trans. Miguel Abreu (New York: Thread Waxing Space, 1991), 2-4.

⁹³ Galloway, *Laruelle*, 134.

⁹⁴ Galloway, *Laruelle*, 144.

⁹⁵ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 137.

necessarily be a *black-christo-fiction*, which is arguably already implicit in Laruelle's thought, but nonetheless remains insufficient without taking up Fanonism as its paradigmatic (though by no means sole) progenitor. That being said, Galloway's elaboration of non-philosophical blackness can be very much in concert with Fanonism and Afro-pessimism. The black universe, Galloway writes, "is a world *without us*" humans, where "such blackness means the leaving of being," where it signifies "nothing as absolute foreclosure," and thus "the shadows of black being are not part of any ontology, but rather constitute an encryption or *crypto-ontology*."⁹⁶ Galloway recapitulates this line of thought in the form of a thesis for Laruelle's non-philosophical thought: "*Blackness is a crypto-ontology absolutely foreclosed to being*. Only through this final definition - black as *kruptos* foreclosed to being - can we begin to understand what Laruelle means by the black universe."⁹⁷ What is Real is this foreclosure; what is Real is black(ness); and any fidelity to the Real black universe immanently demands laying waste to Being and, accordingly, the World. Yet, it is only by thinking this crypto-ontological black universe in explicit fidelity to racial blackness and its structural antagonism toward the World that non-philosophy can be true to its insurrectionist demand for making a tabula rasa out of the future. In this vein, non-philosophy must assume Afro-pessimism's "generalization of the incendiary Spirit of '91."⁹⁸ This is the "summary phrasing" Sexton proposes following his citation of Anthony Farley's "commentary on the legacy of the 1791 slave revolt in the colony of Saint-Domingue: 'The slaves burned everything, yes, but, unfortunately, *they only burned everything in Haiti*.' Theirs was the greatest and most successful revolution in the history of the

world, but the failure of their fire to cross the waters was the great tragedy of the nineteenth century' (236, emphasis added)."⁹⁹

With this fundamental articulation of (racial) blackness and non-philosophy in mind, I want to take up Laruelle's christo-fiction to elaborate my notion of *black* faith. Laruelle announces at the start of his book that christo-fiction and faith are one and the same experiment: "christo-fiction is a thought experiment, or more exactly a faith experiment - a practice of nonphilosophical or nonstandard writing that presents and produces its axioms and its rules commensurately with that which they invest."¹⁰⁰ That is, non-philosophical writing does not (metaphysically) presuppose its claims but generates its axioms/rules from its investments - which, paradigmatically, begins with and follows from the singular wish to make a tabula rasa out of the future. In this way, Laruelle's faith experiment in nonstandard writing strikingly resonates with Afro-pessimism's rigorous rhetorical performance. Such is evident in Sexton's paradigmatic description, which is all the more pertinent given that he is addressing a constitutive dimension of the discourse that is severely neglected in much of its negative reception:

Astonishingly, all of [these criticisms] refuses to countenance the rhetorical dimensions of the discourse of Afro-Pessimism (despite the minor detail that its principal author is a noted creative writer and its first major statement is found in an awardwinning literary work of memoir) and the productive theoretical effects of the fiction it creates, namely, a meditation on a poetics and politics of abjection wherein racial blackness operates as an asymptotic approxima-

⁹⁶ Galloway, *Laruelle*, 144.

⁹⁷ Galloway, *Laruelle*, 145.

⁹⁸ Jared Sexton, "Afro-Pessimism: The Unclear Word," *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 29 (2016): fn. 8. doi:10.20415/rhiz/029.e02. For his citation, see Anthony Farley, "Perfecting Slavery," *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal* 36 (2005): 222-51.

⁹⁹ Ibid. For Sexton's citation, see Anthony Farley, "Perfecting Slavery," *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*. 36 (2005): 222-51.

¹⁰⁰ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction*, xi.

tion of that which disturbs every claim or formation of identity and difference as such.¹⁰¹

At the end of this passage, Sexton includes a footnote citing and invoking a discussion of Fredric Jameson's notion of *theoretical pragmatics* - not to be confused with pragmatism - as "the practice of using theory to change the present world."¹⁰² This practice also deeply resonates with Laruelle's theorization of non-philosophy's "scientific" deployment of philosophical and theological materials to construct its insurrectionist vision(-in-the-Real). Accordingly, along with the coincidence of non-philosophy and blackness, one can find a coincidence of christo-fiction and Afro-pessimism in the immanent production (*poiesis*) of theoretical axioms in their respective modes of nonstandard writing. As such, both are faith experiments, and I suggest their convergence in the notion of black-christo-fiction that endlessly (re-)creates itself through (the leap of/into) black faith - which Fanonism exemplifies.

Following this line of thought, whenever Laruelle writes of "Christ" I propose a simultaneous reading of blackness. For example, when he says "Christ is or contributes a type of intelligence that is faith or messianity itself" and that "it is up to us to find the axioms of faith, the principles of messianity,"¹⁰³ I suggest reading this as an allegorical claim regarding abyssal blackness, of which Fanonism is paradigmatic. When Laruelle writes of the need to invent Christ's impossible coming, I argue, to paraphrase Marriott, this is tantamount to inventing the impossible arrival of blackness in the New World - which is tantamount to the latter's destruction. In taking up Laruelle's suggestion that it is up to us to

invent the axioms and principles of messianic faith, such invention can occur only with regard to the abyss of blackness and the tabula rasa that emanates from it. As Marriott emphasizes: "what I call afro-pessimism must be thought as the black task of thought" that takes "responsibility for a new form of spirit, as the discovery of differentiation that is also the abyssal rupture of the bond between the universal and its various incarnations in nation, community, religion, race, and spirit."¹⁰⁴ In this way, when Laruelle writes that "Christ is the exit from Christianity,"¹⁰⁵ it needs to be simultaneously cast as the exit from anti-blackness. Black-christo-fiction is that which takes responsibility for the black task of thought by inventing a new form of spirit through inhabiting the abyssal rupture of every bond to the World and its various incarnations.

With these modifications in mind, Laruelle's theorization of faith can help one understand the non-philosophical function of black faith. This faith does not take the form of belief in an event or a person. It is "rather an immanent praxis, the messianic practice [in] the world that finds some affinity with an affect of immanence."¹⁰⁶ Following Frank B. Wilderson III¹⁰⁷ and Daniel Colucciello Barber,¹⁰⁸ this affect of immanence must be understood as the objective vertigo of radical withoutness constitutive of black-non-being-in-the-World. That is, the affect of radical immanence follows from the vertiginous tabula rasa, which is absolutely dis-orienting in abyssally demanding invention without appeal to knowledge, coordinates, or legitimacy. Hence, Laruelle attempts to clarify how this faith is necessarily cryptic and without (self-)referent: "We do not

¹⁰¹ Sexton, "Afro-Pessimism: The Unclear Word," par. 6.

¹⁰² Thomas Millay, "Always Historicize! On Fredric Jameson, the Tea Party, and Theological Pragmatics," *The Other Journal: An Intersection of Theology and Culture* 22 (2013): 48.

¹⁰³ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction*, 35.

¹⁰⁴ Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 363.

¹⁰⁵ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction*, ix.

¹⁰⁶ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction*, 37.

¹⁰⁷ Frank B. Wilderson, III, "The Vengeance of Vertigo: Aphasia and Abjection in the Political Trials of Black Insurgents," *InTensions* (2011), <http://www.yorku.ca/intent/issue5/articles/pdfs/frankbwildersoniiiarticle.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ Daniel Colucciello Barber, "World-Making and Grammatical Impasse," *Qui Parle* 25, no. 1-2 (2016): 179-206. doi:10.5250/quiparle.25.1-2.0179.

have faith in faith, nor faith ‘in’ Christ but, really, faith ‘in’ (according to) Christ [*qua* blackness], or ‘informed’ by him.”¹⁰⁹ As I understand it, (black) faith is *in-formed* by the dis-orientation of the Real’s abyssal foreclosure, enabling one to tarry with blackness’s radical withoutness, and theorize from that place(lessness) through endless transvaluation.

Black faith is thus not faith in some individual black Messiah, but faith in the abyssal blackness of the Real that apocalyptically-reveals the fundamental absence of ground for black messianic invention. As such, Laruelle writes that in “its ultimate essence, faith is messianic: it is an immanent praxis for a deindividualized messiah, one that destroys the world-form beliefs of theology [and Society].”¹¹⁰ Black faith is the immanent praxis of the black messianic in that it divests from the World by way of the *pyro-technic desire of 1791* - where the (Haitian) slave revolt is the paradigm for the deindividualized messiah. As such, black faith is immanently messianic as an insurrectionist politics of pure means that subtracts itself from World-form-beliefs-in-ends through a fidelity to the radical withoutness of blackness. Such is the black task of non-philosophical thought: the apocalyptic tabula rasa of black messianic invention revealed in black faith as the pure means of gratuitous freedom. Therefore, Fanonism’s tabula rasa, Afro-pessimism’s gratuitous freedom, and non-philosophy’s christo-fiction converge with the Real leap into black faith - the new faith and fidelity that simultaneously awaits and aspires to endlessly invent the destruction of the World.

¹⁰⁹ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction*, 37.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Another Beginning of Philosophy is Possible Towards a Democratic and Disruptive History of Systems of Thought

Sven Låwen

Abstract: As an analytic prolongation of Laruelle's particulate and democratic picture of philosophy, non-commutative ontology treats philosophical variables, whether continuous or discrete, on an equal footing. Lined up with a spectral paradigm, the notion of variability gives rise to certain indeterminacies with regard not only to the future but also to the past. Therefore, by radicalizing freedom within a democratic and disruptive history of systems of thought another beginning of philosophy is possible.

Sven Låwen is the author of a work entitled *Subtropical Philosophy: Homological Ontology in Characteristic One* (PhD thesis, Kingston University, London, 2019) and two recent articles titled '*Philosophie tropicale. Analyse idempotente de la matrice générique*' (in Ó Maoilearca, John, et al., eds., *La philosophie non-standard de François Laruelle*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2019) and '*L'ontologie non-commutative et la variabilité spectrale*' (in '*Philo-Fictions. La revue des non-philosophies*, n°5, "*Énergie, un sort à défendre*", 2020). He teaches philosophical courses, e.g. on 'Critical theory and democracy of thought' or 'Intellectuals and power', at the University of Paris-Saclay (since spring 2016).

laewen.sven@gmail.com

Keywords: generic quantum, non-commutative ontology, spectra variability, democracy of thought, radical freedom

1. Non-commutative Ontology

François Laruelle undertakes two interesting steps in his “non-classical or ‘non-standard’ philosophy:”¹ first, a *technical* step toward “a quantization of thought”² by applying a logico-algebraic language to philosophy and, second, a *conceptual* step by embracing the notion of “wave function” as a “formula or equation combining the symbols of philosophical or real variables”³ like “the transcendentals (the One itself, Being, Other, the Multiple, Unity, Beings, etc.)”⁴ or “the pairs of great transcendentals (Being and Non-Being, Same and Other, Good and Evil as Non-Good, True and Non-True, etc.)”⁵ The emphasis lies on the fact that the wave function designates a “law of an undulatory process and not of a ‘state.’”⁶ Laruelle refers to “states” of a system of thought attributing certain values to philosophical variables as “isolated conceptual points”⁷ but as wave functions or “state vectors” in “an onto-vectorial configuration space.”⁸ One property of such a system is that every state can be expressed in the

form of linear combinations of other states. A state is described by a vector, the superposition of states corresponds to the addition of vectors, and a “Hilbert configuration space” consists of “a plurality of vectors.”¹⁰ The ideas of “quantics-oriented theory”¹¹ in relation to a classical model of thought owe much to David Hilbert. The quasi-Hilbertian onto-vectorial space plays a fundamental role in Laruelle’s “immanent” or “onto-material formalism.”¹² Yet, as Alain Connes and Matilde Marcolli point out:

This [algebraic] viewpoint on quantum mechanics was later somewhat obscured by the advent of the Schrödinger equation. The Schrödinger approach shifted the emphasis back to the more traditional technique of solving partial differential equations, while the more modern viewpoint of Heisenberg implied a much more serious change of paradigm, affecting our most basic understanding of the notion of space. Heisenberg’s approach can be regarded as the historic origin of non[-]commutative geometry.¹³

Moreover, “the elevation of the wave function or of the state vector to the function of an *a priori* legislation of the empirical domain”¹⁴ con-

¹ François Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard. Générique, quantique, philo-fiction* (Paris: not Éditions Kimé, 2010), 31: “philosophie non-classique ou ‘non-standard.’”

² Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 13: “une quantification de la pensée.”

³ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 53: “Fonction d’onde. Formule ou équation combinant les symboles des variables philosophiques ou réelles.”

⁴ François Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 281; François Laruelle, *Principes de la non-philosophie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 344: “des transcendants (l’Un lui-même, l’Être, l’Autre, le Multiple, l’Unité, l’Étant, etc.)”

⁵ François Laruelle, *Introduction aux sciences génériques* (Paris: Éditions Pétra, 2008), 112 f.: “les paires de grands transcendants (Être et Non-Être, Même et Autre, Bien et Mal comme Non-Bien, Vrai et Non-Vrai, etc.)”

⁶ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 53: “Désignant la loi d’un processus ondulatoire et non d’un “état.””

⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁸ François Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction: The Ruins of Athens and Jerusalem*, trans. Robin Mackay (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 90; François Laruelle, *Christo-fiction. Les ruines d’Athènes et de Jérusalem* (Paris: Fayard, 2014), 139: “un espace de configuration vectoriale.”

⁹ François Laruelle, *En dernière humanité La nouvelle science écologique* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2015), 167: “un espace de configuration de Hilbert.”

¹⁰ Alain Connes, Danye Chéreau and Jacques Dixmier, *Le spectre d’Atacama. Trio pour la fin du temps* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2018), 232: “une pluralité de vecteurs.”

¹¹ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction: The Ruins*, 67; Laruelle, *Christo-fiction: Les ruines*, 107: “théorie orientée-quantique.” For ‘quantics’ see Marcelo Alonso and Edward J. Finn, *Physics*, Harlow: Addison Wesley, 1992, p.956.

¹² Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 77: “formalisme matériel” ou encore “immanent.”

¹³ Alain Connes and Matilde Marcolli, “A Walk in the Noncommutative Garden,” in *An Invitation to Noncommutative Geometry*, ed. Masoud Khalkhali and Matilde Marcolli (Washington, DC: World Scientific Publishing, 2006), 9.

¹⁴ François Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou. Sur l’introduction du Maoïsme dans la philosophie* (Paris: Editions Kimé, 2011), 78: “l’élévation de la fonction d’onde ou du vecteur d’état à la fonction de législation a priori du domaine empirique.”

fers a certain “ontological weight”¹⁵ on these notions. By emphasizing the analogy with optics, as Erwin Schrödinger has shown in his second article of 1926,¹⁶ and by comparing the trajectory of a “conceptual particle”¹⁷ with a ray of light, Laruelle tries to approximate the behavior of a subjacent “wave” in “the philosophical space”¹⁸ such as the transcendental field of Jean-Paul Sartre¹⁹ and the “plane of immanence”²⁰ of Gilles Deleuze. This seems to suggest that the “wave function” or “the generic quantum”²¹ state represents the “Real”²² underlying the particulate nature of concepts. The base for attributing an ontological weight to the generic wave function or state vector is, in the first place, the affirmation that quantum-oriented theory is a theory of waves in philosophical space or “an immanent ontology or aesthetic of the undulatory *a priori*.”²³ However, it is not clear how one could express a generic quantum state of two or more “conceptual particles”²⁴ as a set of wave functions in such a space. Secondly, the wave formulation misses the key feature of the generic quantization project, that is, the *discreteness* of the lived experience (“*Erlebnis*” in Edmund Husserl). “The energy is discrete,” writes Laruelle, “why would not the lived that replaces it be

discrete either?”²⁵ Such a property had to be recovered by supplementary suppositions, as there is no reason why a lived should be a wave related to the frequency. Last but not least, if one treats the wave as the “Real,” one falls immediately into what could be called the “generic measurement problem.” How can a wave expanding over the onto-vectorial space suddenly manifest itself at a single spot as a “conceptual particle?”²⁶

All these difficulties render the “ontologization” of the wave function difficult. On the one hand, this notion has a “philosophical plasticity,”²⁷ more than “the algebraic logos as a complex number,”²⁸ and it is much easier to grasp by giving a linear representation in a quasi-Hilbertian space. On the other hand, the algebraic logos of non-commutative observables is an important concept, while the importance given to the onto-vectorial space could be understood as an indirect confirmation of the ontological weight of generic quantum states. However, it would be a misleading idea to consider the generic notions of the wave function, the state vector or the quantum state as a faithful description of the “Real.” We should deal with quantum-oriented theory rather as a question of values of philosophical variables. “Real human experience,” as Alexander Galloway remarks, “is thus not so much a fact but a variable, not so much an object but a formal relation, just as the algebraic equation $x = 2y$ tells how x and y are related without saying anything about what x and y actually are. [...] Laruelle proposes what he calls a ‘materialized algebra’ of elements held as variables in superposition with each other.

¹⁵ Carlo Rovelli, “Space is Blue and Birds Fly through it,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 376, no. 2123 (2018), 1.

¹⁶ Erwin Schrödinger, “Quantisierung als Eigenwertproblem (Zweite Mitteilung),” *Annalen der Physik* 79 (1926), 489–527.

¹⁷ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 57, 64, 72, 420.

¹⁸ See, for instance, Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 78, 165, 301, 310, 387, 426, 467, and Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou*, 135: “l’espace philosophique.”

¹⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *La Transcendence de l’ego et autres textes phénoménologiques* (Paris: Vrin, 2003), 96: “champ transcendantal.”

²⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1991/2005), 38–59: “Le plan d’immanence.”

²¹ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 85 f. (“Vers le quantum générique”), 420 f. (“Le quantum générique”).

²² Ibid., 59 f., and Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou*, 23.

²³ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 244: “une ontologie et une esthétique immanentes de l’a priori ondulatoire.”

²⁴ Ibid., 72, 401: “particules conceptuelles.”

²⁵ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 136, 166: “L’énergie est discrète, pourquoi le vécu qui la remplace ne le serait-il pas?”

²⁶ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 57, 64, 72, 420: “particule conceptuelle.” See Rovelli, “Space is Blue,” for objections.

²⁷ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 420: “plasticité philosophique.”

²⁸ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 126: “le logos algébrique comme nombre complexe.”

By following, on the one hand, Werner Heisenberg rather than Schrödinger and, on the other hand, Laruelle who introduces “the democracy into the interior of transcendental Logic and Aesthetic”²⁹ with the result that “Logic, as elsewhere the Aesthetic itself, escapes the disjunction of intellectual or sensible forms,”³⁰ the aim is to establish the foundations for a *non-commutative ontology* based exclusively on the relations between, in principle observable, quantities of “intension” (that is what the qualitative quantity of the lived expresses) or of intensity, since non-philosophy does not aim at inflating ontology but in the contrary to rarefy it, as Laruelle states: “*The generic degrowth intends [...] to reduce philosophy to the state of a productive force.*”³¹

2. The Emergence of Space

With the discovery of a philosophical analog of the Heisenberg commutation relation $[p, q] = pq - qp = i\hbar$,³² Laruelle’s quantic-oriented theory thus means first of all *non-commutative onto-vectorial space*. Non-commutativity entails many advantages. In standard ontology of “dualistic philosophies”³³ from Parmenides (*Thought = Being*) via René Descartes (*Cogito ergo sum*) to Alain Badiou (*Set Theory = Ontology*), the commutativity assumption appears as a welcome simplification making certain logical identifications easier. But in fact our use of the written language makes us perfectly familiar with non-commutativity, if

we consider anagrams, i.e., writings that become equal when “abelianized” but nevertheless have quite different meanings as long as the order of letters is respected. One could only switch to what could be called a “communicative shadow”³⁴ of “the World”³⁵ or “World-thought”³⁶ at the expense of a “loss of meaning”³⁷ encoded by non-commutativity. Another key feature of the non-commutative “Universe”³⁸ or “Universe-language”³⁹ is that *the non-commuting discrete variables of the simplest kind generate the commuting continuous variables*. In other words, the “reality”⁴⁰ arises out of the “Real”⁴¹ of the quasi-Hilbertian

³⁴ Marcolli and Tabuda, “Noncommutative Motives and their Applications,” 207. See also Alain Connes, “Geometry and the Quantum” (2017) arXiv: 1703.02470v1, 16: “commutative algebraic shadow”

³⁵ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 145: “Monde.” For “commutative world,” see also Matilda Marcolli and Gonçalo Tabuda, “Noncommutative Motives and their Applications,” in *Commutative Algebra and Noncommutative Algebraic Geometry: Volume I: Expository Articles, Mathematical Sciences Research Institute Publications*, ed. David Eisenbud, Srikanth B. Iyengar, Anurag K. Singh, J. Toby Stafford, and Michel Van den Bergh (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 195, 202, 205.

³⁶ François Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2013), 170 f., and François Laruelle, *Dictionnaire de la non-philosophie* (Paris: Éditions Kimé, 1998), 152 f.: “Pensée-monde.”

³⁷ Alain Connes, Danye Chéreau and Jacques Dixmier, *Le théâtre quantique. L’horloge des anges ici-bas* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2013), 77: “passer au commutatif est une perte de sens.”

³⁸ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 145: “l’homme générique aura l’identité sous la forme d’une superposition quantique c’est-à-dire d’une dimension d’Univers” et non plus de ‘Monde.’ Laruelle distinguishes between “world” and “universe,” as Anthony Paul Smith clarifies, in order to “point out the difference between a form of existence that is not sufficient (universe) and a hallucinated totality that in reality refers to the set of actual but not necessary forms of authority (world).” Smith, *Laruelle*, 124. For “non[-]commutative world,” see Marcolli and Tabuda, “Noncommutative Motives and their Applications,” 202.

³⁹ Cf. the entry “Language-univers” in Laruelle, *Dictionnaire de la non-philosophie*, 91–93, and “Universe-language” in Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, 160–162.

⁴⁰ Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou*, 23.

⁴¹ Ibid., and Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 59 f.

²⁹ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 281; Laruelle, *Principes de la non-philosophie*, 344: “la démocratie à l’intérieur de la Logique et de l’Esthétique transcendantes.”

³⁰ Ibid.: “la Logique, comme d’ailleurs l’Esthétique elle-même, échappe à la disjonction des formes intellectuelles ou sensibles.”

³¹ Laruelle, *Christo-fiction*, 71: “La décroissance générique se propose au contraire de réduire la philosophie à l’état de force productive.”

³² The brackets “[...]” denote the commutator, p and q observables, q the position, p the momentum of a particle, i the imaginary number and $\hbar = \hbar/2\pi$ the reduced Planck constant.

³³ Anthony Paul Smith, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought* (Cambridge, UK, and Malden, MA, USA: Polity Press, 2016), 45.

space.⁴² A “classical philosophy”⁴³ emerges from Laruelle’s “generic ontology”⁴⁴ of non-commutative space implying, among others, the “Non-Parmenidean Equation” *Practice = Thought* or “the (non-) relation of theory and practice.”⁴⁵

For demonstrating this, we conceive of “intentional” or qualitative and “non-commutative variables”⁴⁶ as linear operators or generic matrices in an onto-vectorial space. The complex algebraic system of generic matrices only represents *discrete* variables taking at most two values such as “productive forces” and “relations of production,”⁴⁷ “man” or “human” and “animal,”⁴⁸ “Logos” and “Torah,”⁴⁹ “immanence” and “transcendence,”⁵⁰ etc.; but as soon as one adjoins another non-commuting bivalent variable Y , one generates all *continuous* functions in a so-called “connected space.” Since the product of two self-adjoint operators verifying the matrix relations of “self-adjunction” ($Y = Y^*$) is not self-adjoint unless they commute, we deal with the algebraic logos as a complex number endowed with an antilinear “involution” ($Y^2 = 1$). That is the simplest example of a philosophical continuum constituting a two-dimensional

sphere that can be called “two-sphere.” The involutive logos generated in such a way contains plenty of “continuous variables.”⁵¹ The sphere itself is recovered as the *spectrum* of the algebraic logos, and the “points” of the sphere are the “actors” or, as one says in the categorical jargon, the “arrows” or the “morphisms” of the involutive logos to the complex numbers. This is a prototype example of how a connected space or the two-sphere of philosophy can emerge from the discrete, that is, from the algebraic logos as a complex number and a second variable, due to non-commutativity. What happens is that the connected space of the commutative two-sphere emerges in a spectral manner from the characters of the non-commutative “Universe.”⁵² Non-commutativity allows to generate the continuum from completely discrete variables. There is another great advantage of non-commutativity: the “natural” logos which springs out of the non-commuting logos and the other variable contains the first one but is larger and gives the commutative logos with *continuous* values on the philosophical continuum of the two-sphere.⁵³ Thus, non-commutativity can help, instead of being a disadvantage. It permits to generate *continuous* variables from *discrete* ones on a “a generic plane.”⁵⁴ The idea is that the onto-vectorial Hilbert space is not a continuous space but we try to *approximate* it with such a space “as a ‘good finite’ discrete approximation.”⁵⁵ This is a new paradigm for “intensive or conceptual spaces,”⁵⁶ allowing one to treat the

⁴² Connes, Chéreau, and Dixmier, *Le spectre d’Atacama*, 122: “la réalité ultime naît de l’espace hilbertien.”

