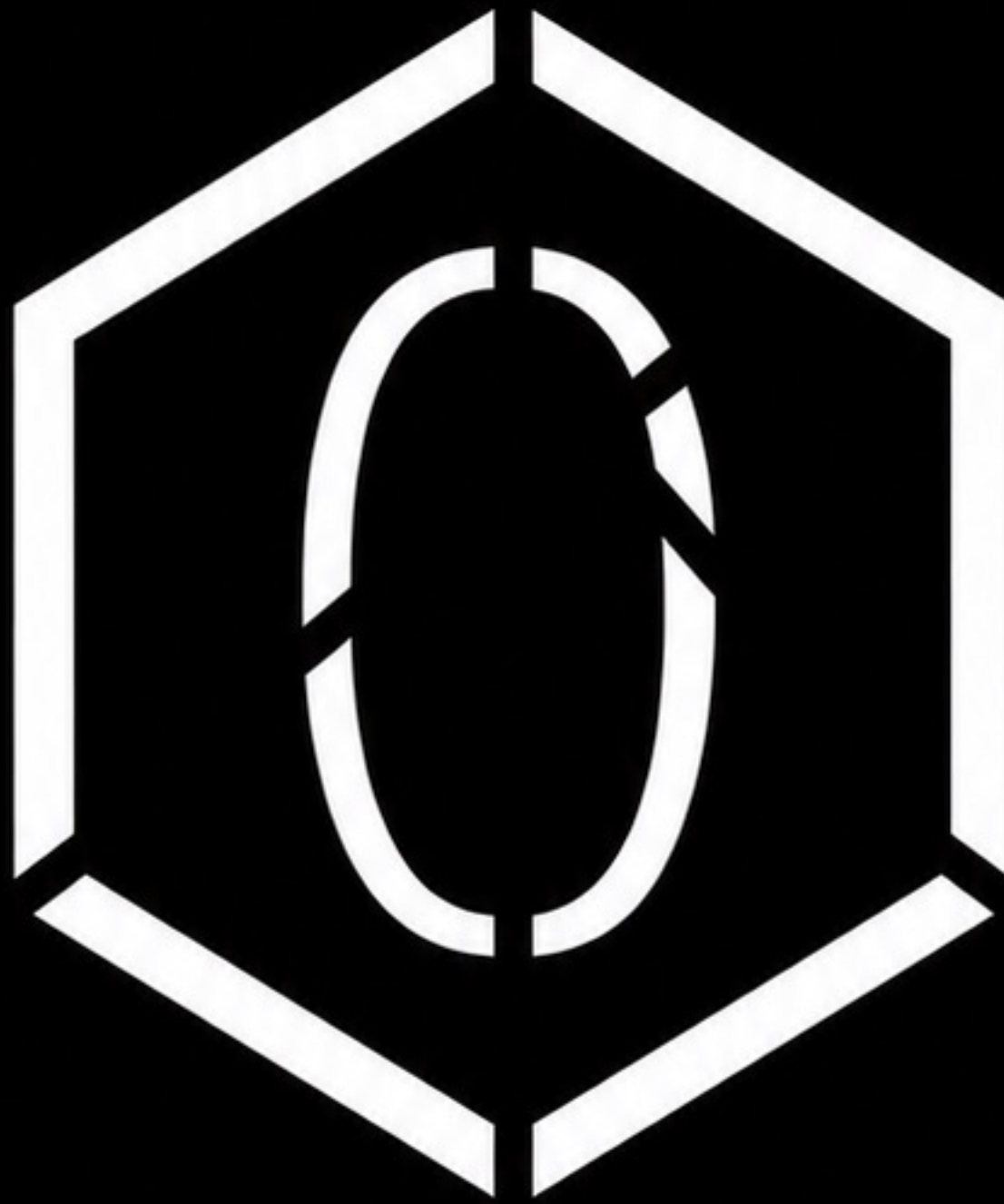


Oraxiom: A Journal of Non-Philosophy

Vol. 2 No. 1 (2024)



Topic: Non-Philosophical Encounters
with Built Environments

Edited by Hannah Hopewell and Yehotal Shapira

Oraxiom

A Journal of
Non-Philosophy



ABOUT EDITORIAL OFFICE

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Mission Statement

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

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

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

Editorial Statement

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

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

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

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

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NON-PHILOSOPHICAL ENCOUNTERS WITH BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

**Edited by
Hannah Hopewell and Yehotal Shapira**

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Editorial

What Can Non-Philosophy Do— With Built Environments and Urban Practices?

Hannah Hopewell and Yehotal Shapira

We inaugurate this special issue of *Oraxiom* with an affirmation of François Laruelle’s provocation: What Can Non-Philosophy Do? Such a question signals our interest less with any analysis of non-philosophy per se, and more with the unconventional tools of discovery, performance, creation, and variation it activates. As the breadth of Laruelle’s oeuvre across Philosophie I-V demonstrates, non-philosophy, or non-standard thought is not just another theory, but a new form of thought that radicalizes its subject in unprecedented ways. Where Laruelle probes what the non- can do with philosophy, we turn this potential towards critical built environment and urban practices.

Critical urban practices name the plurality of scholarship that takes place within the critique, creativity, and designing of architectures, cities,

environments, and landscapes. Whilst this “big tent” approach opens diversities of scholarship, along with their contradictions, it is not our intent to congeal or reconcile any domain in such a way to claim a territory. Rather, we promote the relative autonomy and syntax of liberation for regional knowledges, determined, as Laruelle’s non-philosophy signals, in the last instance.

As is shown by the contributions in this special issue, non-philosophy generates an approach to scholarship without domination of the knowledges it encounters. Instead, it activates immanent concept-less practices that legislate for themselves independent of philosophical authority providing novel approaches to, in our case, critical urban studies, architecture, and landscape architecture. With non-philosophy, the pluralistic science of thought and its universalizing philosophical concepts are reworked and broadened by renewed axioms that free thought from the inherent circularity of traditional philosophical reasoning. Critically relevant to built environment and urban realms is how these practices admit the force of democratization to the production of knowledge itself, at the level of structure.

We find particular valence in the ways non-philosophy’s epistemology generates

opportunities to circumvent the prevailing structures of thought assuming anthropocentrism within critical built environment and urban practices, and with this, scholarship that recognizes systemic participation of the City in visibilized and invisibilized forms of violence acting upon urban life. Referencing a conversation between Katerina Kolozova, Anthony Paul Smith, John Ó Maoilearca, and Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca included in *Oraxiom*'s first issue,¹ non-philosophy avails the promise of an emancipatory politic regarding human exceptionalism and urban-governed notions of equality. Correspondingly, we foreground the potential of what Tony Carusi and Stephen Zepke's contribution rehearses, "the City of Nowhere." This "City" arrives within thought not from the philosophically inflected polis, but from the non-philosophical matrix to affirm the urban non-place that is "unthinkable and unexperienceable" within prevailing urban scholarship assumptions.

Whilst there is much work to be done, and this special issue marks more a yet-to-come than any definitive position, the plural objectives underway here move in accord with non-

philosophy's democratic intent affirming Laruelle's ambition to bypass the "conflicts of faculties" towards knowledge production with an a priori of universal peace. It is for these reasons we recognize this work as utopic, and draw a loose and transversal line through disciplinarity to bring the non-standard, non-philosophical theory-work into contact with built environment orientations. In so doing, we initiate unprecedented, nonetheless mutable and minoritarian ground.

The contributions to this collection experiment with the practice of non-philosophy and demonstrate the disparate ways Laruelle's non-philosophy can be at once altered and altering. We make "use of" Laruelle to test new modes that mutate the experience of habituated architectural and urban thought in ways that might offer meaning on the struggles both for and against the World. Ranging across the performative and representative spectrum, we note the diversity of scholarship styles spanning those with experimental characteristics, to others generative of a more conventional academic format. We emphasize the significance of this range, incorporating both direct and

¹ Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, "Thinking Alongside *The Last Humanity*: Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca in Conversation with Katerina Kolozova, Anthony Paul Smith, and John Ó Maoilearca," *Oraxiom: A Journal of Non-Philosophy*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2020): 169-80, http://oraxiom.org/no1/12_Kolozova_Smith_OMaoilearca.pdf.

indirect speech, encompassing multifaceted implicit and explicit dimensions as a strategic approach crafted to address various histories and places linked to this volume of issues. This range of styles, model subjectivities, and collective experiences through urban and built arrangements, extends the capacity to create localized knowledges that stand indifferent, or alongside any arbitration by external philosophies or theories. Together we interrogate in a partial way what non-philosophy makes possible.

With the spirit of non-philosophy enacting the time of invention, we resist any totalizing commentary on what “this” special edition does for the spacing and temporalization of urban studies. Instead, we offer, “in this last instance,” observation arising with the following:

In this first translation into English by Jeremy R. Smith, François Laruelle’s “Octonary of Philosophical Sufficiency,” focuses the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy as deployed through Philosophy II and its impactful discoveries concerning the structure of the non-philosophical method. Forming a part of the Philosophy phases I-III, wherein Laruelle identifies philosophical decision as the essence of the triadic structure of philosophy, such rethinking about thinking creates a gesture in thought that moves to deflate all claims of

philosophy authority. Through the “Sufficiency of Philosophy,” Laruelle reveals philosophy’s dependence on the appearance of the Real found in various regional knowledges (such as science, art, politics, psychoanalysis, etc.). We are especially pleased to include this translation for its assemblage of Western thinking, by way of the architecture of the bridge.

Laruelle names the “Philosophical Decision” as the implicit division between the extreme presuppositions of being, and the Reason of being, and with the architecture of the bridge performs this division, with the opposed moles, neither supporting the other, above nothingness, to expose the fiction of philosophical structure. The bridge’s invisible pillars make the bricks of the bridge rise above the void in which they are already divided. The bridge’s rope—falsely believed to exist—supposedly tightens the moles and prevents them from falling into the ravine of the river. The essay contains embedded references to other architectural metaphors such as Heidegger’s bridge and Black Forest hut, Albert Camus’s writing on the bridge in *The Fall*, and the interdisciplinary writing of Bernard Tschumi in “Architecture and Disjunction” (Dis-Junction in Laruelle phrasing). By way of the bridge, Laruelle creates a further materializing of thought occasion to gesture towards the

transcendence of the Philosophical Decision, and the built world.

Tony Carusi and Stephen Zepke's foray into non-urban studies leads us to an "Urban Science" to come, in Laruelle's specific sense of science, and expands Urban Studies paradigms. They claim that describing an object through this approach entails immanence as its guiding thread in unilateral relationship. Such a science, they speculate, could supply the infrastructure for describing "reality," or the superstructures' content "in itself." According to them, Laruelle provides "an in-utero theory of non-Urban Studies that rejects spatiality and temporality in favor of Givenness and Positing to discover and describe the ways 'objects' of Urban Studies were determined in the last instance." This revolutionary project dethrones all urban phenomena of authority and hierarchical spirit paving the way for radically situated occasions of urban scholarship.

Sophie Lesueur's "Can the *Utopia of Strangers* Be a City?: A Radical (Re-)Reading of *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*", is included in its original French along with an English translation by Brynn McNab, Jeremy R. Smith, and Luka Stojanovic. With this future-leaning paper Lesueur attends to the polis as the crucible of (western) human inter-relationality and ways the city sustains a spatio-temporal fabric

of everyday subjugation and fear-making. Working through what binds the city and citizens to the will of mastery of the Thought-World, Lesueur rehearses how utopia resides in the suspension of a possible couched in a worldly political orientation. Hence instead of resting the conditions of possibility within the political designations "set-up" by the polis, a politic is liberated with a One-We radically immanent to the Real and extraterritorial to the arbitrating force of the City.

Yehotal Shapira's essay, "Transitioning Arab-Palestinian Dwelling Landscapes: From Pre-Modern Immanent Practices to Self-Sufficient Façades," is grounded in non-philosophy, notably Philosophy III, to articulate the cultural contributions of pre-modern (late sixteenth to early twentieth century) Arab-Palestinian architecture. This approach raises questions not addressed in existing literature about the origins of Arab-Palestinian architecture as an immanent form of thought. This performative architecture utilized fractality and non-Euclidean geometry in its creative biocentric expressions. Through historical transformations under modernization and colonization, it evolved into an architecture of self-affirmation. Signs of change included an anthropocentric separation between architecture and landscape, accompanied by the emergence of buildings' façades. Through non-philosophy, the paper probes the

boundaries between architecture and landscape architecture beyond their common definitions, asserting that pre-modern Arab-Palestinian architecture exemplified a landscape of dwelling.

Returning to the City with “The Multitude Will Never Be Philosophers”, Jeremy R. Smith offers us the City as the Uni-City, and with it a non-political occasioning of democracy. Under non-philosophical conditions thought no longer participates in the forms of othering including the “racist noble lie” internal to the City’s functioning. With a theory and critique of demo-logical difference Smith traces the emergence of a non-relation instantiating the “non-anthropo(-)logical personage of Man void of the racism and xenophobia, and the Uni-City. Such reorganizing compellingly motions how ‘the people’ do not need to be democratized.”

Hannah Hopewell’s “*In-Stance: Generic Encounter in Everyday Urban Landscapes*,” contextualizes and describes how the boundaries of “the possible” shift when urban everyday landscapes and the modes of life they sustain are encountered non-philosophically. Anchored by a mutation of Laruelle’s posture or stance, Hopewell’s practice “refuses standing and pointing, stand-points, to instead perform a standing down, a stance-in-encounter immanently”. The participating non-philosophical

“vision” is shown to recalibrate experience of urban materiality towards the insufficiency of generic experience, a “technique of embodied attentiveness to that which is left behind when one no longer recognizes the World.” Hopewell asserts, when holding in self with stance, what lies at the heart of modern experience and social currency—ontological accrual, identification and legitimation of new subject positions, thereby fades, as of no consequence. Working with this non-philosophical opportunity Hopewell claims to generate a partial unrelativized way to “look” through the saturation of capital’s ascendancies acting upon and controlling urban practices.

“Social Theatre Aggregate” is the name Calum Hazell gives to an occasion of his non-philosophical thought performance, and one that demonstrates the concurrency of “invention” and “diagnosis.” Hazell describes this practice as one of a (h)interlinguistic inscription that “plants rebuses and indices on the walls of the City and its centers of aggregation.” In doing so the work shows the scars of the World’s encroachments in “fragments and pebbles just as it suffers Worldly aggregation of the mouth and throat.” This contribution moves us to experience the city otherwise.

We close the special issue with a conversation between Calum Hazell and Hannah Hopewell

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on “Experimentation and the Non-Relation.” Hazel and Hopewell have found they engage non-philosophy in both similar and different ways through how it affords an affecting, creative-diagnostic practice with a variant of performativity beyond any authorizing horizon of disciplinarity. To that end they discuss the emergence of mystification as a condition of invention, and the creation of “collapsible” and “portable” installations as means to relations in excess to, or beyond dedicated City genealogies. They focus non-relationality as a way of characterizing a kind of practice that takes the relation as the primary material for its compositions in such a way it would not be sufficient to the practice itself.

We thank all authors for extending their works for this special issue, and the *Oraxiom* editorial team for their generosity, support, and production, most especially Jeremy R. Smith and Stanimir Panayotov. Lastly, we wholeheartedly thank François Laruelle himself—the true heretic and philosopher without qualities, whose courage within invention extends to us all.

Octonary of Philosophical Sufficiency¹

François Laruelle

Translated by Jeremy R. Smith

Abstract: In this experimental philo-fiction, Laruelle groups eight paragraphs reflecting on the relationship between philosophy, man, and naming. This relationship itself serves as a kind of landmark, monument, or bridge that strives to connect, in its very sufficiency, the thought of man and man himself. Situated in the midst of Philosophy II and as part of the third issue of *La décision philosophique*, Laruelle's text implicitly relates to other pieces from this same issue, such as reflections on Charles Péguy, human philosophy, anthropology, naming, and a non-epistemological description of science. This philo-fiction that appears towards the end of the third issue of *La décision philosophique* opens this issue of *Oraxiom* with the goal of highlighting the distinction between a human philosophy whose solitude is non-self-positing and the self-positing of philosophical sufficiency to account for philosophy, the real of man, and naming.

François Laruelle was professor emeritus at Université de Paris X-Nanterre and progenitor of non-philosophy and non-standard philosophy. Author of over twenty five texts, Laruelle is also a co-founder of Organisation Non-Philosophique Internationale (ONPhI). His latest works are *Philosophie non-standard. Générique, quantique, philo-fiction* (Paris: Kimé, 2010) (where the portmanteau *Oraxiom* was created), *Tétralogos, un opéra de philosophies* (Paris: Cerf, 2019), and *Le Nouvel Esprit technologique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2020). François Laruelle's cogito is not only philosophical, but also philo-musical. For this purpose, he articulates philosophy with other disciplines, in particular quantum, which replaces natural objects with states and operators. Using these operators and the generic, Laruelle constructs a technique of ascent from the world to the universe, then a long descent towards humans, distinct from philosophical subjects.

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Jeremy R. Smith is an independent researcher and translator. A co-editor and co-founder of *Oraxiom*, his translations have been featured in *Identities: Journal for Politics, Gender, and Culture*, *Barricade: A Journal of Antifascism and Translation*, *Chiasma: A Site for Thought*, and other publications. He is the main translator of François Laruelle's *Theory of Strangers: Science of People, Democracy, and Non-Psychoanalysis*, and co-translator of Anne-Françoise Schmid and Muriel Mambrini-Doudet's *Generic Epistemology: Manual for Future Sciences*.

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Keywords: principle of sufficient philosophy, proper names, first names, human philosophy, human sufficiency, solitude

¹ Originally published as François Laruelle, "Octonaire de la Suffisance Philosophique," *La Décision philosophique* 3 (November 1987): 113-18. – Editors.

On the Argument:

Man is named within proper names, philosophy is named within tautologies. “Man” is a proper name, “Philosophy” is a tautology. However, it is *sufficient* that any name would be in the last instance a name of man so that tautologies would be suitable for “Man” and become secondary proper names that are said of “Man.”

I. *The Principle of Sufficient Reason* is a name that is not yet recognized as a proper name: it speaks the reason for that which is: The World, The *There is* of things, the Given. It speaks the reason for that which it assumes which is. This is that which it postulates at first: it has already asked or posited that something = X, a being, is presented in the panorama of transcendence, but it speaks the reason for that which is without that it can speak the reason of what says about it that which is. This is that which it postulates secondly: that it also would be given in the face of the Given. It is deployed from one postulate to another, in the difference of that which it postulates as being that which receives *the Principle of Reason* and from that which it postulates as being that which gives it *the Principle of Reason*. It deploys the arc of Reason from one absence of reason to the other and constrains *Man* to borrow this bridge. A bridge suspended

over the void holds together by the power of the intertwining of three strands: duty (it prescribes to search for a reason), security (it assures that there is always a reason), and sufficiency (it anticipates the reason that, already being there, is enough). These are the three strands that make up the knotted solidity of *Reason*: the obligation for searching for reason that obliges the being, the always available capital of reason, the sufficiency of this inexhaustible reserve that is enough to exhaust being.

II. No architect has reclaimed the sublime monument that, from one extreme land to the other, assembles the Western continent. No architect, not even the bridge itself, exists. What only exists is the rope—which believes that it prevents the opposing moles from falling into the ravine of the river called “Becoming”—and the moles—who think that the rope must exist and be tightened for them. Neither one supports the other above the nothingness. Together they are only held by the invisible pillar that makes the bricks of the bridge rise above the void in which they are already divided: the transcendence of the Philosophical Decision, the new name that does not yet know a proper name. The philosopher is the only architect who dared to make their body the monument of the Western Dis-Junction. *The Principle of Reason* barely speaks the reason that it is split into another name, *The Principle of Sufficient*

Philosophy, and because its sufficiency, which it speaks but with which it is not satisfied, comes back as the sufficiency of *Philosophy*; that the reason it speaks and that it cannot produce for itself coming back as the philosophical decision; that the duty that it speaks and cannot fulfill for its own account comes back as the duty to philosophize. The misfortune of *Reason* is to be divided without knowing what divides it: riven between the extreme presuppositions of being and the reason of being, reason and the Principle of Reason, the principle that it is already without yet being it. It is inconsistent to the point of being threatened by chaos or the Evil Genius. But it is *Philosophy* that has dug the ravine and installed the bridge. Philosophy alone is enough to divide *Reason* and to reunite it with its strength as principle. Philosophy alone is enough to give *Reason* its sufficiency as a principle and make the difference between these two sufficiencies. *Philosophy* makes *Reason* feel its precarity and imposes the diktat of the philosophical saying: either chaos or me. The sufficiency of *Reason* can only become a principle through the supplement of *Philosophy*.

III. That which is enough thus suffices to think sufficiency [*Ce qui suffit ainsi suffit à penser la suffisance*]. It suffices to think the tautologies of sufficiency to suffice for thought. “Sufficient” is said of the unknown = X that resolves the equation philosophy = real; “unknown” is said

of this sufficiency that only resolves the equation because it makes it into a position. *Philosophy* decides that it is the (ad)equation to the real, and therefore in-(ad)equated [*in-(ad)équation*] to decide it. Philosophy only admits the equation with the real within a more essential inequation. Philosophy is the term and arbiter, partisan and biased; known as a partisan, unknown as impartial. “Philosophy” is a judge that intends to remain secret, but by saying the reason of *Reason* without speaking its own reason, that which is enough thus to which is not enough for it does not either suffice in turn—sufficiency remains an unknown = X and is insufficient. That which is enough suffices and not quite suffices in thinking sufficiency. This is because that which is enough was thought prematurely as sufficient to think the sufficiency before absolutely sufficing by itself. From sufficing to this task that is in-sufficient for it, *Philosophy* in-suffices in turn for *Man* – the absolute and first proper name. This non-tautology of the name of man is enough to demonstrate that which absolutely suffices is enough in order to finally demonstrate the insufficiency of philosophical sufficiency to think the real or man and therefore the “sufficiency” – the pretention – of *Philosophy* and its tautologies. The insufficiency of philosophical sufficiency ensues from the sufficiency of the new but oldest name: *Man*.

IV. Two paradigms are enough to divide thought, to think sufficiency, causality, and the sufficiency of causality. Either it suffices by a requisite to make a cause, or because the cause is enough by itself without first being required. *Philosophy* says that that which is sufficient must be required, and that that which is required must be sufficient; that that which is posited as required and required as posited suffices for the real and is enough for itself to suffice itself and in view of being enough for it. *Philosophy* is the name of that which poorly, viciously or tautologically begets, that which begets outside of any order, for example the sufficient cause, therefore insufficient cause, from the sufficiency of the effect that is in-itself insufficient. It shares the sufficiency over two insufficiencies. By contrast, *Man* says that, as sufficing as the real, he suffices for *Philosophy* and as the cause of *Philosophy*. In search for a requisite, for its decision and position, *Man* opposes his absolutely sufficient causality and his proper name: *Determination in the last instance*. It is to *Philosophy* requisitioned as a cause, therefore as an insufficient cause that pretends to be sufficient, *Man*, the real, is opposed as *Last Instance* who suffices to determine. To the three continuously knotted strands that *Philosophy* draws its existence and the existence of *Reason*, *Man* opposes his own: *The Last Instance* suffices as the real and alone is to be real; it suffices as cause and needs no return of causality or a

supplement of causality in return; and suffices as a term, the sufficiency of the term to be the real cause. *Last Instance* is the other proper name that describes the sufficiency of the solitude to be a cause.

V. *Philosophy* pretends to suffice and only demonstrates the sufficiency of this pretention. However, it is a sufficiency that is only shown elsewhere and from the solitude of *Man*. *Philosophy* thus begets in turn *Sufficiency* that is exposed and appears as it is finally. *Sufficiency* is hidden within the wrinkle of *Philosophy*, it is the effect of immensity, the shadow stretched out by the philosophizing fold. The Queen of the World hidden to the eyes of the World, *Philosophy* is a secret that can only live secretly wherever philosophizing sufficiency reigns. But this secret has become visible as it is to the eyes of *Man* without ceasing to be a secret for him. *Denudation* is the name of the manifestation of the secret that integrally remains a secret when it is shown and that it no longer lives in secret. *Philosophy* is thus exposed in its operation which is never denudation, but sufficiency: it takes the coat of the logos off the phenomenon of the secret and claims to reveal this phenomenon by hiding the secret of the phenomenon. The secret of the *World* was in the world and the world did not see it, and *Philosophy* only believes to make it seen on condition of destroying it as a secret. The secret of *Philosophy* was in

philosophy and philosophy did not see it, and the *World* only believes to make it seen on condition of breaking it as a secret. *Man* alone is enough to denude the secret of philosophizing sufficiency.

VI. *Reason* speaks the sufficiency of things; *Philosophy* speaks the insufficiency of *Reason*; and *Man* speaks the in-sufficiency of *Philosophy*, its “Sufficiency” or its pretention. What in turn does this say about *Man*? It says that *Man* suffices-of..., that sufficing-of is a decision that *Man* suffices for a decision and that the decision suffices (for *Philosophy*, for *Reason*) so that *Reason* speaks the sufficiency of things and *Philosophy* speaks the sufficiency of Reason. It also says that sufficiency consists in sufficing-for and that it serves as a support, and that *Man* suffices by a support for... But *Man* no longer sees this sufficiency split or disjointed from itself, he now sees it from that which it is as a proper name, the proper name of *Sufficiency* before philosophizing tautology. *Sufficiency* is now the name of this primary emotion that did not need division to appear. Sufficiency is the unbegotten child of *Man*, the child’s proper name of *Sufficiency* makes it precede philosophizing sufficiency which is not yet one such proper name and which is disjointed in the twins “Sufficiency” for and “Sufficiency” of... *Human Sufficiency* is not defined as that which suffices-of... nor as that which suffices-for. It suffices

(with) its identity before sufficing; it is human and subject before being a condition, inauguration, and decision; it is inapparent to the sufficiency of the *World* and *Philosophy*, to their strategy and calculation. Only praise, rather than logos, can speak this reality, this stability and this transcendence of undivided *Sufficiency*.

VII. *Sufficiency*, as the child of man, is the invisible sufficiency of any visible sufficiency; the proper name or the secret of tautological sufficiency. However, the latter can and must be now celebrated as the occasion necessary for *Man* so that he can beget the unbegotten *Sufficiency*, for if *Man* begets all things as unbegotten, he needs to do so by an occasion drawn from philosophical sufficiency. Without it, which is not enough and what grounds its “sufficiency,” *Man* will never have had the occasion to draw from his bosom and experience the pre-twinning simplicity of *Sufficiency*, that which—being but one Identity identical to nothing—is absolutely enough. *Sufficiency* which was exposed and considered as absolutely insufficient is once more sufficient, but under the reason of this more anterior sufficiency that the Vision-in-man gives, and only under this condition. That which is believed to be enough is not seen as dressed up with a realer sufficiency except on condition of becoming sterile or absolutely philosophically non-sufficient. The Principle of Sufficient Philosophy, this tautology is

experienced in *Man* as this name of man—the *Principle of Sufficient Philosophy*—unfindable in the kingdom of philosophy.

VIII. Philosophical sufficiency, even revealed as a pure emotion or *Sufficiency*, has not yet completed metamorphoses by which it is definitively submitted to *Man*. Even more than its unbegotten child, *Man* is the redeemer of philosophy, its most lively salvation. Man imposes upon philosophy an ultimate transformation, the only one that brings philosophy to its use as a proper name—so much less than this tautology can tolerate the absolutely proper name of *Man*, and its secret is to be revealed by remaining in the interior of this more secret interior. Philosophical sufficiency, but *Sufficiency* itself, and their unity too (the unity of the sufficient occasion so that *Man* experiences *Sufficiency* as his child), still manifests, each in their own way, an ultimate trait of pretention, and only the absolutely sufficient proper name as the proper name—*Man*—can definitively impair this pretention. Even *Sufficiency*, if it were unbegotten, if it were invisible within the horizon of philosophical sufficiency, falls under the “(non)-human” power that *Man* radiates as soon as an Other-than-Man claims to present itself before him as sufficient. The Principle of Sufficient Philosophy, but also its name, that in which *Man* experiences it, are not dejected or destroyed by him. They receive for the first

time a “(non)-human” place that keeps them, them and their pretention, away from the absolutely proper name that alone can affect them as “(non)-human.” Yet *Man* does not depose the sufficiency of the philosophical position, and even the sufficiency of *Sufficiency* forever imposed or undecided, without which, through another effect of its efficacy—the sufficiency of its solitude as *Last Instance*—*Man* does not submit them to another use. It is a philosophically non-sufficient use of the sufficiency of philosophy. By stopping to pretend to be valid for *Man*, by stopping to use its sufficiency as enough, *Philosophy* is finally with its sufficiency set to be in service of *Man* as the proper name that describes him.

The City of Nowhere: Laruelle and Urban Studies

Tony Carusi and Stephen Zepke

Abstract: What happens to urban studies when it is confronted with the radical, yet non-relational immanence of François Laruelle's non-philosophy? This is not a simple question of illuminating the *and* of our title, because for Laruelle this *and* is a *non-*, forcing us to ask how we engage with the relations constituting both the urban and its various forms of study through an approach that denies and rejects the constitutive possibility of relation itself. This question gives us a sense of the radicality of Laruelle's thought, but also of the wreckage left in non-philosophy's wake. Non-urban studies, if there should be such a thing, does not have, or emerge from, a *relation* to urban studies, but from its denial and destruction. This is a process that does not produce romantic objects of aesthetic appreciation, as in Jacques Derrida's love of ruins, but is instead a violent ruination that seeks a tabula rasa, a scorched-earth-policy applied to the very foundations of philosophy. This will be the story told here, one that begins with non-philosophy's unusual version of radical immanence.

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What happens to urban studies when it is confronted with the radical, yet non-relational immanence of François Laruelle’s non-philosophy? This is not a simple question of illuminating the *and* of our title, because for Laruelle this *and* is a *non-*, forcing us to ask how we engage with the relations constituting both the urban and its various forms of study through an approach that denies and rejects the constitutive possibility of relation itself. This question gives us a sense of the radicality of Laruelle’s thought, but also of the wreckage left in non-philosophy’s wake. Non-urban studies, if there should be such a thing, does not have, or emerge from, a *relation* to urban studies, but from its denial and destruction. This is a process that does not produce romantic objects of aesthetic appreciation, as in Jacques Derrida’s love of ruins, but is instead a violent ruination that seeks a *tabula rasa*, a scorched-earth-policy applied to the very foundations of philosophy. This will be the story told here, one that begins with non-philosophy’s unusual version of radical immanence.

Laruelle offers a unique approach to immanence, detaching it from its previous philosophical examples, which, he argues, are unable to articulate the reality of the One, and in fact deny it. The problem is that the correlation of thought and being that for Laruelle invariably defines philosophy, “is not an *addition* of reality, but a *subtraction*.”¹ This correlation or auto-positioning of thought and being places Western philosophy in a prison of its own making, one that until now it has been unable to escape. Yet, as Laruelle points out, prison walls have always been “the great support for political writing,”² and non-philosophy over-writes the structural limits of human thought and feeling to produce an “unreflected experience”³ of the Real/One, an experience without relation that avoids its incarceration within philosophy, and frees the force-of-thought to exist as undivided but nevertheless individual essence. Laruelle’s sense of righteous outrage over philosophy’s “savage” and “murderous will”⁴ is therefore appeased, it seems, by his weaponization of the *non-* as the “extinction point ... of philosophy as ontology or World-thought.”⁵ This is the “political scope” of non-philosophy’s “liberating

¹ François Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2013), 36.

² François Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics / Photo-Fiction, une esthétique non-standard*, trans. Drew S. Burk, bilingual edition (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), 125.

³ Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 42.

⁴ François Laruelle, *Theory of Identities*, trans. Alyosha Edlebi (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 5.

⁵ François Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography / Le concept de non-photographie*, trans. Robin Mackay, bilingual edition (Falmouth and New York: Urbanomic and Sequence Press, 2011), 90.

power.”⁶ It frees us from philosophy’s “enslavement of individuals to the world or to the philosophy that interpellates or represents them.”⁷ This is necessary, Laruelle claims, because philosophy “has always been conservative and authoritarian,”⁸ insofar as “new philosophical decisions remain enclosed within themselves, wrapped and encysted around the fundamental postulate that defines Greco-occidental thought.”⁹ This fundamental postulate is the correlation of thought and being, and the implications of Laruelle’s rejection of it for urban studies will be our concern for the rest of this essay.

