ALL THOUGHTS ARE EQUAL

Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy

JOHN Ó MAOILEARCA

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posthumanities

Cary Wolfe, Series Editor

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Reason is the operating knife that cuts appearances into defined and workable rations. This Greek vision of the relation between appearance and reason is not "originally" Greek, but "specifically" human. The first tool produced by man at the very instant of becoming man was the stone knife. Human reason produces knives because it works like a knife, and it works like a knife because it produces knives

VILÉM FLUSSER, *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis*

Xenophanes . . . memorably said . . . that if horses or oxen or lions had hands, they would draw the figures of the gods as similar to horses, oxen or lions. . . . Our problem with "anthropomorphism" relates to the projection of humanity into divinity, not animality.

EDUARDO VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, *Cosmologies*

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FIVE POSTURAL MUTATIONS OF LARUELLE AND THE NONHUMAN

> A non-philosophy postulates that there will always be philosophy, not because philosophy has not died or has survived, but because what is essential for it is *that it is*—by definition of its own posture or by internal postulation
>
> FRANÇOIS LARUELLE, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*

> QUESTION: What's the difference between a philosopher and a de-railed train?
> ANSWER: The train will eventually stop.

THE AUTHORITY AND VICTIMIZATION OF PHILOSOPHY

We begin with a quotation and a joke, as is the fashion. It is doubtless that philosophers have been a perennial and easy target for ridicule—since Aristophanes's *The Clouds* at least—some of it well deserved, some of it less so. Philosophy itself, however, is more than a halfhearted jest; as François Laruelle warns, "philosophy is too serious an affair to be left to the philosophers alone."[1] In what follows in these pages, philosophical thought will be presented as a relentless, unstoppable force (which is why Laruelle himself is under no illusion that his work could ever counter this force completely—philosophy is here to stay). Despite what appears to many as philosophy's benign, abstracted appearance, the stance adopted here takes it to be the supreme form of thought control, or, to be perfectly clear, a device for controlling what counts as thought. Its objective is to capture everything under its own authority—*its* definitions of reality, knowledge, and, most particularly, thinking itself—an aristocratism of thinking. Its very form is transcendence, specifically, its *own* transcendence over every rival thought, regardless of content (whether the philosophy in question is deemed "metaphysical," "critical," or even "radical" is unimportant). What

matters most to it is simply "*that it is*"—that such authority of thought, or philosophy, exists. So, whatever else it might be, philosophy is also a question of extreme importance for Laruelle.

Of course, this rather melodramatic and (some might say) hugely overgeneralized picture of philosophy may seem counterintuitive. And this will be especially so to those philosophers who characterize their discipline in epistemic terms, be it of analysis, argument, clarification, questioning, or wonder. Philosophy is neither aristocratic nor democratic for them, for such moralizing terms are inapplicable to its questions of knowledge. Others would go even further in opposing the Laruellean view, only now *precisely* by placing philosophy in a highly moral position, as both a benchmark and a safeguard of intellectual freedom and human flourishing. Agnes Heller, for instance, argues that "every philosophy is—in its structure—democratic." In her book *Radical Philosophy,* she paints an altogether different picture of the discipline:

> It was said that the challenge of philosophy, "Come, let us think together, let us seek the truth together," is addressed to everyone, for philosophy assumes that all people are equally rational beings. It was said that philosophy appeals to the understanding and not to the belief of reasonable people. It was said that philosophy recognizes no *other* authority than human reason.[2]

"Human reason" is the sole authority for philosophy, the one that allows it to address "all people" equally. So why should Laruelle think of philosophy in such draconian terms, when so many think of it as a force for good or, at worst, no more than a moral irrelevance (being ethically neutral)? *The reason is because philosophy's democracy is, he claims, an illusion.* Indeed, Heller herself, while declaring that (left-wing) radical thought is "always *democratic,*" also admits that such philosophies also have a "painfully *aristocratic* aspect: they ascribe to every person abilities and values of which the majority of men and women are either ignorant or unconscious."[3] Yet what for Heller is an unfortunate but still incidental feature of even radical thought for Laruelle exposes philosophy's authoritarian core.

Despite appearances to the contrary, philosophy remains our dominant form of knowledge, according to Laruelle. Or rather, it is the very

form of domination within knowledge. Adopting many shapes and poses (empiricism, rationalism, idealism, materialism, scientism, even anti-philosophy), its fundamental pose is as a form of exemplary thinking. It is *the* model for all foundational thinking, even when those foundations are differential or antifoundational. As Laruelle puts it, "philosophy is not 'first' for nothing; it is that which declares itself first and possessor."[4] Even in our contemporary scientistic era, in *epistemic relations,*

> philosophy holds the dominant place, science the dominated place. In positivism or scientism, the hierarchy is reversed or inverted; but it is still philosophy that dominates in anti-philosophy. The superior or dominant place is in effect always occupied by philosophy.[5]

Scientism is a philosophy too (albeit a self-hating one). Alternatively, those philosophies that posit a more open, liberal thought of "embodiment," or of the "unsaid," or of the "unthought," the "subaltern," "thought of the out-side," "pure difference," and so on, *in as much as they remain philosophical positions,* also maintain a covert dominance: "every philosophical critique (of philosophy) is *first critique* and, as a result, can only be founded upon a non-being or an Other which it *supposes given.*"[6] The "givenness" that supports both totalizing critique (scientism) and antitotalitarian thought is ultimately that of philosophy itself—its entitlement to judge the value (ontological, epistemic, ethical, or aesthetic) of all things. This is its own givenness, "that it is." Philosophy generates "an authoritarian image" or "authoritarian mechanism" that it calls "reality" or the "World."[7]

By contrast, non-philosophy aspires to bring democracy *into* thought, because what it says is that philosophy—the discipline that posits itself exclusively as the power to think at the highest level—does *not* have a monopoly on thinking. In non-philosophy, all thoughts are equalized. However, this equivalence or conceptual democracy is not *political* in the philosophical and representational sense of the term (with all its attendant troubles). It is not a *theoretical* democracy—which would leave what counts as "theory" alone—but the "democracy of theory itself." Such a nonrepresentational democracy aims to resolve the traditional hierarchies of philosophy "with experience, art, ethics, technology, mysticism, science, etc.," by mutating just what thought

and theory might be—by "universalizing thought beyond philosophy."[8]

Coming from the Latin, *aequalis,* "equality," not only means "the state of being equal" but also "even" or "level." According to Laruelle, philosophically driven arguments can only go so far before becoming lexically circular (referring us back to the start) or ostensive. With an abstraction such as "equality," moreover, the inadequacies of the more seemingly exact lexical strategy are even more instructive. To say that "equality *means x*" (or "*y*" or "*z*") necessitates a willful blindness toward its own semantic circularity, to wit: "equality *equals x*" (or "*y*" or "*z*"). Of course, the question of equality—its nature, origins, and current impediments—is a pressing one among those forms of philosophy focused on political programs: does it reside in some kind of sovereign power like sensibility or self-awareness (as Peter Singer argues), or in the lack of any such power, in vulnerability (as Jacques Derrida claims)? Or is it based on a quantity opposed to any quality, be it sensibility, vulnerability, or anything else (Alain Badiou's view)? Doubtless, these particular philosophers should not be numbered among strict political egalitarians on a par with, say, G. A. Cohen or Amartya Sen. Rather, it is because they attempt to give a *philosophical* argument for egalitarian thought (that is supposedly noncircular) that, as we will see, they are apt material for non-philosophical study—that is, one that "levels" or equalizes all arguments.

One purpose of this study is to explain Laruelle's strange image of philosophy—only without either the authority, or the terms of reference, found in *philosophers*' explanations of philosophy. As such, it strives to see how "thought" might appear when we look at it with non-philosophical eyes, once it is "defetishized," as Laruelle puts it.[9] It also serves to defetishize the much-vaunted "human reason" of philosophical power. Instead, the question of both what is human and what is reason will be given a nonstandard rendering, one that goes beyond historicism (Foucault, MacIntyre, Feyerabend) toward something nonhuman. Indeed, the theme of the nonhuman, in particular the animal, must remain prominent in this study given that a striking implication of Laruelle's nonstandard approach to both man and philosophy is that what would be most unthinkable for philosophers, an animal philosophy, becomes thinkable for non-philosophers.

In some of what we will hear, it will seem at first that Laruelle victimizes

philosophy too much, what with his accusations of circularity, narcissism, and intolerance. This is especially the case when he appears to personalize philosophy through the proper names of Immanuel Kant, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Alain Badiou, and various others. Indeed, hearing such a long charge sheet can have a reverse effect on some readers and encourage a stubborn defense of the accused. However, though such a reflex is understandable, we should be careful not to take things so personally. What is "on trial," so to speak, is a kind of thought, a structure or position in thinking. Indeed, we would encourage a type of literalization of this notion of "position." "Philosophy" is the position thought adopts when it becomes authoritarian, irrespective of its source in extraphilosophical domains (like science, art, or history). When these fields enter into a purported dominance—real or ideal—on account of their *self-nomination* as supreme thought, then they become "philosophical." As Laruelle writes in *Anti-Badiou,* "we blame the 'philosopher' for nothing. Badiou, insofar as he strives to succeed Derrida and Deleuze, on the contrary, we blame him right down to his philosopher-sufficient essence—the essence, and not at all the way in which he puts it to work."[10] This "essence" is in fact a kind of behavior, an activity—of positioning—rather than a *specific* body of knowledge, or history, or method (such as Alain Badiou's—for that is only one version of it). The history of philosophy is always retrospectively constructed, of course, with either some new names being written in (as some old ones are written out) or certain permanent names, like Plato or Hegel, being constantly reinterpreted. But "no name," Laruelle claims,

> however big it is, not even Plato or Hegel, sums up Philosophy or can substitute itself for it. No proper human name of history can substitute itself for the name of "Philosophy," a quality-performative name.[11]

The proper names of "Deleuze," "Derrida," and "Kant" are not used here as those of once-living persons, but for the many ruses by which thought can appoint itself the arbiter of all thought (even when it appears at its most benign and open-minded). Consequently, the authority and power of the philosopher—seen particularly in the *posturing* of the public "intellectual"—is not that of an actual person such as Slavoj Žižek, Jürgen Habermas, or Badiou but something in the essence of philosophy itself.

The apparent power of the intellectual is that of thought when it raises itself to the level of a total, complete, or all-powerful position (even if only ideally). Individuals do not have this power: it is rather that philosophical thought is the power of being *in* a certain position. As Katerina Kolozova describes,

> adherence to a determinate theoretical horizon provides one with the comfort and safety of philosophical certainty. It is a twofaced certainty established by the hybridization of the transcendental (or thought) and the real: the comfortable sense of unshakability *in* one's philosophical knowledge and the safe sense of "knowing the reality."[12]

Knowing or representing X ("philosophically") is the power of being *in* a position over X, transcending X, even if one must use mathematics, or physics, or poetry to enter into this position.

Understood in this fashion, philosophy is also the authoritarian structure of a kind of thinking that can operate in numerous domains, whether or not *we* call them "philosophy." Such a self-promoting thought—that is, one that promotes itself as *the* model of thought—is not tethered to certain names or historical disciplines: as Laruelle has said in a recent interview, "*every discipline very soon arrives at its own sufficiency, in the sense that it tends to auto-finalise itself, raise itself to the level of a total, complete or all-powerful thought*").[13] Philosophy is a vector, "an affair of movements and becomings, of lines and vectors, of reversals and displacements."[14] It is a "phase-state" in thought rather than any universally acknowledged "content," one that gives itself sovereign power of thought over all others, whether they be philosophers or non-philosophers, and even whether they be human or nonhuman.

So what is unusual, and undoubtedly counterintuitive, about non-philosophy is the consistency with which it materializes all thought, including its own, within a radically *immanent* approach: it renders transcendence as immanence, as "position." This immanentist stance thereby sees philosophical thinking as both a performance *and* a physical tendency or spatial *activity* (which will be described as the power of "distancing" or "withdrawal"). It is this core to philosophy, as the most persistent performance or position of power, that is under interrogation

here. Non-philosophy, then, attempts to reorient (rather than oppose) philosophy understood as a material tendency, vector, or orientation.

In this introductory chapter, we look at Laruelle's general non-philosophical approach (his attitude toward philosophical representation, performative consistency, material thought, decision, "posture," and science), his unusual treatment of the human (anthropomorphism and extended definitions of thought), and the methodology adopted for this study (non-philosophy's artistic source material, the use of cinema to inform our approach, the horror of the nonhuman, and an outline of the argument's structure). Lengthy though it is, covering this material now will save us some time later.

ALL THOUGHTS ARE EQUAL, BUT SOME THOUGHTS APPEAR MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS: FROM POSITION TO REPRESENTATION

François Laruelle (b. 1937) is Professor Emeritus in Philosophy at the University of Nanterre, Paris, the inventor of "non-standard philosophy" (or just "non-philosophy"), and the author of more than twenty-five books on this topic. His project, as he sees it, is the attempt to envision philosophy as a material and to study it from a genuinely nonpartisan point of view. The ideas of philosophy are no longer positions to be argued with, critiqued, accepted, or promoted but raw material to be utilized: it is not a question any more of how we should study philosophy "philosophically" but rather one of "what should we make *of Philosophy* itself?"[15] As he also writes, "*there is a body of philosophy, a philosophical materiality, a conceptual and lived material, and one can treat philosophy as a part of physical nature.*"[16] In pursuing this task, then, we must first avoid the circular method of "treating philosophy philosophically" and instead propose a "means of causing thought to function otherwise than philosophically."[17] This is neither to reject philosophy nor to surpass it in any recognizably philosophical terms: such an approach "only claims to succeed the faith and authority of philosophy, never to deny its reality, nor to refuse it at least a 'relative' autonomy."[18] Non-philosophy negates "*only that part of it that can be negated—its sufficiency.*"[19] Instead, Laruelle wishes to utilize philosophy and will do so employing models from both the sciences, like biology and physics, as well as the arts, such as photography and music.

Taking this view of philosophy and thought also brings about an expansion of the definitions of both *indefinitely* (which, as we will see, is ultimately to refuse to define either). Laruelle aims to deauthorize philosophy, to democratize it: "as soon as I give a definition it is a failure. We have to refuse the temptation or appearance of definition."[20] However, this gesture goes beyond merely relativizing thought within a pluralism that is actually indifferent to philosophy ("all opinions are valid") or anarchizing knowledge as part of a methodology where "anything goes." Rather, the "flat" thought Laruelle strives for is democratic because it is materialized in *different* ways, some of them "scientific" (quantum physics, biology, geometry), some of them aesthetic (photography, performance art, music). *Standard* philosophy—the positioning of authority over thought—does not have a monopoly on what counts as thought or even "philosophy." What might look like relativism, then, is always expansion, an inclusivity of thought. Moreover, non-standard philosophy also refuses any fixed definition of the Real or the Human. Whether this inclusivity might also extend to the nonhuman, to a thought and philosophy that is not the right of *Homo sapiens* alone, is, therefore, a further question for this work.

One thing we must be clear about from the start is that non-philosophy is *not* an antiphilosophy. Laruelle is not heralding another "end of philosophy" nor the kind of internal critique of philosophy common in much post-Kantian European thought. His use of the term *non-philosophy* is neither a dialectical negation nor even something contrary to philosophy: "while non-philosophy has overtones of anti-philosophy, it cannot recognize itself in current anti-philosophy, whose origins are predominantly philosophical."[21] As we will see later, the "death" of philosophy is more often than not only a botched suicide attempt, a cry for help (or demand for attention) rather than a genuine thirst for annihilation: "*there is indeed a suicide of philosophy, but it has lasted as long as philosophy's own history.*"[22] Rather, modeling the name "non-philosophy" on an analogy with "non-Euclidean geometry," Laruelle proposes a broadened, pluralistic science of thought and philosophy as well as a major reworking of philosophical concepts. Crucially, the *non-* in *non-Euclidean* is not a negative: non-Euclidean geometries do not negate the principles of Euclid's *Elements* but affirm them within a broader or amplified paradigm that allows other, apparently opposed geometries to coexist,

while also explaining where and in what respects they are still relevant.

Similarly, non-philosophy attempts a transformation that locates philosophy as one instance in a larger set of theoretical forms.[23] It is a *positive* act: "the 'non' is therefore not an all-powerful negation. It has a status or function only at a level that is no longer dialectical, no longer at the level of signifier and sense, but that of usage; it is a 'non' that affects the usage of terms, a lived that transforms them."[24] Non-philosophy is a conception of philosophy (and all forms of thought) that allows us to see them as equivalent according to a broader explanatory paradigm.[25] It enlarges the set of things that can count as thoughtful, a set that includes existing philosophy but also a host of what are often presently deemed (by standard philosophy) to be non-philosophical (art, technology, natural science). In addition, Laruelle integrates present examples of philosophy with instances of what *those same philosophies* regard as their "opposites" within philosophy. In this democracy of thinking, all thought is equalized when regarded as raw material for non-philosophy, that is, as part of the Real, or "One" (as it is also called), rather than as "representations" of it.

We now need to introduce the connection between non-philosophy and *representation* in some detail. Each method of philosophical thought ("philosophical" being understood once again as a phase-state of thought), because it *occupies* itself with representing the whole exclusively, misses its target in part—it is partial (just *one* method).[26] Yet this is not to say that each and every philosophy misses it entirely, that they all *misrepresent*. Laruelle is *not* saying that method "X" is "wrong" and that it can be improved upon or replaced with a truer method "Y." The Real is indifferent to every attempt at representing it. This is because every thought, *when regarded as* a physical body, is already a part of it (and a part cannot be the whole, even through the magic of "representation," which always fails to capture its quarry complete). Separated from each of their claims to exclusive truth, philosophical positions becomes a question of precisely that, *positions* in space, a question of physics and the material coexistence of different thoughts.

Alternatively, what makes the arguments of the philosophers *circular* is due to their representational form. Philosophical reasoning is tautological, privileging one piece of empirical evidence by raising its status to the transcendent or representational (creating what Michel Foucault called

"empirico-transcendental" doublets). Philosophical practice "mixes" the Real with a predecided representational schema—be it substance and accident, actual and virtual, being and nothingness, phenomenal and noumenal, and so on—that attempts to transcend the Real (through these philosophical concepts). The resulting worldview, however, is entirely relative to this decisive starting point. Hence, we have what Laruelle describes as all the "great circles" of philosophy: "'Unity of experience' (Kant), '*Lebenswelt*' (Husserl), 'Being-in-the-world' and 'Care' (Heidegger), 'General Perception' of 'Flesh' (Merleau-Ponty), etc."[27] And as we saw, each philosophy's transcendent form leaves no room for alternative positions. As a consequence of their attempts to exhaust all explanatory space, each philosophy—be it phenomenology, deconstruction, Platonism, or any other—cannot explain its rivals' existence as anything other than illusion or error (or *misrepresentation*). Nor can it justify the grounds of such illusions or errors without again presupposing what a "proper" representation and a "proper" ground might be. Even pluralism—ostensibly affirming all other views (or at worst being indifferent to them)—still *occupies a position* and must thereby elbow out both nonpluralist and other kinds of pluralist positions to make room for itself.

In all of this, Laruelle may appear rather unoriginal. For some, his ideas will sound like a version of Kant's critical philosophy: metaphysics cannot *represent* the "thing in itself," for its "truths" are the result of the "manifold" *after* it has been reconfigured through the mind's structure of knowing. The (human) mind refracts rather than reflects reality. Indeed, long before even Kant, Francis Bacon had already written in his *Novum Organum* that human understanding is like "a false mirror, which receiving rays irregularly, distorts and discolours the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it."[28] In fact, Laruelle would be the first to admit that the "intraphilosophical critique of the mirror and reflection is almost universal," being also found in Fichte, Husserl, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Lévinas.[29] His own work, however, concerns *the reality of the reflection* within a philosophy of immanence as well as an extension of the critique of (human) metaphysics to *all thought of the Real.* It is not just metaphysics that is asked to forgo its supposed power to represent reality but any philosophy that would hope to represent things in their essence, that believes that it can capture reality through its own putative powers

(of questioning, wonder, deduction, induction, intuition, will to power, affective encounter, sympathy, selfless attention, pluralist affirmation, and so on). Kant's critique needs to be generalized from one of metaphysics to one of philosophy as such. As a result, Laruelle's accusations concern *all* self-styled philosophical thought, metaphysical *and* nonmetaphysical. Ironically, Kantian transcendental deduction must be included in this lineup too in as much as it also believes that reality can be thought, even if only through *inference,* as this is defined and understood according to its own method.

In short, at no time is a *representationalist* critique being offered by Laruelle, that is, one that judges philosophies according to epistemic values—*his is not an attempt to improve upon other philosophies' "failed" pictures of the Real*:

> non-philosophy does not draw its motivation from philosophy's failure but from the positive necessity of explaining it, of elaborating the reasons of this inability within the Real itself or the Ego that forces every thought to its foreclosure, philosophy on the other hand ignores this foreclosure and claims or wants to know the Real.[30]

The function of a non-philosophy is to integrate (rather than reduce, replace, or eliminate) philosophical views back into the Real by survey-ing them together in a democratic, immanent, revision where no one view is superior to or transcends the other. At the same time, such a real integration shows their *physical* limits: the fact that they are seen to share a space (that their one theory is never as total as it hopes to be) indicates that they cannot occupy the entirety of that space alone ("what the Real really is"). Yet philosophical views are not dismissed thereby as failed representations. Rather, they and their "limits" (irreducible remainders, *aporias,* even circularities—all the usual tools of "critique") are made Real, they are physicalized as parts of the Real. (What such an affirmation en-tails for a *non-philosophical* pluralism like this, *in its own position*—such that it does not enter into a new form of authority—remains to be seen.)

Taken individually, each philosophy is as arbitrary and circu-lar as the other: though some will be more complex, such complexity only serves to occlude their ultimately tautological grounding. This is

especially true of those philosophies of philosophy that offer definitions of "proper" thought. The fact is that the various forms of thinking privileged by different philosophies is always done by *fiat* (stemming from a "position"). The history of philosophy is a litany of different baptisms: thinking descriptively, poetically, mathematically, affectively, embodiedly, analogically, syllogistically, fuzzily, paraconsistently; thinking through a method of questions, of problems, of dialogue, of dialectic, of genealogy, of historicism, of deconstruction, and so on. Taken on their own, though, each of these exemplary cases restricts the idea of thinking in a presumptive manner, either by positing what could count as thinking per se or by positing what counts as "good," "proper," or "true" thinking. Even Badiou's apparent egalitarianism toward art, science, politics, and love, as forms of thinking, masks a demand—says Laruelle—that "philosophy define their essence and itself be their excellent form and their ultimate type, whether the thought of thought, or what totalizes or simply gathers thought, picks it up as a last resort, etc."[31] In other words, philosophy always remains King: it "auto-presents itself as titleholder of thought."[32]

Non-philosophy, on the contrary, is "the manner of thinking that does not know *a priori* what it is to think or to think the One."[33] And in practice, this means that it is "essential," as Laruelle constantly reiterates, "to remodel 'thought' or the cogitative in terms of the autonomy of the Real"; or again, "what is necessary is to change the paradigm of thinking" (and what counts as thinking).[34] And this change of paradigm, which he also calls a "mutation," must be continually reperformed (in case it should fall into one position). The work of non-philosophy, therefore, is an ongoing experiment in what results from seeing philosophical thought in a non-philosophical way—thought as just one other (real) thing rather than thought as *the* (irreal) representation *of* "All" things. This is what Laruelle dubs a thinking "according to" or "alongside" the Real.[35]

PERFORMATIVE INCONSISTENCY

To examine better the means by which non-philosophy tries to avoid becoming another "position," we must return to the question of what makes Laruelle's non-philosophy different, only now in terms of its *activity.* What it attempts, he says, is "*not a new philosophical paradigm*" but the

"*transformation of philosophy.*"[36] Laruelle is adamant that non-philosophy is a new "practice of philosophy" rather than a "philosophical taking of sides and thus inside philosophy."[37] Various commentators agree on this point, Rocco Gangle describing his work as a "radically new form of thought," Robin Mackay calling it a "new mode of thought."[38] A weak interpretation of such ascriptions might take them to imply merely a peculiar variation upon philosophical method (most often owing to novel subject matter), whereas, in fact, Laruelle seeks a radical mutation in methodology and content *at the same time.* He seeks an "experience of thought" that is even "non-Greek" in terms of its philosophical trajectory (which, for Laruelle, means that it must avoid *logical identity* at all cost).[39] Whereas standard philosophical approaches take their conception of what proper philosophy is and then apply it to all and sundry objects—which Laruelle calls the "*Principle of Sufficient Philosophy*"—non-philosophy is a "style of thought" that mutates with its object.[40] Hence, non-philosophy is neither "theoretical nor practical nor aesthetic, etc., in the sense whereby philosophy defines separated regions of experience."[41] It is all of these at once.