⁴³ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 171: “une philosophie classique.”

⁴⁴ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 93: “ontologie générique.”

⁴⁵ François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burke and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Univocal, 2012), 149; François Laruelle, *La lutte et l’utopie à la fin des temps philosophiques* (Paris: Kimé, 2004), 126: “le (non-) rapport de la théorie et de la pratique.” See also John Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 244.

⁴⁶ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 62: “des variables non-commutatives.”

⁴⁷ François Laruelle “Marx with Planck: The Quantization of Non-Standard Marxism,” in *Superpositions: Laruelle and the Humanities*, ed. Rocco Gangle, and Julius Greve (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 160 f.

⁴⁸ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 126 f.

⁴⁹ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction: The Ruins*, 142; Laruelle, *Christo-fiction: Les ruines*, 210.

⁵⁰ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 327.

⁵¹ Connes, “Geometry and the Quantum,” 16.

⁵² Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 145.

⁵³ Connes, “Geometry and the Quantum,” 16 f.

⁵⁴ Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou*, 124: “un plan générique.” See also Laruelle, *Philosophie Non-standard*, 58: “Plan générique.”

⁵⁵ Mochizuki, Shinichi [望月新一], “The Mathematics of Mutually Alien Copies: from Gaussian Integrals to Inter-universal Teichmüller Theory,” Research Institute for Mathematical Sciences, Kyoto University, 2020, 30 (emphasis adapted), <http://www.kurims.kyoto-u.ac.jp/~motizuki/Alien%20Copies,%20Gaussians,%20and%20Inter-universal%20Teichmuller%20Theory.pdf>

⁵⁶ Rocco Gangle, *Diagrammatic Immanence: Category Theory and Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 239.

continuous and the discrete lived on the same footing. The new tool is the spectral paradigm and the new outcome is that commutative ontology emerges from non-commutative ontology, that is, from the onto-vectorial space and linear operators. The onto-material or immanent formalism of linear operators in non-commutative space encompasses the parameterized variables of philosophy. What Laruelle suggests is that the variables obey the rules of “the generic quantum matrix”⁵⁷ which leads to formalize non-philosophy in terms of linear operators in onto-vectorial Hilbert spaces. It is essential for “a nonset-theoretic matrix ontology of the lived”⁵⁸ to understand subtler, that is, *non-commutative* spaces of thought as suggested by Laruelle.

3. The Emergence of Time

Non-commutative ontology does not simply consist in a rational generalization of classical ontology to the case where philosophical coordinates no longer commute. It is also a matter of opening up completely new things which have no analog in the commutative “World.” On condition that “[t]here exists a minimal scale for all phenomena,”⁵⁹ Laruelle assumes “a scientific, generic constant”⁶⁰ determining the divergence in relation to classical philosophy. From there, one can deduce that non-commutative ontology, by simple non-commutativity, generates its own time, that is, changes over time. It can be summarized as follows: the commutative ontology of “World-thought” is *static*, it has neither time nor evolution in time; non-commutative ontology, in contrast, is *dynamic* and *processual*, the

non-commutative “Universe” has this property to generate its own time. Time as we perceive it appears from the generic quantum random. In the “Universe-language” the onto-vectorial states are unpredictable and aleatory. Time can arise in a spontaneous way simply from non-commutativity of the algebraic logos as a complex number as such – no other, supplementary structure is needed. The appearance of time is one of the most interesting conclusions of non-commutative ontology.

In science, the concept at stake is the concept of variable.⁶¹ Variability, as the most elementary notion of non-commutative ontology, is of an “immanent” nature. The spectral variability of the “Real” seems to be more fundamental than its temporal registration and therefore one has to reverse the hierarchy: the generic quantum effervescence generates the passage of time and not the other way round. How can the real time as we perceive it emerge from generic quantum random and variability? To answer this question, we have to consider the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen (EPR) paradox.⁶² Laruelle thinks “that the generic lifts the antinomy” of the debate that Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr pursued “in dogmatic, positivist, idealist or realist terms and in a practically metaphysical way.”⁶³ His understanding of “unilateral duality” or “complementarity” might allow to overcome *correlationism*, that is, the philosophical standpoint rejected by proponents of “speculative

⁵⁷ François Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics. Photo-Fiction, une esthétique non-standard*, bilingual edition, trans. Drew S. Burk (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012b), 149: “la matrice générique et quantique.”

⁵⁸ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 125: “une ontologie matricielle et non ensembliste du vécu.”

⁵⁹ Carlo Rovelli, *L'ordre du temps*, trans. Sophie Lem (Paris: Flammarion, 2018), 101: “Il existe une échelle minimale pour tous les phénomènes.”

⁶⁰ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 59: “une constante scientifique, générique et minimale d’humanité.”

⁶¹ François Laruelle, “‘I, the Philosopher, Am Lying,’ A Reply to Deleuze,” in *The Non-Philosophy Project*, ed. Gabriel Alkon and Boris Gunjevic (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2012), 62.

⁶² Albert Einstein, Albert, Boris Podolsky, and Nathan Rosen, “Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete?” *Physical Review* 47 (1935), 777–780.

⁶³ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 392: “Peut-on déplacer le problème EPR [...] ? Bohr et Einstein posent le problème en termes dogmatiques, positivistes, idéalistes ou bien réalistes et de manière quasiment métaphysique. [...] Scientifiquement il faut donner raison à Bohr mais déplacer génériquement le conflit. [...] [Il] est possible que le générique lève l’antinomie.”

realism” that we cannot directly access thinking and being, but only the correlation between them. Laruelle proposes a “generic realism” to be distinguished from speculative realism in the style of Quentin Meillassoux⁶⁴ and from Ray Brassier’s “anti-correlationism.”⁶⁵ His “generic solution”⁶⁶ is “a generic realism of-the-last-instance,”⁶⁷ which “reinforces the EPR objection [that is, the incompleteness argument] but by a different realism, the realism of the generic subject insofar as it is [...] a passive operator being a virtual condition. We do not have to choose between Heisenberg or Einstein and de Broglie, but to come across a generic or non-Einsteinian real.”⁶⁸ For Laruelle, the EPR paradox reflects the same problem of thinking the Real as being subtracted from the concept as in Immanuel Kant’s schematism (*Critique of Pure Reason*). In addition, what Laruelle says about the uncertainty of knowledge and the unrecognizable real insinuating that the absolute secret is a necessary condition for the success of experimentation⁶⁹ lines up, on the one hand, with Kant speaking of faith and the *limits of reason*; on the other hand, it is clearly positioned against Badiou’s materialist conviction or belief distinguishing himself with the words of Mao from Kant’s “obscurantism”: “We will arrive at knowing everything what we did not

know before.”⁷⁰ The schematism in Badiou regulates the unity of set theory and Being, whereas in the generic matrix it defines the combination of the algebraic or quantum givens as well as of the given philosophical lived experiences, that is their reciprocal interpretation and their ‘unity’. Laruelle offers a different solution than given by Kant’s transcendental imagination, that is, a hierarchical, empirico-rational dualism, the opposite approaches of Hermann Cohen and Martin Heidegger, or Badiou’s solution by the “count-as-one” (“set of all sets”). As for Laruelle, assuming that the generic is “a human last-instance” whose “scientific or algebraic form” is idempotence $1 + 1 = 1$, i.e., One-in-One = 1, he states as follows:

We suspect that between idempotence and lived vectoriality, as in Kant between the concept and the intuition (between the originally synthetic unity of apperception and formal intuition), there is a schematism problem, to which the transcendental imagination has provided Kant with the solution. In our problem we have to rise once more from formal intuition to a generic solution which is the idempotence of the lived or the last-humanity.⁷¹

The “generic solution” is an “immanent” imagination that combines idempotence and lived vectoriality in the idempotence of the lived or of the “last-humanity.” Non-philosophy re-defines, as Brassier says, “the thing-in-itself as

⁶⁴ Quentin Meillassoux, *Après l’initude: Essai sur la nécessité de la contingence* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006).

⁶⁵ Ray Brassier, *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007), 118–149.

⁶⁶ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 391–393: “La solution générique du paradoxe EPR ou la complémentarité unilatérale.”

⁶⁷ Ibid., 394: “un réalisme générique de-dernière-instance.”

⁶⁸ Ibid., 394 f.: “Il renforce l’objection EPR mais par un autre réalisme, celui du sujet générique dans la mesure où il est quand même opérateur passif comme condition virtuelle. Nous n’avons pas à choisir entre Heisenberg ou bien Einstein et de Broglie, mais à retrouver un réel générique.”

⁶⁹ Connes, Chéreau, and Dixmier, *Le spectre d’Atacama*, 208: “Le secret absolu était une condition nécessaire au succès de l’expérience!” See also Jacques Derrida, and Maurizio Ferrari, *Le goût du secret. Entretiens 1993–1995*, ed. Andrea Bellantone (Paris: Hermann, 2018).

⁷⁰ Alain Badiou and Jean-Luc Nancy, *La tradition allemande dans la philosophie*, ed. and postscript Jan Völker (Paris: Lignes, 2017), 22: “Nous parviendrons à connaître tout ce que nous ne connaissions pas auparavant.”

⁷¹ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 129: “On se doute qu’entre l’idempotence et la vectorialité vécue, comme chez Kant entre le concept et l’intuition (entre l’unité originellement synthétique et l’apperception et l’intuition formelle), il y a un problème de schématisation dont l’imagination transcendante a fourni à Kant la solution. Dans notre problématique il faut s’élever une nouvelle fois de l’intuition formelle à une condition générique qui est l’idempotence du vécu ou l’endernière-humanité.”

unobjectifiable immanence [...] which Laruelle identifies with ‘the real’.⁷² However, the privileged role of “the human” is no “re-ontologization”⁷³ of the real, it is rather operatory, as the following passage explains:

But we have to maintain a certain privilege of the human or rather admit her immanent duplication, her intervention at the ends of the process, at first as a probable subject, then as being-of-superposition or clone indexed to the latter. But this duplication is not an ontological hierarchy, *it is simply operatory*, the possibility to think or to objectify by underdetermining her initial situation in the biological circle.⁷⁴

The real is compound by lived experiences that are operators in the immanent Hilbert space, so-called “oraxioms” which verbalize “the lived decisions of the generic subject,”⁷⁵ while in Badiou axioms express “the ontological-formal decision of the Idea”⁷⁶ – the Platonic Idea is an operator, and the “matheme” (Jacques Lacan) is the underlying principle.⁷⁷ “The world,” as Laruelle says, “has not been invented from Ideas or Substances, complete waves and parti-

cles, but on the basis of the imaginary root [i.e., the imaginary number] and of its process as a radical origin of things.”⁷⁸

By thinking about the EPR paradox in the context of Laruelle’s “immanent realism” according to which the Real or the “in itself” remains inaccessible,⁷⁹ one understands that there is, as a matter of fact, an analogy between the generic quantum random and time: in case of “the philosophical measurement (position, relation, meaning, truth, value)”⁸⁰ in two causally independent conceptual points, there are not *two* aleatory generic quantum events, but a *single* one, due to correlations. As Laruelle writes:

It is a simple or unilateral duplication of the lived [...], there are not two lived experiences [...], but a single one in two positions or halves [...]. The variable that will play this double game is divided in two functions, as a variable that is internal to the matrix of fusion and as an index [...]. 2 fuse in 1 for the matrix and 1 is divided in 2 for the generic. The generic is the One, always One but in two halves, [...] in idempotence.⁸¹

Therefore there is a maximum *correlation* but no causality. One does not understand the chronology in this case of the process of knowledge. The “wave packet reduction” seems to make no sense, since one cannot say at which moment

⁷² Brassier, *Nilhil Unbound*, 127.

⁷³ Ibid., 136 f.

⁷⁴ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 125: (my emphases) “Mais il faut conserver un certain privilège de l’homme ou plutôt admettre sa duplication immanente, son intervention aux extrémités du processus, d’abord comme sujet probable puis comme être-de-superposition ou clone indexé à celle-ci. Mais cette duplication n’est pas une hiérarchie ontologique, elle est simplement opératoire, la possibilité de penser et d’objectiver en la sous-déterminant sa situation initiale dans le cercle biologique.”

⁷⁵ Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou*, 32: “la NP [non-philosophie utilise] ce qu’elle appelle des ‘oraxiomes’ exprimant les décisions vécues du sujet générique.” For a definition of oraxiom see Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 57f.

⁷⁶ Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou*, 32: “L’OV [ontologie du vide] utilise des axiomes exprimant la décision ontologico-formelle de l’Idée.”

⁷⁷ Alain Badiou, *Manifeste pour la philosophie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989), 22: “Dans l’exemple platonicien, l’Idée est manifestement un opérateur dont le mathème est le principe ‘vrai’ sous-jacent.”

⁷⁸ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 395: “Le monde n’a pas été inventé à partir d’Idées ou de Substances, d’ondes et de particules achevées mais sur la base de la racine imaginaire et de son processus comme origine radicale des choses.”

⁷⁹ Ibid., chapter XII, “Le réel non-einsteinien,” 387ff.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 399: “la mesure philosophique (position, relation, sens, vérité, valeur).”

⁸¹ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 128f: “C’est une duplication simple ou unilatérale du vécu [...], il n’y a pas deux vécus [...] mais un seul en deux positions ou moitiés [...]. La variable qui va jouer ce double jeu est dédoublée en deux fonctions, comme variable interne à la matrice de fusion et comme index [...]. 2 fusionne en 1 pour la matrice et 1 se divise en 2 pour le générique. Le générique c’est Un, toujours Un mais en deux moitiés [...] dans l’idempotence.”

the actualization of some products of knowledge out of all possible vectors or virtual observables, that is, generic quantum potentials or potentialities, takes place. In case of $AB = BA$, “the chronology is not important, does not make sense, between two observables *which commute*,”⁸² but if $AB \neq BA$, the chronological order of events plays a role. That is “the emergence of time and even of space”⁸³ in the onto-vectorial Hilbert space. While the Laruellean Real “in characteristic one” ($1 + 1 = 1$)⁸⁴ is atemporal, time seems to originate in the random of the “generic quantum.”⁸⁵ A semi-classical and quasi-philosophical commutativity can reappear only on condition that A is being transformed by *imaginary* time:

$$AB = BA.^{86}$$

Non-commutative ontology of philosophical space and *real* time means to think of time as dependent on non-commutative space. Depending on the latter, time can fail to exist or disappear. The *relative point of view* is the view that time depends on or rises from non-commutative space, as non-commutative space rises from “the ‘origenetical’ point” which “underdetermines the production of the generic lived.”⁸⁷ The generic quantum provides a subtler point of view than “ordinary” or standard, that is, nonvariable and nonspectral, consistent “World-thought” which constantly tries to reconstruct a plausible past:

only when we ask ourselves about the time that has passed, the past exists, so that we can imagine a coherent and logical story. The reduction of the wave packet which happens in any philosophical measurement, that is, during interaction of generic quantum systems given that “[t]he technical term for interaction is ‘measurement’,”⁸⁸ is nothing else than the replacement of a virtual observable by an actual observable which is chosen among the elements in its spectrum.⁸⁹ Thus there is an intrinsic fundamental source of variability in the generic quantum universe which is not reducible to anything classical. The results of actualizations are intrinsically variable quantities. Non-commutative ontology advocates, that the classical vision of the “reality” is just a simple approximation of the “Real” – “The real is the superposition of all possible imaginaries”⁹⁰ (“Feynman histories” or “Feynman paths”⁹¹) – based on John Wheeler’s “Delayed-Choice *Gedankenexperiment*,”⁹² in which the choice of one or the other of two complementary aspects of a quantum phenomenon is made *after* the phenomenon actually took place. What works perfectly for macroscopic phenomena reflected by a macroscopic ontology, can no longer be applied at a microscopic, generic quantum scale – and non-commutative spaces are not “macroscopic” but “microscopic” systems of thought. Laruelle’s “thesis is that the most radical immanence which does not take the form of a point or an ego is the action-at-a-distance, that the immanental or the idempotence allows an

⁸² Connes, Chéreau, and Dixmier, *Le théâtre quantique*, 72: “la chronologie n’a pas d’importance, pas de sens, entre deux observables qui commutent.”

⁸³ Connes, Chéreau, and Dixmier, *Le spectre d’Atacama*, 208: “l’émergence du temps et même de l’espace.”

⁸⁴ Laruelle, *Philosophie Non-standard*, 59f.; Laruelle, *Dictionnaire de la non-philosophie*, 171–173; Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, 125–127.

⁸⁵ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 85f.

⁸⁶ Alain Connes, “Dialogue with Alain Connes,” “7/ La Géométrie Non-commutative Engendre son Propre Temps,” video, (2014), 26:01–28:19, <https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/alain-connes/Entretien-avec-Alain-Connes.htm>

⁸⁷ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 22: “le point ‘origénétique’ [...] sous-détermine la production du vécu générique.”

⁸⁸ Carlo Rovelli, *L’ordre du temps*, 107, n.1: “Le terme technique pour interaction est ‘mesure’.”

⁸⁹ Carlo Rovelli, “Space is Blue,” 4: “Measurement is an interaction like any other. Variables take value at any interaction.”

⁹⁰ Connes, Chéreau, and Dixmier, *Le théâtre quantique*, 50: “*Le réel est la superposition de tous les possibles imaginaires.*”

⁹¹ Laruelle *Christo-Fiction: The Ruins*, 158, 176; *Christo-fiction: Les ruines*, 231, 254; Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 189, and Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 331.

⁹² Vincent E. Jacques, E. Wu, Frédéric Grosshans, François Treussart, Philippe Grangier, Alain Aspect, and Jean-François Rochl, “Experimental Realization of Wheeler’s Delayed-Choice Gedanken Experiment,” *Science* 315, no. 5814 (2006), 966–968. See also Connes, Chéreau, and Dixmier, *Le Théâtre Quantique*, 136.

indirect action, in short, that inseparability and non-locality can go together.”⁹³

However, what the generic quantum entanglement shows might not be the existence of any “action at a distance” being faster than light, but simply *a coherence that is hidden by the random of the generic quantum*. A quasi-Hilbertian lived is about “an internal coherence of the entanglement that is strange to the external world.”⁹⁴ Coherence governs the reduction of the wave packets, and while quantics-oriented theory only offers probabilistic expressions, coherence gives an actual result when there is any philosophical measurement. This random is not independently produced but follows the described rules of the onto-material formalism. Hence, the interaction is automatically synchronized, without any intervention, faster than light, at a distance. On the first sight, it seems totally aleatory, but it is a matter of appearance which hides a synchronization. Non-commutativity being an act – just as the “force (of) thought” or “thought power” (similar to the “labor power” in Karl Marx) which “realizes the One-Real as a determination in-the-last-instance,”⁹⁵ is the only formalism that permits to understand the originality of this source of harmony on the generic quantum stage with its superposed states and its operators which interact without commuting. Therefore, it might be a mistake to try to enter the spectral variability in the passage of time, since the latter could be caused by the former in the commutative “World.” That is what is done in the wave package reduction which stipulates that after a philosophical measurement an on-

to-vectorial system sees its entire state reduced to the one that has been measured. Everything becomes clearer if one manages to formulate the interventions of the reduction of the wave packets without entering them in time, by avoiding the pitfall of referring everything always to time.⁹⁶ Time is *not* one of the coordinates in an onto-topological space-time as in transcendental idealism where the *a priori* time belongs to the background framework.

Deleuze gave an analysis of how time was added to the Cartesian cogito in *Kant's Critical Philosophy*⁹⁷: “For Kant, it is a question of the form of time in general, which distinguishes between the act of the I, and the ego to which this act is attributed: an infinite modulation, no longer a mould. Thus time moves into the subject, in order to distinguish the Ego from the I in it.”⁹⁸ In Laruelle, the generic subject does not use causal and spatiotemporal concepts for describing the “corpuscular” thought content, whereas it places phenomena in noncausal connection in space and time, since non-philosophy is not about the causal space-time description that constitutes the criterion of reality, but about a non-classical “*uni-versal* ‘space-time’”⁹⁹ description that constitutes the criterion of the “generic or immanent real”¹⁰⁰ foreclosed to thought.

4. Conclusion

There is a fundamental source of variability in the generic quantum. That is, for thought exper-

⁹⁶ Connes, Chéreau, and Dixmier, *Le spectre d'Atacama*, 256f: “Tout serait plus clair si l'on arrivait à formuler les interventions de la “réduction du paquet d'ondes” sans avoir à les inscrire dans le temps, en évitant le piège de vouloir toujours tout écrire en fonction du temps.”

⁹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, 35.

⁹⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), ix.

⁹⁹ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 2013, 211; Laruelle, *Principes de la non-philosophie*, 257: “un ‘espace-temps’ *uni-versel*.”

¹⁰⁰ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 391: “réel générique ou immanent.”

⁹³ Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 400: “Notre thèse est que l'immanence la plus radicale (qui ne prend pas la forme-point ou ego) est l'action-à-distance, que l'immanent ou l'idempotence permet une action indirecte, bref que l'inséparabilité et la non-localité peuvent aller ensemble.”

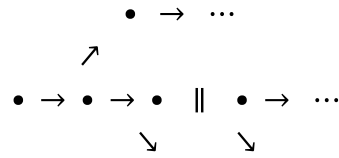
⁹⁴ Connes, Chéreau, and Dixmier, *Le spectre d'Atacama*, 232: “une cohérence interne étrangère au monde extérieur, de l'intrication.”

⁹⁵ Laruelle, *Anti-Badion*, 38: “la pensée défétichisée comme force (de) pensée (cf. “force de travail”) [...] qui [...] effectue le réel-Un comme détermination-en-dernière-instance.”

iments in microscopic, onto-vectorial systems of thought one can give no more than probabilities, although Laruelle prefers speaking of a “lived wave of virtuality”¹⁰¹ and an “immanent amplitude”¹⁰² rather than of “probability.” For non-commutative ontology it suffices to have a “non-commutative algebraic logos as a complex number,”¹⁰³ so that starting from non-commutativity real or worldly space-time emerges. Moreover, the generic quantum suggests to *radicalize* freedom instead of absolutizing it (Sartre) by predicting a sort of symmetry between “not only an uncertain future, but also an *uncertain past*.”¹⁰⁴ The past *is moving*, although we constantly try to fix it in our vision. A coherent representation of past events depends on our standard, i.e., nonvariable and nonspectral, *modus operandi* of consistency-oriented “World” or “World-thought.” That relativizes enormously the significance of the present moment and the significance of the past. It shows that the notion of time based on the idea of an uncertain future but a *definite past* is an inappropriate notion and how the generic quantum obliges to think things differently, in a much more subtle and interesting way. The non-commutative “Universe” or “Universe-language” has the property to generate its own time. As a consequence, the passing of time seems to be an emergent phenomenon rooted in immanent phenomena and their specific variability or random. This is the ultimate expression of thought’s orientation toward the unexpected, the undetermined, the openness

with regard to the future as well as to the past.