Outside of philosophy’s hall of mirrors Laruelle’s task is “to think the unthinkable as unthinkable.”¹⁰ Laruelle’s unthinkable is the One, an “immanence foreclosed”¹¹ that requires non-philosophy—a mode of thought “degreased of philosophical domination”¹²—to think and embody it, theory and practice amounting here to the same thing. This is an act of rejection rather than revolution, “less a matter of questioning, fracturing, or displacing

objectivating or metaphysical representation, than of *resolutely thinking outside of it*.”¹³ Non-philosophy therefore starts prior to the philosophical correlation, from a new axiomatic genesis of the world announcing “the City of Nowhere.”¹⁴ Laruelle writes, “the axiom is a trace of language that also seems to come out of the void because as a burst, it has already reflected itself upon the cosmic wall and travelled this space that it fills as empty, a trace that it does not cease to return to and create as appearance of the void.”¹⁵ This void is “philosophically uncreated or non-constituted,” an “invisible, intangible, unobjectivable” reality, but One that is “perfectly thinkable.”¹⁶ This void of the City of Nowhere is the urban non-place of non-philosophy, unthinkable and unexperienceable according to any of philosophy’s assumptions. So how can we think it?

To think the One requires a “finite individual” without any reciprocal or representational relation to the One, because their immanence cannot involve any form of transcendence. This “ordinary human” is therefore “distinct from

⁶ Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 35.

⁷ Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction*, 22.

⁸ Laruelle, *Theory of Identities*, xvii.

⁹ Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 102.

¹⁰ Ibid., 35.

¹¹ François Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 222.

¹² Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction*, 26.

¹³ François Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man: On Authorities and Minorities*, trans. Jessie Hock and Alex Dubilet (Malden: Polity, 2018), 16.

¹⁴ François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), 166.

¹⁵ Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction*, 40.

¹⁶ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 18.

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objectivated or empirical realities,”¹⁷ a thought/experience¹⁸ of the One-in-One. Such a thought begins from an axiom positing the One/Real as a “given-without-giveness” that is also a “phenomenon-in-itself,” but a phenomenon detached from its perception and therefore a “strictly immanent phenomenal experience *before* (and outside of) all unitary-philosophical prejudice.”¹⁹ Laruelle posits the axiom as “merely the truth, the real possibility of demonstrated truth; it is the scientific side of utterances.”²⁰ The axiomatic One is always and already radical immanence, not in and as its objects, but in an identity that contains them. This identity therefore has two aspects, immanence foreclosed and its thought by non-philosophy, what Laruelle calls a “uni-lateral duality,”²¹ quite appropriately for our purposes here, a “uni-city”²² where “the first determines the second in-the-last-instance.” This last instance is therefore, Laruelle explains, “that which is real in itself, that is to say that which has no need of existence [i.e., being and its correlate

thought] in order to be real.”²³ When something is determined-in-the-last-instance it is experienced in its unilateral duality, or uni-city, an experience that is “defined as strictly transcendental and no longer as *simultaneously* empirical.”²⁴

This “phenomenality devoid of phenomenological operations”²⁵ requires a strange and mysterious body, one capable of seeing and feeling without having a relation to anything, seeing and feeling only through and as itself qua One. “Precisely not the phenomenological body as part of the World,” Laruelle explains, “or as thrown-into-the-World, but an originary and transcendental arche-body that is from the outset ‘vision’ through and through; but an as yet unobjectivating vision.”²⁶ A body, in other words, without objects, the better to experience “phenomena as immanent givens rather than as still-transcendent intuitions.”²⁷ This is what Laruelle calls lived experience (*vécu*), or vision-in-One, a real rather than empirical

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Benjamin Norris calls this “an *experience of thought*” insofar as, as we shall see, what Laruelle calls the “force-of-thought” constitutes all aspects of human experience. Nevertheless, as Laruelle’s non-philosophy in many ways rejects the possibility of distinguishing experience and thought, we shall retain “thought/experience.” See Benjamin Norris, “*Expérience in the (Philosophical) Abyss*,” in *Superpositions: Laruelle and the Humanities*, ed. Rocco Gangle (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), 103.

¹⁹ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 15.

²⁰ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, 53.

²¹ François Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, trans. Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2015), 47.

²² Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, 138.

²³ François Laruelle, *From Decision to Heresy: Experiments in Non-Standard Thought*, trans. Robin Mackay (Falmouth and New York: Urbanomic and Sequence Press, 2012), 395.

²⁴ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 19.

²⁵ Ibid., 15.

²⁶ Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, 12.

²⁷ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 15.

experience that does not follow the assumptions of Aesthetics because it perceives particles that, like those of quantum physics, “escape earlier modes of visibility and objectivation.”²⁸ It is, he says, “a lived experience (of) immanence that is enjoyed before every sensible or intellectual ‘intuition.’”²⁹ This is the beginning of “a Real Critique of Reason.”³⁰

In Immanuel Kant’s First Critique, the Transcendental Aesthetic establishes time and space as the a priori forms of intuition, and the Metaphysical Deduction of the a priori categories provide the conditions of judgement. This empirical-transcendental schematism, i.e., correlation, and its production of synthetic a priori judgements produces both objects of experience and knowledge about them, and is arguably the most influential account of how we represent the real. Laruelle’s system, on the other hand, is based on identity, evaporating the distance between concepts and intuition that in Kantianism acts as the condition of possibility of objects and their experience. As a result, Laruelle claims, “the Real as Given-without-givenness excludes any ‘phenomenological

distance,”³¹ and is experienced instead in “individual thought that gives up concrete representations, representation in all its forms, excluding any figuration whatsoever.”³² The radicality of this cannot be understated, for, as Laruelle puts it, “absolute lived experience is independent from ‘life’ itself.”³³

The human sciences (including urban studies), or what Laruelle calls authorities, only explore the “merely imaginary phenomena”³⁴ of our (so-called) World, hallucinations derived from the “phantasmatic projection of Greco-Christian ontological prejudices onto real man.”³⁵ This real man, or ordinary man as Laruelle more frequently calls him, gives rise to a new, transcendental, and rigorous science that is capable of seeing in a non-empirical way his real and “non-circular essence.”³⁶ Based on the One, this “non-empirical (non-worldly, non-historical, non-linguistic, non-sexual, etc.)”³⁷ science reveals a man without predicates, “*anterior even to relations, social or not*,”³⁸ a man determined in the last instance by and as the One. This man without predicates lives in the City of Nowhere, freed from all social relation, and

²⁸ Ibid., 16.

²⁹ François Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers: Science des hommes, démocratie, non-psychanalyse* (Paris: Kimé, 1995), 45. We would like to thank Jeremy R. Smith for sharing his translation of this book with us.

³⁰ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 29.

³¹ François Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2013), 53.

³² Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 20.

³³ Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers*, 158.

³⁴ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 3.

³⁵ Ibid., 4.

³⁶ Ibid., 6.

³⁷ Ibid., 8.

³⁸ Ibid., 26.

indeed, the social itself. Such men “are invisible to the light of Reason or Intelligence,” enabling them to experience a “non-philosophical affect: rendering perceptible the immanent givens, the non-hallucinatory reality, *the finite transcendental experience* in man.”³⁹ As opposed to the human sciences that mix empirical with transcendental experience, then, a rigorous science of ordinary men thinks/feels the “true immanent givens, real essences lived in pre-political, pre-linguistic, etc., experiences.”⁴⁰ Ordinary men contemplate their real and immanent essence, just as a rigorous science gives “an immanent or unreflexive description (of) the phenomenal experiences that are the real content of the life of man and his relations to the World.”⁴¹ Laruelle’s rigorous science therefore “takes man as the real or lived experience of ordinary men,” and requires “an aprioristic indifference to the philosophical.”⁴² The contemplation of “strictly immanent phenomenal experiences *before* (and outside of) all unitary-philosophical prejudice” are real phenomenal givens and ground the latent phenomenology of non-philosophy, or a “phenomenality devoid of phenomenological operations.”⁴³

We might think, then, that Laruelle’s Real/One is a “return” to noumena, but if so, it is

dualized into an identity with phenomena, radicalizing and transforming Kant’s positioning of them. As Laruelle admits: “The Real is more like Kant’s ‘thing-in-itself’: unknowable and even unthinkable, but with the difference that it is not so from transcendence but from immanence (the One and not the Other) foreclosed and that it consists in an experience or a knowing of the third type, the vision-in-One.”⁴⁴ Vision-in-One, as we shall see, is a strange kind of experience that gives neither a philosophical concept nor an empirical sensation, but rather a vision of and by the One. “Vision-in-One,” Laruelle tells us, “is the experience that the One is the absolutely sufficient element of thought.”⁴⁵ These passages indifferentiating experience and thought make it clear that vision-in-One no longer abides by the empirical-metaphysical correlation established in Kant’s First Critique, because the experience of a thought of the essence of the One never leaves the One; it is, Laruelle says, “a vision of philosophy from the One and ‘in’ it.”⁴⁶ Radical immanence.

Foreshadowing what the non- will do to urban studies, Laruelle affixes non- to an eviscerated Kantianism writing that:

³⁹ Ibid., 9-10.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 20.

⁴¹ Ibid., 14.

⁴² Ibid., 22.

⁴³ Ibid., 14-15.

⁴⁴ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 222.

⁴⁵ Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 34.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 35.

Kantianism is more than inverted and gives place to a non-Kantianism: this is the in itself as phenomenon or given-without-givenness that limits every philosophical givenness and position. It cannot then concern either an ontic or empirical in itself, a simple (philosophical) object projected beyond philosophy; nor an in itself posed expressly by philosophy under the form of an essence of things or a metaphysical entity. But instead an in itself that manifests itself as a mode of FT [force-of-thought] itself and which, without being a philosophical operation, can reduce philosophy to the state of a simple a priori. This in itself that delimits philosophy is the *identity* of phenomena = X and philosophy. It has the following general concrete form: the *essence-(of)-X* or *thought-X* (essence-(of)-science, essence-(of)-art, thought-science, thought-art, etc.).⁴⁷

In a more ruinous register of non-Kantianism, Laruelle elsewhere describes non-philosophy as “the necessary destruction of the Copernican Revolution.”⁴⁸ From this destructive act, thought/experience proceeds aprioristically

from the axiom of the One in which “*the real conditions of experience and those of the object of experience are identical-in-the-last-instance*.” This is the base from which non-philosophy is deployed.⁴⁹ Laruelle’s shift to non-philosophy detaches experience and thought from any transcendental conditions of possibility (which enable representation to subtract phenomena from the real), making them radically immanent with the One. As a result, Laruelle offers a generalized Transcendental Aesthetic qua Givenness, as a “theory of ‘something in general’ insofar as it is given,”⁵⁰ and a generalized Transcendental Logic or formal ontology as a “theory of something in general insofar as it is posited.”⁵¹ Both contain the a prioris of Transcendence, Position, and Unity, which are the real “essences” of the “cloned identities” of the “One-real.”⁵² The One, Laruelle says, is “the immanent body *within* which we see and assemble the universal lines or aprioritic dimensions of the World.”⁵³ In this sense, Laruelle replaces the Kantian schematism with the “givenness/position couple”⁵⁴ as determined-in-the-last-instance by force (of) thought. “Thus,” Laruelle finally claims, “the circle which affects the Kantian and Husserlian

⁴⁷ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 257.

⁴⁸ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 14.

⁴⁹ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 8.

⁵⁰ Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, 65.

⁵¹ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 280.

⁵² Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, 66.

⁵³ Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 42.

⁵⁴ Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, 66.

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concepts of aesthetics and logic is broken.”⁵⁵ There are a prioris in Laruelle, but rather than being transcendental conditions, they are real essences: “By *real a priori*,” he writes, “I describe the essence of existent things, an essence that thought describes as determined in the last instance by the real.”⁵⁶ This is the base of what Laruelle calls his transcendental generalized Aesthetic and Logic, which are no longer correlated with each other, but are “*relatively autonomous*”⁵⁷ and simultaneously enable non-philosophy to proceed aprioristically and non-relationally clear of the wreckage of Kant’s transcendental subject, and correlationism more generally.

Laruelle consequently proposes a “Transcendental realism,”⁵⁸ but one, as Ray Brassier explains,

wherein the object is no longer conceived of as a substance but rather as a discontinuous cut in the fabric of ontological synthesis. It is no longer thought that determines the object, whether through representation or intuition, but rather the object that seizes

thought and forces it to think, or better, *according* to it. This objective determination takes the form of a unilateral duality whereby the object thinks through the subject.⁵⁹

The force of thought thereby “mimes its unobjectifiable opacity”⁶⁰ to produce a discontinuous or unilateralizing identity, a “syntax without synthesis”⁶¹ proper to an object’s “diachronicity rooted in the voiding of being-nothing.”⁶² As Laruelle nicely puts it, this is “the end of realism via an excess of the real.”⁶³ This discontinuous excess of the One remains in contact with what it determines-in-the-last-instance (what Laruelle will call, again referencing Kant, “object X”), their dualized identity revealing, Laruelle claims, “transcendence as the essence of philosophizing and more specifically as the essence of apriority. It [the object X] is determined-in-the-last-instance by the Real and takes on the noetic form of a ‘non-phenomenological distance’ deprived of its autopoitional doublet [i.e., correlation].”⁶⁴ Non-phenomenological distance describes the double-identity of the One-in-One, of the radically immanent One that remains foreclosed, and its

⁵⁵ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 282.

⁵⁶ Laruelle, *From Decision to Heresy*, 395.

⁵⁷ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 280-82.

⁵⁸ Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 43.

⁵⁹ Ray Brassier, *Nil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 149.

⁶⁰ Brassier, *Nil Unbound*, 138.

⁶¹ Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, 42.

⁶² Brassier, *Nil Unbound*, 149.

⁶³ Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction*, 21.

⁶⁴ Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, 54.

clone that it nevertheless determines-in-the-last-instance.

Laruelle's account of non-photography gives us a practical example of all of this: "Photographs are the thousand flat facets of an ungraspable identity that only shines—at times faintly—through something else."⁶⁵ Here, we must emphasize the "flat" and qualify the "shines through" in order to reach the non-photographic instance by which we can, Laruelle claims, "'see' photography anew."⁶⁶ To "see" in this way requires "*vision-force*"⁶⁷ or "vision-in-One,"⁶⁸ a non-phenomenological experience shorn of "external realism [and without] perception and any appearance of depth. It is taking a photo with one's eyes closed,"⁶⁹ and "a discursive photography rather than visual ... intellectually optical,"⁷⁰ which determines-(appearance)-in-the-last-instance. Without dualism the One cannot constitute itself, inasmuch as a self (what Laruelle calls the "Ego-without-giveness"⁷¹) is not separate or alienated from itself. The One (is) instead the finitude (object X) that thinks it, and determination in the last instance (DLI) operates on both aspects of that non-relation, determining the

thought/experience of the One according to its actual foreclosure. Force-of-thought objectifies this foreclosure in a thought/experience (object X, non-photography, vision-in-One, *jouissance*, etc.), but this does not alienate the One because non-philosophy thinks/experiences immanence foreclosed from within immanence.⁷² The One is therefore, according to Laruelle, "'in relation' (to) self, since auto-impression constitutes the self and more than self: the lived Identity which is that (of) lived experience."⁷³ The self-sufficient given-without-giveness of the One is "a real 'experience' which is foreclosed to knowledge but not exterior or transcendent to it, and is therefore capable of determining it outside of every relation"⁷⁴:

the object X to be known must, *on the one hand*, be experienced as radically immanent (meaning seen-in-One, an object of the vision-in-One) so that it can, on the other hand, itself determine its own understanding under that form. This determination is a cloning by itself but as One or immanent, of its understanding. ... DLI fully deployed is the

⁶⁵ Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, vii.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 33.

⁶⁹ Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction*, 7.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁷¹ Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers*, 120.

⁷² Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 40.

⁷³ Ibid., 41.

⁷⁴ Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, 51.

causality that makes it universally possible for any object X to determine for itself, *but in-the-last-instance*, its own “real” knowledge.⁷⁵

As a result, the transcendental subject is banished because knowledge is both subject and object in-the-last-instance, “knowing” itself beyond any duality or relation. Knowledge in this sense is both ontological and theoretical (experience and knowledge), because DLI qua dualysis is the immanent cause and object of its own theory, as “irreducible though undivided dualities.”⁷⁶ This is radical immanence as the chicken *and* the egg, or as Laruelle puts it: “The object X is identically cause-of-the-last-instance of its knowledge and a known object”⁷⁷ to posit the already-there—the One—and this posited “already” determines the object X in the last instance, or as Laruelle has it, “*being-foreclosed does not make knowledge possible but determines it.*”⁷⁸ This is what Laruelle calls “scientific knowledge” insofar as it implies a realism in excess of philosophical reality. This realism (that produced by DLI) allows the object X to be “a mode of the Real; that it be seen-in-One or ‘affected’ by the vision-in-One,”⁷⁹ but this is not,

however, an object of urban studies, and non-urban studies cannot, as a result, be compared with it, or considered a version of it. This is perhaps no better illustrated than by considering the well-known claim of Manfredo Tafuri that architecture remains in crisis insofar as its subjection to capitalist forms overrides any other architectural or social functions. While Tafuri claims that any criticism of this process must put itself into crisis, insofar as any genuine criticism attacks (capitalist) reality itself,⁸⁰ Laruelle goes further in claiming vision-in-One provides a pre-political experience that escapes the dialectical movement of crisis itself, making DLI completely transcendent to and autonomous from “the World or universal capitalism.”⁸¹ Nevertheless, this transcendent and autonomous operation of DLI is immanent in the World, and “vision-in-One can only clone an identity from the materials of the mixture that the capital-world provides for it,”⁸² not an escape from the urban, for example, but from the very conditions of politics itself. Laruelle proposes changing the World through its abandonment.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers*, 121.

⁷⁷ Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, 52.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 53.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 54.

⁸⁰ Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, trans. Pellegrino d’Acierno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 9-13.

⁸¹ Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, 53.

⁸² Ibid., 59.

For the unthinkable, non-relational One to be thought, Laruelle argues, it must pass through a special structure (non-philosophy) that detaches it from the (philosophical) correlation and therefore allows it to refer to itself immediately, through a knowledge (of) self that does not pass through the World, but is “an immanence that enjoys (of) self and solely (of) self without surpassing itself ... that it be self-*jouissance* without any relation to itself or any disjunction.”⁸³ This “*auto-impression*” or “immediacy (to) self” does not, Laruelle claims, offer a “topology for existence,”⁸⁴ but it does establish an interiority, in and as the One, a self, or what Laruelle variously calls the Stranger, ordinary man, “man himself as One-subject of science,”⁸⁵ or the human who enjoys “the most radical lived experience from the start, the lived (of) lived experience or what makes lived experience possess an inalienable immanent being.”⁸⁶ Nothing less, Laruelle writes, than an “empiricism (of the) Radical.”⁸⁷ The body therefore remains in play as the site of vision-in-One and the thought/experience that goes with it, but this is not the corporeal flesh of the phenomenological body, rather, “an originary and transcendental arche-body” made up

entirely of “an as yet un-objectivating vision.”⁸⁸ This is “perception without depth,”⁸⁹ an immanent empiricism detached from the self-contained body of a subject, an “insurrection” that “manifests itself by an effect of heteronomous subtraction, heteronomous precisely via its immanence, on corpuscular transcendence.”⁹⁰ To subtract the transcendent body from a purely interior vision-in-One, or the “non-positional self-vision-force,” is to unleash a “passive and impotent ... indivisible flux of vision,”⁹¹ a radical lived experience that is not without “*jouissance*.”⁹² What is interesting about this non-psychoanalytical affect of immanent *jouissance* is that its experience is at once mystical, therapeutic, and non-political (in the sense discussed above), evacuating human beings from the world of

pain and disquietude, war and violence that animate culture, language, society—and philosophy too, which adds to this malaise. It is from there that it can manifest and contribute to constituting a non-political democracy as the “transcendental order” of the Stranger and, in its specific order, the non-

⁸³ Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 36.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 38.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 101.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 38.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, 12.

⁸⁹ Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction*, 53.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 61.

⁹¹ Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, 13.

⁹² Laruelle develops his concept of *jouissance* in *Théorie des étrangers*, where he extracts it from its psychoanalytical usage, and distinguishes it from what he calls “the Enjoyed” (*Jouir*).

analytic destiny of the “subjects of the unconscious” that we are.⁹³

When seen from the all-too-human perspective of the World, this non-political democracy and its generic humanity can seem like a program of infinite resignation, a continuous leaving of the world. While this is to a certain extent inevitable, inasmuch as non-philosophy necessarily begins as a process of extraction, the challenge remains to try to experience Laruelle’s immanent *jouissance* in a positive sense, and to describe it as such.

The difficulties, but also the rewards, of this at once extractive and positive program of non-philosophy can be seen by returning to our example of non-photography:

We shall thus eliminate from our method the point of view of styles and techniques: this is not our concern. We shall give a description, nothing more; we shall call “essence of photography” only that which we ourselves as vision-force can describe ... The essence of the photographic stance must not be conflated with its conditions of existence in perception, in the history of

styles and the evolution of techniques.⁹⁴

We have already traced some of the ways Laruelle severs perception from vision-in-One, and how this takes us far away from any of Kant’s conditions of possible experience. But this passage also illustrates the aggression of Laruelle’s stance, whose non- leaves nothing of its object standing, bar the terminology it has appropriated, ushering us into the non-place and its horizon of scorched-earth.

From what we have seen, Laruelle provides us with an in-utero theory of non-urban studies that would reject spatiality and temporality in favor of Givenness and Positing to discover and describe the ways the objects of urban studies are determined in the last instance. In this sense, non-urban studies would lead on to a generic science in Laruelle’s specific sense, “not as an artificial perception of the World (this would suppose the philosophical model of perception), but an artificial science or a technological simulation of science, supposing once more, one last time, the World in its transcendent reality.”⁹⁵ Science would provide a symbolization of the real that does not represent it, but rather imposes vision-force as the real condition of existence in order to create a

⁹³ Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers*, 5.

⁹⁴ Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, 6-7.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 10.

“scientific experience”⁹⁶ of the world. Laruelle calls this process an “artistic practice,”⁹⁷ no doubt because it is as creative as it is destructive. But its creativity is naïve, because it is not a representation or even expression of the World, but a “return to the body as undivided vision-force,” a return that is knowingly naïve in positing its absolute reality, and thus its “absolute disenchantment” from received knowledge.⁹⁸ In this sense, then, non-urban studies would not analyze, or even relate to the city, its streets and houses, its waterfronts and walkways, except subtractively through the non-. Instead, a non-urban studies supposes this strangely idempotent and asubjective body, “condemned to see according to itself and to remain in itself—but precisely without being, for all that, a rational subject ‘looking down on’ the World.”⁹⁹ Not a cartographer, then, but a solitary human without a subject. Laruelle calls this non-actor an “utopian body,”¹⁰⁰ and indeed its project is revolutionary, overthrowing transcendence in the city “and all the phenomena of Authority that follow from it.”¹⁰¹

Vision-force considers the same urban materials we all inhabit, the same buildings, people,

streets, cars, parks, etc., yet these “enjoy an absolutely different transcendental status,”¹⁰² and have, we might say, a different substance, i.e., a non-substance. As a result, non-urban studies refutes a city “normalized and coded” by the World, but rather addresses a new “quasi-space” entirely distinct from the World and from the object, a quasi-space that nevertheless is “the ‘in-itself’ of the object.”¹⁰³ This autonomous in-itself is not continuous with perceived being, and in fact is separated from it by an “unbridgeable abyss..., a quasi-field of presence empty not only of present objects, but of all syntax, structure, or articulation,” a pure ideality, Laruelle will say, but without the limits imposed by philosophical Idealism.¹⁰⁴ On the one hand, this feels like a liberation, or at the very least a revelation, insofar as Laruelle’s genealogy of the correlation is convincing. But on the other, in tarring the entire history of philosophy with the same brush (“empirico-transcendental parallelism is the Greco-Occidental itself”¹⁰⁵), Laruelle often seems restricted to repeating the radicality of his own non-position and condemning the rest. As Brassier points out, Laruelle’s work

⁹⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 14.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 20-21.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 21-22.

¹⁰⁵ François Laruelle, *Philosophies of Difference: A Critical Introduction to Non-Philosophy*, trans. Rocco Gangle (London: Continuum, 2010), 17.

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is at once over-determined by the negative characterization of philosophy as decision, upon which it entirely depends, and... significantly insensitive to the vagaries of concrete specificity which, for all its faults, philosophical conceptualization is acute enough to register. Lacking the capacity for conceptual specificity... [non-philosophy] is too loose-cut to fit its object; too coarse-grained to provide useful conceptual traction upon the material for which it is supposedly designed.¹⁰⁶

While Brassier's criticisms seem plausible, at least from the side of philosophy that he is defending, they also seem to deny the intriguing and still largely unexplored possibilities of a non-philosophical artistic practice that creates knowledge/experience of the One in the realm of non-urban studies.

Hannah Hopewell has offered a compelling example of this in *Notes from the Urban Intertidal: A Paraontological Leaning*, which folds poetry,

photography, and theoretical reflection into a “non-philosophical encounter”¹⁰⁷ with the urban fabric. Exploring the generic urban,¹⁰⁸ Hopewell first of all abandons any genre sufficiency, utilizing a post-disciplinary approach that seeks to escape description or expression in favor of a radically immanent psychic geography of the non-Urban “experience”: “The lived,” she writes, “is experienced in reading terrain, but only as experience that offers no standing, nor standard for its own description or interpretation, yet troubles understandings of the City’s proper subjects and objects, even when both are radically miscalculated.”¹⁰⁹ This lived experience of the Urban, this city of *jouissance*, she argues, is an “aporic impossible” operating as an “aesthetico-political” strategy that grafts the radicalized experience of non-time, of non-active resistance to capital-time’s notions of progress and linearity. This aporia equally, or correspondingly, names that mute non-space of the subject, quality of the human *before* the subject-of-enunciation.”¹¹⁰ Such an approach “forecloses representations of a recognizable city. At the same time, traversal

¹⁰⁶ Brassier, *Nihil Unbound*, 132-33.

¹⁰⁷ Hannah Hopewell, *Notes from the Urban Intertidal: A Paraontological Leaning* (Doctoral Dissertation, Auckland University of Technology, School of Art and Design, 2019), 219, <https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/handle/10292/13490>.

¹⁰⁸ The generic is an important concept in Laruelle, one that describes the state/process of the aprioric already, and its actual application to the World in the non-. In this sense, the generic is scientific in Laruelle’s sense, the state of something’s reality after the World has been subtracted from it.

¹⁰⁹ Hopewell, *Notes from the Urban Intertidal*, 151.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 341.

consents me to the worklessness of ‘focusing’ the generic, without ever receiving perceptual clarity.”¹¹¹ This non-reception of the urban qua genre(s) opens up a new field of *generic practice* Hopewell calls *para-fictioning*, one allowing her to “think with urban waterfront landscapes, rather than about them, revealing a vantage that enables me to participate in transformations of the category of truth regarding the urban. The aim is not to develop a positional ontology from which to think, but to evolve a technology to think-with and, thus, to write-with.”¹¹² This approach seems to us full of possibilities, offering a non-relational resistance to urban studies.

Urban studies (to ventriloquize Laruelle) is a philosophical attempt to transcend the immanence of the One in order to supplant determination-in-the-last-instance with its own transcendent authority, a “confusion of the thing with logos ... [as] the core of contemporary thought.”¹¹³ Urban studies does this primarily under the conceptual system of the topological, which imposes the correlationist mode on every conceptualization and experience of place. As a result, Laruelle writes, “for a non-philosophy or a theory, we need a condition of objectivity that is not space/time.”¹¹⁴ Thinking

space as a condition of objects and subjects founds a geography-of-the-World that includes urban studies and assumes that the sufficiency of reason explains/determines the subject with/in topological place. In this sense, urban studies, and geography more generally, produce, ground, and constitute a transcendental topology-of-the-World, a hallucination of the already-built world as it is inscribed by centered and decentered relations, be they dialectical, rhizomatic, chiasmatic, or some other arrangement that urban studies abstracts into a topological form.

This autopoisoning topology of urban studies orients flows, obstructions, stillnesses, and voids within and across city-space deciphering buildings, street corners, and bike lanes, but also direction, movement, navigation, and other modes of urban orientation. Yet non-urban studies has no orientation. In its uni-lation with the One (as opposed to re-lation), non-urban studies is oriented-without-orientation, avoiding a *telos* or horizon of any kind, for in its absolute immanence it obliterates the outside. This is not to say buildings, movement, direction, etc., are foreign to non-urban studies, but they must be experienced/thought as determined-in-the-last-instance, outside of space

¹¹¹ Ibid., 342.

¹¹² Ibid., 210.

¹¹³ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 114.

¹¹⁴ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 117.

and time. Taking non-urban studies in its reality, prior to any philosophical orientation towards, i.e., correlation with, the world suggests a unity of the urban untouched by philosophical sufficiency and indifferent to its subjects and objects. The non-urban is primitive, a *chōra* that “is determined by the finitude of the One and merges with the indifference of the One ... towards the World, etc. It is the site as void, the void as em-placement, the void that is positive only by remaining immobile close to itself and excluding all movement.”¹¹⁵ Perhaps, then, the most difficult task of a non-urban studies will be to describe place as em-placement, that is, in its priority to the topological relations constitutive of the urban and its study. In other words, the task for non-urban studies is to produce a theory of the urban without constituting it as an object or subject, a task that only appears negative from the side of urban studies. This em-placement is not a privation but a positive void, “an irreversible order that removes the World from the subject”¹¹⁶ and the starting point of a non-urban studies.

Setting out for the “City of Nowhere” as a radical alternative to the city of urban studies, Laruelle’s city demands a previously unthought mode of habitation: a city irreversibly

determined by ordinary man, that is, by the unalienated human. A rigorous science of ordinary man removes the “philosophy-form” that “regulates the relations between man and the city”, or “being-in-the-city,” replacing it with “a unified theory of the Stranger.”¹¹⁷ As a result, the Stranger disengages from what Laruelle calls, “the processes of technological division that philosophy exercises over man as being-in-the-World and the-City, in History and Life.”¹¹⁸ This is the strange sense of Laruelle’s science: it “captures and interiorizes” the City and its human occupants “in a machine which is stranger to them, which withdraws from them for its own account a surplus-value of reality and authority, thereby universalizing them according to a mode of thought that does not violate them.”¹¹⁹ This process, Laruelle claims, establishes a “political science which is founded on the Given of man-as-Stranger(s); consequently, on a non-political Given.”¹²⁰

Laruelle clearly describes this non-political science in *Introduction to Non-Marxism*. “Marxism has necessarily confused the practical intervention into the World itself with the constitution of another city, a City of the Proletariat (of the Stranger), from out of the World and using

¹¹⁵ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 117.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 116.

¹¹⁷ Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, 137-38.

¹¹⁸ Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers*, 24.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 65.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 89.

it.”¹²¹ But, it must be remembered, these are materials that have been radically purified of the World, simply “necessary material from which man can construct a City for which there is no map in Society, Culture, or History. Let us say *a transcendental City of Men as uni-versal Strangers or as non-proletarians*.”¹²² This appeal to Marxism supports Laruelle’s advocacy of Democracy, even if “class struggle understood philosophically as division and contradiction are [merely] the occasions, materials, and models for a dual or uni-versal City that builds itself according to these entirely worldly and worldized [*mondaines et mondialisées*] cities, but built according to man.”¹²³ Clearly, class struggle is part of the World Laruelle rejects, and it is only through this rejection that he uses its material for his own project, one in which “only the democracy of Strangers is according-to-man and not against man.”¹²⁴

The City purified of philosophically (and, it seems, politically) tainted humans by a rigorous science is inhabited instead by a solitary Stranger, constituting a democracy of the radically indifferent. As Laruelle puts it, “every man, absolutely each man, philosopher or not,

is no longer an element of the All or the supposedly real City, but a solitary I that solitude neither does nor un-does *de facto*, and by drawing the theorem according to which it is, under certain conditions, also by right a Stranger in the multiple state.”¹²⁵ This multiple Stranger (or what Laruelle elsewhere calls the “Proletariat” or “non-proletarian”¹²⁶) constitutes Democracy not as an object of thought per se, but the essence of knowledges produced by the force of thought, which enjoy an absolute equality.¹²⁷ Whereas philosophy understands the relations between people living in a city as being equal and reciprocal, this is only possible if philosophy over-rides the radical immanence of the One, resulting in “an objective democratic appearance and a real anti-democracy.”¹²⁸ The Stranger cannot live under such conditions, appearing instead in a “void” of its own making, “it transcendently anesthetizes all types of (psychological, sociological) conditioning. The void is also fully positive *qua* identity of universal law, which is itself in flesh and blood. The content of this void is precisely a transcendental multitude, a non-autopositional democracy.”¹²⁹ The Stranger builds, we might say, a void-City, “a transcendental City that is not on

¹²¹ Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, 93.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 148.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Idem.*

¹²⁵ Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers*, 75.