So, despite its own sometimes abstract and abstracted appearance, non-philosophy is intended to be a practical theory too. Indeed, it is forwarded as a performative thought that does things (to philosophy and to "Theory" generally), albeit through words in Laruelle's own practice. Laruelle even goes so far as to say that "*non-philosophy is a practice, it is enacted* [*en acte*]*, almost criminally performative* [*performative au crime près*], this is the only way of demonstrating it."[42] This practice involves taking the concepts of philosophy and attempting to extract all transcendence from them (in a manner and with what success we have yet to ascertain), to review them as parts of the Real and no longer as representations.

Of course, non-philosophy is hardly unique in placing practice at the heart of its method, nor in endorsing a democratic pluralism as regards the definition of thought—many "philosophies of difference" cherish such ideas too.[43] Yet Laruelle is not being naïve: he knows that such values (openness, practice, tolerance) are universally commended. What is different is Laruelle's constant acknowledgment of the difficulty of practicing them, of practicing tolerance and even of practicing practice. This concern with *consistency* in actually doing what one says and saying what one does, is crucial to the difference between philosophy and non-philosophy—it is

its essential, *performative* element: "But we know through the philosophers themselves, in an undoubtedly still limited manner, that they do not say what they are doing, and do not do what they are saying."[44]

Even the most open philosophies (of difference) still aspire to seize reality exclusively. Deleuze, for example, believes that thought should think of itself as immanent to the Real, rather than as a representation that transcends it. So far, so non-philosophical. Yet Deleuze would perform this explanation *in the name of his philosophy*: the image of thought he has in mind is as depicted in his explanation, with all its architectonics of the Real readily defined and hierarchized (virtual versus actual, Bodies without Organs versus the organism, war machines, rhizomes, etc.). Even though Deleuze embraces multiplicity and a variety of kinds of thought in what he says (artistic and scientific as well as philosophical), all the same, *what enables him to say this* is his own highest thought, or "creation of concepts": it is *this* that belongs to Deleuzian philosophy alone. *He* explains the Real; not Boulez, nor Artaud, nor Bacon (they provide the material for the philosopher). For *this* is Deleuze's performative, though it is one that does *not* do what it says.

The same even goes for Deleuze and philosophy as such. Coauthoring a book on philosophy (with Félix Guattari) is a performative act:

> Let's suppose that there exists a book called "What is philosophy?" and that it claims to answer this question by virtue of its own existence or manifestation. Thus it is impossible to talk about it: because this book is at the center of philosophy and philosophy is at the center of this book; because *philosophia sive natura* and one does not converse with God.[45]

Because he remains a philosopher, Deleuze cannot *enact* the egalitarian demands of radical immanence that he espouses. This is not a matter of unwitting self-deception or bad faith, nor conscious duplicity. It is part and parcel of the nature of philosophical thought as "auto-positional" or self-positing. For Laruelle, there is no explaining what the Real "really is," because every thought, *be it Deleuzian or not, be it philosophical or not,* is as good or as bad an explanation as any other—for they are all (nonsummative) material parts.

What follows from an axiom of radical immanence, if acted upon, is

that non-philosophy *does do what it is saying.* Or at least it *says that it does* (such consistent practice is easier said than done). And, indeed, who is to judge whether it has been successful? Undoubtedly, a number of problems emerge when it comes to evaluating such immanent performativity. For a start, it may be that Laruelle is deluding himself as to his own consistency and actually falling into performative contradiction whenever he refers to his own thought as an "identity of saying and doing" (simply because he is *describing* what he is doing *elsewhere* instead of doing it *here*).[46] Second, on one level it is just trivially true that *any* utterance is a kind of action. What is less obvious is when an utterance's "form" and "content" are one and the same (if such a duality can be applied to Laruelle). What is most in need of argument, however, is the notion that *this* saying, here and now, both expresses and embodies what it says consistently in all contexts. If, that is, "this" is what Laruelle means by consistency (the nature of this "this" will be examined in the final chapter, as well as the threat of trivial "explosion," whereby all things become performative).

We could attempt to make things easier for ourselves—and avoid the dangers of triviality, self-delusion, or contradiction—by invoking a "use"–"mention" distinction here. On this view, it might be that when Laruelle says that (to paraphrase) "philosophy does not do what it says and non-philosophy does do what it says," this utterance is itself to be taken as a "mention" rather than a "use" of its terms. As such, it would fall within philosophical purview and avoid the various abysses of self-reference (because the referring statement only *mentions* itself). To mention "animal" in saying "'animal' is not animal" avoids the pitfalls of using "animal" in saying "animal is not animal." Of course, this fix would come at the cost of subverting non-philosophy's entire enterprise by "renormalizing" it. The salvage would also be on the basis of a distinction that is itself contestable (both between philosophy and non-philosophy *and* among philosophers). Laruelle sees *usage* as such a large part of the non-standard approach that even "mentioning" (his own thought) is itself *a kind of usage,* called "cloning." The duality of use–mention rests on philosophical assumptions that non-philosophy cannot share (especially concerning representation and the nature of self-reference or "meta" talk). So, while it is possible to save non-philosophy from certain aporia in this manner, the price is too high (the operation may be a success, but we lose the patient). We

need another approach if we are going to give non-philosophy a better run for its money.

The performative dimension of thought is one more notion that is not unique to Laruelle, of course. As Jaako Hintikka once showed, even Descartes's "*Cogito, ergo sum*" can be understand as a performative act rather than an inference.[47] Performative contradictions too—"this sentence is not true," "I am asleep," "everything is a lie"—have been the source of the many paradoxes that have kept philosophers distracted for centuries and a major point of entry into the performative aspects of philosophical thought. The lack of fit between the content and the performance of an utterance—*saying* "I am asleep" does not lie well with *being* asleep (unless, of course, one happens to talk in one's sleep)—can generate numerous ideas on the nature of thought and language. The misfit (inconsistency) between the speech as *act,* the doing, and what is *said* is also important with respect to the performance of philosophies *as a whole,* however, and not just in its particular "speech acts." In Emmanuel Lévinas's work, for example, the ethical message found in his book *Totality and Infinity*—concerning the inability of any being in the world to totalize or objectivize our infinite ethical responsibility toward the Other—appears to be contradicted by the very writing of *Totality and Infinity,* which is all too adept at conveying its message *objectively,* that is, through beings in the world. Hence, spurred on in part by Jacques Derrida's criticisms, the sequel to that text, *Otherwise Than Being or beyond Essence,* played a far more complex game with language, between content and performance (or "the said" and "the saying"), to scupper any false impression that this book has some *ontological* (worldly) thing that it wanted to say. In a similar vein, Derrida himself is famed for supposedly having stopped *arguing* for his quasi-concept of *différance* in the 1960s in favor of actually performing it in the 1970s (in books like *Glas*) to be consistent with his message regarding the futility of self-present arguments (logocentrism).

Note, however, the emphasis for both of these figures on using performance to *avoid* contradiction, to assure *consistency.* One might even say that neither Derrida nor Lévinas abandoned (logocentric) argument in toto because, to salvage the *coherence of their positions,* they adopted a higher-order meta-argument (*through* the performative). The performative was a means to an end, even though that end concerned such

seemingly extraphilosophical notions as alterity and *différance.* (We will see this philosophical urgency to save coherence again in chapter 2, despite it being done to protect a paraconsistent position.) The performative was never the end in itself for these philosophers. Regardless of its best efforts, for Laruelle there is a constitutive disingenuity in (any one) philosophy given its ongoing desire to explain reality from *its* position. Even when a philosophy is seemingly aware of its own performativity and the impossibility of transcending it, it still attempts to sidestep the implications of such radical immanence. *Its* act, there, is always the *exception* to the case:

> The philosopher, legislating for reason, the life of the mind [*vie de la pensée*] or social life, makes an exception even of the fact that he does not do what he says or does not say what he does, but, speaking the law, he makes an exception and enjoys the privilege of speaking about it and imposing it with his authority. I speak the truth, says the liar; I speak democracy, says the anti-democrat: this is the paradox of the philosopher as thinker of the Whole who is never short of expedients for presenting the paradox as if it were acceptable.[48]

For there is the rub: if *inconsistency* is the content of one's thought, of one's argument, and philosophy is auto-position par excellence (the coherence of a self-identical argument), then one must continually invent new ways of arguing that no longer appear either as philosophical or even as coherent. There must be auto-mutation or self-destruction built in. By pushing this idea to its practicable limit, Laruelle produces the strange vision of a non-philosophical "philosophy." Hence, his approach must be seen as performative *all the time.* In fact, this is its primary constraint:

> In non-philosophy, thought in act is not distinct, in its essence at least, from its effects or its speech because, if it is relatively free regarding its cause, this is its cause as imprinted with a radical performativity, unlike philosophy which only reaches this under the form of a circle, or more or less a circle, or in another case some sort of unconscious which destroys it. Non-philosophy is constrained—materials aside—to do what it says and say what it does.[49]

This "constraint," according to Laruelle, is "transcendental" in nature, a "to-do-in-saying, to-say-in-doing . . . the only instance whose usage speaks itself through this identity without fault." However, notwithstanding the mutation that Laruelle will also render to the concept of the "transcendental" itself (which we will chart in chapter 1), the concept of the performative will mutate in his hands too, taking it away from its linguistic and active origins ("speech acts") and attaching it to the Real as a form of "passive performativity."[50] All of these ideas will need to be addressed again later.

MATERIAL THINKING

This emphasis on philosophy and thought as material is part and parcel of non-philosophy's formal innovation—it approaches thought, "rigorously," "consistently," as material, as a thing, immanent to the Real. Crucially, though, non-philosophy operates without any commitments to a *philosophical materialism* that would only infect its practice with various ideas *about* matter—definitions of what is truly matter, hierarchies of what true matter explains, causes, determines, and so on. Instead, using models directly from physics, biology, or art, Laruelle performs "a quasi-physics of philosophy"—the "quasi-" denoting a nonpositivist, nonreductive approach that takes the model of thought from one domain (like non-Euclidean geometry, as we saw) to shed light on another. Laruelle's choice of models appears somewhat arbitrary and is indeed contingent on his own biography. What counts in their usage is not any supposedly true picture of "what there is" offered by one or the other but the style of thinking that each practices. This is not a project in "naturalizing philosophy" out of existence: Laruelle is far from being a "post-Quinean" who would replace "folk-philosophy" with the discourses of (one or other) "hard science."[51] Philosophy's thoughts are retained in all their molar specificity but are shorn of their ambition (to explain everything) to become bodily parts: there is a "body or a thickness of philosophy" that needs to be acknowledged.[52]

    As a consequence, the "materiality" of philosophy is not to be understood according to standard materialist approaches, the techno-scientisms of computationalism, biologism, or physicalism, for example. What Laruelle

says of photography in *The Concept of Non-Photography* is no less true of philosophy qua matter for non-philosophy. His approach, he writes, is

> a materiality without materialist *thesis* since every thesis is already given in it, in its turn, as "flat," just like any other singularity whatsoever. Far from giving back perception, history or actuality, etc., in a weakened form, photography gives for the first time a *field of infinite materialities* which the photographer is immediately "plugged into." This field remains beyond the grasp of any external (philosophical, semiological, analytic, artistic, etc.) technology.[53]

It is a "field of infinite materialities"—not one or other domains (neuroscience *or* physics *or* mathematics) *to* which everything can be reduced, and *through* which philosophy can thereafter explain everything by proxy of it becoming *the* philosophy "of neuroscience," "of physics," "of mathematics," or of whatever else. Philosophical materialism remains especially hubristic and hypocritical in this regard: though it claims to *follow* a scientific reduction of the Real practiced vicariously through the physicists or mathematicians who offer "theories of everything," what counts is *its lead* in appointing the favored science (physics today, mathematics tomorrow) for wholly philosophical reasons of its own making. It is the King-maker who is truly the King (like the so-called masochist who has all the power). Once again, philosophy does not do what it says.

Significantly, philosophy must leave the origins of its godlike powers of representation a mystery, or palm it onto a theory of "reference," of statements and their relations (which has a plethora of its own idiosyncratic mysteries). As Laruelle puts it in *Principe de minorité,*

> what renders a statement "material"—or rather "real"—and not merely materialist, can be demonstrated neither in terms of its objects, nor its meaning or signification, nor by its *materiality* as statement, that differential materiality or relatively indivisible and *continuous* distance *relating* it to other statements. As far as a statement is concerned, at least insofar as it is grasped in its essence, to be "materialist" is never a question of the manner in which it relates to other statements, but consists rather in its refusing to enter into a relation, a becoming or mediating tendency,

refusing to allow itself to be inscribed within the strategy of a reciproc-
ity, the economy of a community, into the trade between "positions,"
"forces," or "powers."[54]

Philosophy (materialist or otherwise) orchestrates an entire network of
statements (about science and philosophy), conferring legitimacy on some,
illegitimacy on others. But its own power to confer high and low grades
must remain outside of the network as a transcendent. By contrast, Laru-
elle's postulate or "posture" (as we will explain later) could be described as
an non-relational, *auto-affective* hypothesis, that is, a conjecture that all
thought, *including itself,* is material. *Think this,* it says: thought is a thing,
the Real *is* "the *thing* (of) thought, its 'in-itself.'"[55] If we take *this* thought
seriously (i.e., as consistently as possible), it follows that it too is a material
thing (though *not* because it might be composed from neurons, atoms,
or sets). The thought implicates itself—hence the "auto"—but it sidesteps
a possible response from philosophy that this consistency is grounded
upon metalevel reflection, so proving that non-philosophy is actually
only "more philosophy." It avoids this trap because its explicitly posits
itself as performative rather than representational—it is not saying how
things really stand. As such, non-philosophy is *not* some form of higher-
order reflection, representation (of philosophy), or metaphilosophy.[56]
Non-philosophy as a practice never appeals to the "meta-," understood
as a transcendent form behind material practice. And that is also why
non-philosophy is always a *use* of philosophy.[57]

    That said, non-philosophy *can* look very similar to philosophy on
account of an apparent "ventriloquism" of approach that utilizes the
discourse of philosophy in its own speech acts. It does indeed appear to
some as simply "more philosophy," be it in the adopted shape of Kantian,
Derridean, Deleuzian, or even Badiouian thought. This impression, ac-
cording to Laruelle, is itself the product of philosophical narcissism,
though, for philosophy cannot see anything other than itself in other
forms of thought. Hence, all of the non-philosophical strategies to *resist*
being taken as one more account of the Real (its avowed performativity
and materiality) *will themselves* be taken up by philosophy as only another
set of representations, and so as simply another philosophy (and, indeed, a
not very original one at that). Laruelle's posture, however, remains one that

endeavors to see all thought—*including its own*—as part of the Real rather than a picture of it. The posture alone is new, following the hypothesis, "what happens if thought is not a representation but a thing," with radical *self*-consistency. But, of course, nothing of logical necessity follows from this: one does not *have* to see non-philosophy as performative (nobody *has* to do anything of necessity). *This* description of Laruelle, too, is only an invitation or suggestion to adopt a similar posture.

THE STRUCTURE OF DECISION AND POSTURAL MUTATION

Philosophy, by contrast, is all about necessity: "In History—the World and 'the facts'—one finds a type of decision that is called necessary and more than necessary: it is called 'unavoidable' and christens itself 'philosophy.'"[58] Perhaps the most implausible aspect of Laruelle's approach to philosophical thought is also the most controversial trait of his depiction of philosophy, namely, this notion of "decision."[59] Though he admits that the term "Philosophy" *(la philosophie)* is a "highly ambiguous expression, as often multiple as it is one," and even that its history "bears witness to several ways of philosophizing," Laruelle still retains "the structure of Decision" as the one "invariant" of every philosophy.[60] Decision is philosophy's lowest common denominator, so to speak. Each and every philosophy involves a decision—specifically, *to explain or represent the Real in one exclusive way—its own.* Such a "sweeping statement," as Laruelle scholar Anthony Paul Smith recognizes, begs the question as to its universal applicability. Surely Laruelle homogenizes philosophy too much? Nonetheless, Smith defends this idea of decision on a number of grounds:

> It seems plausible since Laruelle has traced it within European philosophy's most radical philosophers (Spinoza, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, Deleuze, Michel Henry, and Badiou, among others). Others who have taken up the task of non-philosophy have also located this structure in the thought of phenomenologists such as Husserl, Levinas, and Marion; in the philosophically influenced sociology of Pierre Bourdieu; in the antiphilosophies of Blanchot and Lacan; and stretching from the ancient philosophy of Plato to contemporary standard approaches to epistemology and aesthetics.[61]

Still, despite these corroborative remarks, one can imagine how most will only see this as a set of assertions rather than as evidence. Indeed, the continued resistance from many others to the structure of decision may well be due to the associated connotations of it apparently being an *intellectual* act: decision here would seem individualistic, voluntary, and conscious. Yet confirmation of the presence of such features in all philosophical thought is rare, to say the least. Additionally, a methodological individualism like this, if such be the case in non-philosophy, would itself be a very large presupposition on Laruelle's part. It could easily be countered by philosophies positing alternative sources for their position: radical encounter with the outside, fundamental existential choice, revelation, wonder, common sense, prayer, a gift . . . Moreover, from the perspective of the newcomer to non-philosophy, Laruelle's approach would then appear to be just one more position in a "game of positions," slugging it out with the other philosophies (and on a terrain of *their* making to boot). So much for a significantly new *kind* of thought.

Now, of course, there is more to decision than this depiction, something indeed more physical and even (as we will argue) "animal" that thereby retains a radicality otherwise lost when it is understood too intellectually and too anthropocentrically. For a start, decision does not itself *have* a metaphysical essence (as free, say, or conscious), for *it is precisely* the invariant position that "hallucinates" such essences in the Real. In the most basic terms, to "decide" is simply to cut oneself off from the Real, to make a cut—*decaedere* (*de-* "off" + *caedere* "cut"). To cut off, to de-cide. At second glance, then, there is in fact something quite spatial, even behavioral, about this game of positions. And, *qua* position, to decide also has something to do with "withdrawal." As Laruelle put it in an interview: "to philosophise on X is to withdraw from X; to take an essential distance from the term for which we will posit other terms."[62] Philosophy, understood as decisionistic *in this manner,* then, is a withdrawal, a distancing, a cutoff. It is this "distance" that allows it its sense of authority—to capture, to transcend, to represent things "objectively," "essentially," "fundamentally" (or with greatest intelligence, wisdom, logic, clarity, etc.). Regardless of whether the language incorporates any actual imagery of separation (detachment, spacing, horizontality, distanciation, spatialization, deterritorialization, or even logical space, the space of

reasons, etc.), when thought enters the phase-state of philosophy, it enters the position of distance and withdrawal.

This distance is also the "sufficiency of philosophy," which is entirely in philosophy's own "mind," or rather in its "auto-position." This sense of entitlement is a delusion because philosophy, like any other thought, is *necessarily insufficient,* a mere part. Philosophy is, however, the part that has wandered furthest and even takes its errancy as the power to see the Real with absolute clarity. What it sees is a hallucination, though: "I call *hallucinating* . . . every thought or vision which believes to see the real when it only sees the all; which believes to see the One when it sees Being. It is a hallucinating of the type: I think, therefore I am."[63] The hallucination itself, however, is a product of this "Distance," which, *because everything is immanent to the Real,* should also be understood as a product of the Real. Distance is a type of auto-exile from the Real by the Real that generates the duality of a philosophy *and* the Real: "the One or the Real is the cause and the object of the illusion," a "hallucination" that bases itself on a "unitary projection of the One and which, from the start, falls outside of that as the World itself."[64]

These initial remarks on distance, withdrawal, and position (which we will extend in chapter 3) also let us glimpse a further possibility: that of a *conversion* of withdrawal. Here is why. Laruelle's message for philosophy is, prima facie, simple: not everything is "philosophisable."[65] As soon as we gloss this message a little further, however, things become more nuanced: not everything is thinkable by *standard* philosophy. Or, even further, what counts as philosophy must mutate for some things to be philosophizable at all. If philosophy is to acknowledge the specific form of thinking indigenous to film, for instance, then it must mutate into "film-philosophy," that is, a new kind of audiovisual philosophy. Otherwise, cinematic thinking will be misunderstood as a covert form of extant, written philosophy (hidden somewhere within the textual components of some film dialogue and plot). The mutation of philosophy reflects a change in emphasis from the Real (of film) fitting the needs of philosophy to philosophy fitting the Real. We no longer have the concept of an "unconditioned" thought (philosophy) that limits phenomena (its "objects") but rather "the unconditional phenomenal itself determining and limiting thought." Or, again, whereas the philosopher wants to "fold the real onto his thought,"

non-philosophy "constrains us to do the opposite: fold our thought onto the real by modifying the concept in accordance with it."[66] So, where philosophy thinks of itself as self-sufficient, sui generis, immaterial, and transcendent, non-philosophy sees it as a dependent, material, immanent exile of the Real. *And this difference in emphasis can be translated into a change or conversion of direction.* According to Laruelle, its withdrawn position requires redirection: thought that *was* directed from philosophy to the Real, *when newly viewed non-philosophically,* inverts itself to being directed from the Real to philosophy. And it really is a change in direction or orientation: as Laruelle puts it himself, "my problem is that of the re-orientation of thought."[67] We might even say that the mutation reorients thought-*as-an-orientation*. However, in its claim to be a "radical inversion" of philosophy's relationship with the Real, non-philosophy aspires to more than merely *reversing* the relationship between the two, for that would leave the door open to an eventual counterreversal. Non-philosophy aims to *invert* the relationship fundamentally, with no subsequent volte-face.[68]

This reorientation or radical inversion is also the mutation that expands thought, and precisely because the mutation is ultimately determined by the Real rather than by a decision (philosophy). This is a "postural mutation," a change of vector or directionality that issues from the One, or, to be exact, from a "vision-in-One" and a democracy *in* thought (as we will explain further).[69] The philosophical decision, then, can be seen as either a determining, intellectual (disembodied) position or, through reorientation, as a bodily "posture" determined by the Real. As *Anti-Badiou* relates, the Real, or One, "is that of a posture, and is given as a lived-without-life or is felt through and through in the image where, however, it is never projected, as in a first image that would precede it."[70] This still fairly subtle idea deserves an extended quotation from Laruelle's *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*:

> The One is a postural rather than decisional and positional identity. Here one must distinguish between the postural and the positional. The postural designates a holding not of self, but *in* self, the *how* this holding (is) held insofar as it has essentially never reposed except in itself. Posture is more subjective, corporeal and undivided than position; more internal, spontaneous and naive than will and decision. Posture is too immanent and

completed, it indivisibly involves the individual's entire being too much to reinstate a decision or make it equal to a "position," which is always relative to another position, always alienable and revocable, always to be taken up and taken back up. Hence one can describe the mode of thinking that "corresponds" with the One as nothing-but-One, as a postural and subjective experience of thought from the outset freed from the constraints of the World, from the codes of philosophy, from the norms of transcendent exteriority, from the rules of speculative figuration or the speculative imagination. In other words, it is necessary to distinguish the *figurative,* but also the *figural, relational* and *positional,* from the *postural,* but as the necessary kernel of reality that precedes them absolutely and instead constrains them to be distinguished from it as mediated by unreality.[71]

Rather than "will and decision" being understood through methodological individualism, "posture," for Laruelle, connotes something "more subjective, corporeal and undivided"—terms that are close approximates to immanence, as he understands it. He also puts it as follows in *En tant qu'un*: "postural 'mutations' [are] more profound still than changes of philosophy or of 'positions.'"[72] Just as position is not the same as posture, so mutation must be seen as more than simply change.

These key concepts of "posture," "position," and "mutation" will be analyzed fully in chapters 3 and 4, respectively. The first of these will need our special attention. There have only been a few discussions of posture within recent philosophical literature. John Schumacher's *Human Posture: The Nature of Inquiry* is a pertinent example, given that it describes how "*posture is the way a thing makes a place in the world,*" or how "to be in the world *is* to have a posture."[73] His study, which is primarily phenomenological, concentrates on the human, however, and especially the human face; though even here his description of the face as an orientation—a *facing*—is not without connection with Laruelle's more abstract concepts of withdrawal and distance:

> A human face, early or modern, introduces a kind of loosening from the world, making possible the reference of that face's orientation in the world to that face itself. . . . A modern human face is not only loosened from the world, but also, so it is said, broken apart from the world.[74]

Alternatively, Annette Baier's *Postures of the Mind*—despite its rather empiricist approach to "Mind and Morals"—actually comes closer to the abstracted, nonpsychological nature of Laruelle's enquiry. Taking her cue from a line in John Locke's *Essay,* she writes that

> Locke, realizing that at least some words did not name simple or complex ideas which themselves named atomic or molecular things, added a brief chapter on "particles" to Book Three of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* and gave these little non-names such as *but* the job of indicating not ideas but "the actions of the mind relating to those ideas," and "the several postures of the mind in discoursing." . . . The following essays in the philosophy of mind and in ethics do try to direct attention away from the overcultivated field of single beliefs, intentions, and intentional actions to the individual abilities, social powers, continuing policies and purposes, virtues and vices they exhibit. A distrust of supposedly discrete events and entities, of Lockean nameables, is one pervasive theme. . . . I have tried to look at streams of developing and decaying beliefs and intentions, at changes of mind as well as decisions and realizations, and at assessment not just of single actions but of lives and of character, at moral style of life.[75]

Her nonintentionalist approach to beliefs—their formation, reformation, and decay—does not go much further into the concept of posture than this, but her one example of a Lockean posture of the mind, the nonname of "but," is salient, for as Locke writes, "All animals have sense, but a dog is an animal." Baier describes herself as a contrarian, *and so a philosopher,* which would point to the importance of "but" within philosophical postures, postures that Laruelle would more readily call "positions." To understand this "but" (and all its avatars in contradiction, *agonistics,* the dialectic, negation, polemic, etc.) in terms of behavior and even animality (nonhuman postures) will be one tack in our attempt to comprehend decision as positional (withdrawal, distance, separation). "But" we are not trying to form a genealogy, foundation, or truth of posture on Laruelle's behalf here. It is the *mutation* (or nonfoundation) of posture, its ongoing performativity, that distinguishes it from philosophical position. Keeping this in mind will help us to understand the meaning of "decision"

all the more, taking it further way from transcendent representation and closer to an immanent, physical, behavioral, and even nonhuman rendering.

