

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 innerve the ghosts of words and set the ear of language aflame.

tmlavenz@gmail.com

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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 Unlocalizable 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 U-topia” (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 en-visioner. 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

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.

⁸ *Ibid.*, xi.

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 Jorris (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 uniference. 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 coterminous 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 ascesis 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 imaginialis*, 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 idiomatity 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 [*Letztdingliches*]. 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 World-outcasts 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 Niemandrose, 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."

⁵² Celan, *Poems of Paul Celan*, 131.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁵⁴ Celan, *The Meridian*, 126.

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 overcoming 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

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/philofiction 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 interference; 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, philofiction, 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 Philofiction 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 idiomatity, 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*.

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.

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.