Walter Benjamin, in his “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” outlines a *disruptive* approach to history which allows for “a Messianic cessation of happening”¹⁰⁵ within a putative “continuum of history.”¹⁰⁶ The introduction of “a new calendar”¹⁰⁷ is claimed to entail “a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past.”¹⁰⁸ In the field of mathematics, such historical “re-initialization operations (i.e., “| |”)



— that is to say, situations where one forgets the previous history of some object [...] and regards this previous history as being inaccessible in subsequent discussions”¹⁰⁹ give rise to “relatively mild indeterminacies”¹¹⁰ which in turn, being not only aesthetically desirable but also logically necessary and meaningful, form a central part of Laruelle’s particulate and democratic picture of philosophy.¹¹¹ Bearing in mind the is-

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 64: “onde vécue de virtualité.”

¹⁰² Ibid., 309: “l’amplitude immanente.”

¹⁰³ Laruelle, *En dernière humanité*, 126.

¹⁰⁴ Connes, Chéreau, and Dixmier, *Le théâtre quantique*, 51: “il [Einstein] écrit un article avec deux autres physiciens dans lequel il montre, disons que ‘le quantique nous prédit non seulement un futur incertain, mais aussi un passé incertain’ ! [...] C’est [...] ce qu’ils montrent, toujours à l’aide d’une ‘expérience de pensée.’ Ils en concluent que la mécanique quantique implique une incertitude sur les événements passés entièrement analogue à l’incertitude sur le futur !.. See Albert Einstein, Richard C. Tolman, and Boris Podolsky, “Knowledge of Past and Future in Quantum Mechanics,” *Physical Review* 37 (1931), 780 f.

¹⁰⁵ Walter Benjamin, *Sprache und Geschichte: Philosophische Essays*, ed. Rolf Tiedermann, including an essay by Theodor W. Adorno (Ditzingen: Reclam, 1992), 152 (Thesis XVII): “Zeichen einer messianischen Stillstellung des Geschehens.”

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 150–151 (Theses XIV, XV, XVI): “Kontinuum der Geschichte.”

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 151 (Thesis XV): “einen neuen Kalender.”

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 152 (Thesis XVII): “Zeichen [...] einer revolutionären Chance im Kampfe für die unterdrückte Vergangenheit.”

¹⁰⁹ Mochizuki, “Report on discussions, held during the period March 15 – 20, 2018, concerning inter-universal Teichmüller theory (IUTch)” (February 2019), 7 (emphasis removed), <http://www.kurims.kyoto-u.ac.jp/~motizuki/Rpt2018.pdf>.

¹¹⁰ Mochizuki, 4 (emphasis removed).

¹¹¹ For the “particle picture” of philosophy, see Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, and Laruelle, *Tétralogos. Un opéra de philosophies* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2018). For “democracy of thought” see Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 49 (“not theoretical democracy but democracy of theory itself”), *Principles de la non-philosophie*, 58 (“démocratie non théorique mais de la théorie elle-même”), and Ó Maoilearca,

sue of “escaping from the cage of [...] narrowly defined deterministic models”¹¹² of scientific development, the proposed spectral paradigm charts “a course that cherishes the privilege to foster genuinely novel and unforeseen evolutionary branches,”¹¹³ following Mochizuki Shini-chi. What interests me is by no means “the End Times of Philosophy”¹¹⁴ but, to the contrary, the rise of philosophy from imaginary or ‘*uni-versal*’ “space-time,”¹¹⁵ since within a democratic and disruptive history of systems of thought *another beginning of philosophy is possible*.

All Thoughts Are Equal.

¹¹² Mochizuki, “The Mathematics of Mutually Alien Copies,” 165 (emphasis removed).

¹¹³ Ibid. (emphasis removed).

¹¹⁴ See Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, and Laruelle, *La lutte et l’utopie*.

¹¹⁵ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 211; Laruelle, *Principles de la non-philosophie*, 257.

Utopic Expressivity: On Laruelle's Oraxiomatic Method and Paul Celan's Vision of Poetry

Timothy Lavenz

Abstract: A radical vision of the end times requires an equally radical mode of expression to transmit it, one that tears language from convention and renders it capable of visionary communication. This effort is palpable in non-philosophy's oraxiomatic method as well as in Paul Celan's poetic works. What use of language can induce an "eschatological comportment"? How does one voice a subjectivity "of-the-last-instance"? In this paper, I advance the idea that eschatological imagination and utopic expressivity are two sides of the same messianic activity of vision-creation. My principal goal is to explain and explore this thesis and these concepts through an encounter between Laruelle and Celan. To set the ground for this, I begin with Henry Corbin's theory that the active imagination produces imaginal worlds (*mundus imaginalis*) which are invisible to mundane perception because they exist "nowhere." Such worlds are accessed by creative acts that leap outside the world and open a space for the unlocalizable, or u-topia. My proposition is to treat Laruelle's philo-fictions and Celan's poetry as imaginal worlds and to collide them to produce a new understanding of messianic vision-creation. To achieve this, I first examine Vision-in-One and the oraxiom as a discursive method, as well as the rationale behind non-philosophy's claim to produce a final ultimatum. I then challenge Laruelle's claim that only this method is suited for the purpose. After reconstructing Celan's vision of poetry from his 1960 Meridian speech and drawing inspiration from his poems, I contrast and synthesize these two radical modes of expression. Poetry is idiomatic and testamentary, not oraxiomatic and generic. Nonetheless, the two modes share many features, including: a critique of "sufficient" interpretations; a move beyond metaphor and meaning; a "use-of-silence" aware of how silence impacts speech; an orientation of the written work as "last-thingly" [*letztendlich*]; and regarding the messianic dimension, a desire for person and language to form an indissoluble unity which is forever loyal to the human quest for utopia. I also argue that the oraxiom addresses a "You-of-the-last-instance" which Celan makes explicit; his work thus helps us understand non-philosophy's own operations and, more importantly, the relational dynamic at play in all messianic and visionary works. By weaving together these manifestations of utopic expressivity and exploring their divergences and parallels, I offer a unique vision of how language can foster an end-times subjectivity and produce works that catalyze the eschaton.

Timothy Lavenz is an independent writer, translator, and researcher with a B.A. in creative writing and philosophy from the University of Iowa and an M.A. from the European Graduate School on the concept of messianity in the work of Laruelle, Derrida, Agamben and others. His philosophical essays have appeared in *Kunst und Kirche* and *Epoché*; his poems in *The Susquehanna Review* and *Sequestrum* (forthcoming). Other writings can be found at fragilekeys.com. Current projects include translating Pascal Quignard and Hans Blumenberg, and developing poems and stories. His passion is to innervate the ghosts of words and set the ear of language aflame.

tmlavenz@gmail.com

Keywords: active imagination, poetry, oraxiom, idiom, testimony, messianity, imaginal world, utopia, eschatology, vision, visionary, symbolic alteration of subjectivity, Corbin, Celan, Laruelle

1. Eschatological Imagination and Utopia

End-times thinking is usually accompanied by the hope that, after the end, there will be a radical improvement: a restoration, revelation, or redemption of the future. Eschatology waits for and anticipates an emancipation, an unforeseeable change, or even a transport to another mode or realm of existence altogether. The challenge is how to envision this transition, how to give it content that is not a fantasy. For it must be admitted that a vagueness tends to plague humanity's ideas about the end-times, on the side of the Last Things and on the side of the future; often this is reckoned a mystery, which only sidesteps the question. Despite the many doomsday forecasts throughout history, the evident fact is that the hegemony of the world continues. Faced with the failure of many end-times visions, one is forced to either give up end-times thinking as a delusional wish or to resituate it with regard to the "real world" entirely, namely, by taking the world's end and the redemptive future in a more immanent and imaginative way, without giving up hope in creating real consequences in the lives of humans.

In what follows, I will focus on the *symbolic alteration of subjectivity* that certain eschatologically oriented theoretical and artistic inventions can catalyze in those who participate in them and integrate them into their lives. These alterations are no less *real* for being under the radar of the world and keeping their distance from doomsday fear. Though the transformations at stake in them are subtle and may even be "invisible" according to the gaze of world and history, it is to the promulgation of such invisible effects that I will attend. This approach decouples end-times thinking from the illusion of a destructive Last Day, situating it instead in the register of *intimate processes* of human creativity and connection which slowly and persistently construct un-

expected visions. Specifically, I will argue that eschatological imagination and utopic expressivity are two sides of the same "messianic" dynamic, for which the mode of existence of the future is at stake; and that the latter can only be meticulously constructed through the *symbolization of a messianic-type vision*.

Put schematically, a messianic-type vision has two eyes forming one face: one eye *sees into* the end of the world, the other eye *envisions* the coming of the future. The first *imagines* the eschaton realizing itself in the present, the second *expresses* the utopic as the "matching" side of this realization. The symbolization of these two intertwined elements gives breadth and accessibility to the open, participatory nature of messianic-type visions. It renders end-times thinking a matter of fidelity to the *work* and *process* of "radical improvement," rather than perpetuating apocalyptic fantasies. It thus provides a measure for what we can hope for - though this too can only be deduced through an active engagement with the multiplicity of messianic-type visions, two of which I take up here.

The goal of this essay is to give evidence of this dynamic in the two writers who inspired it in my thinking, François Laruelle and Paul Celan, and to flesh out the above schema by exploring the details of the visions they transmit. To set the backdrop, I begin with Henry Corbin's theory of imaginal worlds, with focus on the notion of the "Not-Where": this is 'where' the imagination acts and exercises its visionary power, where seeing a vision is to enact it and further it in an intimate, immanent, and inventive way. I then detail how Laruelle conceives the "oraxiom" and "philo-fiction" for the transmission of an end-times vision that is meant to amplify messianic subjectivity. I then present Celan's vision of poetry and show how similar themes of utopia, the Not-where, and eschatological comportment are at play, among other parallels. I will gradually circle and collectively illuminate various features

of the dynamic, features which I then synthesize in a final section. Through this conversation, I hope to show that Laruelle and Celan resonate in their expression of the utopic; in the symbolic alteration of subjectivity they hope-toward; and in locating the *eschaton* not in the objective course of history but in the imaginative work or act. My intention is to offer, with the help of their visions, some reflections that exercise and improve this faculty, the eschatological imagination, and along the way to do justice to these expressions of utopia.

2. Entering the Imaginal

To depart from the *where*, the category of *ubi*, is to leave the external or natural appearances that enclose the hidden internal realities, as the almond is hidden beneath the shell. This step is made in order for the Stranger, the gnostic, to return *home*—or at least to lead to that return.¹

To better clarify what I mean by the utopic, I turn to Henry Corbin's concept of the imaginal world, *mundus imaginalis*. Corbin's work on the concept is based on the 12th century Sufi philosopher Suhrawardi, whose name appears intriguingly in Laruelle's *General Theory of Victims* as a parenthetical reference for his own use of the term "Not-where."² "Not-where" or "Nowhere-place," a recurrent theme in non-philosophy, translate Suhrawardi's term "Na-koja-Abad" most literally. Corbin translates it as *mundus imaginalis* for reasons discussed below. Nevertheless,

in what follows I take the terms Not-where, Nowhere, utopia, *mundus imaginalis*, and the Un-localizable to *formally* indicate the same zone or direction for thought. Each are inventions of the eschatological imagination as ways of conceptualizing or envisioning the departure "from the *where*," in an imaginative direction that leads "home" - though this home is not easily, or not possibly, "located" in the world, given that the one headed there is deemed "Stranger."

In rendering Na-koja-Abad with *mundus imaginalis*, Corbin stresses that Suhrawardi's term should not be assimilated to what the West generally conceived as social or political utopia (etymologically also no-where).³ His choice of "imaginal world," however, points to the *modality of existence* of utopia I intend here and which I link to the activity of a messianic-type vision. Corbin avoids "utopia" in order to highlight another type of "nowhereness;" but this choice follows closely upon Laruelle's own critique of "utopias of the past" and Celan's view of Utopia as that "in light of which" poetic research is undertaken. This rejection of the social or political concept of utopia, moreover, finds support in other philosophical thinking on the topic. In their interview "Something's Missing," Ernst Bloch and Theodore Adorno agree: there shall be no positive conception or program of utopia; stress falls upon the "ontology of the Not-Yet" and the determinate negation of the world as it is.⁴ For Fredric Jameson, too, the difficulty of translating any concrete utopia into a viable alternative to the current system forces us to "concentrate on the break itself: a meditation on the impossible, the unrealizable in its own right," or again, "to think the break itself;"⁵ this echoes Laruelle's own slogan: "Let us make a *tabula rasa*

¹ Henry Corbin, "Mundus Imaginalis: Or, the Imaginary and the Imaginal," trans. R. Horine (Ipswich: Golgonooza Press, 1976), <https://www.amiscorbin.com/bibliographie/mundus-imaginalis-or-the-imaginary-and-the-imaginal/>

² François Laruelle, *General Theory of Victims*, trans. Jessie Hock and Alex Dubilet (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 87: "If the subject as stripped lives on in the earth, in monument, writing, and rite, the Victim-in-person on the contrary insists (indeed, 'in-sists') in the No Where, in the 'Not-Where' (Suhrawardi), and, we will add, in the 'Not-When.'"

³ Corbin, "Mundus imaginalis."

⁴ Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 10.

⁵ Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York: Verso, 2005), 232.

of the future.”⁶ I believe one could assemble under this heading many gestures, all of which exhibit the dynamic of eschatological imagination and utopic expressivity. Such gestures force a break with the “real” world and turn toward an alteration of things and subjectivity powered at heart by imagination and its “fictioning” power. In drawing from Corbin, I do not take his theory of imaginal worlds as final arbiter or common denominator for all these gestures, but rather as a model for understanding what is at stake in *acts* of eschatological imagination (e.g. the creation of philo-fictions or poems).

Lamenting the loss of appreciation for imaginal worlds, Corbin argues that the philosophical dualism of sensible and intellectual worlds - perception, body, affect, and concrete things on one side; mind, idea, reason and categories of understanding on the other - neglects a key component of human experience that he calls the Active Imagination, which mediates visionary experience and its realization between the sensible and intelligible. Corbin endeavored to restore the Active Imagination’s dignity and its realm into the scheme of Being and Knowledge.⁷ Far from producing mere copies of real things - products that are unreal, fictive, make-believe, “imaginary” - the Active Imagination produces and participates in imaginal worlds which are “invisible” to mundane perception. Imaginal activity would mediate the Angelic Realms to world and self, opening to the mystic an altered experience of time and space, for example. What is essential here, however, is not the axioms and idioms of specific examples, but rather Corbin’s overall designation of a realm of “imaginative perception, imaginative knowledge, imaginative consciousness” that is *only* encountered in the mediating realm of imaginal forms or “imag-

es in suspense.” This suspense of images is a feature shared by both Laruelle and Celan, as I discuss below; it is a crucial ingredient in the symbolization of any messianic-type vision. In addition to this, Corbin insists that the Active Imagination is “an organ inherent in the soul,” not a bodily faculty à la Aristotle but a participation in the Invisible, the realm of prophecy and “eternal relations”: it is a paradoxical organ of seemingly transtemporal and transmundane communications, realizations, and enactments. The Active Imagination is thus perhaps best defined as the “reality in act” of the Not-Where. To ignore it is to forget a dimension of creativity that is essential to human-utopic being and the “invisible” transactions of vision it can facilitate in the human person.

For a vision to have a chance of surviving, however, it needs a work, a theoretical or artistic construction united “materially” with the utopic “reality in act.” Works are emanations of a participation in “invisible relations” that both mediate them into world and self, and yet also take on their own, new life in those who receive them for the transformation of the world. Like the “subtle” bodies theosophists considered independent of the physical organism and capable of surviving it, I argue that the imaginal works created by thinkers and artists “in light of Utopia” (Celan) live on for the Active Imagination, for those who activate their imagination through them to participate in the Imaginal. This is a mark of their potency: they exist at the *end* of their own worlds; and they may survive the “real world” lives of their authors, *if* another regenerates the work’s vision and travels with the envisioner. To restore the dignity of this faculty, it is necessary to acknowledge the virtual perdurance of its products, their potentially-for-all-time validity. They act as mediators, organons, or vessels of the Not-Where or “futurity.” As *realities-in-act* of the Not-Where, works of eschatological imagination produce imaginal worlds that are “for ever” (Celan’s *für immer*) expressive of

⁶ Francois Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Time of Philosophy*, trans. Drew Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2012), 9.

⁷ Henry Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, trans. Nancy Pearson (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1977), vii-xi.

utopia (or utopic homecoming) and the human search for it. In Laruelle's terms, such vessels channel and amplify a messianic subjectivity to others in-the-last-instance, raising an Ultimatum for the World.

What takes place in the imaginal work? Importantly, Corbin notes that the *mundus imaginalis* is not only where the truth of prophecy, spiritual ritual, symbolic acts, alchemy of soul, epiphanies, and filiation between masters take place. It is also where *visions* and *visionary events* as such take place, specifically: "the visionary events which each human soul traverses at the time of his [or her] *exitus* from this world."⁸ Now, what if this *exitus* is active *wherever* there is a genuine vision of the utopic sort? My assertion is that the works and gestures of Active Imagination have the power to transport their participants to such "(non-)places," which are ontologically *real* yet in *exitus* from the world normally known. The transport at stake in the imaginal world is a breakaway from any place that could be found and grasped; it exists in the event or action of participation and so cannot be pointed out in normally accepted external space. Neither purely mental nor physical, utopia is thus conceived as "another place entirely," one *not modeled* on what our senses and our concepts, our topographical intelligence, tell us a place can be; nor along the lines of subtraction, an operation of removal or destruction of the world. Rather, we must begin here: *utopia's being is the reality-in-act of visionary experience*; it takes place in imaginal *exitus* from the world, in a zone of eschatological events.

The Active Imagination, from this perspective, is thus inherently eschatological: it imagines the present from its end, life from death, and so constructs a zone of knowledge that emanates from and extends into the u-topic, the Not-Where. Acknowledging this dimension of human acts and its ontologically real status is crucial for at least two reasons. First, it decouples utopia from

compromise with the real world of effectivity, liberating the *imaginatio vera* and its visionary power. This is not an abandonment of things for fantasy but an attention to things through the lens of the imaginal. Second, it is to recognize the potency of imaginal forms in human life, their existential validity and ability to affect symbolic alterations in subject-world experience in ways that cannot be dismissed as fanciful, nonsensical, hermetic, or absurd. Granted, these effects may appear fleeting, ephemeral, or even "invisible," but this trait only accentuates the fragility of the operation of the imaginal and the attentiveness required of any consciousness that would perform it.

For philosophical reason (logic, deduction, dialectic) and common sense (practicality, positivism, etc.), the imaginal world poses the challenge of an altered discernment of what is allowed and deemed to be "real"; it strips the former of their authority while also freely marshalling them for its own expressivity. For Corbin, this amounts to opening the gnostic "eyes of fire" that see beyond "all false and vain opposition between believing and knowing, between thinking and being, between knowledge and love"; and that consequently constitute the phenomenon of the world differently than the "eyes of flesh."⁹ Laruelle's Vision-in-One and Paul Celan's "absolute poem" both compellingly indicate such openings, such shifts, though in different dictions. They point to the *reality-in-act* of their visions. As with everything in the imaginal, they are accessed only by "generating in oneself, on the indication of the texts, a minimum of mental vision."¹⁰ This essential point of regenerating or resuming the vision will be reiterated throughout.

Though my account of the Active Imagination is not identical with Corbin's, I retain his core

⁸ Ibid., xi.

⁹ Henry Corbin, "Eyes of Flesh and Eyes of Fire: Science and Gnosis," *Material for Thought* 8 (1980): 5-10, <https://www.amiscorbin.com/bibliographie/eyes-of-flesh-and-eyes-of-fire/>.

¹⁰ Corbin, *Spiritual Body*, xix.

insight that “[e]very philosophy which loses the sense of the imaginal world closes to itself all access to the events of which it is the locus, and comes to be the prey of pseudo-dilemmas.”¹¹ Many pseudo-dilemmas could be named, for example: mistaking imaginal symbols for objects of epistemological analysis, instead of treating them as manifestations that symbolize *with* knowledge to “produce” the unknown (this is the operation of non-philosophy’s “generic matrix”); or mistaking the rationale of a poetic image with logical or common sense relations, submitting the former to the latter’s rules. This danger is also relevant for end-times issues: the risk that prophecy be reduced to prediction, that foreboding facts cloud the pertinence of imagination, that invention be devalued in the name of effectivity, or that fears of disaster inhibit what Blanchot honored as “the writing of the disaster.”¹² To avoid pseudo-dilemmas, then, one might understand non-philosophy as a practice of “salvational knowledge” (Corbin) that produces *imaginal worlds* which cannot be evaluated for their comparability to the real world. A philo-fiction is a middle-locus of utopia’s event, made of suspended images and times, the transmission of an intuition of being-suspended as such. It cannot do without the participatory act that generates such a vision in oneself, lest it be misapprehended and held to discursive standards it suspends. Its ambition is to *enact* utopia, not represent it. Poetry produces imaginal forms, but again these are not to be evaluated according to aesthetic standards or for their metaphorical content; that is to risk getting caught in a different set of pseudo-dilemmas and miss the poem’s visionary essence. For Celan, the poem is *the locus of an encounter*, an event of meeting beyond the known horizons of the world. All its images are in pursuit of the “other” in such a “place,” for the felicitous moment when the poem exists once more and one can say: “And

once, by dint of attention to beings and things, we came close to a free, open space and, finally, close to utopia.”¹³ Attentiveness to *what is* does not contradict its imaginal transformation; but for this to happen, attention needs the poem, needs access to the imaginal. We as readers must therefore retain our sense for the imaginal if we are to understand and avoid pseudo-dilemmas.

Once imaginal worlds are understood not as theoretical contrivances or convenient metaphors but as *loci of events* on the “interior” side of every world-place - in “us” at the “heart apex”¹⁴ - it is no longer legitimate to restrict human activity to the sphere of the empirical or to calculative reason. The imaginal Form is neither ideality, nor present-at-hand, but an inventive act of-the-last-instance with respect to every arrangement of being. Works themselves - philo-fictions, poems - can only be the practice, the *doing* of imaginative vision. This “doing” halts us in our tracks, holds us in suspense; it is an acting upon idea and images suspended over the transition between *eschaton* and utopia, between a final *exitus* and an arrival at “home” in the Not-Where. Regardless of how things transpire for a specific vision, it is from that creative ground of the vision alone - when the world is suspended, and one enters the *mundus imaginalis* - that the work makes sense.

Finally, I believe it legitimate to rearticulate Corbin’s concept and assert that the Active Imagination is a *generic human capacity* not oriented regionally or religiously around any specific vision; nor is it bound to any given manner of discoursing. What this brief exposition should show is that *for any given imaginal world, what ultimately counts is the vision it seeks to express*: to endow with the force of thought, to mediate to

¹¹ Ibid., xvii.

¹² Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Anne Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

¹³ Paul Celan, *The Meridian: Final Version—Drafts—Materials*, trans. Pierre Joris (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 11.

¹⁴ “At the heart’s apex a / musclefiber comes / musing to death.” Paul Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead*, trans. Pierre Joris (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), 205.

the intellectual and affective, and to communicate to others such that they access that vision. By entering and experiencing such visions, the symbolic alteration of the subject-world complex is made *real*. Active participation, moreover, can overcome the limitations of a given vision, for through participation the vision is adopted, made one's own. With Laruelle and Celan, the challenge is not to decipher but to *enter* the "world," the "for ever" they have imagined for the sake of an exact transmission of their visions. My argument is that *this movement of entering imaginal worlds of utopic vision is in essence eschatological*, for it ends exclusive attachment to "this" world and introduces the futurity of a Not-Where that embraces and resituates every "there," that subverts every topology and position. This is their messianic horizon and why I identify them as messianic-type visions. Both entail an *entrance* on the part of the receiver for the experiment to be performed, for the poem to reach; non-philosophy and poetry share this methodological concern. If the effectivity of such a movement is not clear in the eyes of the world and does not easily register on the world-screen, this only attests to the power and "eternity" of these visions and to the alterations of subjectivity they can affect in whoever makes the imaginal - *not* imaginary - leap.