We will also see how non-philosophy takes the decisional structure of philosophies and, using both art and science, clones or reperforms it such that, instead of a thought representing the Real in being cut off from it, we have a thought that performs the Real as a postural part of it. Inch by inch, we will see Laruelle's account of philosophy and decision shift from a seemingly personalized and judgmental "critique" closer to an impersonal descriptive science. To get us started, then, we need to know a little more about what Laruelle means by "science."

HYPOTHESES OF REAL SCIENCE

The first thing to understand about non-philosophy's self-image as a "science" (Laruelle often uses this title as an alternative name) is how *unscientistic* it is. It works through "axioms," "hypotheses," and "thought experiments," but they are not employed as a means, however indirect, to verify a thought. Rather, they are used to generate an experiment—and so *experience—in thinking.* Scientific verification, as one more authority, does not interest Laruelle: beyond any "truth" that has been "verified, validated," there is an "axiomatic form" of "the true" that allows "the transformation of the discourse of representation."[76] It is this axiomatic form (which can also be rendered as "posture") that really counts:

> even as a simple hypothesis, it [non-philosophy] must—this is our second demand—contribute to transforming the reality of philosophy and science, rather than just having knowledge of it. In effect, the hypothesis of non-philosophy can neither be empirically justified nor invalidated through comparison to experience; it must at least also transform experience.[77]

Hence, any appearance of scientism in Laruelle's work (as might be gleaned from its continual references to both general science and biology, geometry, and physics) is based on a false inference that being scientific, for him, is a form of authorization, of proof, of enlightenment. Yet Laruelle

never makes claims that even come close to biologism, mathematicism, or physicalism. All knowledges are equal, or "flat," vis-à-vis their discoveries:

> If philosophy has not been able to explore the nature and extent of flat thoughts, let us change our general hypothesis and horizon: science, a new science perhaps, shall be the guiding thread . . . on condition that we globally re-evaluate and reveal the "thinking" at work in science.[78]

Indeed, rather than enlightenment, Laruelle is more interested in our experience of the *unproven,* the foreclosure of all thought, equally, before the Real. His is a "black universe," where everything is equally dark, and equalized by the dark.[79] All the same, Laruelle is not a proponent of an anti- or counter-Enlightenment either. This equality of color is actually scientific, but scientific in neither a heliocentric (Kantian) *nor* Ptolemaic orientation. There is no absolute sun, no center in science:

> If there is a real task of thought, it is instead in what is no longer completely a reversal and definitely not a Copernican reversal. To put science at the centre—and philosophy at the periphery? Not quite, for when science is really "at the centre," there is no longer centre or periphery. Nothing, not even philosophy, turns around it.[80]

Science decenters—it is an *activity* rather than a body of knowledge, a posture that continually unearths the foundations of authoritarian knowledge. Rather than one more variant of the Copernican revolution, Laruelle's project, he writes, is "to introduce into philosophy a *Lobachevskian and Riemannian mutation.*" This is a non-Euclidean extension of thought beyond the classical, Greek experience of *identity,* as well as the Jewish countermovement of *difference,* which is really only a reversal rather than a genuine inversion.[81] Such mutations are in fact the hallmark of *both* "the sciences and the arts—above all painting and music"—in the twentieth century, and yet they have bypassed philosophy for all this period, which has remained mostly stuck in the sterile to-and-fro of the Greco-Judiac dyad (identity and difference): "this is why non-philosophy will discover in these scientific and artistic mutations if not its *raison d'être,* then at least its strongest encouragement."[82] Science *and* art, as experimental, mutational thoughts, can redeem philosophy from its stagnant authoritarianism:

How do we equalize philosophy and science, philosophy and art, philosophy and ethics outside of every hierarchy and its last avatar (anarchist and nihilist leveling)? . . . This is to universalize them within the common layer of an a priori of a new style, rendering regional knowings more universal than they spontaneously are, or rendering them co-extensive with philosophy; and rendering philosophy more empirical than it now is.[83]

Indeed, this study, using a cinematic model of thought, is one attempt at such a mutation, a "regional knowledge" made "co-extensive with philosophy" while also "rendering philosophy more empirical."

That said, such experimentalism must not be subsumed within a philosophical paradigm of *epistemology* either: these hypotheses are *posed as* Real. We might say that axioms and hypotheses are real "postures," poses of the Real, but not according to any philosophical "position" of realism. As Laruelle admits in a recent interview:

I look for the Real without being a realist, for materiality without being a materialist, the physical nature of generic man without naturalism. All of these philosophical positions want to obliterate the Real through reality; materiality through materialism; physical nature by naturalism.[84]

In contrast to the inveterate idealism of philosophy (which refracts the Real through its own ideas, be they metaphysical, critical, or even materialist), non-philosophy attempts to be "ultra-realist," though without any relation to philosophical realism. "Realism" remains a *position*—one more definition of the Real.[85] The language of non-philosophy—the "transcendental," "a priori," "thought," even the "Real"—is harvested from philosophical definitions, of course, but it is then reoriented *as* Real materials rather than ideas *about* the Real. The Real itself is left undefined, indifferent, nonrelational—though these negatives here are not dialectical (and so reversible) on account of a positive identity that allows each philosophical position an equal standing. Here real identity and multiplicity are no longer mutually exclusive. The "One" is not a numeral.[86] Moreover, the "foreclosure" of the Real to philosophical capture and definition does not mean it is ineffable but that it is multiply, equally, sayable. As Anthony Paul Smith and Nicola Rubczak phrase it: "the Real cannot be captured by philosophy, but instead authorizes the equivalency of all philosophies,

all knowings, as relative before the Real. Or, in other words, the Real is not ineffable, but infinitely effable."[87]

One of the myriad ways through which the Real appears to be "known," however, does have a special status for Laruelle—the way through what he often simply calls "Man" or "man-in-person": "Man," Laruelle writes, "is precisely the Real foreclosed to philosophy"; or "I say that Man is the Real, that we are the Real."[88] However, this Man is not an object of knowledge, at least not of the sort acquired through a philosophical position. As we will see, it is a Real identity.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND EXTENDED THINKING

Despite all of its protestations to the contrary, to many readers non-philosophy still seems idealist, and hence philosophical, in virtue of this nomination of the Real as "Man" or "human" (Laruelle uses each term interchangeably with the other). As Ray Brassier writes, the "privileging of the nomenclature 'man' to designate the real cannot but re-phenomenologize and re-substantialize its radical in-consistency."[89] Ian James echoes Brassier's point and also questions Laruelle's apparent contradiction in humanizing the Real while also declaring not to define it.[90] So what exactly is Laruelle doing with such a humanization? Smith and Rubczak, conversely, offer a positive interpretation of the issue:

> what we find here is not typical philosophical humanism, represented in everyday culture as a privileging of some claimed universal human being that is in reality taken as a hetero-normative, white, healthy male. But instead the question of the human is open in non-philosophy, even as the human or what he comes to call Human-in-person is also the name of the Real. It is not the Real that is impersonal, but rather the Real is foreclosed to philosophy, represented not in some anti-humanist hatred or indifference towards human beings, but in the maxim that, "Philosophy was made for man, not man for philosophy."[91]

Indeed, this apparent anthropomorphism of the Real actually lies at the heart of non-philosophical research (and therefore this study). It is not only central on account of its endeavor to reorient thought—from going

from philosophy to the Real to going from the Real to philosophy—but also on account of the maxim that Smith and Rubczak refer to earlier, which actually accompanies this shift. We should note that, while individual philosophies are not *epistemically* judged by Laruelle (they are rendered positional and equal), philosophy *as a structure of decision* is *ethically* judged on account of its deleterious effects on the human. Hence, the non-philosophical maxim is that philosophy should be made for the human rather than (as is the case in standard philosophical thought) that the human be made for philosophy: "we must change hypothesis and even paradigm: break up the mixtures, found philosophy on man rather than the inverse."[92] Man has been described, defined, categorized, quantified, and normalized by philosophy since its beginning, and it is the task of non-philosophy to invert this mediation of the human through philosophy.

This double reidentification of both the human and the Real over philosophy carries with it this new identity of the Real with the human. But with that we also have two opposed "subspecies" of anthropomorphism: alongside the idealizations of man through philosophy (the human modeled on philosophical anthropology—what we will call "philosomorphism" in chapter 4), there is the Laruellean inversion that realizes man through non-philosophy. This realization (or de-idealization) does not *define* man, however, but simply subtracts two and a half millennia of philosophical mediation (exploitation, harassment, racism, sexism, inequalities of all kinds) from the image of the human. Doing so, as we will see, leads to peculiar results, not least that what man is, is rendered wholly indefinite. Man also becomes, in a specifically Laruellean sense, nonhuman and utopian.

Here, then, anthropomorphism—the transformation of animals and inanimate objects into an image of the human—is reframed by this new, more radical form that equates the human and the Real. This rearticulation is not without connection with traditional analyses of anthropomorphism, though, as we can see in what Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman say here:

> "anthropomorphism" is the word used to describe the belief that animals are essentially like humans, and it is usually applied as a term of reproach, both intellectual and moral. Originally, the word referred to the attribution of human form to gods, forbidden by several religions as blasphemous.

Something of the religious taboo still clings to secular, modern instances of anthropomorphism, even if it is animals rather than divinities that are being humanized.[93]

What religion forbids the "heresy" of non-philosophy performs. In this secular, *affirmative* anthropomorphism, however, identifying the human with the Real allows the human image to be multiplied as a consequence (without any definition, nor synthesis of definitions). *Anthropos* is altered too, morphed, not on account of philosophical difference (Deleuzian becoming, Derridean deconstruction, Lévinasian alterity), but because, as Real, man is indifferent to any one image. "We" do not *know* what the human is because we *are* already human *before* philosophy. Answering, or not answering, the question of who "we" are, then, is itself a problem for non-philosophy. As Rocco Gangle asks, "are these two terms *human* and *philosophy* co-penetrating and reciprocally determined or are they definitively separate?"[94] Laruelle thinks of this question as follows, here using the more abstract nomination "individual":

Individuals are not philosophisable nor liable to an All-political treatment; they are no longer subjects; they have no predicate and are thus politically indefinable and undecidable. We "define" them indirectly through axioms which decide for individuals since political philosophy is incapable of doing so. With respect to philosophy, emancipation begins with a thought free of every predicate; with those individuals who are nothing other than real, and not formal, axioms. These are subjects-without-predicates, individuals without qualities or properties, which we call "Men-in-person."[95]

These subjects-without-predicates might put us in mind of Sartrean humanism: the subject as a predicateless nothing, a *poursoi* with no essence, only existence. Yet even attaching nothing to the individual is already too philosophical for Laruelle: any definite decision always bears potentially catastrophic consequences for humans.

The question of the human, then, is central to Laruelle's new style of thought and vital to its reorientation, its new posture. The non-philosophical human, as we will argue throughout this work, is some-

thing nonanthropological, perhaps even nonhuman. Equating the Real with Man is itself a gesture in this direction, an anthropomorphic posture that leaves both the Real and the human indefinite. And so we intend to demonstrate that such humanization is, in fact, a radical anthropomorphism, that is, a reorientation of *both* what the human and the Real entail, along with what counts as human thought and human philosophy, each of these receiving a nonstandard treatment. And with that, therefore, just as the *non-* of *non-philosophy* is not a negation but a broadening of our vision of philosophy, so a Laruellean nonhuman-ism is not a negation of "man" (posthumanism, antihumanism) but an expansive mutation—an alter-humanism or pluri-humanism that reverses the narrowing action of philosophy that always limits the human according to a single model.

One component of this posture of expansive "indefinition" and mutation involves reconfiguring what we mean by *Homo sapiens* as the thinking, "wise" animal. Doubtless *philosophia,* the love of wisdom, would be happy to aid us in this and all other matters involving the classification of "Man," which is presumably one reason why Laruelle describes the "philosopher," sarcastically, of course, as "the human par excellence in speaking, knowing, acting."[96] The contrast, by implication, is with the imperfect, unwise animal, that is, with the non-philosophical individual (at least as seen from the philosophical vantage point). This is precisely why Laruelle does not ask for philosophy's help. Quite the contrary: dephilosophizing the human is what is needed most.

This duality of apparent wisdom and ignorance affords us a new, starker formulation of Laruelle's project—"how to elaborate an outside-philosophy thought?"[97] At one still recognizably human and even philosophical level, the elaboration of such an "outsider thought," or *philosophie brute,* requires a kind of unlearning:

> the Real is an *unlearned knowledge,* rather than a "learned ignorance." Unlearned means that it is neither an expert knowledge nor a taught knowledge. It is non-taught knowledge, it gives its unilateral identity to a subject.[98]

Admittedly, the commendation of *any* form of ignorance (even as a Keatsian "negative capability" or a stupidity) can strike some as churlish

and even duplicitous.[99] Certainly Laruelle finds Deleuze's own theory of stupidity (in *Difference and Repetition*) a rather disingenuous move. Despite its being offered in place of the standard image of error in representationalist philosophy,

> we find here once again, under the mitigated form of an unlimited becoming, the distinction between man and philosopher, their hierarchy in spite of all: the philosopher who constructs the system and the idiot whom he talks about and who doubtless stumbles through the windings of the system do not adequately coincide. Once again the philosopher does not really want idiocy, he limits it.[100]

Merely playing the idiot will not suffice: if there is anything like a "transcendental idiot" who is not merely a philosopher's stooge, then he, she, or it will exist in a much more postural, bodily manner. Indeed, at another level, non-philosophical "unlearning" involves something more radical again, the idea (to be explored further) that

> thought is not the intrinsic property of humans that must serve to define their essence, an essence that would then indeed be "local"; it is a universal milieu. If we tend now to emphasise animality, bringing it within the sphere of culture, then why not emphasise the most elevated humanity, so as to bring it into the universe; and, through a paradoxical example, why not reexamine its links with animality, of which it will then be a matter of knowing whether it, also, is universal?[101]

With respect to the human and this animality, Laruelle goes so far as to say that "thought is not necessary—and perhaps even foreign—to the Ego itself which can be *given* without thought."[102] That is why non-philosophy is also nonhuman.

A FILM OF PHILOSOPHY: *THE FIVE OBSTRUCTIONS*

To introduce non-philosophy in the spirit of consistency, we have made it our goal to think about it *non-philosophically.* If we are going to have any chance of success in this, we will have to acknowledge two things: first, the

importance of extraphilosophical materials as models for non-philosophy's modes of thought—what Laruelle describes as "techniques of creation that would be pictorial, poetic, musical, architectural, informational, etc."— even though we know that what counts as "extraphilosophical" is itself as mutable as philosophy, being determined differently within each "game of positions"; second, the constant threat of reducing non-philosophy to a set of tenets understood through extant forms of philosophical explanation.[103] Indeed, in respect to this last item, Rocco Gangle has pointed out that introducing non-philosophy is particularly challenging given that there is "a distinctive 'pedagogical' or 'initiatory' problem built into the very fabric of non-philosophy."[104] Likewise, Taylor Adkins openly admits that any "proper" introduction to Laruelle "*is an illusion.*"[105] The slow reception of Laruelle's work thus far has, no doubt, some connection to this problem of "initiation," that is, the difficulty of explaining its highly unorthodox approach. As Andrew Reszitnyk also bemoans:

> Laruelle and his commentators—myself included—often encounter great difficulty when writing about non-philosophy. The injunction to generate self-conscious fictions, as opposed to treatises that pretend to some privileged view of reality, demands that we alter not only *what* we write, but also and especially *how* we write. . . . However, it must be acknowledged that the results of this attempt are decidedly mixed. Laruelle often writes as though he comes from another world, replete with its own foreign and radically abstract standards of truth, clarity, and beauty.[106]

In fact, in an interview for a volume on art and non-philosophy, Laruelle reflects on the "failure" of his work, partly in terms of both its style and its lack of examples and citations. He explains this absence as follows: "I don't talk about the great metaphysical poets like Donne, Hölderlin, and Mallarmé, who have been the consistent prey of philosophical commentaries; my project is different. I'm not that kind of commentator and perhaps that's why I've failed."[107] The mention of failure is connected to this lack of citations, as he then continues to explain:

> Just as I cite very few other philosophers (except as floating markers in my dream) and never cite myself at all, I do not cite applied work,

much preferring a certain type of paraphrase that is a destruction of commentary. . . . Rightly or wrongly, and I admit that it may be wrongly, if it is necessary to cite an aesthetician, I try to do so in such a way that I use just a strictly circumscribed piece or moment in my work. What I write is a sample, not an example, of what I do when I think. To think is to make, no?[108]

Thinking is making: it is not "of" the Real—its ideal representation—but a material part or sample *from* it. We think "according to" or "alongside" the Real. And if making is a thinking, it is of its *own kind* (rather than an illustration of one philosophical kind).

Such questions of art and failure bring us back to the issue of how one should introduce Laruelle when performative consistency—doing what one says and saying what one does—is so important. How do we assess Laruelle faithfully, that is, without "representing" him? Our response, modeled on Laruelle's own methods, will involve art. In point of fact, when speaking about his more "experimental texts" in another interview, Laruelle recounted his ongoing project to "treat philosophy as a material, and thus also as a materiality—without preoccupying oneself with the aims of philosophy, of its dignity, of its quasi-theological ends, of philosophical virtues, wisdom etc." And he then adds: "what interests me is philosophy as the material for an art, at the limit, an art."[109] Yet, what is true of his "experimental texts" (that aim for art) is also true of all Laruelle's works inasmuch as they partake in this experiment: to demonstrate a new "behavior," "stance," or "posture" as regards what philosophy is—both as a material and how it can be reviewed using art practices, such as photography (as outlined in his *The Concept of Non-Photography* and *Photo-Fiction*) or music.[110] So, in *Anti-Badiou,* for instance, non-philosophy's "initial project" was, he says, to "*serialize the standard tonality of the philosophical scale*—to treat all of its pitches equally, as parameters or variables, so as to make heard a music other than the classical."[111] Elsewhere, he describes such an approach as being "a question of imagining in this way a 'non-informatics' or a 'non-poetry,' etc. and thus of capitalizing on the maximum effects of the type: poetry-fiction, logic-fiction, religion-fiction, etc."[112]

A reorientation of philosophy through art-material, then, can be seen in Laruelle's call for a "non-standard aesthetics," which is described as

"an 'installation' made up of multiple thought materials which are made at the edge of art and philosophy."[113] In this connection, he also writes that he would

> like to use philosophy as a material (as one would use space or color, as a materiality) for an art that would be of a piece with conceptual thought without making a new aesthetic or a new philosophy. The ambition of creating a new genre is the deepest consistent core of all my undertakings.[114]

And so, pausing at this point of convergence between non-philosophy and art, we are emboldened to take an extraphilosophical, indirect or *tangential* approach. This will use a visual art form (cinema) to perform a *non-philosophical* introduction. If what Laruelle says is true, namely, that "the model of art and of its liberty of material is something that encouraged me in non-philosophy," then such an approach may work well for us too.[115]

Indeed, in my previous work, *Philosophy and the Moving Image: Refractions of Reality* (a study of different philosophies of cinema), I began to adopt the non-philosophical posture by showing how to understand theories of film as material parts of the Real of film (i.e., as immanent to it).[116] Each theory, qua part, was related to film mereologically rather than in epistemic terms of right (absolutism) or wrong (traditional relativism). In other words, I argued that if one materializes theory itself, then there is no point in looking for one transcendent discourse that will somehow have a privileged access to film (such as cognitive neuroscience, Lacanian psychoanalysis, or Deleuzian ontology). Each discourse is both selective and circular (as regards the properties of film that make it an "art"). Materializing theory in this fashion shows each theory to be only a part and, by that, democratically opens up each part to every other part within the Real of film.

Nonetheless, the exegetical form of that text still, perhaps, resembled the *written* Laruellean form too closely such that it might have been taken as an application of his "theory" in a transcendent manner. To develop a non-philosophical approach directly from the structure of film itself, albeit still of necessity communicated in textual form, would be another step toward a more autonomous film-philosophy that moves even further away

from resembling (standard) philosophy. And so I have decided, with both some justification and some arbitrariness, to utilize one particular film structure, that of Lars von Trier's *De fem bensptend* (*The Five Obstructions,* 2003).[117] This will be an attempt at making a "Film of Philosophy" rather than a "Philosophy of Film."[118] *The Five Obstructions* will be neither an application nor an illustration of (Laruelle's) non-philosophy but *its own non-philosophy,* though one that also operates here as a non-philosophical "introduction," that which "leads to the inside" *(intro-ducere)* of Laruelle. So, *The Five Obstructions,* when it does intervene in each chapter, will come in a series a *tangents* alone, rather than a *direct* address (where "this" equals "that"). Its various appearances will "touch" on matters concerning Laruelle (philosophy, logic, behavior, animality, and performance), of course, but also on its own matter, the film itself, *for itself* (the documentary gaze, editing, acting, animation, and performativity). Here is where we hope the film becomes a posture that thinks *alongside* the other discussions *in the same way* that it and Laruelle's work both think alongside the Real.[119]

The two most salient aspects (for our purposes) of *The Five Obstructions* are, first, its peculiar composition and, second, that it is a collaborative work. *The Five Obstructions* is made up of five remakes of an original work by another filmmaker—Jørgen Leth. Leth (born, like Laruelle, in 1937) is a mentor of von Trier, yet it is he who is under von Trier's command in this picture, having to remake sequences from his own first film (a 1967 short) five times, each with an obstruction or "creative constraint." The constraints are as follows: (1) that it be remade with no shot longer than twelve frames, (2) that it be remade in the most miserable place on earth, (3) that it be remade with *no* constraint (a form of metaobstruction), (4) that it be remade as a cartoon (*the* definition of a nonfilm for both von Trier and Leth), and finally, (5) that von Trier makes the fifth remake, though it must be both credited to and narrated by Leth. Mette Hjort gives us the background to this strange game being played between the two:

> The idea of undertaking a collaborative project was first discussed by von Trier and Leth during the celebratory launch of a new Zentropa subsidiary devoted to nonfiction filmmaking, Zentropa Real. As is the case with many of von Trier's initiatives, the establishing of Zentropa Real in 2000 was marked by manifesto-like statements, in this case not only by von

Trier himself, but also by Leth, Børge Høst, and Toger Seidenfaden. Von Trier's pronouncements introduce a concept of "defocus," the point being to learn how to set aside "simple patterns," "solutions chosen in advance," and routine "techniques" in order somehow to reach and rediscover life that has not, as the director puts it, been "drain[ed of] life."[120]

The Five Obstructions, consequently, is a work whose very form explores a number of issues, but especially those concerning aesthetic creativity and generative constraint. Indeed, many of the obstacles that von Trier puts in front of Leth are designed to thwart "the latter's artistic habits and routines," such as his penchant for the long take.[121] No wonder, then, that Hector Rodriguez has described the film as a "model for creativity as ludic action" and a "work of thinking as problematising."[122]

In our study, we will introduce Laruelle *tangentially* via this same constrained approach, multiplying images of non-philosophy according to a fivefold cinematic structure. Non-philosophy will thus be *forced* through five different entryways—beginning, ironically, with the most perspicuous one, philosophy (chapter 1), before continuing through paraconsistent logic (chapter 2), behaviorism (chapter 3), animality (chapter 4), and performance (chapter 5). The arrangement of these five chapters is to some extent arbitrary, stemming from the structure of a film with passing resemblances to Laruelle's work (as will be seen).[123] A more "direct" motive for our choice of *this* film is that von Trier's obstructions can also be taken as five forms of non-philosophical thought in its own right, tackling questions of (1) *philosophy* understood as the dystopian "worst place" that exploits the Human, (2) *paraconsistent logic* that equalizes all shots into a democratic frame rate (a kind of visual serialism) while also leveling truth and fiction in a Meinongian "jungle" or "*chôra,*" (3) a radical (non-philosophical) *behaviorism* seen in the basic remake without constraint that tries to *clone* or mime an original through gesture and posture alone, (4) the cartoon or animation that *animalizes* the optical real, and (5) the misattributed commentary whereby the author plays the subject in an act of *performative consistency.*

Last, *The Five Obstructions* also suggested itself on account of the subject matter of Leth's original 1967 short film, titled *Det perfekte menneske* (The perfect human). That Leth and his protégé von Trier—both

oftentimes working in various forms of the realist tradition (documentary and Dogme 95 film)—should use this short film, which studies, with much humor, the behavior of the supposedly "perfect human," raised many questions too tantalizing to resist asking. Krista Geneviève Lynes describes the film thus:

> Although the film has been described as having the cool aesthetic of Richard Avedon, it also insinuates other histories: the stark discipline of Eadweard Muybridge or Etienne-Jules Marey, and Alphonse Bertillon's physiological dissections. In it, Claus Nissen—dressed in a tuxedo—and Maiken Algren—in a white dress with radiant silver knee-high boots—perform daily activities in a white spaceless room: shaving, eating, jumping, sleeping, making love, falling, getting dressed and dancing.[124]

In *The Perfect Human,* various human behaviors are observed, often in close-up, dissected from the whole. They are sometimes ordinary and sometimes surreal actions, but all are viewed with the same supposedly transcendent camera's eye, accompanied by the narrator's detached voice:

> Yes, there he is! Who is he? What can he do? What does he want? Why does he move like that? How does he move like that? Look at him. Look at him now. And now, and now. Look at him all the time.
>   How does she lie down? Like that.
>   We're going to see what the perfect human looks like and what it can do.

