

Quantum Queer: Towards a Non-Standard Queer Theory¹

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Abstract:

This essay looks at some potentially fruitful lines of correspondence between Laruelle's non-philosophy and gender, feminist and queer theories. Drawing on the work of leading Laruelle scholars I seek to outline some highly tentative principles for a non-standard queer theory which would help us to think about democracy, the human, performativity, sexual difference and some other crucial questions for current queer theorizing.

Keywords: Laruelle, queer theory, non-philosophy, flat ontology, the human, sexual difference, the stranger.

Black Box

The French non-philosopher François Laruelle writes that:

Like an artisan, engineer, or designer, I am going to attempt to construct in front of you a so-called apparatus of photo-fiction ... [I]t is an exercise in the construction of a theoretical object, and is thus transparent, but which will function more like a black box.²

This paper is my latest attempt to bring Laruelle's non-philosophy and queer theory into productive conversation with each other.³ I am going to attempt to construct in front of you a so-called apparatus of queer-fiction, a theoretical object which will not seek to render either queer theory or non-philosophy transparent, but rather to allow them to function more like black boxes. With that disclaimer in place, it must be said that the aim of the present article will be to demonstrate that Laruelle's non-philosophy has much to offer to queer theory, feminist thought and gender studies. Ian James' recent book *The New French Philosophy* (2012) begins its chapter on Laruelle by exclaiming:

Of all the recent attempts made by French philosophers to effect a break or rupture within contemporary thought, there is perhaps none more radical than that made by François Laruelle. Since the early 1980s, Laruelle has sought nothing less than a decisive break from the entirety of philosophy itself. His thinking of radical immanence and of what he calls "The One" (*l'Un*) unequivocally demands that thought leave the terrain of philosophy, that its structuring principles and fundamental operations be suspended in a new discursive gesture, a new kind of thinking, theory or knowledge. This new discursive gesture, theory or knowledge takes the name of "non-philosophy."⁴

Three texts devoted to charting the latest developments in French philosophy (by John Mullarkey, Alexander Galloway and the above-mentioned by James)⁵ list Laruelle as an important voice in post-continental thought. It is only recently, however, that Laruelle's non-philosophy has gained popularity in the Anglophone world and so far his work has made very little impact (with the exception of Katerina Kolozova's important body of scholarship) on feminist and queer thinking.⁶ This is despite the fact that Laruelle has written a book on minorities, essays on sexuality, gender and

¹ A version of this article was first presented at the "Ohrid Summer Institute for Sexualities, Cultures, and Politics" in Macedonia on August 17 2013. I would like to thank Stanimir Panayotov and Slavco Dimitrov for the invitation and for their thoughtful responses.

² François Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics* (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2012), 11.

³ See my "Towards a Non-Queer Theory" in Elahe Haschemi Yekani, Eveline Kilian and Beatrice Michaelis (eds) *Queer Futures: Reconsidering Ethics, Activism and the Political* (Farnham: Ashgate Press, 2013), xiii-xxv.

⁴ Ian James, *The New French Philosophy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 158.

⁵ John Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline* (London: Continuum, 2006), 125-156; Alexander Galloway, "François Laruelle, or The Secret," *French Theory Today: An Introduction to Possible Futures* (New York: The Public School, 2010).

⁶ See for example Kolozova's *The Lived Revolution: Solidarity with the Body in Pain as the New Political Universal* (Skopje: Euro-Balkan Press, 2010).

queerness, and given over substantial time—from Philosophy II to Philosophy V— to the figures of the victim and the stranger.⁷ In their preface to their recent translation of *Principles of Non-Philosophy* (2013) Anthony Paul Smith and Nicola Rubczak correct the misunderstanding that Laruelle’s is a “non-humanist” philosophy (and by extension that it is masculinist or heteronormative). They explain that what we find in his non-standard philosophy is not “a privileging of some claimed universal human being that is in reality taken as a heteronormative, white, healthy, male.

But instead the question of the human is open in non-philosophy.”⁸ Drawing on the work of Smith, Mullarkey, Kolozova (and other Laruelle scholars) this article will seek to develop some *highly provisional* principles for a non-queer theory which would take up Laruelle’s non-standard philosophy in order to think about democracy, the human, performativity, sexual difference, among other pressing concerns for current queer theorizing. A non-queer theory would not be a negation but rather what Mullarkey and Smith describe as an “amplification” and “mutation” which would re-open and re-frame the philosophical contexts for thinking queerness and the real.⁹

This article represents a preliminary attempt to sketch out a chapter on Laruelle for a book I am working on called *Queering Speculative Realism*. The impetus for the book came from my sense that there was something compatible about the projects of Queer Theory—which I have been writing about since the mid 1990s—and the newly emergent field in continental philosophy called Speculative Realism. Since 2006 we have witnessed the rapid rise to popularity of this new branch of (post)continental philosophy which, at least for now, goes under the name Speculative Realism. The term was coined by Ray Brassier—a figure largely responsible for bringing attention to Laruelle in the Anglophone world¹⁰—who has subsequently distanced himself from it denouncing it as an “on-line orgy of stupidity.”¹¹ This dismissal—attractive to the queer theorist in me for its suggestions of promiscuousness, stupidity and failure at attaining the level of the serious—should remind us that Teresa de Lauretis who coined the term queer theory in 1990 famously ditched it four years later as a vacuous creature of the publishing industry. Fascinatingly De Lauretis has more recently returned to queer seeing in it a stubborn vitality.¹² For me much of this perceived vitality, ineradicability and stickability is attributable to what I would call the *speculative* energies of queer theory. My sense is that there is a promiscuous entanglement between queer thinking and speculative realism and this is, at a superficial level, etymological given that queer has connotations of weirdness, strangeness, oddness and there being something *unheimlich* about it. The French feminist philosopher Hélène Cixous was one of the first to draw attention to this significant etymological tangle when she noted that there is something queer about Freud’s uncanny and, going further, that there is something uncanny about the queer (or queerness).¹³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick was just as quick to spot these etymological threads. Indeed she referred in *Tendencies* to queer as being “relational and strange.”¹⁴

Cixous was right to suggest that queerness occupies some shadowy position between life and death given the many pronouncements of the death of the field (Brassier’s attempt to kill off Speculative Realism is just one more such attempt to bruit the demise of that which can yet be barely said to exist). In a 2011 state of the field report on queer theory Michael Warner opines that “queer theory now has the shape of a searching and still largely undigested conversation, rich enough to have many branches, some different enough to be incommensurate with one another” and that “queer theory in this broader sense now has so many branches, and has developed in so many disciplines, that it resists synthesis.”¹⁵ Warner’s mood seems (unlike Brassier’s) nothing but hopeful: “At its best, queer theory has always also been something else” and, by his lights, the time of queer theory, our time, is very much a time of promise as queer theory branches out and extends its flexuous lines everywhere. It miscegenates as it feels its way forward toward, gestures at, another future, other futures, futures which are incalculable. I would add to Warner’s claim about queer theory’s always being “something else” by saying that at its best queer theory has always been *somewhere* else

⁷ One reason may be that Laruelle’s *Le Principe de Minorité* (1981), *Une Biographie de L’Homme Ordinaire: Des Autorités et des Minorités* (1985), *Théorie des Identités* (1992), *Théorie des Etrangers* (1995), *Ethique de L’Etranger* (2000) and *Théorie Générale des Victimes* (2012) remain untranslated into English.

