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PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

KRISIS AS THE SCENE OF NON-DECISIONAL JUDGEMENT: A PERFORMANCE-FICTION FOR THE GENERIC HUMAN

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'Performance philosophy', as a field of inquiry concerned with the 'relationship, encounter or interaction between "performance" and "philosophy"' (Cull 2014, 16), challenges us to develop ways of thinking this relationship other than through an illustrative model—that is, neither by applying philosophy to performance, using the former to explain the latter, nor by taking specific performance works or practices as exemplars of philosophical theories. Instead, Laura Cull proposes that it experiments with the idea that, '*performance itself thinks*, that performance itself philosophizes—not in a way that reduces it to being the "same as" philosophy [...] but in a way that enriches our very concept of philosophy' (23). Hence, Tony Fisher suggests that the term 'performance philosophy should in fact be thought less as designating a field so much as asserting a hypothesis' (Fisher 2015, 182), one which posits as a principle the equality of these two heterogeneous disciplines—as modes of both thought and practice.

Cull and Fisher both look to François Laruelle's 'non-standard philosophy' as an approach to thinking that holds 'seeds of hope' for such an egalitarian project, because of the way it 'reopen[s] the question of *what counts as philosophical thought*' (Cull 2014, 24). Laruelle challenges philosophy's tendency to position itself as a master discourse with the unique ability to ground our understanding of the world and proposes a way of redeploying the conceptual materials philosophy produces, which proceeds from the supposition that 'all thoughts are equal' (Ó Maoilearca 2015). Thus, he proposes to bring philosophy into a new relation with other modes of thought, including the arts, 'substituting for the conflict of art and philosophy the conjugation of their means' (Laruelle 2012a, 1), via a framework or 'matrix' that he characterises as 'scientific'. This

conjugation would produce a 'non-standard aesthetic' that is less a theory of art than an 'art of thought' (5). Moreover, what this 'art of thought' produces can be understood as a kind of *performance*; as John Ó Maoilearca remarks, 'Laruelle's "non-philosophical" practice is connected to its performative language, such that to the question "what is it to think?", non-philosophy responds that thinking is not "thought", but performing' (2017, abstract). As a 'performing', non-standard thinking does not produce an object of thought that could be isolated from the context of its enactment; rather, it must be *experienced*: 'non-philosophy is a practice, it is enacted, […] this is the only way of demonstrating it' (Laruelle 2014, 149).

Laruelle's motivation for staging such a performance is that he sees philosophy as a constitutively dominating form of reason which harbours presuppositions that are 'not very favourable to man', and he proposes non-philosophy as a 'weapon of last defense' against this mode of conceptual domination. Its aim is to re-focus thought 'on the generic plane, on the human plane' (Gracieuse et al. 2012, 241). Thus, what is at stake in assuming this posture toward thinking is ultimately the way that we, as human beings, ground ourselves—how we present our identity conceptually, and how this presentation determines our thoughts and actions. This article will explore what it means for thought to be re-focused on a 'generic' and 'human' plane in this way by attempting to effectuate such an experience. That is, I will attempt to stage a performance of Laruellian pragmatics which 'conjugates' philosophy with performance, in order to demonstrate how the 'human' may be presented in a generic mode.

This will entail enacting a non-standard re-description of two sets of theoretical materials: one 'philosophical', the other arising out of the context of 'performance theory'. The 'philosophical' text I will examine is an essay by Werner Hamacher (2006) which deconstructs the enunciative structure of human rights declarations, and the manner in which they ontologically determine the 'human'. The concerns of Hamacher's analysis resonate with Laruelle's desire to defend the human against philosophical overdetermination. However, I will argue that his response to the issue—a proposed reform of this enunciative logic which appeals to the mythical scene of *krisis* in the court of the dead, related by Socrates at the end of Plato's *Gorgias* (1984, 523a–26d)—ultimately remains problematically 'philosophical' in Laruelle's terms, and positions the capacity to resist conceptual closure beyond theorisation.