Yet, as Caroline Bainbridge points out, "the 'obstructions' imposed by von Trier have as their focus an attempt to undo Leth's pursuit of 'masterful' observations of human nature and to dismantle his approach to film-making systematically in the hope of breaking him down."[125] He wishes, von Trier says, to reduce the objective "distance" that Leth (like many documentary makers) places between himself, his camera, and his subject. Nonetheless, despite all of these rules and constraints, it only *seems* that von Trier is in command.[126] As Bainbridge continues: "while, on the surface, von Trier appears to be in control, issuing the obstructions and formulating the challenges, Leth resists his adversary's attempt to re-shape his working methods and ultimately comes off more successfully at the

end of the film."[127] Who is in control, who is the authority in this game of "originals" and remakes, is very much the question that animates the whole documentary.

Indeed, as Lynes observes, von Trier's realist tendencies, from his Dogme 95 period onward, have always eschewed the director's usual "aesthetic" interventions in favor of a search for some kind of *non*-artistic truth (almost in the style of performance artist Allan Kaprow). In support of this, she cites the final proclamation that follows Dogme 95's famous "vow of chastity"—made by von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg:

> I am no longer an artist. I swear to refrain from creating a "work." . . . My supreme goal is to force the truth out of my characters and settings. I swear to do so by all the means available and at the cost of any good taste and any aesthetic considerations. Thus, I make my vow of chastity.[128]

The parallel between this nonartistic, noncinematic filmmaking and Laruelle's non-philosophical aspirations is obvious (perhaps too much so). Von Trier has been described as the "great democratiser of cinema in the digital age," and likewise, we will try to show that cinema in various forms—not just that of the art house—can act on the margins of perception to create a democratizing perception (André Bazin's neorealist notion of the objective, yet *democratic,* perception of the camera lens will aid us in this task later).[129]

It is ironic, then, that von Trier regards *The Perfect Human* as a pinnacle of *artistic* achievement (he says he has viewed it at least twenty times). Indeed, such a position might give both the film and its human subject matter a Platonic perfection and thereby render it classically philosophical (in Laruellean terms). And yet *The Perfect Human* itself clearly subverts both its own form and content with its overt pseudoscientific style, while von Trier subsequently subverts Leth's film (or so it seems) through these multiple clones. In light of this, there may equally be an anti-Platonism at work here. Significantly, Leth's allegedly detached eye, that of the nonparticipatory and "modest" observer, is thwarted in various ways by von Trier. As Lynes asserts, "*The Five Obstructions* perverts this modesty: the ventriloquising relay of modest witnessing involves not only

speaking for but also penetrating the body of the other, a puppet act."[130]

If we, then, in our turn are explicitly trying to ventriloquize Laruelle—through the materials of philosophy, logic, behaviorism, animality, and performance studies—then the added constraint of forcing the structure of one film onto this parallelism acts both to help and to hinder us even more. Yet it is not added gratuitously *in order to* make some kind of "romantic" gesture of failure; on the contrary, it is an attempt to allow a further perversion such that, *all the same,* the parts can *still* "refer" or "correspond" to each other. As promised, this will not be on account of some crude one-to-one correlation, with one side "illustrating" or "applying" the other (specific ideas and specific scenes, images, elements of dialogue, etc.). Nor can it even be in virtue of some isomorphism in structure (which is there, to be sure, because I have both discovered *and* invented it). If the parts do somehow work in parallel, we should refrain from seeing this as the "cleverness" of the author–artist at work (the human philosopher). Instead, and to adopt another pose, the suggestion is that *anything* viewed with sufficient care (the *act, practice*, or *performance* of a vision-in-One) can be thoughtful, can correspond to another part of the One, when each is seen as equally Real. This is because thought itself is not representation (true, false, or relative) but a form of democratic, material participation. Obstructions and constraints should be thought of here as positive rather than as negative or contradictory. We have no intention to romanticize failure.[131]

THE HORROR *OF* THE NONHUMAN

Some philosophers may not like such an interdisciplinary approach. For some, it is quite horrifying to see philosophical concepts ooze, flow, and mutate out of all recognizable shape. Yet, if philosophy begins in *thaumazein* (wonder), as Plato's *Theaetetus* and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* say it does, is it surprising, then, that *thaumazein* can also mean "horror" *(deinon)*? So what of this wonder, and horror? Perhaps (for some) it is the horror that philosophy *itself,* that is, *the* model of thought (allegedly), may not be singular at all but multiple. It is the horror of finding thought among those who have either always been previously regarded as *unthinking* or, if they can think, only do so *monstrously.* Indeed, according to David

Bollert, *deinon* can refer to both a "wonder with respect to a human being and to that which is monstrous in humanity."[132]

One of those monstrosities, we will argue, is cinema, understood as a monstrous, "animal" thought within the "human." Cinema thinks, monstrously. Indeed, as Eric Dufour has shown, cinema began in horror when, in 1895, an inanimate background image came alive and plunged into the foreground *(L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat)*.[133] In what follows, we will pursue this horror of animation even further, seeing a monstrous thought and even a possible animal philosophy at work in film. Again, be it taken as art, entertainment, or both, that cinema might think for itself and in its own audiovisual structure (taken here as shot length, foreground and background structure, recording format, animation, and performance) will be anathema for many philosophers. For these, film can only think by proxy of the human artists who make it, be they philosophers *manqué* or no. It is truly nauseating for them to see philosophy slip away from its textual, human hands into the paws of something inhuman, especially when cinema is understood as an animal mode of perception.

However, if we use a cinematic structure to introduce Laruelle, it is not *in order* to summon up only the allied horror of a certain nonhuman animation and animality within "us" (after all, for some, the response may equally be of wonder and even joy). Rather, this resort to film is ultimately only so that we might "give up deciding on philosophy philosophically," as Laruelle says.[134] To have any chance of avoiding the circularity of philosophical explanation, we must take the various tautological definitions of Philosophy, the Human, and the Real *and use them as materials.* And we attempt this by treating their thought paraconsistently, behaviorally, animalistically, and performatively, in accordance with what Laruelle describes as "*heterophilosophical treatments of philosophy.*"[135] Admittedly, some of what follows may well appear as simply more philosophy (and so not very radical). However, if one looks at this usage *as a practice that performs its theory*—doing what we say and saying what we do—then it promises something quite different: a nonhuman posture for human thought. For *this* is what makes non-philosophy different: it is not another sales pitch for one more philosophical position but the suggestion of a posture that has consequences—through a materiality of thought—for "human" and "animal" alike.

However, in none of this should we be tempted to see Laruelle as an *antihuman* thinker. Indeed, non-philosophy can add much to debates concerning humanism and antihumanism, partially because its approach is uncategorizable for both camps. And here is another point of contact inasmuch as the more recent paradigms of "posthumanism" and "transhumanism" have pushed the field beyond the shibboleths of post-Althusserian antihumanism. Now the question is no longer simply whether one is for or against humanism (and what it putatively stands for) but whether we have ever known what it means to be human, or, further still, whether we have ever been human. Using the resources of hard science, theoretical speculation, and artistic invention, what the word *human* means has been interrogated from every angle. Recent art, technofantasy (both dystopian and utopian), performance work (Stelarc, Orlan, Franko B.), and various artistic experiments have exploded any one definition of the human, pluralizing and/or dissolving its scope. In the field of theory, work by Cary Wolfe, Neil Badmington, Steve Fuller, Rosi Braidotti, Patricia MacCormack, and many others has refracted the image of *anthropos* through philosophy, biopolitics, bioscience, technology, futurism, and, crucially, animal studies.[136] Aside from the "deconstruction" of the human subject as a sociopolitical myth, the "becoming-molecular" of Deleuze and Guattari, or the "bare life" of Agamben's "anthropological machines," the extension of the human in thought and technology (robotics, informatics, and art), also continues apace.

At the most obvious level, Laruelle brings something "metatheoretical" to this discourse. To see why, let us take the problem of circularity as an example. Philosophy is plagued by circles, the broadest one probably being the antinomy of ontological primacy versus epistemological primacy (being vs. knowing): "to (really) know, one must already know *reality*; but to know reality, one must already really *know*." Variations of such antinomies, dilemmas, and even trilemmas abound: Heidegger argues for ontology over logic; Dummet argues for logic over metaphysics; Lévinas "argues" for ethics over both, and so on. And each demonstrates his case perfectly well, so long as one adheres to *his* idea of what a good demonstration does, or does not, look like (can it use examples, or logic, or poetry?). Each of them, in other words, forms a circle. Laruelle's non-philosophical response to these aporias is *not* to step into their demonstration, be it on one side or the other, but to sidestep it altogether through a materializing posture.

This is what he calls, in *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* "the principle of a *real solution* to antinomies."[137] Aporias are realized rather than surrendered to nihilistically or explained away synthetically:

> Theoretically using an antinomy, explaining it in an immanent manner, is to require an identity-without-synthesis, a transcendental identity of a "unilateral duality," capable of explaining it. . . . The true "solution" to philosophical antinomies, under whatever form they present themselves, does not consist in interiorizing them or imploding them, but in making them into a *problem* regarding which we discover a hypothesis that is at once a priori and experimental and designed to explain and critique them in an immanent manner.[138]

With this realizing method to hand, then, we arrive at another basic antinomy, and circularity, for philosophy: that of man and animal. The approach we will adopt takes the various philosophies of the human and the nonhuman as real objects, irrespective of whether they are speciesist, chauvinistic. They are examined to see how they work, how they remain always *too* "philosophical" (with circular arguments as to what thought is, what the human is, what the environment is, what the animal or plant is, and so on). This approach does not aim to displace any of these ideas with new, superior philosophies (of human and nonhuman) but to change *our relevant optical field* (with cinema to aid us). We will attempt to see these philosophies as Real in virtue of their material equality rather than their "representational" superiority (i.e., the claim by any one of them to account for things correctly). The Real of man or of animal is never defined but revisioned (through the materiality of these philosophies) in such a way that allows us to think anew (monstrously or mutationally) "*about*" what it is to have supposedly superior thoughts "*about*" what makes us superior or inferior as a species and as thinkers. And doing this, *doing what we say we do,* is forwarded as one type of bridge between man and animal, a materializing of theory–practice that animalizes thought as well as humanizing animality. As such, it will be one attempt to enact Cary Wolfe's commendation to posthumanist animal theorists not only to study animals at the level of "content, thematics, and the object of knowledge" but also at the level of style and approach:

Just because we direct our attention to the study of nonhuman animals, and even if we do so with the aim of exposing how they have been misunderstood and exploited, that does not mean that we are not continuing to be humanist—and therefore, by definition, anthropocentric. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of humanism—and even more specifically that kind of humanism called liberalism—is its penchant for that kind of pluralism, in which the sphere of attention and consideration (intellectual or ethical) is broadened and extended to previously marginalized groups, but without in the least destabilizing or throwing into radical question the schema of the human who undertakes such pluralization. In that event, pluralism becomes *incorporation,* and the projects of humanism (intellectually) and liberalism (politically) are extended, and indeed extended in a rather classic sort of way.[139]

The pluralism that admits the outsider *without* letting itself mutate as a consequence is no pluralism at all but an imperialism of thought. Here instead, we hope, not only is Laruelle's non-philosophy introduced as something strange and nonclassical but the nonhuman Real is introduced, or reintroduced, into "our" thought as well through a change of orientation within a non-philosophical practice.

OUTLINE OF A STRUCTURE, WITH TANGENTS

When recounting his intellectual biography, Laruelle mentions that his first university thesis—titled "The Absence of Being"—was inspired by Michelangelo Antonioni's film *La Notte* (1961). That the equalizing dark night (as opposed to the enlightening of philosophy) has subsequently been such a theme in his work is a choice morsel for any film-philosopher. That this philosophy thesis involved a renunciation of the greatest systematizer and "Absolute" thinker in philosophical history, G. W. F. Hegel, doubtlessly leaves my motive for making a film of non-philosophy (as a usurpation of philosophical sufficiency) all too transparent.[140] Yet the chosen film, *The Five Obstructions,* remains only *a* model for introducing Laruelle. For what matters most in any recounting, if only to be faithful to or consistent with the Real of Laruelle's non-philosophy, is that there is always a plurality of other accounts possible. There is no "best picture"

of the Real—nor then, to be consistent, any best picture of nonstandard philosophy. As Laruelle writes, "*for whichever phenomenon, one should be able to propose a multiplicity of equivalent interpretations.*"[141] The model offered here, though it has a pentalateral shape, and so has five half-lives or chances of success, remains one model all the same. For Laruelle, by contrast, there are "multiple activities of modeling between philosophy and science, philosophy and art, leading all the way to risking a *modelist explosion.*"[142] In a finite book such as this, however, the reality of such an explosion cannot be accommodated (though the logical consequences of embracing such devices will be explored in chapter 2).

Another option, no doubt, would be to advance an explicitly *philosophical* introduction to non-philosophy—one that either explains its terminology in terms of its other parts or that uses another philosophy's (more familiar) terminology. Yet that merely staves off our ignorance a little longer or palms the explanation whole until it reaches a point where it is preaching to the converted (devotees of Kant, Husserl, etc.). Nonetheless, *both* would be types of explanatory circle, one narrow, the other broad (the radius of the latter being sufficiently large that its circumference is almost imperceptible). The use of illustrative examples (ostensive explanation) might be of help, but they would most likely suffer from the problem of privilege (the transcendental decision that selects one or more texts or concepts over others—one reason, perhaps, for Laruelle's avoidance of examples).

Our chosen route, though, is to approach the object *tangentially,* using myriad analogies and perspectives, not to represent *what the thing is* by averaging them out (or creating "more eyes" in a Nietzschean perspectivism)[143] but to instantiate how it works through the convergent movement between diverse images—always rectifying one image with another. This is not a relativism but a Real instantiation, using many disparate "samples" rather than circularly privileging certain favored examples.[144] As *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy* states, "descriptions must be multiplied and diversified in accordance with the thematics, whether *philosophical or otherwise,* that are available and chosen as material."[145]

Consequently, our own aim to model Laruelle five different times employs images that are only provisional (they too must mutate), so that even the concept of "posture" (the focus of chapter 3 and something of a

leitmotif for this study) does not exhaust non-philosophy. As *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy* goes on to say,

> it will be said that it [the One] is experience or affect, posture, inherence (to) self, lived experience, non-decisional (of) self, etc. But what will be described in the last instance by these multiple languages—none of which should be privileged—will no longer itself be an effect of language (or of metaphor). Hence the necessity of an ongoing rectification of these descriptions. . . . This description is not false in itself, it becomes so *if it is not pursued and rectified incessantly* under the pressure and function of this specific matrix of the One.[146]

Descriptions are only false when they attempt to stand alone for the whole, when they are not rectified "incessantly," when they do not mutate. That we are using a cinematic model to orchestrate these five other models does not give it a metalevel mastery, however: it is invoked partly on account of a set of resemblances and partly as another level of material constraint.

Clearly, Laruelle's non-philosophical project is not only epistemic (the "non-" as expanded explanatory scope): it also has an ethical axis—the "non-" as protest, as resistance to any concentration of power, to any exceptionalism or inequality. Hence, apart from shadowing the structure of the various remakes in *The Five Obstructions,* slightly reordered (von Trier's first and second reproductions being switched), the chapters' sequence is also oriented by issues set along an ethical axis that enquires into the origins of inequality. The first such issue remains closest to home: how and why has philosophy (which belongs to "the human par excellence," the perfect human) gained its authority over all other forms of thought, human and nonhuman?[147] This question then leads to four more like it, expanded in scope, but always concerning inequities and their origins as we travel from the perfect human through mutant paralogic (chapter 2), bodily behavior (chapter 3), and animality (chapter 4), before returning to the figure of the performing philosopher (chapter 5). These matters will not be addressed through a history of ideas, however (to prove one or other position), nor with any other type of empirical research posing as evidence. Rather, it is the answer-form itself that will be expanded, or rerendered, through a set of materializing, cinematizing, postures.

By wishing to introduce democracy into theory, equality into thinking, non-philosophy is also obviously utopian, opposed to the dystopias, or "miserable places," facilitated by philosophy. Its opposition is not "logical," though, but the posture of "a hiatus or collapse, truly a non-place or utopia."[148] Certainly there is also much circularity in utopian thinking. W. H. Auden once remarked that a literary critic should declare his "dream of Eden" because "honesty demands that he describes it to his readers, so that they may be in a position to judge his judgments."[149] So, in answer to the Marxist question "what is to be done?" or the Kantian question "what ought I to do?" (or even "what ought to be?"), we must have *already* decided on what has gone wrong: "what is to be done" begs us to ask, "In the face of *what*?"[150] We must know the reality of our dystopia before we can construct a utopia.

The five chapters of this study enquire into the question of the human, thought, the body, the animal, and art, oriented along an axis of varied *nonhuman* interests (once we understand that term in its expanded, non-philosophical sense). And, in this enquiry, it is a film that gathers these five together, partly through the force of invention and partly through the real equality that always already subsists between materials, when they are each seen from the vision-in-One. As Laura Mulvey writes, the cinematic inhabits a middle ground between the "animated human and the spectral inhuman." It is our project to introduce Laruelle by demonstrating how that middle ground has been segmented into unequal shares—a "partition of the sensible" (to borrow a phrase from Jacques Rancière) that ensures that the nonhuman *departs*.[151] Any utopia that might be inferred from what we will construct here, then, will be both discovered reality and invented fiction. In radical immanence, after all, the fictional also has the Real in view (rather than one more true, but circular, philosophy). As Laruelle himself emphasizes, "non-philosophical utopia has never been about creating a new philosophy.... Instead, it creates a new genre or generic practice, which might be called 'philo-fiction.'"[152]

PERFORMING THE IMPERFECT HUMAN

A Non-Parmenidean Equation: Practice = Thought. . . . In order to clearly distinguish philosophy, we will say that *practice and thought are identical in-the-last-instance,* or even that *practice is the presupposed that determines thought.* This is the non-Parmenidean paradigm and it must put an end to theoreticism and idealism, which are both the effect of philosophizability.

FRANÇOIS LARUELLE, *Struggle and Utopia*

A last word. They tell me I am an artist-without-art and a philosopher-without-philosophy, that I take the "pose" of an artist without the practice, or a philosopher without the doctrine—and I would add that of a believer without a religion. This criticism recognizes me by subtraction: I am exactly not one of the sincere liars that the artist, the philosopher, and the believer are.

FRANÇOIS LARUELLE, "Artistic Experiments with Philosophy"

A PERFORMANCE PHILOSOPHY

It was Albert Camus who described actors as sincere liars ("*l'acteur est un menteur sincère*"). It is not that they do not do what they say or say what they do but that *they do not even say what they say.* Is Laruelle one of those (if only "by subtraction")—some kind of poseur, ironist, or dissimulator? Or does he do quite the opposite—posing *and* practicing, or even a posing that *is* a practicing? What kind of actor or performer is he anyway? As we know, when Laruelle extends a philosophical idea, it is not a *quantitative* "easing" that merely generalizes an extant concept—printing more of the same (thought of) philosophy, the human, or even thought itself. Rather, it is a distension that mutates what it shares in the very act of sharing. This is the founding gesture of non-philosophy—to extend, to admit more, only to do so through self-mutation: "science is widened

to every phenomenon that, from now on, can become the 'object' of a science, or rather, give place and indication to a new science."[1] The science becomes a *new* science when it encounters a new phenomenon—it mutates. As always, the *non-* of *non-philosophy* wagers on what *could* count as thought: "Non-philosophy is not 'the highest' exercise of thought; this no longer means anything for a non-philosophy which does not know the 'superior form' of thought."[2] It expands rather than negates philosophy and so opens it up to the Real rather than relativizing it into nothing (via language, history, or culture). It indefines or underdetermines (verb), not to generate a vagueness for the sake of vagueness (noun), but to simplify in such a way that the copious, warring definitions of philosophy are revisioned materially in-One. As such, it is always a practice, a material behavior. Where the Parmenidean Equation is that "Thought Equals Being" (as seen in Badiou's philosophy, to take only the latest instance of this supreme sufficiency), Laruelle performs the "Non-Parmenidean Equation": "Practice = Thought." Consequently, the *dualism* of practice and theory dissolves:

> A great misunderstanding in fact threatens non-philosophy, that of its spontaneous definition as a theory or even as a practice. It is neither one nor the other, of course, neither practical theory nor theoretical practice or "of" theory, but *a future thought or in-the-last-instance, determining a subject for the (non-) relation of theory and practice.*[3]

We examined this "(non-) relation" previously when looking at the notion that non-philosophy is "a new practice of philosophy" as well as Laruelle's inheritance from Derrida's performative-oriented thought.[4] Let us tackle some of these ideas one final time. Non-philosophy's practice is connected to its performative language, such that "to the widespread question: what is it to think?, non-philosophy responds that thinking is not 'thought,' but performing, and that to perform is to clone the world 'in-Real.'"[5] Non-philosophy is equally described in turns as "*transcendental practice*," an "*immanent* pragmatics" (that ensues "*from the One—of simple philosophical material*"), or a "universal pragmatics" that is "valid for ordinary language as well as for philosophy":[6]

In this sense, non-philosophical pragmatics can be defined by saying, for example, that *all language becomes performative in it but in the form of a performativity of description. . . . It is what it does, it does what it says by saying it.*[7]

Laruelle insists that we look at "that-which-I-do-in-saying and not just what I say"—for the latter is simply what happens when thought is "taken hold of again by philosophy."[8] Resisting this hold, non-philosophy performs redescriptions of philosophy that, *in doing so,* produce effects on how philosophical texts are seen.[9] Of course, whether these effects are always *desired* or are merely nominally considered "*effects*" such as *any* description might create (misunderstanding, disbelief, dismay, boredom) has been on ongoing issue for us. In accordance with this, it is notable that Laruelle objects to the focus on activity within the concept of a speech *act* and instead emphasizes the "descriptive passivity" that an immanent pragmatics obliges: statements that manifest "by their very existence what they must describe in the last instance—statements identically descriptive and performative."[10] In other words, the field of speech act philosophy remains decisionistic for Laruelle: philosophical decision is "implicit when it concerns the linguistic 'performative.'"[11]

In contrast to this, what Laruelle calls a "Performed-without-Performation" would be an action of the Real, or the "in-One"—philosophical language seen as a performed without *we* using this or any language to perform. This complex thought warrants the following extended quotation from *Principles of Non-Philosophy* to aid our grasp:

Non-philosophy thus frees up, by manifesting it on its behalf, the phenomenal core of performativity which was always despite everything somewhat divisible in the usage philosophy made of language. It particularly subtracts it from its verbal and active dimension and leaves it to-be-given as Real('s)-passivity, prior to the noun of beings and the verb of Being. . . . We will carefully distinguish the phenomenal given concerns, to which we designate the first axiomatic abstract name of Performed-Without-Performation. . . . If deconstructions and almost all philosophy since Freud (up to Badiou's work) are a "hetero-critique" of the proper identity of Being (of the *ontological* One, or the One attached

to Ontological Difference) as performativity, they have only destroyed the ontological and transcendent forms of performativity, never the core of the Performed that necessarily precedes every operation of performation. . . . The radical Performed signifies the definitive destruction of hinter-worlds: there is no longer even any performation reconstituting a world sketched out behind the One, and moreover none of these ultimate hinter-worlds such as Phenomenological Givenness, Desiring Production or the Will to Power, Writing and general Textuality, or even Language Games. It is this Performed, stripped of its fetishes of "performativity" and in general of activity and the *causa sui,* that transmits thought itself as identity (in its relatively autonomous order of thought) of science and philosophy, more generally of the "theoretical" and the "pragmatic." We will not say too hastily—confusing the Real and thought once again—that this is directly performed "in-One," but that *it is in-One in-the-last-instance only through the One as the Performed itself.*[12]