⁸ Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith, “Cloning the Untranslatable: Translator’s Introduction” in *Principles of Non-Philosophy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), xv.

⁹ John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith, “Introduction: The Non-Philosophical Inversion: Laruelle’s Knowledge Without Domination” in *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 16.

¹⁰ See Ray Brassier, *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 118-149.

¹¹ Ray Brassier and Marcin Rychter, “I am a Nihilist Because I Still Believe in Truth.” Interview, *Kronos*, March 4 2011, <http://www.kronos.org.pl/index.php?23151,896>.

¹² Teresa DeLauretis, “Queer Texts, Bad Habits, and the Issue of a Future,” *GLQ* 17.2/3 (2011): 243-263.

¹³ See Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 42-43.

¹⁴ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), xii.

¹⁵ Michael Warner, “Queer and Then?” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 1 2011, <http://chronicle.com/article/QueerThen-/130161/>

(Laruelle might say it is a “world-thought”). José Muñoz asserts in *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (2009) that “[q]ueerness should and could be about a desire for another way of being in both the world and time, a desire that resists mandates to accept that which is not enough.”¹⁶ In detaching from the hegemonies of US dominated queer theory and laterally exploring its elsewhere(s) we can begin to desire queer theory as a world-building project again. One such elsewhere or world-thought is, I would argue, Laruelle’s non-philosophy.

In words which echo Laruelle’s in *Photo-Fiction* (2012) (as we shall see) Muñoz asserts that queer and its attendant political aspirations are promissory: “I argue that queerness does not yet exist. I instead offer the proposition that queerness is an ideality or a figuration of a mode of being in the world that is not yet here.”¹⁷ He explains that “a queer politics of the incommensurable” or “queer politics of life” is “most graspable to us as a *sense* rather than as a politic” and he proposes “an understanding of *queerness as a sense of the incalculable* and, simultaneously, *the incalculable sense of queerness*.”¹⁸ This is, he asserts, a profound challenge to calcified terms, ones which we like to think of as set in stone: identity, politics, the human, the very terms and conceptual frames which queer theory and Laruellian non-philosophy seek to upend and decenter. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen’s essay “Queering the Inorganic” thrives on these very theoretical instabilities and celebrates the fact that “fugitive vectors are in fact queer theory’s strengths.”¹⁹ But he worries about another kind of stalling of queer theory’s mobility, that of its often unquestioned anthropocentrism: “as a verb, as an action, queer holds limitless possibilities for unanticipated conjugations. Yet the queer domains I have been sketching so far harbour a recurring and perhaps inescapable limit: anthropocentricity, an unfolding of the world from a human point of view.”²⁰ He wonders then: “what if queer theory were to lodge the nonhuman firmly within the sexual? What kind of queer domains, queer homes, queer ecologies (from *oikos*, house) might open?”²¹ These questions were ones already asked in Noreen Giffney and Myra Hird’s *Queering the Non/Human* (2008)²² but Cohen (who wrote the afterword to that collection) goes a little beyond them: “can we have not just a queer non/human, but a queer in/organic?” Indeed he asks: “can we imagine a zōē-egalitarian ethics, where zōē indicates not just bare or animal life but a life force that vivifies all materiality, without caring whether it is made from biotic carbon, is endowed with organs, possesses DNA?”²³ Laruelle’s work provides one possible answer as we shall see shortly.

Cohen’s questions and arguments for the motility of stone and a more generously envisioned zōēpolitics are concrete instances of what Jack Halberstam terms “queer betrayals” insofar as they generate “counter-intuitive ... forms of queer knowing” and “the road to oppositional forms of being and knowing” must pass through “the vexed territories of betrayal” and “disloyalty.”²⁴ For Halberstam queer betrayal must “flirt with and risk engaging homophobic logics”²⁵ and for some readers, not very careful ones to be sure, Cohen’s displacement of the centrality of the human will seem like the ultimate betrayal. But Halberstam is clear on this point: “Betrayal in Bersani’s work, like failure in my work, like ‘aberration’ in [Roderick] Ferguson’s work, and like violence in Chandan Reddy’s, does much more than just offer a perverse reading of the human; instead Bersani’s version of betrayal unmakes the queer project itself and demands that we let it collapse under the weight of its own contradictions.”²⁶

Queer Theory Meets Non-Philosophy

Unmaking the queer project itself and allowing it to collapse under the weight of its own contradictions might sound terribly negative. But we could argue, by turning to Laruelle’s non-philosophy, that this crumbling of the concrete conceptual edifice of queer theory is precisely what will allow for and carve open an expanded queer theory in (and as) the future. In her forthcoming book *The Cut of the Real* (2014) Katerina Kolozova inaugurates a long overdue conversation between Laruelle’s non-philosophy and feminist theory.²⁷ She explains that “[g]etting to the roots, the ‘radical’ theoretical position, at least the one argued for by this particular text, would consist in questioning the content and mechanisms of auto-constitution and auto-legitimization inherent in the founding conceptual constructs of one’s

¹⁶ José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 96.

¹⁷ José Esteban Muñoz, “Race, Sex, and the Incommensurate: Gary Fisher with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick” in Yekani, Kilian and Michaelis (eds) *Queer Futures*, 103.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁹ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “Queering the Inorganic” in Yekani, Kilian and Michaelis (eds) *Queer Futures*, 149.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 151.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

²² Noreen Giffney and Myra Hird (eds) *Queering the Non/Human* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

²³ Cohen, “Queering the Inorganic,” 153

²⁴ Jack Halberstam, “Queer Betrayals,” in Yekani, Kilian and Michaelis (eds) *Queer Futures*, 177-178.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 180.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

²⁷ Katerina Kolozova, *The Cut of the Real: Subjectivity in Poststructuralist Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming 2014).

