

Certainly the Nazi Holocaust was, in part, motivated, by the Nietzschean desecration of all 'higher (Christian) values,' and by the reduction of Christian sacrifice to its most perverted, debased versions, in what Giorgio Agamben, in *Remnants of Auschwitz*, describes as the completely *un-sacrificial* death. But Jewish theologians have compared the Shoah to the Abrahamic sacrifice of Isaac (the *Akeda*; *Genesis 22:1-18*) as the supreme test of faith which was required before the Jewish tribes could return to the Promised Land. But this sacrificial interpretation is obviously highly problematic, and it would be interesting to know how Girard might respond to the challenges raised to his theory by Jewish theologies of the Holocaust or Shoah.

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Laruelle: Against the Digital

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Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014; 304 pp.; \$27.50 (paperback)

doi:10.1017/S0012217315000761

In Herman Melville's short story, *Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street* (1853) Bartleby's obstinate response to every request made of him is that 'I prefer not to.' Bartleby withholds participation in his environment and gradually recedes from society altogether thus fostering a curious indeterminacy in his outright refusal to do anything at all. Yet Bartleby emerges as an unlikely figure of resistance. Is Bartleby's withdrawal, revolutionary and an effective act of protest? Or is his solipsistic and ultimately infuriating behaviour a symptom of the overall social and political malaise of neoliberal society.

Alexander Galloway invokes Bartleby's abstention from society in the second chapter of *Laruelle: Against the Digital* likening his withdrawal to the Occupy movement's demand of having no demands. Slavoj Žižek and Antonio Negri (among many others) have also connected Bartleby's attitude of passive resistance to the Occupy movement. In *Laruelle: Against the Digital*, a critical analysis of self-styled, so-called non-philosopher, François Laruelle, Galloway also connects the Occupy movement with Bartleby. Bartleby

seems a fitting archetype to embody Laruelle's non-philosophy, despite Laruelle's disdain for representation, metaphor or allegory. Laruelle privileges homogeneousness rather than a hybridity as espoused by phenomenology, psychoanalysis, existentialism, deconstruction and identity politics; he dismisses those schools of thought as mere "therapeutic crusades" (85). Rather, Laruelle seeks a generic state setting him apart from most continental philosophers' theories, with the exception of Gilles Deleuze. In particular, Deleuze helps us understand the theme of digitality in Laruelle. In order to illustrate this, Galloway cites Deleuze's famous short essay from 1992, "Postscript on the Societies of Control." According to Galloway, the Postscript demonstrates that historic "periodization ... defines today's mode of being" (100); furthermore it asserts "historical breaks" (109) as tropes that increasingly define society and culture.

Galloway draws distinctions between the 'analogue' and 'digital' as conceptual infrastructures that are based on a binary system. However, Laruelle disdains the root of all digitality: zeroes and ones. In addition, technology is repulsive to Laruelle. Laruelle sees technology as "provide[ing] little more than an avenue for transit or meditation in and out of things" (134). For Laruelle, philosophy is "all technology wrapped into one" (134). Laruelle prefers to abstain and withdraw. Yet Galloway vehemently claims that Laruelle's inaction is revolutionary. One of the ways Galloway supports this claim is by citing our collective inaction on climate change. Climate change serves as an example of the abject failure that indifference can herald. In Chapter 7, *The Black Universe*, Galloway's discussion of darkness in Laruelle's writing provides a perspective that *may* be categorized as revolutionary. Beginning with Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," fluctuations between light and shadow have driven philosophy. This fascination with light and shadow has also been the focus of art history. A genealogy of attempts to depict true darkness has followed *Black Cross* (1923), in which Kasimir Malevich sought to represent the irreducible core of painting. Galloway states that work by artists such as Malevich, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko and Stan Brakhage are "no more black than a bright summer day" (135). This is because works of art are simply images mediated by the hand of the artist. They are and will always be mere representations, not actual darkness. For this reason both Galloway and Laruelle privilege artwork by James Turrell, a contemporary artist whose material of choice is not paint, or film, but light itself.