It is the notion of the performative, *but without any philosophical adumbration,* and only in its own core, that we need to comprehend. Naturally, this core cannot be a philosophical essence: this "Performed-without-Performation" belongs to the Real or the in-One and so cannot be reduced to any solitary method or concept. It requires numerous takes. In one respect, this entire study has been an attempt to understand the maxim of non-philosophy that "*it is what it does, it does what it says by saying it*" through a multiplicity of performative takes (and so with an *undefined* "core"). The attempt has for the most part been quasi-performative, chapters 2–4 taking a literalist, naive, or avowedly "stupid" stance—seeing non-philosophy as democratic to the point of paraconsistency ("performative contradiction"), as a behavioral posture, or as a nonhuman (animal) philosophy. Each was an attempt to do what Laruelle does, namely, radicalize "the Marxist criterion of practice . . . against the transcendence of ideology, indeed of philosophy" by *changing* the base of thought away from (standard) notions of consistency, speculation, and anthropocentrism— and doing so not only in word but also in deed (through words).[13] Here "use" and "mention" merge whereby every mention (of philosophy) is also a usage, such that citations within "ordinary language" (be it "constative," like an introduction, or "performative," like a rhetorical question) become

behavioral. The so-called representational dimension of "propositional content" is not rendered simply as the social practice of "giving and asking for reasons" (Robert Brandom) but is materialized in a host of different domains under categories such as "art," "science," or even nonhuman behavior (animality).[14]

If performative practice is not performativity as philosophy has understood it (as speech act, power, desire, and so on), what other non-standard and nonhuman models can we add to it, alongside paraconsistency, behavior, and animality? This chapter, consequently, brings our study to a close by introducing Laruelle as this "artist-without-art" by looking at non-philosophy as a model of performance art (rather than of the performative—or "philosophical"—speech act). Indeed, Laruelle is adamant that, "because of its Greco-spontaneous usage of thought, philosophy, which continues its desire to govern the real, man and science, finds itself lagging behind the arts and sciences."[15] It is time to address this "lag." The place of art has always been here, of course, as far back as chapter 2 and the notion of "philo-fiction," as well as in the film structure of *The Five Obstructions* that we have followed tangentially throughout. Moreover, Laruelle has described his work as a "rebellion-through-fiction" that can also be seen as an "invention of lived experience or of a life [that] takes . . . from thought's point of view, the form of a theory-practice."[16]

In this final introduction, then, we will look at the invention and practice of performed lives by turning to certain concepts and practices of performance (Allan Kaprow's, Richard Schechner's, and Michael Kirby's especially). Close to hand throughout these last pages will be the question whether Laruelle's non-philosophical practice can also be seen as a performed life, a "personal" or "'auto' nonphilosophy" that, without being reflexive, *enacts* the biography of a non-standard ("ordinary") human through reusing other (philosophical) lives. We will then conclude with a discussion of evaluation in terms of how performance per se might itself be valued as well as how this introduction might be assessed, be it as a (consistent) mutation of non-philosophy or as a species of nonhuman thought. In all of this, we will also be trying to explain what Laruelle might mean when he says that "Man is not an ancient lost paradigm which we must bring back . . . man is the 'performed' paradigm of the future-in-person."[17]

A PERFORMATIVE TANGENT: THIS IS HOW THE PERFECT HUMAN FALLS (THE RADICALLY PASSIVE OBSTRUCTION)

Obviously, we could subsume the idea of performance under the even more general category of "behavior" already tackled, but that would leave aside the *art* of performance too quickly and indeed the possibility that that art is already a form of philosophy *before* being taken up within other genera (that may or may not themselves be philosophical). Likewise, with respect to the active passivity of Laruelle's performance, we need to take care to examine how the category of "acting" (and nonacting) forms a continuum of behavior whose two vectors vary from types of performance that look wholly passive, to others that appear as full-blown acting for the theater stage or film. Alternatively—and going now in the direction of universal performance—one aesthetician, David Davies, has argued that *all* art can be seen as performance, claiming that individual artworks are snapshots of a performance toward a possible work.[18] Here, though, it is the specificity of art that is subsumed within a general concept of performance that is wholly philosophical, owing little or nothing to concepts of performance actually generated within performance studies by practitioners and performance theorists themselves. Though a number of philosophers have of late given more attention to performance art and theater in particular—Samuel Weber's *Theatricality as Medium,* Jacques Rancière's *The Emancipated Spectator,* or Alain Badiou's *Rhapsody for the Theatre,* for instance—this belies the ongoing "anti-theatrical prejudice" of even these more sympathetic positions inasmuch as they continue to *apply* philosophical concepts to theater and performance.[19] Performance is allowed to think only through (seemingly nonperformative) philosophy. As Laura Cull notes, "the extent to which performance might be considered a philosophical activity in its own right" remains closed for most philosophers.[20] Indeed, the idea of an autonomous "performance philosophy" (one that does not merely illustrate or apply extant philosophy) remains the holy grail—though she notes that *non-philosophy* might hold some potential for such a view:

> via the contemporary French thinker François Laruelle's notion of "non-standard philosophy" in particular, we find the seeds of hope that Perfor-

mance Philosophy might equally be embraced as an opportunity for the renewal of philosophy as much as of theatre and performance studies; or again, if this is not too grandiose, as an opportunity to reopen the very question of *what counts as philosophical thought.*[21]

Performance becomes a philosophy all its own, just as philosophy becomes something else. Indeed, the utopian hope for a (non-) philosophy that is regarded as an equal to art (qua thought) will be outlined in what follows through a film as well as that "pose" of the artist that Laruelle seemingly adopts in his work.

The Five Obstructions is neither a piece of theater nor performance art, of course, but in its fifth and final obstruction, the film produced is both performative and a performance, though not according to the norms of philosophy. The last obstacle set by von Trier renders Jørgen Leth *radically passive*: he will do virtually nothing for the final film. We also learn that von Trier has already made the fifth version of *The Perfect Human* but that, all the same, the film must still be credited as Leth's. Indeed, Leth must read this film's voice-over narration (in the form of a letter from Leth to von Trier) ostensibly from his own perspective, though it too in fact has been written by von Trier (Leth calls it a "fiction, really. A letter to him from me"). Moreover, the material that makes up this fifth film has already been shot, being composed of the documentary footage taken in their previous encounters (von Trier hopes, he says, that "we captured something human as we talked"). Doubtless, the form taken by this part of *The Five Obstructions* is ripe for a postmodernist, abyssal reading—an account of reflexivity that puts the identities of both Leth and von Trier (alongside *The Perfect Human*) into endless play, mirrors reflecting mirrors. As Murray Smith writes, "von Trier has imagined what and how Leth might imagine what von Trier had to say about Leth."[22] Yet, as Smith also remarks, there is a materiality to this final phase in the fact that "the record" (of their game) is now its "substance":

> Von Trier wrong foots Leth at the last by the most audacious interpretation of the rules of their game of all, turning the *record* of the game (the documentary footage of Leth making the new films, and of Leth and von Trier in discussion at various stages of the project) into its *substance*. In

other words, various other strategies having failed, von Trier subjugates Leth by making Leth his (von Trier's) vehicle of expression, even as this final film is designed to appear to be the work of Leth.[23]

Leth appears as a "vehicle of expression," parroting von Trier's words (of him thinking about von Trier), and thereby producing what Smith describes as the "disorienting" affect of a "triple-embedding of levels."[24] Krista Geneviève Lynes goes further still, seeing this embedding at work not only within the fifth film but across the whole of *The Five Obstructions.* Indeed, she sees it as an extended act of ventriloquism beginning with the second obstruction set in the worst place in the world (Falkland Road) when Leth takes the role played by Claus Nissen in the original:

> In *Obstruction # 2* Leth repeats Nissen's words and actions. He is mimicking his own objects. Trier, on the other hand, is building new circuits of ventriloquism. In *Obstruction # 5,* Trier creates a dizzying relay: he offers to remake *The Perfect Human* and asks Leth to read a voiceover written by Trier. Trier is pulling all the strings. In the narrative, however, Leth's address (written by Trier) often cites Trier, a circling ventriloquism that has Trier speaking through the relay of Leth.[25]

Significantly, in the preparations before the final film is assembled, von Trier makes two admissions about his relationship with his mentor, Leth. The first concerns his own method, his "filmic upbringing" as he puts it, namely, that what Leth calls "the rules of the game" have always been central to von Trier's work. The second admission is the spur for making *The Five Obstructions* at all, inasmuch as von Trier argues that "Jørgen Leth" is one of the few areas in life on which he believes he is an expert. He knows "considerably more about him [Leth] than he does," and as such, "this entire project has been a 'Help Jørgen Leth' Project." The rest of this introduction to von Trier's image of Leth is provided in the letter written by von Trier to himself (though using Leth as his ventriloquist's dummy). It is performed in the film itself, part of which runs as follows:

> Dear Lars, thank you for your obstructions. They've shown me what I really am, an abject, human, human. I try to fool the world because I don't

want to be part of it. My trick is cheap and I repeat it endlessly. If I go on telling the viewer what I see, like a prisoner of war repeating his name and number, without adding anything . . . emotions are far too dangerous, the world and I will fall for it. I call it art. . . . Maybe you put words into other people's mouths to get out of saying them yourself. . . . You only saw what you wanted to see. The skepticism you felt about yourself must go for me, too. But you exposed yourself. You wanted to make me human, but that's what I am! . . . As we all know, it's the attacker who really exposes himself. The truth is, you got it wrong! I obstructed you, no matter how much you wanted the opposite. And you fell flat on your face. How does the perfect human fall? This is how the perfect human falls.

We will return to this commentary at various junctures in this chapter as the question of the imperfect, "abject" human arises, both in an objective "philosophical" vein and more personally and autobiographically. Questions of trickery, ventriloquism, the refusal of the world, reversal (who is really obstructing who?), and passive performance—"you wanted to make me human, but that's what I am"—need to be addressed anew, only now under the rubric of performance art (also known as "live art," "body art," or simply "performance"), the final tangent to non-philosophy that we will underline here.

THE SPECTRA OF PERFORMANCE: FROM NONART TO NOT-ACTING

What is it that permits us to see philosophy as a performance (or indeed performance as a philosophy)? Laruelle wants to broaden philosophy, but by mutation rather than mere extension. Yet he is not alone in trying to create a "new genre," as he so often puts it, nor in forming a more generic thought that can embrace art as well. Much of the last one hundred years of artistic innovation (that philosophy so far "lags" behind) has concerned the question of what counts as art, be it in music (Cage), theater (Artaud), or visual art (Duchamp). Such enquiries, however, are not pursued only in modernist terms in search of *theoretical* "essences" but through practices that discover new forms of art simply by inventing them. In this role, art takes on a philosophical hue by *performing* its research ("practice as research" or "artistic research," as it is sometimes called) and constructing

it out of the Real, rather than out of, or in conflict with, readymade theory or extant practice. As Allan Kaprow put it, as "art becomes less art" (i.e., less like official "Art"), "it takes on philosophy's early role as critique of life."[26] For Kaprow, the goal for practitioners was to invent "an art that was distinct from any known genre (or any combination of genres)... to develop something that was not another type of painting, literature, music, dance, theatre, opera."[27] In Kaprow's *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life,* he describes this as the process of "un-arting," or the taking of "art out of art." Art is undefined in and through practice, or what he calls an "act or thought whose identity as art must forever remain unknown."[28] In his "Activities," for example, commonplace actions such as looking into a mirror or opening and closing a door were transformed into "art" through slight adjustments (viewing one's reflected breath and face, repeating the door opening over and over). This "nonart," Kaprow wrote, "exists only fleetingly.... Indeed, the moment any such example is offered publicly, it automatically becomes a type of art."[29] Calling it "Art" publicly is the product of a "conceptual decision" for him; but its capacity to become such "Art" was prefigured in the practices that created it out of the ordinary.[30] Indeed, there is a simultaneous two-way movement by which the ordinary is made into art and therewith "Art" is "unarted." Laura Cull writes of this as follows:

> Kaprow conceives of artistic conventions as a set of traits that allow us to recognize an event (as theatre, as dance) and trigger a conventional mode of relation to that event. In contrast, he sought to create unknown forms of event to which we must invent new ways of relating.... Representational implications are not denied then (how could they be with such a forcefully and, as such, problematically symbolic backdrop?), but it is important to note that Kaprow himself explicitly argues against any simple distinction between form and content in order to avoid producing works of art that will "remain only an illustration of a thought" rather than providing participants with what he calls an "experienced insight."[31]

The affinity between Kaprow's project of nonart and Laruelle's of nonphilosophy is clearly evident, especially in terms of the former's cloning of the ordinary to render it into art, using it as a raw material that thereby

also destabilizes the decision of what counts as art. The difference is that, while creating the possibility that art practices (and so much else) can be forms of thought equal to that of philosophy, Laruelle concentrates his efforts on *using* philosophy as his own art-material, on unphilosophizing it. The second strategy lowers philosophy from its self-made pedestal just as the former elevates art, qua *thought,* from its merely illustrative or applied status. Both movements converge toward a "flat" thought. This parallel is even more striking when we consider that, for Kaprow, nonart must keep the "Art" establishment aware of the activity of unarting "to set in motion the uncertainties without which their [non-artists'] acts would have no meaning."[32] Similarly, the practice, or performance, of the non-philosopher is the constant reminder to philosophy that *not everything is philosophizable* and that there are other ways to think, or "philosophize," than that of philosophy.

Arriving at performance from the direction of theater rather than the visual arts, Richard Schechner offers us an alternative model of performance that has an especially crucial analogue for non-philosophy in its concept of "restored behavior." Since the 1970s, Schechner has promoted the "broad spectrum" theory of performance as that which involves a range of human activity: "performance must be construed as a 'broad spectrum' or 'continuum' of human actions ranging from ritual, play, sports, popular entertainments, the performing arts (theater, dance, music), and every-day life performances to the enactment of social, professional, gender, race, and class roles, and on to healing (from shamanism to surgery), the media, and the internet." From this perspective, "any action that is framed, presented, highlighted, or displayed is a performance."[33] Rather than basing this open definition on a semantic relativism, however, this is more of a "seeing as" activity that is itself based in practice. Central to the practice is this notion of restored behavior. In his 1985 text *Between Theater and Anthropology,* Schechner writes,

> Restored behavior is living behavior treated as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behavior can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, techno-logical) that brought them into existence. They have a life of their own. The original "truth" or "source" of the behavior may be lost, ignored, or

contradicted even while this truth or source is apparently being honored and observed. How the strip of behavior was made, found, or developed may be unknown or concealed; elaborated; distorted by myth and tradition. Originating as a process, used in the process of rehearsal to make a new process, a performance, the strips of behavior are not themselves process but things, items, "material." Restored behavior can be of long duration as in some dramas and rituals or of short duration as in some gestures, dances, and mantras. Restored behavior is used in all kinds of performances from shamanism and exorcism to trance, from poetic dance and theater, from initiation rites to social dramas, analysis to psychodrama and transactional analysis. In fact, restored behavior is the main characteristic of performance.[34]

Performance, the way Schechner sees it, reuses behaviors of all sorts as its "material," cuts or strips of behavior that, in being reused—or in what he also calls "twice-behaved behavior"—are simultaneously restored or "reactualised." As Peter Eckersall notes, however, this is not an act of conservation—restored behavior involves "mutation, transformation, agitation."[35] The cloning, so to speak, is not a mere copy but a mutilation, cutting up its material as might a film editor reusing found footage. In this regard, Rebecca Schneider remarks that "performance (re)gains complexity—grows haunted (and, surprisingly perhaps, filmic—as if he [Schechner] were *returning* us to a state of film after having returned us, previously, to theatre)."[36] There is also a dimension of ventriloquism in this concept, because it is not only behavior that is doubled or cloned but the performer too. As Schechner says,

> restored behavior is "me behaving as if I am someone else" or "as if I am 'beside myself,' or 'not myself,'" as when in trance. . . . The difference between performing myself—acting out a dream, reexperiencing a childhood trauma, showing you what I did yesterday—and more formal "presentations of self" . . . is a difference of degree, not kind.[37]

There are multiple *me*s in each person, so it is the performer who "channels" the behavior rather than he *who actively and decisively* performs it. This is a performed-without-performance. What Schechner calls a

"trance," Laruelle calls—as a description of non-philosophy—a passive performance and a "*waking dream*" (which we should contrast with Kant's dogmatic wakefulness).

However, such continuist thinking on the part of Kaprow and Schechner, its productive similarities with Laruelle's non-philosophy notwithstanding (unphilosophizing, cloning, performing-without-performation), brings with it the usual dangers that attend all-encompassing categorizations like this: for might not the very scope of "nonart" or "performance" render both concepts vacuous, making them mere synonyms for simple existence (and thereby trivial)? Stephen Bottoms is one performance theorist who has of late questioned whether seeing such a broad range of activities as performance gains us any explanatory power.[38] No less than the extension of Austin's concept of performativity by the likes of Derrida and Judith Butler left it both everywhere and so nowhere, might not a broadened concept of performance risk breaking it entirely? Is it not too weak to bear the weight of being such an *arché*-concept? Do we not need to create a minimal distinction, if only of tendency or direction, within these continua?

Michael Kirby's work may come to our aid here. As Eelka Lampe notes, Schechner's idea of the "restoration of behavior" is close to Kirby's own ideas of "acting" and "not-acting."[39] Indeed, Kirby forms an interesting triad with the other continuists, having documented Kaprow's earlier "Happenings," which were themselves an important influence on Schechner's "New Orleans Group" in the mid-1960s (as Kirby reminds us in his crucial 1972 essay "On Acting and Not-Acting"). The question of what is *not* acting and yet still a performance is vital for this essay's argument and may provide us with a new orientation within the performative spectrum. As Kirby notes, "the performers in Happenings generally tended to 'be' nobody or nothing other than themselves; nor did they represent, or pretend to be in a time or place different than that of the spectator."[40] They merely "behaved"—walking, running, speaking, singing, washing dishes, sweeping, and so on. Much as the "actors" in Leth's *The Perfect Human* do, they simply perform actions as themselves, as ordinary men and women, without impersonating anyone or anything else. This allows Kirby to propose the concept of a range of behavioral styles set along a continuum of actings:

In a performance, we usually know when a person is acting and when he is not. But there is a scale or continuum of behavior involved, and the differences between acting and not-acting may be quite small. In such cases categorization may not be easy. Perhaps some would say it is unimportant, but, in fact, it is precisely these borderline cases that can provide insights into acting theory and into the nature of the art.[41]

This continuum runs from not-acting (dubbed "nonmatrixed" performing) through "simple acting" and then all the way to full-blown "complex" acting (playing Hamlet, say, using the full range of actor's techniques). This is a quantitative scale, however, and does not involve any value judgment as to which is better and which is worse qua acting. It is only a matter of how *much* acting is being deployed, whereas, in value terms, sometimes what is appropriate is more acting and sometimes less (even when playing Hamlet).

Nonmatrixed acting comes in three types. The first is "nonmatrixed *performing,*" such as is done by the stage attendants in Kabuki theater, who move props on- and off-stage, help with costume changes, or even serve tea to the actors—all on stage. Significantly (at least for Kirby), these performers "do *not do* anything to reinforce" their identification as nonactors. In other words, such an individual is not "imbedded, as it were, in matrices of pretended or represented character, situation, place and time, I refer to him as being 'non-matrixed.'"[42] The second type is a "nonmatrixed *representation,*" as when "the performer does not act and yet his costume represents something or someone" (an example being when one encounters an off-duty Santa Claus having lunch in the shopping mall in early December).[43] Were we, instead, to have seen this actor on stage and in a suitably rustic setting (one aspect of a matrix), the fiction of having "Santa Claus" before us would be closer to hand, even though the actor had still *not* acted: "when the matrices are strong, persistent and reinforce each other, we see an actor, no matter how ordinary the behavior. This condition, the next step closer to 'true acting' on our continuum, we may refer to as 'received acting.'"[44] The behavior can be "seen as" acting, even though this Santa does nothing. This is the third of the non-matrixed performances.

The fourth stage on Kirby's continuum—"simple acting" (the last to

NOT-ACTING				ACTING
Non-Matrixed Performing	Non-Matrixed Representation	"Received" Acting	Simple Acting	Complex Acting

FIGURE 2. Michael Kirby's continuum of not-acting to acting.

come before full-blown acting)—is vital for us inasmuch as it also harks back to Schechner's restored behavior (see Figure 2). Here Kirby analyzes the work of the avant-garde group the Living Theatre:

> Acting also exists in emotional rather than strictly physical terms, however. Let us say, for example, that we are at a presentation by the Living Theatre of *Paradise Now.* It is that well-known section in which the performers, working individually, walk through the auditorium speaking directly to the spectators. "I'm not allowed to travel without a passport," they say. "I'm not allowed to smoke marijuana!" "I'm not allowed to take my clothes off!" They seem sincere, disturbed and angry.[45]

The question is, are they acting? Despite the fact that they are performers, they only "play" themselves and are not portraying characters. They are also in a theater, but even the theater building is being "itself," so to speak, rather than an "imaginary or represented place." And everything that the performers say is factual. This indefinite style of behavior—neither wholly nonmatrixed nor full-blown acting (fictioning), is named "simple acting" by Kirby. The acting here comes in the *use* of behavior, emotional behavior in particular, which is being "pushed" for the audience. It is this use and "projection" of behavior that distinguishes not-acting from acting, the first and minimal incursion of the matrix.[46] The similarity of simple acting with restored behavior (albeit now with the vector of acting/not-acting mapped onto the continuum of performance) goes further still. Describing the "mirror exercise" used in actor training (whereby two people face each other and one copies the movements of the other—an old Marx Brothers gag, by the way), Kirby argues that this "rudimentary acting" can actually be seen as either a purely mechanical reproduction of "abstract movements" *or* as acting:

Even "abstract" movements may be personified and made into a character of sorts through the performer's attitude. If he seems to indicate "I am this thing" rather than merely "I am doing these movements," we accept him as the "thing": He is acting. On the other hand, we do not accept the "mirror" as acting, even though he is a "representation" of the first person. He lacks the psychic energy that would turn the abstraction into a personification. If an attitude of "I'm imitating you" is projected, however—if purposeful distortion or "editorializing" appears rather than the neutral attitude of exact copying—the mirror becomes an actor even though the original movements were abstract.[47]

The "performer's attitude" (*attitudine,* "fitness, posture") involves a distortion, an "editorializing" of movement; or (in Schechner's terms) the restoring of behavior into cut strips; or (in Laruelle's terms) the cloning of behavior with mutation, a copying with "errors." As a form of performance art, we might now see non-philosophy as a type of simple acting and restored behavior (of philosophy) that also unphilosophizes its subject thereby.

Kirby even mentions the game of charades as one type of this simple acting, though it can become more complex or full-blown as the gestures become more detailed (merely "putting on a jacket" vs. putting on a jacket and acting out how the "resistance of the material, the degree of fit, the weight of the jacket," and so on, feels).[48] But there's the rub (once more). Despite his references to a "matrix" that cannot be determined by the actor, even Kirby defines the performer's acting in terms of *her volition*: "if . . . we define acting as something that is done by a performer rather than something that is done for or to him, we have not yet arrived at true acting on our scale."[49] Yet this begs the question and seems to reduce the orientation of the continuum ultimately to one pole only (complex acting being the actor's *active* performance, with all other forms being mere subtractions from this behavior). As Laura Cull notes,

> Kirby's continuum itself concerns the identification of degrees of acting, apparently based on the notion of performance as a non-continuous event of interpretation of an object by a subject. The difference between acting and not-acting is a matter of degree, and yet the process by which these

degrees are measured seems to separate the measurer and the measured as different in kind. At one point, Kirby does mention that "the exact point on the continuum" at which different observers might position a given performance "undoubtedly varies quite a bit from person to person," but the model itself is apparently still based on the principle of a transcendent subject.[50]

This would be a standard, heroic notion of full-blown acting, using the actor-subject's representational skills alongside those of the audience-subject (and their all-important power of imagination). Of course, there is no doubt that playing the role of Hamlet is normally a very different kind of performance from the "simple acting" used in a game of charades, but it is arguable nonetheless that what makes simple acting *different* is not the absence of the performer's *volition* to "act more" ("Desiring Production or the Will to Power," as Laruelle put it) but the performance "of" the matrix itself, as Real—a passive performance that is not mere lack. Elements of *Hamlet,* in other words, can appear on all points of the acting/not-acting continuum.

In *Anti-Badiou,* Laruelle writes of a "process of quasi-transfer" that sees the Real "as superposition," that is, as something that "should be a non-acting capable of 'acting' non-mechanically in the form of a simple under-potentialization or under-determination of transcendence." Whereas Badiou thinks in terms of lack and "the void," non-philosophy thinks in terms of the "*radically* passive (that is to say, non-contemplative) effect, generated or resumed by an occasional cause or a unilateral complementarity."[51] Passive performance or immanent pragmatics, therefore, if it can be thought of in terms of performance art (as we strive to here), is nonetheless *not* based around the voluntary human subject (that either acts, heroically, for Badiou, or lacks action, as an animal or victim, for Badiou). A nonhuman matrix creates a radical passivity in performance *vis-à-vis* the human and the Real, the former only "performing" the latter in its radical, immanent behavior, that is, in *not* representing the Real. *If* the matrix is a condition of representation (as it is for Kirby), it is not itself a representation and cannot be represented. And yet, Laruelle does not work in *conditions*: the matrix, the Real or in-One, performs through non-philosophy as it clones and unphilosophizes philosophy

(the charade or "absurd pretense" that is gestured in-One). This is not merely imagination at work, a fictioning (of philosophy) that is less real. The non-philosophical posture becomes a *fictionale* acting: less a "sincere lie" (to refer back to Laruelle's reference to the "artist, philosopher, or believer") than unconcealing the lie of authority; a welcome mockery of the absurd pretense of the (philosophical) *subject's* power. Power does not belong *to the subject's thought* but *is the philosophical position in thought.* In the final obstruction, Jørgen Leth is left passive, a victim of sorts, in the fifth remake of *The Perfect Human.* Yet his radical passivity belies a performance of simple acting and restored behavior (strips of found footage documenting the earlier remakes), only not one enacted by him but by the Real of the film itself. This is not a mere trick of editing (cutting strips of behavior) but the Real of a clone. What other nonhuman aspects there might be in this matrix of clones, both material and animal, remains to be seen.