own theoretical discourse.” Kolozova’s own theoretical discourse, which she heretically questions, is contemporary gender theory and her aim is to call “into question the putative truths” which “function as axioms within that discourse.” For queer theory it is the putative truths of identity, being, life, politics, the human and so on which get undermined and this “effect of undermining seems to be always and as a rule understood as destructive, rather than as a gesture that brings forth a problematic aspect ... without dismissing it altogether.” Kolozova sees negativity as potentially fruitful or productive and goes on to say that “questioning from within of a particular discourse contributes to its conceptual vitality and to the re-invigoration of the doctrine it underlies. My aim here is to open up from within their own discursive horizon certain questions pertaining to the axiomatic structures that underlie gender theory.” In

putting into question or under suspension the “axiomatic structures” which undergird queer theory and subsequently re-invigorating them, “the goal is not,” Kolozova cautions, “to attain definitive and irrefutable solutions, but merely to propose a few stimulating examples of questioning. Accordingly, the ambition is reduced to the mere exercise of an awakening of thought from the rigidity of doctrine and to the emancipatory move of stepping out—albeit for an instant—from the scholastic enclosure which constrains the discourse of contemporary gender theory.” These stepping stones on the way to stepping out “may result *at least* in hinting at a critically new positioning of thought, in moving toward something more radically different,” something which lies beyond dichotomous thinking (the current relationality/anti-sociality debate in queer studies, for example). Here Kolozova echoes Halberstam directly: “in order to enable the release of thought from the grasp of dichotomy, it seems necessary to grant oneself *the right of disloyalty* to the school of thinking one adheres to [my emphasis].”

Kolozova offers a way out of such aporetic situations in which neither queer nor politics offers epistemological certainty by suggesting we turn to Laruelian non-philosophy:

[O]ne of the possible approaches to such re-positioning of the thinker is the critical situating of thought provided by François Laruelle’s non-philosophy which consists in a theoretical gesture of radical stepping out of any sort of *discursive* autoreferentiality. This means performing a doctrine-unattached (without a pre-emptive theoretical argument of corroboration and discursive legitimization) leap of abandonment of the enclosure of thought within the tradition of a certain discourse and the (epistemological, ideological) obligations of adherence. The leap itself, made on the basis of a mere ‘non-’without the knowledge of any pre-existing discursive grounding, is a leap of and into uncertainty.

Laruelle’s non-philosophy offers a way out of the aporias we so often find ourselves in, ones which are seemingly impassable, and these moments of *productive disloyalty* allow us to exit what Kolozova calls “the binary clench:” “Laruelle’s *Principles of Non-Philosophy* is an attempt to invent a mode of thinking which is outside the aporetic labyrinth, to confer a possibility of thinking in a non-aporetic situation.” The kind of non-dichotomous thinking Laruelle argues for instantiates a radical gesture of stepping out and might be one answer to the myopic, auto-referential, narcissistic perception US dominated queer theory currently has of itself as self-sufficient. What I am gently pushing toward is a *non-queer theory* where the non- is not to be misunderstood as negative. As Rocco Gangle explains in his “Translator’s Introduction” to Laruelle’s *Philosophies of Difference: A Critical Introduction to Non-Philosophy* (2010): “it is important to emphasize that it is not in any sense anti- or counter- philosophical. It is a broadening or generalizing of philosophy rather than an opposition or antagonism to it. Which is not to say that a strong, critical element ... is not set upon philosophy by non-philosophy in an especially rigorous way.”²⁸

In his preface to Kolozova’s *The Cut of the Real* (2014) it is of huge significance that Laruelle himself refers to *queer* as the “radical” of gender (in his sense of “radical” which we have already seen). Here is his concluding pair of paragraphs:

Finally it becomes possible for the determination of the *queer*, which seems to sit awkwardly with the classical sexual distributions, to be re-appropriated provided that it is inserted into the generic matrix and its conceptual and effective levels are changed. Sexed genders are affected by the imaginary number that is the condition for vectoriality, the matrix itself, or the knowledge of generic matrix is entirely [*globalement*] indexed on one such number, somehow inclined by generic humanity which we have called the fading or disempowering of sexual sufficiency that is not its negation and no longer a simple subtraction but its transformation. What is the relation with the queer? This final concept is related, or often interpreted as related, to that of

²⁸ Rocco Gangle, “Translator’s Introduction” to François Laruelle, *Philosophies of Difference: A Critical Introduction to Non-Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2010), ix.

transversality (Deleuze, Guattari, Foucault), destined to collide with the Cartesian rectangular coordinates of philosophical space and to trace the complex sexual becomings there. But, as complex and hazardous as they are, they retain a final frame of reference in the simultaneous duality of the sexual genders' frame of reference; they are perhaps becomings that are infinite or unlimited but predictable and able to be discerned, in some sense philosophically calculable. "Transversality" provides us with a supplementary nuance to "trans-cendence," the version of "tending" [*verse*] (operation of tending [*verser*]) which at the same time carries out a "trans"-cendence, a transition or leap which tends to go from one instance to another, so as to flow past.

Now what we have called the inclination or slope, assured, algebraically, and which carries out a certain "dis-inclining" [*dé-clin*] of sufficient or corpuscular sex. This is even a version or an act of tending towards or even a transition, but one that is not reabsorbed in itself, which is not closed upon itself and an *ad quem* instance or an object-in-itself. It is a vector, it has a departure point, a transition point in which it provisionally completes itself, but not an arrival point where it would shut itself away. This is a new concept for the *queer*, no longer Deleuze's n-sexes for a sexuality of the "full body" that is virtually infinite, but a sexual complementarity, a gender unilaterally sexed within every identifiable sex, a transfinite or vectorial queer. It seems possible to us in this way to extract the nuance of the queer from its traditional philosophical context – to remove it from that frame and bring it back to a humane or generic level.²⁹

Laruelle's take on queer, which is clearly ambivalent about itself is full of the speculative energy that Michael Warner located in the early "active," ACTing UP, moments of queer theory. He renews the term and reiterates it so that we have a "new concept of queer" one radically wrenched from the familiar coordinates of queer thinking and their conceptual indebtedness to Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari. Laruelle's new concept also occupies a speculatively prophetic stance as he dreams that queer could be drawn out of its "traditional philosophical context" and opened up to a "philosophically" incalculable future. Queer, for Laruelle, comes very close to Muñoz's "crisscrossing and intersecting vectors of singularity" and Cohen's "fugitive vectors." Laruelle returns to queer its "ability to work so unpredictably across registers to produce a knowledge that is both *live and speculative*"³⁰ and his transfinite or vectorial queer with its lateral relays is asymptotic and tinged with promise. And this non-philosophical move should not be misunderstood as a negativity which leads to inaction. On the contrary, Laruelle's queer is productively negative (this is something like the *queer art of betrayal*) and always on the move. It refuses to get stuck in normative grids of intelligibility and in so doing could lead to a world-making which is concrescent, a growing-together. His play on the word *tenser* ("to tend" or "to pour") should call to mind what we noted earlier about the concrete and calcification. Laruelle's pourings (and we should also note the connection between Laruelle's tendings and Sedgwick's tendencies) are never allowed to solidify or calcify, become predictable or discernible. Non-philosophy leads to escape routes, out-pourings, lateral shifts to elsewhere, into unknown futures. Laruelle's messianic queer is without end and it does not close on itself or in itself. It widens the field of possibilities for future queer thinking and thoroughly reframes everything as it draws queer away from its current philosophical context.³¹