3. The Last as Future

The "last things" are not fabulous, cataclysmic cosmic events. Only generic subjects (rather than those who return) are "last" in the eschatological sense, that is to say, "prior-to-first."¹⁵

With these remarks as preparation, I move on to non-philosophy, Vision-in-One, and the oraxiomatic method suited to express that vision. One common difficulty with non-philosophy is

that any commentary on it feels obliged to either abide by its syntax and "rules," thus giving the impression of parroting Laruelle, or to reject one or all of its moves as invalid, as philosophically unsound. This leads to objections based on epistemological grounds that the imaginal rejects as improper to visionary perception. I invoke Corbin's theory to encourage an imaginal understanding of non-philosophy; it is to view its philo-fictions as imaginal worlds. When non-philosophy strips ideas of the "sufficient" interpretation their field of origin would insist upon, when it constellates them instead according to Vision-in-One, it indeed treats ideas as *images in suspense*, as under-determined idea-images freed for new destinations. This suspension and collision of idea-images is an act of eschatological imagination that, in full poetic freedom, tears them from their world-context and puts them to a use for expressing utopia, leaving every other standard of reckoning behind.

Let's explore in greater depth the discursive strategy non-philosophy employs, the oraxiomatic method. This neologism, the oraxiom, is a combination of axiom and oracle. It betrays the double provenance of non-philosophy, the pairing of two extremes: on the one hand, an axiomatic system inspired by science and mathematics, on the other, an oracular announcement inspired by gnostics and heretics (Corbin's "spokespeople for the Invisible"¹⁶). The first is responsible for the incorporation, over a long trajectory, of fractals, idempotence, wave-particle duality, the imaginary number, superposition, vectoral force, "conceptual algebra," etc.; and for the fundamental idea that the subject is not just the object of science but is *included* in its experimental set-up and procedure. The second is responsible for a religious affect or gnosis concerning salvation, messianity, glorious bodies, the Final Future, immanent utopia, and so on. The list alone suggests non-philosophy's imaginal quality in bringing together such di-

¹⁵ François Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction: The Ruins of Athens and Jerusalem*, trans. Robin Mackay (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 115.

¹⁶ Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, xii.

verse themes and in its willingness to envision new forms of knowledge beyond the division of labor normally enforced between disciplines.

To play up the paradoxes of the oraxiom, and specifically its axiomatic aspect, I begin with one of its earliest articulations in *Mystique non-philosophique à l'usage des contemporains*. Laruelle envisions

a mathesis of mystic-fiction, obviously non-mathematical mathesis...which guarantees an integral transmissibility of radically lived utterances of the Word-fiction. The ultimate Gospel, the Last Good News before the return of the World, is said in the form of mathesis... We introduce a quasi-mathematical style into predication.¹⁷

What is the attraction of *mathesis* for philo-fiction? First, there is no need for interpretation in math. Everything in a mathematically styled argument is on the surface of its saying. Saying and said are inseparable. There is no depth of the signified one must go searching for, no polysemy of meaning like there is in “typically accepted linguistic space.”¹⁸ Everything happens at the level of a rigorous manipulation of *otherwise meaningless signs*; these form their own consistent language “subtracted” from normal reality or any regional ontology. As Badiou has also pointed out, this grants math a universal transmissibility, according to an anti-esoteric ideal of a fully transparent knowledge. Non-philosophy aims at just such a transmission, this time of a lived knowing (of) the One or Vision-in-One-of the Not-where immanent to humans. Yet such expressions are more axiomatic than hermeneutic, more like the apparatus of an experiment than the raising of claims.

The discursive novelty of non-philosophy is to introduce a new use of language into predication and conceptualization. Its chief consequence is to empty out the significance of traditional philosophemes like the “One” and free them for new configurations unbound by the meanings they have accrued over time, including those accrued within the matrices of previous non-philosophical experiments. Non-mathematical *mathesis* thus informs an evolving axiomatic system that functions very differently from natural, philosophical, and symbolic language, while using these as its occasional materials. Signs are used without any meaning beyond the regulated writing that arranges them. All intuitive or naïve apprehension is combatted and actively undone. Words enter as “black boxes” without positive determination, like variables in an equation, becoming so many “first names” of the One (for example: “*Man=Real=Utopia*”¹⁹). The task is then to *formalize* rather than metaphorize, to replace reference with uni-ference. All language is performed in the desert of abstraction “according-to-the-desert of the One.”²⁰ And since non-philosophy refuses to describe or decide anything about the Real, its utterances will be characterized as a radical *use-of-silence*, just as math radiates its evidence in silence. The usage of words is then seamless with their lived practice, a “Word-fiction” stripped of all assertorial weight and predicative imposition. Whatever enters the “generic matrix” is set to work for this purpose: to defend “generic human immanence” or “Man as Future” from its ensnarement in the transcendences of World and History. Instead there will be a real use of language (idea-images) at one with the Real of the vision (the One-in-One-in-Nowhere, to put it axiomatically). This usage of language co-terminous with a practice of utopia is confirmed as the formalization proceeds over countless

¹⁷ François Laruelle, *Mystique non-philosophique à l'usage des contemporains* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), 7-8.

¹⁸ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction*, 91.

¹⁹ François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2012), 10.

²⁰ Laruelle, *Mystique non-philosophique*, 259.

phases and reformulations; language is insufficient but radically so. Unshackled from semantic networks of connotation, words flow into new make-ups of thought able to use language as a form of radical silence. It allows, at the same time, an utterance united to the vision-enactment caused by the One-of-the-last-instance: a defense of the Not-where from the All-place, of Utopia from every determination by the world-form (=philosophy). Such is the oraxiom's "mission" - the substance of philo-fiction.

This humble practice, these "reduced" invocations, testify to Utopia-in-person, to the power of our impotence before the world and word, and to the "invisibility" of messianic force. Oracular pronouncements of prophets and mystics are inserted without remainder into an axiomatic without metaphysical background, such that they are no longer deciphered according to past dogmas and generalities but are immanent statements "infinitely deployed as phases of a flux."²¹ The "infinitely open" axiom receives the secret of the oracle; the oracle receives the "poverty and silence" of the axiom.²² Together, they form an idempotent flow of "lived rather than logical - and yet transmissible - oraxioms, brief and fragmentary and thus indisputable and prior-to-first."²³ Such generically-lived axioms are treated as waves interfering with each other, continuously creating "new blocs of unlocalizable or indiscernible meaning."²⁴ Without any message, without conceptual sequence, empty of all sufficiency of Logos, oraxioms stand like so many "oracles in the memory of humans to come - infinite and indiscernible words that traverse history and the world like an eternity that is no longer against the times."²⁵ Such phrases, absurd from the perspective of good sense and sound epistemology, cannot be grasped without the vision they express being generated, without being

imaginally transported to the Unlocalizable. Yet there is no adopting a non-philosophical system or professing belief in it. It is rather a question of *redefining* the subject according to oraxioms by incorporating them into one's vision of things, *living* them. It is a matter of "fusing" oneself to this mode of seeing-in-One, seeing-in-the-Indivisible that is immanently Other-than...X.

Non-philosophy is a "subject-science" in this sense. According to the oraxioms and the living of them, the subject - *prima materia* provided by philosophy - is no longer exhaustively determined by the world or temporality, no longer defined by looping upon itself or returning to itself. That is the axiomatic beginning that calls for its own enactment, even if this enactment is an under-determination, a quieting of decision or effectivity as such. The radicality lies not in denying the world but in re-envisioning what activity *for* the world means when the subject is superposed with the Last Instance - becomes itself a "Last Thing." An enactment of vision-in-One, however it is conceived, implies a response to the announcement: see, the world is overcome by the *priorness* of the immanent Last Instance as "prior-to-first," prior to every priority of world and ego (and so not calling for their destruction). When this is taken as an oraxiom capable of transforming the lived - when the imaginal world of Vision-in-One is entered - the subject is rendered generic, de-personalized, simplified. Generic in this context means: lived without egoism, without brand or self-image, without being viewed through the lens of "a" life. It is what Laruelle calls the "glorious lived" or the "lived-without-life" [*vécu-sans-vie*]: an experience of the u-topic lived not constricted to any self-narrative, any physical body, any being-in-the-world, any production by history or identity. It is rather a superposition of lived experiences without owner that "annuls the combat of opposites [and] produces not an intersubjectivity of atomic entities, but an interference of fluxes of lived,

²¹ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction*, 39.

²² Laruelle, *Mystique non-philosophique*, 254.

²³ Laruelle, *Christo-Fiction*, 155.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 158.

or an interreferential subjectivity.”²⁶ All together it is the invention of “the generic body ‘in my name’.”²⁷ Participating in this invention, the subject accepts a determination-from-the-last-in-stance such that *its activity is determined from this end-point*: such is its messiah-reorientation. Everything is then viewed from its transience, its ultimate end; from the falling-silent of the word; from after death or in excess of life-death; from an *exitus* from the world that is immanentized, im-mediatized, rushed to presence - now the presence of the *eschaton* itself (“in-person”).

Laruelle names “messiah-existing-Stranger” the result of this operation. It is the *cloning* for the world of generic, non-individualized messianity, a subjectivity-of-the-last-instance:

The constitution by cloning of a Stranger-subject for whom the announced end is already realized, or immanent, is a real subject as transfinite organon or as partially dependent on the world... The messianic Stranger announces retroactively that it is generic Human in-the-last-instance or that it is in-immanent-under-going.²⁸

Radically stranger to the All, “*indifferent* rather than an absolute stranger,” the generic lived exists or rather vectorially rises not *in* but *for* the world through a subjective “clone” of the One, which unilaterally determines it as a “*Stranger-advent for the All*.”²⁹ Such a messianic-generic subject comes under the world one-time-each-time as a superposition of liveds bearing a u-topic expressivity. This expression is not the testimony of a single self, the discourse of an ego, the speech of an I, or determined exclusively by any one individual. Oraxiomatic expressions of utopia are rather “the property... only of a ‘we’

as quantum of expression or unilateral formulation.”³⁰ They testify to a generic body, an interreferential subjectivity, which knows its own invisibility to the world as well as its power to transform it imaginally, from underneath.

The infinitely open axiom, bearing the generic secret of the oracle’s pronouncement in a lived flux, is thus the practice of an *a priori exitus* from World, addressing subjects for the sake of their liberation from the double transcendence of self and “a” life. Redefining the subject by including it in a subject-science - allowing the oraxioms to express and under-determine it, rather than it expressing and determining them - one hears echoes of the imaginal world and its *suspense* facilitating the turning of the world inside out: the breaching of the sensible-intellectual by an enacted Vision-in-One; insertion into the experimental matrix as into a “topology of visionary experiences”; and finally the Stranger’s move “home” in passing to the generic interior now manifest as the final black box - the Messiah-for-the-World testifying to the Final Ultimatum. Such is the “output” of philo-fiction.

In this section, I’ve tried to both explain and emulate non-philosophy’s oraxiomatic method. Its effect on the writing is an inclusion in the oraxiomatic procedure. Non-philosophy tends to a lack of individuality and idiom, an asceticism of language, a unilateral formalization of expression, which comes out in the abstraction of its exposition. It is helpful to view philo-fiction as a *mundus imaginalis*, but only if we stick to its concreteness and final effectiveness for the Stranger-for-the-World intended with this term: *the reality-in-act of Not-where*. The modality of generic thought and futurity in non-philosophy is *the expression of Utopia-in-person from an immanent end-time stance*, a tenacious act of eschatological imagination traversing history that leaves behind visionary traces to be reactivated through the resumption of the vision in others, even if this

²⁶ Ibid., 215.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 257. Translation modified.

²⁹ Ibid., 256.

³⁰ Ibid., 157.

vision nullifies the need for traces and leads to a falling-silent. This resumption of vision does not necessitate the continued production of non-philosophical texts, however, but rather: *actively-imaginatively take up "habitus" in the Not-where, underway to the Unlocalizable.*³¹

4. In Light of U-topia

With all my thoughts I
went out of the world: and there you were,
you my quiet, my open one, and –
you received us.³²

Coming now to Paul Celan's vision of poetry, my aim is to give an account of its visionary aspects, as I have tried to do above with non-philosophy. I will center my remarks on Celan's Meridian speech from 1960 and the draft materials for the speech. Along the way, I will indicate the fruitfulness of thinking these two writers together, before coming to this point in more detail in a final section.

First, a few negative indications about which Celan is adamant and which might even be considered "axioms" for his poetics. Consider the crucial note "Image = vision (not: metaphor)": images in the poem are not imaginary or metaphoric but, more profoundly, *transport visions* according to their own rationale, their own dimensions. In Corbin's terms, they are images in suspense that one must traverse so as to enter the imaginal world envisioned, an operation not unlike the subject allowing its redefinition by the oraxiom. What the casual observer would identify as obscurity in Celan's poetry is in fact an intentional work of bending, breaking, and reforming language so that it is no longer the instrument of violence but a site of exposure and encounter. Celan is highly critical of any

neutral appraisal that would treat poetry like a form of art to be judged according to known standards. Rhythm is not a matter of metrics or sound-forms but of *the direction of a voice*: an "individual human's rhythm," the uniqueness of its handiwork: "hands of the one-time, [the] mortal soul-monad."³³ The poem is not a linguistic object but "the trace of our breath in language."³⁴ It comes to us on "breathroutes."³⁵ It must have the "liveliness of mortal soul creatures."³⁶ As with Corbin's *mundus imaginalis*, neither aesthesis (on the side of art and sensibility) nor noesis (on the side of comprehension) is enough. Neither a sign system nor information, the poem is a *speaking-to* and *going-with* in the direction of Utopia; an image-filled transmission of vision. What is this vision and how is it conducted?

At the antipodes of "man as information," the poem confronts us with "man as silence," the true school of humanity, as Celan's note suggests. To get at this dynamic between speech and silence in the poem, Celan distinguishes between seeing-through and looking-at. Whoever sees through the poem – such that it could be left behind by paraphrase, interpretation, or contextualization – sees nothing; the poem remains opaque, unentered. Only one who looks *at* the poem, as at a stone in the air, can enter its vision and encounter the other who speaks in it. This includes undergoing an experience of the poem's falling-silent.³⁷ Confronted by the poem, the reader is drawn into *suspense*. Looking at the poem draws one into the imaginal world, its vision, into one movement with the vision-enactment itself: the imaginal world of the poem as "what is perceived and is to be perceived once and always again once, and only here and now."³⁸

³³ Celan, *The Meridian*, 113.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

³⁷ See Timothy Lavenz, "Silent Consonants of the Named," <https://fragilekeys.com/2018/03/23/silent-consonants-of-the-named/>.

³⁸ Celan, *The Meridian*, 10.

³¹ Habitus is to be understood along the lines of Laruelle's "mi-lieu" or "mediate-without-mediation."

³² Paul Celan, *Poems of Paul Celan*, trans. Michael Hamburger (New York: Persea Books, 2002), 145.

The challenge is to dwell in this suspense and the movement it initiates - perhaps for a whole lifetime - avoiding the temptation to reduce the poem to anything less than an art of encounter. This is not to forbid interpretation but to stress the necessity of *receiving* the poem by letting it speak in all its idiomatcity and so affect our very voice. As with the oraxiom, with the poem it is a matter of incorporating it and allowing it to affect the symbolic alteration of subjectivity it prepares or hopes-toward.

The poem, however, also knows the darkness and risk of this journey and undertakes it through darkness ("You-darkness"). It worries it will not be received, that it is impossible to receive, asking:

Sight threads, sense threads, from
nightbale knitted
behind time:

who
is invisible enough
to see you?³⁹

To approach answering this, I turn directly to a note in which Celan states most clearly the end-times orientation of his poetics: "The poem waits for its absent (coming and thus future) you: thus it stands toward the end times [*Letztzeitlichen*],"⁴⁰ as something last-thingly [*Letztendlich*]. The dynamic articulated here condenses many aspects of his vision that it will be helpful to examine step by step.

Celan stresses that everything first and "accidental" - all the contingencies of being in the world - enter the poem as "last," indeed, as if the world were lost. Contents of life and experience enter from a quasi-final perspective; the poem is written "from the direction of death" - from an *exitus*, from the *eschaton*. Allowing this passage

through the end, the poem "lets the transience of all things and of itself come to word"; only thus can the poem "last."⁴¹ The poetic process is an exchange whereby the precious contents of life are estranged and replaced into the poem, as if the poem were the graveyard for the contents, the latter being solidified into word-stone as the imaginal mediate for their "ended" world. The poem's inscription allows the transience of worldly contents to come to attention and sets them into a new context: no longer the world of origin but the poem itself as a vessel of an undying vision, an imaginal world. There is a *kenosis* of the person into poem, a transubstantiation of person into language, such that language becomes the voice of vision, direction and breath. Personal experience is both annulled and raised up. The date of birth of the poem is effaced, rushed to its death date; and yet the purpose of this operation is to preserve the date, to remember the date - to allow it to return at a future date, in unison with the date of another. This brings us to the receptive movement and the *hope* attached to the poem: namely, that it will come home to itself and to the other; that through "you" it will finally arrive at itself, the vision alive and the poem there once more.

The contents and times of life, which enter the poem as "last-thingly," from the direction of death, are thus preserved in the poem in a state of *waiting*. The poem waits upon an "absent (coming and thus future) you" who can receive it and - for the one-time-each-time that the poem's event *is* - let its voice and vision emerge again in the present. When "you" receive the poem and let it speak "outside the world," there is a communication between times. The poem is wrenched back from its "already-no-longer" into its "always still"; its finitude is given back its "mortal infinity." Yet nothing guarantees that the poem will be received or revived, that the date will be remembered, that the encounter will take place and the vision be expressed. The

³⁹ Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead*, 87.

⁴⁰ Celan, *The Meridian*, 136.

⁴¹ Ibid., 111.

poem is thus urgently in search of the “you.” “The poem intends another, needs this other, needs an opposite. It goes towards it, bespeaks it.”⁴² The encounter is so much the element of the poem that, for Celan, the *mystery of the encounter* is present even at the *inception* of the poem.

Recall now once more the operation of *kenosis* of the person into the poem discussed above. From this perspective, the rush to the end, the estrangement of the I - the setting-off of all contents of experience from their worldly origin so as to be transformed in a poetic taking-shape of the voice in language, in imaginal vessels stowing not metaphors but *visions* - all of this amounts to an act of imagination that submits the “first” and “accidental” to the event of encounter with the (unknown, absent, future, coming) you. The encounter is determined “by the one who steps toward it,” namely, the you whom the poem reaches, who receives the poem. Its very vocation is to speak the cause and the time of this other: to speak to, speak with, and thus to go forward in time together. This going forward is therefore not modeled on a linear course of history but on the temporal fecundity that arises in the encounter itself, in its precarious present when time is a caesura, the remembrance of a pause.⁴³ When looked-at and entered, the poem tenses into an “exciting presence,” “swift” and “outside.” It speaks not just the suspension of images, idea-images, metaphors, worlds; it speaks the suspension of breath, the holding of breath, the “breathturn.” This pause of soul, caesura in time, or breathturn induced by poem happening once-more is an exposure and invitation to attend. Nothing is imposed, only we step into its imaginal form and, encountering the other there, let it speak (with) our time. Not a linguistic but a *visionary event*, the encounter makes possible a going-to-

gether in the “home-sensed Nowhere,”⁴⁴ as one late poem puts it, along the difficult path of the Stranger home, in Corbin’s terms too. But as Celan says at the end of the Meridian speech, this is to pursue the “absolute poem” that does not and cannot exist; it is to go the “road of the impossible,” for, “None of these places can be found. They do not exist. But I know where they ought to exist, especially now, and... I find something else!”⁴⁵ That something else is “like language - immaterial, yet earthly, terrestrial”: an imaginal zone of vision-events capable of connecting our times, and so our lives, together in light of U-topia.

The thought of the utopic - of reaching free, open spaces - is thus again matched to a sense for the *eschaton*. Eschatological imagination transfigures lived experience into the shape and breath of the poem, such that the living person is entirely poured into it as an imaginal vessel for shared visions whose reality is instated from this imaginal zone. But as this operation is oriented around a future homecoming “nowhere,” as the resultant poem is forever underway and waiting upon the other *at time’s end*, the poem’s research is conducted in light of u-topia, crossing tropes and topos. Thus, a unity of *eschaton* and utopia is prepared: the possibility of a homecoming realized in our going forward together with the poem.

Poetry is then not “word art” but a listening and obeying after the near and infinitely distant you, the addressee that gathers around the addressing I, at the end or “caesura” of time. The poem is a radical individuation of language, an experience of idiom and of the possibilities of language, that has passed through I-distance, an estranging of the I whereby it sets off for another in the void and, hopefully, sets itself free in its search. It is the reality in act of an attention to beings and things in their otherness and

⁴² Paul Celan, *Collected Prose*, trans. Rosemarie Waldrop (New York: Sheep Meadow Press, 1986), 49.

⁴³ Celan, *The Meridian*, 99.

⁴⁴ Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead*, 197.

⁴⁵ Celan, *Collected Prose*, 54.

opaqueness, in their *last-thingliness* caught up in u-topic light, such that the poem's speech is simultaneously a speaking-to-death of the I *and* a "detour from you to you" leading "far outside." By way of what Celan variously calls intense perception, poetic receptivity, becoming-aware, or a "capacity for the real—reverent—experience of form—of *performance*,"⁴⁶ the poem builds toward and enters into conversation with a "finite-infinite you," in search of an answer to Where-from and Where-to. The place of this question, which stays open, is the open, free, empty space the poem seeks. Everything that passes through the "narrow hours" - historical happenings, personal life events, words, ideas, "each thing, each human" - is a figure of this other the poem is headed toward through darkness. The labor of art is thus not to "enlarge art" but to set oneself free in this direction and *encounter oneself too* along this path ("self-encounter encountering the other—and vice versa"). Every image and metaphor, every worldly place and the human creature, including the writer's "I," is submitted to the approach of this meridian where time changes over. It is a homecoming without homeland, a homecoming into the Nowhere of the imaginal and real, what one poem gestures to as "the great Inbetween."⁴⁷

Why does a meditation on utopia culminate here? Because here - the ascertainable "home-sensed Nowhere" - utopia's nearness through poetry corresponds to the "ancient dream" or double movement of the poetic. Celan formulates its ambition thus: "as the world is delivered in the world, something—what?—become[s] world-free."⁴⁸ The world is delivered in being brought to its end; the event corresponding to this is a second movement of turning or re-turning wherein "something" is set into a world-free space. It is the finding of a futural "origin," a "home" that is the place of a seemingly impos-

sible correspondence and access between times. It is an encounter "nowhere" where "only the void stood between us," and the "us" is understood as an unbound variable or open referent: whatever and whomever is encountered in the vision-event. Connected here is Celan's pronouncement that "The League of the Worldoutcasts has yet to be called into existence."⁴⁹ Are these not akin to the ordinary messiahs Laruelle theorizes, who clone the Victim-in-person? Celan draws the powerful image of a thousand fists gathered together into "a great, overwhelming force" that climbs above the highest towers to swear an oath. They form one face, "a fist of eyes swearing" allegiance to tomorrow's truth.⁵⁰ It is a pledge we do not yet know, but it carries all the force of imaginal transformation and alteration of subjectivity. It is again a mode of futurity that takes place by way of contact with the *mundus imaginalis*. The poetic word gathers us in the "last soundbell" like an "accelerated heartstep" to such an "outside / in space" - up to the site for our eternal pledge.⁵¹

For both Celan and Laruelle, what is at stake is an interreferential subjectivity and the possibility of unified and futural visionary acts. In both cases, lived experience is "separated" from the world and its strict belonging to the individual; it is seen from a point of the world's end, in strangerhood to the world and I-estrangement, but also from the vantage of fusion or encounter with the lived experiences of countless others, of the unknown You. In Laruelle the individuality of the subject is, ideally, brought down by the oraxiomatic procedure, such that there is a movement of depersonalization and genericization. This seems to be the opposite of Celan's view of the poem as person becomes language and language becomes person; indeed, this difference partially accounts for the vast difference in style between a philo-fiction and a lyric poem.

⁴⁶ Celan, *The Meridian*, 169.

⁴⁷ Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead*, 99.

⁴⁸ Celan, *The Meridian*, 126.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 172.

