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

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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 apocalyptics 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.

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[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 apocalyptics 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

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[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.

[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.

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

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[8] Andrew Santana Kaplan, "Notes Toward (Inhabiting) 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.

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[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.

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

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[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-poiltical 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

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[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.

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[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 peace[46] it gives way to[47] - 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

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[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 philosophy[52]). 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 human[56] (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

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[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" (*Ethikotheologie*) 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' (*entsetz*) 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-

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[59] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*.

[60] Agamben, *Karman*, 75.

[61] Marriott, *Whither 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)"

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[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 inherit 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 Xpassive 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 longstanding 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

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[72] Marriott, *Whither 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, *Whither 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 racist[76] - 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 abyss[77] - which, I would add, is the original sin of supersession from the Real that humanity inherits in their being (fraudulently) made in 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

[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.

[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 Coluciello 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 (*eschato-logy*) - 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 apocalyptics: "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

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[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 Laurelle'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 III[107] and Daniel Coluc-ciello 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

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[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 Coluciello 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 (Hatian) 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.