Laruelle's Flat Ontology

Anthony Paul Smith, John Mullarkey and Katerina Kolozova would all agree that non-standard philosophy, Speculative Realism, and Object Oriented Ontology challenge anthropocentrism and that their shared project is the reorientation of thought. Laruelle's non-standard philosophical project sets itself the task of reorienting our relation to the real, and to re-opening the concept of the human (or the human-in-person). Laruelle's posture, his stance is, as we shall see, a queer one. Queer orientations are movements, vectors, behaviours, postures. And they are oriented towards The Real which is not inaccessible or ungraspable (as feminist/queer theorists such as Teresa De Lauretis or Lee Edelman would have it); it is inexhaustible (we might recall that for Sedgwick queer is inextinguishable [Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, xii]). As Mullarkey and Smith have argued, the reorientation of the philosopher's orientation causes a mutation which is to say that when philosophy engages with an object it mutates itself. Laruelle in his writings has introduced a non-Marxism and a non-psychoanalysis.³² I will venture to argue that he approximates and introduces a non-queer theory too.

²⁹ François Laruelle, "Gender Fiction," translated by Anthony Paul Smith, preface to Katerina Kolozova, *The Cut of the Real*. I would like to thank Anthony for sharing his translation with me.

³⁰ Warner, 2011.

³¹ Anthony Paul Smith's talk "Faux Amis? François Laruelle and the Speculative Turn," Flat_Pack Gallery and Studios, Dublin, January 2013 was a huge help to me in understanding this text by Laruelle and what he means by "generic man."

³² François Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, translated by Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, forthcoming).

Laruelle may not call himself a queer theorist but he does call himself a realist and the real, for him, is the thing in-itself in its actuality: one-in-one, human-in-human. This is the core—first outlined in *The Principle of Minority*³³—of Laruelle’s flattened ontology, his non-hierarchical approach. He advocates a flat ontology of objects, what Levi Bryant in his “onticology” terms a “democracy of objects.”³⁴ For Laruelle standard philosophy is chauvinistic insofar as some things appear as objects and others as subjects. This is a prejudicial error because for Laruelle everything is included: this is his Vision-in-One, his theoretical pluralism. Nobody, no/thing is left behind.³⁵ As Kolozova explains Laruelle refuses to define the human precisely because there is no set humanism in his work.³⁶ His philosophy is performative (at least partially in the Butlerian sense). He begins from the question of philosophy as an approach to the real (not realism) and material (not materialism), from philosophy as a thing and not a representation. Laruelle’s theoretical experiment reintroduces non-philosophy differently each and every time. It is critically and reiteratively queer (very much, this time, in the Butlerian sense).³⁷

Laruelle’s non-standard approach to democracy, to the public, to the *demos* turns on its flatness. He treats, as do Bryant and Ian Bogost (and Graham Harman to some extent) all philosophies and ontologies equally. The non- is not a negation, it is an extension, a quantum mechanical superimposition or entanglement. In every sense Laruelle listens for and is attuned to the dignity of objects: to non-life, the undead, bare matter, the animal (Kolozova’s non-standard human). He creates a further extension of Agamben’s bare life where disenfranchisement, discrimination and a violent structure of regard and disregard in the politics of life means *all life*. He gives this the name of the generic human. And, as we shall see, queer is another name for generic humanity, for Laruelle’s victims, minorities, strangers.

Kolozova in “Solidarity in Suffering with the Non-Human” (2013) argues that Laruelle’s human is human without the humanist dimension. Comparing his non-philosophy to Butler’s *Precarious Life* (2006) Kolozova asserts that Laruelle aims to minimize the discursive category of the human. And this is opposed to Butler’s attempt to expand or plasticize it: human-in-human. In the last instance, Kolozova writes, we are always already broken subjects, bodies exposed in their vulnerability. Agamben would call it bare life while Laruelle would perhaps say it is bare matter. This is Cohen’s zōē-egalitarian ethics, a life force that revivifies all materiality. In the essay “Is Thinking Democratic? Or How to Introduce Theory into Democracy” Laruelle outlines his “flat thought.”³⁸ As Mullarkey and Smith describe non-philosophy and the development of a theory of the democratic or generic subject: “this generic subject is necessarily, in the last instance a living utopia, because the generic subject is always a stranger, *xenos*, or one-without place.”³⁹

Levi Bryant’s onticology, his version of “flat thought,” and his theory of withdrawal opposes any “phallogocentric totalization.” Since he wrote *The Democracy of Objects* (2011) Bryant has coined the term “phallosophy” and acknowledged more explicitly how formulating Jacques Lacan’s graphs of sexuation in “ontological terms” illuminates feminist and queer thinking.⁴⁰ Instead of interpreting Lacan’s graphs in terms of sexuation (he follows Bruce Fink in this) Bryant understands them in terms of “ontology.”⁴¹ He explains that “on both the masculine and the feminine side of the graph of sexuation, what we get are two different ways of handling the withdrawal at the heart of being. The left side of the graph refers to masculine sexuation, while the right side of the graph refers to feminine sexuation.”⁴² And in Bryant’s post-phallosophical onticology, queer theory or queerness is to be found on the feminine (“not-all”) side of the graph. We could, after Laruelle, rename this flattened theory of sexuation as non-phallosophy.

Rather than unproductively focusing on castration or lack, Bryant’s onticology swerves away from Lacan’s phallic function and he explains that “rather than referring to a masculine and feminine side of the graph, we can instead refer to a side of the graph that refers to object-oriented ontologies (the feminine [and subsequently he has placed the

³³ For a small portion of the text see “Who are Minorities and How to Think Them” translated by Taylor Adkins, March 24 2013, <http://speculativeheresy.wordpress.com/2013/03/24/translation-of-laruelles-who-are-minorities-and-how-to-think-them/>

³⁴ Levi R. Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2011).

³⁵ This is the argument made in John Mullarkey’s “How to Behave Like a Non-Philosopher; Or, Speculative Versus Revisionary Metaphysics,” *Speculations IV* (2013): 108-113.

³⁶ Katerina Kolozova, “Solidarity in Suffering with the Non-Human,” *Basic Space*, Dublin, 24 June 2013.

³⁷ See, for examples of these shifting definitions, the texts collected in *The Non-Philosophy Project*, edited by Gabriel Alkon and Boris Gunjevic (Telos Press, 2012).

³⁸ François Laruelle, “Is Thinking Democratic? Or, How to Introduce Theory Into Democracy” in Mullarkey and Smith (eds), *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy*, 227-237.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, “Introduction,” 15.