⁵⁰ Celan, *Collected Prose*, 10.

⁵¹ Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead*, 307.

And yet, despite this, Celan returns constantly to the theme of no-one, for example in the title of his book *Die Niemandsrose*, *The No-One's Rose*. Though the poem begins as breath, everything transpires as if the other's breath and voice depended on the "you," on "yours." Without collapsing both projects together, it is evident that the poet also invokes and takes upon him or herself a generic fate, the fate of no-one ("O one, o none, o no one, o you"⁵²). The poem yearns for the "No-One's-Rose" to bloom

for-no-one-and-nothing.

Unrecognized
for you
alone.

With all that has room in it,
even without
language.⁵³

In the end-making [*Verendlichung*] of the poem, we feel the "sharp point of the infinite" (Baudelaire)" through every present and being.⁵⁴ This is ultimately why things in the poem are in their last-thingness: their direction is determined by the *You-of-the-last-instance*, by a seemingly infinite, unknown, unguaranteed encounter. This does not negate belonging to the world but, as with everything in the imaginal, turns the world inside out, so that it now "takes place" in the ambit of encounter, the one-time-each-time only of the poem - the majestic and absurd presence of a humanity that, as one, raises a *counter-word* to the imposing discourses of the world. The poem speaks itself to death against death, and in the word's finitude [*Endlichkeit*], it preserves an eternal hope, preserves a chance on "you."

5. In-Final-Loyalty

The silkbedecked Nowhere
devotes its duration to the beam,

I can see you
here.⁵⁵

At the heart of this inquiry was an intuition that multiple points of resonance exist between the two otherwise highly divergent works of Laruelle and Celan. I've tried to outline a number of shared themes: a perspective of alienness to the world; an emphasis on genericity, interreferentiality, or sharedness of the person; the one-time-each-time only nature of philo-fiction and poem as discursive events, as well as their tendency to fall silent or guard a silence at their core; fidelity to others centered on an ambition to set-free from oppressive world-structures and persecutory speech; the consistent refrain of Nowhere as the (non-)place of visionary events; emphasis on transmissible human affects of inventive gnosis or poetically-receptive encounter; a determination-in-the-last-instance by the coming You or undercoming One; and the constellation of the eschatological and utopic as two matching times of the Active Imagination - the two textures woven by the reality-in-act of its vision. Together, these features broaden the definition of the messianic. While the latter is often mentioned by name in non-philosophy, yet perhaps never appears in Celan's poetry, it is still possible to recognize a messianic-type vision at play in both. Uniting them is the dynamic between eschatological imagination and utopic expressivity in visionary action.

In this essay, Corbin first pointed us to the Active Imagination and its power to catalyze vision-events that are not removed from the real world but expose its limitations in light of another real space, noted symbolically as Not-Where or Utopia. Such vision-events take place

⁵² Celan, *Poems of Paul Celan*, 131.

⁵³ Ibid., 209.

⁵⁴ Celan, *The Meridian*, 126.

⁵⁵ Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead*, 409.

in imaginal worlds of all sorts; Laruelle and Celan gave us two different expressions of the utopic creativity involved, two messianic-type visions going their own way, yet sharing a strong sensitivity for the end. The one led, with the help of oraxioms, to a redefinition of the subject in the direction of generic messianity. The other led to the transubstantiation of the human creature into language become mortal voice *en route* to you; poems reaching for the “meridian” where a shared oath on tomorrow is possible. Both are unbending in their attention to the *exact* formation of the imaginal vessel because to do otherwise would be to sacrifice the vision and its end-times stance. In both there is a direct performative unity of the “in-person:” in non-philosophy between oraxiom/philo-fiction and lived Utopia, in poetry between poem and person. This points to another feature of messianity: a desire for the substance of the vision and the vessel of its communication to be *as one*. In both writers this reveals itself as a shared aspiration to strike hard against sedimented habits of thought and language, to refuse compromise with the expectations and ways of the world, and to destine itself to that unique reader who takes the vision to heart and travels in the Unlocalizable with it.

Non-philosophy and poetry bear witness to an interreferentiality of subjects while also doing justice to the each-time-unique “locus” of this interreference; this insight should apply to the conversation between them too. Laruelle assumes a question Celan asks explicitly, namely, the superposition of others, of I and you, at the inception of the poem, philo-fiction, or by extension any imaginal world. Poem and oraxiom both bear in their flowing evolution the *real content* of a superposition of lived experiences, transmuted into a language-mesh or generic matrix *en route*. This “near and distant” you, this “coming” you at the inception of the poem - a meeting in darkness seeking its own origin - is also at stake in the oraxiomatic flow; both call

for a new perspective on experience right where creatureliness is taken most seriously. In the poem, there is more verbal evidence of a desire for conversation not as explicitly addressed by non-philosophy; at the same time, the oraxiom, in its generic ambition, undoubtedly *addresses* the other at their most immanent and calls for “climbing out of yourself.”⁵⁶ Philo-fiction is equally a re-routing of solitude open to numberless other human addressees according to the ideal of universal transmissibility; it too is underway to a You-of-the-last-instance. Likewise, while the personality in its uniqueness, its idiom-aticity, seems an unasked question in non-philosophy, conversely, a degree of impersonality also characterizes the “negative capability” of the poet and even testimony as such, as Giorgio Agamben has shown.⁵⁷ Far from preventing the generic imagination from exercising its expressive powers, an experience of the impossibility of speaking “on one’s own” turns the “I” into an experimental ground “expropriated of all referential reality”⁵⁸ - and so again in *exitus* from the world, finding its home nowhere. The “genuine *ethos* of poetry” entails reacting to one’s own non-existence, responding to one’s own desubjectification, and testifying to this.⁵⁹ The notions of interreferential subjectivity, the superposed lived-without-life, and the generic body all have much to offer future meditations on human personhood and voice.

Any incompatibility between oraxiom and idiom - the genericity of non-philosophy and the uniqueness of the poem - should thus be rejected, so that new models can be projected to bridge the apparent gap. The *mathesis* present in non-philosophy does not preclude its *testimonial* aspect: this is the messianic pronouncement it carries. The oraxiom is also an idiom calling

⁵⁶ “You, clamped / into your deepest part, / climb out of yourself / for ever.” Celan, *Poems of Paul Celan*, 309.

⁵⁷ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 112.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

for transmission, just as the idiom in a poem functions like an axiom, calling to be looked-at, repeated, performed, incorporated. The generic speech of the oraxiom seeks you who can live as a Stranger-subject, a “Last Thing.” The idiomatic speech of the poem seeks to turn toward tomorrow’s truth, rumbling in the thick of “flurrying metaphors.”⁶⁰ In neither case are you addressed as a subject determined by the world but rather in your *last-timeliness* in the struggle for utopia. Transmission demands entering an imaginal world and going a way with it in suspense; this is prerequisite to knowledge and consciousness of any messianic-type vision. Whether the “I” is used or not, whether the discourse is oraxiomatic or testamentary, depersonalized or lyrical, what is at stake is the imaginal world as a locus of vision-events with the “invisible” power to transform sense and intelligence, world and self.

United in the dynamic of the messianic, these works undertaken at the extremes of stylistic intention demonstrate a search for idioms of thought proper to an eschatological comportment that “liberates”; these are perhaps the “universal singularities,” of which Derrida speaks, that demonstrate an invincible desire for justice.⁶¹ The contiguity between Laruelle and Celan can be a lesson in the democracy of expression that does not sacrifice the charge of the utopic for anything. I submit the dynamic I have presented as a contribution to the accurate reading, recognition, and revival of such indications of messianity in the cultural record in a way that stretches beyond verbatim acceptance. Central to the inquiry is finding and furthering a generic affect that, speaking from the end, speaks in the direction of the “homecoming” future. It speaks to the last You to be addressed, who might remember Utopia-in-person - who realizes, perhaps, that *the practice of eschatologically imaginative vision is utopia*.

Despite the differences between works of the Active Imagination, each is destined to this transition in “us” between *eschaton* and utopia, to finding address and habitus in the Unlocalizable, and to the symbolic alteration of subjectivity this entails in the direction of the messianic - the humanly loyal. Each work undertakes its efforts, ending every step of the way, *in-final-loyalty*, and that is how we must learn to receive their claim.

⁶⁰ Celan, *Poems of Paul Celan*, 247.

⁶¹ Jacques Derrida, “Faith and Knowledge,” in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar, trans. Samuel Weber (London: Routledge: 2002), 56.

Non-Philosophy and Speculative Posthumanism: A Conversation with David Roden

David Roden teaches philosophy at the Open University, UK. His published work has addressed the relationship between deconstruction and analytic philosophy, philosophical naturalism, the metaphysics of sound and posthumanism. He contributed the essay “The Disconnection Thesis” to the Springer Frontiers volume *The Singularity Hypothesis: A Scientific and Philosophical Assessment*. His book *Posthuman Life: Philosophy at the Edge of the Human* (Routledge 2014) considers the metaphysical, epistemological and ethical implications of the existence of posthumans: powerful nonhuman agents produced by human-instigated technological processes.

david.roden@open.ac.uk

Bogna Konior is the editor of *Oraxiom*.

Keywords: Non-philosophy, posthumanism, speculative posthumanism, aliens, transhumanism

As David Roden writes, “a biomorphic posthumanism is no longer about the human relation to the future... It is the insurgency of an Outside... We have no transcendental access to this ‘doll space’ prior to making it.”¹ Similarly, as Katerina Kolozova describes Laruelle’s position, “how something appears cannot be philosophically predetermined. Reality dictates how we will think and develop entirely new concepts and programmes about what is going on.”² In this conversation, David Roden and Bogna Konior discuss the possible intersections between non-philosophy and speculative posthumanism, tackling a variety of topics, including transcendental computers, human agency in relation to modern technology, the body, biomorphism, and pain, dark phenomenology, and how both non-philosophy and Roden’s work diverge from other contemporary approaches to posthumanism.

Bogna Konior: I want to start with a question that is not central to your work but that drew my attention. I find it very interesting that you begin your book *Posthuman Life: Philosophy at the Edge of the Human* (hereafter PHL) with a discussion of pain. Through non-philosophy, Katerina Kolozova has written extensively about pain as the real, the lived, brutal experience *par excellence*, which, in her view, unbinds our humanity from philosophical and conceptual thinking. In my article on the recent self-immolation of Polish chemist Piotr Szczyński, I use her work to argue for a non-representational politics rooted in this relentless and equalising workings of pain. Thinking through my pain syndrome, pain is as much as the thing-in-itself as I’ve experienced; it is also a communication breakdown, a fact that Eugene Thacker notices in *Infinite*

Resignation: “Low-grade, chronic pain for weeks, months, I’m trying to listen to my body but I don’t know what language it is speaking.”³ While for Kolozova the traumatic experience of pain shatters signification and is the precondition for interspecies politics, you write rather that it is a fundamentally isolating experience: “Whatever consolation we offer, it seems, the other’s pain is theirs alone.”⁴ So, for you, pain reminds us of our inability to experience the mental states of others, a problem that can be alleviated *technologically*. I find the question of pain important now, with all kinds of pain conditions, acute and chronic, environmental and physical, emotional and social on the rise across the globe in an unprecedented manner. What is the place of pain in your take on posthumanism, especially at this moment in history?

David Roden: This question cuts across a lot of my current concerns, some that we will need to take up in later question, I imagine. Like Bertrand Russell, Kolozova and yourself, I am struck by what you imply is pain’s apparent lack of relation. Whatever its functional role in the economy of our bodies, the experience of intense suffering or extreme pain seems detached from any representation or purpose. For example, even if it informs us of tissue damage, this information is often vitiated by our inability to use it - because the pain is disabling, chronic, untreatable, or terminal.

Of course, in the introduction to PHL I introduce this phenomenology to problematize it, suggesting that pain may not be necessarily private but only contingently so, given the absence of technologies for connecting the pain evaluation and discrimination areas in one’s brain to the inputs flowing into analogous areas in others’ brains. But the excessive character of pain

¹ David Roden, “Posthumanism: Critical, Speculative, Biomorphic,” in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Posthumanism*, ed. Mads Thomsen and Jacob Wamberg (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 81-94.

² François Laruelle, “Non-Standard Marxism: A Quantum Theory Approach,” *Identities: Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture* vol. 12, no. 1 - 2, (2015), 19.

³ Eugene Thacker, *Infinite Resignation: On Pessimism* (London: Repeater Books, 2018).

⁴ David Roden, *Posthuman Life: Philosophy at the Edge of the Human* (London: Routledge, 2014), 1.

- its 'blackness and luminosity' as Kolozova puts it - is something other than privacy.⁵ It is privation. Our capacity to express the experience is precluded by that experience. Its phenomenology, as I say elsewhere, is "dark" or as Thomas Metzinger says, 'is online only.'⁷ It does not allow us a complete or adequate re-presentation.

Pain may be fundamentally privative, divorcing us from the world, because it has no world. There's a phenomenological 'cut' of pain, something that, in removing the subject, divorces it, perhaps temporarily, from notional positions within it - whether as male, female, human, non-human, living, machine, etc.

I can go some of the way with Kolozova and yourself. Perhaps the inhumanity of pain resides in this power of detachment. This may partly explain the pleasure of pain received or given consensually in sadomasochistic practices, performance art or extreme sports. Although Stelarc correctly rejects accusations of masochism, his body art is also a notional cut of this kind - removing the body from its functional relation to a world, implying its absolute generality, its capacity for detachment. An art of pain, cleaving and remaking the body image or imago, allowing us new possibilities for pleasure or action: pain as offworld violence, or to cite your reading of Kolozova, "a void that suspends all meaning, all worldly affairs."⁶

I admit I'm hesitant regarding the emancipatory nature of this cut, or rather towards the kind of thought it prompts or enables. I agree that there's some kind of opening here. Maybe being deprived of subjective coherence or world through the cut of pain can help us think out-

side the limitations of our worlds. But this only reiterates the problem of the posthuman as a subtractive mode: it deprives thought of the subject, leaving the void as its remainder; but in so doing removes any source of or address for normative claims. Maybe the multiple and contested readings of Piotr Szczęsny's [politically-motivated] self-immolation [in your article] illustrate this dangerous ambivalence.⁷ This may partly explain the violent rejection and victimization of immigrants that contemporary fascism exploits. As if their loss and victimhood must be placed outside 'our' borders. It's too obscene or excessive, one should suffer only in moderation.

I see the relation to this subtraction as so 'be-headed,' so open as to be without any determinate political or ethical content. It does not imply, for example, a relation of inter-species justice more than one of extirpatory violence. I agree that the cut of pain opens a space for remaking bodies and subjects, for different forms of affiliation, but one so wide that it preempts any particular decision or form of ethics. For this reason, also, I'm critical of those 'critical posthumanists' who see deconstructing anthropocentrism as an ethical act portending a more graceful or egalitarian relationship with nonhuman animals or with life as such. Rather, I regard anti-anthropocentrism as implicit in the predicament of a late technological modernity already acephalic, inhuman, 'out of control' without being 'in control' in any way we can make sense of (see PHL, Chapter 7). Anthropocentrism is wizened and dying on its feet. It doesn't work anymore. But the forms of distributed agency or non-agency (rather) that are replacing individual and collective agency - e.g. of deliberative democracies, collectives, etc. - seem utterly indifferent to otherness or the distinctive life of the other. I accept that pain may sometimes be a gift; a phenomenological cut that - in disordering our body or world - opens us to thinking dif-

⁵ Katerina Kolozova, "A Post Scriptum: Post Mortem (To my Father)," in *Cut of the Real: Subjectivity in Poststructuralist Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

⁶ Bogna Konior, "Media intellectualism or Lived Catastrophe? Mediating and Suspending the A/Political Act," *Identities: Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture*, 15, no. 1-2 (2018), 178.

⁷ Ibid.

ferent embodiments. Maybe Kolozova is right that this is a necessary condition for some kind of interspecies politics, but it isn't sufficient, and it is massively ambivalent.

BK: In PHL, you overview various strands of post- and transhumanism. I have been drawn to the idea now called transhumanism from a young age because of its commitment to either extreme bodily modification (to the level of disrupting species identity) or abandoning the body altogether. I am often scolded for this commitment - arguing *against* the body is a general no-no in all kinds of disciplines, with feminism leading the way. In Kolozova's work, it seems that riding ourselves of this commitment to our bodies would foreclose our ability to have a more-than-human politics. Similarly, for a teacher of mine [Jules Sturm] who initially trained me in posthumanism, queer embodiment and posthumanism were synonymous. Paul di Fillipo's novel *A Mouthful of Tongues: Her Totipotent Tropicánalia* is a good example here and one I think you'd like because it comes close to your insistence on *biomorphism* as a key component of speculative posthumanism - the body is not to be abandoned but morphed in ways as yet unforeseen.⁸ Di Fillipo describes a fusion between a woman and a "benthic," a metamorphic, totipotent animal named after organisms that live in the lowest bodies of water. In the novel's end-of-days, climactic, cannibalistic orgy, the consumption of quivering flesh is not the locus of objectification but of personalization. While he is paying tribute to the radical Tropicália art movement in Brazil in the 1960s, where the dominant principle was *antropofagia*, a cultural cannibalism, he calls his own genre "ribofunk," a rendering of cyberpunk that takes biology and excretions like slime, fluid, blood, and sperm as the field of the technological revolution to come.⁹ But it seems

to me that for many who think about the challenges that exist and that will come, bodies seem a burden - our bodies do quite badly in outer space, for example, which is why they have been written out of various futurist narratives. Could you talk a bit more about why retaining the body is necessary in speculative posthumanism - is it a question of philosophical rigor for you (we cannot think ourselves without bodies) or also a strategic choice to place yourself in a discourse that discounts embodiment as a productive way of thinking about posthumanism?

DR: Thanks for posing this question so well, Bogna - I've just ordered Di Fillipo's book! I admit that I am struggling with this question at the moment.

Posthumanism seems to me a response to various overlapping predicaments in which bodies find themselves. I've already referred to the way the virulent power of technological modernity seems to exceed agency, anything like a bounded, political body. At the same time, we remain embodied creatures at a historical juncture where we can imagine very radical changes to individual bodies, their minds, their interrelationships and boundaries. For example, the introduction of increasingly intimate technologies inside the skin-bag, neural interfaces between bodies and prosthetic devices, synthetic protein switches to monitor and regulate cellular machinery, the production of transgenic animals to service the excess demand for transplantable organs, the use of genome editing techniques like CRISPR to target or induce new mutations in both human or nonhuman bodies... And, of course, some transhumanists dream of transcending the limitations of the body entirely - whether through mind-uploading, the creation of non-human artificial intelligence or by escaping biological senescence. A future technopolitics of space colonization - should this occur - will radically explore the limits of bodies, the degree to which they can be adapted for non-terrestrial

⁸ Paul di Fillipo, *A Mouthful of Tongues: Her Totipotent Tropicánalia* (Cabin John, Maryland: Wildside Press, 2002).

⁹ Paul di Fillipo, "Ribofunk Manifesto" (1996), <https://www.wired.com/1996/05/ribofunk-manifesto/>

environments and the extent to which this might constitute a mechanism of posthuman ‘disconnection,’ a secession from terrestrial bodies and forms of political affiliation.

On the other hand, we are facing a catastrophic breakdown in the capacity of various environmental and technological systems to sustain human and nonhuman bodies. Lastly, the political contestation over bodies, gender and race, over territory, place and identity are becoming more vehement and open. Maybe, as I suggested in the case of migration, this bespeaks a kind of terror reflex in the face of these other changes, an attempt to shore up meaning by cementing identity - a kind of retreat into the “peace and safety of a new dark age” - I couldn’t resist citing Lovecraft’s opening to *The Call of Cthulhu* here, which opens a completely ‘other’ can of worms, or tentacles...¹⁰

Even those who see biological bodies as instantiations of abstract cognitive functions contest the place of the body. In fact, it is hard to conceptualize agency without the assumption of a relatively stable body, fundamentally self-maintaining and bounded, however plastic and adaptable. The posthuman predicament is one that - however acephalic and disembodied - challenges our conception of what bodies are in ways almost too numerous to list here.

I’m not sure if posthumanism would be recognizable without this double affect of massive fragility and almost unlimited potential. If the body is, in some way, the essential horizon of posthumanism, this generates a kind of aporia. We need this contested, changeable flesh to articulate the posthuman condition or posthuman predicament - our capture by these multiscale technological, social and environmental processes. But given the possibility space that it opens

up, there is no phenomenology of the body or conception of agency adequate for conceptualizing *what* is being challenged or threatened. The space of possibilities is too vast, whereas the philosophical tools available for constraining that space seem too epistemically fragile, or so I’ve argued in PHL and elsewhere.

It’s as if posthuman philosophy is fated to subtract the body that made it intelligible as a historical predicament. I can put it another way: This is one of many points where posthumanism outreaches philosophy, indicating its points of contact with non-philosophy. The body that is challenged has its ‘incept date,’ its pleasures, pains, gender(s), ethnicity, racial marking. But none of these seem transcendental or invariant. They are not philosophical material for limiting the scope of posthuman possibility. As soon as we insist on one dimension of this body as invariant - I don’t know, its capacity for duration or joy, for rational action - we limit the scope of the posthuman challenge. We need a way of addressing our bodies as the subjects of this experiment that isn’t tied to invariants.

The idea of the biomorph - I think - is that of a kind of placeholder or ‘stand in’ for the body invariants that the posthuman condition precludes. The biomorph isn’t personal and it isn’t the body itself. Perhaps - to reference Nancy - it touches the body at its limit, modifying and machining it, offering it up to experimentation and fantasy. Di Filippo’s fiction of xenoerotic fusion with a trans-species entity or cannibalism is thus biomorphic in this sense, as are Bellmer’s highly sexualized dolls, Ballard’s Crashes, Cronenberg’s visceral bodies and machines.¹¹ It’s not a conceptual representation of possibilities so much as an organon for intervening in or transgressing bodies, affecting them in precisely the way that pain or violence affects us, cutting us off-world, perhaps not unpleasurably. In this case,

¹⁰ H. P. Lovecraft, “The Call of Cthulhu,” in *H. P. Lovecraft: The Fiction. Complete and Unabridged* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), 355 – 380.

¹¹ David Roden, “Xenoerotics,” (2020), <https://enemyindustry.wordpress.com/2017/08/18/xenoerotics/>

I suspect, this is to conjure ‘pleasures’ or dissociations from unexpected quarters, potentiating action and connection, however discreetly. What possibilities does the thought - the pleasurable thought - of being food for a lover or alien God, a gift for another (human or non) open up? Could that generate a politics? Once again, I’m not proposing this as a lifestyle (laughs).

BK: Despite the importance of embodiment for your project, one of the most obvious intersections between speculative posthumanism and non-philosophy is that both discount human *experience* as a ground for thought. Non-philosophy, in my view, is akin to an anti-phenomenology (although Laruelle might scold me here for using the word ‘anti,’ which does not allow the same movement of mutation as ‘non’ does). Non-philosophy’s use of ‘man’ interchangeably with ‘the real’ could give the opposite impression yet Man-in-person is not a subject nor a mode of consciousness, experience or being. In fact, if the real is experienceable it is only through its practice or through its effects. This seems connected to the types of experiences that you call *dark*: “having them does not confer much or any understanding of them” and that “our capacity for self-reflection exposes us to the simulation of a subject whose utterly non-subjective nature is entirely inaccessible to it.”¹² For you, this is important - acknowledging these dark phenomena means that we abdicate the desire to decide how our experiences can apply to “non-human, non-terrestrial or posthuman life” or decide on what makes someone a person.¹³ This vocabulary of “broken thought” and “disconnection” not only relates to non-philosophical practice but is very powerful in the times when, despites its goal to do the exact opposite, posthumanist thinking is dominated by affects, connections, networks, relations, affirmations and the lexicon of neoliberal subjectivity. The commitment to

dark experiences is contrary, you say, to new materialist posthumanism that reduces nonhumans to life, relations, affect or, in the case of Rosi Braidotti, ‘endurance, passion, pain.’¹⁴ Could you elaborate on this difference, especially in relation to what kind of politics and ethics they necessitate? It seems to me that new materialist posthumanism wants to look for common ground with nonhumans and sees in that a precondition of ethics, which is why the relations, connections and networks are so important. But could there be an empathy without understanding, an ethics without perception, and with no common ground? Some would argue that this is something that non-philosophy forces us to consider.