THE SPECTER OF PERFORMANCE

The numerous arguments of philosophers against poetry are not without a sense of irony, given their most ardent manifestation in Plato (to whom all others are said to be footnotes), whose own work is so laden with theatrical and poetic devices. Despite what Martin Puchner calls the "theatrical turn" in philosophy—as "registered in the recurring use of such terms as 'performance,' 'performativity,' 'theatricality,' or 'dramatism' as well as in a fascination with theatrical topoi such as 'masks' and 'enactment' in the writings of Nietzsche, Benjamin, Deleuze and Butler"—the specific idea of an *immanent and actual* philosophical performance remains a thorn in the side of much philosophy.[52] As Laruelle writes, "Non-Philosophy is a practice and an immanent practice. This is what screens out a lot of philosophers, because philosophers always project something or desire it."[53] It is the *actual* performance *immanent in this* act of philosophy here and now (doing in saying and saying in doing)—as opposed to a theory *about* performativity or theatricality that occurs elsewhere or later—that poses a threat to the authority of philosophy. Non-philosophy is the "only theory," Laruelle claims, "that is 'all execution' . . . whereas philosophy left to its spontaneity is not execution without also being tradition and

memory."[54] It is not that theater, poetry, or any other "extraphilosophical" art *becomes* an "essence or a priori" *through* theory, as philosophy would have it, but that "the a priori cannot not manifest itself as such except on the condition of residing in the depths of experience and emerging theatrically."[55] Wherever the identity of theory and practice is cloven, we have "an absolutely sure sign of a return to the philosophical repressed."[56] Non-philosophy is therefore (according to *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*)

> a practice that only exists in the immanence of its exercise. Whence the necessity of *inventing each time formulations* which are not satisfied with thematically describing what is in question—lest they again give rise, as this treatise risks doing at each moment, to the transcendent and fetishistic illusion of philosophy and of its discursivity—but which *de facto* reveal for the One-subject the new functions assigned to the material. The combination of the two styles, the ultra-descriptive style and the ultra-performative style, is here necessary so as to avoid the reconstitution of the philosophical disjunctions of the theoretical and the literary, of the scientific and the poetic, of the rational and the non-rational, of the philosophical and the extra-philosophical, etc.[57]

Philosophy is discursive, it discourses on X, with total authority (apportioning essences or a prioris *selectively*), even if it *says* that every philosophical statement (except *this* one) is performative or theatrical. What counts is its authority to say what art is and what it needs.[58] Hence, its fear of its own performativity, not in terms of speech act *philosophy* (which ultimately recuperates this "discursivity"), nor even theatricality (which can always be deferred or displaced), but in terms of its own *actual* form as art. The converse is also true for Laruelle, of course: art can think, and not only affectively (Deleuze) or therapeutically (Cavell) or poetically (Heidegger). Hence it is not the case (as more evenhanded philosophers might concede) that "without art, philosophy lacks sensitivity and without philosophy, art lacks thought."[59] There are forms of thought in art that are equal to philosophy, but not because they are the same (as philosophy's) but because *all thought is equally undefined or underdetermined.* And this is true of a multiplicity of non-philosophies in the making:

A field of new pragmatic possibilities, founded in the positivity of the De-termination in the last instance, is opened and frees a perhaps infinite multiplicity of new non-philosophical practices of philosophy. These are not new philosophical varieties, new systems obtained by variation, grafts, intercessions, etc. on the invariants of decision.[60]

These are "new *usages* of philosophies, whether they exist yet or not."[61] They are the arts of philosophy (non-philosophy as performances that *use* philosophy) as well as "the arts" as forms of (non-philosophical) thought. If anything, art-thoughts are less self-deluded than philosophy's inasmuch as they do not hallucinate any capture of the Real: like non-philosophy, they think alongside or according to the Real.[62] As Alexander Galloway says of Laruelle's engagement with the work of American artist James Turrell,

> Laruelle assumes from the outset that Turrell and his art are performing theoretical work as such. Laruelle's is not a theoretical interpretation of a non-theoretical art work; the work itself is enacting the non-standard method. Turrell "has discovered a new aesthetic (and theoretical) object: light as such, the being-light of light." Thus in Laruelle's view, Turrell him-self discovered a non-phenomenological solution to the problem of light.[63]

Turrell's work makes its own discoveries, and, like non-philosophy, at-tempts "not to think about perception, but to think *according to* per-ception."[64]

Likewise, as we earlier heard from *The Concept of Non-Photography*, Laruelle argues that he is *not* trying to "submit" photographic artists (or their work) to philosophy so as finally "to 'explain' them but, on the basis of *their* discovery taken up as a guiding thread . . . to mark its theoretical effects in excess of all knowledge."[65] Fighting against the philosophical aesthetics that overdetermines photography from without—"the *Principle of Sufficient Photography* or photo-centrism," as he calls it—Laruelle ges-tures toward a philosophy that is photography's own:[66]

> I call this gesture of creation non-aesthetics or non-standard aesthetics, its standard form being philosophical and photo-fiction being one of its non-standard objects. . . . This project seems absurd. It will no longer be

absurd if we accept changing our level of reference for defining the real. Instead of treating the photo and the concept of the photo as two given and describable physical, intellectual objects or representations, we treat them as completely different than given objects closed in on themselves.[67]

Photo-fiction is a philo-fiction of its own making, immanent to the Real and nothing else. In other terms, Laruelle's project involves the "'generic' extension of art to aesthetics; the moment when thought in its turn becomes a form of art." As we noted in chapter 2, this is "an art of thought rather than a thought about art"; it is not a "conceptual art, but a concept modeled by the art, a generic extension of art" that relays an attitude—an *aisthesis* rather than a *thesis*.[68] As such, it is not a new first position of philosophy nor a new system for the arts, as Laruelle's short essay on choreography explains:

> A system of fine arts arises from the comparison of arts to each other, if not from the comparison of finished works. It is a system of aesthetic *representations,* universals or abstract generalities in a state of survey [*survol*] in relation to experience. They give place to aesthetic categories that generalize experiences without relying on the essence of art as such, but by contenting themselves with postulating it, with postulating those experiences as "aesthetic." In opposition, we set out from a science of essences, but essences on the one hand determined in terms of the real or the aesthetic lived of the work and, on the other, overdetermined or codetermined by a particular material. There is no general essence of art, no universal first object of a philosophical aesthetics, but a science of *essences* each time *determined in the last instance* by real lived experiences, and codetermined by means and supports drawn from the World. . . . There is no universal or philosophical knowledge, no first knowledge of art, but a science that on one side is given as objects of supposedly "aesthetic" works through determined theories; and on the other, a real cause or a given-of-the-lived that prohibits this science from claiming to be "first" in the ontological sense of the word.[69]

Non-philosophy operates out of "the real or the aesthetic lived of the work" or "*essences* each time *determined in the last instance* by real lived

experiences"—that is, out of the work itself. The work generates its own philosophy.

It is doubtless arguable that a parallel has always existed between the artistic avant-garde (the anti-art of Duchamp, for instance) and the philosophical avant-garde (anti-philosophies and certain nihilisms). Art critic Boris Groys, for one, makes just such a comparison in his study *Introduction to Antiphilosophy,* arguing that the anti-philosophies of Marx, Kierkegaard, and Kojève can be connected to anti-art through the notion of the "readymade":

> I would like to draw some parallels between "anti-art" and what I call, by analogy, "antiphilosophy." The authors I treat in this book can be understood as ready-made philosophers, by analogy with the ready-made artists. . . . Antiphilosophy—in other words, [is] a ready-made philosophy that ascribes universal philosophical value to certain already existing ordinary practices, in the same way in which practices of the artistic readymade ascribe artistic value to ordinary objects.[70]

This parallel between art and philosophy is facilitated by the notion of a readymade *concept*: just as anything—even a urinal—can become the object of art given certain conditions of intention (by the artist and/or audience) and reception (by the art institution), so anything can become a worthy object for philosophy:

> A traditional philosopher is like a traditional artist: an artisan producing texts. An antiphilosopher is like a contemporary art curator: he contextualizes objects and texts instead of producing them. Production of philosophy can be interpreted as an extraordinary, mysterious, "poetic" process that is accessible only to a chosen few. Antiphilosophy does not abolish philosophical *metanoia,* but rather democratizes it.[71]

The ordinary becomes special, or rather, there is now nothing exceptional *about philosophy and its objects.* Kierkegaard's Christ, for example, is an ordinary man, and indeed *must be* an ordinary man (to be special in a new way). As such, He becomes a type of "proto-readymade." Likewise, Kojève treats Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a readymade such that

Kojève's own role consists merely in "exhibiting this readymade in a new place—namely the Paris of his time."[72] The connection between non-philosophy and this leveling of art objects and disciplinary concepts is clear: in the readymade object and concept, both art and philosophy renounce their putative exceptionalism. In some of his work, Laruelle might even be regarded as a "curator"—recontextualizing philosophical texts as art objects. Where the difference remains with Laruelle's non-philosophy, however, is precisely in this role of the "anti-." In any simple *rejection* of philosophy, the power of the "anti-" remains in virtue of its act of mere reversal: it thereby perpetuates the authoritative position, albeit displaced (hence the continued valorization of Christ and Spirit as *exceptional* objects by Kierkegaard and Kojève, respectively). By expanding philosophy through non-philosophical mutation, however, *all* aspects of philosophy—*its objects, practices, and practitioners* alike (as actually performed)—are leveled or flattened. Thought is not merely displaced into a new *exemplary* domain (the anti-, the "nihil") with its objects nonetheless remaining intact but distributed according to a democratic code without any exemplariness or exceptionality.

The "without" *(sans)* structure endemic to non-philosophy ("lived-without-life," "subjects-without-predicates," "given-without-givenness," etc.) can also be detected in art practices in the twentieth century, of course. Kaprow's unarting is one instance—though it has its own roots in Dada and Situationism. The stripping away of any standard figurative determinations of the human, as found in "body art," is another example of such minimalism, one resulting in the body no longer being seen as the sign of the human subject "but also the material object of art."[73] Yves Klein's "New Anthropometric Period" of work in the 1960s gave us the stereotype of this kind of performance art, with naked bodies rolling around in blue paint. Such performers may be "simple" actors in Kirby's terms, inasmuch as they "are not acting, or playing a character in any way removed from themselves," especially if they "push" their emotions.[74] More generally, as Janelle Reinelt reminds us, the term *performance* is related to a "general history of the avant-garde or of anti-theater, taking its meanings from a rejection of aspects of traditional theater practice that emphasized plot, character, and referentiality."[75] Be it the "performance art" of Kaprow and Klein (as well as Joseph Beuys, Yoko Ono, Marina Abramović, and Chris

Burden), the subsequent "body art" of Klein (again), Carolee Schnee-
mann, Vito Acconci, and Orlan, or the later "live art" scene with figures
such as Franko B. and Ron Athey, it is *subtraction* and *elimination* that
are among their most commonly shared strategies (though *what* is being
removed may differ among them). Even the "post-dramatic theatre" of the
Living Theatre, Forced Entertainment, and Goat Island tends to involve a
sparseness that allows a focus on participation, duration, and movement;
or, as in the case of Societas Raffaello Sanzio, the "bare presentation of
performers" bodies marked by abjection and alterity."[76]

In her 1965 *No Manifesto* for dance, Yvonne Rainer goes even further
in this puritanical ("without") trajectory:

> No to spectacle.
> No to virtuosity.
> No to transformations and magic and make-believe.
> No to the glamour and transcendency of the star image.
> No to the heroic.
> No to the anti-heroic.
> No to trash imagery.
> No to involvement of performer or spectator.
> No to style.
> No to camp.
> No to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer.
> No to eccentricity.
> No to moving or being moved.[77]

As a result of this parsimony, Rainer's works focused on bodily move-
ment alone, leaving emotion and drama aside. The Vow of Chastity in
von Trier's and Thomas Vinterberg's Dogme 95 proclamation matches
Rainer's subtractive process for cinema ("shooting must be done on
location"; "the camera must be handheld"; "optical work and filters are
forbidden"; "the director must not be credited," and so on), though it is
phrased less negatively overall. The nihilism and eliminativism evident
in all of these strategies have aspects in common that might help model
non-philosophy, especially those (like Rainer's) emphasizing the absence
of "spectacle," "virtuosity," and the "heroic." Nonetheless, it is not the sheer

removal of elements (be it the figurative, the dramatic, or the stylistic) so much as their mutation that counts for Laruelle. Such mutations still involve philosophy in all of its material specificity, and so *without its authority, without its positionality.* Philosophy's drama or theatricality must be nonstandardized (cloned) rather than denied.

Gustav Metzger's "Auto-Destructive Art" might offer us an even closer approximation (despite its title's connotations of annihilation). Here Metzger's artwork involves the mutation of the norms of standard art *as well as its own* destruction, a consistency that involves itself within the processes of self-transformation. As his 1959 *Manifesto for Auto-Destructive Art* declares,

> Auto-destructive art is primarily a form of public art for industrial societies.
>
> Self-destructive painting, sculpture and construction is a total unity of idea, site, form, colour, method, and timing of the disintegrative process.
>
> Auto-destructive art can be created with natural forces, traditional art techniques and technological techniques.
>
> The amplified sound of the auto-destructive process can be an element of the total conception.
>
> The artist may collaborate with scientists, engineers.
>
> Self-destructive art can be machine produced and factory assembled.
>
> Auto-destructive paintings, sculptures and constructions have a life time varying from a few moments to twenty years. When the disintegrative process is complete the work is to be removed from the site and scrapped.[78]

The materiality of art ("site, form, colour") is *conserved* to be destroyed. This is comparable, then, to what we heard Laruelle say at the Société française de philosophie: that his method involves *destroying* the "strictly philosophical part" of any mediation of the Real (or, elsewhere, how for him the "transcendental" must be "radicalised, i.e. destroyed").[79]

Indeed, in other forms of self-destructive art, this conservation acts even more perspicuously as a kind of "erasure." This is especially true of Robert Rauschenberg's idea of destroying (other) artists' work. Producing his artworks through "non-marking," Rauschenberg first erased some of his own drawings, leaving nothing behind except white paper. His *Erased de*

Kooning of 1953 advanced things even more, taking a piece by the abstract expressionist Willem de Kooning and slowly erasing its oil, pencil, and charcoal substance until only the paper with a few barely visible marks remained. Without a doubt, in this light, we can regard Lars von Trier's project to ruin Jørgen Leth's *The Perfect Human* through multiple remakes as following Rauschenberg's model: as Leth himself at one point remonstrates, a remake is "totally destructive." As a model of non-philosophy, however, what counts is not the remains as such (Rauschenberg's spartan work) but (again) the performance of its erasure, its mutation.[80]

HOPEFUL MONSTERS: EVALUATING PERFORMANCE

In *A Treatise of Human Nature,* David Hume bemoans his fate of exile from the philosophical mainstream:

> I am first affrighted and confounded with that forlorn solitude, in which I am placed in my philosophy, and fancy myself some strange uncouth monster, who not being able to mingle and unite in society, has been expelled all human commerce, and left utterly abandoned and disconsolate. . . . I have exposed myself to the enmity of all metaphysicians, logicians, mathematicians, and even theologians; and can I wonder at the insults I must suffer? I have declared my disapprobation of their systems; and can I be surprised, if they should express a hatred of mine and of my person.[81]

In the last chapter we described non-philosophy as partially alien, as a kind of monster. But is this perpetual "outsider" status of non-philosophy a *mere* posture (like some outsider art/*art brut*) that replicates the structures of philosophy in absentia? Is it a kind of *philosophie brute* that still gazes longingly into the Academy from without? And is its own distance (from philosophical distancing) itself a warning to others about such hubris—a true "monster" (from *monere,* "to warn")? As Hume wonders in his own case, perhaps the rejection of philosophy has transformed Laruelle into "some strange uncouth monster"—an outsider despite itself or even for the sake of it. If posture (chapter 3), animality (chapter 4), and now the performance of the body offer real alternatives to standard philosophy,

while also explaining its decisionistic structure *without* replicating it, then notions such as "bodying forth" (as we heard Coetzee describe Ted Hughes's jaguar poems perform) will have to be more than simply exotic forms of representation. Is the disavowal of philosophical decision (for Laruelle) or "rationalism" (for Coetzee), *even as performed* (saying equals doing), nonetheless thwarted by the representation of that performance, by its very thematization (as we are doing here too, we should add)? Perhaps it would be better if we kept silent and simply "acted" instead (by just "introducing" Laruelle). In other words, trying to overcome "X" may well only reinstall "X" at another level (deferred or displaced). Thematizing the postural embodiment of ideas as performance may reinstate standard, disembodied, and positional philosophy inasmuch as conscious representation is being privileged once more.

Or, might the representation of embodiment be *another type of embodiment,* another level of corporeality awaiting *demonstration* (a monstrous "showing" *and* "warning") in *this* place? Were this the case, the actual performance of a thesis, the enactment of a thought, would indeed be a deferral and displacement, but one that remains, *in-the-last-instance,* an immanent representation, an (animal) embodiment performed for another "here and now" (superposed with this one). Hence the corporeality at issue might still be behavioral, animal, and performative, only at other levels. Just as immanence can be seen as transcendent (by philosophy), transcendent representation can be seen as immanent. And position can be seen as posture, at another level. Indeed, this is just what non-philosophy does. The mutation or movement of ideas at such other "levels" (or "speeds," "tensions," "adequacies," "perspectives"—the vocabulary is itself mutating) would involve both the social practices of molar creatures and what we called "microbehaviors" (which are "performed in the brain," according to Bergson). This would not simply be representation as immaterial self-awareness but representation *as a bodily performance and practice* with both "external" ("psychocultural") and internal ("biophysical") components that are individuated spatially and temporally. There are different ways of saying and not-saying (doing), for not all so-called performative utterances (contradictory or not) are alike.

This approach would also help us to evaluate such performances without recourse to an elitism of "art" to provide norms of judgment (given

that we have nowhere attempted a definition of good art). Significantly, the question of evaluation is raised inadvertently by Ray Brassier in his following rumination on non-philosophy's immanent pragmatics:

> Philosophers, Laruelle insists, do not know what they are doing. They are never doing what they say or saying what they are doing—even and especially when they purport to be able to legitimate their philosophical decisions in terms of some ethical, political or juridical end. The theo-reticist idealism inherent in decision is never so subtle and pernicious as when it invokes the putative materiality of some extra-philosophical instance in order to demonstrate its "pragmatic worth." To condemn Laruelle for excessive abstraction on the grounds that the worth of a phi-losophy can only be gauged in terms of its concrete, extra-philosophical (e.g. ethical, political or juridical) effects is to ignore the way in which extra-philosophical concretion invariably involves an idealized abstraction that has already been circumscribed by decision. It may be that Laruelle's crisp, sharply delineated mode of abstraction turns out to be far more concrete than those nebulous abstractions which philosophers try to pass off as instances of concretion. In other words, the criteria for evaluating the worth of non-philosophy's function for philosophy are not available to philosophers, who know not what they do. In non-philosophy, radi-cal axiomatic abstraction gives rise, not to a system or doctrine inviting assent or dissent, but to an immanent methodology whose function for philosophy no one is in a position to evaluate as yet. Ultimately, then, non-philosophy can only be gauged in terms of what it can do. And no one yet knows what non-philosophy can or cannot do.[82]

Non-philosophy is an unknown quantity with an "an immanent methodol-ogy whose function for philosophy no one is in a position to evaluate as yet" (the irony of this use of "position" should not be lost). Laruelle himself expresses an allied point—there is no basis on which non-philosophy can be commended that is itself *philosophically necessary*:

> There is then no imperative fixing a transcendent, ontotheo-logical neces-sity to "do non-philosophy": this is a "posture" or a "force-(of)-thought" which has only the criterion of immanence as its real cause—which takes

itself performatively as force-(of)-thought—and the occasion of its *data*; which contents itself to posit axioms or hypotheses in the transcendental mode and to deduce or induce starting from them.[83]

Non-philosophy is a posture—a set of performed axioms. However, whereas Brassier is correct to see a radically immanent thought as its own obstruction to evaluation (or being "gauged"), the concepts of posture and performance may well lead us out of this labyrinth.

What is the "concrete" worth, and what is the mere "abstraction" referred to in the quotation from Brassier? If the concrete has inherent value (ethical, political, or juridical), how is it determined? In other words, how do abstract norms *follow* from (concrete) facts (without contravening Hume's "is–ought" fallacy)? These are standard dilemmas for philosophy, philosophically posed in terms of epistemic, representational norms (they "know not what they do," "no one yet knows," etc.). But what if "following" were understood behaviorally as *orientation,* which we saw even Kant deem to be an affect, a value? It could then *itself act as a norm* to be embraced or resisted *behaviorally,* that is, followed or not followed (according to other norms, themselves determined "in-the-last-instance" at another "level" of "concretion"). Movement through space can itself be a quality and not only a quantity. It can be (seen as) a performance, a demonstration, an axiomatic *and* axiological posture. *Kant's* orientation was the "self-preservation of reason," his own concrete standard set as abstract norm, a centrifugal "auto" and authority. What would be a genuine alternative to this movement (and not merely a reversal)? "Openness" in the abstract? But what or where is *that*?

As another option, we could forgo all positions, open or closed, and discover an evaluation, or "following," qua immanent performance. This would entail that *this evaluation itself* is rendered into a following, a performance, a behavior. And some followings follow more and are followed by more. Naturally, this "more" is quantitative, but it is also *affective*— being more democratic, more inclusive, and with that less abusive. On this understanding, therefore, a minimal condition for one performance to be preferred over another would be on account of its ever-increasing, broadening movement that incorporates and acknowledges the *non-* of others in widening circles ("levels"), in ever more attentive ethologies.

What such "centripetal" performances denote specifically (through the "body," through a kind of gesture, through ethology) must remain undefined, however, simply because their a prioris are local—they are both discovered and invented in the very practice of non-philosophy as immanent to the Real:

> It will be asked: is that real? We reply: *this* is precisely the real itself. *This* description is an immanent or transcendental auto-description and signifies that vision-in-One is an absolute thought.[84]

Of course, the indexicality of the demonstrative—the *when and where* of this "*this* description"—is crucial: was it spoken in a lecture, written (and rewritten) in a book, or read (and reread) later? Which was the performance? This is why Rocco Gangle describes the interpretations that non-philosophy makes of philosophy as a "*generalised indexicality*" and their clones as a "*radical that-ness.*"[85] In this respect, it is a continuation of Derrida's project, introduced in "Signature, Event, Context" and realized in works like *Glas* and *Dissemination,* to "open onto the concrete question of the *this, here-now . . .* they stage it or overflow this stage in the direction of that element of the scene which exceeds representation."[86] In the end, however, for non-philosophy, the seemingly fixed categories of discourse *or* performance, theory *or* practice, are unwieldy unless they too mutate. Hence Laruelle's critique of deconstruction as a petrified method and philosophical position held together "as a forced yoke, through the genius, that is, the violence of a single man."[87] Beyond everything, it is ultimately the Real that acts—this is Laruelle's ultrarealism that we only approximate *through* broad spectra (of performance, or art) in the *enactment* of their broadening in specific situations. Here is *The Five Obstructions* again:

> Why is he moving like *that*?
>   Because women like it when he moves like *that*.
>   *This* is how he moves.
>   How does the perfect human fall?
>   *This* is how the perfect human falls.

So, in parallel, when Laruelle says that *his* thought is determined by the Real, it must be that *this* thought, as now performed, is determined, now,

by the Real. *This* is the performed immanence over representation. A representational view of *this* thought (one pointing away—so that he is supposedly referring to *another* thought), would be, by contrast, a lie or the *non*-doing of saying. The nonrepresentational account would be the broadened view of performance that, being radically consistent, must incorporate every (non-) philosophical act. Which is what we do here.