⁴⁰ Levi R. Bryant, “Phallosophy,” *Larval Subjects*, March 15 2011, <http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2011/03/15/phallosophy>

⁴¹ Levi R. Bryant, “Lacan’s Graphs of Sexuation and OOO,” *Larval Subjects*, June 28 2010, <http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2010/06/28/lacans-graphs-of-sexuation-and-ooo/>

⁴² *Ibid.*

queer here too]).” So, “what we get in this schema are two fundamentally different ways of discoursing about being” and Bryant reformulates the schemas for masculinity and femininity in terms of philosophies of presence where “all are submitted to withdrawal with one exception” and object-oriented ontologies where “*not all* are submitted to withdrawal. But there is *no exception*. There is none which is not submitted to withdrawal.”⁴³ What Bryant is getting at here is that there is no master signifier outside the set of all objects and there is no top or bottom object in this non-hierarchical philosophical system. He goes on to say that...

...if the graphs of sexuation are rewritten in terms of ontology and withdrawal we can see how we get radically different ontologies depending on whether or not we’re dealing with a metaphysics of presence or an object-oriented ontology. What the metaphysics of presence seeks and is always dependent upon is an exception or an entity that is not subject to withdrawal. In other words it seeks an entity that is *fully present* without any withdrawal whatsoever.⁴⁴

Bryant rethinks flat thought in terms of what Timothy Morton has called in various places the “strange stranger.”

[T]he arrow pointing to the barred object would thus indicate a desire oriented to welcoming the stranger or that which disrupts the familiar world of local manifestations. Where the logic of desire underlying metaphysics of presence is predicated on overcoming a loss and thereby attaining presence, the logic of desire underlying object-oriented ontology would emphasize the excess of all substances over their local manifestations (there’s always more) and *would welcome difference* or those eruptions within stable regimes of local manifestation where the strange stranger surprises and indicates this excess.⁴⁵

For Bryant, every “entity is a becoming that promises to become otherwise” and this is why entities are not only strange strangers to other entities but are also strange strangers to *themselves*.” Morton has in his essay “Queer Ecology” extended his idea of the strange stranger to queer (hyper)objects, guaranteeing a theory of withdrawn objects which recognizes the strange strangeness to *everything*.⁴⁶ In its unruliness queer theory is a *cosmopolitical* theory of precisely *everything*. And I mean a “theory of *everything*” insofar as queer theory (in all its uncanny weirdness) could open up to and mesh, in Morton’s terms, with the strangeness of others, the strangeness of objects, *the strangeness of anyone and anything*. Queer Theory is a stranger thought, as Anthony Paul Smith has dubbed Laruelle’s non-philosophy.

Bryant’s non-phallosophy has, I think, a strange affinity with Laruelle’s non-philosophy, his theory of strangers. In his talk, “Towards a Philosophy Deemed ‘Contemporary’” Laruelle argues that the future is an aleatory region “of the anticipated coming of some unknown, un hoped for or strange thing that it cannot define precisely because of its imminence.”⁴⁷ The contemporary also, for Laruelle, retains “a ground of indetermination” and a productive “opening” comes before it and inspires it. He describes this very opening as “a relation that is not closed up on itself or in itself” (recall his definition of *queer* as non-reabsorbable in itself) and, moreover, that its futurity “is not of course ontic or ontological, in any way a being or thing, ecstasy or horizon” (recall what Muñoz says about the promissory not-yet of queerness and ekstasis above). Instead the contemporary (the unanticipatable future of philosophy) has the nature of a directed throw. It is, Laruelle says, “vectorial.” And the way he describes this “insurrection of the vector” resonates, I think, with Bryant’s neo-Lucretian reading of Lacan’s graphs of sexuation. Vectoriality, Laruelle says, is an “ascendant or invented clinamen that pushes into the individual subject instead of finding its origin and basis there.” The law of the vector is accretive: it is “superposition” or “addition” and “another vector can always be added to it.” Bryant has been moving in the direction of this law of vectoriality recently in his shift from the terminology of objects to machines in his MOO (Machine-Oriented Ontology) and “pan mechanism.”⁴⁸ The vector is an open process by definition and it allows philosophy to no longer arrive at becoming an object in itself, thereby destroying itself as an object. Vectorial ontology is a “controlled ruin of philosophy,” an auto-deconstruction, a queer betrayal, which allows it to collapse into itself. Queer too, for Laruelle, does not have an “arrival point,” a telos where it “would shut itself away” (“Gender Fiction”).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Timothy Morton, “Queer Ecology,” *PMLA*, 125.2 (2010): 273-282.

⁴⁷ François Laruelle, “Towards a Philosophy Deemed ‘Contemporary,’” translated by Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith, Liverpool Hope University, 30 June 2012.

⁴⁸ Levi R. Bryant, “Machine-Oriented Ontology: Towards a Pan Mechanism,” *Larval Subjects*, June 21 2012, <http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2012/06/21/machine-oriented-ontology-towards-a-pan-mechanism/>

In an essay in *Identities* Bryant has brought together this idea of politics as an event, his ontology, queer theory and Jacques Rancière's radical democratic politics (this allows us, I think, to push Rancière and Laruelle closer together).⁴⁹ In the partition or distribution of the sensible queers and other minoritarian subjects (Laruelle's strangers) do not count, have no-place. But, in Rancière's political philosophy the paradoxical or paratactical subject, a subject falling *between* identities, is precisely from their non- or de-ontological (queer) position able to redress the wrong of so-called democratic politics. In Rancière's post-politics of re-distribution of the sensible the political subject, the individual who has not been validated by the dominant order (women, queers, immigrant workers for example) polemically irrupts and has his or her speech validated. The impossible, de-substantialized subject—Laruelle's man-in-man or man-in-person—attains their place in a regime where they have been invisible, silent, and unknowable. These queer subjects have a certain fidelity to what Rancière calls dis-agreement, conflicted speech situations in which certain subjects are seen and heard while others are not. Out of this conflict and incommensurability new forms of political community (Bryant calls them collectives), new regimes of visibility and sayability, and new regimes of politics and aesthetics, surface. This radically democratic politics facilitates the eruption of valid political subjects, able to take up their share in the distribution of the sensible, however impossible their identity and speech may be, and these political subjects are created within a situation of tort, an ontological torsion, twisting, or wringing.