DR: To begin with, I think we need to be clear about what the dark phenomenology thesis implies for phenomenology. It isn’t intended as an eliminativist thesis about first person experience. It is *consistent* with eliminativist or deflationist theses about phenomenal consciousness such as those developed by Dan Dennett (multiple drafts theory) and Keith Frankish (illusionism) but does not entail them. The idea, rather, is that having experience does not provide a secure warrant for claims about the nature of that experience because its structure need not be disclosed by the mere having it.

For example, if some phenomenological accounts of the continuity of temporal experience are on the right tracks it is hard to see how we could have first person evidence for those accounts (experience would be just too dense and rich for finite beings to grasp). By the same token there can be no epistemic warrant for claiming that experience consists of a special class of introspectable phenomenal properties which cannot be accounted for naturalistically in terms of the functional role of conscious states. The problem - as Keith Frankish and Metzinger have argued - is to explain why humans have such intuitions of specialness. That also involves a kind of phenomenology but it’s entirely naturalistic

¹² David Roden, “Disconnection at the Limit: Posthumanism, Deconstruction and Non-Philosophy,” *Symposia Melitensia* 14 (2018), 24.

¹³ Roden, “Posthumanism: Critical. Speculative Biomorphic”

¹⁴ See Rosi Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity Press 2019).

and continuous with (say) cognitive theories of the architecture of mind. Dark phenomenology makes room for naturalism without entailing naturalism. It implies that our first-person knowledge of consciousness experience is narrower than we think, but it doesn't entail any particular thesis about its susceptibility to scientific (third person) methods. That something for the scientists to work out, or fail to work out.

So, yes, I agree with Laruelle about the opacity of experience and practice. It's not merely that we act without having unmediated access to action, but that the very space of that mediation (interpretation) isn't given either, and quite possibly alien. For example, should we subscribe to the neo-Hegelian view that mind and agency are constituted by the space of reasons within historically evolving social games? I don't think there's a convincing argument for this claim to be had - certainly within phenomenology or interpretation-based account of meaning.

I think this implies a more austere, dark but also (I hope) epistemologically rigorous kind of posthumanism. I don't deny that there are affects, ecologies, relations, especially transversal ones, where organisms or species bleed into one another, acquire new functioning and power. However, for reasons that ought to be clear by now, we need to be cautious about reading an ethical itinerary into this metaphysics. The most 'teleology' we can derive from this ontology is that function and purpose (insofar as they are to be found) are diachronic and indeterminate. There's nothing that life wants. There's nothing inherently joyful or graceful about becoming. Nor is there anything egalitarian about the transversal. To use Braidotti's terminology, "zoe" (this generalized, differential life opposed to the cultivated, individuated life or "bios") doesn't want to save us affirm anything at all.¹⁵

This doesn't mean there isn't a scope for affirmation here, only that this isn't any longer

¹⁵ See Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (New York: Polity Press, 2013).

bounded. I want to quote Claire Colebrook (who I've admired hugely since seeing her incendiary talks at a couple of Society for European Philosophy – Forum for European Philosophy events) writing in an almost Darwinian vein in her essay *How Queer Can You Go: Theory, Normality and Normativity*:

This question of fitness is, I would argue, a politic-metaphysical question of the utmost urgency for our time. What modes of life, what forces or selections can be affirmed? This is not the question of a decision – of how we might make or recreate ourselves – but the problem of encounters that are queer (not determined according to recognition and reproduction).¹⁶

Theory/philosophy can't preempt ethics because ethics is made rather than recognized (hence the compound 'politic-metaphysical'). Theory can't affirm anything - especially posthumanist theory since the epistemological unbinding principles at its core (dark phenomenology/ performativity) are fundamentally subtractive. Admittedly, we might want to say that posthumanist theory is a subject - an operation of subtraction - but, if so, it's a perverse and deracinating one that - like Vaughan, the ideologist and sexual totem of Ballard's *Crash* - is engaged in a suicide run whose effect is to detach politics/bodies/technology from the space of philosophical adjudication.

BK: I would add that there are other dangers in this philosophical pre-emption of posthuman ethics. Fetishizing animals and plants, othered as tokenistic 'ethical models' and aspired to as our salvation from 'humanism' might serve us well in rituals of poetic self-purification and performances of self-erasure. But because we need

¹⁶ Claire Colebrook, "How Queer Can You Go? Theory, Normality and Normativity" in *Queering the Non/Human*, ed. Noreen Giffney and Myra J. Hird (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 30.

to keep them fixed through a specific ethical definition so that we can erase our humanism ‘through them,’ we actively reduce them to historically specific, limited goals of social ‘progress’ in our times, say, socialism or feminism in Europe in 2019. This also erases the possibility of nonhumans being something else, or indifferent, or just resistant to any ontological colonialism of the ‘noble nonhuman’ we perform for the purpose of our contemporary politics. So, instead, you propose ‘unbinding,’ an idea that I see as close to the intention of non-philosophy. You take it from Drucilla Cornell’s “philosophy of the limit,” which you describe as such: “strip away the artificial constraints that make the world in our image, layer by layer, concept by concept. What remains, as in deconstruction, is something other than a world, and perhaps something more or less than philosophy, but an encounter with a remainder or non-meaning that philosophy cannot recognize or conceptualize.”¹⁷ And elsewhere you speak of the “self-imposed conceptual poverty of Unbound Posthumanism,”¹⁸ recalling non-philosophy’s intention to think without concepts, what John Ó Maoilearca unpacks so well.¹⁹ You argue we should perform unbinding with regards to our humanity. You then want to make this more *indeterminate*, towards a post-humanity that we cannot yet imagine or recognize: “If we unbind the posthuman we cannot deliberate on becoming posthuman without pre-empting our deliberation.”²⁰ Has encountering non-philosophy after completing the book changed how you think about what speculative posthumanism and unbinding could be? You write that “speculative posthumanism is committed to a minimal, non-transcendental and nonanthropocentric humanism and will help up put bones on its realist

commitments,”²¹ which sounds ‘completely like non-philosophy to me!

DR: I sometimes feel like I’m converging with Laruelle from a different starting point. While I appreciate that his use of ‘Real’ is axiomatic - to be grasped through its performative consequences - I’m not sure we need to make that opening game to solicit such a space of indetermination. As you imply with your remark on Cornell, I guess my approach owes more to deconstruction, in that regard; scratching at the blind spots or aporia in systems, slackening their constraints, etc.

I’ve read a bit of Laruelle, talked to him briefly (in my fractured French) at an event in the Liverpool Tate, and obviously read those he has influenced, Katerina [Koložova], yourself, John [Ó Maoilearca], Rocco Gangle, Emma E. Wilson and, of course, Ray Brassier. I think the effect of these various encounters has been to confirm my sense that posthumanism requires a shift *via* epistemology and ontology towards a kind of operation or practice - whether or not this should be viewed as ‘affirmative’ in the sense that Braidotti and others urge. I don’t feel that I need to use Laruelian terminology (the Real, vision-in-one, determination in the last instance, etc.) to do this. But I don’t think I can claim any special originality or independence here. You and the others on this list are remarkably independent in the way you develop Laruelle’s thought. There’s nothing here like the cloying scholasticism that one sometimes found in some of the reception of Derrida and Foucault within anglophone continental philosophy.

If there’s a sense of struggle and perhaps concern here, it’s that this indetermination is, as I’ve suggested, hard to like. It’s a kind of ‘for-itself’ that is also for nothing. I don’t know, or have any reason to believe, for example, that it will help us save the planet.

¹⁷ Roden, “Disconnection at the Limit,” 26.

¹⁸ Roden, “Posthumanism: Speculative, Critical, Biomorphic.”

¹⁹ John Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

²⁰ Roden, “Disconnection at the Limit,” 27.

²¹ Roden, *Posthuman Life*, 36.

BK: Speaking of our theme, ‘the end times,’ you write about a different, posthuman reality emerging through technological alteration, “human-made future that doesn’t include us.”²² Advancement requires withdrawal, disconnection; or, in non-philosophical terms, both synthesis and mutation require negation. It must start from the negative. In the academy, transhumanism, which you also criticize, is generally condemned because of its association with the military-industrial complex and capitalism, both of which are often disavowed in the academic humanities in Europe. Transhumanism has an obviously futurist ambition. Critical posthumanism (and its extension in the new materialism), on the other hand, developed in self-proclaimed parallel to feminist and postcolonial thought - the narrative here tends to be that ‘we are already posthuman therefore attempts at posthumanism are power relations in decoy.’ They are more interested in mapping existing relations of power through deconstructing what the category of the human means. Attempts to cut across this division - as some members of Laboria Cuboniks, for example, try to do - often hit a nerve. Apart from a short essay *Homo ex Machina*, Laruelle tackles this subject in *The Transcendental Computer*, where he entertains the possibility of “a unified theory of thought and computing... a machine that would have a transcendental relation to philosophy in its entirety and therefore would be able to compute-think the blendings of thought and computing” akin to a “transcendental arithmetic like Platonism.”²³ In this arrangement, the real (or human-in-person) is both “a legible figure in a space of transcendence [and] precisely what defies every transcendence and every inert

structure composed of terms and relations.” He states that “AI prejudices intelligence, what intelligence can do by setting for it limits or goals (determined and finite in the measurable sense) in order to compare it to the machine,” which recalls your own commitment to underdetermined thinking about posthumans and what their intelligence might be like. But philosophers are not the ones who decide. Nevertheless, over the decades and in unpredictable ways, many of philosophy’s ideas have made it to the cultural mainstream, to the extent that popular op-ed culture seems like a parody of academic cultural studies, with the same discursive wars waged on a larger scale. Could you comment on these underdetermined ideas of intelligence? Is it possible to speculate on what that would mean for “us” (humans)?

DR: The dominant images of intelligence in the AI community have been in flux for some time: e.g. intelligence as the ability to derive theorems within formal systems, intelligence as the codification of expert knowledge, intelligence as skillful embodied coping (in situated robotics). The current interest in the powers of deep learning neural networks raises particular problems for received philosophical conceptions of intelligence. For example, DeepMind’s Alpha Go Zero (AG.0) the successor to the deep neural network Alpha Go (which defeated a three-time European Go champion) learned to play in an entirely unsupervised way, by playing successive iteration of itself.

A related issue which has bedeviled neural network research for some time, is that a trained up neural network may accomplish a particular pattern recognition task but its creators may only have access to the learning algorithm or classical data structures that produce this fluency. It doesn’t follow that they understand how the trained up neural network achieves this: that knowledge is encoded in the weights of a multidimensional neuronal state space, which

²² Roden, “Disconnection at the Limit,” 19.

²³ François Laruelle, “*Homo ex Machina*,” trans. Taylor Adkins (2018), <https://fractalontology.wordpress.com/2018/02/08/new-translation-of-francois-laruelles-homo-ex-machina-1980/>; “The Transcendental Computer: A Non-Philosophical Utopia,” trans. Taylor Adkins and Chris Eby (2013), <https://speculativeheresy.wordpress.com/2013/08/26/translation-of-f-laruelles-the-transcendental-computer-a-non-philosophical-utopia/>

humans can't intuitively comprehend in the way one can, for example, comprehend a piece of code that implements some algorithm. There are dimensionality reduction approaches in statistics which can tackle this problem by finding the significant subspace and trajectories relevant to a particular task, but (and here I'm talking way outside my expertise!) this may become increasingly problematic with the very large neural networks (hundreds of layers) exploited in deep learning. In her keynote at Tuning Speculation 7, Beatrice Fazi argued that this leads to a kind of opacity in machine thought - in that the algorithmic models produced by deep neural networks are opaque but also treat the domain that they work in as yet another black box, generating prediction engines rather than theories that delineate the structure or composition of reality. It should be stated that this approach is, with qualifications, reflected in current cognitive science in the vogue for predictive coding models of learning and cognitive function.

So, it is possible, regardless of the philosophical prescriptions of transhumanism, that progress in AI and CogSci will generate images of thought by virtue of the brute success of certain paradigms over others. One way this might go is tipping us towards Scott Bakker's "Semantic Apocalypse" - a final shredding of humanistic assumptions about a special preserve where meaning, intentionality or normativity held sway. If things go this way, nothing we're doing in the academic humanities or posthumanities is going to stem the backwash or help us cope with it. The end of meaning is the end of the human, the end of ethics, any kind of political prospectus we can grasp. Alternatively - and this is reflected in the work of neorationalists like Reza Negarestani and Ray Brassier - there are plenty of folk who argue that we need to re-instate a commitment to intelligence as the reflexive employment of concepts in social-inferential practices.

To be intelligent - in this sense - is not just to be nifty at generating optimal outcomes but of having the language-bound capacities for the production of transcendental apperception. I have the greatest admiration for Brassier, Negarestani et al. and Reza's latest book elaborates this prospectus in vivid and massively fascinating detail.²⁴ However, I've argued that this approach inherits the philosophical blind spots of the Pittsburgh Pragmatism (Sellars, Brandom, etc.) that informs it. The worry goes something like this: the Pittsburgh-style approach needs a model of agency as the capacity to undertake and ascribe normative (deontic) commitments. But since such approaches deny that we can simply read off normative practices from non-intentionally described behavior or regularities, normativism reduces to something like interpretationism. When asked what makes a particular stretch of behavior meaningful or norm-governed the interpretationist says something like: 'it could be so interpreted by an interpreter under idealized conditions...' (for example, where the interpreter is a field anthropologist who wants to devise a semantic theory of an entirely unknown language).

The problem here is *just who is this Interpreter?* It's not the apperceptive subject - or *better not be* because then the account is viciously circular and collapses. But then - with a nod to the worries about dark phenomenology mentioned above - we don't seem to have an independent account of what this second-order transcendental hermeneut is. Is it even human? At the risk of being a little unfair, Donald Davidson in his work on Radical Interpretation pretty much assumes a pith-helmeted fellow with a notebook, recording his interactions with natives throwing spears at rabbits. But viewed through the lens of posthumanism there are no obvious constraints that can independently limit the capacity of the interpreter. Alluding to the theory-fiction [that I

²⁴ Reza Negarestani, *Intelligence and Spirit* (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2018).

read recently at Tuning Speculation 7], *The Sound Artist*, we might imagine ‘it’ as the cowed auditor in Becket’s *Not I*, Nyarlathotep herself, or Laruelle’s transcendental computer.

That is, once we strip away the filters afforded by phenomenology or anthropology, the worry is that the Pittsburghers and their neorationalist acolytes can’t regiment the space of interpretation. It follows that seeing the future of intelligence as the social production of transcendental apperception just won’t cut it: the ‘space of reasons’ it entertains is massively underdetermined. It cannot - for example - preclude Bakker’s Semantic Apocalypse as a resting state along its itinerary.

BK: Last question. You write about humans as “feral technological entities”²⁵ and I am just riffing on a word here but would it be interesting to reflect on the place of speculative posthumanism in the Sixth Extinction of species, or what has been called the anthropocene? And more so, is this a question of ethics or of something else, maybe of possibilities of techno-biological adaptation? You make a commitment to an underdetermined ethics; in fact, you condemn mainstream transhumanism, represented by the likes of Nick Bostrom, for its moralizing attitude - the transhuman is better, faster, stronger. The same criticism goes, however, for Braidotti and her condemnation of capitalism, for example, as “unnatural,” a diversion from some kind of good, non-capitalist essence of life. Both affirm the existence of the natural, they just value it differently. Looking for a third way - no ‘natural’ way of things and no moral hype of technological advancement, what is then the speculative posthumanist stance regarding environmental change (if any)?

DR: You summarize my criticisms of transhumanism and critical posthumanism beautifully but I fear that my response won’t live up to the same standards. Personally, of course, I worry

about the prospect of radical climate change because it threatens to strip away the nature on which I minimally depend, from which I draw enjoyment, aesthetic pleasure while foraging for cherries, apples, petting cats, and so on. The position I developed in PHL implies that maximizing functional autonomy (the capacity to enlist values and generate functions in an environment) is the way to go in a planetary technological culture generating an increasingly noisy, uncertain future. This is because wider functional autonomy is an existential necessity. In an uncertain world you want to maximize your options even if this generates a positive feedback loop requiring the cultivation of even wider functional autonomy ...

But this isn’t a moral prescription and it presupposes something like a stable, embodied agent (or population of such) as the subject of these interactions. That position was self-evidently perverse, but an unbounded posthumanism simply embraces its essential perversity. To quote from a forthcoming piece of mine: “A rigorous posthumanism is ... perverse in principle. It makes no philosophical decisions, including or especially ethical ones; although, as in Braidotti’s posthumanist ontology, it indicates a field where ethical relations between variously living and non-living entities may emerge.” I’m not sure I can do much better. To look for posthumanism for ethical guidance or political critique is just wrong-headed. It can, however, cue us to the junctures, the spaces or interstices where new bodies or ethical relationships emerge. For example, and with a nod to my anti-natalist friends, it can allow us to consider a gentle path to the extinction of humans or sentients on a dead planet finally devoid of suffering as an ethical path or trajectory. It doesn’t prescribe this however, because that is not the game of posthumanism.

²⁵ Roden, “Disconnection and the Limit,” 20.

**Thinking alongside *The Last Humanity*:
Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca in Conversation with
Katerina Kolozova,
Anthony Paul Smith and John Ó Maoilearca**

Abstract: This is a conversation in response to François Laruelle recent book, *The Last Humanity: The New Ecological Science*. Published in French in 2015, Anthony Paul Smith's English translation of the book is due to appear in November 2020. For this conversation, performance researcher Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca sent questions about the book to three leading scholars of non-philosophy who also have specific interest and expertise in the question of the nonhuman, animality and ecology: Katerina Kolozova, Anthony Paul Smith and John Ó Maoilearca. All quotations in the text are from Anthony Paul Smith's forthcoming translation (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, Amsterdam University of the Arts / University of Surrey
Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca is Professor and Head of DAS Graduate School at the Academy of Theatre and Dance in Amsterdam, and Director of the Centre for Performance Philosophy at the University of Surrey. Her books include: *The Routledge Companion to Performance Philosophy* (2020) and *Theatres of Immanence: Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance* (2012).

lcull@gsa.surrey.ac.uk

Katerina Kolozova, Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje
Katerina Kolozova is Director and Professor of Gender Studies and Philosophy at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje and Professor of Philosophy of Law at the University American College Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia. Her books include: *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals: A Non-Marxist Critique of Capital, Philosophy and Patriarchy* (2019) and *Cut of The Real: Subjectivity in Poststructuralist Philosophy* (2014).

katerina.kolozova@isshs.edu.mk

Anthony Paul Smith, La Salle University

Anthony Paul Smith is Associate Professor in the Department of Religion and Theology at La Salle University. His books include: *A Non-Philosophical Theory of Nature: Ecologies of Thought* (2013) and *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought* (2016).

smithanthony@lasalle.edu

John Ó Maoilearca, Kingston University

John Ó Maoilearca is Professor of Film and Television at Kingston University, London. His books include: *All Thoughts are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (2015) and *Refractions of Reality: Philosophy and the Moving Image* (2009).

j.mullarkey@kingston.ac.uk

Keywords: Laruelle; ecology; non-philosophy; human; nonhuman; animal; equality; violence

Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca: By way of introduction, can I ask you each to say a little about how *The Last Humanity* sits for you with respect to Laruelle's wider project? Why do you think Laruelle chose ecology as the next set of materials for non-philosophical treatment? What does non-philosophy have to do with ecology and/or what is the relationship between "the degrowth of philosophy itself" (Laruelle) and ecological crisis?

John Ó Maoilearca: I cannot be sure: that three of his critics/commentators/proponents have chosen to take up his approach via the interrelated perspectives of ecology, the animal, and the nonhuman, might well have struck him as a significant phenomenon, worthy of his own intervention and "correction." It is surely not a coincidence that three of his early non-francophone readers have taken these allied stances. Also, the sustained theme of de-determination has taken a more concrete and eco-political form of "degrowth" in his recent work – so, that the damage to/harassment of the environment done by philosophical thought should itself need to be reoriented/inverted by non-philosophy, appears as an opportune assignment (i.e., just what Philosophy needs and non-philosophy is able to do). Finally, Laruelle's latest works in Non-Philosophy V (NP V)¹ are broad in their range of themes – but that this last (?) phase should give an account of what the Human "is" finally, in non-philosophy, is probably necessary.

Katerina Kolozova: It is a project that seems to sit oddly within the overall work of Laruelle. I do find it surprising that he would choose to deal with the topic of ecology. To me, however, the book is primarily attempting to conceptualize human subjectivisation in terms of

non-standard philosophy, or the non-philosophical appropriation of quantum theory. The function of the notions of nature and the animal seems to serve the role of a juxtaposition (or "othering") that defines the human, which is a classical philosophical function of these two ideas/concepts. In spite of ecology being the central theme, ecosystems, sustainability of the environment are not really the topic of the book, and that is why I never really perceived it as a book on ecology. What I find valuable in the book is the conceptualization of subjectivation: the human's philosophical under-determination and the attempt to overcome anthropocentrism (even though I think that in this particular book Laruelle eventually fails at said task, perhaps because of the flawed conceptualization of ecology as subject-matter). Degrowth is treated as a philosophical task, or the task of philosophy. I argue that philosophical degrowth, if conceived as a critique of capitalism as philosophy, may yield radical political-economic critique and possibly provide a foundation for a political change. However, it is an inference I make with the help of Marx, rather than something I deduce directly from *En dernière humanité* alone.

Anthony Paul Smith: I always feel in a somewhat strange position when called to answer questions like these. That stems in part because – as a translator of someone's work – there is a sense in which you are asked to take responsibility for the ideas and people will reach out to ask what so and so means as if the words and ideas are mine. With someone whose writing style is so particularly strange and precise within its own rules as Laruelle's, this can be a bit more intense, since I find myself being asked to defend that style and so on. So I often find that I want to take a bit of a protective posture and any criticisms I may have about the book get shelved. In this instance, I agree a great deal with what John and Katerina have to say about the project. There is certainly something about non-philosophy that begs to ask questions that bring it

¹ Editorial note: Laruelle refers to his work according to a series of phases: Philosophy I, II, III, IV and V. Throughout, John Ó Maoilearca chooses to refer to these phases as Non-Philosophy or NP I, II, III, IV and V in order to avoid an unnecessary confusion between Laruelle's project and standard philosophy.

close to ecological thinking. And I am glad to see Laruelle engaging with that. With that said, I do wish (and he signals that he knows some readers will criticize him for this) that he had engaged with the scientific form of ecology a bit more. I think the material that is being worked with is more accurately described as political ecology or ecological thought broadly understood, which is far more mediated and mediatized than scientific ecology itself is. Like philosophy, though, this ecological thought has spread out, as Laruelle describes, and for that I find it interesting that he's engaging with a growing, general form of thought and rightfully criticizing some of its aspects. As I say in the translator's introduction to *The Last Humanity*, there is no necessary connection between justice and ecology and we must be on watch for a rising ecofascism or appropriation of ecological frameworks by those Laruelle has elsewhere termed the "authorities."

LCÓM: A significant recurring theme of *The Last Humanity* is the nature of the relations between human and nonhuman forms of life – specifically the conception of the relations within what Laruelle calls the "MAP system (Man, Animal, Plant)." Given my particular interest in nonhuman animals, I wonder if we can focus for now on talking through the general problem of how to understand "their common unity and their unilateral difference," "indivisibility" and "discretion," entanglement and distinction of human-animal life. How can we think these two things *together* rather than as mutually exclusive?