Having identified how this philosophical critique of human rights discourse falls short of accomplishing a generic presentation of the human, I will then examine how aesthetic materials are brought into the non-standard matrix in order to enact such a presentation. Thus, I will outline the manner in which aesthetic elements are 'conjugated' with philosophical ones—how Laruelle proposes to extract their immanent identity in order to utilise them as models for thinking. I will then demonstrate this in practice by subjecting Erika Fischer-Lichte's (2008) aesthetic theory of performance to a formal analysis, similar to my reading of Hamacher. This particular aesthetic material has been selected because Fischer-Lichte's conception of performance as a transformational *event* resonates with Hamacher's discussion in interesting ways, grounding itself with a similarly performative logic. My aim is to show in practice how, by bringing to light a certain identity shared by the two sets of materials, the latter can be used, in a reduced form, to construct

a model that allows us to view the former differently. Bringing 'performance' and 'philosophy' together in this way allows us to radicalise Hamacher's notion of *krisis,* and so to bring it back from the aporetic beyond of thought to be enacted as a theorisable instance of a-critical judgement. This non-standard re-deployment of Fischer-Lichte's aesthetics of performance ultimately enables us to manifest the 'human' as a generic instance of thinking.

Fisher notes that the effects of adopting a Laruellian posture as an approach to performance philosophy 'would be as startling to the field of performance as it already is to the epistemological field of philosophy' (2015, 182). Which is to say that bringing performance and philosophy together according to the non-standard matrix entails re-describing *each* term, in a way that underdetermines them *both.* Enacting such a re-description will allow us to demonstrate these effects on performance, and so will add a new perspective to the growing range of literature examining how Laruelle's thinking mutates philosophy. This will enable us to better assess the consequences of assuming this posture for performance philosophy.

Decision: Philosophy as Crisis—A Primer on Laruelle's Practice

In order to orient ourselves in the context of Laruelle's rather strange manner of thinking, I will begin by explaining some key terms he uses, and outlining the nature of his performative practice. The non-philosophical approach hinges on Laruelle's claim to have discovered an invariant formal trait shared by all philosophies. This trait, which he names the 'philosophical Decision', can be understood as the critical mechanism by which philosophy legitimates itself (Laruelle 2013b, *passim*; see especially 231–236). Philosophy 'decides' in the sense that it produces its objects by isolating a part of the immanent-real and binding the latter to its own transcendent structures. Consequently, the image of the world produced by philosophy is dyadic, containing both empirical and transcendental parts. This is to say that each philosophical concept not only represents its object, but in the same gesture also presents an auto-reflexive image of philosophy itself: a meta-philosophy. This, Laruelle argues, is how philosophy dominates what it theorises: every aesthetic theory of performance, for example, is also a theory of *how to think performance*—and, moreover, a claim that *only* this way of thinking performance is legitimate.

One way of understanding the critical economy grounded and perpetuated through this decisional mechanism is as an economy of *crisis*. Mattia Paganelli observes that 'the notion of crisis is directly linked to the paradigm of representation' and suggests that far from being exceptional states, crises should be understood as events of emergence which are necessary for the production of sense (Paganelli 2012, 60). Paganelli proposes that crisis indicates the process of individuation, whereby the 'thing in itself', which has no logical depth, is experienced phenomenologically through an 'epistemological presupposition that tends to foreclose it' (71). Thus, the individuation of an object of thought is a moment of *convergence*—the constellation of a given phenomenon with a structure of givenness which enables its perception—which is also a *divergence* from the 'in itself'. For Laruelle, philosophy's auto-foundational logic constitutes just such an event; the Decision is a crisis at the basis of thought, and the economy it gives rise to is a restless one: thought circles back to itself, and in doing so occludes the very thing it is attempting to grasp. The consequence of

grounding thinking in this way, of individuating objects by separating them from the immanence of the real, is that the object is only ever grasped in a partial manner, so the image of the world produced by philosophy is always incomplete. As such, each Decision—each claim about the proper way to think the world—can be challenged by any other, creating a situation of perpetual conflict.