Such broadening is not without its own dangers, though. In our earlier discussion of broad spectra, we encountered the problem of vacuity, the reduced usefulness for any term once its scope has been extended too far. Hence we should also ask ourselves here how far we can extend Laruelle's ideas before they become *logically* identical (and synonymous) with the Real in toto and therewith explain both everything and nothing. Perhaps non-philosophy's potential for all-encompassing scope borders on vacuity too? An explosion into triviality threatens us, only this time not as *real* triviality (of immanence) but the *representational* triviality of explanation (which, though immanent in-the-last-instance—nothing is left outside—must still pose as useful in any one time and place). In *En tant qu'un* Laruelle writes of a non-philosophy where the "field of *possibles* of thought is considerably enlarged," and in *Théorie des Identités* we hear that "it would be a question of being given the means of a conceptual and theoretical mutation likely to give a new *élan* to philosophy."[88] Yet is there *no* enlargement that can be deemed impossible, no mutation that is so monstrous that it becomes non-Laruellean, or a heresy *within* non-philosophy?[89]

Katerina Kolozova, for one, is happy to entertain "Monstrously Hybrid Concepts" and argues that radicalizing Laruelle's ideas leads to something like Julia Kristeva's notion of the "abject," which Kolozova glosses as "bordering a 'thérion,' a monstrosity" (or "wild beast").[90] This radicalism means, then, that who the self is, what human and Man-in-person means, must also mutate, become monstrous, and indeed a "thérion" or wild beast (for some, an abject human–animal hybrid). In chapter 4 we heard Laruelle speculate on whether we could "universalise non-philosophy even more." His own response was that "I don't believe that it would be possible. It has to pass through this mediation, this distorted mediation that is humankind."[91] Nevertheless, it might be that such a universal could be achieved should the "distorted mediation" (of) humankind distort or mutate even further. An actual demonstration is needed that would make

this possible (retroactively), however. And that is the wager or hypothesis of our reading of non-philosophy. Its vision-in-One offers a new structure of regard that attempts to recondition our "optical" and conceptual field toward the most faceless, strange, and alien others. It proposes "hopeful monsters"—philo-fictional inventions that also reinvent philosophy: they expand the human into the nonhuman, and vice versa. Part of this fictioning process, however, involves looking at things idiosyncratically, or seeing non-philosophy "in-person."

THINKING PERSONALLY: *NON-PHILOSOPHIA AD HOMINOS*

The description of Derridean deconstruction as an artifact of "the genius, that is, the violence of a single man" appears to come close to a personal attack, an openly *ad hominem* assertion from Laruelle. Obviously, were we to invoke again Arthur Danto's idea that (aesthetic) "style is the man," we might justify this personalized approach. As he says, "the language of immanence is made licit by the identity of the man himself and his style," for we are ourselves "systems of representations, ways of seeing the world, representations incarnate."[92] Or more "philosophically" perhaps, we could turn to J. G. Fichte's *The Science of Knowledge,* in which he personalizes philosophical decision: "what sort of philosophy one chooses depends . . . on what sort of man one is; for a philosophical system is not a dead piece of furniture that we can reject or accept as we wish; it is rather a thing animated by the soul of the person who holds it."[93] And yet the *hominem* here remains too determinate to fit non-philosophy. It is not Derrida's person or soul that is being addressed but—as always— the *philosophy-in-person* of "Derrida," or "Badiou," or "Deleuze." It is the philosophical *position* that counts, for, as we heard in the introduction, Laruelle means to "blame the 'philosopher' for nothing." It is his or her "philosopher-sufficient essence" that is the target.[94] Consequently, rather than being *ad hominem,* non-philosophy is precisely

> *ad hominos*—it is an act of defense, not of intolerance; the defense of a certain human universality against an individual spokesperson of a tradition that is believed to place it in danger. This combining of the address and that to which it is addressed is the first aspect of an ultimatum of defense.[95]

Non-philosophy defends the (undefined) human-in-person against philosophy. Moreover, when it happens that Laruelle actually addresses the *person* of the philosopher, it is most often quite *auto*-biographical:

> People may ask me, but how then did you in fact arrive at non-philosophy? Then I must say that I have made my "auto" nonphilosophy. It is contingent, arbitrary, it depends on lots of things which are mine.[96]

In a recent interview, this place of contingency becomes even more central:

> my non-standard philosophy has its own contingency, in a certain sense. The contingency of any production of non-standard thought comes from the philosophical model one chooses—in my case, from the utilisation of the quantum mechanical reference. In a sense, nothing especially authorises it, but nothing prohibits me from doing it either! . . . So I can speak of contingency, contingency in the rather banal sense that it is my decision. . . . And there you have it, now I am ready to know that it will all disappear.[97]

Yet these empirical facts are not wholly incidental either. As Rocco Gangle confirms, for non-philosophy, "any critique must be understood (at least potentially) as a *self*-critique, an auto-inhibition."[98] It is also auto-destructive, a self-harm ("*it will all disappear*" could prove to be a self-fulfilling prophecy). Here we have another indexical, the *author* as deictic subject: the identity of the subject that performs non-philosophy is not constituted though *the subject's* performativity (à la Judith Butler) but by the wholly contingent performance (of the Real).

Leaving aside the matter of contingency—and disappearance (self-destruction)—for a moment, such a Real identity between the self and the Real might amount to a passive *egoism* were it not also a performative realism. Other commentators, like Alexander Galloway, describe Laruelle's stance as *positively* autistic, and yet, despite such appearances of egoism or autism, non-philosophy claims to be neither idealist nor solipsist.[99] It is certainly not Cartesian: for Laruelle, Descartes's supposedly "radical" beginning within the cogitative ego was an "all-too weak radicality, which understands radicality as primacy *and* priority of a principle, a principle as hierarchy, domination, power over . . . , and its realization as thinking

substance."[100] If there is an "ego" in non-philosophy, it is not an authorita-tive one, and to think that it may be so is to confuse radicality, as starting at the root of the self in consistent doing and saying, with radicality as power or philosophical privilege. The radical must also be self-oriented. All the same, some might still like to think that all of Laruelle's idiosyn-crasies and neologisms are merely his own autism being acted out within a public monologue. The very writing of Laruelle's *Anti-Badiou,* after all, is described by him as "above all, finally—and one must take it as such—a book in which non-philosophy explains itself to itself, but with the aid of a counter-model that it falls to us to transform."[101]

So what are we to make of this "auto"? First, it should be distinguished from the "autos" of philosophy, *auto*-position and *auto*-sufficiency. Philo-sophical decision is all about the "*Auto,* that is to say the idea of an ab-solute autonomy of *Philosophy* under the form of a circle, of a return to itself," whereas non-philosophy concerns the "*non-auto* (-positioning and giving)" and "will lose this 'superior' identity first."[102] But there is also a personal dimension to the "auto":

> Each philosopher claims to possess the universal language of thought and of the Real but only carves out a sphere of private usage over a vaster domain that escapes him and that he believes himself to exhaust here where he renders it adequate to *his* real. The non-philosopher proceeds otherwise and draws from all possible languages, philosophical or not, and, in this case, finally philosophizable. He is forced to return here and to find materials here. First, to form a language-without-speech, a language-without-discourse, words-without-language, which is to say the primitive language, or language given-without-givenness of the transcendental axiomatic, a language *according to* the Real and in-One.[103]

In this description we have a list of "withouts" again, only now linked to the person. This alternative procedure of non-philosophy, as we know, goes from the human to philosophy ("philosophy is made for man, not man for philosophy"), and so "according to the Real."[104] Non-philosophy is *for* the human: "*if non-philosophy must be made 'by' and thus 'for' all men, and not solely 'by' the philosopher for other men, then the 'human' reception of non-philosophy is the* a priori *that governs its production*

rather than the other way around."[105] But note how the human is left in scare quotes here, undefined. As *Anti-Badiou* already stated for us, "Man-in-person . . . prohibits me from recognizing him in himself or from identifying him through given predicates."[106] Galloway echoes this point nicely—we do not "'increase the resolution' of the subject by adding more definitional predicates—I am militant, I am freedom fighter, I am subject to truth," and so on, but rather we "de-individuate the subject . . . toward a condition of generic being."[107]

Which brings us back to contingency: what makes *Laruelle's* non-philosophy arbitrary is the fact that "it"—its content, its style—is *not* authorized or necessary at all. Because Laruelle "starts from the Real," that is, in a posture that sees all thoughts as equal before the Real (equally foreclosed, but not thereby *mis*-representational), then, of course, non-philosophy could have been otherwise.[108] Indeed, it has been constantly otherwise (hence its versions, one to five) and will continue to mutate in his and others' hands.

REFLECTION AS MUTATION: UNCONDITIONAL REFLEXES (A FINAL TANGENT)

In a recent discussion of the relevance of animal studies for performance theory, Laura Cull has exposed various forms of speciesism at work in the domain of performance studies. Referring to Richard Schechner's collaborator, Victor Turner, she describes his concept of *homo performans* as the notion that performance itself offers us a new definition of the human. Turner himself writes of it as follows:

> If man is a sapient animal, a tool making animal, a self-making animal, a symbolizing animal, he is, no less, a performing animal, *Homo performans,* not in the sense, perhaps, that a circus animal may be a performing animal, but in the sense that man is a self-performing animal—his performances are, in a way, reflexive, in performing he reveals himself to himself. This can be in two ways: the actor may come to know himself better through acting or enactment; or one set of human beings may come to know themselves better through observing and/or participating in performances generated and presented by another set of human beings.[109]

Once again, it is *reflexivity*—that which "reveals himself to himself"—that forms the basis to the exception (be it performance or anything else). We will leave aside the fact that there is much evidence that animals do perform as well, and not merely as "circus" entertainments but in truly creative yet nonreflective ways.[110] Moreover, we might ask, what would follow were reflection *not* understood as self-representation (either directly or vicariously) but *behaviorally*, as a form of unconditioned *reflex*? For Laruelle, remember, reflection is not the holy of holies; indeed, it is philosophy that curses the human with reflection: "Philosophy has never been 'human' in the rigorous sense of the absolutely subjective or of the unreflected affect."[111] Non-philosophy is this "unreflected" human, and as such it is also a bodily, affective reflex, although one that is both *unconditional* (outside of Kantian representational conditions) and *unconditioned* (indefinitely mutable rather than Pavlovian). And it is in *this* sense that non-philosophy is genuinely (non-) human. So here we come to the next question: how does this notion of reflex sit with the performances in von Trier and Leth's fifth remake of *The Perfect Human*?

For a start, we know that the author is deauthorized: "the director must not be credited" is a Dogme 95 vow that Leth must practice in the final film. As Mette Hjort writes, this disavowal is crucial to the last experiment: "it is precisely some form of imperfection that von Trier seeks as a kind of 'gift' or 'sacrifice' from Leth. . . . What the game requires is a willingness to be exposed, to be vulnerable, to fail."[112] And yet, as von Trier himself admits in his script for the final film, "it's the attacker who really exposes himself," and then later: "nothing was revealed, and nothing helped." Hector Rodriguez remarks on this nonrecognition and nonrevelation at the heart of both *The Five Obstructions* as a whole as well as in this fifth remake in particular:

> This difficulty is not a matter of some contingent cognitive limitation on the part of either filmmaker; it is in the nature of an interpersonal situation that these determinations should remain essentially elusive. There are no precise or definite facts of the matter. The point of this indefiniteness is not, as another cliché would have it, to encourage viewers to "think for themselves." Rather, the point is to express an image of thought, a paradigm of what it means to think. More specifically, the film tackles

the possibility of thinking thoughts that defy clear-cut categorisation. Thinking is not (at least not only) the application of a predefined image or schema that enables recognition and identification. Rather, thought is an opening to the new. Ambiguity is thus not an end in itself; it is an aspect of a mode of thinking as radical openness, without a predefined image.[113]

The Five Obstructions, Rodriguez continues, "is about the origin of thinking as an open adventure, beyond mere recognition, out of a conflict-ridden encounter with a loved one."[114] The film is not about self-knowledge *or* awareness; it is not a performance that reflects and reveals (the notions with which Victor Turner defines the human) but a performance of "indefiniteness." The fifth remake uses strips of film, or "restored behaviors," to allow Leth and von Trier each to play himself (simple acting) in a nonreflective manner. A new film, the last remake, clone, or mutation of the *The Perfect Human* is the result.

But this last film is no longer Lars von Trier telling Jørgen Leth what to do either, but a review of what Leth has done as *already* actions that are beyond success or failure. We no longer have the theoretical command of the Real but the Real (of) theoretical command. Any radical (i.e., self-rooted) movement must always finally meet its own performative self and, with that, mutate. This final chapter of our study, which takes elements from the previous chapters and reproduces them, stripped down, is another instance of this. It amplifies the mutation further, not in an attempt to capture (through reflection) the Real of Laruelle but to think according to the Real through a quasi-cinematic practice. If we pose as another philosopher, it is a performance, a ventriloquist act, an imposture, but one no more dishonest than that von Tier strikes as Leth, when he makes him describe (back to von Trier) how he "put words into other people's mouths to get out of saying them yourself." As a mere introduction, it is always a "twice-behaved behavior."

This is no "big reveal," however. Nor is it the tragic self-awareness of another failed introduction to non-philosophy. There is neither *Anagnorisis* (recognition) nor *Peripeteia* (reversal) in the Greek tragic style here but only the perpetuation of an act—another remake or review that confects what is happening as an action, as part of the Real rather than a representation or "introduction" to the Real, both *ad hominem* and *ad hominos.*

No final flourish or *crescendo,* then, but at least a level of self-consistency *(diminuendo).* After all, Laruelle had always said that non-philosophy is not "a 'model' or 'system' closed in on itself," it is "a practice of—and in—thought." And it is thereby open to all the mutations and corruptions that come with such practice. As *Anti-Badiou* declares, "this structure of NP [non-philosophy] necessitates its being practiced in such a way that one invents NP itself with the aid of its object, since it is from this object (an interfering object) that is extracted the lived-without-subject."[115] And *this* is (one version) of what happens when non-philosophy takes *itself* as its object (in a consistent introduction). Non-philosophy needs to be reinvented, to mutate anew with each practitioner. As a consequence, one cannot say that there is a clear, transferable method in non-philosophy that must be adhered to unbendingly. There is only a set of suggestions, or a recipe that, if followed, invites a revision of what we see thinking and philosophy to be: "it is the opening of thought beyond philosophy."[116]

Yet non-philosophy is not only a (heretical and foolish) usage of philosophy but opens out onto a host of other fields of enquiry. If it were otherwise, non-philosophy would indeed be led (as has been charged) into the endless narcissism of philosophical autocommentary, instead of being the liberating force it claims to be that generates new ways of thinking.[117] Indeed, it is precisely by extracting any philosophy *out* of our thinking about photography, for example (as in an aesthetics of photography), that photography's own discoveries come into view. Not *more* "philosophy" (of a certain kind) but comparatively *less.* As a thinking according to the Real, therefore, non-photography is non-philosophy in another name, and its discoveries can be mapped onto those of the other sciences—quantum mechanics and fractal geometry, for instance—in such a way as to show that there are no distinctions of regional-versus-fundamental science for Laruelle. Non-photography is already a non-philosophy without any provincial substatus. As we heard him state, from the preface to the English translation of *The Concept of Non-Photography,*

> these essays aim to disencumber the theory of photography of a whole set of ontological distinctions and aesthetic notions imposed on it by the Humanities, with the help of philosophy, and which celebrate photography as a double of the world. Written around 1992, they contain the entirety of

non-philosophy as exposited in *Theorie des identités* . . . and make the link with the quantum themes of *Philosophie non-standard.* . . . It is enough to understand that the term "identity"—perhaps not the happiest of terms, given its logical associations—assures the passage between the One (the perennial object of our research) and that of quantum "superposition" our key concept at present. Just a minor change of vocabulary would suffice.[118]

"Just a minor change of vocabulary would suffice": only a small mutation then, a disfigured clone, would be sufficient.

MAKING A MONSTER OF LARUELLE

On Actualism and Anthropomorphism

Heard about the guy who fell off a skyscraper?
On his way down past each floor, he kept saying to reassure
himself:
"So far so good . . . so far so good . . ."
How you fall doesn't matter. It's how you land.

　　　La Haine, Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995

Throughout this work, we have said that Laruelle's use of "man" or "human" called for its *own* non-philosophical treatment, for an extension of his method. And yet, as we already heard, in *En tant qu'un,* Laruelle writes that "man is a man for man," as opposed to (some) philosophy's proclamation that "man is a wolf, an eagle, or a sheep, etc. for man."[1] By nonstandardizing what an animal is (and so what sheep and wolves, or bees and lizards, are), however, we are arguing that now the first clause "man is a wolf," like the statement "cinema is a philosophy," for that matter, is no longer a reduction or an inflation of the one to the other as if both were *already* fixed in their separate identities. It is not a *logical* identification. To be sure, in saying that not only "X equals X" but *also* "X equals Y" or even "X equals X plus Y" (idempotency), the retort may come that, of all these identifications, it is *still the self-identical ones that are exceptional* (the Xs that equal Xs rather than the Xs that equal Ys).

In other words, if everything *really* is animal, or really is human, or really is philosophy, or even really is already dead (as some argue), we still have to account for the appearance of *those* animals, humans, philosophies, or already dead that also actually look like an animal, a human, a philosophy, or dead and *those* others that *do not*. They do have a self-identity after all, even if only an *apparent* one, and the appearance of a (self-) identity counts for something, a something that can then be used as the basis of an exceptionality (were one so inclined). Anything less,

such as to say that the self-identity itself is merely an illusion (even if "well founded" or "useful"), still leaves the basis for *illusion as such* unaccounted for, while also dismissing entire worlds far too easily. There are *these* and *those*; there is *this* and *that*—its completely demonstrable. As Alan Read records when writing about Agamben's "Anthropological Machine" in conjunction with the work of the performance group *Shunt,* "*you need to know the difference between this and this. And that is an elephant.*"[2]

Alternatively, to say that wolves are humans *too* (or film or performance is philosophical *too*) in a non-philosophical manner is not another logical equation but a *remodeling,* a hypothesis to be explored, a new comparative that must be only one among many. Saying that "X equals Y" in this Real identification is also to say that "X *could* equal Z *or* Q *or* R," and so on. Of course, this multiplication of Real identities *could* "explode" into triviality or, if you prefer, idiocy, but only in a theory-position separated from practice. In practice, that is, performatively, the identifications have each to be executed in actual spaces and times, in Real momentary postures (and not in the philosophical position of everywhere and always). *Any* thing looked at closely enough *can* be anything else ("in-One"), so long as their equation *makes any* sense at all, even in *paraconsistency.*[3] So a wolf can be human. And a man can be a (thinking) reed. This "can be" is the leap, and benefit, of doubt, the posture in-the-last-instance. The phrase "making sense" is too semantic, no doubt—no one vocabulary should be fetishized. What counts is the invention, the philo-fiction that discovers and performs a convergent or integrative movement—a vector that mutates both man and wolf, eagle and sheep, or cinema and philosophy, together in a *full* (consistent and reciprocal) anthropomorphism or a *full* philosomorphism. It is always the mutation that counts.

Of course, the call upon Laruelle to justify his usage of various philosophically saturated terms such as *a priori, ordinary, empirical, immanence,* and *transcendental* is usually rebuffed by him as no more than a typical philosopher's stratagem, either in *tu quoque* mode or in the name of a disingenuous consistency, being "more Laruellean than Laruelle." Nonetheless, if we invoke the need for consistency here in extending his use of the (non-) human, it is on account of a non-philosophical *paraconsistent* consistency that aims to radicalize such words so that, at its root, in its own performance, it too is equally implicated in an autofictioning. (This

is something that Graham Priest, for one, does not perform—for he does not do as he says—being careful to immunize his approach, as "coherent," from paraconsistent explosion.) Hence, the normative call for a consistent treatment of terms actually entails nothing other than the extant fact that non-philosophy *always practices what it preaches by mutation*: it transforms itself through its own operations.[4]

Vision-in-One, cloning, DLI, and so on, in their articulation through the various vocabularies we have employed here, only provide a glimpse rather than a permanent account *(logos)* and transferable methodology. As a *permanent* account, this introduction quickly falls into performative self-contradiction (immanence), but this *fall* is itself what allows it to mutate. This, perhaps, is why Laruelle's non-philosophy, *at least as understood as a lived body of practices, or postures,* exists mostly between philosophy and the Real, between transcendent philosophies (*of* the Real) and the pure immanence (which *is* the Real). In that it transcends (and resists) those transcendencies, it has no place or position. Utopia. The *Principles of Non-Philosophy* put it as follows: "non-philosophy *has not taken place.*"[5] Doubtless, "betweenness" too has a lineage in philosophical terminology (Merleau-Pontian and phenomenological in its transcendence), so its usage (here) must mutate too—for *this* is how the imperfect always falls. As the *Anti-Badiou* proposes, "it is not necessarily a matter of new 'great philosophies' with a hegemonic vision, but at least of texts that could be called, globally, 'non-standard.' By definition, we do not entirely know what to expect of ourselves."[6]

And yet, we still do not wish to romanticize failure. So let us review our positive argument concerning the nonhuman with one final take. Ray Brassier, as we earlier heard, has pointed out that non-philosophy's identification of the Real with the human would seem to reontologize it (as an idealism or even a solipsism). He continues as follows:

> The slide from "I think according to my ultimate identity with a real that is already given" to "this real of the last-instance is the human that I am" is as precipitate as the more familiar leap from "I think" to "I am." This slide envelops what by Laruelle's own lights amounts to a decision: "I am human." But what can "being-human" mean given that the radically

in-consistent real is not? What I think I am can have no privilege vis-à-vis the identity of a real already given independently of anything I may happen to think about it. To claim that I harbour some sort of pre-ontological understanding of my own being-human is to plunge straight back into Heidegger's hermeneutics of *Dasein.* . . . The privileging of the nomenclature "man" to designate the real cannot but re-phenomenologize and re-substantialize its radical in-consistency and invest it with a minimal degree of ontological consistency.[7]

Brassier's point as regards humanizing the Real is valid at face value. But the validity weakens as soon as we understand that what is being hypothesized is not a definite logical essence but an indefinite Real identity. The fact is that Laruelle's descriptions always involve Real identities, and it is this that gives his account the ability to practice a *non-standard* humanism. Hence, the human is *never* given.

Indeed, it is arguably Brassier who has an overtly *anthropic* standard of knowing given his own faith in the objectivity of the "scientific image." Brassier practices *epistemology*—rather than a Laruellean science—and so knows what knowing is: he quantifies it, captures it as a true philosopher should in a philosophy or *logos* of knowledge (all of whose history as a scientism from the Vienna Circle onward has, ironically, been completely ignored by actual practicing scientists). Brassier is less Laruellean than Badiouian (as channeled through Wilfred Sellars): it is the matheme that ultimately counts. His own notion of "intelligence" is thereby anthropocentric and quantitative. Its scientific status is based on experimental *repeatability* and *universality* with a wholly known notion of who repeats (the social practices of human technology) within a quantified space and time (where and how often). Intelligence may be rendered in synthetic and inhuman terms, yet it remains a model of *human* intelligence that has only been extended by degrees.

This must be opposed to not-knowing who this public is, what this society is, or what the human is, according to the non-philosophical posture. This not-knowing is no mere ignorance, nor even the romantic notion of a negative capability. It is an active "degrowth" (unknowing) of epistemology by the Real—a de-philosophizing of the philosophy of knowledge. The "public," *dēmos,* or man, is undefined, so what is an *experiment* is not reduced to one kind of quality—the one deemed

"quantity." Quantity is the quality of and under control, or authority: it is the *logos* of instrumental science and reason (versus the nonstandard *scientificity* of science). Quality asks the question of "*qualis,*" "what kind are you?" Quantity, having already made up its mind as to kinds, is only interested in numbers and so asks, "*quantus*"—"how many of you are there?"

This thought of quality is not the thought of *qualia,* of qualitative essences: rather, it is the thought that leaves open the question of kinds, of what kind of people are "people." We have described Laruelle as an "actualist": on one hand, he depotentializes ontology and all philosophy, and on the other, his practice is entirely performative—it is "all execution" and "criminally performative."[8] As the quotation from *Principles of Non-Philosophy* near the start of chapter 5 stated, there are no "hinterworlds" or anything else "behind the One." For such an actualism, things are always visible in and to themselves and only invisible to certain perspectives. Indeed, "we" *make* things invisible simply because we must occupy a certain position (if only momentarily), a certain structure of regard (as opposed to the vision-in-One). Wittgenstein's behaviorism is often summed up in the phrase "nothing is hidden." This is usually taken to relate to epistemology.[9] However, in terms of a nonrepresentational perspectivism, it means that everything has its own perspective (on it), and so what *is* hidden must be due to the position of that perspective, and what is revealed must be due to a qualitative movement beyond that point of view—a postural mutation. Everything is public, but there are different forms of public, and not all of them are human. Some of these publics are hidden from each other, blinded to each other, screened off from each other. Being public does not entail being democratic (the idea that every public enjoys the same visibility). But being radically democratic, in actualist terms, means that there are always multiple publics, multiple perspectives, and multiple spaces and times that we can move among to varying extents (if we try). There are not only anthropological "people." Jaguars are people too (X = Y). It is a similar case with behaviorism: here, the body is the picture of the soul, but in a genuinely radical behaviorism (one that is consistent with itself), there is neither a best picture nor one type of soul (or body). There are multiple visibilities, certain of which render others invisible: this, again, would be a genealogy of absolutes, as immanental appearance, within a radical approach.