KK: Yes, the continuum of animality-vegetality-humanity is an attempt at overcoming anthropocentric thinking of animality, which I believe ultimately fails. Namely, the human is assigned the role of the "guardian" of the vegetal/animal world, and the position of humanity is determined as one of "avant-priorité" and "après-ultimité" in relation to animals and other forms of life. Laruelle insists on the distinction between the animal and the human not only in a way that would simply be consistent with his overall

methodology – seeking for the "identity of the last instance" – but also in a way that is anthropocentric in line with the classical traditions of philosophy. Humanity is a philosophical generality in a way that Marx would find problematic – an abstraction that is a mere philosophical generalization insofar as it is a unity of concepts, unification of differences, an *Allgemeinheit*. This type of generality or a conceptual unity prior to its subjection to *chôra* is criticized by Laruelle as *ensemblisme*.² Yet again, in this particular book, he fails to arrive at humanity's determination of the last instance beyond relationism (its definition via the animal and the vegetal) and beyond philosophical decisionism. Humanity seems to be extrapolated from the philosophical traditions unexamined and non-radicalized in order to be subjected to the non-philosophical operation of superposition, which is compelling. I find great value in it in terms of conceiving of subjectivation beyond fetishization and reduction to sets of identities, but I do not see it as very useful in terms of a post-philosophical reconceptualization of the human and its relation to the animal. In this sense, I have found John Ó Maoilearca's notion of the non-human far more inspiring for my own work, as well as Anthony Paul Smith's work on ecology.

JÓM: Togetherness can be thought of as a radical equality of all belonging on a plane of immanence, for example, though Laruelle would then say that even the plane of immanence is over-determined (by philosophy). "Togetherness" would work better, in my view, as belonging equally to the Real, but without any determination as to what the Real is, nor even what belonging to it means (as "participation," set-membership, expression, being-with etc). Belonging, equality, etc., are always "in the last instance." I say this because other aspects such as identity and difference, or entanglement and distinction can be treated philosophically (as real

² François Laruelle, *Tetralogos* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2019), 43, 51.

determinations of philosophy) or non-philosophically – as material for thinking about how philosophy attempts to determine the Real (of animals, humans, etc.). They could be entertained as philo-fictions – e.g., asking “on what continuum of difference and sameness do humans and animals lie?” (Singer, Regan et al.), or “through what irreducible differences do human and animal relate?” (Derrida).

APS: Piggybacking off of what John and Katerina have said, I think that Laruelle misses an opportunity here that is consistent with his other thought. Specifically, in the fictions he writes about humans as guardians (and I take fictions to mean the names that are lived out through the undetermined human) he repeats old stories; whereas non-philosophy opens up for new kinds of fictions, new kinds of naming. Had he engaged more with scientific ecology he could have extended the MAP system to think at the level of ecosystems, he could have included the worldless stones and thought our continuum with that worldlessness. Such a thinking could open up the degrowth of philosophy to a rethinking of the human from Black Studies, which I think is doing some of the most important work on the question of the human today. I am thinking of Jared Sexton’s call to rethink the lifeform we are from under the condition of the valorization of the slave who is landless. He writes that the landlessness of the unsovereign slave has a correlate in selflessness:

No ground for identity, no ground to stand (on). Everyone has a claim to everything until no one has a claim to anything. No claim. This is not a politics of despair brought about by a failure to lament a loss, because it is not rooted in hope of winning. The flesh of the earth demands it: the landless inhabitation of selfless existence.³

³ Jared Sexton, “The *Vel* of Slavery: Tracking the Figure of the Unsovereign,” *Critical Sociology*, Vol. 42, No. 4-5 (2014): 11.

Or even at the scale Laruelle is working at, the rethinking of the human-animal relation undertaken by Zakiyyah Imam Jackson in her recent *Becoming Human* springs to mind as important.⁴ I think Laruelle holds on to a need to give dignity to the human, but the ecological continuum opens up to the idea that there might be a better way to defend the human than dignity, that the defense might involve a rethinking of ourselves as abject, as something that can be eaten, rather than holding on to the old dreams of European Man.

LCÓM: So, how does Laruelle’s conception of these relations here sit with respect to your own approach?

KK: Laruelle’s other writings have been of greater use to my own project that is concerned not only with the preservation of animal life on the planet, but also with that of humanity insofar as animality - or that which is susceptible to “animalization” or “dehumanization” as a political procedure - could be categorized as “material resource” for capitalist “value production.” Laruelle’s human-in-human, John Ó Maoilearca’s non-human, and Marx’s (non-positivist) objectivism have led me to the conception of the human as a radical dyad (an epistemological tool borrowed from Laruelle) of the physical (“animal”) and the automaton of signification or the transcendental (that begins with the natural languages but can be extended to artificial languages too and technology more generally). The radical dyad has enabled me to defend animality and physicality from capitalist exploitation, enabled through their transformation into “resource material” for commodity production, without establishing a hierarchy among the forms of life with humanity as the criterion, and without the hierarchy between “value” (monetary, and otherwise) and matter or physicality.

⁴ Zakiyyah Imam Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiracist World* (New York: New York University Press, 2020).

JÓM: I would like to split off Laruelle as a human biography from his invention of non-philosophy (at least NP III). Despite everything, my deep suspicion is that Laruelle, as well as inventing many canonical ideas from the Western tradition, also retains prejudices stemming from that tradition through a host of causes in his background and education – humanist ones being amongst them (but also ones about the central truth of psycho-analysis and Marxism – the usual twentieth century French investments). And of course, so do I (and everyone else) – though they might be a different set of such retentions. NP III however, as a force of thought, pushes against any determination of the “human” that would privilege any one species or a species property (thought, language, intelligence, art, creativity, sociality, love, labor, victimhood, etc.). Now, I cannot help the arrogance of saying that my work endeavors to be true to that orientation or posture of NP III. Yes, this sounds like saying that I am being “more Laruellean than Laruelle” – but I think that NP III is the most Laruellean phase, so really it is Laruelle being more Laruellean – at least by my definition! So, my work on diagrams, film, animality, and mysticism, are very much amplifications of NP III equalism (the middle two being focused on animal/film as animal).

APS: As I have said before, I have a real sense of duty that I am often called on to give an account of Laruelle’s work. For me, Laruelle’s non-philosophy gave me a method for how to engage with thinking about thinking. How to think the materiality of thought, of the books we are reading, their transmission, and so on. That allowed me in my first book to approach the task of thinking about “nature” in dialogue with ecology and for rethinking religious thought and practice, both within philosophy and outside. So I found the work of the period of Philosophy III the most impactful to me for the pure structure of the method and I found Philosophy IV, where Laruelle begins to play around with

the material of philosophy and some other discipline = X as instructive for what that could look like as a practice. But as Laruelle himself says, “Laruelle does not exist.” I do not think the project of non-philosophy is about creating a superego figure out of the human being François Laruelle. This is a matter of a project begun and explored by him, but able to be taken up in very different ways by other people. As with ecology, I do not think there is any necessary relationship between non-philosophy and what Laruelle himself does with it, but I do find much of it fruitful and refreshingly divergent from some orthodoxies in eco-philosophy and the environmental humanities more generally.

LCÓM: Again, very much linked to the questions above: How do we move from this understanding of unity and difference to the question of *equality*? I would like to understand more about the distinction Laruelle wants to retain between humans and animals. To what extent do you think it is indeed possible to retain this distinction without making it hierarchical and/or reverting to a model of human exceptionalism? And indeed, how can this distinction be upheld if there is “no metaphysical human nature” or if MAP is “no longer species according to a biological distribution”? On the one hand, Laruelle seems to be directly critical of “man’s metaphysical priority over the two other kinds of life” – animal and plant. He claims to reject “his assumed superiority and his sufficiency of measure for the others” in favor of a “plane of immanence of life where each of the three kinds of life is equal to the two others.” And yet, in other parts of the book, it could perhaps be construed that Laruelle is repeating the standard gesture of measuring animal life according to human norms.

To give some examples – he says: “We grant only a mitigated belief to those who... affirm that the animal not only knows but knows that it knows, confusing... invention and learning linked to need with the most abstract knowl-

edge, calculation with mathematics, and habits of the den with knowledge of the cosmos.” But doesn’t this amount to a return to the old practice of measuring animals according to human standards and to reassert animal knowing as “merely” instinctive, habitual, etc.? Or again, elsewhere, he states: “the nonhuman animal remains at the border of language, it cannot think algebraically, admit the ruin or collapse of its transcendence, make an ethical decision.” But is this not to deny animals “language” because they do not communicate according to norms of human language? Finally, he also seems to assign a “privilege” to the human on the grounds of its exclusive access to “the power of the algebraic imagination”; for instance, when he suggests that it is “man who alone occupies Reason-in-person and its algebraic nature.” Or like, in terms of the quantum, he states that: “Man and animal share culture, they could even share philosophy, but do not share the power of quantum physics.”

I gather that this is not intended as a hierarchical distinction, and Laruelle is clear in other parts of the book that human, animal and plant are three equal kinds of living things, but why do these kinds of gestures not (to use Laruelle’s own language) serve to “reestablish an avatar of the old anthropological cut”? Might it not be objected that Laruelle is presenting algebra and quantum physics as superior forms of thought denied to nonhuman animals (in a not dissimilar fashion to Badiou’s use of set theory)?

KK: Yes, we are again returning to the problem of subjectivity centered thought (as a problem of structure, not semantics), which cannot be but any other form of subjectivity except human (it therefore becomes a problem of semantics too), rendering his “ecology” anthropocentric. Ecosystems, if studied scientifically, can be imagined without the human subject participating in them in any way whatsoever. A non-philosophical addition to such study could be postulating the problem of human survival as part

of the problem of maintaining eco-systems. Reducing ecology – and as a consequence eventually (or even, necessarily?) cybernetics too – to a science of humanity seems like a philosophically spontaneous act on the part of Laruelle. The fact that he has replaced philosophy with quantum theory does not make his project less philosophical – the principle of philosophical sufficiency seems to be replaced by the principle of “quantum sufficiency.”

JÓM: Briefly – to tackle all of the examples you cite above in how Laruelle seems to be falling foul of his own charges against philosophy... Normally, when it is a question of making apparent judgements against philosophy’s judgements, I would say that he is not guilty of such “tu quoque” (or “what about”-ism) because in NP III it is not another statement of the same philosophical register but a gesture in thought that tries to deflate and level all claims to authority. It avoids the kindred liars’ paradox (“this statement is not true”/“I am lying”) by not only being a different logical type of statement (being self-referential or about statements) but a performative gesture. Yet in this phase (NP V) and in *The Last Humanity* these statements you cite can appear – at best – as still performative (of a philo-fiction) – which is to give them the benefit of the greatest doubt in my view; or they can appear as a final resolution, or most perfect model, for all non-philosophy, through quantum mechanics and algebra. Alas, I cannot take that latter option seriously, as it finalizes what cannot be finalized. So, when you ask, “to what extent do you think it is indeed possible to retain this distinction without making it hierarchical and/or reverting to a model of human exceptionalism?” – I do not think it is possible in NP III, but suspect it has already happened in NP V (in my darker moods).

APS: I share a lot of your concerns, Laura. I think the question of equality requires a consideration of violence. Because of the imbrica-

tion of metaphysics and politics, when we talk about equality we are in some sense also talking about the acceptable or unacceptable nature of violence being done. In terms of the distinction that Laruelle wants to maintain between the human and the animal (or the plant, for that matter), I think it comes down to this: that violence (the minimum necessary) can be done to the animal. That might sound like grounds for cancellation and as an “ethical vegetarian” (whatever that means) I certainly have some qualms about Laruelle holding this distinction. I worry that it repeats certain other French philosophical thinking on this that always feels like a sleight of hand and a failure to own the real vertigo of immanence. We see it in Bataille, Deleuze, and others when they say (in what strikes me as very Hegelian) everything is the same but the human is the one that knows this, or everything is nothing but the human is the one that can think this void, or something along those lines. (Interestingly, this form of exception is common to Christian philosophy of religion where Christianity is the best religion because it knows it is a religion or an imperfect relation to the divine and since it is imperfect and knows it that means it is better than the determined religions like Judaism and Islam.) That said, I think what Laruelle is doing at least is honest and opens up to the difficulty of thinking equality as such between species, lifeforms, ecosystems, and so on. It is easy to talk about equality or the lack of violence when one is at a distance to that violence. But what happens to this equality in situations where violence is confronted between other animals or the violence visited upon species by aspects of the ecosystem that we cannot quite call “life” in the same way? Perhaps there is no metaphysical essence to any of that and what is to be explored is whether or not we have a unilateral duality of equality and violence. There is an invitation in this book, I think, to push back against some of the easy ethical statements of environmental philosophy and mediatized ecology.

LCÓM: Throughout this book, and in other writings, Laruelle refers to the “generic” hu-

man (and in the translation of the MAP system to “Man” rather than the human). Women are briefly mentioned at the start, and race referenced once. So how are we to understand differences among humans in this context or to respond to possible concerns that the reference to the generic constitutes a(n all too philosophical) universalizing gesture - just at this time when the difference of lived experience produced by systemic racism in particular (including in the form of environmental racism) is so brutally evident?

KK: The question of political “translatability” of Laruelle’s generic categories of subjectivity, humanity, the “world,” etc., has been raised by many critics referring to most of his works, his overall oeuvre, that is. I believe that the genericity of these categories can be put to political use if intersected with other universals that do not refer to subjectivization exclusively, such as “identité sexuée” or “the victim,” but also to concepts such as “labor force,” or epistemic categories that render thinking the political in universal categories possible. The non-philosophical radical or generic subjectivity can be placed in historical, political, cultural, human, non-human and post-human contexts of discussion and, if the theorizing subject discusses realities – and the “identities of the last instance” of those realities – of a particular kind, such as subjugation or exploitation on gendered basis, or racial and cultural basis, we will be able to a) explain those realities in structural terms, and b) in terms of subjectivization. There is a relatively extensive discussion of “sexual difference” in the book, and its prominence in a discussion on ecology would be somewhat strange had this book not been, in fact, about human subjectivization in nature and the imminence of its destruction. Again, there is a relational and mutual – supposedly the result of the procedure of “superposition” – determination of the feminine and masculine that feminizes the masculine and the other way around. It is comparable and moreover homologous to the thesis that “the

human is animalized by the animal” and the other way around – Laruelle’s ecological proposal seeks to “humanize the animal.” The problem with this approach, which seems to move away from Laruelle’s classical position of unilaterality and the method of unilateralization (or dualysis), ensues from the book’s centeredness on humanity/human subjectivity in a discussion that is supposed to explicate ecosystems and human responsibility in relation to the systems at issue.

JÓM: I can imagine that Laruelle might acknowledge that these are indeed pressing issues (e.g., “environmental racism”) but not problems for him (given his own age, biography, interests). Normally, Laruelle would say that any anthropological determination of the human by philosophy is typical of the latter’s harassment of Man and so to be resisted in non-philosophy. The appalling ramifications of that harassment, beginning with philosophy but transformed in political programmes of hierarchical difference soon after, have always been marked by non-philosophy in all its forms: the current obscenities, though rooted in history, are symptomatic of this ongoing harassment. What arises to resist them, however, may only be a further set of obscenities (“moral guidances”). For comparison, Levinas forwards ethics not as a solution to dilemmas but the basis of them (conflicts of freedom and responsibility); similarly, for non-philosophy every solution to a conflict of equality will determine that equality in some way that has pernicious results (even when it is as broad as sentience, or vibrant matter). I myself do not think that such chauvinistic regard is necessarily “bad” in a moral sense, so long as what is being disregarded is already outside of the “structure of regard” to which it is subjected – i.e., that any inflicted “pain” is itself limited in its uptake/regard by the “victim.” Responding to Katerina’s work on pain as universal here, I think it is virtually universal, but actually only inflicted within limited domains – though by “limited” I mean something still extremely wide in scope, such as

carbon-based life. In short, neutrinos, say, are so small as to be actually immune to our interferences (outside of a particle accelerator). Indeed, their size simply is their disregard of our regard/interference, made flesh.

APS: Laruelle had been using *Humain* more in recent texts, so I was surprised to see him revert back to *Homme* here. The old saw about how this gets at the singular universal is not satisfying anymore, at least not to me. It also leaves him open to all sorts of misinterpretations by people rightfully angry and suspicious of the world. That said, the generic human is not the same thing as the universal Man of the Enlightenment (and here I think Laruelle is interestingly read in dialogue with Sylvia Wynter’s work on the “genres of Man”). This is not a pretended reduction of human beings down to their minimal essences, but a total stripping away of essences as such. This is why, after engaging with Laruelle’s non-philosophy in my doctoral dissertation, I came to the philosophical work on Blackness and Slavesness in theorists like Frank B. Wilderson, Jared Sexton, Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman and others. There the more fuzzy parts of non-philosophy’s stripped bare human is given more “undetermined form” in focus in the affirmation of the powers of that human lifeform denied humanity: the Black slave. The victim that Laruelle talks about cannot simply be universal, even if it is generic, but what is generic is seen most clearly in the most abject (from within the perspective of the world’s determinations). I do not think Laruelle is necessarily going to do that, though of course other Francophone theorists have taken that up in other idioms and with other methods, but I do think non-philosophy offers resources for that project. In short, the differences between humans are matters of hallucinated determinations and the generic human is one way of seeing that those differences do not call for “help” from one genre of the human to another. I think that the task of non-philosophy in this regard is

to see something that Fred Moten gets at when he writes, “I don’t need your help. I just need you to recognize that this shit is killing you, too, however much more softly, you stupid mother-fucker, you know?”⁵

LCÓM: I like this quote from the book very much:

It is urgent that we test with new principles the knowledge we are able to have about life and recenter ethics and epistemology on the “encounter,” as we now say, with the animal and plants. This encounter calls for a new concept of MAP equality, a reevaluation of the notion of “human nature” and its degree of destruction.

Now, this may be the wrong thing to ask of this book and/or too potentially instrumental an approach to non-philosophy, but I am interested in what this book adds to our understanding of how a non-standard ecological ethics (or non-ecological ethics) is to be practiced and what it means for how humans treat animals (and plants)? Laruelle seems to be critical of the form of moral guidance that comes from standard ecology, calling for a new ethics of life that would be “a life without daily guidance.” But what is Laruelle’s objection to “guidance” in this context? Does this broadly correspond to the distinction that Deleuze makes between ethics and morality, insofar as Laruelle suggests that ethics “must guide life in an immanent way rather than govern it”?

Secondly, in *The Last Humanity*, Laruelle says that he does “not particularly defend an attitude of empathy or compassion” and criticizes ecology and animal ethics for an “affective monism” that fails to see empathy as but one strategy amongst others. So what additional practices are needed to move beyond the sentimental ecology

that Laruelle criticizes? And finally, what does non-philosophy mean for how we live – our “ethico-ecological comportment” – if Laruelle is clear that it “does not mean absolute equality of treatment between living things”? Laruelle touches on the treatment of animals in the Conclusion to *The Last Humanity* – suggesting that we should treat them “humanly” and according to an axiom of “least suffering for the animal.” But is there not a problematic power imbalance retained here if Laruelle refuses to grant the possibility of ethics to animals themselves – for instance, when he says: “Ethics is not for the animal in-itself who needs it but cannot provide it by itself”?

KK: I agree, it is a beautiful quote but unless in the main tenets of his project (*En dernière humanité*) humans are decentered leaving behind the present spontaneous philosophical anthropocentrism, unless it becomes a scientific account of ecosystems and the protection of environment that is based on science and makes non-philosophical, scientific use of philosophical material, we will remain encircled by the principle of philosophical sufficiency even though this surely was not Laruelle’s idea (with the book we are discussing). Please, see above how and why Laruelle’s other works combined with Marx have served me better in developing a similar project (of non-philosophy). I am afraid to say that here he remains spontaneously philosophical, perhaps due to the illusion that such danger is avoided thanks to introducing quantum theory in the space previously occupied by philosophy.

JÓM: Yes, political programmes, as determinations, may hurt as much as heal. As for going beyond “affect”: certainly “empathy” is itself restrictive (a sophisticated version of cuteness perhaps). What of the least empathizable – like COVID-19? Without turning to Kantian duty (which is still selective), one can imagine that a regard for X (e.g., these particular deaths) is not based on having loved X (e.g., loving animals).

⁵ Fred Moten, in Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (New York: Autonomedia, 2013), 140–41.

This would be in between affect and intellect (rational law) – i.e., a kind of posture created or imposed from both within and without – so not all of our “doing” (COVID-19 may be an “agent” already doing some of this “moral” work in adopting a new posture for us).

APS: In a response to my friend Eric Daryl Meyer’s book *Inner Animalities: Theology and the End of the Human*,⁶ which I read around the time I was completing the translation of *The Last Humanity*, I was thinking about similar issues. The response, entitled “Closer, or the Pleasure of Being Eaten,”⁷ had me thinking about the fantasy that philosophers have when they think analogically about ourselves to other animals. So Nietzsche clearly wants to think he is a bird of prey, but obviously he was much weaker than that. Lots of people want to think they are wolves (Deleuze, for example), but if we are honest are not most of us closer to cows? At least some of us are and there is capacity in thinking our closeness to cows. I think that how non-philosophy has stripped us bear of our philosophical determinations has a far more powerful, if terrifying effect than Laruelle’s seemingly sober words let on. Thinking in dialogue with Eric’s book I wonder if the ethical program might be one of finding pleasure in our own being eaten. If it is possible to give up on the human fantasy of never suffering, of never decaying, of a death that we do not experience. I wonder if that might bring us into a different kind of ecological and ethical relationship with the rest of what is around us.

LCOM: Again, this may be too instrumental, but are there specific implications of Laruelle’s work for our relationship to “anti-animal violence”? Where would you situate this book or non-phi-

losophy more broadly with respect to animal activism? Is the focus more on the epistemological basis for anti-animal violence or epistemological violence rather than violence in the physical sense? In the text, he alludes to the need for “the defense of the animals” by humans; particularly from “the despotic or sufficient individual, who reduces the animal to the state of a consumable object and abuses its sensible nature as a suffering animal.” But how should we understand this given that he also rejects any “absolute or ideological decision” to “refuse to train and consume animals” as symptomatic of, what he calls, “the Principle of Ecological Sufficiency”? I am also thinking of the place where he promotes [the new] ecology, “as a way of thinking rather than of eating” which might be seen by some as dismissive of an obviously key site of animal suffering and violence.

JÓM: As I have already said, Laruelle is prejudiced (as are we all), but nonetheless what I say about a posture between thinking and affect could be used here: it is not so much eating vs. thinking but eating-as-thinking, beyond any voluntarism – think of the effect of red meat on the human brain (especially for U.S. meat-eaters!) and thereafter on other behavior - see Jane Bennett on this kind of agency. Can we decide and voluntarily control our appetites, change our thought through eating? Yes, and no – we can attempt to “nudge” the effects of food on our thought so that the involuntary Real might be conducted in some way by our actions – but there may be both foreseen good consequences and other unforeseen consequences that are deemed far worse.

KK: Yes, I would say that (at least) my animal rights activism or stance on “anti-animal violence,” as well as our relative projects of (post/non-philosophical) science of the non-human and the ensuing politics of anti-capitalist critique of animal exploitation, are enabled by Laruelle’s epistemology rather than his politi-

⁶ Eric Daryl Meyer, *Inner Animalities: Theology and the End of the Human* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018).

⁷ Anthony Paul Smith, “Closer, or the Pleasure of Being Eaten (Inner Animalities Book Event),” *An und für sich* (April 5, 2019), <https://itself.blog/2019/04/05/closer-or-the-pleasure-of-being-eaten-inner-animalities-book-event>.

cal philosophy, including the one treating the animal. Laruelle invites certain responsibility towards the animal, certain protection that becomes the moral duty of humanity, but at the center of this protectionist stance seems to nest the paternalistic anthropocentrism I have spoken of in my previous answers. In that sense he reminds me of Donna Haraway's "anti-animal violence stance," her advocating of affinity with the animal, nonetheless concluding that humanity is endowed with a particular kind of superiority, moral at least, and her argument remains anthropocentric. I think that Derrida is far more radical in his anti-anthropocentrism and vindication of the figure of the animal as the basis of overcoming philosophy's sufficiency and circularity (I am referring to his Cerisy symposium on the animal).