¹²⁶ Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, 93, 148.

¹²⁷ Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, 46.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

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this World without thereby being abstract, since they would be cloned from this World or the philosophical City. Democracy is the excess of the explication over what it must explicate: the default universal war of uni-versality, i.e., of identity.”¹³⁰

This war, however, does not involve inter-vention, as we have seen, and as such is wholly indifferent to the city of urban studies, which nevertheless provides its materials. The city of non-urban studies is rather the purification of its own mode of thought, liberating the thought-world from its philosophical over-determination, and enabling the construction of “a Utopian City of Heretics, built with world-materials.”¹³¹ This evocation of utopia establishes the futural place of non-philosophy, a radical “to come” whose arrival depends on our accepting its eternal and universal self-evidence. The axiom, Laruelle tells us, “speaks within the oracle that announces the future and does nothing but announce it, and acts by this ambivalent announcement.”¹³² This “mode of the Future of a City of heretics”¹³³ is radically separate, as Laruelle’s axiom must be, but at the same time, its oracle “needs a priest-subject to untangle the meaning”¹³⁴ and distribute it.

Enter the ordinary human of non-urban studies, a non-specialist and artist.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 143.

¹³¹ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, 153.

¹³² Ibid., 53.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Idem.

L'Utopie des Étrangers peut-elle être une Cité?: Une (re)lecture radicale de *La lutte et l'utopie à la fin des temps philosophiques*

Sophie Lesueurss

Résumé: Dans les temps troublés et très incertains que nous connaissons, la tentation est grande de vouloir (re)construire un espace sûr, imaginer de nouvelles formes d'existence humaines porteuses d'espoir... Quoi de plus naturel? A ce titre, les réflexions pouvant être menées sur la *cité* , en tant que creuset ancestral de nos relations et échanges inter-humains occupent une place de premier plan. *Quelle cité pour demain?* est un thème majeur qui occupe ou à tout le moins préoccupe nos contemporains de par le monde. Et en tant que non-philosophes, bien sûr, nous sommes tentés par l'aventure. Aussi la question de savoir ce que *peut* la non-philosophie dans ce contexte se pose, inéluctablement. Mais tout aussi inéluctablement et immanquablement apparaissent les chausse-trappes de la Pensée-monde, si ce n'est de la philosophie, prêtes à nous (ac)cueillir dans nos errances. Ainsi notamment, le terme même de *cité* , employé par François Laruelle lui-même plusieurs fois, dans ses écrits, qui pourrait sembler légitimer son usage dans cette démarche en vue mener une réflexion concrète de cet ordre, doit être analysé plus profondément et précisément. Quel impact peut avoir concrètement la non-philosophie sur le Monde ? En tant que non-philosophes, devons-nous totalement nous résoudre à un non-agir indifférent à la marche mondaine et donc à un sort scellé des humains présents et à venir? Qu'est-ce qu'une *utopie* qui vient unilatéralement au Monde et qui ne bascule pas dans les mirages et la croyance en une efficience et une matérialisation mondaine?

Sophie Lesueur first studied political philosophy at the Lyon Institute of Political Studies. In 1997 Lesueur enrolled in a philosophy degree at Nanterre, taking François Laruelle's introductory course on non-philosophy. Laruelle was Lesueur's supervisor for Masters 1 and 2, and then for her thesis defended in 2008. Entitled *Non-philosophie du sujet politique: Une généalogie du pouvoir*, it has been published in its definitive form in 2021. Since 2008, Lesueur has pursued independent research in the development and extension of Laruelle's non-philosophical thinking. In particular, exploring a number of issues and concrete implications that Laruelle evokes at various points in his work, without however developing or making them explicit. She also wishes to reveal the concrete existential declensions of this thought and posture. On the basis of theoretical and practical experience of non-philosophy, Lesueur leaves certain aspects of traditional Western philosophical thought behind once and for all, to move forward as a kind of bridgehead even further towards and into the heart of radically different thought and practice.

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En 2004, dans *La lutte et l'utopie à la fin des temps philosophiques*, François Laruelle s'applique notamment «à mettre en garde les non-philosophes contre la tentation de se retourner en arrière, vers la philosophie»¹. La non-philosophie est en effet «sans cesse menacée par un retour de théoricisme» précise-t-il plus loin². Or, il y a de multiples manières de faire retour à la philosophie, et surtout à la Pensée-monde, qui prétendant pouvoir tout penser, l'englobe mais ne s'y réduit pas; le glissement peut être subreptice, imperceptible, délicat. D'où l'un des problèmes essentiels pour un non-philosophe: la rigueur. Être non-philosophiquement rigoureux implique de faire preuve d'une grande vigilance afin de ne pas retomber dans les rêts de la Pensée-monde, qui telle une sirène ensorceleuse chante en permanence dans nos esprits. Il nous faut cultiver la solide détermination d'Ulysse pour ne pas y céder, surtout dans les temps troublés que nous connaissons, où l'Humain croule sous des montagnes d'informations contradictoires, où les représentations mondaines s'affrontent avec violence, où la manipulation de masse est plus que jamais la norme; où, de ce fait, les projections se font plus spontanées et donc où notre vigilance diminue, voire s'évanouit. Lorsque l'avenir devient plus qu'incertain et

que s'annoncent des changements majeurs, lorsqu'un champ lexical eschatologique emplit l'espace de débat, lorsque l'insécurité et la peur dominant, la tentation est grande de vouloir (re)construire un espace sécurisé, imaginer de nouvelles formes d'existence humaines porteuses d'espoir... Quoi de plus naturel? À ce titre, les réflexions pouvant être menées sur la *cité* , en tant que creuset ancestral de nos relations et échanges inter-humains occupent une place de premier plan. *Quelle cité pour demain?* est un thème majeur qui occupe ou à tout le moins préoccupe nos contemporains de par le monde. Et en tant que non-philosophes, bien sûr, nous sommes tentés par l'aventure. Aussi la question de savoir ce que *peut* la non-philosophie dans ce contexte se pose, inéluctablement. Mais tout aussi inéluctablement et immanquablement apparaissent les chausse-trappes de la Pensée-monde, si ce n'est de la philosophie, prêtes à nous (ac)cueillir dans nos errances. Attention: en acceptant une fois encore d'être *jetés dans la Caverne*, le non-philosophe doit bien prendre garde de ne pas s'y égarer, de ne point se laisser (ré)abuser par les ombres portées, et surtout ne pas oublier *pourquoi* il accepte d'y être jeté: «pour troubler la bonne conscience du Monde par l'hérésie» rappelle Laruelle³. Et dans notre cheminement de prendre garde aux mots

¹ François Laruelle, *La lutte et l'utopie à la fin des temps philosophiques* (Paris, Kimé, 2004), 26.

² Laruelle, *La lutte et l'utopie*, 117.

³ Laruelle, *La lutte et l'utopie*, 138-40.

employés. Car le *Logos* veille; tel le Minotaure, gardien du labyrinthe, qui ne manquera pas de se saisir de nous à la moindre imprudente distraction. Ainsi notamment, le terme même de *cité* , employé par Laruelle lui-même plusieurs fois, dans cet ouvrage et dans d'autres écrits, qui pourrait sembler légitimer son usage dans cette démarche en vue mener une réflexion concrète de cet ordre, doit être analysé plus profondément et précisément.

La recherche des conditions de possibilité d'un vivre-ensemble non déterminé par la Pensée-monde passe effectivement par une réflexion sur la notion de *cité* . Ce terme, issu du grec *polis* et du latin *civitas* , renvoie à une réalité bien plus ancestrale. Dès l'Âge du Bronze et même, selon certains archéologues, le Néolithique, des structures relevant de ce concept existent déjà; ces ensembles sont caractérisés par un regroupement d'individus sous des règles et institutions communes, physiquement reconnaissable par une délimitation spatiale précise. En effet, le principe et l'élaboration de la cité sont d'abord motivés par la volonté de distinguer ceux qui vivent dans l'acceptation des règles édictées – d'où le terme de *civilisés* – des autres, les barbares, qui par voie de conséquence, relèvent d'un niveau inférieur d'humanité et sont de fait mis au ban, c'est à dire exilés *hors de* . La délimitation physique du territoire consiste en un mur d'enceinte ou un

fossé, symbole de protection autant que de division, qui reflète dès les origines la peur de l'autre, de l'inconnu potentiel. L'idée est déjà de *faire corps* , par-delà les différences, de constituer un corps social, aussi clairement délimité et harmonieusement organisé qu'un corps physique humain. Dans cette optique, il est fondé de manière ritualisée en vue de lui donner un caractère sacré. Une autre motivation relève d'un autre type de protection: il s'agit de sortir de la précarité économique qui était encore celle du village, même sédentarisé, en organisant d'abord l'engrangement à long terme des récoltes afin d'échapper aux famines, puis par les surplus de production et la division du travail, une accumulation pérenne des richesses qui assure la viabilité et la sécurité globale de la structure et donc de ses habitants. La *polis* grecque s'inscrit dans cette même veine, en mettant encore davantage l'accent sur le projet commun d'un vivre-ensemble, ce *corps* social qui reflète la conscience collective des grecs et leur représentation du Monde: la *polis* en tant que communauté indépendante et souveraine sur les citoyens qui la composent, cimentée par des cultes et régie par les lois, est entièrement emblématique et symptomatique de l'aspiration grecque au *cosmos* et de sa répulsion au *chaos* . Elle est ainsi très concrètement représentative d'une volonté de maîtrise du réel, en vue d'une perfection proclamée philosophiquement, notamment par

Platon et Aristote. Ce dernier voit dans la cité à la fois un fait de nature et la forme d'organisation sociale la plus parfaite en ce qu'elle réalise l'essence de l'homme en tant qu'*animal politique*. Outre le fait d'assurer la défense et satisfaire les besoins de ses membres, elle permet aux hommes de s'accorder sur un idéal de justice en faisant le *choix* de vivre, et surtout de *bien vivre*, en amitié, en cultivant la vertu; la cité est ainsi la condition *sine qua non* d'une vie pleinement humaine, commune et *parfaite*⁴. Éthique et politique sont ainsi inséparables chez Aristote, et c'est parce que l'homme assigne à la *polis* une fonction d'organisation à vocation éthique qu'il sort de sa condition proprement animale. Ainsi, la *polis* constitue-t-elle un ensemble de trois niveaux de réalités distincts: une donnée spatiale, consistant en une entité physique rivant une ville à son territoire et un écosystème; une donnée sociale, une communauté fortement structurée d'ayant-droits libres et autonomes, à la fois entité politique et cadre d'émergence du politique, caractérisée par la domination de la parole et la publicité des débats; enfin, un État souverain, doté de pouvoirs régaliens qui joue un rôle sur la scène internationale. Hannah Arendt, dans son analyse de la *polis* grecque, met l'accent sur l'espace d'apparence par

excellence qu'elle constitue, «un lieu dans lequel les acteurs se rendent *saisissables* les uns aux autres, se rencontrent et interagissent»⁵. De ce fait, tout ce qui est présenté en ce lieu par l'un de ces acteurs devient réel dans la vie des autres, et par conséquent, être privé ou exclu de participation à cet espace, ou même menacé d'en être privé, revient à une (menace de) privation de réalité, le sens de la réalité du monde étant uniquement défini et garanti par les règles de l'apparence publique de cette entité et par le jeu des acteurs en son sein.

Ainsi, la *polis*, tant dans sa conception que dans son organisation, est intrinsèquement liée à la Pensée-monde, entendue comme Prétention et Décision sur le Réel, subordonnée à in *Telos* d'ordre, de maîtrise et d'efficacité. Et ce en raison de la peur qui, indéniablement, préside à toute cette construction. Et plus précisément, une double peur. La première, ancestrale, est liée à la survie de l'espèce, la peur de perdre la vie par manque des moyens essentiels de subsistance mais également, manque de protection suffisante face à tout *autre*; la mise à l'abri, au sens large du terme, motive l'élaboration et la construction de toute cité. La seconde peur relève de la crainte de perte de sens; la cité procure un cadre significatif

⁴ Aristote, *Politique*, Livre I, Chapitre II, 1242-1254; Livre III, Chapitre IX, 1280b29-35.

⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Condition de l'homme moderne*, traducteur Georges Fradier (Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 2000), 253-57.

structurant doté de repères symboliques efficaces, autant qu'une direction claire. Elle est donc à maints égards rassurante. Comment bien se comporter pour ne pas risquer la disparition de l'humanité, tel pourrait être ainsi résumée la problématique qui préside – même inconsciemment, même implicitement – à l'élaboration de la cité. Nous inscrivons nos peurs et par conséquent nos désirs dans la matière. La cité apparaît ainsi dès lors que s'établit dans l'esprit des êtres humains la conjonction entre l'absolue nécessité de la survie et l'utilité que représente à cet égard l'organisation, entendue comme Donation d'un cadre spatio-temporel à l'activité humaine, à l'origine uniquement consacrée à cette survie. Et toute pensée cherchant à expliquer le monde, à tracer les voies de son devenir, guider et régler les individus dans les actes de leur vie quotidienne, finit par créer les institutions de gouvernement qui garantissent la stabilité de cette codification des rapports de l'humain avec son environnement. Ces institutions ont été ou sont encore religieuses, économiques; elles sont de tout façon *politiques*, quelque forme ou dominante qu'elles puissent occasionnellement adopter. La religion a structuré la vie sociale là où l'État n'existait pas encore. La représentation imaginaire s'est mise

au service de l'impératif de l'utilité politique au sens large, avec la prescription de l'obéissance comme noyau incontournable. L'ordre s'impose pour ainsi dire de lui-même: le passage des religions holistes ou traditionnelles à des religions du sujet, accompagne voire induit la constitution d'un espace *déclaré* démocratique fondé sur des individus autonomes. De ce point de vue, la religion anticipe grandement la philosophie. On peut se demander pourquoi, à un moment et en un lieu géographique donnés, l'humain passe d'un certain type de religion à un autre, ou de la religion à la philosophie – voire l'inverse. Nous pouvons formuler l'hypothèse d'un mouvement de l'esprit qui, à un moment donné, tend à se dégager du cadre pour inventer des structures d'organisation plus souples, moins aliénantes, plus conformes à ce mouvement. Mais si la peur demeure, elle finit par le rattraper, pour dans un violent mouvement de balancier, se rabattre sur un autre cadre, plus propre à apaiser ses craintes. Peut-être est-ce là ce que Friedrich Nietzsche tentait de nous dire, lorsqu'il évoquait l'exigence de supprimer *le mobile de la crainte*, écrivant: «nous voulons *un jour n'avoir plus rien à craindre*»⁶.

⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Par delà bien et mal*, 201; «nous voulons qu'il n'y ait *plus rien à craindre un jour*», traducteur Angèle Kremer-Marietti (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006), 142.

C'est ainsi que le *Logos*, via nos représentations, structure la vie en société comme l'ensemble de notre rapport au Monde: son argumentation rationnelle-logique par ses mécanismes décisionnels issus de sa volonté de maîtrise, prélève des pans entiers de la réalité pour les réagencer à sa manière en vue d'établir une cohérence à partir de ses propres priorités. La structure du langage est telle que le rattachement de tout objet de discours à un référent préalablement connu est inévitable; l'identification a pour fonction de classer, d'ordonner les choses et les signes qui les désignent. Le langage modèle la réalité pour un faire un Monde sensé où l'humain peut se repérer; il balise, trace, coupe, opère des sauts, des ruptures, impose des limites artificielles, là où la nature comme le soulignait Leibniz ne procède que par changements imperceptibles, transitions graduées, transformations progressives. Platon fonde philosophiquement la *polis* en reprenant à son compte la notion de séparation, d'essence religieuse – le *sacer*, le sacré, est le domaine séparé, interdit, inviolable. Elle constitue la *tête de pont* de l'éternel dans le temporel. Pour Gilles Deleuze⁷, la division de la Cité platonicienne s'inscrit dans le cadre général de la théorie des Idées, dont l'objectif est de trier, de faire la différence entre l'être et l'apparence, le vrai et le faux. Dans le domaine

politique, il s'agit également de procéder à ce tri, et pour cela il convient d'établir les critères permettant de choisir les *prétendants* au gouvernement de la Cité. Car sinon, comment parvenir à arbitrer entre le médecin, le commerçant, le laboureur qui prétendent tous apporter l'élément essentiel à la survie de celle-ci? La réponse est de nature mythologique: le mythe construit le modèle et suggère les critères de la distinction puis de la division. Où l'on voit ici très précisément que c'est le rapport incessant à quelque chose de l'ordre de l'existence d'une *Vérité* qui permet la fondation et où s'origine la division. Le critère du vrai est non seulement un facteur de stabilité mais également une garantie d'efficacité; il constitue un faisceau d'exigences et de valeurs qui permettent de guider l'expérience et l'action. Aussi la division comme geste est-elle toujours par nature un acte *politique*, puisqu'elle permet le principe même du gouvernement: la scission d'un groupe en deux, d'un côté les gouvernants, de l'autre les gouvernés et le rapport à une Vérité en est la composante essentielle. De ce point de vue l'État ne s'oppose pas à la *polis*: il n'est que l'expression du même principe, conçu pour opérer de manière plus large et plus efficace. Il/elle est avant toute chose un *Topos*, un territoire d'exercice de pouvoir, sans lequel celui-ci,

⁷ Notamment dans Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Minuit, 1969), 292 s.

rappelons-le, ne peut ex-ister.

Martin Heidegger met en évidence ce lien prépondérant entre *polis* et *Logos*; pour lui, l'essence de la *polis* est déterminée à partir de sa relation à l'essence de l'homme et l'essence de l'homme est déterminée à partir de la Vérité de l'Être. L'humanité des Grecs étant primordialement et exclusivement déterminée à partir de l'Être lui-même, c'est à dire à partir de l'*aletheia*, pour cette raison, seuls ils pouvaient et précisément devaient fonder la *polis*, statuer pour le rassemblement et la préservation de l'*aletheia* en un *site*. La *polis* est ainsi posée comme *Topos* privilégié de l'Être, d'autant moins contestable ou lieu de contestation qu'Heidegger la définit également comme lieu de l'Histoire: «On traduit *polis* par l'État ou la cité; cela ne rend pas le sens plein. *Polis* signifie plutôt le site, le là dans et par lequel le *Dasein* est historique ... La *polis* est le site du destin historique, le là dans lequel, à partir duquel et pour lequel l'histoire advient»⁸. Heidegger décrit les liens intrinsèques entre, d'une part, une réalité sociale concrète (la *polis*), d'autre part, ce qui a présidé à son fondement et continue à opérer en son sein au travers des siècles, à savoir le *Logos* et sa formulation philosophique, notamment par le biais de l'Histoire. Ce *site* est ainsi conçu comme le lieu

de l'unité du monde historique commun, le lieu de toute communauté humaine possible, tendant à la perfection. Les propos heideggeriens traduisent un état de fait qui résulte des rapports du *Logos* au Réel, trouvant leur expression concrète dans les discours philosophiques sur la politique et l'histoire. C'est comme si le *politique*, via le *Logos*, venait ici sceller l'ancrage de l'humain en un lieu où il ne peut échapper à la Transcendance ou à la Pensée-monde et donc où il lui est irrémédiablement soumis.

Aussi l'idée de *choix* soulignée par Aristote, n'est-elle dans ce contexte qu'un leurre philosophique habile. Car, l'aspect essentiel de cette *Vérité de l'Être* mise en exergue par Heidegger peut ainsi être résumée: l'homme est quelque chose qui a besoin d'être gouverné et doit l'être. Tel est l'un des présupposés fondamentaux de la philosophie et de la Pensée-monde. Selon cette conception, l'humain, quelle que soit l'époque, se trouve toujours *en manque de*. Qu'il soit défini comme animal langagier, religieux, rationnel, etc., il est un négatif couplé à un positif qui seul lui procure son Humanité. Il ne jouit pas d'une valeur intrinsèque et n'existe en tant que tel, philosophiquement considérable, que dans la Donation d'identité, ce qui fait de lui

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction à la Métaphysique*, traducteur Gilbert Kahn (Paris: Gallimard, 1935), 159.

fondamentalement un sujet assujetti, quoiqu'il en soit des doctrines qui proclament néanmoins son autonomie. Cette Donation est le geste où s'origine toute division, quel que soit son mode de déclinaison. Si la visibilité moderne de la Donation d'Identité en politique est l'État, elle trouve déjà sa parfaite expression dans la *(Logo)polis*, ancrant l'Homme-sujet dans un espace qui n'est pas le sien propre: un territoire, une histoire, une vocation à l'égard de la collectivité que lui-même n'a pas définie et choisie, le verrouillant dans le carcan du sujet, ne lui laissant aucun espace d'être autre que la fonction qui lui a été décisionnellement assignée.

Dans ce contexte, c'est l'Histoire qui dit la Loi, venant en renfort de la structure interne de Pensée-monde et/ou vice versa, avec pour horizon ultime, l'inscription dans un cadre unitaire, avec une orientation, une destination unique: absolue hétérogénéité. La menace de la privation à laquelle Arendt fait référence, n'est ainsi pas postérieure à la création de la *polis* mais bien antérieure; on pourrait même dire qu'elle fait intrinsèquement partie de la démarche conceptuelle qui préside à quelque chose de l'ordre d'une *cité*. Celle-ci est normative, d'une norme indispensable pour en

construire et pérenniser l'*ossature*, qui n'est autre que l'*os-sature triadique du pouvoir politique*, définie comme action conjointe d'un *Telos*, d'un *Chrono-Topos*, sous l'autorité du *Logos*⁹. Son résultat escompté est l'obéissance, la sujétion; celle-ci est moins un besoin du pouvoir en lui-même que celui du *Logos* en tant qu'arrière-Monde de tout pouvoir, c'est à dire celui du discours philosophique et de son rapport bien particulier à la Vérité et donc au Réel.

On pourrait croire que l'imagination de nouvelles formes puissent échapper à cette structure normative; ce serait faire preuve en l'occurrence d'une grande ingénuité. Cornelius Castoriadis a pu montrer que la société était la création d'un monde humain, qui constitue une *Weltanschauung* commune, partagée par les membres d'une même communauté: «Je tiens que l'histoire humaine est essentiellement définie par la création imaginaire. Imaginaire, dans ce contexte, ne signifie évidemment pas fictif, illusoire, spéculaire, mais position de nouvelles formes et position non déterminée mais déterminante ... Ces formes créées par chaque société, font être un monde dans lequel cette société s'inscrit et se donne une place. C'est moyennant elles qu'elle constitue un *système de normes*, d'institutions au sens le plus

⁹ Sophie Lesueur, *Non-philosophie du sujet politique: Une généalogie du pouvoir* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2022). *Chrono-Topos* ici doit être entendu comme synonyme de discours historique sur un territoire donné.

large du terme, de valeurs, d'orientations, de finalités, de la vie collective comme de la vie individuelle»¹⁰. Castoriadis conçoit cette création comme une œuvre collective anonyme, qui contribue à créer un pouvoir instituant, exerçant sa domination sur l'ensemble des membres de la société. Ce pouvoir doit être considéré selon lui comme un *universel du social-historique*, au sens où aucune société quelle qu'elle soit ne peut se dispenser de produire un tel système de représentations ayant fonction de détermination symbolique du monde dans lequel elle s'inscrit. Il justifie cet état de fait en invoquant justement la précarité de l'existence sociale, la menace qui pèse en permanence sur son organisation et la fragilise: menace intérieure, menace de *transgressions individuelles*, menaces extérieures et surtout selon l'auteur, peur de l'avenir, de l'immaîtrisable, de l'incertitude, à l'égard desquels *des décisions doivent être prises*. Ceci vient corroborer l'importance de la place de la peur dans la conception de toute entité de l'ordre de la cité.

Ainsi la cité apparaît-elle comme l'archétype de l'*etho-techno-logos* concentré en un *Topos*. Selon la définition laruellienne, l'*etho-techno-logos* condense toutes les formes historiques de

l'éthique avec des conditions d'existence et de pensée massivement réglées par la technologie. Depuis le milieu du XXe siècle, le déploiement tentaculaire de *mégalopoles* traduit dans la matière le développement de nos egos surdimensionnés de sujets assujettis, au mépris de la nature au sens large du terme – l'*eco*, la maison-Terre –, image archétypale de la volonté de surmaîtrise du Réel par Donation de la Loi en vue de l'exploitation du vivant, végétaux, animaux et notre cœur le plus Humain compris. L'Être fait de plus en plus cercle avec l'Avoir, ou plus précisément la quête incessante d'Avoir qui vient tenter de combler la déficience proclamée de cette humanité toujours (dis)qualifiée, *en manque de*. Plus encore ces vingt dernières années, le *tout technologique*, favorisé, plébiscité, rend facultatif voire quasi obsolète l'attribution autrefois nécessaire d'un *Topos*. Émerge ainsi la possibilité d'une *cité sans site*, hors-sol, ultimement virtuelle, et donc une possibilité d'u-topie parce que partout et nulle part à la fois; mais une u-topie dont la caractéristique essentielle serait l'*etho-techno-logos* laruelien, volontairement haussé à sa plus parfaite à la fois transcendante et mondaine expression. Exact opposé de l'Uni-vers, parce que conçue comme éminemment inclusive, intégrant et donc englobant jusqu'à la

¹⁰ Cornelius Castoriadis, «Le polis grecque et la création de la démocratie», dans *Domaines de l'homme. Les carrefours du labyrinthe II* (Paris, Seuil, 1986), 264.

corporalité humaine, cette cité-là a pour vocation et ambition dans son ultime développement d'asservir jusqu'au cœur le plus humain de l'Homme, *sa teneur en humanité radicale*¹¹. Par chance, cette prétention machinique n'a qu'une vague idée du Réel, convaincue qu'il se confond avec la réalité mondaine; si l'être humain est sommé et contraint de confondre son essence et ses conditions effectives d'existence avec un tissu de règles et de normes, telle une *momie pénétrée de ses bandelettes*¹², seule sa croyance en cette fable peut lui procurer son efficience. Réellement, rien d'autre. Néanmoins, il convient d'admettre que la pression contemporaine dans le sens d'une intégration absolue de la norme, de la conformité la plus intrinsèque à la règle, est omniprésente et de plus en plus prégnante, par ce que Laruelle nomme la *dilution doxique*¹³, à savoir le devenir-doxa planétaire de la norme: tentative de sujétion parfaite par l'insertion manipulateur de l'évidence éthique dans les contrées les plus reculées de l'esprit et de l'existence.

Cette déterritorialisation de la cité comme à-venir déjà éminemment omni-présent de l'*etho-techno-logos*, nous exhorte en tant que non-philosophes à étudier de plus près notre

référence à la *cité* et notre usage du terme comme possible champ d'expression ou d'application de la non-philosophie. Il convient d'adopter la plus grande prudence, voire même de renoncer à cet emploi pour préserver la clarté, la portée et la puissance non-philosophique en tant que pensée hérétique. En effet, cette déterritorialisation *politique* est le pendant de la radicale extraterritorialité (du) Réel tel qu'oraxiomatisé par la non-philosophie, comme *nécessité mais de la possibilité*¹⁴, force(d')utopie car rendant impossible l'asservissement de l'Homme, même dans les conditions étho-technologiques les plus aliénantes. Cet espace d'être non topique est radicalement inadéquat et indéterminable à toute pensée de maîtrise donc de pouvoir, impossible à assimiler, à assigner à un champ, un domaine, une cause, encore moins à un *Telos*; ne faisant plus cercle avec un quelconque Avoir, il est ainsi puissance hérétique inaliénable. L'extraterritorialité (du) Réel exprime la détermination unilatérale, sans retour ni cercle, sans aucune possibilité de convertibilité, du *Logos* et de toutes ses manifestations mondaines par notre radicale Identité humaine inaliénable, en même temps que la Vision claire de cette détermination. Cet *espace* ouvert est *utopique*, en tant qu'il est

¹¹ François Laruelle, *Éthique de l'Étranger: Du crime contre l'humanité* (Paris: Kimé, 2000), 9.

¹² Laruelle, *Éthique de l'Étranger*, 150.

¹³ Ibid., 145.

¹⁴ Laruelle, *La lutte et l'utopie*, 120.

partout et nulle part, plus précisément *ubique*, En-Présence partout et à tout moment, sans dimension spatiale. Cette extraterritorialité indique également par là-même l'essence de la comm-Unauté en tant que Vision-en-Un, condition de possibilité, détermination unilatérale de toute conception de *vivre-ensemble*, de fraternité et de concorde sociale, Un-Nous non plus englobant mais radicalement immanent. C'est de ce fait, qu'elle est radicalement force(d')utopie, et par conséquent uchronique: Futur-en-personne, *forclos à l'Histoire et déterminant l'imagination elle même*¹⁵, déjà donné avant même quelque chose de l'ordre d'un sujet, et ainsi l'autre nom du Rebelle-hérétique, de toujours d'ores et déjà *En-lutte*, dans une impossibilité radicale de la croyance à un quelconque *surmaître*. Si Laruelle emploie le terme de *Cité des Hérétiques*, il précise qu'elle «ne prend pas la place de la maîtrise et ne s'installe pas dans le Monde», que «la rébellion ne fait pas œuvre, ou c'est le Rebelle-en-personne qui est cette œuvre»¹⁶. Aussi le terme de *Cité* employé ici, en dépit de son attractivité sémantique, compte tenu de son lourd arrière-plan mondain n'est-il probablement pas le plus adéquat car il peut induire en erreur et laisser penser que la non-philosophie pourrait faire œuvre et construire

dans et pour le Monde; or, il n'en est rien. Laruelle est très clair sur ce point: «Ainsi, elle [l'utopie] s'achève dans la constitution du sujet comme activité autonome, dans une Utopie des Étrangers ou Cité des Hérétiques qui pour sa part n'est donc ni du Ciel ni de la Terre mais simplement la pratique non-philosophique elle-même»¹⁷. D'ailleurs s'il emploie conjointement le terme *Utopie des Étrangers*, c'est peut-être pour proposer une autre formulation qui, elle, lèverait et éviterait toute ambiguïté; nous pourrions d'ailleurs employer également, sans altération de sens, l'expression *Utopie des Hérétiques*.

Ainsi l'extraterritorialité du Réel, son déploiement en force(d')utopie par l'Étranger-rebelle, Futur immanent, sans cesse reconduit dans l'Un-stand, est l'antidote à la cité en tant que *Logopolis*, qu'elle soit elle-même extraterritoriale ou physiquement territorialisée. Cette force, issue de la non-philosophie vue comme *le style de l'hérésie contre la conformité*¹⁸, précieuse pour en finir une fois pour toute et chaque fois avec l'asservissement mondain, doit être préservée des assauts de la Pensée-monde et de tous ses avatars notamment imaginaires qui sévissent à notre insu dans les méandres de nos pensées. Pour

¹⁵ Ibid., 21.

¹⁶ Ibid., 170.

¹⁷ Ibid., 139.

¹⁸ Ibid., 17.

une *écologie des utopies*¹⁹ non-historiale et non-temporelle, il convient de ne pas basculer par mégarde dans l'idéologie des hérésies. Dans cette optique, la vigilance et la rigueur sont éminemment nécessaires, y compris dans l'emploi des termes, comme garantes d'une utopie-univers radicalement distincte des utopies-monde et d'une identification constamment reconduite de l'utopie et de la lutte. Les non-philosophes dans leur vocation de pourfendeurs du Conformisme se doivent à la cohérence la plus radicale, sous peine de devenir à leur insu des serviteurs prétentieux de la Pensée-monde. De ce point de vue, le terme de *cité* , même doté d'une majuscule apparaît disqualifié; le bannissement de son usage semble une judicieuse précaution. Par ailleurs, si la rébellion ne fait pas œuvre comme le souligne Laruelle, si l'imagination en tant que modélisation utopique mondaine, autre *machination* de la réalité, est elle aussi disqualifiée, devons-nous totalement nous résoudre à un non-agir indifférent à la marche mondaine et donc à un sort scellé des humains présents et à venir? Qu'est-ce qu'une utopie qui vient unilatéralement au Monde et qui ne bascule pas dans les mirages et la croyance en une efficience et une matérialisation mondaine? Sans répondre directement à cette question –

ce qui serait immédiatement retourner à une posture décisionnelle – nous pouvons néanmoins dégager les conditions de possibilité d'un *Manifesté* de cet ordre à savoir une émanation radicalement immanente (du) Réel: (1) demeurer au cœur de la Vision-en-Un, de manière stable, quelles que soient les circonstances, c'est à dire (2) ne laisser en aucun cas la peur (re)devenir maître de nos pensées et actions effectives et (3) empêcher le retour du cercle de l'Être et de l'Avoir en refusant la détermination mondaine et donc la définition de *l'Homme en manque de* , revendiquant en revanche l'Identité radicale de l'Étranger pour tout Humain sans exception et ainsi (4) abolir tout principe de division, de séparation et d'exclusion, la vision cauchemardesque de la menace de barbarie, y compris au sein de la pensée, à partir de l'En-Homme selon le principe non-philosophique essentiel *Moi et l'Étranger sommes identiques en dernière-Identité* ²⁰; (5) élargir la Vision-en-Un à tous vivants, végétaux et animaux, mais également à l'ensemble de la biosphère et ainsi s'ouvrir, d'une ouverture radicalement immanente, aux conditions de possibilité d'un *eco-* (relatif à la notion de *maison*) qui ne relève plus de la norme (*-nomos*, *-nomie*), ni de la logique (*-logos*, *-logie*), ni d'un système. Ces

¹⁹ Ibid., 18.

