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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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.

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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

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[1] This work in part references my doctoral studies where I was ambitioned 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 exchange[7]—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 AbdouMaliq Simone indicates, "the conversion of individuals into homogenous 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

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[4] AbdouMaliq 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*.

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

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[9] I am indebted to other urban thinkers who have engaged with Laruelle: Morten Nielsen and AbdouMaliq 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

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*)

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[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 unhinging 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 unleveraged, 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

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[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. En-counter—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

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[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 irruption with alternative ways of looking and, thus, acting on a world that Lefebvre defines as totalized by the tendencies of modernity.

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

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[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 Leaning* (PhD, Auckland University of Technology, 2019).

[25] John Ó Maoilearca, "Galloway's Non-Digital Introduction to Laruelle," *Los Angeles Review of Books*,

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.

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

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[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 clime 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 precedential 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

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[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

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[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 "Situated 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

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[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 Francois 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 everydays. 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

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[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 no-one, 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

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 unrelatived 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*.