APS: I think for me the concept of violence is often really incoherent or at least slippery within environmentalism and animal ethics. I would like to see much more attention given to the questions of violence (and I know both John and Katerina have given thought to this in different ways and I very much appreciate the centering of suffering in Katerina's work). So I do not quite know how to respond to this. Maybe what Laruelle gives us here is an invitation to do that work when he says ecology may be a way of thinking and not eating. That is, we really do need to take some time to think about violence a great deal more. Why is it that I cannot kill an animal (I do not think anyway), but I am willing to go get my head kicked in or kick in someone else's head at an anti-fascist/anti-police protest? Why do I cry when I see the slaughterhouse, but get excited when I see a crowd of protestors violently turn back the police? Are those affects simply expression of a political metaphysics and so of a kind of determination, or do they speak to a real desire for justice beyond determination (like Benjamin's justice that is necessarily particular)?

LCÓM: Finally, Laruelle frames *The Last Humanity* as a work of "eco-fiction, a new ecologi-

cal science parallel to science-fiction." But might there also be a role for the arts in coming to know the animal in a non-standard way?

APS: Yes, absolutely. There are some really wonderful artists working in this regard and doing very experimental things, though I think I have to speak more about the ecological relationship as such rather than the animal in particular. For someone who has been obsessed with ecology and environmental political activism since I was ten years old, I have a surprising aversion to "nature art" or the valorization of "nature" (it is all a lie and ultimately an entirely colonial fantasy). So what I would love to see is eco-fictions that move beyond the philosophical decision of nature and the city, or the animal and man, and that get real weird. I am talking ketamine weirdness, Sun-Ra as eco-theorist, or just working from the recognition that nature is perverse. I think there are some folks moving in this direction already. In philosophy the recent book by Malcom Ferdinand, *A Decolonial Ecology: A Caribbean Perspective*,⁸ explores different fictive figures in environmental thinking to great effect. The fiction of Jeff VanderMeer, specifically his *Southern Reach* Trilogy,⁹ is really powerful in this regard (and Benjamin J. Robertson's study *None of This Is Normal: The Fiction of Jeff VanderMeer*¹⁰ is a great companion volume). As a side note, the best book in that trilogy, *Annihilation*, has a real hallucinatory feel in its description of a "tower" (which is somehow also a tunnel) that I could not help but think about in the very hallucinatory chapter in *The Last Humanity* entitled "The House of Philosophy Is in Ruins." I also think the experimental music of RRose and Space Afrika does interesting things in this regard sonically.

⁸ Malcom Ferdinand, *Une écologie décoloniale: Penser l'écologie depuis le monde caribéen* (Paris: Seuil, 2019).

⁹ All three books - *Annihilation*, *Authority*, and *Acceptance* - were published in 2014 by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.

¹⁰ Benjamin J. Robertson, *None of This Is Normal: The Fiction of Jeff VanderMeer* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

JÓM: Given my answers above, this possibility of the work being a fiction gives me hope that, along with the rest of NP V, it is performative, taking quantum mechanics, algebra, music, or, here, ecology, only as new alternative models for new non-philosophies. Alas, I fear he has invested so much in quantum mechanics in particular by now that it is indeed being taken as a definitive model (that is why I rarely address NP V in my approach). Of course, I could be wrong and Laruelle is still holding something back from us!

KK: Toward the end of the book, the use of superposition, in understanding, positioning the human and thinking subject with regard to the real of the animal, whereby the two begin to condition one another, is a good starting point for an emancipatory politics of the non-human animal or simply of the animal. Quantum theory enables a “dedoubling” of the generic human subject in its two states - the animal and the rational, without an interrupted continuity. In that sense, there is still potential for a more radical animal politics in that book. As far as art is concerned, I believe in its aspect of performativity (understood non-philosophically) it remains a powerful political tool in the animal liberation struggle.

Who Are Minorities, and How Are We To Think Them?¹

François Laruelle
(Translated by Taylor Adkins)

Description: Laruelle's essay from 1987 strives to scientifically describe the individual experience of minorities distinguished from the State's point of view, including political philosophy. This essay pairs well with Laruelle's texts written around this time, including *Le principe de minorité* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1982), *A Biography of Ordinary Man: On Authorities and Minorities* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1985; trans. Jessie Hock and Alex Dubilet, Cambridge: Polity, 2017), and *Philosophies of Difference: A Critical Introduction to Non-Philosophy* (Paris: PUF, 1986; trans. Rocco Gangle, London: Bloomsbury, 2010.).

François Laruelle is professor emeritus at Université de Paris X-Nanterre and progenitor of non-philosophy and non-standard philosophy. Author of over 25 texts, Laruelle is also a co-founder of Organisation Non-Philosophique Internationale (ONPhI). His latest works are *Philosophie non-standard. Générique, quantique, philo-fiction* (Paris: Kimé, 2010) (where the portmanteau *Oraxiom* was created) and *Tétralogos, un opéra de philosophies* (Paris: Cerf, 2019). François Laruelle's cogito is not only philosophical, but also philo-musical. For this purpose, he articulates philosophy with other disciplines, in particular quantum, which replaces natural objects with states and operators. Using these operators and the generic, Laruelle constructs a technique of ascent from the world to the universe, then a long descent towards humans, distinct from philosophical subjects. Forthcoming: *Le nouvel Esprit technologique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, collection "l'Ane d'or").

Taylor Adkins is an independent scholar and translator of contemporary French philosophy.
taylor.adkins613@gmail.com

Keywords: minorities, political philosophy, authorities, the State, difference, identity

¹ [Originally published as François Laruelle, "Qui sont les minorités et comment les penser?" *Études Polémologiques* 43 (1987): 175-89. - Editors.]

Minorities represent a certain type of problem that is both insistent or inevitable and never resolved. For political science, one might say it is a crux, a theoretical impasse. The same goes for political practice. What is the source of this difficulty? There are several reasons. First, for a political reason, it became a problem or a question. The problem of Minorities emerged as such with the history of the great modern States with which it is coextensive and whose constitution it accompanies. Perhaps it was a less critical or less obvious problem with the great Empires wherein Minorities were recognized *de facto* and sometimes repressed. But in the 19th century with the establishment of unified and somewhat centralized States, they became *a question as such* for political theory, which is simultaneously the sign of their problematic nature and the beginning of their recognition as such.

Afterwards, it has become not simply a political problem but a social one, too. I believe that it is important for reflection and theory and completely necessary for philosophy to overcome the political limitation of the concept of “Minorities” to which it is still too often restricted. The problem has developed an incredible extension with the appearance of a totally different type of Minorities than the national and political. No doubt they arise as political and historical problems, but they now undergo new experiences and require more extensive and not simply political definitions.

This extension beyond their political origins must therefore be considered, even if historians are not in agreement: the new Minorities are social and moral, they arise within the social body, which is supposedly homogeneous from the outset. They are defined according to age class (the “youth” or the “Third Age”), social class (the “Fourth World”), what could be called sexual class (“women,” homosexual Minorities), and not simply in line with political power, but

with social, religious, cultural behaviors as such, i.e. according to a power which is not always political. I realize that this extension can be denied; but, on the one hand, they themselves lay claim to the status of new Minorities; on the other hand, they offer, so as to be thought, the same theoretical difficulties as political Minorities; lastly, it is difficult to contest the fact that the modern social body is increasingly less homogenous, increasingly reticent to define itself by the political point of view alone, and increasingly demanding. There is a veritable *continuous social production of new minorities*, and it is tied to the emergence of the social beyond the political and to the emergence of the individual and the emergence of particularity beyond the social. The transformation of social relations is accompanied by a continual growth of new demands formulated in terms of *difference*, *identity*, and *right*: *de facto* differences; *de jure* differences; but also right to difference, the celebrated “right to difference” which is the foundation of all current claims of identity. How do we summarize these phenomena now that the political veil has been lifted from their definition? Do they have anything in common, and what makes them difficult theoretical objects?

1. The concept of Minority is unstable, poorly defined, with a tendency to be unlimited because it seems that new Minorities are born in quick succession (there is no definitive threshold based on which a minority exists).

2. Minorities, whether political or not, always present themselves as multiplicities; they are several by definition and are themselves constituted by a plurality of individuals as such; this is an important phenomenon if we consider the centralizing and unifying inclination of modern States.

3. They are born and manifest themselves through the mode of demand and struggle, toward a different identity that can be prolonged by violence, even terrorism; so that it may be a right, the “right to difference,” to au-

tonomy, to recognition must be acquired by an initial violence.

4. They always appear somewhat like phenomena of margins or marginality, fringes, periphery, and danger, simultaneously - indeed I say *simultaneously* - internal and external in relation to the unity of the social body or the centralized political body of the nation.

5. Lastly (and this follows from the preceding point), due to the centralized State and its agencies, they are regularly the object of a pressure hellbent on containing them, a pressure which is not always brutal, which can have the form of control and surveillance or indeed repression, in all kinds of forms (policing, administrative, cultural, linguistic, etc.) and which, nevertheless, ends in the negotiated granting of rights political, cultural, linguistic, etc., i.e. a generally *relative* autonomy within national unity.

This is a short description of a situation that everyone recognizes. But what is of interest here for the philosopher and politician? The interest lies in the fact that, on the one hand, Minorities manifest themselves as an improbable object through the mode of violence and conflict that is *simultaneously* internal or intestine (civil war at the limit) and external. And, on the other hand, because there is something unthinkable about them. I mean to stress that theoretical and political reflection on Minorities is rather impoverished and ill at ease. A recent "Encyclopédie des Minorités," published by Caratini¹, defines them in this simultaneously vague and overly restrictive way: they are a historical subset of a nation and involve centrifugal-centripetal relations with the State. This definition perhaps does justice to the multiplicity of minoritarian groups, but it cursorily describes the mechanism that binds and opposes them to the State. The traditional political and theoretical means to which we are accustomed do nothing but vary/refine the first impression: these are the fringes, the margins or marginalities, the subsystems of the State or the subsets of the Nation.

¹ Éditions Larousse.

Political philosophy ultimately relies on three, and only three, ways to think them. The first consists in saying that Minorities are modes or *modalities* - just subsets! - of a centralized unity, State, or Nation; in other words, they are external secondary phenomena that do not have their own autonomy because they refer to the superior (i.e. *indivisible*) unity of the Nation or the State, which they suppose in every way. The second consists in speaking of "differences." It will then be said either that Minorities are differences (of language, culture, sexual orientation, etc.) in the *interior* of/or *in* a set (which harkens back to our usage of "mode"); or, and this is already more interesting, it will be said that they are differences identical to the State (and not *under* it or *in* it), or at least that Minorities are what is *universal* in the social body, which must itself be interpreted in turn as minoritarian or as becoming minoritarian (I will come back to this conception).

Lastly, the third concept in use is that of the relic or archaism; they have been repressed on the Nation's behalf and must still be repressed yet again. It will thus be necessary to contain them, to master them, and to integrate them - to carry out a veritable gestation of Minorities (which is also their protection) - by a politics simultaneously of firmness and of juridical/ political concessions by according them a relative (always partial and *specified*) autonomy. This is due to the fact that Minorities remain perceived as a residual phenomenon tied to the history of modern Nations and States in the 19th century - representing a perpetual danger of reactivating the hotbeds of political (and sometimes terroristic) effervescence - or to supposedly provisional and amendable social dysfunctions. One point is particularly striking in these definitions. They remain content with describing what is seen or believed to be seen immediately; they basically perceive Minorities from the point of view of the State itself, which contains or represses them. In the same way that the State proposes to better

integrate them into its unity, these definitions integrate Minorities into political philosophies, which are always unitary schemas or schemas of unification, identification, and sometimes totalization. Philosophical reflection, above all in this form, flies to the State's rescue and prepares the way for it; it rarely allows itself to serve Minorities, despite certain appearances. And yet Minorities lay claim to their identity while refusing the identification proposed for them by the powers that be: this paradox must be explicated.

What makes it so hard to think Minorities? The common understanding wants clear and distinct definitions of separate and well-identified objects. But, precisely, the Minorities who claim their "identity" are not easily identifiable as such. They are only understood through *rappports, relations*, and relations of struggle with the State. But what is generally most difficult to understand is the war, the proportion of force, because it defies this general tendency to posit properly distinct identities. The political, historical existence of Minorities is inseparable from the struggle for recognition and sometimes for autonomy; and their theoretical existence is, on its side, inseparable from contradiction, which is the war in thought. Because they are politically unthinkable, demand or struggle is their only way of making themselves heard. Because they always emerge "out of order" [*en rupture*], they are politically unthinkable.

However, philosophy, more so than the discourse of political action, has the means to think them. Political reflection often remains content with a historical *description* and acknowledges struggle; but it does not understand that struggle is a necessary mechanism for the emergence of new Minorities. I would like to describe the four theoretical schemas, the four operative ways of understanding Minorities and of doing them justice.

1. The most conservative and classical way of conceiving Minorities is to turn them into re-

sidual, secondary, external phenomena of relics and archaisms, i.e. ultimately irrational phenomena. Two presuppositions are behind this:

a) Political rationality is represented by the Nation or State as unifying, if the meaning of politics is unification;

b) Politics is itself understood as the reason wherein everyone must fulfill themselves.

If we accept these presuppositions, then Minorities will in fact be vanishing² phenomena at the limit of nothingness; they will only have a political least-being, and, at the limit, they will have no political future, no historical destiny, no creative signification for national culture and unity. But, precisely, too often philosophy and political philosophy overemphasize unities either global (People, Nation, State, Sovereign, Country) or specific (a Mother Tongue, a Tradition, a common History, a Culture, etc.). From their point of view, the particularity of such unities is that they involve an apparently simple relation to Minorities, but this relation, unbeknownst to them, is in fact complex. From their point of view, everyone who lays claim to an existence outside or in the margins of these unities has no (political, historical, cultural, etc., i.e. philosophical) existence proper: they are particular deficient modes, modalities of these Unities. They must be understood and reduced as such. And because they have no real existence, there is consequently not even a violent and conflictual *hierarchy* with Minorities. Minorities are *vanishing* and condemned to disappear the moment they manifest themselves on the periphery of the social body. They are political nothingnesses; simple limits by way of absence, privation, political *insufficiency*. Here, politics still has not encountered real opposition, but simply the nothingness or absence of existence. Consequently, there is no longer a proper efficacy or political causality of

² [This notion should be understood in the sense of algebra, i.e. of or relating to a quantity that indefinitely diminishes as it approaches zero - Trans.]

these Minorities; the only causality is that of the unitary social body represented by the sovereign (man, people, State). Political efficacy as a whole goes in a single and linear direction: from Unity towards the vanishing periphery and therefore nowhere. There is a *de jure* impossibility of fixing, placing, and identifying Minorities: their existence is annulled by decree (all political identity comes from elsewhere). The logic of power is to be coextensive with logic. *Minorities are analytically contained in sovereign unitary power; they bring about nothing new = real.* Power is master of itself and therefore master of the political real. *The political auto-determination or auto-position of the sovereign includes Minorities.*

2. A revolutionary conception in the broad philosophical (not simply political) sense of Minorities is much more modern. Minorities will finally have an autonomous existence here, almost as strong as that of the State, but only in the form of a fringe of the State. Their relation to the State would by definition always be a relation of force or tension. Their existence would be non-manifested, not as manifest as that of the social body, but it would act through violence, conflict, the risk of destabilization and “blind” or “primary” terror. Given their reality and thus the constitution of the social relation as a relation of force or hierarchy, it is necessary to examine this relation from two points of view, for there will be a *double causality, both on the one hand and on the other.*

From the State's point of view: a double and no longer single action; *ensemble of the very gesture* specific to any hierarchy, the State can only try to repress them (as Other, Stranger, Unclassifiable) and integrate them through force and violence, be it that of right, which is still a force.

The action of the state is double and single: repress, exclude, internalize. This double relation wherein the social body is *in fact directed by what it represses* is a *symptom*. The social body does not

see Minorities in their reality, does not see what it does, and this double-edged or contradictory repression weighs down on it. It would be necessary to study this complex mechanism of repression or of self-defense, of conflictual repression.

From Minorities' point of view: what is the response?
It is double:

a) Through reversal and terror; they are the source of heterogeneity and conflictuality. This is the flipside of repression. Reversing the hierarchy of relations of force is the only strategy possible; there is no other solution (if at least Minorities exist-as-repressed). The reversal (destabilization as *inversion* of all social relations) is inevitable and positive;

b) Through the global displacement of the Unity of the social and political body which is reorganized otherwise, or whose economy of internal relations is modified. Unity is reconstituted, must be reconstituted in the form of a *global political order* that will be different, wherein Minorities will be heard and their claims will be partially taken into account in the general economy of the forces of a society. These (double) effects signify that global functioning is not much different, yet it is modified. If the claims of regional or popular cultures are taken into account as well as those of social groups primarily perceived as deviant or anomic, what changes is the general tonality of a society. Everything has slowly shifted around, even if whole blocks of social relations have remained as they are.

Here the novelty is the discovery of the *political relation of force* as such, *power as real power* and no longer *logical* or identical to the logical *unity* of the social body. Minorities are no longer analytically contained in socio-political Unity, they are external and necessarily = structurally given in competition with the State and *affect* the political body with finitude.

This conception, which winds up in a quasi-dualism, discovers the *relation of force* as indivisible autonomy, as the only reality. Minorities are simultaneously outside and inside the State and therefore all the more dangerous; what is real is the conflict common to the State and Minorities. The State is condemned to self-defense, but for Minorities it is the other way around. They constitute a sort of Other of the State, a political unconscious of the Nation and even an *other-than-political* unconscious: linguistic, sexual, social, cultural, economic. This unconscious is all of that, masked or disguised by all of that, but globally anti-political. Minorities cannot simply be political, for they are conveyed and masked by all types of social relations. They are individual, but like the Other can be, thus always also *anonymous* like the Other: this is an opaque, obscure, unintelligible power [*puissance*], albeit effective by way of its immediate political non-rationality, by way of this moment or this virtuality of radical terror. Minorities are consequently an instance of *Antipolitics* simultaneously relative and absolute in the political intelligence of a society. But, at the same time, this structural moment of unintelligibility, which is *itself incomprehensible* in its unity with the social body, re-establishes a unity or a new hierarchy with it.

This conception is much more subtle, differentiated, and realist than the preceding one, which is a dogmatic metaphysics of politics. It gives right - right of existence - to Minorities and to their multiplicity as such. *But this is at the price of rendering them unintelligible, obscure like a primary process of force. Hence a third conception that synthesizes the first two by conserving, from the first, its sense of unitary political intelligibility and, from the second, its sense of multiplicity (heterogeneity, alterity), but without turning it into an external unconscious.*

3. Consequently, a third, equally contemporary solution: the synthetic conception of Minorities as “difference.”

It will therefore be acknowledged that we have to think *together* the socio-political Unity, represented by the State or embodied by it, and, at the same time, the heterogeneous multiplicity of individuals, cultures, languages, peoples, sexes, and *therefore*: we have *to think the unity of the individual* (in a broad sense) and the State. Here still and as always, *this identification is not called into question*: the most individual forces can demand their autonomy, but they can only do so in view of the State, a new unity, or a relation ultimately better accomplished by the State. The presupposition is the same: *Minorities* indeed have to struggle against the State, or rather simply struggle against some of its old forms; they are ultimately and even initially inseparable from it, for one continues here more than ever to define Minorities in terms of *force*, struggle, and combat, and therefore in globally political terms.

What, then, is specific to this identity of the State and Minorities? It is difficult to say. Between them, a smaller distance or exteriority is supposed than previously. Minorities are indeed always those who bring about distance, distension, and the risk of ruptures in social relations or in consensus. *But they do nothing but bring it about*, and they alone are the ones who can bring it about everywhere: everyone is minoritarian, there are nothing but Minorities in all social relations: the State is the ensemble of their functioning. There is no longer, as before, a distance between a State supposed given, already there, and Minorities already given but as unconscious. *There is no longer this quasi-duality of realities here, these two modes of heterogeneous realities* that was supposed earlier, including the political and the non-political (the unpolitical is as non-negotiable as ever), but a *single* type of reality, which is the political. Hence a return to a conception of the *political-All* or *social-All*, like in the first solution, *where everything is again grasped in Unity and thus also in rationality and intelligibility*. There is indeed a multiplicity, an unconscious if you will, but it is *immediately* embodied by this

superior Unity, a single reality which can thus be read simultaneously as nothing-but multiple, nothing but heterogeneous or also even as nothing-but-statist or nothing but social. *There is no superior and central State on one side and peripheral and marginal Minorities on the other; this would still be to place an exteriority in them, a distance, that of a center fixed to its periphery or a Unity fixed to its margins.* There are nothing but partial sequences of connection that must be called *immediately and inseparably statist-minoritarian*. Every socio-political phenomenon can and must be read as statist or universal - creating a rule for other phenomena which are minoritarian in relation to it - and as itself minoritarian with respect to another that holds as a superior rule. There are *only Relations of force*, forces in relation, but in a greater and smaller distance than any *bond* or synthesis by way of a "generality." The buffer zones between the State and Minorities have been dismantled, including all the economic, institutional, political, and social generalities with which Minorities no longer identify and which they themselves even critique (destruction of the gregarious and intermediate generalities which *code* desire or statist-minoritarian flows), yet all the better to identify themselves with the State.

This is a complex and ambiguous position, for the revolutionary force of Minorities is indeed conserved, but it is limited to non-statist generalities rather than turned against the State itself. On the contrary, is devoted to becoming immanent to individuals and triumphing the ruins of the intermediate and middle bodies. Ultra-anarchism is identical to ultra-statism: an anarchism against the intermediate social forms, but so that Minorities themselves still incarnate the State. The statist-minoritarian complexes *revolutionize or reverse the entire social structure and the whole intermediate social base in a perpetual and unlimited way, all the better for the State to triumph.*

This is a purified position, the pure political diagram relative to the preceding position. But,

above all and consequently, it illuminates an aspect of the philosophical theory of Minorities. The statist-minoritarian connection is purified, manifested as such, relieved of its external forms. *What philosophy can do for Minorities is thus fully manifested.*

I believe that it is the individual who seeks to be heard in Minorities. But all these conceptions are similar because they posit that the individual is ultimately identical to the State, that the individual realizes herself in it, or despite it, but in every way *with* it, that the individual forms a system with the State for better or worse. I call these conceptions "mixed Minorities" or "statist-minoritarian Minorities," and I oppose them - this will be the fourth solution - to another conception, the nothing-but-minoritarian, which will give an absolute right to the individual's claim and would recognize the existence of Minorities absolutely autonomous with respect to the State. The first three conceptions describe the social body, and thus their point of view is still that of the unified social body or the social body of the state; they are on the side of the polis or political reason. This is why, on the one hand, they reduce the existence or reality of Minorities to their struggle - and in struggle it is always the State that is ultimately the victor with a few concessions; and, on the other hand, they remain content with describing the surface of the phenomena without explaining them. From my point of view, these are philosophical and not scientific theories of Minorities; they are engaged or partisan (simultaneously on the State's side and on the side of Minorities - thus still on the State's side, for if one gives a simply political meaning and struggle to Minorities, that would still be on the State's ultimate behalf). Certainly, one can remark that these solutions are increasingly on the verge of recognizing an autonomous reality to Minorities, not merely a right acquired or conquered in struggle, but a reality irreducible to the State, not relative to it, not accidental or irrational, and more so a reality of

opposition to it. Yet these solutions still concede to Minorities a reality of simple competition with the State and remain content with tracing in their concept the most external conflicts (social, cultural, etc.).

For both of these reasons, I prefer a scientific type of description, if possible, of Minorities. By *scientific*, I understand at least this - this is not all, but at least this: a description that would not reduce them to their struggle alone, thus to their relation to the State alone, that would attribute them a reality *before, prior* to their relation to the State, which does not mean that they do not maintain relations with the State! It is a requirement of their description to posit their autonomy. Just like any science implies, in opposition to philosophical and political partisanships, it recognizes an autonomy in its object without mixing its object with something else, a consistency by itself. From my point of view, only a science of Minorities as individuals rather than a political philosophy renders intelligible what is at stake in minoritarian struggles, what is concealed in them, the value of what announces itself, which is the recognition of the individual as such or in her multiplicity; it is the recognition of her reality, which is not necessarily political or cultural or linguistic, etc. Aside from the philosophical Minorities I have described, the only one still possible is *a science of man qua individual* that would replace the renowned “human sciences,” which do nothing but confuse man with her political, social, and historical forms of existence.



Online ISSN: 2545-4668

oraxiom.org