²⁰ François Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers: Science des hommes, démocratie, non-psychanalyse* (Paris, Kimé, 1995), 129.

conditions minimales constituent une liste non exhaustive; il y en a peut-être et sûrement d'autres.

La garantie d'une utopie-univers (et même unis-vers) réside dans le suspens d'une conception ou d'une imagination à contenu mondain *politique* et/ou anthropo-logique et -centrique, ainsi que d'une quelconque projection de nos peurs dans la matière. La peur, premier fil de la trame de notre assujettissement, qui n'est ni plus ni moins notre peur de la mort – ou de l'idée que nous nous en faisons –, est peut-être plus précisément liée à toute perte ou spoliation d'identité. C'est pourquoi, ultimement, il s'agit d'avoir confiance dans les effets indirects de la Vision-en-Un et de ne pas rebasculer dans la crainte *que rien ne se passe* et donc dans la Prétention de la saisie; avoir confiance que de la Vision-en-Un, en tant que force(d')utopie, émergera de manière *ad hoc* et seulement fonctionnelle et spontanée des formes structurelles d'existences concrètes: cultivons la Vision-en-Un et voyons ce qu'il advient. Gardons à l'esprit et au cœur l'humilité de l'éphémère et le *fictionnel*, c'est à dire le suspens de la croyance en ce Monde, loin des Décision et Prétention mondaines à vocation définitive parce que fondées sur une Vérité proclamée. Laissons ex-ister dans sa Réelle-liberté l'Étranger-rebelle, qui est aussi Un-spiré; ayons

confiance dans le Futur oraxiomatique, de toujours déjà là, à la fois utopie et uchronie comme la teneur de cette force, indéfectible et inaliénable parce que radicalement hérétique.

Can the *Utopia of Strangers* Be a *City*?: A Radical (Re-)Reading of *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*

Sophie Lesueur

Translated by Brynn McNab, Jeremy R. Smith, and Luka Stojanovic

Abstract: In the troubled and very uncertain times that we experience [*connaissances*], there is a great temptation to want to (re-)construct a secure space, imagining new forms of human existence that carry hope... What is more natural? As such, the reflections can be led towards the *city* as an ancestral crucible for our inter-human relations and exchanges which occupies a prominent place. *What is the city for tomorrow?* is a major theme that occupies, or at least preoccupies, our contemporaries worldwide. And as non-philosophers, surely, we are tempted by adventure. It is also the question of what non-philosophy *can do* in this context that is ineluctably posed. But the pitfalls of the Thought-World, if this is not philosophy, appear just as ineluctably and inevitably, ready to (ac)cept [*(ac)cueillir*] us in our wanderings. Thus, notably, the very term of the *city* employed by François Laruelle himself several times in his writings, which could seem to legitimate its use in this approach in view of carrying out a concrete reflection of this order, must be analyzed more profoundly and precisely. What impact can non-philosophy have concretely upon the World? As non-philosophers, must we totally resolve ourselves to a non-acting indifferent to worldly motion and therefore to a sealed fate of present and future humans? What is a *utopia* that comes unilaterally into the World and does not rock back and forth in mirages and the belief in an efficiency and worldly materialization?

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In *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy* (2004), François Laruelle notably applied himself to “caution non-philosophers against the temptation of returning and looking backwards towards philosophy.”¹ Non-philosophy is in effect “always threatened by a return to theoreticism”² specified later on, for there are multiple ways of returning to philosophy, above all to the Thought-World, which claims to be able to think everything, to encompass it, but not be reduced to it; the slip-page can be surreptitious, imperceptible, and delicate. Hence, one of the essential problems for a non-philosopher: rigor. To be non-philosophically rigorous implies demonstrating a great vigilance in order not to fall back into the mesh of the Thought-World, which, like a bewitching siren, persistently sings in our minds. We need to cultivate Odysseus’ solid determination not to yield, above all in the troubled times that we experience, where the Human crumbles under the mountains of contradictory information, where worldly representations are confronted with violence, where mass manipulation is more than ever the norm; where, thereby, the projections become more

spontaneous and therefore where our vigilance diminishes, even fades away. When the future becomes more than uncertain and announced by major changes, when an eschatological lexical field fills up a secured space, imagining new forms of human existence bears hope... What is more natural? As such, the reflections could be led towards the *city* as an ancestral crucible for our inter-human relations and exchanges which occupies a prominent place. One of the major themes that occupies, or at least preoccupies, our contemporaries worldwide, is *What is the city for tomorrow?* As non-philosophers, surely we are tempted by adventure. The question of what non-philosophy *can do* is posed ineluctably as well, but just as ineluctably and inevitably, the pitfalls of the Thought-World, if this is not philosophy, appears ready to (ac)cept³ us in our wanderings. Please note that by once more accepting *being thrown in the Cave*, the non-philosopher must be aware to not get lost, to not let themselves be (re)abused by the cast shadows, and above all to not forget *why* they accepted to be thrown: “in order to trouble the good conscience of the World with heresy,”⁴ and in our process to be aware of the

¹ François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), 25; François Laruelle, *La lutte et l'utopie à la fin des temps philosophiques* (Paris: Kimé, 2004), 26.

² Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 137; 117. [Any citations to existing English translations of Laruelle’s writings will precede their French originals. – Trans.]

³ The English word “accept” etymologically is related to “capture” (*ad + capere*), which is a major theme throughout this work. In lack of a proper way of translating (*ac*)*cueiller*, (*ac*)*cept* may assist the reader in understanding that there is a seizure that is welcoming yet received willingly. – Trans.

⁴ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 165; 138–40.

employed terms, for the *Logos* keeps its watch, like the Minotaur, the labyrinth guardian, who will not fail to seize us at the slightest imprudent distraction. Thus, notably, the very term *the city*, employed by Laruelle himself several times in this work and in other writings, which could seem to legitimate its use in this approach in view of carrying out a concrete reflection of this order, must be analyzed more profoundly and precisely.

The investigation into the conditions of possibility of a living-together that is not determined by the Thought-World actually happens with a reflection on the notion of the *city*. This term, which comes from the Greek *polis* and the Latin *civitas*, refers to a much more ancestral reality. Since the Bronze Age and even, to some archeologists, the Neolithic Era, structures that are relevant to this concept already existed; these ensembles are characterized by a regrouping of individuals under common rules and institutions, physically recognizable by a precise spatial delimitation. In effect, the principle and elaboration of the city are first motivated by the will to distinguish those who live in the acceptance of the rules laid out—hence the term *civilized*—and the others, the barbarians, who, by way of consequence, emerge from an inferior level of humanity, and are *de facto* banished, i.e., exiled *outside*. The physical delimitation of territory consists in an enclosed wall or a moat,

which is a symbol that is as much one of protection as division, which reflects since the beginning the fear of the other, the fear of the potential unknown. The idea is already *embodied*, beyond differences, in constituting a social body, as clearly delimited and harmoniously organized as a human, physical body. In this context, it is grounded in a ritualized way in view of giving it a sacred character. Another motivation emerges from another type of protection: the point is to get out of the economic precarity that belonged to the village, even the sedentarized one, by first organizing the long-term engagement of harvests in order to escape from famines, then by the surpluses of the production and division of labor, a persistent accumulation of wealth that assures the viability and global security of the structure and, therefore, its inhabitants. The Greek *polis* inscribed itself in this same vein, by even further emphasizing it on the common project of a living-together, this social *body* that reflects the collective consciousness of the Greeks and their representation of the World: the *polis* as an independent and sovereign community over the citizens that compose it, cemented by cults, and ruled by the laws, is entirely emblematic and symptomatic of the Greek aspiration towards the *cosmos* and its repulsion of *chaos*. It is thus very concretely representative of a will towards the control of the real in view of a philosophically proclaimed perfection, notably by Plato

and Aristotle. The latter sees in the city both a fact of nature and the most perfect form of social organization insofar as it realizes the essence of man as a *political animal*. Beyond the fact of assuring the defense and satisfaction of the needs of its members, the city allows men to grant themselves to an ideal of justice by making the *choice* of living, and above all *living well*, in friendship, by cultivating virtue; thus, the city is the *conditio sine qua non* of a fully human, common, and *perfect* life.⁵ In Aristotle, ethics and politics are thus inseparable, and it is because man assigns an organizational function with an ethical vocation to the *polis* that it exits from its strictly animal condition. Therefore, the *polis* constitutes an ensemble of three levels of distinct realities: a spatial given, consistent within a physical entity tying a town to its territory and an ecosystem; a strongly structured community of free and autonomous entitled peoples [*ayant-droits*], both a political entity and the framework of the emergence of the political, characterized by the domination of speech and the publicity of debates; and finally, a sovereign State, endowed with kingly powers that plays a role on the international scene. Hannah Arendt, in her analysis of the Greek *polis*, emphasizes the space of appearance *par excellence*

that it constitutes, “a place in which the actors make themselves *comprehensible* to one another by meeting and interacting with one another.”⁶ Thereby, everything that is presented in this place by one of these actors becomes real in the life of others, and, consequently, to be deprived or excluded from participating in this space or being threatened to be deprived of it comes back to a (threat of the) privation of reality: the meaning of the reality of the world being uniquely defined and guaranteed by the rules of the public appearance of this entity and the play of the actors within its breast.

Thus, the *polis*, as much in its conception as in its organization, is intrinsically bound to the Thought-World understood as the Pretension and Decision on the Real, subordinated to a *Telos* of order, mastery and efficacy. And this is because of the fear that undeniably presides within this whole construction, and more precisely a double fear. The first fear, which is ancestral, is bound to the survival of the species: the fear of the loss of life for lack of the essential means of subsistence, but also for lack of sufficient protection against any *other*; the shelter, in the broad sense of the term, motivates the elaboration and construction of any city.

⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, Chapter II, 1242-1254; Book III, Chapter IX, 1280b29-35.

⁶ Hannah Arendt, *Condition de l'homme moderne*, traducteur Georges Fradier (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2000), 253-57. [The closest our translation from the French comes is in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago:

The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 198: “The *polis* ... is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be.” –Trans.]

The second fear emerges from the fear of the loss of meaning; the city procures a structuring and signifying framework endowed with effective symbolic landmarks as much as a clear direction. Therefore, the city is in many ways reassuring. How does one behave well to not risk the demise of humanity: such could be thus the problematic summed up—even unconsciously and implicitly—in the elaboration of the city. We inscribe our fears and consequently our desires in matter. Thus, the city appears as soon as the conjunction—between the absolute necessity of survival and the utility that the organization represents in this regard, understood as the Donation of a spatio-temporal framework towards human activity, with an origin uniquely dedicated to this survival—is established in the minds of human beings. And any thought seeking to explain the world, seeking to trace the paths of its becoming, guiding and ruling individuals in the acts of their everyday life, ends by creating the governmental institutions that guarantee the stability of this codification of the relations of the human with their environment. These institutions have been or are still religious and economic; they are in any case *political*, whatever form or domination that they can occasionally adopt. Religion has structured social life where the State did not yet exist. The

imaginary representation was employed for the imperative of political utility in the broad sense with the prescription of obedience as an unavoidable kernel. Order is imposed from itself, so to speak: the passage from holist or traditional religions to religions of the subject accompanies, indeed induces, the constitution of a *declared* democratic space grounded upon autonomous individuals. From this perspective, religion greatly anticipates philosophy. One can ask why, at one given moment and geographical place, the human passes from one certain type of religion to another, or from religion to philosophy—indeed, the inverse. We can formulate the hypothesis of a movement of spirit that, at one given moment, tends to disengage itself from the framework to invent more supple, less alienating structures of organization that are more conforming to this movement. But if the fear remains, it ends by recapturing it, for in one violent pendulum movement, it reduces itself to another framework, more proper to sooth its fears. Perhaps this is what Friedrich Nietzsche attempted to tell us, when he evoked the exigency of suppressing *the motivation of fear*, writing: “we wish that there will one day no longer be anything to fear.”⁷

⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1973), §201, 124. – Trans.

This is how the *Logos*, via our representations, structures life in society as the whole of our relationship to the World: its rational-logical argumentation by its decision-making mechanisms stemming from its will to mastery, takes whole parts of reality to rearrange them in its own way in order to establish a coherence starting from its own priorities. The structure of language is such that the attachment of any object of discourse to a previously known referent is inevitable; the function of identification is to classify and order things and the signs that designate them. Language models reality in order to make a sensible World where humans can find their bearings; it marks out, traces, cuts, makes leaps, breaks, imposes artificial limits, where nature, as Leibniz underlined, proceeds only by imperceptible changes, gradual transitions, and progressive transformations. Plato philosophically grounds the *polis* by taking over the notion of separation, of religious essence—the *sacer*, the sacred, is the separate, forbidden, inviolable domain. It constitutes the *bridgehead* of the eternal in the temporal. For Gilles Deleuze,⁸ the division of the Platonic City is part of the general framework of the theory of Ideas, whose objective is to sort, to make the difference between being and appearance,

truth and falsehood. In the *political* domain, it is also a question of carrying out this marshaling, and for that it is necessary to establish the criteria for choosing the *pretenders* to the government of the City. Otherwise, how can one arbitrate between the doctor, the merchant, the farmer [*laboureur*] who all claim to bring the essential element to the survival of the city? The answer is mythological: myth constructs the model and suggests the criteria of distinction and then of division. What we see here precisely is the incessant relation to something of the order of the existence of a *Truth* that allows for the foundation, and it is where division originates. The criterion of the true is not only a factor of stability, but also a guarantee of effectiveness; it constitutes a bundle of requirements and values which make it possible to guide the experiment and action. Also the division as a gesture is always by nature a *political* act, since it allows for the very principle of the government; the division of a group in two, on one side the governors, on the other the governed, and the relation to a Truth is the essential component. From this point of view, the State is not opposed to the *polis*; it is only the expression of the same principle, conceived to operate in a wider more effective way. It is

⁸ Notably in Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Minuit, 1969), et seq. [Gilles Deleuze, “Plato and the

Simulacrum,” in *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 253-54. — Trans.]

above all a *Topos*, a territory of exercise of power, without which this one, let us recall it, cannot exist.

Martin Heidegger highlights this preponderant link between *polis* and *Logos*; for him, the essence of the *polis* is determined starting from its relation to the essence of man, and the essence of man is determined starting from the Truth of Being. The humanity of the Greeks is primarily and exclusively determined starting from Being itself, that is to say, from *aletheia*, and it is for this reason that only they could and precisely had to found the *polis*, to rule for the gathering and preservation of the *aletheia* in a *site*. The *polis* is thus posited as a privileged *Topos* of Being, all the less contestable or a place of contestation, since Heidegger also defines it as a place of History: “One translates *polis* as state ... this does not capture the entire sense. Rather, *polis* is the name for the site, the Here, within which and as which *Dasein* is as historical. The *polis* is the site of history, the Here, *in* which, *out of* which, and *for* which history happens.”⁹ Heidegger describes the intrinsic links between, on the one hand, a concrete social reality (the *polis*), and, on the other hand, that which presides over its foundation and continues to operate within it throughout the

centuries, namely, the *Logos* and its philosophical formulation, notably throughout History. This *site* is thus conceived as the place of unity of the common historical world, the place of all possible human community, tending towards perfection. The Heideggerian remarks translate a state of affairs that results from the relationship between the *Logos* and the Real, finding its concrete expression in philosophical discourses on politics and history. It is as if the *political*, via the *Logos*, came here to anchoring the human in a place where they cannot escape Transcendence or the Thought-World and, therefore, where they are irremediably subjected to.

In addition, the idea of *choice* underlined by Aristotle is not in this context that of a clever philosophical trick. Because the essential aspect of the *Truth of Being* emphasized by Heidegger can be summarized as follows: man is something that needs and must be governed. Such is one of the fundamental presuppositions of philosophy and of the Thought-World. According to this conception, humans, no matter the era, are always *in lack* [of being governed]. Whether the human is defined as a lingual, religious, rational animal, etc., it is a negative coupled with a positive that alone procures their Humanity. The

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction à la Métaphysique*, traducteur Gilbert Kahn (Paris: Gallimard, 1935), 159 [Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, second

edition, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 169-70, translation slightly modified. – Trans.]

human has no intrinsic value, and only exists as such, philosophically considerable, in the Donation of identity, which makes it a fundamentally subjugated subject, regardless of the doctrines that nevertheless proclaim its autonomy. This Donation is the gesture where the origin of all division lies, whatever its mode of declination. If the modern visibility of the Donation of Identity in politics is the State, it already finds its perfect expression in the *(Logo)polis*, anchoring the Human-subject in a space which is not their own: a territory, a history, a vocation towards the collectivity that they themselves have not defined and chosen, locking them into the bind [*carcan*] of the subject, leaving no space of being other than the function that has been decisionally assigned to them.

In this context, it is History which speaks the Law, as a reinforcement of the internal structure of the Thought-World and/or vice-versa, with, as its ultimate horizon—along with its inscription within a unitary frame, with an orientation, and a unique destination—absolute heterogeneity. The threat of deprivation to which Arendt makes reference is thus not posterior to the creation of the *polis* but is its anterior. One could even say that it is an intrinsic part of the

conceptual process that presides over something of the order of a *city*. This is normative, an indispensable norm to construct and sustain the *ossature* that is no other than the *triadic ossaturate of political power*, defined by the conjoined action of a *Telos*, a *Chrono-Topos*, under the authority of *Logos*.¹⁰ Its expected result is obedience and subjugation; this is less a need for power in itself than for the *Logos* as the hinter-World [*arrière-Monde*] of all power, i.e., philosophical discourse and its very particular relationship to Truth and thus to the Real.

One might think that the imagination of new forms can escape from this normative structure; this would be very naïve. Cornelius Castoriadis was able to show that society was the creation of a human world, which constitutes a common *Weltanschauung*, shared by the members of the same community: “I hold that human history is essentially defined by imaginary creation. Imaginary, in this context, obviously does not mean fictitious, illusory, specular, but the position of new forms and an undetermined but determining position ... These forms, created by each society, make a world in which this society inscribes itself and gives itself a place. It is through them that it

¹⁰ Sophie Lesueur, *Non-philosophie du sujet politique: Une généalogie du pouvoir* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2022). *Chrono-Topos* must be understood as synonymous with historical discourse concerning a given territory. [Provided with the context of the ossification of power

in its saturation with a *Telos*, a *Chrono-Topos*, and the *Logos* in its grasp, the notion of the *os-saturate* accompanies the *ossature* or the skeletal foundation of power and the permeation of it within these elements. – Trans.]

constitutes a *system of norms*, of institutions in the broadest sense of the term, of values, of orientations, of finalities, of collective life as well as of individual life.”¹¹ Castoriadis conceives this creation as an anonymous collective work, which contributes to the creation of an instituting power, exercising its domination over all members of society. According to Castoriadis, this power must be considered as a *universal of the social-historical*, in the sense that no society whatsoever can dispense with the production of such a system of representations, which has the function of symbolically determining the world in which it is embedded. It justifies this factual situation by precisely invoking the precarity of social existence, the threat that constantly weighs on its organization and makes it fragile: interior threat, the threat of *individual transgressions*, exterior threats, and above all, according to the author, fear of the future, of the unmanageable, of uncertainty, for which *decisions must be taken*. This comes to corroborate the importance of the place of fear in the design of all entities of the order of the city.

So the city appears like the archetype of the *etho-techno-logos* concentrated in a *Topos*. According to the Laruellian definition, the *etho-techno-*

logos condenses all historical forms of ethics with the conditions of existence and thought, massively regulated by technology. Since the middle of the twentieth century, the sprawling deployment of *mega-cities* translated into material the development of our oversized egos as subjugated subjects in disregard of nature in the broadest sense of the term—the *eco*, the Earth-home. It is the archetypal image of the will to super-mastery of the Real by Donation of the Law in view of the exploitation of the living, plants, and animals, including our most Human heart. Being is more and more in a circle with Having, or more precisely, the incessant quest of Having that tries to fill the proclaimed deficiency of that always (dis)qualified, *lacking* humanity. Moreover, these last twenty years, the *technological whole* that is encouraged and voted on [*plébiscité*] makes the once necessary attribution of a *Topos* optional or even obsolete. Thus emerges the possibility of a *city without site*, above ground, ultimately virtual, and therefore a possibility of u-topia, because it is everywhere and nowhere at the same time. It is an u-topia whose essential characteristic would be the Laruellian *etho-techno-logos*, voluntarily increased to its most perfect expression, both transcendent and worldly. It is exactly the opposite of the Uni-verse, because it is

¹¹ Cornelius Castoriadis, “La polis grecque et la création de la démocratie,” in *Domaines de l’homme. Les carrefours du labyrinthe II* (Paris: Seuil, 1986), 264. [Cornelius

Castoriadis, “The Greek Polis and the Creation of Democracy.” In *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 2.2 (Fall 1983), 79-115. — Trans.]

conceived as eminently inclusive, integrating and therefore encompassing even human corporality, this city's ambition and vocation in its ultimate development is to dominate even the most human heart of Man, its *tenor of radical humanity*.¹² By chance, this machinic claim only has a vague idea of the Real, and is convinced that it merges with worldly reality. If the human being is summoned and forced to confuse their essence and actual conditions of existence with a fabric of rules and norms, like a mummy penetrated by its bandages,¹³ only its belief in this fable can provide it with its efficiency; really, nothing else. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the contemporary pressure in the sense of an absolute integration of the norm, of the most intrinsic conformity to the rule, is omnipresent and more and more vital through what Laruelle calls *doxic dilution*,¹⁴ i.e., the planetary becoming-doxa of the norm: an attempt at perfect subjection through the manipulative insertion of ethical evidence into the furthest regions of the mind and existence.

This deterritorialization of the city to-come, already eminently omni-present of the *etho-techno-*

logos, urges us as non-philosophers to take a closer look at our reference to the city and our use of the terms as a possible field of expression or application of non-philosophy. Great care must be taken, even renounced, to preserve the clarity, scope, and power of non-philosophy as heretical thought. Indeed, this *political* deterritorialization is the counterpart of the radical extraterritoriality (of) the Real as oraxiomatized by non-philosophy, as *a necessity but of possibility*,¹⁵ a utopia(-)power [*force (d')utopie*],¹⁶ because it makes the domination of Man impossible, even in the most alienating etho-technological conditions. This non-located space of being is radically inadequate and indeterminate to all thought of mastery and therefore of power. It is impossible to assimilate or to assign to a field, a domain, a cause, let alone a *Telos*; no longer circling with any Having, it is thus an inalienable, heretical power. The extraterritoriality (of) the Real expresses the unilateral determination—without return or circle, without any possibility of convertibility—of the *Logos* and all its worldly manifestations by our radical inalienable human Identity, at the same time as the clear Vision of this determination. This

¹² François Laruelle, *Éthique de l'Étranger: Du crime contre l'humanité* (Paris: Kimé, 2000), 9.

¹³ Laruelle, *Éthique de l'Étranger*, 150.

¹⁴ Ibid., 145.

¹⁵ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 141; 120.

¹⁶ In contrast to Burk and Smith's translation "force (of) utopia," which follows from the literal translation of *force (de) pensée* as "force (of) thought," we have opted

to translate *force (d')utopie* as "utopia(-)power" to retain the French Marxian term *force de travail* and its English equivalent "labor-power," while bracketing the connecting hyphen between utopia and power. By bracketing the connective hyphen, we wish to highlight typographically the unilateral relation-without-relation.
— Trans.

open *space* is *utopical*, in that it is everywhere and nowhere, more precisely *ubiquitous*, In-Presence everywhere and at all times, without spatial dimension. This extraterritoriality also indicates the essence of comm-Unity [*comm-Unauté*]¹⁷ as a vision-in-One, a condition of possibility, the unilateral determination of any conception of *living-together*, of fraternity and social harmony, a One-We that is no longer encompassing but radically immanent. It is because of this that it is radically a utopia(-)power, and consequently uchronic. It is the Future-in-person, *foreclosed to History and determining the imagination itself*,¹⁸ that already is given before something like the order of the subject, and thus is the other name of the Heretic-Rebel. They are always right now and already *In-Struggle*, within a radical impossibility of belief in any such *supermaster*. If Laruelle employs the term *City of Heretics*, he specifies that it “does not take the place of mastery or install itself in the World,” that “Rebellion ... does not make an oeuvre, or it is the Rebel in person that is precisely this oeuvre.”¹⁹ With the term *City* also employed here, despite its

semantic attractiveness, taking account of its heavy worldly hinter-plane is probably not the most adequate, for it can lead to error and let one think that non-philosophy could work and construct within and for the World; however, this is not the case. Laruelle is very clear on this point: “Thus, [utopia] completes itself within the constitution of the subject as autonomous activity, within a Utopia of Strangers or a City of Heretics which for its part is then neither of Heaven nor of Earth but simply non-philosophical practice itself.”²⁰ Otherwise, if he conjointly employs the term *Utopia of Strangers*, perhaps it is to propose another formulation that would dismiss and avoid any ambiguity; moreover, we could equally employ the expression *Utopia of Heretics* without an alteration of meaning.

Thus, the extraterritoriality—its deployment by way of utopia(-)power through the Rebel-Stranger, the immanent Future, ceaselessly taken back into the Un-stand [*l’Un-stand*]²¹—is the antidote to the city qua *Logopolis*, whether it

¹⁷ *Comm-Unauté* a term that is introduced in Lesueur, *Non-philosophie du sujet politique*, 239. Lesueur defines it as the People-without-the-World who determine in-the-last-identity the Rebellion (of) People, which is inexplicable to Philosophy. Comm-unauty is the condition of possibility of being-together of a people who are no longer the subjugated subject of the World. It would seem that Lesueur updates with this conception Laruelle’s old concept, the People or Peoples (of) the One, introduced in the fourth issue of *Pourquoi pas la philosophie?*, entitled “Le philosophe sans qualités,” from October 1984 and *A Biography of Ordinary Man*. – Trans.

¹⁸ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 18; 21.

¹⁹ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 206; 170.

²⁰ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 167, translation slightly modified; 139.

²¹ Lesueur defines *l’Un-stand* in *Non-philosophie du sujet politique*, in the subsection, “La déterminant radicalité de l’Un-stand,” 141-43. According to Lesueur, the *Un-stand* is a portmanteau between the One (*l’Un*) and the instant. Citing varying philosophies of the instant such as Zeno of Elea, Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, and Bachelard, Lesueur’s *Un-Stand* “(is) the instant that (is), a radical condition of a Future not determined by

is itself extraterritorial or physically territorialized. This force issued from non-philosophy seen as *the style of heresy against conformity*²²—valuable to set an end once and for all and once each time with worldly domination—must be protected against the attacks of the Thought-World and all its avatars, notably the imaginary ones that rage without our knowledge in the windings of our thoughts. For a non-historical and non-temporal *ecology of utopias*,²³ it is better to not stumble by accident into the ideology of heresies. In this context, vigilance and rigor are eminently necessary (included within the employment of terms) as guarantees of a universe-utopia radically distinct from world-utopias and an identification of utopia and struggle constantly regressing. In their calling as destroyers of Conformism, non-philosophers owe themselves to the most radical coherence, under penalty of becoming, without their knowledge, the pretentious servitors of the Thought-World. From this point of view, the term *city*, even endowed with a capital letter, appears disqualified; the banishment of its use seems to be a judicious precaution. Otherwise, if rebellion does not make up a work, as Laruelle highlights, if the imagination *qua* utopic worldly modelizing—another *machination* of

reality—is also disqualified, must we then totally resolve ourselves to a non-acting that is indifferent to the worldly motion, and therefore to a sealed fate of present humans and those to come? What is a utopia that comes unilaterally into the World and does not stumble into the mirages and belief in a worldly efficiency and materialization? Without directly responding to this question—which would be to immediately return to a decisional posture—we can nevertheless liberate the conditions of possibility of a *Manifested* of this order, namely, a radically immanent emanation (of) the Real:

- (1) Remaining within the heart of the vision-in-One in a stable way regardless of the circumstances,
- (2) to never let fear (re)take control of our thoughts and effective actions and
- (3) prevent the return of the circle of Being and Having by refusing worldly determination, and therefore the definition of *Man in lack of*, reclaiming, by contrast, the Radical Identity of the Stranger for any Human without exception and thus

the hallucination of the Past as Truth” (Lesueur, *Non-philosophie du sujet politique*, 142). While it may be a creative concept, it is not a simple flirtation of language: the *Un-stand* “(is) of a radical exteriority in relation to any Past-Present-Future sequence, containing within it all determinations of the Past,

the Power-within-the-Real of the Present, and the entire potentialities of the *to-come* as Future” (ibid., 143). — Trans.

²² Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 13; 17.

²³ Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 14; 18.

(4) abolishing any principle of division, separation and exclusion, the nightmarish vision of the threat of barbarism, included within thought, through the In-Man according to the essential non-philosophical principle *I and the Stranger are identical in the Last-Identity*;²⁴

(5) to extend the vision-in-One to all living ones, to the plants and animals, but also to the whole biosphere and thus open itself, from a radically immanent opening, to the condition of possibility of an *eco* (relative to the notion of the house) that no longer emerges from the norm (*-nomos*, *-nomie*) nor logic (*-logos*, *-logy*), nor a system.

These minimal conditions constitute a non-exhaustive list: there are perhaps and surely other conditions.

The guarantee of a universe-utopia (and even uni-vers-es [*unis-vers*]) resides within the suspension of a conception or imagination with a worldly *political* and/or anthropo-logical and -

centric content, as well as a mundane projection of our fears materialized [*dans la matière*]. Fear, the first thread of the fabric of our subjugation, one that is neither more nor less our fear of death—or the idea that we ourselves make of it—is perhaps more precisely bound to any loss or theft of identity. This is ultimately why the point is to have trust in the indirect effects of the vision-in-One and to no longer stumble back into the fear *that nothing will happen* and therefore in the Pretension of the seizure [*saisie*]; the point is to trust that the vision-in-One, *qua* utopia(-)power, will emerge in an *ad hoc* and solely functional and spontaneous way from the structural forms of concrete existences. Let us cultivate the vision-in-One and see what happens. Keep in mind and heart the humility of the ephemeral and the *fictional*, that is, the belief in this World, far from the worldly Decision and Pretension to definitive calling, because it is grounded on a proclaimed Truth. Let the Stranger-Rebel ex-ist in their Real-Liberty, which is also Un-spired [*Un-spire*].²⁵ Trust in the Oraxiomatic Future, the always already

²⁴ François Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers: Science des hommes, démocratie, non-psychanalyse* (Paris: Kimé, 1995), 129.

²⁵ The term *Un-spire* also appears in the same subsection of Lesueur's book as the *Un-stand* and is evoked as a portmanteau of the One and a subject inspired by a creative impulse. Lesueur writes in *Non-philosophie du sujet politique*, 143: "Within the Vision of the *Un-stand*, each subject can take the measure of their Being-other-than-the-subject, their Stranger-Existence and their Heretical Identity, for they envisage themselves otherwise than subordinated to: in the discovery of themselves with no configuration, no framework, no

function, no mission devolved or assigned to them in advance. It is a radical opening, a Presence-to-self without concern, just within the pleasure of discovering their potential of being. It is an opening to Identity as self-discovery within creativity, but still different from self-sculpture. It is an opening to an awakening as if to a smile, therefore to wonderment. It is a moment of Creation that is ceaselessly renewed, at any fraction of a second, a radical opening to Being and above all to perseverance within Being, so dear to Spinoza, and that we here retrieve in its full evocative Capacity [*Puissance*]. This is why the *Un-Stand* (is) also an Unspired (Un-Spired) creator." – Trans.

there, at once utopia and uchronia as the tenor of this force, unwavering and inalienable because it is radically heretical.