In performance also, the urge for a democracy of the visible and the human is evident in a number of new interventions within the field. In his "A Manifesto for Generalized Anthropomorphism," for example, Esa Kirk-kopelto has set out a model of nonhuman performance that takes the concept of anthropomorphic theater and generalizes it (beyond its own "black box") in a fashion redolent of non-philosophy on a number of fronts:

> The problem of theatre, as it is thematized here, is a problem of the whole western way of experience. It concerns both, being limited to the human figure and the limitations of the human figure. . . . Since our experience is so strongly tied to a predefined human figure, we are unable to encounter the phenomenon of human. . . . *The phenomenon of human must be liberated from the human figure.* This aim cannot be reached in any individual theatre performance. There is no one expressive solution to this. This is about a process of transformation to which this manifesto calls all those, equally and without distinction, who work with performing arts. Abandoning the model of human means that we really first turn our gaze to each other in this situation where there is no authority, ideology or ideal to supervise us anymore.[10]

The aim of such a project, he goes on to say, is to "distance theatre from that *restrained* 'anthropomorphism' which has conventionally given a negative connotation to all 'anthropomorphism,' and to do so time and again through using different means and methods." This is clearly a model oriented toward a democratic equality of methods (with no "authority . . . to supervise us anymore"). Moreover, it is also focused on *expanding* the human through its own nonstandard, "*generalised*" anthropomorphism: "as its means it has the ability to extend the human phenomenon to all existence." All the same, this is not to "turn the world into our own image" (in idealism or solipsism) but actually to allow other beings their own visibility beyond the perfect image some have created of man. As such, it hopes

> to dismantle that too perfect a picture which we have built so that beings could from now on come to encounter and address us more on their own terms, in all their unfamiliarity, in all their uniqueness which

does not trace back to our definitions and our way of being. . . . This reaching outside of the human figure is neither progress, nor a project. It is encountering something unfamiliar and non-human and opening up to it. . . . Human hope lies behind all restricted anthropomorphism, behind everything that calls itself "humanism." It lies in the decidedly non-human. What we encounter at its most beautiful in other humans is something that always goes beyond us.[11]

Like non-philosophy, Kirkkopelto's generalized anthropomorphism has no more time for that "too perfect a picture" of the human. What is "most beautiful in other humans" is other forms of human being discovered in new pictures. Likewise, in Amerindian perspectivism, as we heard it described by Viveiros de Castro, the human is discovered existing on all sides, not just "ours." What he calls "the invisible of the invisible" is the "visible," while

the other side of the other side is this side. If the body hides the soul, then the soul hides the body as well: the "soul" of the soul is the body, just like the "body" of the body is the soul. Nothing is hidden, in the end . . . because there is no ontological dualism.[12]

Nothing is ever hidden. How can we evaluate a performance, and so, at long last, a non-philosophy? By not answering but continually reiterating the questions, who are you? who is human? in words as deeds.[13] *Not answering* leads to effects in knowledge and practice rather than simply quietism. The *perfect* human falls this way: but the imperfect human, the nonhuman, is allowed to stand this way too ("you wanted to make me human, but that's what I am!"). Philosophical perfection falls, and with it also the perfect man. Yet it may well be ultimately immaterial whether humans or nonhumans fall: what counts is how they land.

PARADISE NOW; OR, THE BRIGHTEST THING IN THE WORLD

On Nonhuman Utopia

Laruelle writes, "One of the things that motivate non-philosophy is the eternal question 'what is to be done?'"[1] This study has looked at the dystopias of philosophy—its "worst places" or "positions"—in one response to Laruelle's question. In this regard, Alexander Galloway notes that Laruelle does not follow received opinion when it comes to seeing utopia as a "non-place apart from this world":

> Laruelle's utopia is a non-world, yet it is a non-world that is entirely rooted in the present. Laruelle's non-world is, in fact, entirely real. Revealing his gnostic tendencies, Laruelle's non-standard real is rooted *in* matter, even if the standard world already lays claim to that same space. The non-standard method simply asserts the real in parallel with the world.[2]

Such a coexistent utopia is not a liberal conformism but the hope and hypothesis of a world that can be *superposed* on this one as both invention and discovery. As Laruelle puts it in *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy,* "even hatred of the World has its limits; it is still about saving the World from the World."[3] Indeed, Galloway further points out that the non-philosophical utopia is not concerned with constructing "bigger and better castles in the sky, transcendental and sufficient for all. Rather, utopia is always finite, generic, immanent, and real." Moreover, Laruelle's utopianism is not a state but a method, a practice:

> If indeed utopia perished as narrative or world or image, it was reborn as method. . . . To refuse the philosophical decision is to refuse the world, and thus to discover the non-standard universe is to discover the non-place of utopia.[4]

So what, finally, is in that "non-standard universe," and how might it assist our utopian-method—the "what is to be done?" or (waking) "dream of Eden"—that is peculiar to non-philosophy? Matthew Goulish, cofounder of the performance group Goat Island, has recently written of *The Brightest Thing in the World.* As he tells us toward the end of this work, the question of what precisely is "the brightest thing in the world" was answered in 1919 by the diarist and naturalist W. N. P. Barbellion (aka Bruce Frederick Cummings). Goulish discusses Barbellion's argument (made soon before his death in his own book, *Enjoying Life and Other Literary Remains*) as follows:

> He prefaced that book with an epigram from Amiel: *I love everything, and detest one thing only—the hopeless imprisonment of my being within a single arbitrary form. . . .* Now he devotes what he knows to be his final breath to setting the natural history record straight. The brightest thing in the world is not, as Rupert Brooke has claimed, a leaf in sunlight. It is a ctenophore, a ribbed or combed jellyfish. Barbellion fixes his gaze on this obscure miniscule creature, whose name derives from the Greek for "comb bearer," and we see his naturalism achieve quiet transfiguration. What exhalation escapes the suffering human form? What angel of the light at last ascends? Only this: the jellyfish.[5]

The perfect human falls as the animal ctenophore ascends. The brightest thing in the world is a jellyfish, a *méduse,* a mutating animal (rather than a "single arbitrary form"—or Kant's unchanging animal shape). Laruelle's philo-fictional *poisson-eau,* the fish that is both immanent in and transcendent to water, serves the same transfigurative role. But note that Barbellion's brightest thing in the world, a ctenophore, is a very special jellyfish, being *bioluminescent*: it is a deep-sea creature that invents its own light within the darkest place in the world. It does not reflect the light of the sun but generates light immanently within its black universe (which is aptly named the "Midnight Zone" by marine biologists).

Beyond such seemingly allegorical animals, we know that in this world, too, what counts as human is itself somewhat "*arbitrary*" and that our ability to empathize with the suffering and struggles of other humans, those called "animal" or "nonhuman," is sometimes a mark of

our "humaneness." According to J. M. Coetzee's Elizabeth Costello, "there are people who have the capacity to imagine themselves as someone else, there are people who have no such capacity . . . and there are people who have the capacity but choose not to exercise it."[6] The philo-fiction of a *poisson-eau* or the Real of ctenophora is a call or advocacy for a nonhuman utopia of immanent light, a light that the philosophical sun cannot claim to be its own. Non-philosophy is oriented in this same direction. It sees the enlightened norms and authority of philosophy as precisely the means by which the world is made unequal and uninhabitable for humans and nonhumans alike.[7] Non-philosophy consequently constructs a black world of radical equality that can coexist alongside this standard one:

> Stop sending your vessels through the narrow cosmological corridor. . . . Cease having them compete with light, for your rockets too can realise the more-than-psychic, postural mutation, and shift from light to universe black, which is no longer a colour; from cosmic colour to postural and subjective black.[8]

In the standard position, light creates the perfect, absolute exception: be it in *thought,* where (some) *others'* thoughts come to be seen as parochial, nonessential, or even idiotic and unthinking (leaving Philosophical Thought to stand absolute and alone); or in *logic,* where some coexisting, plural truths come to be seen as only contradictions (conflicting truths) or even trivial (leaving absolute Truth to stand alone); or in *behavior,* where some expressive bodies come to be seen as simple mechanical events or even mindless movements (leaving absolute Mind alone); or in *animality,* where some humans come to be seen as only animals or even objects (leaving *Homo sapiens* standing alone); or in *performance,* where some actions come to be seen as merely transparent acts or even artless functions (leaving Art alone absolute). Light creates the inequality, the withdrawn perfection. In the nonstandard posture, "universe black" removes that absolute exception and allows all to stand *and* fall together as imperfect equals.[9]

194   On one hand, Flusser can be quite flexible and nonanthropocentric about
      what, say, thought means qua "reflection" (see ibid., 81ff.), while, on the
      other hand, remaining quite rigid in his biological identifications (of
      the human, the animal, and the vampire squid as a human analogue).
      This duality reflects the different orientations of the text, some of them
      directed toward putative biological facts, others more toward myth and
      fable, a "'fictitious science' . . . the overcoming of scientific objectivity
      in the service of a concretely human knowledge" (123). Whether the
      text is able to combine the two in one remains in doubt.

195   Ibid., 31, 38.

196   Ibid., 46.

197   Cited in Finger et al., *Vilém Flusser,* 120.

198   Flusser, *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis,* 54.

199   To be precise, Flusser thinks of the amorous posture of *Vampyroteuthis
      Infernalis* as a synthesis of love and war, but this is only due to a "double
      repression" without which its posture would express love all the more
      clearly. Ibid., 54–55.

200   See Rancière, *Ignorant Schoolmaster,* 101: "One can teach what one
      doesn't know. A poor and ignorant father can thus begin educating
      his children: *something must be learned and all the rest related to it, on
      this principle: everyone is of equal intelligence.*" This is from the opening
      of the final chapter of *Ignorant Schoolmaster,* whose unfortunate, but
      unexplained, title is "The Emancipator and His Monkey."

201   Laruelle, *En tant qu'un,* 250.

202   Laruelle, "A Summary of Non-Philosophy," 299.

5. PERFORMING THE IMPERFECT HUMAN

1   Laruelle, *Théorie des Identités,* 92.

2   Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* 197.

3   Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia,* 148–49.

4   Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* 3; Gangle, *François Laruelle's
    Philosophies of Difference,* 135.

5   Laruelle, *What is Non-Philosophy?,* 233.

6   Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia*, 148; Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-
    Philosophy,* 4, 172.

7   Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy,* 168, my italics.

8   Laruelle, *Intellectuals and Power,* 38. See also Laruelle, "I, the Phi-
    losopher, Am Lying," 42: "Because if it is a question of doing what the
    authors have done rather than of saying what they have said, perhaps
    there still remains one last situation they have not foreseen: that of really

doing what they said they did or what they have only done by saying, mixing doing and saying once more under the name of 'creation,' as all philosophers have. It remains to do or to practice, solely to practice, the immanence that they say and which is perhaps still only that of philosophical saying: it remains to practice immanence with regard to their saying-of-immanence."

9   See Laruelle, *En tant qu'un,* 40.

10 Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy,* 167.

11 Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* 178. See also ibid., 175: "Vision-in-One or the Real can thus be understood starting from 'performativity.' This term is at least a datum given by ordinary language philosophy; it must be transposed and generalized here outside of the linguistic sphere under certain conditions of work proper to non-philosophy in order to characterize the radical kind of immanence, compared to the efficacy of language or to the action of Being in a regime of logos."

12 Ibid., 176, 177.

13 Laruelle et al., *Dictionary,* 55.

14 See Brandom, *Between Saying and Doing,* and Brandom, *Making It Explicit,* 496: "The thesis is that the *representational* dimension of propositional content is conferred on thought and talk by the *social* dimension of the practice of giving and asking for reasons."

15 Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy,* 31.

16 Laruelle, "Non-Philosophy as Heresy," 280–81.

17 Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia,* 5.

18 See Davies, *Art as Performance,* x: "Artworks in the different arts, I argue, must be conceived not as the products (decontextualized or contextualized) of generative performances, but as the performances themselves. Vermeer's *Art of Painting,* then, represents not a possible performance productive of a work, but a moment in the unfolding of a possible work."

19 See Weber, *Theatricality as Medium*; Rancière, *Emancipated Spectator*; Badiou, *Rhapsody for the Theatre.*

20 Cull, "Performance Philosophy," 1. See also 4–5.

21 Ibid., 15. She continues: "according to a non-philosophical perspective, philosophy and theatre would be realigned as equal yet different forms of thought—embedded in the whole of the Real, with neither being granted any special powers to exhaust the nature of the other, nor indeed the nature of the whole in which they take part" (18).

22 Smith, "Funny Games," 137.

23 Ibid., 121.

24 Ibid., 137.

25 Lynes, "Perversions of Modesty," 609.

26 Kaprow, "Manifesto," 292.
27 Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life,* 195. Kaprow makes this statement in respect to his earlier work on "Happenings."
28 Ibid., xxix.
29 Ibid., 98.
30 See Cull, *Theatres,* 174–75: "Rather than being a conceptual decision, 'Performing Life' is an aspect of the process of what Kaprow calls 'un-arting': a new mode of research and development in the preparation of works, distinct from the conventional idea of the artist at work in her studio—especially if the studio is a place detached from daily routines of eating and sleeping and so forth. Kaprow's concept of 'performing everyday life' names a research process in which the un-artist engages before creating an Activity."
31 Ibid., 154, 157. Cull goes on as follows: "What matters most to Kaprow are the experiential products of the interference of the processual in the symbolic, the immanent in the transcendent, in the event of participation itself, not what the Activity looks like from a position outside of it" (157).
32 Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life,* 98.
33 Schechner, *Performance Studies,* 1–2.
34 Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology,* 35.
35 Eckersall, "Australian Performance Studies Marginally Off Centre," 119.
36 Schneider, "Reactuals," 140–41.
37 Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology,* 37.
38 See Bottoms, "In Defense of the String Quartet."
39 See Lampe, "Rachel Rosenthal Creating Her Selves," 299.
40 Kirby, "On Acting and Not-Acting," 3.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 4.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid., 6.
46 Ibid., 7.
47 Ibid.
48 See ibid., 8–9.
49 Ibid., 6.
50 Cull, *Theatres,* 235.
51 Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou,* 220–21.
52 Puchner, "Theater in Modernist Thought," 524.
53 Laruelle, *Intellectuals and Power,* 38–39. See also Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* 191: "It is precisely this trait of radical actuality or Performed-without-Performation, of being-given identically without

excess or reserve, which renders the real-One absolutely invisible for philosophy."

54   Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* 180.

55   Ibid., 241.

56   Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia,* 235.

57   Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy,* 168, first italics mine.

58   A case in point is Andrew McGettigan's review of *Philosophy and the Moving Image: Refractions of Reality*—which attempted a Laruellean study of film and film-philosophy (as the philosophy *immanent* to cinema). Here it is clear that only German idealist philosophy, as read by McGettigan, can say what art is and what it requires from philosophy. McGettigan's disquiet with the non-philosophical approach rests entirely on his own clear intolerance for such a democratization of philosophy—for anything outside of the Hegel–Adorno axis of thought is simply not relevant, either to film or to art in general (however that is defined). The irony here is striking: McGettigan writes as a philosopher on behalf of art (not just cinema)—he announces that "those already engaging with the arts have no need of this book" even though he has neither any art practice of his own nor any knowledge of film studies. Without an understanding of the generic concepts of art arising out of "the richer strain drawing from German Idealism," and without understanding "mediation," such work cannot offer anything of value. However, it is not just this book but *any* work of film-philosophy that is at fault on this score, according to McGettigan. Film-philosophy cannot be said to be a proper "subdiscipline" and so must be subsumed within what has been said about art in general by those in the German idealist tradition, that is, *philosophy—his own philosophy is particular.* McGettigan's resort to art in general is especially ignorant of his chosen tradition, however, in that he accuses *Philosophy and the Moving Image* of having occluded film with theory, even though Adorno can hardly be said to have ever done otherwise.

59   Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction,* 14.

60   Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy,* 122.

61   Ibid.

62   This is in contrast to the artist or idiot, as Laruelle writes in *Philosophies of Difference,* 179: "They [philosophers] seek the One precisely because they have not found it, and *they will never find anything but their own hallucination. They neither find nor become anything other than what they already are: them-'selves'*" (my italics).

63   Galloway, "Laruelle and Art," 231.

64   Ibid., 232.

65 Laruelle, *Concept of Non-Photography,* 71, my italics. See also ibid., 86: "One should not think, however, that the work of artists is for us a mere occasional cause, that it is secondary. It is rather that it is the symptom or the indication of a theoretical discovery that has not yet produced all its effects in art itself and above all in its theory." Hence it is very much an overstatement when John Roberts says (in his review of *Concept of Non-Photography*) that Laruelle hopes to "introduce some of the categories and terms of non-philosophy into the theory of photography and representation" (134). Quite the opposite, in fact. See Roberts, "Flat-Lining of Metaphysics," and my reply, Mullarkey, "A + A = A."

66 Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction,* 19.

67 Ibid., 13.

68 Ibid., 2, 5.

69 Laruelle, "First Choreography," 147.

70 Groys, *Introduction to Antiphilosophy,* viii, xi.

71 Ibid., xiii. By "metanoia," Groys means "the radical 'change of mind' through which a subject rejects everything that connected this subject to the 'old,' ordinary, limited life perspective and opens itself up to a new, universal, infinite perspective of philosophical evidence" (ix).

72 Ibid., 100, 162.

73 Heathfield, *Live,* 11.

74 Forte, "Women's Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism," 224.

75 Reinelt, "Politics of Discourse," 202.

76 Heathfield, *Live,* 13.

77 Rainer, *No Manifesto.*

78 Metzger, *Manifesto for Auto-Destructive Art.*

79 Laruelle, "Transvaluation of the Transcendental Method," 468–69.

80 One might contrast this with Derrida's method of putting under erasure, which still emphasizes absence over presence in a reversal.

81 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature,* I, 4, 7.

82 Brassier, "Axiomatic Heresy," 34.

83 Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* 198–99.

84 Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy,* 75, my italics.

85 Gangle, *François Laruelle's Philosophies of Difference,* 177, 206. Gangle refers this "*radical that-ness*" to "Non-Thetic-Transcendence," which Laruelle would later reinterpret as cloning.

86 Derrida, *Points . . . Interviews 1974–1994,* 11, cited in Gangle, *François Laruelle's Philosophies of Difference,* 128.

87 Laruelle, *Philosophies of Difference,* 108.

88   Laruelle, *Théorie des Identités,* 312–13; Laruelle, *En tant qu'un,* 242.

89   Laruelle, *En tant qu'un,* 225: "My project . . . [is] to introduce philosophy to heretical experience."

90   Kolozova, *Lived Revolution,* 27, 33.

91   Laruelle, "Non-Philosophy, Weapon of Last Defence," 251.

92   Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace,* 204.

93   Fichte, *Science of Knowledge,* 16.

94   Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou,* xxxiii.

95   Ibid., xxxii.

96   Laruelle, "Non-Philosophy, Weapon of Last Defence," 251.

97   Mackay and Laruelle, "Introduction," 28.

98   Gangle, *François Laruelle's Philosophies of Difference,* 172. So, when Gangle elsewhere writes ("Laruelle and Ordinary Life," 61–62) that "the philosophical organisation and legitimisation of the world as a mixture of immanence and transcendence (or as a correlation of reality and thought) would thus involve, in particular, an *ad hominem* attack against what such a world cannot encompass," it is still not a personalized attack but a generic one (against a world).

99   See Galloway, "Laruelle, Anti-Capitalist," 202. McGettigan, characteristically negative, describes it as tending to "solipsism." McGettigan, "Fabrication Defect," 41.

100 Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* 93. See also 95: "To this divided and thus split Ego, Ego-of-Ego or Self-of-Self, at once under- and over-determined by the onto-cogitative plane, we therefore oppose the Ego absolutely *given* without reference, even of 'immediate negation,' to a universal horizon; we call it Ego-in-Ego, Self-in-Self, the *in* being charged with signifying its already reduced state or with annulling the philosophical splitting."

101 Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou,* xxxix.

102 Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* 234, 273.

103 Ibid., 223.

104 Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy,* 247.

105 Ibid., 30.

106 Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou,* 232.

107 Galloway, "Review of *Théorie générale des victimes,*" 104.

108 Given this lack of necessity to do non-philosophy, and that it could have been otherwise, one might thereby arrive at answers to such questions as, Why haven't the "obvious" dilemmas of representational philosophy led everyone to Laruelle? Or, Does non-philosophy need standard philosophy? Questions of implication and inference, of leading and following, are contingently (unconditionally) behavioral and not of

logical necessity. Indeed, "what follows," even as logical consequence, is never necessary. It was not necessary, for instance, that, when writing this study, the language of the author's name reverted from the English "Mullarkey"—a homophone for "nonsense" in its bastardized form—to the original Irish, "Ó Maoilearca," which was discovered to translate ultimately as "follower of the animal." But it was a happy coincidence.

109   Turner, *Anthropology of Performance,* 81.

110   As Marvin Carlson writes, "animals are not simply negotiating social situations, but are knowingly repeating certain actions for physical or emotional rewards, a process that, to me at least, seems to have important features in common with human performance." Carlson, *Performance,* 200. Even Richard Schechner has argued that "performance is an inclusive term. Theater is only one node on a continuum that reaches from the ritualizations of animals (including humans) through performance in everyday life." Schechner, *Performance Theory,* xvii.

111   Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy,* 227.

112   Hjort, "Style and Creativity in *The Five Obstructions,*" 25.

113   Rodriguez, "Constraint, Cruelty, and Conversation," 54.

114   Ibid., 55.

115   Laruelle, *Future Christ,* 122.

116   Laruelle, *Principles of Philosophy,* 291.

117   See Harman, "Review of *Philosophies of Difference.*"

118   Laruelle, *Concept of Non-Photography,* viii.

CONCLUSION

1   Laruelle, *En Tant qu'un,* 37.

2   Read, *Theatre, Intimacy, and Engagement,* 81.

3   What we were concerned about in the introduction as a "threat" (an explosion "whereby all things become performative") can now be seen as an opportunity.

4   In an earlier essay, I argued that Laruelle's transcendentalism was intrinsically spatial and so opposed to the temporality of mutation. My amended reading is that, in the spirit of his transvaluation of the transcendental *as autodestructive,* it already has mutation built into it. The duration of this temporality, of its mutation, is not fixed objectively but set locally by each practice. Before something mutates, it must appear as an identity long enough for some to register "it" as a mutation, at least momentarily. Mullarkey, "1 + 1 = 1."

5   Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* 266.

6   Laruelle, *Anti-Badiou,* 61.

7   Brassier, *Nihil Unbound,* 137. See also Brassier, "Liquider l'homme une fois pour toutes."

8   Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy,* 180; Laruelle, *Intellectuals and Power,* 149. See Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy,* chapter 4.

9   Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 128.

10 Kirkkopelto, "A Manifesto for Generalized Anthropomorphism."

11 Ibid.

12 Viveiros de Castro, *Cosmologies,* 143.

13 Finally, this leads us to the question, which we can only mention here, of how to orient oneself toward objects *as* subjects as well as those subjects that appear to us *as* objects—to the problems of panpsychism, and to the purported anthropomorphism attendant to that stance. If there really is a "flat" thought of objects—a "democracy of things"—how is it that only *some* objects appear to other objects as subjects? What use is there for this chauvinism (both as a material chauvinism contra some objects and as a "spiritual" chauvinism pro some others)? How can we create, immanently, a "genealogy of the absolute," of absolutism, of hierarchy, a structure of *disregard*? One could simply discount such hierarchies as *mere* chauvinism, that is, as only prejudicial error or illusion. However, I hope to show in a later work that, for a nonstandard approach to philosophy, this option is not available: everything is included within Laruelle's "radical immanence" and nobody is left behind, including the idiots (indeed, especially the idiots). So, if nothing is outside of the Real (a kind of monism of flat *thought* rather than a flat *ontology* that begs the question), this includes these dualities (chauvinisms) as moments within immanence itself—the "immanental," as Laruelle also calls it. This is not merely to *tolerate* intolerance in some kind of Latour-meets-Lévinas thought experiment, nor is it to *deconstruct* tolerance (as one might deconstruct "hospitality," say, through aporetic reasoning): it is the attempt to explain or realize intolerance within the Real as a kind or behavior or orientation.

CODA

1   Laruelle, "From the First to the Second Non-Philosophy," 321.

2   Galloway, "Laruelle and Art," 235.

3   Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia,* 250.

4   Galloway, "Laruelle and Art," 236.

5   Goulish, *Brightest Thing in the World,* 64.

6   Coetzee, *Lives of Animals,* 35.

7   By contrast, according to Novalis, philosophy is homesickness—but

only for humans. Agnes Heller glosses this adage as "the longing for a world in which philosophy is at home." But she then continues to say that, so long as philosophy wants to "give a norm to the world, it finds itself at home in morality and in comprehension." Such normativity is, for Novalis and Heller at least, to make "*the world to be a home for humanity.*" See Heller, *Radical Philosophy,* 134.

8   Laruelle, "Universe Black in the Human Foundations of Colour," 407.

9   We have only glimpsed the genealogy of such absolute inequalities and their radical inversion here, offering a mere outline of these structures of regard and disregard (with all the deflations of "only," "merely," and "simple" attaching to the latter): rendering that outline with other images must remain the goal of a future work in non-philosophy.