Non-philosophy does not attempt to adjudicate this conflict between different philosophical positions because it views each Decision as equal. Every mixture of immanence and transcendence occludes the real as much as any other, and so each is equally arbitrary. Instead of deciding between one or another philosophical position, Laruelle proposes a means for escaping the vicious circularity of philosophy's self-grounding crisis by adopting a different posture of thinking, which allows the concepts that philosophy produces to manifest in an immanent mode. Thus, it entails elucidating another vision of the phenomenal reality of thought. It proceeds by proposing as a hypothesis that it is possible for thought to materialise without separating itself from the immanence that is its enabling condition—without the crisis of the decisional cut—and then testing the consequences that follow from this idea. Laruelle's method is an axiomatic one, which is to say that it posits a set of rules or procedures for transforming thinking and then performs a re-description of some extant philosophical text that it takes as 'material', according to these rules. An axiom, by definition, can neither be proved nor disproved and so '[n]on-philosophy must remain an explicative theoretical hypothesis' (Laruelle 2013b, 11); this is why it must be tested through practice (rather than, for example, according to its logical consistency). We can think of non-philosophy as deploying its axioms in the 'as if' mode of a theatrical play—as fiction. Yet, in doing so, Laruelle proposes to modify both the experience and the concept of fiction, suspending the philosophical claim 'to trace an always unstable line of demarcation between the fictional and the real, a critical line by which the latter is a degraded form of the former and, at the same time, claims to belong to it and determine it in its becoming' (2012a, 229–30). As we put Laruelle's ideas into practice, we shall see that fiction is deployed not in a representational manner, but in the construction of models for thinking that Laruelle calls 'philo-fictions' (2012a).

The crisis of individuation identified by Paganelli is not easy to overcome. Laruelle does not claim to be able to *reach* what is occluded in the decisional movement of convergence/divergence. Indeed, the grounding axiom of non-philosophy is that the real is radically immanent and foreclosed to thought (Laruelle 2012b, 45). Rather than seeking to resist this foreclosure, he approaches the problem by re-conceiving the direction of the vector of thought. His second axiomatic invention is to posit a mode of causality which moves from radical immanence towards thought, irreversibly. Thus, thought is posited as being determined by the real. The 'immanence' of the real is not to be understood in material terms, but rather as the transcendental condition for thought as such. Its foreclosure does not mean that it cannot be *described*, however; Laruelle uses various 'first names' for the real, which serve as place-holders for what is occluded. Among these first names, 'the One' [*l'Un*] is privileged, because it indicates both the indivisibility of radical immanence, and the style of thinking that would be adequate to this immanence—which Laruelle calls 'vision-in-One' (Laruelle 2013a).

The task non-philosophy sets itself is thus not to theorise empirical reality, as the latter would usually be understood, but rather to theorise the phenomenal reality *of the manifestation of thought.* Pragmatically, such a theorisation begins by first selecting one or more philosophical text(s) to be taken as 'material', and then 'preparing' them for their non-standard re-description by analysing the interplay of immanence and transcendence in them. That is, the specific Decision that structures the material is rendered apparent by tracing its own *philosophical* logic. Hence, I will begin with a close reading of Hamacher's philosophical critique of the juridical-political structure of human rights declarations. Hamacher's text provides interesting material, in the context of this discussion, because it addresses the question of how to defend the human against conceptual overdetermination and, moreover, because the analysis identifies a performative logic underlying human rights discourse that conforms to Laruelle's description of the structure of Decision. Hamacher thus engages with a similar problem to Laruelle; however, our 'preparation' will show that he does so from a *philosophical* perspective, and thus his response to the issue, which appeals to the *mise en scène* of the event of judgement (*krisis*) presented in the Platonic myth of the court of the dead, remains grounded in an event of crisis in Paganelli's sense. Taking Hamacher's text as material will allow me to show what is distinct about Laruelle's approach. Once Hamacher's text has been 'prepared' in this way, I will then move on to explore the positive practice of non-philosophy, introducing it into a non-standard matrix to be underdetermined by *performance,* where the latter is deployed as an 'art of thought' (Laruelle 2012a, 5). In this way, we will construct a 'performance-fiction' that will radicalise the performativity of *krisis* and enable us to present the human generically.