Transitioning Arab-Palestinian Dwelling Landscapes: From Pre-Modern Immanent Practices to Self-Sufficient Façades

Yehotal Shapira

Abstract: This paper portrays the vernacular Arab-Palestinian architectural and landscape configuration as performative utterances of the peasant subject and community that produced them. The study draws on several case study villages and ruins in the Jerusalem hinterland, examining key periods under Ottoman rule, and their developmental trajectory under British colonial rule until the initial decade of the twentieth century. The paper considers how non-philosophy raises important questions not addressed by existing literature. Through a non-philosophical approach, this paper divides Arab-Palestinian architectural culture into two phases. The first phase refers to this architecture as an immanent performative form of thought that utilized fractality and non-Euclidean geometry in creative expressions, living through and with nature. This thinking/building of house architecture and cultivated plots intertwined, forming an inseparable agricultural production system. The second phase encapsulates the distinction of the individual house from its surroundings, and the emergence of the façade with well-chiseled stones. This change symbolized the house as a self-affirmation of its owner's wealth and social status within the village public sphere. This transformation occurred under the influence of modernization and colonization processes. The third period of non-philosophy is used as a framework in this study to differentiate between architecture as an immanent performative form of thought and architecture as self-affirmation, aiming to grasp the unique experimental thinking/building of pre-modern Arab-Palestinian architecture. The study considers how these modes of thinking/building may contribute both to architectural and landscape architecture knowledge and to a better comprehension of the non-philosophical approach.

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This article employs François Laruelle's non-philosophy, or non-standard philosophy, which is not a negation of philosophy but its expansion into new realms of thought. It is a "style of thought" that mutates with its object.¹ It can be considered not as a new theory, but a new experience, or use, of theory or thinking as part of the Real, that is, as a material, immanent part of reality.² This approach is utilized here to experiment with architectural performatives while studying the approach of pre-modern Arab-Palestinian architecture and environmental culture.

The article portrays the vernacular Arab-Palestinian agricultural landscape, water resources, and architectural configuration as performative utterances expressive of the peasant subject and community positions and beliefs that produced them. The study draws on several test case villages and ruins in the Jerusalem hinterland, where the pre-modern landscape is almost erased but still palpable. It examines key periods in Palestine from the late sixteenth century under Ottoman Empire rule, before and after the Egyptian occupation (1830-1839), and the architectural developmental trajectory

under British colonial rule during the initial decades of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, traces of this pre-modern culture and its transition from pre-modern to modern persist throughout the twentieth century, including the establishment of Israel until today. Employing non-philosophy, the research probes the affiliation between architectural performances and the environment, touching on folklore, ethnographic studies, ecology, religion, and politics.

Contrary to the common reference to the development of Palestinian architecture and environmental culture, I propose, through a non-philosophical approach, and notably Philosophy III, a division into two phases. The first phase refers to an immanent performative architecture that utilized fractality and non-Euclidean geometry in creative expression. The second phase encapsulates the emergence of the façade as an architecture of self-affirmation under the influence of modernization and colonialization processes.

In what can be considered Laruelle's allusion to architecture in a broad sense, he posits that

¹ François Laruelle, "Non-Philosophy as Heresy," in *From Decision to Heresy: Experiments in Non-Standard Thought*, ed. Robin Mackay (Falmouth and New York: Urbanomic and Sequence Press, 2012), 259.

² Anthony Paul Smith and John Ó Maoilearca suggested that "there is the option to see his approach as what it hypothesizes itself to be a thought that is part

of the Real." John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith, "Introduction: The Non-Philosophical Inversion. Laruelle's Knowledge without Domination," in *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy*, eds. John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 8.

“thought, in its turn, becomes a form of art.” This denotes “an art of thought rather than a thought about art...,” not conceptual art but a concept modeled by the art, a generic extension of art.³ Regarding building, Laruelle writes, “Prisons or ramparts, those where graffiti covers every surface or those where it is prohibited, walls are at stakes, not just of freedom but of writing and of thought.”⁴

In this context, this article delves into the performative immanent nature of thought articulated by pre-modern Arab Palestinian architecture and considers how these modes of thinking may contribute both to architectural knowledge and a better understanding of the non-philosophical approach. It also asks, in what ways does the non-philosophical approach enhance our understanding of pre-modern Palestinian Arab architecture that existing literature does not address, and what novel aspects of this architecture can emerge through such an approach?

Throughout the article, tensions manifest across various levels, resonating with one another. There is tension between both non-philosophy and Arab-Palestinian building immanence performative practices that may extend

our modes of thinking and experiencing, and between writing about them in order to elucidate their eccentric uses through the standard academic form of writing. Additionally, tension arises between non-philosophy, a Western perspective, and Arab-Palestinian pre-modern architecture, emblematic of indigenous heritage. Furthermore, tension emerges between myself, the author situated in Israel that is perceived as a conqueror with colonialist traits, and the Arab-Palestinian pre-modern culture intrinsic to the Palestinian people.

The article delves into non-philosophy’s potential contribution to understanding the history of architecture, particularly pre-modern Arab-Palestinian architecture, and its significance for Jerusalem. This research reveals a clash between traditional architectural configurations, depicted as philosophy-without-symbols (PwS, denoting a philosophy without standard symbols), and symbol-laden architecture embodying self-sufficiency. In this context, these phases perform a schism between two forms of thought: one biocentric and fractal, where man was part of nature, and the other anthropocentric, where a self-assured representation emerged, asserting human control over nature. Furthermore, this article integrates the concept

³ François Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics* / *Photo-Fiction, une esthétique non-standard*, trans. Drew S. Burk, bilingual edition (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), 2.

⁴ François Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography* / *Le concept de non-photographie*, trans. Robin Mackay, bilingual edition (Falmouth and New York: Urbanomic and Sequence Press, 2011), 125.

of philo-fiction from Philosophy III to clarify the traumatic encounter between the traditional non-representational built environment and subsequent phases.

In contemporary Palestinian society, preservation efforts for architectural heritage primarily focus on built structures,⁵ with significantly less attention given to landscape and water resources.⁶ These elements are often considered peripheral to architectural conservation, lacking proper consideration as they are typically perceived as exterior and marginal to architectural conservation. Despite the imaginative role of peasant culture in shaping the Palestinian national narrative of *Nakba*, agricultural practices have faced criticism for perceived “backwardness” and associations with metaphysical and patriarchal values.⁷

These vernacular rural environments are frequently excluded from mainstream discussions on landscape and gardens. Andrew Walter highlights that these discussions often

prioritize “artifacts, monuments produced by and for social elites,” assuming they “form the basis of a cultural imaginary in which all levels of society participate in varying ways.”⁸ Nevertheless, in Palestine from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, the agricultural and rural landscape played a crucial role.

The remnants of this culture receive insufficient protection under the Israeli Antiquities Law, which applies to remains dated until 1700 and any associated elements. In recent years, certain Israeli religious leaders and politicians have contended that there is no Palestinian people and, consequently, no such distinct culture. However, the remains of Arab-Palestinian culture form a tangible background in the Israeli environment. Contrary to this assertion, the article assesses the contribution of Arab-Palestinian rural communities amidst landscape changes over more than 200 years of development and Western influences. Haim Yacobi and Hadas Shadar argue that an ongoing campaign seeks to obliterate the remnants of this

⁵ Suad Amiry, *Peasant Architecture in Palestine: Space, Kinship, and Gender* (Ramallah: RIWAQ, 2017).

⁶ For exceptions, see the two conferences in Birzeit University on the matter: “The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal Poetry” (1999), as well as the conference volume: Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Roger Heacock, and Khaled Nashef, eds., *The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal Poetry* (Birzeit: Birzeit University Publications, 1999), and “Palestinian Landscapes: New Perspectives since 1999” (2019), <https://www.birzeit.edu/en/events/Landscapes-of-Palestine-New-Perspectives-since-1999>.

⁷ Honaida Ghanim, “Poetics of Disaster: Nationalism, Gender, and Social Change Among Palestinian Poets in Israel after Nakba,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2009): 23-39, DOI: 10.1007/s10767-009-9049-9.

⁸ Michel Conan, “Learning from Middle East Traditions,” *Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity. Questions, Methods, and Resources in a Multicultural Perspective*, ed. Michel Conan (Washington and Cambridge: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection and Spacemaker Press, 2008), 1-21.

culture to establish Israeli sovereignty over the land.⁹ In the present political climate, where traditional Arab-Palestinian culture is often unfamiliar, and most of its remnants lie in ruins, it is primarily discussed in terms of loss. This article, however, focuses on historical achievements with the aim of generating a seminal reevaluation of this scenic and architectural cultural heritage in defiance of its denial.

Theory

In this special issue, in his “Octonary of Philosophical Sufficiency,” François Laruelle critically employs an architectural example, utilizing the construction of a bridge to illustrate the Principle of Sufficient Reason in Western thought. This invokes Martin Heidegger’s post-World War II context, where he idealized traditional peasant building as authentic architecture.¹⁰ Yet, as part of “back to the land” movement, this idealization is criticized as fascist.¹¹

In contrast to Heidegger, Theodor W. Adorno contends that the impossibility of true dwelling stems mainly from an ethical sensibility, asserting that “Morality involves not feeling at home in one’s home... Wrong life cannot be lived rightly.”¹² Massimo Cacciari further posits that within the inherent injustice of the social system, wherein participation is universal, only an architecture of empty signs can genuinely express dwelling’s impossibility.¹³ Daniel A. Barber asserts that architecture serves as a medium for expressing a cultural approach to the environment, functioning as both a canvas projecting socio-environmental transformations and a practical system facilitating realization.¹⁴ This duality underscores architecture’s role in shaping physical structures and the identities of individuals, collectives, and societies. The current study explores aspects pertaining to the characteristics of Arab-Palestinian architecture, encompassing themes of exclusion and inclusion derived from the theories embodied in Laruelle’s example.

⁹ Haim Yacobi and Hadas Shadar, “The Arab Village: A Genealogy of (Post)colonial Imagination,” *Journal of Architecture*, Vol. 19, No. 6 (2014): 975-97, DOI: 10.1080/13602365.2014.987155. See also Shai Aron, “The Fate of Abandoned Arab Villages in Israel on the Eve of the Six-Day War and Its Immediate Aftermath,” *Katedrah be-toldot Erets-Yisra’el ve-yishuvah*, Vol. 105 (2002): 151-70. Furthermore, academic studies on decolonialism often overlook the distinctive characteristics of pre-modern Arab-Palestinian culture. See, for example, Steven Salaita, *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking,” trans. Albert Hofstadter, in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 156.

¹¹ Murray Bookchin, *The Modern Crisis*, second revised edition (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1987).

¹² Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. Edmund F.N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005), 39.

¹³ Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999).

¹⁴ Daniel A. Barber, *Modern Architecture and Climate: Design before Air Conditioning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

Laruelle's example may prompt associations with Albert Camus's *The Fall*. Shoshana Felman interprets *The Fall* as a text guiding readers to Amsterdam's Jewish Quarter, posing the question, "What does it mean to inhabit history as a crime, as the annihilation of the Other?"¹⁵ Felman views *The Fall* as a narrative on silence, mirroring the quietude linked to the bridge in the novel. She contends that it delves into not just silence but also the interplay of one silence masking another, where one contracting universe delineates another. The bridge suicide scene symbolizes historical moments when silence reasserts itself—a metaphor for the cyclical nature of history, before and after displacement and annihilation.¹⁶ Felman overlooked the symbolic environmental relevance of choosing suicide by the bridge in connection with nature. Consequently, *The Fall* can be construed as a narrative of opting for a voiceless death in nature, rather than succumbing to or engaging in man's spurious "authenticity" or attempting to control natural forces—two conflicting attitudes that could not be bridged in Camus's tale.

Events in Amsterdam's Jewish Quarter draw on European culture, which, by the same logic, mutes the cultural expressions and significant achievements of pre-modern Arab-Palestinian rural landscapes through the involvement of entities such as European bodies, European Jews, and skills including modern agricultural techniques and methods of establishing settlements.

Laruelle utilizes Dis-Junction in his example, possibly alluding to Bernard Tschumi's assertion that a gap persists between ideal space (a mental construct) and real space (shaped by social praxis). While acknowledging the ideological weight of Tschumi's distinction, it becomes evident that it is intrinsic to architecture's nature according to him.¹⁷ This implies that the bridge signifies the unbridgeable gap between ideal and real space. This inability to bridge gaps aligns with Camus's critique of the pursuit of authenticity in Heidegger's thought. The philosophical frameworks discussed here endorse the use of the third period of non-philosophy in this study which is a performative philo-fiction and a thought gesture deflating authority.¹⁸ In this context, the uniqueness of

¹⁵ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 189.

¹⁶ Felman and Laub, *Testimony*.

¹⁷ Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 3.

¹⁸ Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, "Thinking Alongside

The Last Humanity: Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca in Conversation with Katerina Kolozova, Anthony Paul Smith, and John Ó Maoilearca," *Oraxiom: A Journal of Non-Philosophy*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2020): 169-80, http://oraxiom.org/no1/12_Kolozova_Smith_OMaoilearca.pdf.

Arab-Palestinian heritage lies in its capacity to spur methods of experimental thinking about architectural performances in its affiliation with nature.

Non-Methodologies and Research Materials

The research utilizes a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. On the one hand, it delves into the actual structure, while, on the other hand, it explores thinking and beliefs underpinning its establishment. John Ó Maoilearca elucidates that “non-philosophy can encompass both quantitative and qualitative differences simultaneously” in a “democratic” exchange that avoids diminishing either, and it is “divested of their pretense of absolute authority over reality.”¹⁹ This framework conceives architecture as spatial action, considering aspects such as inherent meaning, construction patterns, and their relation to nature. The study draws on insights from, remains analysis in field research, in various abandoned villages in the Jerusalem hinterland, and verbal accounts of contemporaries. Additionally, it incorporates pictorial

descriptions, photographic images, maps, and aerial photos sourced from archives and books.

Arab-Palestinian architecture has frequently been characterized as a reflection of technological changes, including hewing and the shape of windows. Ruth Kark and Michal Oren-Nordheim,²⁰ for instance, delineated construction development stages based on window characteristics, building decoration, and the level of chiseling and finishing. Ron Fuchs²¹ argued that literature on Arab-Palestinian houses lacks the technical knowledge needed for discussing architectural form, including design, space, and typology. Michal Moshe analyzed architectural structural patterns in the development of Arab-Palestinian villages in the Jerusalem area.²² In contrast, this article explores local beliefs perceived as superstitions, along with customs, traditional rituals, and religious meanings of the physical surroundings as part of an archaic and mystical culture. The aim is to consider the social and theoretical significance of environmental changes.

¹⁹ John Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline* (London: Continuum, 2006), 129.

²⁰ Ruth Kark and Michal Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and Its Environs: Quarters, Neighborhoods, Villages, 1800-1948* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001); Ruth Kark, *Ge'ulat hakarka be'Eretz Yisrael: Ra'ayon uma'ase* [The Redemption of the Soil in the Land of Israel: Theory and Action] (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1990), 574.

²¹ Ron Fuchs, “The Palestinian Arab House and the Islamic ‘Primitive Hut,’” *Muqarnas Online: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World*, Vol. 15 (1998): 157-77, DOI: 10.1163/22118993-90000413.

²² Michal Moshe, *Adrichalot Nishkabat: Bikvot giloya shel shafa adrichalit mekomit nisteret* [Forgotten Architecture: In Search of Local Architectural Language] (Ariel: University of Ariel, 2020).

Since the late 1990s, architecture has shifted from post-structural criticism to a “post-critical” era, advocating an end to the importation of external ideas. Michael Speaks, a proponent of this shift, advocates for “design intelligence,” emphasizing an interactive relationship between thinking and doing, fostering innovative, digitally-driven experimental design.²³ Stan Allen associates Gilles Deleuze’s “pure immanence” with the idea that every discipline can generate its own theoretical concepts.²⁴ Laruelle criticizes Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s “pure immanence,” proposing “radical immanence” for disciplines to legislate independently without philosophical authority. Laruelle underscores the importance of democracy between philosophies and disciplines. This perspective challenges distinctions between “Architecture” (professional) and “architecture” (vernacular),²⁵ as well as questioning traditional disciplinary boundaries like landscape architecture and architecture. The separation of these disciplines was not observed in pre-modern environmental production, created according to an integrated logic.

Laruelle’s non-standard thought, notably Philosophy III, experimentally employs an uncertain and probable apparatus that obviates the risk of self-defense or sufficiency supporting knowledge derived from habitual disciplinary inclinations. This approach is crucial for comprehending the non-residential thoughts and beliefs shaped by Arab-Palestinian culture as a spatial performance.

Research Findings

This section delineates two phases that encapsulate the changing attitudes of Arab-Palestinian architecture toward the landscape. Based on non-philosophy, these phases phrase the discourse differently from existing literature on Arab-Palestinian building and environmental culture. In the initial phase, nomadic tribes and families settled, and a sedentary process began, centered around an agricultural way of life. Accordingly, there was a reduction and expansion of the desert and cultivated areas.²⁶

Shimon Gibson asserted that, in the late sixteenth century, settlements originated near water sources, evolving from caves to four-walled

²³ Michael Speaks, “After Theory,” *Architecture Record* Vol. 193, No. 6 (June 2005): 72-75.

²⁴ Stan Allen, “Field Condition,” in *Points + Lines: Diagrams and Projects for the City* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999); Stan Allen and Michael Meredith. “Interview 1,” in *Matter: Material Processes in*

Architectural Production, eds. Gail Peter Bordon and Michael Meredith (New York: Routledge, 2012), 9-16.

²⁵ Dell Upton, “Architecture in Everyday Life,” *New Literary History*, Vol. 33, no. 4 (Autumn 2002): 707-72, DOI: 10.1353/nlh.2002.0046.

²⁶ Adolf Reifenberg, *The Struggle Between the Desert and the Sown: Rise and Fall of Agriculture in the Levant* (Jerusalem: Publishing Department of the Jewish Agency, 1955).

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houses.²⁷ A new house was built directly on the bedrock. Its walls followed the terraces' structure, and the natural division of mountains into plateaus. Terraces prevented alluvium, preparing the land for cultivation.

The village's growth followed an open-ended, non-Euclidean approach,²⁸ responding to actual needs correlated with local resources, rather than a predetermined vision for the village. The architecture of the villages reflected a fractal construction,²⁹ maintaining parallel fidelity to the environment. The construction embodied a code derived from nature and the agricultural context, exemplifying co-existence between the house and the landscape.³⁰

Ron Fuchs and others have claimed that the elevated plateau, known as a *mastaba*, serves as a

fundamental architectural element—an underlying substratum that implies the idiosyncrasies of both the single-space, all-purpose village house and the Islamic domestic architecture of the Levant.³¹ However, Fuchs did not attribute environmental significance to the elevated plateau, which imitates the agricultural plot and mountain terraces from which the sedentism process originated. In other words, this article suggests that the elevated plateau, known as the *mastaba*, mimicked the exterior cultivating plot structure by transforming it into raised living and sleeping spaces. That is to say, the *mastaba* originated from agricultural practices and a broader tendency to expand the mountainous terrain within the house and village form.

The present article also indicates that landscape outside was divided into numerous plateau

²⁷ Shimon Gibson, Bridget Ibbs, and Amos Kloner, "The Sataf Project of Landscape Archaeology in the Judean Hills: A Preliminary Report on Four Seasons of Survey and Excavation (1987-1989)," *Levant: The Journal of the Council for British Research in the Levant*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1991): 29-54, DOI: doi.org/10.1179/lev.1991.23.1.29.

²⁸ John Friedmann, "Toward a Non-Euclidian Mode of Planning," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (1993): 482-85, DOI: 10.1080/01944369308975902. See also Ernest R. Alexander, "The Non-Euclidean Mode of Planning: What Is It to Be?," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (1994): 372-76, DOI: 10.1080/01944369408975594.

²⁹ Ron Eglash, *African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

³⁰ Some terms used in describing planning and traditional architecture resemble non-philosophical terms. This article introduces these concepts in the context of Arab-Palestinian environmental culture. In the subsequent section, which examines the research findings, these concepts will be explored in relation to non-philosophy and Arab-Palestinian environmental culture.

³¹ Fuchs, "The Palestinian Arab House"; Gustaf Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina: Das Haus, Hühnerzucht, Taubenzucht, Bienenzucht*, Band 7 (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1942); Richard Lodoïs Thoumin, *La maison syrienne dans la plaine hauranaise, le bassin du Baradā et sur les plateaux du Qalamūn* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1932); G. Robinson Lees, *Village Life in Palestine: A Description of the Religion, Home Life, Manners, Customs, Characteristics, and Superstitions of the Peasants of the Holy Land, with Reference to the Bible* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905).

terraces, a division mirrored by the inside houses into plateau segments, forming a mediation between earth and sky, marked by a centrally crossed vault or dome as the ceiling. It considered both the interior and exterior as part of a holistic fertilization system while simultaneously reflecting a social order. The intertwined nature of house architecture and cultivated plots formed an inseparable agricultural production system. The attachment to the land through agriculture created an epistemological conception of time and space, living through and with nature.

In peasant (*fallah*) dwellings, agricultural produce and animals shared the same house, segmented by various plateaus for their respective uses (*Qa'al-beit*—lower space for entrance or/and stabling animals, *ranyeh*—lower space for stabling animals or/and working space, and *mastaba*—elevated platform)³². Ethnographic accounts, such as Hilma Granqvist's,³³ emphasized the connection between land ownership, marriage considerations, and everyday agricultural practices within extended families.

Agriculture, from sowing to harvesting, was based on family self-employment, reinforcing the use of the house and landscape as one agricultural system. Subsequently, the extended family and the entire community participated in constructing the foundation and roof of the house (*il 'aqdeh*).

In the early stages, the village's definition encompassed various structures, evolving over time amidst destruction and construction processes.³⁴ Félix Bovet's observations highlighted the villages' inconspicuous blending with the mountains' color, making them appear as landscape without the human sounds.³⁵

Villages on mountain slopes developed as fortress constructions, resisting external threats. David Grossman proposed a social structure based on kinship, with clan quarters forming neighborhoods and multiple neighborhoods constituting a village.³⁶ The buildings that served communal and religious functions, such as the school (*khotab*) and the guest house

³² These definitions vary slightly across different villages; see Taufik Canaan, *The Palestinian Arab House, Its Architecture and Folklore* (Jerusalem: Syrian Orphanage Press, 1933), 59-61.

³³ Hilma Natalia Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, Vol. I, trans. Agnes Dawson (Helsinki: Helsingfors centraltryckeri och bokbinderi, 1931).

³⁴ Such a house is described in the literature: see Canaan, *The Palestinian Arab House*, 53.

³⁵ Félix Bovet, *Egypt, Palestine, and Phoenicia: A Visit to Sacred Lands* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1883).

³⁶ David Grossman, *Ha-Kefar ba-'Arvi u-venotar: Tabalikhim ba-yishuv ba-'Arvi be-Erets-Yisra'el ba-teḥayyah ba-'Otmanit* [Rural and Desertion: The Arab Village and Its Offshoots in Ottoman Palestine.] (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1994).

(*madafa*), were intentionally located at the meeting point between clan quarters.

The Arab-Palestinian landscape embraced all regional beliefs and religions, showing respect for their remnants. In 1877, Claude R. Conder elucidated the pagan roots of local Arab-Palestinian culture, suggesting that the peasants' (*fallahīn*) beliefs were rooted in a pre-Israelite polytheistic faith, blending seamlessly with local religions. According to him, "The so-called Muslim is found worshiping at shrines consecrated to Jewish, Samaritan, Christian, and often pagan memories." Conder proposed that the *Mukam*,³⁷ the peasants' sacred place on the hilltop, along with the sacred tree, would evoke the words of Scripture denouncing the Canaanite idol altars on mountain tops.³⁸ These local superstitions, along with customs, traditional ritual culture, and folklore, were also evident in the house construction.³⁹

The Arab-Palestinian peasant resisted analyzing his agricultural work in terms of profit and

economic feasibility, viewing agriculture as a crucial aspect of mundane, everyday life.

In an illustrative conversation, Philippe J. Baldensperger explained to an Arab-Palestinian peasant the economic benefits of buying seeds for time and cost savings. However, the peasant, content with his situation, expressed happiness in not possessing a pencil for such calculations.⁴⁰

In Arab-Palestinian culture, superstitions permeated various aspects, including the construction of residences, agricultural practices, as well as beliefs related to springs and vegetation. While some regarded these superstitions as indicative of the backwardness of rural society, they reflected a profound connection between the indigenous people and the natural environment that surrounded them.⁴¹

Arabian tribes were historically divided into camps with pre-Islamic belligerent tendencies. These affiliations, though fictitious, served as a basis for legitimacy in coalition formations during violent conflicts, unrelated to kinship or

³⁷ Written also as *maqum*; see Tawfiq Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (London: Luzac and Co., 1927)

³⁸ Claude R. Conder, "The Moslem Mukams," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1877): 89-103, DOI: 10.1179/peq.1877.9.3.89.

³⁹ Tawfiq Canaan, "Folklore of the House,"

in *The Palestinian Arab House*, 82-96.

⁴⁰ Philippe J. Baldensperger, "The Immovable East," *Palestine Exploration Fund* (1907), 270.

⁴¹ Tawfiq Canaan, "Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine," *The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, Vols. 1-2 (1920-1921): 153-70; Tawfiq Canaan, "Plant-lore in Palestinian Superstition," *The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, Vol. 8 (1928): 129-68.

religious ties. According to Miriam Hoexter,⁴² these struggles led to widespread destruction, including crops, orchards, and entire villages, driven by competition for status, resources, and control power in an entire region, a village, or a part of a village. However, by the 1930s, these alliances lost influence, proving ineffective for landlords, authorities, or Zionist land acquisitions. Hoexter documented battles between Judean Mountains and Nablus area families based on Yaman-Qays affiliations, involving deportation, assault, kidnapping, murder, forced marriages, and also building of houses for resettlement in new settings. The social structure centered on extended family (*hamula*) and a “honor and shame” value system among party supporters.

The second phase, contextualized within the house’s connection to nature and the landscape, resulted from the Ottoman Empire

regaining control after the Egyptian occupation (1931-1941). Ottoman modernization reforms,⁴³ coupled with changes in land laws (Ottoman Land Code of 1958 and the 1873 land emancipation act),⁴⁴ reshaped landholdings and eliminated the tax farming system to boost agricultural production and state revenues.⁴⁵ This transformation affected land tenure and agricultural labor organization. Land tenure changes led to absentee landlords, depriving smaller peasants of their land. Communal land holdings (*mushaa*) diminished in favor of private ownership, whether by landlords or peasants.

Master building emerged as a profession during this phase, marked by a specialization in building practices that underscored the importance of teamwork. Locally sourced building materials gave way to market-purchased alternatives. For example, field stone was replaced by hewn

⁴² Miriam Hoexter, “The Role of the Qays and Yaman Factions in Local Political Divisions: Jabal Nablus Compared with the Judean Hills in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” *Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1973): 249. See also Salim Tamari, “Factionalism and Class Formation in Recent Palestinian History,” in *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Roger Owen (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1982), 177-202, and Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905-1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁴³ Ruth Kark and Noam Levin, “The Environment in Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period, 1798-1918,” in *Between Ruin and Restoration: An Environmental History of Israel*, eds. Daniel E. Orenstein, Alon Tal, and Char

Miller (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), 1-28.

⁴⁴ According to Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, villages in the Jerusalem area in 1870 before the beginning of Zionist settlement under Ottoman rule were considered part of a district called *Mutasarrifate* of Jerusalem or *Sanjak* Jerusalem. The Sanjak was divided into sub-units (*Nahiya* and *Kada* units) and included an extensive area around Jerusalem, including Bethlehem, Hebron, and Jericho. The total number of people in the Sanjak in the 1870s was 25,000. The population of the whole Sanjak was 100,464. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, “The Sanjak of Jerusalem in the 1870s,” *Qatedrah be-toldot Erets-Yisra’el ye-yishuvah*, Vol. 36 (1985): 73-122.

⁴⁵ Amiry, *Peasant Architecture in Palestine*.

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stone. The introduction of new construction materials, such as iron and concrete,⁴⁶ was accompanied by construction techniques that utilized chiseled stone. The village economy, initially focused on subsistence agriculture, underwent a transformation into a monetized economy with the integration of non-agricultural activities such as urban commerce and various professions.⁴⁷

Modernization has led to a class-based division in construction types, with high socio-economic status houses present in both urban and rural areas, in stark contrast to lower-status houses primarily situated in villages or urban outskirts.⁴⁸ Commencing in the mid-nineteenth century, a process of diffusion unfolded between urban and rural settings, later accompanied by migration from rural areas to Jerusalem. The impact of modernization processes is further manifested in the heightened European influence and the establishment of foreign religious administrations and consulates. This, in turn, has contributed to enhanced sanitation, improved traffic methods and security in

villages surrounding Jerusalem, facilitating the introduction of Eurocentric culture and capitalist influences.

The spatial organization of communal clan enclaves, centered on blood relationships surrounding a courtyard, underwent a transformation as individual houses were constructed anywhere on the plot of land. This shift marked the initiation of the nuclearization of the extended family.⁴⁹ The house, situated on the plot, became distinct from its surroundings. New constructions emerged, either replacing older structures or being erected on available ground or in the spaces between houses (*hawākīr*).⁵⁰ Courtyard areas diminished, and gardens were relocated towards the village periphery. Houses evolved from communal, introverted structures into individual units featuring façades adorned with well-chiseled stones, symbolizing wealth and individual status within the public social sphere. This detachment from rural culture and nature served as a prominent manifestation of the significant change characterizing the second stage.

⁴⁶ Ruth Kark, "The Introduction of Modern Technology into the Holy Land, 1800-1914," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*, ed. Thomas Evan Levy (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995), 524-41. See also Norris, *Land of Progress*, 2-25.

⁴⁷ Grossman, *Ha-Kefar ha-'Arvi u-venotav*.

⁴⁸ Baldensperger, "The Immovable East," 57; Canaan, "Folklore of the House," 82-96.

⁴⁹ Amiry, *Peasant Architecture in Palestine*. See also David Kroyanker, *Adrichalut birushalym: Hbniya Haravit Mbotz*

Labomot [Jerusalem Architecture: Periods and Styles of Arab Building Outside the Old City Walls] (Jerusalem: Mekhon Yerushalayim le-ḥeḳer Yiśra'el, 1991).

⁵⁰ Nisreen Mazzawi and Amalia Sa'ar, "The *Hawākīr* of Nazareth: The History and Contemporary Face of a Cultural Ecological Institution," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (2018): 537-56, DOI: 10.1017/S0020743818000764.

Salim Tamari emphasized a societal rupture within Arab-Palestinian communities during that period. This division was delineated between the urban sector, comprising individuals employed in administrative and religious roles, along with the landed elite, and the rural areas surrounding Jerusalem, inhabited by dispossessed local peasants primarily engaged in agriculture. Tamari argued that Islam served as a unifying force, bridging gaps among these various social strata and paving the way for the adoption of a new, “modern” national collective identity.⁵¹

Non-Philosophy and

Discussion of Research Findings

The proposal in this article to divide Arab-Palestinian architecture and environmental culture into the first and second phases was derived from non-philosophical thinking. In the first phase, architecture was imminently integrated with the landscape, reflecting self-expression that evolved through fractal and non-Euclidean utterances, while the second phase emphasized visibility and self-affirmation, influenced by Western notions of wealth and success.

Few studies have highlighted the unique characteristics of this building culture. Sylvaine Bulle characterizes Arab-Palestinian architecture as a *bricolage*, employing vital, accumulative, and subversive tactics.⁵² According to Bulle, this approach circumvents standard rules and challenges the foundational mythology of the absolute architectural plan. The spatial quality she poetically described is viewed in her writing through an anthropocentric prism. This research findings reveal that this heritage establishes connections between architecture and the environment, anchored in nature, and adopting an autochthonous biocentric approach. This approach serves as the epistemological foundation for both Arab-Palestinian village and urban architectural traditions.

It is not merely that the concepts Bulle employs are unrelated to the environment or nature; they are delineated in terms of the negation of order and form (e.g., shapeless, non-signifying, non-submissive, disqualification) or inherent opposition (e.g., entropic, absurdity, and grotesque). The Arab-Palestinian architectural heritage adopts an uncertain positive attitude

⁵¹ Salim Tamari, “Factionalism and Class Formation.” See also Norris, *Land of Progress*.

