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

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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 visiblized 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

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[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 works 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

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.

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