The Performativity of Human Rights Declarations

In 1789 the French National Assembly set forth a 'solemn declaration of the natural, unalienable, and sacred rights of man', out of a belief that 'the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of [these] rights [...] are the sole cause of public calamities and of the corruption of governments' (Declaration of the Rights of Man 1789). These rights are proclaimed with the intention of underwriting the legislative powers and processes of the state with 'simple and incontestable principles', against which the behaviour of both individuals and institutions can be evaluated—and where necessary, corrected (Ibid.). Thus, they are proposed as a means of *defending* human beings. Similar principles are iterated in other human rights declarations, such as the US Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the 1948 United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet, despite the proliferation of 'human rights' as a discursive concept since the eighteenth century, such proclamations often seem empirically ineffective, failing to protect the most vulnerable of people. Hence, Hannah Arendt suggests that the very phrase 'humans rights' might be seen as 'the evidence of hopeless idealism or fumbling feeble-minded hypocrisy' (1958, 269). Marc de Wilde argues that these empirical failures 'should be explained not only by their inadequate enforcement, but also by contradictions that are inherent in the concept [of human rights] itself', and that this contradictory logic must be confronted if such failures are to be countered (2008, 2).

Hamacher's analysis, which traces the internal contradiction of human rights to the enunciative structure of their declaration, enacts just such a confrontation. He observes that, although the discursive notion of 'human rights' emerges at a particular historical moment, the declaration that they are 'natural, unalienable, and sacred' entails a claim that these rights transcend the contingency of any particular time or place; rather, they apply 'to the human "as such" or "in truth"' (Hamacher 2006, 671). This is to say that the claim of the declaration concerns neither the empirical totality of human beings nor any individual(s) considered as exemplary, but instead 'provide[s] an explication of human essence as it presents itself in and of itself after all external attributes have been subtracted' (Ibid.). As such, the function of the declaration is not to create anything new but to render the already-existent essence of human nature accessible to reason—thereby allowing what has always, implicitly, determined humankind to be codified juridically, and so accorded the universal respect it deserves. Yet at the same time, by *manifesting* the essence of man the declaration plays an important role in *actualising* it, hence: '[t]he essence of the human and its humanity *is* itself and *consists in* this Declaration' (672).

The 'inalienability' of the rights of man is thus explained by the fact that these rights constitute his very *substance*, which is, in turn, identified with 'the onto-theo-logical-political substance of the *language* of the Declaration itself' (Ibid., emphasis added). Hamacher identifies the declaration of human rights as a foundational enunciation with a circular structure: 'Man unveils, explicates, and joins himself with himself in the declaration of his rights as a being that is, precisely, unveiling, declarative, and conclusive. These characteristics make up the juridical essence of man' (673–4). On the surface level, this circular claim could be characterised as appealing to a certain naive faith in the inalienability of the manifest: its truth is demonstrated in the revelatory qualities of the enunciation as a public act, 'carried out in universal consensus' (672). The performative function of the declaration is thus to unveil the essential rights of man and bring them, 'conjoined with their presentation, to recognition and their at least virtual realization' (674). However, as Hamacher observes, in order for the process of auto-enactment and auto-verification to succeed, the declaration 'has to enact its own grounding and must present an ontological tautology—an ontotautology—rather than a merely trivial one' (673). Thus, the performativity of the declaration is profound, functioning to establish the very Being of the human:

> All of these proclamations are essentially phenomenological and present themselves as fundamental phenomenology *in actu*: as speech acts and actualizations of concepts that do what they say and politically realize what they claim [...] They assert themselves as the performance of a grounding and install themselves—and stall—through this very assertion. (674)