⁵² Sylvaine Bulle, “Ai masmaot vehitkomemot barchitectura” [“Indiscipline et Insurrection en Architecture”], trans. Yael Bergstein, *Resling*, Vol. 4

(1998) 14-22, archived at: https://web.archive.org/web/20051124093923/http://readingmachine.co.il/home/articles/article_327. Bulle based her idea on Bataille. See Georges Bataille, “Architecture,” in “Critical Dictionary” of *Documents*, No. 2 (May 1929): 17.

rooted in faith and holistic observation, entailing a creative subjective position. This is why non-philosophy can better reflect its uniqueness through an approach that is established not in negation or dialectics but in expanding our standard way of thinking.

The forgotten affinity of Arab-Palestinian pre-modern architecture with the landscape represents a local architectural innovation that once coexisted harmoniously with nature in a complex ecosystem. This traditional heritage, although evident in some present-day customs, has become unfamiliar even to its inheritors. The non-residential pre-modern architecture, as an approach, has the potential to challenge longstanding anthropocentric urban and architectural accounts.

The creative act of building and design served as a means of contemplating existence for a society based on an autarkic economy, dependent on the unpredictable grace of nature for agricultural production. It was an act of establishing a sense of place in an environment where the panoramic view of the mountains on the horizon defined the perception of home.

This process represents a “unique” amalgamation of vitality, akin to a traditional act of Design Research.⁵³ This denotes a form of design that draws inspiration from the intrinsic facets of architecture, as Speaks suggests, but transcends the conventional boundaries between architecture and landscapes.⁵⁴

The Arab-Palestinian landscape in the first phase was a wondering for meaning in accordance with the Universe. The uniqueness of the landscape lay in its ability to follow a thread of immanence (as non-philosophy calls us to consider). It was a performative act of building in nature that materialized through immanence. This building culture consecrated and cloned the natural and agricultural environment while being a part of it. The visible mountain terraces on the horizon beneath the sky were replicated in the house, which was segmented into several plateaus under a dome or a crossed vault symbolizing the celestial realm.

In an interview, Hassan Abu Aslah,⁵⁵ the former head of the Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba Development Committee, and a former planner in the Jerusalem municipality under both Jordanian and Israeli regimes, cited Yonatan Shilony

⁵³ Which could relate to the notion Design Research. See Murray Fraser, ed., *Design Research in Architecture: An Overview* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

⁵⁴ Speaks, “After Theory.”

⁵⁵ Yehotal Shapira, “Reflection of Spatial Presentation in Sur Bahir: A Study in Use,” in *City of Collision: Jerusalem and the Principles of Conflict Urbanism*, eds. Philip Misselwitz and Tim Rieniets with Zvi Efrat, Rassem Khamaisi, and Rami Nasrallah (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006), 130-52.

et al.,⁵⁶ who analyzed and provided guidelines for further “organic” development of Silwan. Abu Aslah contended that adhering to such instructions would prove unsuccessful, asserting that Palestinian traditional expertise, characterized by intuitive aleatory improvisation in construction, adapts to circumstances, creating fitting architecture for the given situation. Abu Aslah’s suggestion implies a social dimension in the creation of subject positions through building, extending concepts such as fractality and non-Euclidean geometry.

Understanding the central values of this building culture poses challenges, as evident in regionally conducted in-depth surveys. Notably, the Israeli Antiquities Authority conducted a comprehensive study in response to a 2011 court petition by the Save Lifta Coalition. This petition emerged within the context of plans (no. 6036),⁵⁷ to develop a new affluent neighborhood at the entrance of the Jerusalem in the abandoned village of Lifta.⁵⁸ The objection asserted that the village embodies a unique example of a complex “frozen in time.”⁵⁹ This survey meticulously documented and

photographed each house in the village, offering details on various archaeological layers of construction and destruction.

The survey’s findings were exposed through a virtual simulation of the village development. The simulation expressed assumptions that distinguished architecture, agriculture, and landscape. In contrast, the present research findings indicate an inseparable agricultural production system that combined cultivated plots and house architecture. The pre-modern system, integrated into a broader fertilized environment, demonstrates an “abyssal irregularity” in relation to notions of “progress” based on a separating logic.⁶⁰ The Arab-Palestinian environment exhibits unique relationships among Man, Animal, and Plant (referred to as MAP in non-philosophy). In peasant (*fallah*) dwellings, agricultural produce and animals shared the same house, segmented by various plateaus for their respective uses, and also employed for storing and processing agricultural produce. The boundaries between humanity and non-human in inhabiting the earth exemplify, according to Laruelle, an ecology that

⁵⁶ Yonatan Shilony, Yael Shilony, Nehemiah Bikson, and Yoel Bar-Dor, *Jerusalem Surveys Conducted in Preparation for a City Plan in the South of the Old City Wall* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Municipality, 1988).

⁵⁷ The plan including 259 villas also disregards the former Palestinian residents of the village’s historical rights, and will destroy the landscape, spring, and village.

⁵⁸ Jonathan Boyarin, “Ruins, Mounting toward Jerusalem,” in *Palestine and Jewish History: Criticism at the Borders of Ethnography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 238–53.

⁵⁹ UNESCO has included the village of Lifta in its tentative list of World Heritage Sites.

⁶⁰ Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, 126.

questions community relationships with strangers, signifying those within and outside the community. Sylvia Wynter has traced how religion, philosophy, and science contribute to the “overrepresentation” of the human as “Man,” with race being part of this overrepresentation.⁶¹ Laruelle, as noted by Anthony Paul Smith,⁶² is useful for understanding the link between race, justice, ethics, and ecology.

The residence of animals was part of the Arab-Palestinian pre-modern household. This habitation was considered part of the “backwardness” of these rural villages in the Palestinian society. It is essential to note that Heidegger’s concept of pre-modernity, and the values associated with pre-modern German culture, differ from those of pre-modern Arab-Palestinian culture. In contrast to the “back to the land” movement, Arab-Palestinian architectural heritage was constructed using *in-situ* ruins, with great care taken to preserve and sanctify previous cultures and religious sacred remains,⁶³ including the ancient names of places. This

suggests an inclusive approach within Arab-Palestinian pre-modern culture.

The second phase marks the integration of the region’s economy into the European capitalist market and the unequal distribution of wealth, goods, privileges, and rights. The alteration of the mansion in the second phase, marked by the emergence of the façade, illustrates the “overrepresentation” of the human as “Man” in architecture during the modernization process.⁶⁴ This signifies a shift from a transcendental positioning to a narcissistic self-sufficiency in relation to the Real, influenced by capitalism.⁶⁵

The history of construction and architecture is widely acknowledged. Nevertheless, what sets apart the comprehension through non-philosophy is the focal point of transformation in the landscape that deviates from conventional classifications.

⁶¹ A notion defined by Sylvia Wynter. See Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick, “Unparalleled Catastrophe for our Species?,” in *On Being Human as Praxis*, ed. Katherine McKittrick (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 9-90.

⁶² Anthony Paul Smith, “Translator’s Introduction: Why Ecology at the End?,” in François Laruelle, *The Last Humanity: The New Ecological Science*, trans. Anthony Paul Smith (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), vii-xv.

⁶³ Conder, “The Moslem Mukams.”

⁶⁴ Smith, “Translator’s Introduction,” xiv. Smith interacts with the work of Sylvia Wynter. 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*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Fall 2003): 257–337, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2004.0015>.

⁶⁵ Katerina Kolozova, *Cut of the Real: Subjectivity in Poststructuralist Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

This article, employing a non-philosophical approach, highlights the façade's emergence as a key element altering the vernacular aboriginal typology. This marks the inception of visibility and ostensive attitudes in modern capitalist approaches. The decomposition of the courtyard house typology has resulted in a modern-vernacular built environment, challenging the dichotomy between "modern" and "vernacular" as rigid frameworks. It illustrates the initial effects of capitalism and modernism within Arab-Palestinian indigenous vernacular architecture in the Jerusalem area.

The proposed shift is grounded in a transformation of thought, self-perception, and societal configurations, as elucidated in the relationship between architecture and the environment in its broadest sense. The article did not adhere to disciplinary boundaries between architecture and landscape architecture when describing the Arab-Palestinian landscape. Instead, it underscored the seminal aspect of landscape from which architecture derives, thereby allowing for the expansion of related disciplinary boundaries. The article scrutinized the construction of walls in relation to nature, exploring themes of over-representation versus immanence, as well as the dichotomy between separation and connection among human and non-human elements. The current situation, in which the unique contribution of Arab-

Palestinian construction culture is neither discussed nor valued, signifies a loss. The immanence of the subject's creation, through the connection between architecture, landscape, and agriculture—via a non-Euclidean fractal construction—plays a role in fostering an inclusive culture that respects other traditions and creatures, while allowing for rethinking the deficiencies of modernization within the context of capitalism and colonialism.

Non-Philosophy, Pre-Modern Arab-Palestinian Dwelling Landscapes, and October 7

It has been a while since the conclusion of the article evolved due to unpredictable events on and after October 7, 2023. These local terrorist and war events have also taken on a global dimension, embodying the uncertainty and danger of a potential apocalyptic Armageddon war with a theological-political background spanning hundreds of years. I find myself questioning how an understanding, through a non-philosophical lens, of the research findings can contribute to a better understanding of the current situation.

It is necessary to emphasize that the Arab-Palestinian pre-modern rural culture remains under imminent threat of extinction, facing challenges from both the West, as represented by colonialism and Zionism, and institutional

Islam. The latter has actively sought to eliminate remnants of its sacred places perceived as Mugrabi, considering them un-Islamic and pagan.⁶⁶ Consequently, the objectives and motives of institutional Islam diverge significantly from the struggle of indigenous populations against colonialism in their homeland.

The pre-modern Arab-Palestinian environmental culture bears a sense of muteness, a form of non-verbal expression, which could be interpreted as indicative of what Jean-François Lyotard identified as an inability to articulate oneself in conflicts. Lyotard elucidated that in situations where a dispute arises due to the imposition of a specific idiom or discourse, the opposing party may be impacted in a way that “the wrong suffered by the other is not significant in that [particular] idiom.” He referred to this as a “*differend*.”⁶⁷ The distinctiveness of the Palestinian pre-modern tradition remains subdued, struggling to find expression in a modern world firmly rooted in representation. For instance, this research relies on photographic images of historical architecture. Nonetheless, the

unique connection between architecture and landscape eludes the logic of representation, evading convenient photographic documentation.

The moment of change outlined in this article, specifically the transition from pre-modernity to modernity, holds significance for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this context, Pierre Bourdieu and Abdelmalek Sayad described the challenges faced by Algerian Kabyle peasants in adapting to the modern world, positioned “between two worlds.”⁶⁸ They proposed that this liminal state, straddling traditional and modern habitus, gives rise to *habitus clivé* (“split habitus”). Within this framework, two attitudes are identified: the “*de-peasanted peasant*,” (*paysan dé-paysanisé*) a tragic figure self-destructive and unable to adapt to urbanization or modern influences, and the “*em-peasanted peasant*” (*paysan empaysanné*), fully embodying capitalist modernity habitus.⁶⁹

In a manner distinct from that described by Bourdieu and Sayad, transitions are also

⁶⁶ Interview with Mr. Abu Aslah, July 2005, cited in Shapira, “Reflection of Spatial Presentation in Sur Bahir,” 132. See also Rochelle Davis, *Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 103.

⁶⁷ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 9-10.

⁶⁸ Pierre Bourdieu and Abdelmalek Sayad, *Uprooting: The Crisis of Traditional Agriculture in Algeria*, ed Paul A. Silverstein, trans. Susan Emanuel (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2020).

⁶⁹ Jane E. Goodman and Paul A. Silverstein, “Introduction: Bourdieu in Algeria,” in *Bourdieu in Algeria: Colonial Politics, Ethnographic Practices, Theoretical Developments*, eds. Jane E. Goodman and Paul A. Silverstein (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 1-63.

currently occurring in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These transitions are manifest in both directions—from pre-modern to modern and from modern to pre-modern. An in-depth study is warranted to understand their impact on both societies.⁷⁰

The experience of these transitioning, as revealed in the rupture within the subject's experience, is anchored through interconnected representational relationships between the signifier and signified. These relationships are discussed at the foundation of non-philosophy and can be deciphered using a non-philosophical lens. It seems that “overrepresentation” of the human as “Man” does not enable articulations of non-representation approach,⁷¹ which is “intended to multiply and embed representation within immanence, allowing it to belong to the Real rather than stand outside it.”⁷² This situation creates an impossible reality that is “unrepresentable,” such as psychological ineffable experiences that are too painful to represent. These encounters, characterized by traumatic transitions between the pre-modern and modern, play crucial roles in the relationships

between architecture and the environment within the societal context, as reflected in the contemporary Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

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⁷⁰ I refer here to the scale of bombings in Gaza, influenced by Jewish-Israeli fear of pre-modern pogroms and the characteristics of the October 7 massacre influenced by pre-modern Palestinian inter-raid.

⁷¹ Smith, “Translator’s Introduction,” xiv; Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality.”

⁷² John Ó Maoilearca differentiates between modernist “unrepresentability” and “non-representation.” See John Ó Maoilearca, “‘For We Will Have Shown It Nothing’: Bergson as Non-Philosopher (of) Art,” in *Bergson and the Art of Immanence: Painting, Photography, Film*, eds. John Ó Maoilearca and Charlotte de Mille (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 206-31, at 223.

The Multitude Will Never Be Philosophers

Jeremy R. Smith

Abstract: This short piece reflects on an early text by François Laruelle called “Le philosophe sans qualités,” the fourth issue of the self-published journal *Pourquoi pas la philosophie?* It considers the opening remarks reflecting on *The Republic* and the statement “the multitude will never be philosophers” as a framework in a positive light: insofar as people and democracy are key factors of non-philosophy, people do not need to become philosophers in order to change the world. Instead, it is a matter of accepting that ordinary people, in the sense deployed by Laruelle and the author, determine a democratic order of thought intimately woven with their existence, what the author calls the en-demic. In this way, people are the touchstone of philosophy and themselves.

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Keywords: non-philosophy, the multitude, democracy, the en-demic, the Republic, the City, Uni-City

1 There are two ways of formulating the statement, “The multitude will never be philosophers.” The first, the philosophical, all-too-philosophical statement, finds its source in *The Republic*, Book VI, with Socrates’ condemnation of the rabble who are ill-equipped for the truth of the beautiful in-itself and who are easily susceptible to being led astray by sophistry.¹ Though this multitude will be protected by guardians and philosopher-kings, they serve as producers and artisans for the Kallipolis, the City of Beauty. As the story goes, one truly becomes a philosopher when they ascend from imprisonment within the Cave and aspire towards the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. On escape, they are blinded by the Sun, and then descend back into the Cave, finally liberating those who are in a pitiful state of ignorance. *Paideia* is this glorious pathway to the ideality embodied by the philosopher. The multitude finds itself both victim and party to the production and reproduction of these rare yet ideal subjects due to the State-imposed noble lie of its blood racism, a noble lie that these philosophers, too, are victim and party of.² It is a catch-22. The iron-blood multitude in this dominant Greco-unitary paradigm will never be the gold-blooded philosophers. They must simultaneously become so by escaping the Cave—but still be iron-blooded.

And they must beget philosophers in order to continue the fortification of the City of Beauty. The sought for City of Beauty institutes auto-sufficient eugenics. In both instances, it is a paradox that this paradigm cannot circumvent to this day, a racial paradox that prejudices in advance with the categories of peoples it has conceptualized. Moreover, while the Judaic face-to-face response to the Greco-unitary problematic partially addresses a solution by somewhat empathetically “putting yourself in someone else’s shoes,” this response remains bound to the problematic by mitigating universality with particularity as that which is Beyond: above all, it is a loosening rather than an abolition to the paradox. Nevertheless, the multitude, *hoi polloi*, are indebted to the City of Beauty to bear and sacrifice the artisanal child to this machine to keep the City’s fuel and its dimmed lights of a fallen sun running.

The second, non-philosophical, nothing-but-non-philosophical statement, finds its source in François Laruelle’s fourth issue of *Pourquoi pas la philosophie?*, dedicated to the theme of the philosopher without qualities. Laruelle provides terms for this paradox of the Greco-unitary paradigm—one which serves as an invariant condition that extends from its most ancient bases to the contemporary forms of

¹ Plato, *The Republic*, Book VI, 493e-494a.

² Plato, *The Republic*, Book III, 414e-415c.

“popular philosophy”—demo-logical difference. Demo-logical difference is considered the “common matrix capable of begetting both, ruling the relations of the people *and* philosophy, *insofar as these are precisely relations*, or, because there is, between the *demos* and *ontologos*, both distinction and unity.”³ Pedagogy in its various forms—whether it be educational, economic, political, etc.—mediates this distinction and unity of the people and philosophy. This extends well beyond philosophy into political practices such as Leninist vanguardism. Whatever City may be in its construction, whether an intellectual construction or one in its physical manifestation, it will always aspire towards a City of Beauty unless it is able to provide a theory and critique of demo-logical difference. That is, any city that does not provide a critique of the sought for City of Beauty hidden amongst its categories destined to continue the racist noble lie internal to its functioning. The multitude is destined for philosophy as its Other. To breed, train, and beget once more in order to rise through into the ranks of the auxiliaries and become the excellent philosopher-guardians, albeit still functioning within the noble lie. How is it not only possible, but radically true, to state that the multitude will never be philosophers in a non-

philosophical fashion? And what is this multitude, what are these peoples? Are they still the iron-blooded producers protected by the golden-blooded philosopher guardians? What becomes of philosophy and its City when the people are no longer the Other of philosophy? From the ruins of the City of Beauty and demo-logical difference will be constructed a Uni-City.

2. This problematic grounds the programmatic vision of introducing democracy into thought. If it lives up to the name, then democracy is the rule of people. However, if demo-logical difference is nothing but another name for anthropo-logical difference, the very invariant present in *A Biography of Ordinary Man* and elsewhere in *Théorie des Étrangers*, then it is one that

begins from a mixture or a universal: [people] as language, as desire, as society, as power, as sex, etc. It cannot be satisfied with ordinary man ... man will already be doubled, both exceeded and devalued by these philosophical puppets: the gregarious, the common, the everyday, the exoteric, the healthy understanding, or the communal consciousness; and by their symmetrical or

³ François Laruelle, “Le philosophe sans qualités,” *Pourquoi pas la philosophie?* No. 4 (October 1984), 7. Any and all translations are the author’s own, except if otherwise noted.

complementary elements: the overman, the philosopher, the authentic man, the reflexive subject, Spirit, etc. More generally, anthropo-logical difference is the scission of the indivisible essence of man ... In place of man, of his real and absolutely singular essence, it employs anthropological, even andrological, images, quasi-transcendental androids (the Cogito, *ens creatum*, Spirit, the I think, the Worker, the Unconscious, etc.).⁴

Said otherwise: demo-logical difference, therefore, mixes people with a universal, seeing people as productive androids. This includes the very image of multitudes as the artisanal rabble in the Greco-philosophical worldview and even the pleb Other of contemporary popular philosophies. In both cases, the people are the included/excluded (or a synthesis of the two) Other. Critiques that do not start from ordinary people outside (of) this all-encompassing horizon nevertheless fail at overcoming demo-logical difference and exacerbates the vicious circle between people and philosophy. Ordinary people are people who are not the everyday, the vulgar, the common, but people who take their inalienable from themselves. It is

from their unreflected experience that an irreversible, non-reciprocal order ensues, one that acts upon the World without return. The meaning of order and the meaning of the ordinary are one and the same.⁵ As such, no democracy would be possible, no democracy would be even real, if the essence of people is *homines ex machina*, parts and cogs generated from out of the State machine.⁶ For there to be an introduction of democracy into thought, it would be a matter of inverting the normative stance that sees people inseparable from the City, as their subject in the form of the Citizen. What would it mean to take ordinary people as the real cause—inalienable, undividable, and not the subject to/of—that determines the City, Politics, Philosophy in-the-last-instance alone? To determine is not to do or make: these multitudes, these people, they are no longer the *homo faber*, man the maker of and for..., they are not the Other. *We are index sui et philosophiae*, we are the touchstone of ourselves and philosophy. The ordinary people that we are, we are the People-(of)-the-One: the lived real critique, the science of Greco-unitary philosophy and its onto-theo-politics, as the radical immanence of the nothing-but-One that precedes the City. If there still remains an authority, then it is the last-instance, for the polysemy of the last-

⁴ François Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man: On Authorities and Minorities*, trans. Jessie Hock and Alex Dubilet (Cambridge: Polity, 2018), 5.

⁵ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 122-24.

⁶ François Laruelle, "Homo ex machina," *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* 170, No. 3 (July-September 1980): 325-42.

instance is itself the only and last-authority that is not *causa sui* or self-cause but *causa ordinata*, that is, an individual cause unable to be shared or reciprocated with what it acts upon, rules over, and emplaces in an irreversible order. This is what we mean by democracy.

3. The proposed stance is not an unabashed populism against a philosophical elite. There is a radical humanity within the very heart of the philosopher and philosophy itself. Nothing of what is radically lived in humanity is foreign to philosophy. Although it is philosophy itself personified by the philosopher, the one who identifies themselves with what Kant calls their queen, that occupies the intermediary position between elitism and populism. This intermediary relation is what treats the people as an Other that must be governed, liberated, and/or the synthesis of these operations. As Didier Moulinier highlights, philosophy “desires man to be identified with it under the traits of the Philosopher or through the voice of the emancipated People, for it needs this ‘first’ identification to move towards a more important ‘secondary’ identification where it is realized as it is, that is, as its own Subject.”⁷ If we claim that the People-(of)-the-One are the cause that determines the City in-the-last-instance, what

would be the subject? The subject may be the Stranger, the determined or generic intellectual, the philosopher without qualities or the human philosopher. Such a subject would be an organon gripped by the masses, a protector who brushes away the invariants as if with the back of the hand—invariants that strive to blend the undecidable with the continuous.⁸ This includes the very invariant of demo-logical difference and the propagation of the noble lie. If generic humanity involves the sedentary and the nomad, the autochthonous and the displaced, the dwellers and the navigators, the earthbound and the extra-terrestrial, the popular masses and the migratory flows,⁹ then a non-humanist theory or the vision-in-man adequately represents as a non-thetic reflection (of) the real of People-(of)-the-One. Said otherwise, it is a unilateral reflection that is determined by people alone in-the-last-instance without a reciprocal or dialectical relationship ensuing. The non-humanist subject is cloned from the occasional materials provided by meta-human statements from humanism devoid of its auto-sufficiency. This subject embodies the non-anthropo(-)logical personage of Man void of the racism and xenophobia inherent and implicit within philosophy itself. Philosophy is inhabited by an anti-humanity

⁷ Didier Moulinier, *De la Philosophie: Critique du Principe de Philosophie Suffisante* (Paris: Les Contemporains Favoris, 2022), 57.

⁸ Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 119-22.

⁹ François Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard: Générique, quantique, philo-fiction* (Paris: Kimé, 2010), 34.

that is the superior form of racism.¹⁰ Such a uni-lateral frontality is the forced hand of the People-(of)-the-One for those who are still auto-sufficient philosophers, including the populists who identify themselves with this “pure people,” the Other of philosophy. The forced hand is both a welcoming gesture to the humanity within the heart of the philosopher and the gesture that lifts the veil, brushing it away to see the very person that philosophy has masked. Far from a spontaneous populism, this is a theoretical non-Rousseauism, the model of whom only saw masks and never people, the one who saw the general will as the collective force that frees people from their self-interest. Laruelle clones Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s general will into the forced hand, no longer forcing the self-sufficient individuals to be free, but forcing them to be heretics separated-(from)-the-World-without-the-act-of-separation.¹¹

4. Non-Philosophy is the non-alienated concept of “popular philosophy,” becoming what we may consider a “human philosophy” that is constrained by a radically irreversible order that

ensues from ordinary people. This form of philosophy is no longer identified with the world of philosophy which is nothing but the World-form, but it is identified with humanity which is nothing-but-One. The Ordinary is “the real possibility of all orders,”¹² and such a stance organizes the City in a new light. The People-(of)-the-One are not exchangeable with the City, becoming instead the source for a “positive democracy that utilizes secondarized Authorities.”¹³ The people do not need to be democratized.¹⁴ If they needed to be, then they—*we* must have not been people to begin with, a doubt that stems from demo-logical difference and its Evil Genius personified by the man *par excellence*, the philosopher. Indeed, the City is nothing but an occasion for a new non-political conception of democracy. The People-(of)-the-One are the cause that determines the City and the State in-the-last-instance alone. For Laruelle, the Stranger is this subject who displaces and emplaces the State by way of a unilateralization from the cause. Why do we consider this conception of democracy as non-political and not the grounding of a democratic non-politics? This is because democratization

¹⁰ François Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers: Science des hommes, démocratie, non-psychanalyse* (Paris: Kimé, 1995), 127; Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard*, 176.

¹¹ François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), 75-76. The forced hand is in connection to *force (de) pensée*, usually translated into English as force (of) thought.

¹² Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, 123.

¹³ Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers*, 159.

¹⁴ A claim that is supported by John Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 186.

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is secondary to what is prior-to-the-first in this order that ensues from the People-(of)-the-One. Democracy is no longer resulted from out of the long operation of philosophy, as if people needed to become what they are and included in some whole that nevertheless subsumes them. Rather, when people as the being-human (of) man exist in the encounter or the dual between the One and the World, instead of a bridge between ordinary people and the State, democracy informs Strangers to instantiate a utopia, a void, *a no-man's land*, for there is no human involved or handed over to the City to become other than what they are. Furthermore, there is no debt needed to be repaid by the City, no reconciliation to be had for the mute compulsion the City propagated upon the People-(of)-the-One. The City, framed in affinity with non-philosophy's uni-lateralization, a Universe-City¹⁵ or, simpler, Uni-City.¹⁶ The Uni-City is a city that does not aspire towards

sustaining the noble lie and the broader capitalist relations overdetermining existence in both its economic and philosophical forms. The Uni-City is outside (of) the horizon of onto-cosmo-anthropo-theo-politico-logical relations,¹⁷ and is therefore irreducible to demological difference. It is then, and only then, that one may be able to say that the City is itself endemic¹⁸: People are not made for the City, but the City is determined by the People in-the-last-instance alone *for* the City. This is the real content of the non-philosophical statement “the multitude will never be philosophers,” and the real scientific, non-political framework of the old concept *multitudo transcendentalis*, where each-and-every-One (*tout-un-chacun*) determine this order inalienably.

¹⁵ François Laruelle, *Éthique de l'Étranger: Du crime contre l'humanité* (Paris: Kimé), 373-74.

¹⁶ “Uni-City” is a portmanteau that plays into the framework of Laruelle's varying *uni*-s (uni-lateralization, uni-identity, uni-lation, etc.) ensuing irreversibly from the One, as well as the term “unicity,” that is, united or uniqueness in kind.

¹⁷ In *Éthique de l'Étranger*, 294, Laruelle refers to “onto-anthropo-theo-logy” as the most complete definition of metaphysics. In the broader context in connection to the cosmopolitical, we include these other dimensions to expand on Laruelle's own.

¹⁸ The en-demic is a portmanteau of the author's design and is knowingly drawn from a false etymology. It signifies that which is immanent (to) people and follows from the varying paradigmatic frameworks proposed by Laruelle such as vision-in-One or vision-in-man (in French: *vision-en-Un*, *vision-en-homme*), the in-person (*en-personne*), and the in-the-last-humanity (*en-dernière-humanité*). The -demic, as well, draws from the *demos* which we now see is not the multitude in the classical sense (i.e., *hoi polloi*). Though the words “demotic” or “endemic” colloquially express the en-demic, both however maintain prejudicial bases for conflating the ordinary with the everyday or common. Therefore, en-demic in its full expression is the uni-lateral order that is immanent (to) people forced upon the World insofar as people are the People-(of)-the-One.

In-Stance:

Generic Encounter in Everyday Urban Landscapes

Hannah Hopewell

Abstract: This inquiry draws from François Laruelle’s non-standard thought by way of intersection with the urban theory of *everyday life* and the practice of *encounter* in urban landscapes. The convergence is motivated to experiment with occasions of non-standard *stance* in the *encounter* of the urban otherwise, in such a way as to “look” through the saturation of capital’s ascendancies acting upon urban practices. Non-philosophy is posed to operate *immanent-to* urban everyday materiality and generate pathways approaching urban conditions unable to be detected or deciphered by conventional tools of thought and their sufficient reason. This paper therefore disregards the limits of established urban discourse that remains geographically and epistemologically trapped in the neoliberal city, and instead entangles urban thought with the non-philosophical for access to a faint glimmer of life unmitigated by capital’s totalizing and colonizing drives. What follows contextualizes and describes how non-standard stance shifts boundaries of “the possible” when urban *everyday* landscapes and the modes of life they sustain are encountered non-philosophically. Non-philosophy stimulates practices to think and write *with* non-philosophy rather than think and write *about* it, so this paper orients towards the use of non-philosophy in urban encounter rather than explication of Laruelle’s project per se. However, Laruelle’s eccentric ecology of thought, idiosyncratic syntax and intratextual lexis can confound intelligible access and bearings. Consequently, as this paper is intended for those unfamiliar with Laruelle’s practice, I am obliged on this occasion to use writing to elucidate this project, rather than perform it.

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Keywords: non-urban, stance, everyday life, situated practice, generic encounter

This inquiry draws from François Laruelle’s non-standard thought by way of intersection with the urban theory of *everyday life* and the practice of *encounter* in urban landscapes.¹ The convergence is motivated to experiment with occasions of non-standard stance *encounter* of the urban otherwise, in such a way as to “look” through the saturation of capital’s ascendancies acting upon urban practices. Non-philosophy is posed to operate *immanent-to* urban everyday materiality and generate pathways approaching urban conditions unable to be detected or deciphered by conventional tools of thought and their sufficient reason. This paper therefore disregards the limits of established urban discourse that remains geographically and epistemologically trapped in the neoliberal city, and instead entangles urban thought with non-philosophical for access to a faint glimmer of life unmitigated by capital’s totalizing and colonizing drives.

What follows contextualizes and describes how non-standard stance shifts boundaries of “the possible” when urban *everyday* landscapes and

the modes of life they sustain are encountered non-philosophically. Non-philosophy stimulates practices to think and write *with* non-philosophy rather than think and write *about* it, so this paper orients towards the use of non-philosophy in urban encounter rather than explication of Laruelle’s project per se. However, Laruelle’s eccentric ecology of thought, idiosyncratic syntax and intratextual lexis can confound intelligible access and bearings.² Consequently, as this paper is intended for those unfamiliar with Laruelle’s practice, I am obliged on this occasion to use writing to elucidate this project, rather than perform it.

The Urban

Urbanization no longer fits comfortably into imagery of the city drawn from theocratic, monarchic, democratic, and economic communities peopled by those engaged in a natural economy.³ Now taking-up planetary scales under variegated market-ready regimes, interdependent standardizing, and ubiquitous probabilistic reckoning, urbanization cannot be separated from its creation of spacings peculiar to

¹ This work in part references my doctoral studies where I was ambivalent to use, to write *with*, Laruelle’s generic and the demands of an experimental non-philosophical disposition. What emerged was *para-fictioning*—a style of urban site-writing. I express gratitude to Laruelle himself, along with John Ó Maoilearca, Katerina Kolozova, and Alexander R. Galloway, who, with the other authors referenced in this paper, have been fundamental to advancing my understanding.

² See Rocco Gangle, *François Laruelle’s Philosophies of Difference: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 7, and Taylor Adkins, “Death of the Translator, a Uni-lateral Odyssey,” in François Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy* (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2013), i.

³ Murry Bookchin, *Urbanization without Cities: The Rise and Decline of Citizenship* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1992).

profit-driven commodities. With this altered coherency, the city has been shown to disappear into configurations wholly metered by capital and its “machines” designed to build surpluses, finances, and futures for the few. The urban signifies a generality towards an imprecise locus for reflection and proposition when “extensive and extended urbanization is no longer rooted within the city form,”⁴ but in the spawning of subjectivity’s structurally aligned to the generation of both debt and profit.