However, as Bryant is quick to point out the political subject—in contradistinction to Laruelle—for Rancière is always the "human" subject. Man is a "literary animal" and it seems that only humans are capable of speech. Yet an engagement between Rancière's political thought and Bryant's non-anthropocentric ontology reveals an altogether different distribution of the sensible, of what parts get to count in large scale objects. It is clear, then, why Bryant's thinking is shifting towards pan mechanism, parts and machines. An anarchic ontology perturbs our knowing in advance who and what is capable of participating, counting, acting. Bryant pushes Rancière's politics in this "strange" or "weird" direction:

I argue that it follows that all politics is *queer* politics. Here I return to the original etymology of the term "queer," extending its signification beyond the domain of the politics of sexual orientation and gender. Queer refers to the strange, the odd, that which twists, and is out of place. Insofar as politics *only* occurs in those sites where *parts* contest their status of elements, revealing the volcanic anarchy beneath every system of counting, disclosing the *contingency* of every object or system's way of counting or producing elements, it follows that all politics is essentially queer. If queer theory initially stumbled upon questions of sexual orientation, gender, etc., then this is because these are mechanisms by which larger-scale objects govern parts and constitute elements for themselves (thereby erasing the bubbling chaos upon which they stand). It matters little whether the politics is what we ordinarily refer to as "queer politics," whether it is Marxist insurrections of the proletariat as universal motor of history, whether it be women, people of color, or whether it be genuine eco-activists asserting the truth of spotted owls, in all cases the political moment is the moment where the queer or odd as in-apparent appears and challenges systems of constituting elements, governance, and the erasure of parts.⁵⁰

What Bryant is arguing here is that queer-as-inapparent (the Real in his thought) extends far beyond gendered and sexual politics (and the politics of identity) to include numerous other sites of political struggle and "praxis." The parts—"cyborgs, computers, whales"—that compose a larger scale object or machine are again, what Morton calls "strange strangers."⁵¹ Bryant, following Jane Bennett, argues that if we cannot know *a priori* "what part can suddenly appear and speak, there seems to be no reason to restrict the domain of political subjects to the *human*. Indeed, any part, human or otherwise, can rise up within an assemblage or large-scale object and force its reconfiguration, the disconnection of certain elements and new connections among elements. These moments where nonhuman agents such as cane toads, natural gas leaks produced through fracking, and hurricanes can rise up and disrupt the orderly auto-reproduction of systems looks suspiciously like the agencies of *political subjects*."⁵²

This de-anthropocentrizes and renders more vibrant what Rancière calls the "politics of literarity" in such a way that Rancière might mean that bodies/entities (whether human, animal, objects, machines, disciplines) which refuse to stay in their place have the "aesthetic capacity" to imagine new forms of life, to open up an interval for promiscuous, incommensurable, excessive communications, fugitive vectors between *anyone and anything*. This is perhaps, Bryant claims, the "queerest dimension of the politics advocated by ontology: in a resolutely posthumanist turn, ontology

⁴⁹ Levi R. Bryant, "Of Parts and Politics: Ontology and Queer Politics," *Identities: Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture* 8.1 (2011): 13-28.

⁵⁰ Levi R. Bryant, "Strange Politics," *Larval Subjects*, August 23 2011., <http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2011/08/23/strange-politics>

⁵¹ Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁵² Bryant, "Of Parts and Politics," 27

refuses to restrict the political subject to the human."⁵³ We do not know, he says, what entities, what parts, human and nonhuman "might come to occupy the *an-archic* site of the political."⁵⁴ This sounds a lot like Laruelle's vectorial "flat thought." For example, in one of his only explicit engagements with ecology, which Anthony Paul Smith discusses, Laruelle makes an argument for a "human ecology." He writes there: "A human ecology in-the-last-instance will be theoretically more rigorous. As the man of the Last Instance is never a foundation, he must renounce or give up every 'earthly' or 'land-owning' foundation of an ecology of the ocean and start thinking the sea not as such but from itself, *according to the sea which is also human in the way in which the human is every Last Instance.*"⁵⁵ Again, we have a zōē-egalitarian ethics, a queered ecology, where all life is equal in the last instance.

Uni-Sexuality

Benjamin Norris in "Re-asking the Question of the Gendered Subject after Non-Philosophy" attempts to theorize a non-philosophical gendered subject using Laruelle's *The Concept of Non-Photography* (2011).⁵⁶ Norris argues that the "identity of the photo and correlatively of the (non)gendered identity is something that is not reducible to either the immanent (philosophically understood) or the transcendent. The photographic identity is more properly the space between the proposed doublet/deadlock."⁵⁷ Norris goes on: "gender can now be understood as an immediately experienced unity that is never reducible to either its immanent expression or the transcendent category it is measured against. It is never stable yet never fragmented. It is a constant experiment, limited only by itself. Gender is no longer oppositionally defined splitting into male or female, queer or straight, etc."⁵⁸ This, as we shall see, is similar to what Laruelle means by "uni-sexuality." Norris again: "we can instead turn to the fractal nature of temporality as the 'between two' to ground an experience of gender that is infinitely free, unitary and productive, always affirming and self-realizing ... [G]ender is an expression of a fractal temporality that is always already beyond, and more importantly indifferent to and before, any form of binary dichotomization."⁵⁹

In their article "Sexed Identity" Laruelle and Anne-Françoise Schmid implement a "non-anthropological, truly universal paradigm equal for all humans in place of sexual difference (which is not All-sexual), and not determined by it. Instead of projecting sexual difference onto the human paradigm, they propose, first of all, a pre-sexual 'difference' or duality encompassing all humans, and enabling a certain usage or pragmatic of sexual representations."⁶⁰ This utopian, democratic paradigm thus allows for thinking a transformation, an amplification and mutation of sexual difference. Sexual difference must, they say, be universalized. Hence the idea of "uni-sexuality:"

[T]he uni-sexual subject does not mean that there is only one sex unifying the two (this is the transcendental appearance, where we oscillate from one contrary to the other). Rather, it signifies that every (one) subject is individuated by a status of the human as using sexuality and sexual norms and transforming them each time in a way that is proper but human each time. There is no all-sexual in which we can decompose subjects into singularities or *n sexes* as in Deleuze. There are subjects determined as humans and specified by sexuality and, consequently, using sexual difference each time according to a practice or a combination proper but each time human in the last instance.⁶¹

What Norris terms non-gendered identity, Laruelle and Schmid identify as non-sexual identity and Laruelle will later go on to call queer, "no longer Deleuze's *n-sexes* for a sexuality of the 'full body' that is virtually infinite, but a sexual complementarity, a gender unilaterally sexed within every identifiable sex, a transfinite or vectorial queer."⁶² Liberation from sexual difference is, Laruelle and Schmid argue, "not an ideal to be reached, like truth, but a practical task, a posture rather than a position." This is, they conclude, a "modest but effective transformation of sexual difference." Unisexuality too is vectorial and can be re-framed or removed from its traditional philosophical context, from what

⁵³ Ibid., 27.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 27.

⁵⁵ François Laruelle, "L'Impossible Foundation d'Une Écologie de L'Océan" cited in Anthony Paul Smith, "The Real and Nature: A Heretical Nature Contra Philosophy's Nature," *Identities: Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture* 8.2 (2011): 60.

⁵⁶ Benjamin Norris, "Re-Asking the Question of The Gendered Subject after Non-Philosophy," *Speculations* III (2012): 7-42.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 25.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 26.