The question, then, is why this ontological installation *stalls*—why these performative enunciations so often fail to protect vulnerable people in the empirical world. Hamacher argues that the problem with the auto-constituting nature of human rights declarations is that they enact a judgement about the essence of man—one which conclusively determines his humanity. Which is to say that the ethical claim made in the articulation of rights is founded upon and bound to the ontological determination of the human: in Laruelle's terms, the declaration enacts a *philosophical Decision*

which makes a conceptual claim that affects the empirical existence of the human. The performative effect of this Decision is to categorise the human as a juridical being—one whose Being is given as a '*right to have rights'* (Hamacher 2014). Such a determination excludes other possibilities for the human which are 'not susceptible to juridical thematization and cannot be perceived by categorial thinking, and [… *occludes*] all further deliberations that might be carried out or even just demanded by "human beings"' (Hamacher 2006, 674). This is to say that the empirical failures of human rights declarations are rooted in the conceptual closure they enact. Hamacher characterises this state of affairs—that humans are supposed as fundamentally juridical beings and are thus made the object of legislative judgements—as a 'scandal, which governs the movements of the process (and the movement *as* process) […] of effective politics', and thus 'amputates' man as it reduces him to an 'object of rights' (Ibid.).

The performative function of the declaration is thus to enact a reduction of the human, which restricts the latter's possibilities through the categorial logic of its mode of grounding. Moreover, Hamacher proposes that the structural logic inherent to each declaration of human rights 'establishes the paradigm for every predicative judgement […] and defines the human as the one who is essentially judging, equally and essentially judged and inescapably condemned to judge himself' (674–5). Consequently, the stakes of the structural argument Hamacher makes are cast as not only ontological but also epistemological—it is a *philosophical* problematic concerning the form of thought *as such*. As we have seen, Laruelle argues that a philosophical Decision not only determines the empirical object(s) it refers to, but at the same time positions itself as *the* proper way to grasp the world. Thus, what Hamacher points to here can be understood as the meta-dimension of the Decision constituted by the declaration of rights, the mechanism by which the enunciation legitimates itself in one and the same gesture as it ontologically determines the human. Hamacher's critical analysis of human rights declarations can thus be seen to accord with Laruelle's characterisation of philosophy as enacting an auto-grounding Decision which functions on both empirical and transcendental levels simultaneously, even if the terminology he uses is different. Hamacher reveals these declarations to have an inherent, crisis-type structure, which functions performatively to overdetermine the human.

The question this raises is how we might present human beings differently, without coming to a conclusion and hence closing off the possibilities of what a human could be. Hamacher suggests we need to find a 'nonpredicative' form of language, which could 'become an element of political or juridical deliberation without already belonging to the language of evaluation or of decision' (2014, 201). This resonates with Laruelle's proposal to re-focus thinking on a plane that is 'generic' and hence 'human', through a non-decisional pragmatics of language. As we shall see, however, Hamacher's response ultimately remains, in Laruellian terms, within the decisional circle.

Staging Judgement: The Scene of *Krisis*

Hamacher's analysis of the auto-constituting performativity of human rights declarations implies that they enact a *mise en scène,* 'posit[ing] the scene of a court of law […] that claims to be the final arbiter of the structure of right and judgement in man' (Hamacher 2006, 675). In order to articulate

the conditions for a non-predicative language he does not reject the structure of judgement or the juridical setting *per se*, but rather proposes a reform of this legal theatre—with reference to Plato's *Gorgias* myth. The introduction of myth into the discourse entails a shift in the mode of theoretical expression, an appeal to *fiction* to figure a different paradigm for judgement. J. A. Stewart observes that the dramatic form of Plato's writings, in which speech is the primary mode of action, shapes the logic of his arguments in important ways. However, although they are less prominent in his oeuvre, Stewart argues that Plato's myths should be regarded, 'equally with the argumentative conversation, as essential to [his] philosophical style' (1960, 24). This is to say that the myths are an integral part of the theoretical exposition rather than an ornamental addition, that in them, 'the movement of the Philosophic Drama is not arrested, but is sustained, *at a crisis*, on another plane' (25, emphasis added). Thus, myth is used to speak about subjects that elude more direct theoretical presentation—rather than as allegorical illustrations of points that could be otherwise expressed. Yet, as Stewart suggests, this usage of fiction does not escape from the economy of crisis, but rather manifests it according to a different *mise en scène.*