Capitalism presents the hallmarks of modernity determined in capital-time’s notions of progress and linearity. Inferred here is the palpable en-closing of assumptions concerning unlimited growth, most demonstrable in present urban conditions. The logics of neoliberalism saturate present urban life, occluding any “view” out with, as Mark Fisher suggests, “the widespread sense that not only is it the only viable political and economic system, but also it is now impossible to even imagine a coherent alternative to it.”⁵ Wendy Brown argues that neoliberalism, the dominant political rationality,

fuses economic and political life. Brown warns: “[If we] treat neoliberalism as a set of policies, or as a mystification of certain capital imperatives, we will miss the extent to which it regulates new kinds of subjects, new forms of subjectivity and new social relations into being.”⁶ Given capitalism’s omnipresence, Slavoj Žižek, among others, suggests that it may be easier to imagine the end of life on earth than to imagine another global means of exchange⁷—such an influence weighs heavily on not only urban everyday lives, but the range of architectures tasked with its spatializing.

Some might argue these claims on Capitalism with regards to the urban are an overdetermination, yet it is increasingly evident that present urbanization designates an all-pervading material of the masses showing its alignment through, as AbdouMalik Simone indicates, “the conversion of individuals into homogeneous and featureless entities, whilst at the same time, circumscribing a locus for intensified individuation exemplified through a profusion of niche markets and idiosyncratic values.”⁸ Urban life in this neoliberal urban age is therefore

⁴ AbdouMalik Simone, *The Surrounds: Urban Life within and beyond Capture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022), ix.

⁵ See Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zer0 Books, 2009), 2.

⁶ Jacob Hamburger and Wendy Brown, “Who Is Not a Neoliberal Today?,” *The Tocqueville Review*/

La revue Tocqueville, January 18, 2018, <https://tocqueville21.com/interviews/wendy-brown-not-neoliberal-today>.

⁷ Slavoj Žižek, “Introduction: The Specter of Ideology,” in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 2012), 1.

⁸ See Simone, *The Surrounds*, ix.

conditioned by incessant revision of heterogeneous relationships favoring highly visible and individuated adaptations honed for economic potential. Such conditioning not only moves toward the marketization of every gesture, but effaces modes of existence and forms of dispersal concealed by prevailing financialized forms of analysis and intervention—including that of architecture and its allied fields. Capital’s totalizing relations and colonizing modalities of the urban thereby enact multiple exclusions and coerce urban spatial practices to operate within and as part of its weaponizing. Anti-capitalist counter-practices are nothing new to urbanisms and are presently emerging within activism and academic discourse with varying coherency. Laruelle’s non-philosophy and its eccentric forms of resistance are, however, a very minor note in urban discursive realms,⁹ yet whose motivations offer alignment to the established urban discourse of *everyday life*.

⁹ I am indebted to other urban thinkers who have engaged with Laruelle: Morten Nielsen and AbdouMalik Simone, “The Generic City: Examples from Jakarta, Indonesia, and Maputo, Mozambique,” in *Infrastructures and Social Complexity: A Companion*, eds. Penelope Harvey, Casper Jensen, and Atsuro Morita (London: Routledge, 2016), 128-40; Christine M. Boyer, “The Indifferent City,” in *e-flux Architecture: Urban Village* (January 2018), eds. Nick Axel, Hou Hanru, Nikolaus Hirsch, Anton Vidokle, Liu Xiaodu, and Meng Yan, <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/urban-village/169800/the-indifferent-city>; and Jeremy

The Urban *Everyday*

The urban *everyday*, or *everyday life*, is a strategic terrain for experimenting with practices and possibilities. This notion of the everyday references a field of Marxist inflected thinkers: Michel de Certeau, Guy Debord, and the most significant, Henri Lefebvre. These thinkers and activists, whose projects continue to influence urban thought and practice, were most cogently brought together through the Situationist International project, though in very different ways and with different kinds of (lived) utopianisms. Together, they present a collective provocation to discover possibilities for transformation latent within the everyday, an “unearthing of the human world that lies buried” beneath a commodified world.¹⁰ Such “unearthing” aims to counter an everyday life outside the totalization of capital, that Debord claims has been literally “colonized.”¹¹

Lefebvre insisted that while the everyday is defined by contradicting heterogeneity, it forms

Lecomte, *The Anonymous City: From Modern Standardization to Generic Models* (MPhil Thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2013), https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/11033/1/CCS_thesis_LecomteJ_2014.pdf.

¹⁰ See Michel Trebitsch, “Preface,” in Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, Vol. 1: *Introduction*, trans. John Moore (London: Verso, 2008), xxiv.

¹¹ Mentioned in Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, Vol. 2: *Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*, trans. John Moore (London: Verso, 2008), 11.

“an inevitable starting point for the realization of the possible.” Relevant here is how Lefebvre names encounter as that which transforms the contingent into the possible, and along with that, latent effects able to neutralize the inevitable reproduction of a fetishized market and cultural economy. With this subversion of prevailing forces Lefebvre was motivated to open new fields of practice, new animating principles, without retreat to ancient regimes. These “new” fields were toward the possibilities of forms of tempo counter to capital’s monopoly on time. He considered life irreducible to the conceptual, by either the bounds of biology, the theological, or the purely philosophical. Life, and the cracks it locates, yielded for Lefebvre not just a critique but seeds for new forms and tempos of living itself.¹²

The everyday therefore designates a diversity, a point of reference, a freedom from the hierarchies and placed-ness bestowed by the modern era on dominant urban thought. Taking the inconsequential and banal characteristics constituting the everyday seriously, Lefebvre aimed to surpass the bounds of the philosophical: “The everyday is a philosophical concept and

cannot be understood outside philosophy ... it is not the product of pure philosophy but comes of philosophical thought directed toward the non-philosophical, and its major achievement is in this self-surpassing.”¹³ Or as McKenzie Wark explains: “Everyday life might be a concept internal to philosophy, but it directs philosophy to that which it excludes in the interests of a coherence, the achievement of which renders it null and void.”¹⁴

These considerations of the irreducibility of life to philosophical conceptuality resonate with the intent of this paper and its non-philosophical leanings. The project of the urban everyday is certainly entirely different to Laruelle’s, yet analogous in its alignment to thinking with uncertainty, contingency, praxis, withdrawn from life as a classical generalization—thus outside the conditioning and authorization of philosophy. Where their projects overtly depart involves the politics of this inquiry.

The Marxist everyday life movement is motivated to remedy and ameliorate forms of alienation emerging in city-life by affirming the etymological relationship between the city (*polis*)

¹² Counter to either scientific or religious qualification, Lefebvre uses “everyday life” as a realm of heterogeneous, yet indeterminable, forms and times, finding a way to slip away from determination.

¹³ Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. Sacha Rabinovitch (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 13.

¹⁴ McKenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International* (London: Verso, 2015), 96.

and the citizen (*polites*), and inciting “rights to the city.”¹⁵ To that end, everyday discourse can be seen to participate in a spectrum of thought and behavior that ultimately operates within the “reality principles” of pervading loss, and therefore contribute to and augment the recovery drives of modernity that underpin capital captive urban practices. Laruelle’s project is far more heretical and diffuse, targeting the democratization of knowledge and a radical move away from subject-centered, identity-centered politics at the level of metaphysical structure, not semantics.¹⁶ Laruelle’s non offers a non-oppositional quality of resistance, more an un-hinging from the urban’s transcendental co-ordinates as non-oppositional, or from the inside. Whilst challenging to “hold,” the politic of non-philosophy offers urban practices an uncharted vector.

Encountering *Encounter*

Encounter, an event of relation essential to the agency of the everyday, has long held the interest of urban scholars and designers. As a key site of (philosophical) study concerning spatial

practice, performance, and the politics of the city, encounter opens a lens on uncalculated transformation and change. Encounter refers to something general, yet not corresponding to conscious experience or sensations of body, and before instead understood as the pure effect of contingency. As introduced above for Lefebvre, encounter names that which transforms the contingent into the possible. Relevant to this ambition, he asserts that encounter is fundamental to observing relations “disengaged from exchange value, commerce, and profit.”¹⁷ For Andy Merrifield, the urban itself issues from occasions of encounter, where encounter-as-site holds the possibility for locating a new politics.¹⁸ Aligning with the everyday, encounters “are everywhere and nowhere,”¹⁹ and evidently signal the urban’s dark side, or that withdrawn from recognition. Encounters are therefore happenings that pass through un-leveraged, unconditioned by any transactional or measurable qualification. As a locus of attention, they hold potential to open spaces and times divergent from the saturating interactional densities of city life, that Simone

¹⁵ For an example, see *Global Platform for the Right to the City*, <https://www.right2city.org/our-history>.

¹⁶ For sustained interrogation of subjectivity in non-philosophy, see Katerina Kolozova, *Cut of the Real: Subjectivity in Poststructuralist Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

¹⁷ Henri Lefebvre, “The Right to the City,” in *Writings on Cities*, trans. and eds. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996), 138-39.

¹⁸ Andy Merrifield, *The Politics of the Encounter: Urban Theory and Protest under Planetary Urbanization* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 273.

¹⁹ Jonathan Darling and Helen F. Wilson, “The Possibilities of Encounter,” in *Encountering the City: Urban Encounters from Accra to New York*, eds. Jonathan Darling and Helen F. Wilson (London: Routledge, 2016), 2.

highlights “oblige capacities of making oneself marketable.”²⁰

Donna J. Haraway suggests that to be attentive to encounters, we must “grapple with the ordinary,”²¹ yet to confront the challenge of encounter, write Laruen Berlant and Lee Edelman, one needs to “attend to those things that remain opaque or unpersuasive.”²² Encounter thus opens attendance to that which thought does not recognize and, significantly, it is the sign “that refers to something other than itself, namely, to the force that it manifests or expresses” that escapes recognition.²³ Critically, the sign is affect. Encounter is experienced as bringing a “logic” of forces—other than interpretation—forward into the relationality of urban landscapes and urban practices shorn of any aspiration to authorize by way of reason. Encounter can be understood in this context as a provocation to everyday “seeing”, or seeing *past* the habitual, *past* the regulated, and perhaps *through* the capture of capital.

However often overlooked is this force-of-encounter that in its displacement of recognition installs radical un-grounding, unknowingness, and resultant *estrangement*. Experience of

encounter by its very definition problematizes any naturalized accounting-for, given the unravels coherent significations of reality by incorporating the non-phenomenal instance of exteriority—the senseless “outside,” or “virtual”. Encounter invokes uncertainty and layers of questioning concerning apparent reality and any ontological primacy yoked to a field of thought. Encounter—some “measure” of between—issues an onto-political charge and makes a mind-body work the very problem of what is presented. Philosophically, encounter highlights a fundamental epistemic “problem” at the limits of thought. Yet resisting demand to overcome this ungrounding extends a transformative capacity within sites of political interest, where focus on the performance of encounter enables the revealing of momentary enactments and rhythms that undermine essentialist thought. As will be shown, resonance with a non-standard, or what I will explain as *generic* encounter rather than the philosophically mediated one. It is the potential of this unmediated encounter I find compelling *vis-à-vis* urban practices.

Bringing Laruelle’s non-standard philosophy to this nexus in the encounter of the everyday

²⁰ Simone, *The Surrounds*.

²¹ Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 3.

²² Lauren Berlant and Lee Edelman, *Sex; Or the Unbearable* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), ix.

²³ François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A Philosophy of the Event. Together with the Vocabulary of Deleuze*, eds. Gregg Lambert and Daniel W. Smith, trans. Kieran Aarons (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 62.

urban landscape does not advance any attempt to respond to the (philosophical) epistemic problem of overcoming signaled above. Rather, it experiments with encounter in a localized non-philosophical stance to bypass the forces of neoliberal capital and enclosed forms of subjectification that are captive to a loss-and-recovery duality impacting urban relations. Or put another way, this paper discloses a localized mutation of non-standard thought, less to furnish understanding of encounter, or for that matter any triumph over its resulting estrangement, and more to mobilize what I have come to call non-philosophical *generic experience* in the lived practice of situating in city waterfronts. Critical to my motivation is exploring ways that side-step the rehearsal of the political as centered upon the human as individuated knowing subject. Significantly, the strategy here shuns possession or conquest within the stance of generic experience, instead intending on interruption with alternative ways of looking and, thus, acting on a world that Lefebvre defines as totalized by the tendencies of modernity.

²⁴ For readers interested in pursuing “uses” and/or mutations of non-philosophy beyond Laruelle’s own texts, see Alexander R. Galloway, *Laruelle: Against the Digital* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); John Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Kolozova, *Cut of the Real*; and Hannah Hopewell, *The Urban Intertidal: A Paraontological Learning* (PhD, Auckland University of Technology, 2019).

²⁵ John Ó Maoilearca, “Galloway’s Non-Digital Introduction to Laruelle,” *Los Angeles Review of Books*,

Non-Philosophy and the Force of Radicalization

Laruelle’s non-philosophy is described as “philo-fiction,” a “radically new form of thought,” a “radicalized deconstruction,”²⁴ and a mutation in methodology offering “a new way to experience philosophy, neither as the right nor wrong representation of reality but as a material, immanent part of it.”²⁵ For Laruelle, thought is material rather than that which is privileged within philosophical hierarchies and taxonomies. Non-philosophy challenge’s philosophy for its central desire to create a transcendental system of knowledge which auto-referentially claims it can exclusively and universally approach the real. “Revealing” this self-referential sufficiency motivates Laruelle’s whole approach against philosophy’s “pretention to co-determine the Real or Man who is foreclosed for it.”²⁶ Alexander R. Galloway highlights how non-philosophical method operates under a “kind of dogma adhering to a single axiom, where the *One* is the generically immanent real, and everything else stems from

May 17, 2015, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/galloways-non-digital-introduction-to-laruelle>.

²⁶ For Laruelle, philosophy’s “transcendental claim to primitively know the real” is violence. Avoiding this violence provides his rationale for practicing with the non and other idiomatic tactics. See Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 99, and François Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, trans. Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2014), 2.

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this [unilateral bordering].”²⁷ Unilateral in so far as proffering a non-contiguous proximity (non-relation) to the indifference of the real. Non-philosophy thereby moves by way of crafting ways to think *according to* the one, the real, in fidelity with it, leaving thought open to immanent or non-identifiable identity unconditioned by philosophical “identifiable identity.” The real, the one, can be understood as virtual, we do not actually see it, despite seeing effects of contingency. Encounter intensifies this non-relation as a living-on-orientation, a bordering, functioning as matrix within which thought develops, free of logic founded on consistency (propositional non-contradiction). As such, non-philosophy holds no firm identity beyond its real lived gestures, as determined “in the last instance.”

Non-philosophy consistently materializes all thought within a radically immanent style to render transcendence as immanence. Being open to, approximating, this non-standard radicalization obliges a shift in orientation, or from *where* one thinks. Whilst urban scholarship is accustomed to thinking *from* position and the generation of perspectives, which are always

relative to other positions and perspectives, moving with non-philosophical infrastructure demands an entirely different, or non-positional, identity. Affirming performativity, operations of non-philosophy therefore avoid taking positions, deeming them behavior too entangled with philosophical frameworks of representation and authoritative proposition. Where position is an inadequate designation, Laruelle assigns, stance or posture, expressed by Ó Maoilearca as “openly subjective, embodied and undivided; more internal, spontaneous and naïve than will and decision.” This demands orientation proffers an immanentist stance or one that is “towards the world where (non-philosophical) thinking is both a performance and a physical tendency or spatial activity.”²⁸ Stance, posture is re-viewed as physical orientation toward the real—being determined as real, “in-the-last-in-stance.”²⁹

I have come to understand Laruelle’s project as a peculiar infrastructure for a wholly performative rather than representational thought practice, and one that holds appeal as site of resistance to an increasingly homogenizing urban present.³⁰ Yet adhering to the methodological

²⁷ Galloway, *Laruelle*, 193.

²⁸ Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal*, 6.

²⁹ Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal*, 144.

³⁰ On this point, Nick Srnicek emphasizes: “Non-philosophy opens a space beyond any philosophical or capitalist Decision, thereby offering an always-already-given locus of resistance. This space also makes

possible the advent of a radically new determination (from the perspective of the world).” Nick Srnicek, “Capitalism and the Non-philosophical Subject,” in *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, eds. Levi R. Bryant, Nick Srnicek, and Graham Harman (Melbourne: re.press, 2011), 178.

intent of this paper, what might be meant by *according-to*, and how might one adopt this *immanent* stance, or unilateral bordering, according-to the real in the practice of encountering the urban everyday?

In my experience working with Laruelle's non-philosophy, the non- marks the catalyzing agent of radicalization and key methodological climate nominating non-philosophical practice is taking place. To enact an occasioning of non-philosophy, the non- must be wholly embraced as not a fixed negation, but a force of constant modulation. The non offers a side-stepping (not opposition) of governing orders that promulgate the ruling motifs of urban discourse. Using the non- enables thinking to move without the sufficiency of urban reason, urban-organizing of thought, urbanity of sufficient reason. There is no dialectical movement in this approach, but rather a nominal arc, an aberrant modal operation, a practice, a material behavior, transforming into flesh materials-of-thought along with matter of the world. The non- acts positively and renovates uses of terms as they are lived, bypassing functional signification at the level of the signifier. Thinking, with this non-, becomes part of the real, rather than becoming understood as

representations of it, and when embodied and performed, a practice we can name as stance, and what I have come to understand as a situated generic orientation.

A Practice of "Situated"

Non-Standard Stance

Scopophilic notions of vision, viewpoint, or sight have dominated Western philosophical and scientific accounts of how knowledge is created, since Plato's Allegory of the Cave.³¹ This *doxa* weighs heavily on urbanism, landscape, and urban design practices, where synoptic scenic overlooking leads to perspectival and aerial extending gazing as effective instruments of power.³² One reason for trialing non-standard practice is an attempt to extend such a tradition and innovate the scopic by destabilizing or radicalizing any presumed humanist vision-in practice. Haraway's work is precedent in this regard, given her description of what she terms "the god trick": a means of vision enabled by "a perverse capacity ... to distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything in the interests of unfettered power." Situated knowledge is thus an attempt to subvert a "conquering gaze from nowhere." The metaphor of vision, Haraway proposes, is

³¹ Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII, 514a-520a.

³² Some of my previous publications work into these issues: Hannah Hopewell, "(Non)Landscape and (General) Ecology as Agents of Creativity," *Kerb: Journal*

of Landscape Architecture, Vol. 28 (2020): 116-19, <https://kerb-journal.com/articles/non-landscape-and-general-ecology-as-agents-of-creativity>.

“always a question of the power to see—and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. With whose blood were my eyes crafted?” Seeing is not a naturalized endowment, but something practiced, learnt, “technically, socially, and psychically.”³³ Eyes are not passive instruments of seeing, but actively choose and organize so that “ways of seeing” are “ways of life.” de Certeau, a scholar of the everyday, takes up this same message in his influential essay “Walking in the City.”³⁴

Situated knowledges demand practices that attend to power relations at play in processes of knowledge production. Such orientation can be understood as occurring across four planes simultaneously: epistemological, ontological, ethical, and political. This occurring-orientating draws out questions: “How to see? Where to see from? What limits to vision? What to see for? Whom to see with? ... What other sensory powers do we wish to cultivate besides vision?”³⁵ Put another way, situated practice “is where expertise comes not from a focus on a

pre-defined discipline or subject but from a creative and critical position that operates beyond these categories.”³⁶ Laruelle’s notion of stance offers an alternative approach.

Stance, or non-philosophical posture, is the name Laruelle gives to how thought situates as according-to the real. The postural designates not decisional agency, “not of self, but a holding in self, the how this holding (is) held insofar as it has essentially never reposed except in itself,”³⁷ meaning embodied, lived, without the arbitration of modernity’s positional fixtures. As introduced above, unlike position, which is orientated and conditioned, stance harbors no premise of alignment, placement, or direction for any viewer. Instead, stance is a corporeal orientation to the virtual real, or generic—that which names “an entity without attributes ... indifferent to difference at the level where all things converge,”³⁸ or “the condition of anything whatsoever and being nothing beyond

³³ See Donna J. Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Autumn 1988): 581, DOI: 10.2307/3178066.

³⁴ See Michel de Certeau, “Walking in the City,” in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press), 93. de Certeau suggests: “The panorama-city is a ‘theoretical’ (that is, visual) simulacrum, in short, a picture, whose condition of possibility is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of practices. The voyeur-god created by this fiction, who, like Schreber’s God, knows

only cadavers, must disentangle himself from the murky intertwining daily behaviors and make himself alien to them.”

³⁵ Haraway, “*Situated Knowledges*,” 587.

³⁶ This definition is taken from The Bartlett School of Architecture “Situating Practice MA Programme Information Sheet”, taught by architect and critical spatial practitioner, Jane Rendell, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/architecture/sites/bartlett/files/situated_practice_ma_0.pdf

³⁷ Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 42.

³⁸ Boyer here cites Laruelle. See Boyer, “The Indifferent City.”

what one is.”³⁹ Commitment to thinking within stance results in an embodied and *utopical* “spatial activity” distancing recognition and its reflective feedback loops where, with a holding in self, I have found, largely displaces the symbolic. For Laruelle, stance privileges the force (of) thought, where only the criterion of immanence is its real cause and the first possible experience of thought happening: “... that is after the non-thetic vision-in-One, which is not itself a thought.”⁴⁰ This force takes itself performatively, to occasion its “data.”

Stance, in such dis-orienting vagueness, is therefore not meant to instigate awe or wonder or even reflection on one’s life, but radically supplant the transcendental humanist human to instead move with the contingency of the real. Whilst taking up stance generates occasions of *estrangement* in a manner analogous to encounter, there is no existential dimension to this that may assume, within a humanist tradition, its overcoming, or authentic dwelling, and with it any correlate sense-making. Depriving potentiality for recognition and opening latent freedom beyond the rhetoric of individual liberty, stance implies the real, placing the very

notion of life within the contingency of the real. When holding in self with stance, what lies at the heart of modern experience and social currency—ontological accrual, identification, and legitimation of new subject positions, thereby fades, as of no consequence.

I consider non-philosophical generic encounter with respect to urban practices as provisioning an opportunity, given its agency to ‘construct’ this by-pass to the binds of the neoliberal knowing subject, that includes the many forms of violence held in such conditioning. Instead, generic encounter arising with urban landscapes offers a way of radicalizing urban-thinking by leaning into a non-humanness outside the precinct or prospect of (philosophically defined) subjectivity.⁴¹ Non-philosophical stance can be considered as furnishing a substrate of engagement freed of anthropocentric architectural cartage.

As may already be apparent, the practice of stance withdraws from modes of identification and representation, ceasing to delimit itself by way of actual identifications, actualizations of somethings as “objects.” Stance clearly

³⁹ François Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics* / *Photo-Fiction, une esthétique non-standard*, trans. Drew S. Burk, bilingual edition (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), 23.

⁴⁰ Vision-in-one names what I have previously termed unilateral bordering. See François Laruelle, *Dictionary of*

Non-Philosophy, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2013), 19, and François Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 198-99.

⁴¹ Kolozova, *Cut of the Real* provides an excellent resource to consider subjectivity in non-philosophy.

troubles the site of signification, let alone urbanistic language that is deeply aligned to Cartesian spatial analogy and forms of overview. Given attentiveness under the (heretical) stance of the non does not petition reality, how is it possible to compose the present, under conditions of encounter and, without the “sufficiency” of the urban’s organization of thought—the urban’s sufficient reason? How could the real or, rather, our estrangement from it as instances of the generic lived, be held within the field of encounter?

Such troubles aside, I have come to understand embodied non-philosophical stance as metered by an alongside—that is parallel to the immanence of the generic or real. This practice refuses standing and pointing, stand-points, to instead perform a standing down, a stance-in-encounter immanently, as a matrix of between-bodies of urban everyday. Further, it is a mode that recalibrates vision towards the insufficiency of generic experience as a technique of attentiveness to that what’s left, when one no longer recognizes the world, and where findings are recursively modulated autonomous to the urban. Stance, in its methodological radicalization, results in a radical subtraction to afford a sparse, minimal bearing on everyday urban landscapes, and arrival of the concept of experience whose determination in the last instance is the real.

Generic (Non-Philosophical) Encounter

With non-standard stance, this investigation bears away from *urban* discourse as securing ground for knowledge production, and instead tests what if favored producing is suspended or deprived, leaving just the immanence, the real or radicalized generic, in play in the encounter of everyday urban landscapes? As a reminder, non-philosophy declines reflection on things withdrawing from the decision (to reflect on things). However, whilst the recognizable urban landscape is held back, the non-relation of immanence and experience does not leave the empirical opposed and outside of the real—theirs is not an anti-relation. Generic encounter, therefore, offers an embodied opportunity to undertake urban practices that think from immanence to reveal the non-phenomenological bearing of this practice. The “productive” aspect of generic encounter is accomplished under the non-relation proffered by stance.

Establishing means for searching instances (stand-ins) of the generic, in marginal fields of urban everyday landscapes gives up any assumed certainty of ground to instead incline with aberrant movement towards the virtual. Aberrant means to literally “wander away from” something, to accept groundlessness—which, in this case, is an indifference to given tendencies, to phenomenological grounding inclined towards, in-tending-to objects of

consciousness and co-related concepts that shape the recognized fields and discourses of the city. Under the aberrant movement issuing from generic encounter, urban things become virtual affording a thrifty experience, in the sense of it being minimal or sparse. Its sparseness arises with experience that is uncut, or undivided, inalienable and prior to, or para(llel)-to, ontological disclosure. Objects fall within engagements of urban *everdays* where these objects are unremarkable peripheries, modalities, or modifications of existence that are indifferent to any—to all—operations-of-recognition aimed at determining, for example, a city surface. These modifications of existence (a weak or minimal ontology) are occasions of non-event, a losing of way as definitive methodological tactic of detachment within the very work of continual re-direction or singular usage.

Therefore, within generic encounter occasioned by everyday urban landscape encounter, representational closure is suspended, sensations and thinking become a-topic—without

place, unbounded by home, difficult for sense-making. Generic orientation regulates a ground that has no particular definition and “where things can show up in various formats without contradiction,”⁴² without the imperative to assimilate or overcome inconsistency. Experience of generic encounter provoked by departure from a descriptive practice able to delineate urban everyday landscape bodies installs a radical un-grounding, producing a quality of estrangement by admitting into the present an exterior relation—I call it a non-human untimeliness.⁴³

I have found sustaining stance, or a generic orientation, a challenge involving a certain resourcefulness where this experience of (non-positional) situatedness might be considered an *a priori* or, rather, an “aprioritising” of the World.⁴⁴ Such a notion is difficult to relate to and may explain how practicing encountering urban everyday landscapes from a non-philosophical stance, a holding in self with the insufficiency of the real, ratifies a perpetual withdrawal from ontological accrual and

⁴² AbdouMaliq Simone, “Flickering in the Dark: The Compressed Tissue of the Urban,” in *e-flux Architecture: Urban Village* (December 2017), eds. Nick Axel, Hou Hanru, Nikolaus Hirsch, Anton Vidokle, Liu Xiaodu, and Meng Yan, <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/urban-village/169789/flickering-in-the-dark-the-compressed-tissue-of-the-urban>.

⁴³ See Hopewell, *The Urban Intertidal*, where I discuss my writing practice, and what results when estrangement

and site-specificity extend to the non-philosophical and confront a space in excess of any particular place or any particular person, the nowhere that is particular to none, the *generic*.

⁴⁴ Galloway comments: “Laruelle ‘apriorizes’ the world. He reverses the real and the transcendental (from their Kantian positions) and recasts both real and transcendental as *a priori*.” The real is *a priori* by virtue of being immanent. Generic encounter moves ‘from,’ as immanent-to, this real.” See Galloway, *Laruelle*, 18.

identification. At the same time this practice generates expressions that offer no clear value to an instrumentalized urbanism, thereby falling beyond recognition and capture. Moving with non-philosophical stance tactically refuses to care about the politics of recognition with its admissions to the Thought-World, and instead embraces the agencies afforded by a quality of invisibility (to the circulations of authorized discourse).

As indicated, my experimentation with non-philosophy culminated in para-fictioning, a site-writing practice as by-product of the recursive practice of generic encounter in urban landscapes. Para-fictioning is underwritten by an unhinging of the transcendental co-ordinates that constitute the urban and opens a mode of appearance proximal, yet beyond the thresholds of intelligibility aligned to the totalizing and authorizing governance of a captured urban-ism. Without perspective, transformed vision shows up weak, discrete, and simultaneous forms of familiar life in ways that unfold potentials of marginal everyday urban landscapes and their unsurveilled happenings. These lives, happenings, temporalities, are indifferent to and beyond the reach of the eighteenth-century technology of the map ingrained into urban lexicon and intelligibility, and thus unlocatable, unrecognizable, and unreproducible.

Non-standard stance and generic encounter coupled with a “fictional leap” make up the “machinery” of para-fictioning method, yet it is outside the scope of this paper to further elaborate its process. I however include the following fragment from my para-fictioning archive to example an occasion of this practice.

Turn/Horizontal/City/[Stranger]:

An Excerpt

A spark, a stream, a shockwave into a simultaneous currency of ongoing.

Fidelity to sequence tripped up by 400,000 volts.

A tangerine dress, the cusp of a wave, the desolation of flux itself.

What assumed relational form was now foam and lather.

Soft ground, damp grass, jeans turned above sockless ankles, an emptied name.

Words fall unspoken without regulation.

You seek a stance of mutable perception, which is different from a position. In the pattern of the carpet, which you may have seen before, the props of flight are revealed.

You believed the beyond as that under your skin.

In the space between thinking and the sensation of thinking, you are compelled to engineer a provocation.

Was it Saturday afternoon, thinking showed itself in strangers?

Rescinded expectancy, an outdoor setting, the swell of nearby floods.

It was because you now know not what comes first, only what is last, difference swims inconsequential.

The Sutro Tower, pylons of Sivakasi, a transparent bridge.

You step into a poor neighborhood without a label; a city afloat in bountiful solitude.

In the wake, you sense time as a great borderless cloud.

You consider the rubble of this presence.

Intuition and reeling understand this space not as cloister, but crawl space.

Flapping curtain, striped umbrellas, walls of fresh glue.

You lash some shards of time to paddle with the City's wallows; it looks to you like the outline of the tide.

In tide-lines you hear the tearing of boundaries caught up in that waltz whose music you do not perceive.

It was Wednesday evening here, when the lobby space opened. It was not me

who cut the ribbon, I was walking lines in the fens.

Plastic goldfish hung on links of shiny gold, frayed flags crown poles in repeat.

As the time of the City fell through your hands you wonder what happened to the promenades' plot.

Hot tarmac, cin cin and flashings; surface of sills.

Cut loose from any linear future, there is nothing to follow, much less obey.

You gave up the diurnal as duration in lines spun with slack stitches.

The city, neither a word, a world, nor a concept.

...

Conclusion

This experimental entanglement of urban everyday and non-philosophical practice has shown how radicalizing experience by way of generic encounter shifts the bounds of urban knowing from reliance on forms of recognition metered by an urban captive to neoliberal capital, and the assumption of the human as individuated knowing subject, to "something—anything" more diffuse, discrete, autonomous, yet at the same time undividable. Performing non-standard stance provokes a methodological pathway, a radical departure from urban discourse and its philosophical measures, to eke out a situated non-philosophical approach to

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living and world withdrawn from any apparatus of subject-formation that obligates the assumption of identity position recognizable to the World. Non-standard stance offers a way to not counter or oppose realities subtended by the conditioning conditions of ontological disclosure of beings as they are asserted through the hierarchical urban discourses and the exceptionalism of market-ready subjects, but as a partial unrelativized way to look through the saturation of capital's ascendancies acting upon urban practice. Such an approach vacates an urbanism understood through capitalist realities as observed tendencies, to instead extrapolate in such a way as to gesture a hazy proximal zone both everywhere and nowhere, and possible other-than-capitalist temporalities. Generic encounter avails urban scholarship less any supersession of prevailing urban analytics or way out of the totalizing influence of capitalism, and more as a movement towards an increasingly pluralized, yet flattened, democratic future urban episteme. This occasioning finds weak promise in its inventive and diagnostic trajectory, and with it, re-potentiated political imaginations unbound from strictures of the polis through holding the human as nothing more and nothing less than determined in the last *in-stance*.

Experimentation and the Non-Relation:

A Conversation between Calum Hazell and Hannah Hopewell

Abstract: Calum Hazell and Hannah Hopewell discuss aspects of François Laruelle's non-philosophy as it bears upon their respective practices of writing, photography, poetics and diagnostic-invention. They reflect on how non-standard practices mutate prevailing urban formulations of city space, time and subjectivity.