⁶⁰ François Laruelle and Anne-Françoise Schmid, "Sexed Identity," translated by Nicola Rubczak (forthcoming in *Angelaki*). I would like to thank Katerina Kolozova for sharing the French original (published in *Identities*) of this text and Nicola Rubczak for sharing her translation with me.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Laruelle, "Gender Fiction."

Laruelle calls the “Principle of Sufficient Sexuality.” This is a new concept of sexual difference “brought to a humane or generic level.”⁶³

By the Principle of Sexual Sufficiency Laruelle is suggesting that Kolozova moves away from traditional philosophical understandings of gender and sexual identity and mutates them, inventing and creating a non-sexual identity. This latter, Laruelle admits, is not well understood. He opens his preface by saying: “Gender has become the new scene, the new enclosure that is necessary to think, and the problematic that is possible to work through once again. Katerina Kolozova boldly takes her place in ‘gender studies’ with a look towards what I call non-philosophy. Her work is all the more interesting to me because non-philosophy’s first and final word concerns the human as ‘generic,’” which I oppose to the metaphysical and even to the philosophical.”⁶⁴ Laruelle marries his line of thought and Kolozova’s by claiming that they both schematize a non-standard conception “not of the sexes but of genders in so far as they include, extend beyond, and run through the classical distributions of sexuality. The meta-sexual dimension of gender is affirmed here, one may even want to say non-sexual if the usage of ‘non’ were well understood, as a partial negation of what is dominant and harassing there, in a word what is ‘sufficient’ in theories of sexuality.”⁶⁵

Photo-Fiction, Queer-Fiction

It is significant that Laruelle entitles his preface to Kolozova’s book *Gender Fiction*. Just as Norris draws on *The Concept of Non-Photography* (2011) to theorize a non-gendered subject we might look to Laruelle’s more recent *Photo-Fiction: A Non-Standard Aesthetics* (2012) to supplement, or further mutate, Kolozova’s non-sexual dimension in the direction of a non-standard queer theory. *Photo-Fiction* is, in my opinion, Laruelle’s queerest book.⁶⁶ On every page we could substitute queer where he writes photo. Even if the target there is the Principle of Sufficient Aesthetics or “photo-centrism” we do not have to look far before we get a critique of phallo-centrism and the Principle of Sufficient Sexuality. In the first chapter, tellingly entitled “Art-Fiction, A New Aesthetic Genre” (everywhere Laruelle plays with the multiple meanings of genre and gender in French) he writes “one must construct non-aesthetic scenarios or duals, scenes, characters, or postures that are both conceptual and artistic and based on the formal model of a matrix.”⁶⁷ The connections between Laruelle’s thought and that of Bracha Ettinger are startling (especially the hyphenization of words and the invention of conjugated democratic concepts) but never more than here when he deploys the “matrixial.”⁶⁸ He explains: “the matrix is ordinarily directed by philosophy and its objects, such as art, but it can also be directed differently toward generic uses or humane ends rather than towards philosophy.”⁶⁹ In effect what Laruelle is asserting here is that the matrix *is* queer. We should remember that at the end of his preface to Kolozova’s text he argues that the queer is oriented out of its traditional philosophical context (PSS) towards the generic and the “human.” The installation, as he calls it, of a new genre “art-fiction” could just as easily be read as the instantiation of, the vectorially inclining or tending towards, a new genre of “queer fiction.”

Installing this new genre is reparative (in the last instance) in Sedgwick’s sense (and it is noteworthy that she first outlined her theory of reparative reading in a book *Novel Gazing* on reading fiction⁷⁰). As opposed to a strong theory (reading motivated by the hermeneutics of suspicion) Sedgwick advocates weak reading, queer as a weak eventual force in the act of reading. Laruelle develops a similarly weak ontology: “it is less determinant than under-determinant, it is a weakened or weakening causality that removes determination from the resulting image.”⁷¹ We should take note here that performativity (as Laruelle rewrites performativity) is *radically passive*.⁷² The queer stakes of this *de-puissant* photo-fiction (and its many betrayals) which is less cock-sure of itself than rigidly philosophical discourse are readily

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid..

⁶⁵ The Principle of Sexual Sufficiency could, I think, go under the names of either heteronormativity or homonormativity in current queer theory. We need, as Robyn Wiegman, Elizabeth Wilson and Annamarie Jagose have recently been proposing, a theory of anti-antinormativity. See, for example, Annamarie Jagose’s *Orgasmology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

⁶⁶ One wonders however what the as yet unwritten *Principia Amoris, La Science Des Amants*, a proposed “erotic conclusion” to a triptych begun with *Future Christ: A Lesson in Heresy* might look like. See “The Triptych: Author’s Foreword” to *Future Christ*, translated by Anthony Paul Smith (London: Continuum, 2010), ix.

⁶⁷ Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction*, 3.

⁶⁸ Bracha Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

⁶⁹ *Photo Fiction*, 4.

⁷⁰ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You’re So Paranoid you Probably Think This Introduction is About You” in *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

⁷¹ *Photo Fiction*, 18.

⁷² See *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 163-230.

made apparent.⁷³ Photo-fiction is “formal and contains objectivity but a milder, non-apodictic or axiomatic form. It produces materiality but in the form of enjoyment [*jouissance*] or lived experience.”⁷⁴ Photo-fiction aligns humans with generic humanity (elsewhere termed queer) “rather than a narcissistic delirium of the modern individual that uses photography.”⁷⁵ If photo-fiction “suspends” the Principle of sufficient philosophy then we might infer that queer-fiction (or Kolozova’s gender-fiction) interrupts the principle of sufficient sexuality. Photo-centrism might be rewritten as phallo-centrism, here and elsewhere throughout Laruelle’s non-standard aesthetics. The crucial ethics which follows from the development of photo fiction is that the *jouissance* of photo-fiction leads to the decline of photo-phallo-centrism and an “ethical safeguarding of humans within photo-fiction.”⁷⁶ Later on Laruelle writes that “the generic photo is ethically people-oriented, in service of their defence, and passes from the positive photo, devoted to narcissism of the world to the generic photo which is not that of subjects but rather objects.” We could extend this even further to say that the All-sexual is what enslaves and interpellates and that uni-sexuality is an ethico-political safeguarding of the human or the stranger within the world. To reiterate: photo-fiction is queer, it “is a *genre*.”⁷⁷ Laruelle is again playing on gender/genre and we might infer that queer-fiction is a genre too, in the “spirit of the quantum.”⁷⁸

The onto-vectorial, immanent insurrectionary ascension of photo-fiction is later described as a quantum deconstruction of logo-photo-centrism and again the sexual connotations are hard to miss. For example, “[I]et’s unfold the figure of the flash and the theology that accompanies it from the first emergence or without origin if not void to which its precipitation give rise, let’s unfold the thrust [*le jet*] in its onto-vectoriality.”⁷⁹ We might immediately object to the phallic language of thrusting and spurting here but it is vital to note that photo-fiction is deconstructing the potent, phallic auto-confirming ipseity of the self: “generic man as an onto-vectorialized subject is a superimposed flux of vectors.”⁸⁰ This approximates the fractal temporality of non-gendered identity Norris was theorizing insofar as Laruelle’s “quantic model” works “via a futural retroactivity” and this “model comes to shatter the macroscopic schema of the doublet and introduces another schema that is messianic and christic in ‘quartialising’ according to the negative quarter turn, the circle of time or eternity. A quasi-Judaic dimension is reintroduced in a weak and non authoritarian mode without giving rise once again to the eternal return of the same... it is futurity in its messianic dimension.”⁸¹ We could say then that queer-fiction is a world-oriented weak art of vectorial insurrection, a queer messianicity without messianism.