Plato's tale, which derives from Homer, concerns the archetypical *krisis*: the judgement of souls at the end of their mortal life, which decides whether they should spend their afterlife in the Isles of the Blessed or receive punishment in Tartarus. Socrates tells how in the time of Kronos, 'living men [had] authority over the living, judging them on the day they were to die' (Plato, 1984, 312 [323b]). However, when Pluto became god of the underworld he saw that the judgements were poorly made, and he and Poseidon went to Zeus to petition him to change this. Thus, the story itself is directly concerned with the reform of judicial procedures. Hamacher remarks that the aim of the ancient reform was to 'fit [these procedures] better to the structure of both cognition and man', and hence that the 'restitution of judgement to its purity' was 'therefore also of a restitution of the juridical nature of philosophy' (Hamacher 2006, 675). This suggests that the scene of the court of the dead is related to the structure of *logos* itself.

Zeus explains the badly rendered judgements by the fact that, 'those judged are judged while still alive' (Plato 1984, 312 [325c]). This confuses the judges because wicked souls can be 'dressed up in beautiful bodies, with ancestry and wealth', and they can bring witnesses to testify on their behalf (Ibid.). Thus the phenomenal markers of identity are presented as concealing the true nature of beings. Moreover, Zeus further suggests that the judges' capacity to decide the true nature of souls is impaired by the fact that they, too, are alive and embodied: 'The sight of the souls is obstructed by the sight of the judges' eyes, the hearing of the souls is hindered by physical ears—their perception and consequently also judgement are led astray by bodies' (Hamacher 2006, 675). Zeus's reform is thus twofold: Firstly, he puts an end to the foreknowledge of death—from now on death will be unexpected, so beings will not be able to anticipate and prepare for the moment of judgement. Secondly, Zeus proclaims: 'let all of them be judged naked, for they must be judged dead; and their judge too must be naked, and dead, contemplating the soul alone by itself by means of the soul alone by itself at the very moment each person dies' (Plato 1984, 312–3 [325e]). In this way, Zeus 'institute[s] a court without veils' in which judgement arises suddenly, upon a soul that is isolated from earthly associations (Hamacher 2006, 675).

On the basis of this myth, Socrates elaborates the nature of death as 'the separation of two things, soul and body, from each other' (Plato 1984, 313 [324b]). Developing this understanding of death as separation, Hamacher proposes that '[t]he *krisis*—the decision, the judgement, the sentence— thus finds its model in death, insofar as death [...] is the archi-crisis, which severs the merely accidental and contingent from the true nature of a being' (Hamacher 2006, 276). This is to say that in order to make a true and just judgement it is necessary to peel away the external qualities—the sensory aspects of a person. Death undresses the soul of the phenomenal particularities that disfigure it, and as the living being is stripped of its contingent physicality it is revealed in its essence to a gaze, 'which is in turn naked and nonphenomenological' (Ibid.). Thus, Hamacher argues, death is not a theme that can be submitted to judgement, but rather 'the pure structure of judging, an aphenomenal and anepistemic separation' (Ibid.).

The juridical language of human rights echoes this work of logical and ontological unveiling in the declaration that these rights apply regardless of 'race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property birth or other status' (Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, Article 2), similarly proclaiming the contingency of these worldly categories— in comparison with the universal and inalienable 'right to have rights' which the declaration installs as the juridical essence of the human. Yet, Hamacher suggests that the judgement of the court of the dead does not enact the same conceptual closure as the declaration of human rights because, in the absence of any phenomenal elements that could be thematised categorially, each case is judged 'only for itself, without subsuming its singularity under a general concept, a norm, an expectation, or a habit' (Hamacher 2006, 677). The profound nakedness of both judge and judged means that no general models are available to be used as an orientation, and also that no singular judgement can become a paradigm for future decisions. Consequently, Hamacher proposes that the judgement of the court of the dead:

> cannot have the character of a performative act, which presupposes the minimal consensus of a community on the conventions of speaking, for such a consensus belongs to phenomenal stock that alone is able to constitute a 'who' and from which both the judge and the judged are severed in death. (Ibid.)