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Hannah Hopewell (Pākehā) is a landscape architect, urban designer, and presently teaching at Cornell University. Hopewell's research approaches urban landscapes in settler colonial contexts through critical and creative means seeking out forms of invisibilized persistence and other-than capitalist conditioned material relations. Hopewell became interested in the agency of François Laruelle's project when undertaking her creative practice doctoral studies that culminated in *parafictioning*, a site-writing practice in accord with Vision-in-One.

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Hannah Hopewell: Non-philosophy calls us to consider the world “before any philosophical division,” and to a degree, describe it by following its thread of immanence. François Laruelle would term this a “non-Euclidian mutation,” which amounts to a creative act. I wonder, for you, what is the modification of understanding that emerges from non-philosophical work, and how does it provoke experimentation and creative practice?

Although, as I write, the term “understanding” is not at all the right word. I recall my early reading of Laruelle to be mystifying, in so far as it installed a compelling dream like a state. Reflecting on this now, and I do not quite know when it happened, but I somehow recognized I was inhabiting Laruelle’s texts, reading them as material, where the capture of meaning continually hovered in the background as question without cause for resolve. This got to a point where a new variant of constructing (I think that might be the right word?) thought had emerged, yet one without grasp or fixed knowing—a space of experimentation that bypassed disciplinary territories and

taxonomies. How for you might this space be inventive?

Calum Hazell: Laruelle’s concept of World has been a source of interest for my work principally due to (a) its irreducibility to his Earth or Universe. I am especially thinking of the “Universe Black” poem here, where “Man works the Earth, inhabits the World, thinks according to the Universe.”¹ And (b) its substitutions for his Philosophy and perhaps, by extension, the discipline as such.

Taken together, I understand Laruelle’s concept of World as amounting to an exhortation—build and inhabit decapitalized worlds! Invent interdisciplinary practices in accordance with the Universe!—tempered by requirement to fashion concepts-tools appropriate to rigorous diagnoses of what Nelson Goodman calls worlds already on hand.² These valences are concretized from 1) the Universe/Real/One via 2) the Human/Man-in-person towards 3) the World/Philosophy/Discipline.

Positively, we should (feel obliged to) develop compositional methods, structurological arenas, and strategic postures for recognizing the

¹ François Laruelle, “Universe Black in the Human Foundations of Color”, trans. Miguel Abreu and Robin Mackay, in *From Decision to Heresy: Experiments in Non-Standard Thought*, ed. Robin Mackay (Falmouth and New York: Urbanomic and Sequence Press, 2012).

² Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988).

non-Philosophical, in-Disciplinary, other(-than-)Worldly status proper to thought and praxis as such. We should (feel permitted to) experiment and invent in-(the)-knowledge that experiment and invention are not beholden to philosophical strictures/structuration. Inquiry then prospects for a more genuine novelty in theory-praxis activities delivered from in (liminal, devotional, magical, virtual, hypo-thetic...) excess of the World, at the World in its present and inevitable configurations.

Negatively, though there is no need to “escape” the Philosophy-circle (being as we are, for Laruelle, always-already or in-the-last-instance stationed from without it), we do need to invent strategies aimed at breaking it. If the World we inhabit is understood as operating with/exerting any real (if concurrently unreal) authority, then there is no reason to believe it will *present itself* in its tractability or flaunt itself at the seams. The World will not give itself up without a fight. Which is to say that whilst philosophical and disciplinary materials can be deployed generically, democratically, simply, and so on, the protocols required for those executions are finely-wrought and -tuned. There is a real difficulty in speaking the irreality of the reality (and the reality of the irreality) of the World, and non-philosophy’s tortuous incorporations of Philosophy are testament to this (and to this necessity).

In a restricted sense, these patterns are suggestive of a well-rehearsed language-problem differently ramified to God in the Christian and Islamic apophaticisms: How to describe, appropriate to His indescribability, the truly Indescribable? Which is not to suggest, for its part, that non-philosophy also proceeds *via negativa*. Amongst numerous points of departure, that in the Neoplatonist-devotional trajectory certain apophatic accounts envisage for all the creatures (their *anagogic* reasoning, their *returning towards* Who does the creaturing) is not represented in Laruelle. What is comparable, though, is the premium placed on strategic encounters with ordinary/scriptural/philosophical language-matter even as any and all such encounters ultimately fall under Divine remit/are Unilaterally insured. Dionysius, Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas of Cusa, Ibn ‘Arabî, Rûmî, and so on, do not suppose to *pass over* the One in silence in virtue of a special gnosis of which they are in immediate receipt, but to plot out contemplative routes—generally up and down ladders and mountains—to silence or unknowing or unsaying *passing through* sound or knowledge or kataphatic speech. Silence is the real austere achievement of a special prolix way, a dialectic, of saying, not its privation or an option we might otherwise have chosen at the outset to save our legs. Where Worldly or Urban regimes of sense-making are concerned, my contribution in this collection, “Social

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Theatre Aggregate,” would distinguish itself from things like “asemic” inscriptions for similar reasons in a similar way.

I really like your invocation of the “mystifying” along these lines, Hannah. Like you, I found (and very much continue to find) textual encounters with non-philosophy to be viscerally mystifying. Mystification might also lend itself as a nickname for a diagnostic practice with Philosophical artefacts that they would be “mystified” out of the World. For my own part, I am thoroughly mystified by work that has my name attached to it. Mystification could be the (compositional) condition under which it appears to have emerged.

HH: You foreground such creative agency in non-philosophy, and how, when taken non-philosophically, World(s) already to hand can be seen to demand inventive alignments with the Real of the universe. A non-philosophical posture then is one that is prefaced by what I will clunkily refer to as a “seeing in the black,” or a seeing through and past alignments determined and conditioned by, for example, the socio-political, as one named structure on the World “plane.” Put another way, a non-philosophical stance bypasses the World before the specificity of any “invention” per se has taken place, affording both a generic and radical openness to our always-already alongside

the universe, or the real. And yes, in the rising of mystification as condition to invention, a creative-diagnostic practice with Philosophical artefacts unfolds. There is non-representational technique here, which we can speak of later, but I would also say the generic non-philosophical stance can make the World frictionless, and thus creates no drag on the possibility for inventive strategies for acting/thinking in accord with the real, rather than being governed by the World and its self-styled fictions. To me there is something extraterritorially spatial about this, that is the admission that the always-already creates a generic spatiality of the Human/Man-in-Person subsisting within, yet unseen by the World. This spacing shows itself textually in some of my own work, and I see it in yours also, where the language of the World is disabled to open a practice of words without the governance of language. Yet I also wonder about the politic here, what kind of spacing arrives with non-philosophical stancing, and does this give way to a subsisting together? As I outline in, *In-Stance: Generic Encounter in Everyday Urban Landscapes*, a non-philosophical stance, a holding in self with the insufficiency of the real, ratifies a perpetual withdrawal from ontological accrual and identification in such a way any urban subject, market-ready or otherwise is derealised. How then does any admission of the Human/Man-in-person enable us to consider the imperative of

the city, as that of the multitude? Perhaps you could speak about “Social Theatre Aggregate” and some of your other textual hostings of non-philosophy?

CH: I think Laruelle’s presentation of mathematical idempotence offers a good view on non-philosophical diagnoses and inventions as regards the World, where diagnosis might entail some of the “negative” imperatives I mentioned and “invention” is facilitated/precipitated by the “generic stancing” you invoke here. For the creative practitioner, the idempotent expression “ $A * A = A$ ” assumes a permissive-descriptive texture. It permits radical democratic levelling (“ $= A$ ”) of a given array of material artefacts ($A, A...$) about their strategic treatment (*) in a space for composition *in such a way as to* describe the non-standard and less-than-thetic flavor of invention as such. And, more properly, in reverse: it describes the genericity of compositional arenas and strategies the practitioner—because they work with their composites—always-already permits of and for themselves.

With a wider lens, idempotence remarks on the performativity of non-philosophical axiomatics: Whatever the specifics of our arguments or operands ($A, A...$), they will always-already be aligned in practice and only realized ($=$) in that alignment having been operated on (*). To say

“*only realized*” is to foreground the style of invention the idempotent expression wants us to admit ($=$):

(A) Our arguments are *only realized* in their alignment *because that alignment is predicated on the terms of their idempotent realization*

(*) $\curvearrowright$

(A) Since alignment of our arguments is axiomatically ensured, then their idempotent execution *only realizes* that alignment *because of that alignment and nothing else*.

This recursive dynamic describes the pleonastic character of arguments in-the-last-instance, or as they are delivered from “alongside the Universe,” and permits fuller understanding of diagnostic and inventive protocols (and their practicable ligature) as they are brought to bear on the World. If invention names what can be/is being realized, then diagnosis names the idempotent means by which that realization will (have) take(n) place. If invention names a democratic and transformative practice with operands, then diagnosis names the tautological road to democracy always-already travelled in-One. To my understanding, it is as a tautological-transformational realization and performance of its own axioms—*How do we transit (*) from A to A ?*—that non-philosophy provides

vocabulary and vantage for “bypassing” the World/rendering it “frictionless.”

Like you, I think we can develop and discover new practices under the auspices of this dynamic accentuating problems of space and speech. Before we know what these new practices might look like or, as you put it, “before the specificity of any invention per se has taken place,” I think it’s crucial axiomatic commitment is maintained to the fabrication of *new problems* and the amplification of those that have always been posed and circulated in the bowels of the City, in the shadows of the City, (at the immanent) outside(s) (of) the City gates. It seems unlikely that the same problems couched in the same terms will ramify thought in different ways. The promise of other(-than-)Worldly languages and the configuration of specific places at which to speak them entails development of strategic pathways for bypassing zombie taxonomies and retooling undead concepts. To me, this amounts to a political and ethical imperative.

In previous work, I have sought to excavate language-problems from the standard enframement of interlanguage, vectoral considerations

of Hesychastic and Charismatic chant, and Dionysian “dissimilar similarities.” From my perspective, “Social Theatre Aggregate,” which is in keeping with these projects in some respects, is both aimed, as you say, at “disabling the language of the World” and scarred by inevitable Worldly encroachments. It would like to speak the World into fragments and pebbles just as it suffers Worldly aggregation of the mouth and throat. So “Social Theatre Aggregate” is a proposition, the one that it undergoes. It is also a contention that it is better to speak the World badly, epi-thetically, than merely speak badly of it, that misspeaking the World or speaking the World out of turn could become commensurate with its generative unnamings.

I think this contention calls for and on your *city-body* idiotically. There is a heavy World-City pressure applying to the promise of speech attributing the grammatical error, the glottal stop, the mispronunciation, the misspelling, the pidgin, the interlanguage, and so on to the idiot. But these items can also inform a “bandwidth of movements,”³ as you have it, fostered by Idiots and Strangers the City will struggle to speak away. Processes and centers and infrastructures of aggregation conducted and

³ Hannah Hopewell, *Notes from the Urban Intertidal: A Paraontological Learning* (Doctoral Dissertation, Auckland University of Technology, School of Art and Design, 2019), 160, <https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/handle/10292/13490>.

erected and hosted by the City on the part of the World render the multitude invisible. But an idiotic or what I call “(h)interlinguistic”⁴ subsistence of the *city-body*—that it would un/inhabit the City *unseen*—is not reducible to this. “Social Theatre Aggregate” wants to plant rebuses and indices on the walls of the City and its centers of aggregation. It is a practice of inscription pointing to the surfaces harboring it and it is trying to suspend.

I am especially interested in the photographic dimensions of your work along these lines, Hannah. Of what status are the places photos configure? What sorts of language-problems do they capture, and what counts as capturing here? I also wonder whether there might be a *para-fictional* strain to the kinds of speech and inscription practices I have tried to raise and the non-placements they would like to index/properly name?

HH: I agree that the dynamic brought into play with non-standard philosophy allows us to discover radical practices that can accentuate problems of speech and space. As regards to the photographic dimension of my work, I have trialed photographic practice as means to foreground non-placed urban artefacts and

utopian spaces beyond the economy of the “image” or “reference”—so the photos are strategically shorn of any requirement to explain or capture place. Instead, they are borne by political imperatives yet realized within the tautological dynamic you meaningfully call “invention” and “diagnosis.” I find these photographic non-placements without the tags “where-and-for-whom” disarticulate discourses of urban form, or the instrumentalities of a city, and carry a kind of muteness, or non-speech. I wonder if then they fall out of what can be circumscribed by urban thought, and instead belong to a non-urban world where inhabitation does not rely upon the constitution of particular subjects, but rather “strange” assemblages of liveliness. The photos are therefore not “mirrors” of the urban World, nor perspectives on it, but instead emerge from resistance to the visualities and identifications supporting recognized tropes and injustices of “City.” What the photos attempt to foreground is a *something* that remains supplemental to a city’s convergence—whatever it is that cannot be specified or colonized by urban calculus, and thus remain non-indexed. I speculate this mute liveness animates normative notions of city life with capacities to perturb and provoke, yet remain unregistered. Non-photography,

⁴ See Calum Hazell, “Speaking-in-the-Last-Instance: Non-Standard Usage, Superposition, and the (H)interlinguistic State,” *Philo-Fictions, La revue des non-philosophies*, Vol. 5 (2022): 83-102.

offers an occasion to potentially expand anthropocentric notions of the body politic insofar as the production of these images are for and of nobody.

I would say, then, the photos are less captured, and more materialized by the immanence of the photographic act as an occasioning of “superposition” of myself, camera, and situation. Here, the practice attempts to remove the distance between seen and seeing implicit in standard photography and image capture. As follows the photograph appears in parallel to and conditioned by the force of the Real through becoming immanent-to... urban situations. Photographs in the practice I call para-fictioning are axiomatically produced—they become a non-relation to their setting and autonomous to the scales and hierarchies imported by any such urban subject. The Real, as the organizing force of the photographic appearance, prompts manifestations as data-like, where their appearance is no more or no less than a flicker. To consider city life through a non-standard photographic assemblage affects what you have named as democratic levelling.

I would say, Calum, our respective inventive projects, most evidently seen through “Social Theatre Aggregate,” and a work of mine called

“Turn/Horizontal/(City)/Stranger,”⁵ problematize the space and speech of the City in a way that can be described as idempotent expression. Our works show how non-standard practice can liberate thought from the linguistic or texturalist paradigms otherwise dominating urban narrations to affect the radical questioning of basic assumptions and practices associated with analytic and conceptual thought. In turn, a democratic levelling unfolds, a politic which in the case of my inquiry is the decentering of the urban subject towards urban bodies, technicities, liveness as encountered in intertidal environs. Travelling the “tautological road to democracy always-already travelled in-One,” as you so succinctly put it, also permits in the case of “Turn/Horizontal/(City)/Stranger” urban thought as a thing—a thing that faces the non-human to testify to a world no longer able to be seen and thought as constitutively “for-us.” This non-urban occasioning is that which exists outside the available frames of recognition or zombie taxonomies, as shadow, absence, immanence, and could, sometime in the future, turn into something else. In this way I consider the transformative promise of non-standard experimentations’ non-representational techniques as an approach to divest urban accounts of a long-exercised

⁵ Hopewell, *Notes from the Urban Intertidal*, 2.

anthropocentrism, and perhaps gather up a flash of the justice to come.



Fig. 1. Hannah Hopewell, “Disquiet of a Non-Crash Site.” Still from video, 2015.

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Fig. 2. Hannah Hopewell, “Apex.” From *Cusp* series, 2014.





Fig. 3. Calum Hazell, “April Spolia,” 2022.



Fig. 4. Calum Hazell, “& Usyk the Bird Across,” 2022.

CH: A number of lines of inquiry we have been pursuing might converge at the issue of the non-relation you raise in the context of your photographic works, Hannah. There is liminality to the non-relation 1) as peculiar to the diagnostic-inventive ligature discussed

above and 2) *qua* relatively autonomous situation or minimally discrete placial clotting. In the first place, non-relationality might emerge at the *solidus* or speak to the ampersand minimally separating (*e*) & strategically reconciling (*i*) those analytic protocols. This is not going to

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be a question just of negating relations already on hand but—in the style of Laruelle’s prefix—really of bringing them to hand for diagnostic ramifications and inventive re-engineering. And in the second instance, it might involve dowsing for and excavating sites *in but not of* the City, at which and from where diagnoses-inventions could be locally made. Taking these items together, I think, means carefully designing and erecting collapsible and portable installations capable of observing relations as if at the scale of moderately-sized dry goods, a demand to which I have responded in my research with recourse to a concept of *zonality*.⁶ Through insistence on the non-triviality and necessity of cuts and breakages, boundaries and thresholds, zonality is a concept of the force of non-relation: for summoning it up and, in conversation with your para-fictioning, teasing its practicability out. In one direction, again, this is a spatiolinguistic measure, like Federico Campagna says of magic, aimed at “reclaiming language” or excavating the very possibility of speech, we could say, “as an internal dimension to ineffability.”⁷

Inflating or fattening up relations is a playful and determinedly naïve non-relational gesture 1) in accentuating a basic tractability and 2) allowing work with (including against) them. So non-relationality is a way of characterizing a kind of practice that takes the relation as the primary material for its compositions *in such a way* it would not be sufficient to the practice itself. The necessity I attribute to breakages and boundaries and so on basically is a political one because, per Claire Colebrook’s “A Cut in Relationality,” for instance, I think we ought to be laboring for “something *less* than the whole.”⁸ Which is to say that non-relational practices might be executed to disarm overextensions of relations on methodological, narratological, and analytic bases. For any given worldly array is actual, thoroughgoing alterity that cannot without some appreciable and appreciating violence be reduced. The worldification—to borrow Richard Sylvan’s term⁹—under which a certain cartographic technology is devised and from where it is deployed is not a trivial concern. Enactment and experience of novel worldly constellations should always be

⁶ See, for example, Calum Hazell, *Formal Shamanic Conduct: Zonal Installations in Supernatural Space* (Agger: EyeCorner Press, 2022); Calum Hazell, “Notes Towards a Zonal Aesthetics: Thinking-with the Autonomy of the Contemporary Work of Art,” *Media Theory*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2022): 73-112, <https://journalcontent.mediatheoryjournal.org/index.php/mt/article/view/671>; and Calum Hazell, *Trenchchord hippo*. (Seoul: Erotoplasty Editions, forthcoming).

⁷ Federico Campagna, *Technic and Magic: The Reconstruction of Reality* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 169.

⁸ Claire Colebrook, “A Cut in Relationality,” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (2019) 188.

⁹ See Richard Sylvan, *Transcendental Metaphysics: From Radical to Deep Pluralism* (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 1997).

protected and encouraged, but polycentrically: each time, at one of a thousand centers, and not taken as given or assumed in advance.

HH: Such a use of non-philosophy and non-relational tactics is indeed inventive and offers tools for diverse encounters with localized urban relations. I find it compelling how your composition of zonality, as a “collapsible” and “portable” installation capable of observing relations excess to or beyond dedicated City genealogies, chimes with AbdulMaliq Simone’s proposition of the surrounds. Similarly, the surrounds is an amorphous relational location rather than a geographic one, and neither an “explanatory context, a relation of interdependency,” nor an “alternate reality just over there.” Instead, an infrastructure of possibility for “something incomputable and unanticipated to take (its) place”¹⁰ outside any purchase of the instrumentality of design. Like zonality, the surrounds presents opportunity for material resistance to policy and design intentions that ascribe measures of efficacy to a particular territory and governance over relational frameworks. This does not mean that recognizable relational frameworks are suspended by these

specificities, only that an “often tacit dimension of collective agency is materialized.”¹¹ In this way the surrounds is less a disarming of the city’s overextensions of relations, and more a refusal to integrate, and a producing indifferent circumvention to the urban vernaculars of assessment and judgement. Zonality also affords such avenues into reorienting urban relationality with spatiolinguistic expression and in “making use” of non-philosophy furthers our understanding of what non-philosophy can do.

In a similar vein, my own work with para-fictioning has taken up spatiolinguistic resistance to given urban analytic-diagnostics via the force of non-relation. I write in more depth about this elsewhere, yet briefly, the *urban intertidal* was contrived within “my” encountering waterfronts held by a “radicalized” non-philosophical stance co-relating with the Real as authority in-the-last-instance, rather than with systems of urban thought. An experiential orientation of unilateral “bordering” formed the relationality where the real exerts a force of determination on para-fictioning unilaterally, mutely, indifferently, unaffected in return. This is not to claim the contents of conscious

¹⁰ AbdulMaliq Simone, *The Surrounds: Life within and beyond Capture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022), 5.

¹¹ Pranita Shrestha, Alison Young, Adam Morton, Tanzil Shafique, AbdouMaliq Simone, and Dallas Rogers, “Book Review Forum Podcast: *The Surrounds*,” *Urban Studies: An International Journal of Research in Urban Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 12 (2023): 2515-23, <https://www.urbanstudiesonline.com/review/the-surrounds>.

experience of these urban situations as the Real, as radical immanence, but to acknowledge the Real as anterior to *all* experience—meaning any relation of myself (in-writing) to the Real is, in effect, the force of non-relation. My motivation towards experimenting with non-philosophy in this way was to “get under” the layers of capital accumulation and extraction to avail opportunities for the invention in the staging of incoherent relational somethings’ present *in yet not of* the city. I am interested (most broadly) in finding ways to amplify what behaves as otherwise to capital’s appropriations.

Towards this aim I have made use of non-standard thought to shape para-fictioning as a non-cumulative writing-economy with “technologies” that amount to transcendent *bolsters*. The *urban inter-tidal* is an invention to deliver para-fictioning without the “harassment” of the time of capital, or rather avail writing to “use” times “co-extensively”—this is time-without- temporality, whereby the instance is made “cooperative”, opening possibilities for itself to be written. This is inherently focused on the virtuality of space and time, in ways that are *generic to relational locality*. For example, through a process of *cloning* the tide¹² and creating *the urban inter-tidal*, the space-time of a tide

(as material) becomes transmuted across all encountered relations—*the tide shows itself as whatever arrives from everywhere*. I pose the *urban inter-tidal* as a kind of architectural variant for focusing non-event, non-ground, or non-placed territory within a realm of the urban. It is also a way of keeping going, or constituting a movement that resists axial extension, resisting accumulative possession. In other words, the *urban inter-tidal* composes an autonomous and localized time, along with a technicity that not only allows time to go “both ways” but, as well, permits the static, the suspended, to have a sense of everyday finitude. The *urban inter-tidal* thus offers a pervading—yet de-realized—endurance, indifferent to, yet alongside, World-time. This is time as generic materiality, time as pre-ontological: pure common, entirely fictional. Nonetheless, time in fidelity with the real.

CH: Yes, I think the surrounds can be an interesting interlocutor for zonality here too, Hannah. Zonality, as I have written elsewhere and which I hope its suffix can affirm, is a concept always-already applying to the states and conditions (-ity) of what is and might yet be zonal(-) *vis-à-vis* a given *problématique* or state of affairs. Resonating with Simone’s understanding of the surrounds as “‘show[ing] up’ across different contexts in many different forms...

¹² Hopewell, *Notes from the Urban Intertidal*, 297.

and structural constraints,”¹³ what comes to count as a zone for zonality largely proceeds from the circumstances out of which it itself emerges and by which it is configured at specific installations. That being said, where the plasticity of the surrounds is such that their disparate modes of “appearance” do not necessarily “demonstrate a set of common features,”¹⁴ because they inform its guiding problematics and minimal architectural elements, zonality’s interrogation of boundaries—their conception and construction, their being compromised and collapsed—is invariant across the multiple concrete settings at which it objectivates itself. In the abstract, though, this does not tell us very much. For certain of the items to which zonality has previously been brought to bear, such as non-well-founded sets, design theories, and contemporary artworks, what is a boundary and how a zone operates is a broadly speculative affair requiring development of discrete methodologies (often of a comparative flavor) supporting distinct conceptual outcomes. Applications of zonality to, for instance, urban, oceanic, and speleological horizons likewise but, unlike in the previous examples, these also entail negotiating what is already zonal—in virtue of existing vocabularies and anatomizations—about the city, the sea, and the cave.

In the context of the urban, the “nonrelationality” (without hyphen) of boundaries and zones indexes, as Simone might intimate via his surrounds, their basic “ambivalence.”¹⁵ They carry, much as do the Baradian apparatus and the Wiccan magic circle in their different ways, worldmaking, *and* worldexcluding effects. They serve as vehicles of resistance (such as the Temporary Autonomous Zone established by local activists in Seattle, June 2020, in response to the murder of George Floyd) *and* to structure and reinforce inequitable sociospatial relations (land-use zones, contact zones, sacrifice zones...). Or, borrowing from Simone, “they can be as much exploited and exhausted as they can enable indeterminate uses and endure.”¹⁶ The non-relationality (with hyphen) of zonality describes, once more, a diagnostic-inventive condition encompassing its witness to & interventions on the nonrelationality of those zonal places and processes to which it always-already adheres in urban space. Put simply, in this particular context, “non-relation” animates a localized and concrete compositional method for retooling the kinds of ambivalent relational complexes “nonrelations” orchestrate. Nonrelations make and are made of relations and are remade as materials through and for non-relational practices.

¹³ Simone, *The Surrounds*, 5.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, 11.

¹⁶ Ibid.

I do not think such practices necessitate commitment to prevailing figurations of personhood, and instead could antagonize them. One strand of my present research project, drawing on the work of Olivier Clément and Erich Przywara, aims to flesh out this claim via a “negative anthropology” that challenges contemporary accounts of human being. There is scope for non-relational “focus [on undermining] the division of humans and non-humans [where such] a division,” as you have written elsewhere, “implies we know what the human is.”¹⁷ Non-relation would not be doing the dividing/reinforcing the division here, but attending to the latter as a nonrelational, and therefore a relational, expression. I.e., that exceptional agential qualities are derived negatively and achieved synthetically of human being. Impressions of non-relation follow from bringing non-philosophy to bear on its case studies, from disentangling the promise of speech from its received pronunciations, from the unilateral duality Laruelle posits about the One through the human, but also from suspending the human for the philosophy from out of the philosophy for the human. In that case, non-relation might be to harness a zonal enclosure/theological installation for

insulating the human alongside the Universe/within the Body of Christ, for ensuring its proper estrangement to the World (in non-relation, as I have suggested, to the urban district or the collective territorial sacrifice), and engraving the thresholds with deep apotropaic marks. This would allow maintenance of an other(-than-)Worldly vantage commensurate with a proper name without attributes: the human *qua* site whose relations have all been sawn off, the human *qua* proposition whose precision is marshalled and multiplied below-the-tetic.

HH: Your mention of non-relation securing zonal enclosure of the human alongside the Universe offers, I believe, experimental ways into composing the human unencumbered by the strictures of philosophy. I agree this underdetermination of the human allows us to write in ways that hold back reliance on Western frameworks for truth-telling, frameworks recognized in metaphysical suppositions concerning subject-object correspondences that demand or define propositional correctness. I use para-fictioning without taking a “position” concerning what is the real or false human, and as follows non-human, allowing, as you say, an

¹⁷ Hannah Hopewell, “(Non)Landscape and (General) Ecology as Agents of Creativity,” *Kerb: Journal of Landscape Architecture*, Vol. 28 (2020), 119, <https://kerbjournal.com/articles/non-landscape-and-general-ecology-as-agents-of-creativity>.

other(-than-)Worldly vantage commensurate with a proper name without attributes. The non-relation renders any hermeneutical approach to relations inoperative, and thus undetected by urban authority. Para-fictioning's sole concern is to experiment with effects of an indifferent Real to avail forms of emancipation for the human, or what Laruelle has termed the stranger. The prefixing *para* "locates" this practice as staging non-relations with—superposition, alongside—the contingency of the real, or radical immanence giving way to a writing-with (the force of the non-relation), rather than a writing-about (the human/the city). Para-fictioning, with the non-relation, is *immanent-to* the real, and "claims" to "cast a shadow" over urban "reality" with a lived (living) abstraction—adequacy that is, at once, inadequacy of language. Consequently, para-fictioning manifestations, extra-linguistic fictive assertions, are not *against* "reality." They intervene in its construction, taking a role in transformations of the category of truth, albeit in minor and incalculable ways, in the last instance.¹⁸ The non-relation intervenes at the level of method, a model-of-living, with experiential bases entirely

enmeshed in the slope—incline, *clinamen*, or gradient (not binary)—between theory and practice.¹⁹ In these ways non-philosophy offers an open field for invention and ways of "getting at" the world in unforeseen ways.

¹⁸ Jean Luc-Nancy speaks of the necessity of fiction: "In fiction, truth is not figured as if by impudent allegory: it is figured in so far as it is unfigurable. The infinite receives its finition, it opens within the finite." Cited in Thomas Gould, *Silence in Modern Literature and Philosophy: Beckett, Barthes, Nancy, Stevens*. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 166.

¹⁹ Para-fictioning draws from Laruelle's assertion that any dualism of practice and theory is dissolved. He promotes a non-Parmenidean Equation: Practice = Thought. Within non-standard practice, practice and thought are identical in-the-last-instance. Practice is the presupposed that determines thought. See François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burke and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), 114-15.

SOCIAL THEATRE AGGREGATE

The Composites I-XXXIII

Calum Hazell

Calum Hazell is an artist, writer, and researcher who most recently served as Assistant Professor in Interdisciplinary Humanities at Al Akhawayn University, Morocco. Recent publications include: “Notes Towards a Zonal Aesthetics” (*Media Theory*, Vol. 6, No. 1 [2022]), *14 Stock Frequencies: Variations on the & Manifold* (Centre for Experimental Ontology, 2022), and *Formal Shamanic Conduct: Zonal Installations in Supernatural Space* (EyeCorner Press, 2022).

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I

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II

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III

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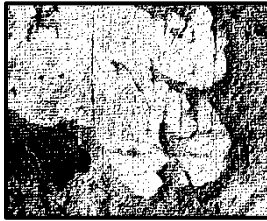
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IV

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VI

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VII

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VIII

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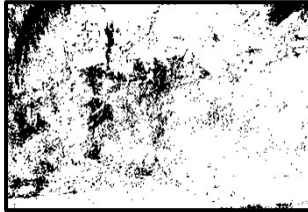
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IX

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X

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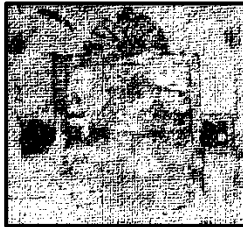
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XI

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XII

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XIII

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XIV

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XV

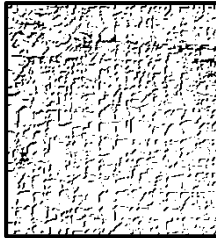
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XVI

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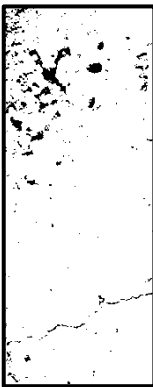


XVII

Embargo justified jellypurse

by many feathers such babe alive with your thumb.

The creature is truly absorbent who uncovers a



spectacular sacrifice called William the
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XVIII

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XIX

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XX

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XXI

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XXII

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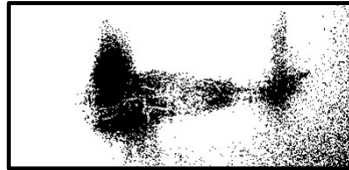


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between them
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XXIII

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from my own unfished
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XXIV

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XXV

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XXVI

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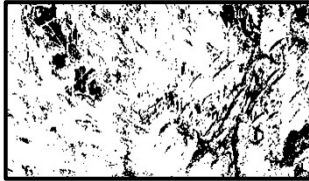
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XXVII

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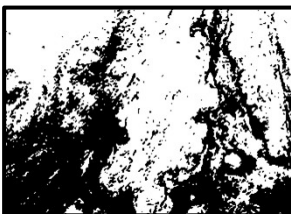
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XXVIII

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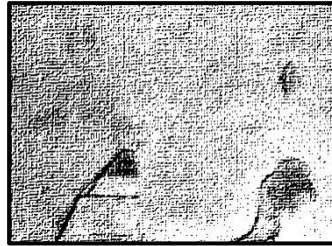
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XXIX

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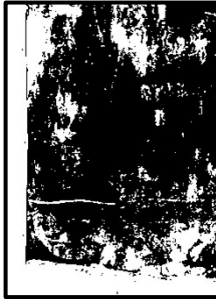
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XXX

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XXXI



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XXXII

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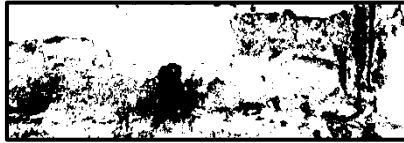
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that engineering aflower
to bear charlie astonish eccentric serotonin really
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XXXIII

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like it they was clucking
dropping their hands
covering the walls in



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