The Stranger

In “Inside/Out” (1991) Diana Fuss says that “change may happen by working on the insides of our inherited sexual vocabularies and turning them inside out, giving them a new face.”⁸² This folding inside/out perfectly describes what Laruelle does to our inherited vocabularies (including our sexual ones). He makes them alien and strange. It is no wonder then that an early book of his is a theory of strangers and that the stranger plays such a privileged role in his non-philosophy (and Kolozova’s reworking of and through it).⁸³ Contrary to other philosophies of the stranger (Levinas’ for example) Laruelle sees the stranger as part of the self. The *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy* (2013) explains that the self is no longer encroached upon by the other and “there are only Egos without strangers.”⁸⁴ The existing-stranger-subject, as Laruelle calls it, is non-ipso-phallic and part of a *demos* of stranger-subjects. Kristeva in *Strangers to Ourselves* (1994) makes a similar argument regarding the way we relate to strangers outside ourselves if we acknowledge the presence of the stranger inside ourselves.⁸⁵ This levelling, ethical gesture of Kristeva’s has however not made her thought less of a stranger to queer theory. Laruelle too, as we have seen, has not made much impact *inside* queer theoretical debates.

⁷³ On philo-rigidity and the need to de-potentialize philosophy by creating a new amplifying and weakening genre of philo-fiction see Laruelle’s “Introduction” to *Anti-Badiou: On The Introduction of Maoism into Philosophy*, translated by Robin Mackay (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), xviii-

xli.
⁷⁴ *Photo Fiction*, 18.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 23; On “quantum queerness” see Karen Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance: Dis/Continuities, SpaceTime Enfoldings, and Justice-to-Come,” *Derrida Today* 3.2 (2010): 240-268.

⁷⁹ *Photo Fiction*, 39.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁸² Diana Fuss, “Inside/Out” in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 7..

⁸³ See Katerina Kolozova, “The Figure of the Stranger: A Possibility for Transcendental Minimalism or Radical Subjectivity,” *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 11.3 (2011): 59-64.

⁸⁴ See the entry for “Stranger (existing-stranger-subject)” in François Laruelle (and Collaborators) *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, translated by Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2013), 142-143.

⁸⁵ Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

Perhaps, to borrow a topological figure discussed in *Photo-Fiction*, we might see Laruelle's non-philosophy as a kind of Möbius Strip, his work characterizing a torsion or twisting motion between the inside and outside (of the self, of queer theory, of non-philosophy). This model of the Möbius Strip is too simple however because the two sides eventually merge and become one. Laruelle's non-philosophy as queer theory's stranger and queer theory as non-philosophy's stranger retain their difference and specificity even as the insides and outsides (of the self, of the theory) remain indistinguishable. Laruelle's thought must at the very least hold on to its heretical, marginal and insurrectionary character. Our desire ought to be (as with queer theory) not to allow non-standard philosophy to become institutionalized. In this way we can emphasize the definitional instabilities of queer theory and non-philosophy (Laruelle's *Dictionary* in many ways wilfully frustrates the impulse to fix or determine or institutionalize his lexicon). The initial shock value of queer (its acting up) was the catalyst for developing a disruptive politics which was productively unsettling (as non-philosophy is) precisely because queer has had and continues to have (and ought to have in the future) no stable referent. The future promise of non-philosophy, as Mullarkey and Smith argue, is that it will transform and mutate across other fields. Queer's initial promise, as Sedgwick observed was to cut across domains, genders, sexualities, theories. As she notes the indo-European root of queer "-twerkw' means across.⁸⁶ Non-philosophy will, as Warner says about queer's branching out, cut into various other realms, making trouble for compartmentalized and self-sufficient kinds of academic and philosophical theorizing. Laruelle's altered definitions (or non-definitions) of non-philosophy in each new book or interview are Butlerian insofar as she avowed that if queer were to retain its subversive power to wrench frames of thinking then it would "have to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes."⁸⁷ But this has nothing to do with the divisiveness of identity politics or the so-called sexual dissidence of the queer subject which is something we must confront when making a case for the queer potential of Laruelle as a straight, white, male theorist. Elizabeth Grosz would agree insofar as she claims that the ambiguity of queer theory terminologically implies that both the objects of speculation and the knowledges that deal with them *are* queer.⁸⁸ Michael Warner concurs when he states that in contrast to a tidily disciplined lesbian and gay studies, those involved in queer theory "want to make theory queer, not just to have a theory about queers."⁸⁹ Laruelle's *democratic* thought and invention "liberates an infinite, really universal, field of possibilities from all philosophical closure" and in doing so attempts to create "a new democratic order of thought which excludes conflictuality between philosophies and between philosophy and regional knowledges."⁹⁰ Laruelle has persistently identified his work as a heterodox and even heretical form of thought, one which will necessarily be misunderstood when viewed according to the norms philosophy sets for itself. Non-philosophy's future will depend above all on its ability to create "forms of discourse and genres which are other than philosophy."⁹¹ So, in the last instance, perhaps it would be best to remain heterodox, heretical and undomesticatable.⁹² Laruelle's is a queer stance or posture and his tending towards queer (theory, reading, writing) is equally slantwise and athwart, inside and outside, relational and strange, a "quantum xenography of the Stranger."⁹³

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⁸⁶ Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, xii.

⁸⁷ Judith Butler, "Critically Queer" in *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (London: Routledge, 1993), 228.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

⁸⁹ Michael Warner, "Fear of a Queer Planet" in *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xxvi.

⁹⁰ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 13.

⁹¹ François Laruelle, *Philosophie Non-Standard* (Paris: Kimé, 2010), 16.

⁹² On the stranger and philosophical homeless see Anthony Paul Smith's "The Philosopher and the Heretic: Translator's Introduction" in *Future Christ*, xi-xxv.

⁹³ Robin Mackay, "Introduction: Laruelle Undivided" to François Laruelle, *From Decision to Heresy: Experiments in Non-Standard Thought* (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2012) 31.