How do these musings on art relate to climate change? In *The Black Universe* Galloway, by way of Reza Negarestani, articulates the following:

Oil petroleum is black, of course, in color if not also in moral decrepitude. But oil is also light, because it is a transmutation of the light of the sun. Oil is the geological product of sunlight, first via photosynthesis into vegetable matter, and second via the decomposition of ... matter over time. In this sense oil is ... the black corpse of the sun (139).

Laruelle does betray himself from time to time with inconsistencies. For example, although he abstains from binaries, just because Laruelle is against the digital (which is based on a binary system), it does not follow that Laruelle somehow "finds refuge in the analogue" (89). The sheer irony of the "speaking using existing philosophical language even if the goal is something other than philosophy" (89) is not lost either. Furthermore, when Laruelle, or Galloway, cite Revelation 9:2, or 16:10 Matthew 20:16 or the Book of Genesis, gnostic undertones are revealed even while railing against transcendence.

Returning to Laruelle's generic black universe and its relation to climate change, this conceptualization represents the most valuable nugget to be mined from this work. Laruelle's darkness represents not merely a world gone dark, but rather the complete blackness of a world without us (144). "Oil is the darkening of sunlight. Oil is thus literally dead: oil is death ... Oil is the shadow of black being—wh[ic]h annihilates societies by tear[ing] them apart ..." (145). According to Laruelle "oil is understood not simply as dark but as radical blackness" (145). Black is never defined in terms of its' relation to light. So when Galloway touts Laruelle as "the great thinker of radical equality" (47), in this respect he succeeds in making his point. Although some critics "view Laruelle[']s stance] as a license to do nothing," (85) Laruelle's attitude of indifference is often dismissed as too stubbornly rooted in indecision. Galloway defends this attitude as being equally assertive as it is passive, as disruptive as it is peaceful (86). For a supposed "non-philosophy [that] declines to reflect on things" (xxiv), Laruelle, like *Bartleby*, resolutely 'prefers not to.'

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All for Nothing: Hamlet's Negativity

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Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014; xi + 226 pp. \$22.95 (paper).

doi:10.1017/S0012217315000608

Andrew Cutrofello's *All for Nothing* retraces the trajectory that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (the play and the character) has taken across the Continental and Analytic philosophical traditions, and it is no small achievement that, despite the literally centuries of commentary and criticism on this Shakespearean play, Cutrofello has succeeded in shedding new light on its literary and philosophical significance. There are two ways of approaching Cutrofello's *All for Nothing*: 1) as an in-depth philosophical commentary on the concept of negativity, particularly as this concept comes to life against the backdrop of *Hamlet*; and 2), as a work of literary criticism that opens up new avenues of interpretation into the play *via* the longstanding philosophical rapprochement with the concept of negativity. Whether readers are coming to this book as scholars and students of Shakespeare and *Hamlet*, or as scholars and students of the history of philosophy and of the concept of negativity, they will surely not be disappointed in what they take away from *All for Nothing*.

Cutrofello begins by positioning *Hamlet* as a 'conceptual character,' the chief representative not only of Shakespearean thought (as Zarathustra is of Nietzsche's, for instance, or the Angelus Novus is of Benjamin's), but also a character that can be played and played differently by whichever philosopher happens to decide to step into the role. Cutrofello: "There are as many ways of playing *Hamlet* within the space of philosophical positions as there are of playing him on stage. Just as theatrical performance histories compare Garrick's, Schröder's, Kemble's, Siddons's, Kean's, Bernhard's, Oliver's, Gielgud's, and Branagh's *Hamlets*, so we may compare those of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Russell, Heidegger, Arendt, Derrida, and Žižek" (2). Cutrofello's methodological innovation consists in converting a dramaturgical question into a philosophical one: *how has Hamlet been played?* becomes, in the hands of Cutrofello,