This is to say that the *krisis* is anterior to declarative enunciations, and indeed to categorial language *tout court.* Moreover it is a judgement that, in its profound singularity, opens onto an open-ended universality—thereby providing the very paradigm for philosophical contemplation: bare souls are presented, in this scene, to the nonphenomenological 'gaze of *theoria*' (Hamacher 2006, 676). Hamacher thus suggests that philosophical reasoning is grounded in the scene of *krisis*, which in turn is modelled on death as the event which makes a singular but incisive cut between the essential and the merely contingent: the 'happening of discretion itself' (Ibid.). *Krisis* is thereby presented as the event of individuation in its most elemental form, the moment of convergence/divergence that we have identified with the form of the philosophical Decision. And indeed, Hamacher lends support to this idea when he argues that philosophy is *made possible* by this originary act, which he characterises as 'a judgement of *alterity*: of the separation of the one and everything else' (677).

Hamacher presents this originary event of alterity as a means of asserting the constitutive openness of language, which—anterior to the categorial closure performatively installed by human rights declarations—is grounded not in its auto-verifying hypostatisation, but rather in its auto-interruption. He suggests that conceiving language as *enacting its own stoppage* at this ontological level would lead to 'the stoppage of all judicial powers that might appeal to it, of all judicial titles that might be claimed through it, and of all "human rights" that have been or might still be declared through it' (690). Yet this auto-interrupting structure, which is grounded in an originary separation, arguably remains within the restless economy of crisis.

Laruelle suggests that deconstructive analyses like Hamacher's can 'complicate' philosophy 'in a structural or essential way', thus providing interesting material for non-standard re-description (2013a, 134). However, he argues that philosophies which take this evental form can at best figure the immanence that is their enabling condition as an *aporia* which resists conceptualisation (Laruelle, 2012c). Hamacher's appeal to the mythic setting of the court of the dead, to the unhindered vision of bare souls which is in principle beyond the reach of the living, arguably conforms to this logic. The *krisis* invoked by Hamacher—as the originary event of *discretion* and *alterity*—ultimately reinscribes the differential structure of Decision. As such, the source of non-predicative language he proposes still dominates what it theorises—even as it places it beyond the reach of living, thinking, humans—because it occludes the immanent-real through the manner of its staging. Thus, although Hamacher's analysis has taken an important step in resisting the overdetermining action of human rights declarations by uncovering the 'ontotautological' and hence decisional structure of enunciation that grounds them, he stops short of proposing an alternative to the discourse of rights. Moreover, his use of the myth of *krisis* to figure the idea of a non-predicative judgement brought about by means of a 'nonphenomenal gaze' that belongs only to the dead remains a representation, rather than an enactment; hence his deconstructive analysis does not succeed in positing an alternative performance of the 'human' that we have any means to enact.

In order to begin to shift our way of thinking, to perform the postural shift that will facilitate a change of vision—from that of mythic representation to a usage of fiction as an apparatus—I will now explore Laruelle's suggestion that extra-philosophical modes of creation may be brought into non-standard thought, and the role these materials play in underdetermining philosophy. Specifically, I want to explore how aesthetic elements are 'conjugated' with philosophy in the non-aesthetic matrix. I will then attempt to move beyond critique by enacting such a process. This will begin with an analysis of Fischer-Lichte's (2008) aesthetic theory of performance to identify its own decisional form; then I will construct a model using terms extracted from this theory, and use it to re-stage *krisis*—thus setting the conceptual content of Hamacher's analysis of human rights discourse into play according to the immanence that Laruelle proposes as thought's absolute, albeit insufficient, enabling condition.

Each effectuation of non-philosophical thinking entails the elaboration of a model that uses terms from the material that occasions it: '[a] text of non-philosophy is constructed around a word, a statement, a philosophical text' (Laruelle 2013a, 137). However, Laruelle also opens the possibilities for theoretical invention by suggesting that it is possible to introduce 'techniques of creation' into the material which come from other disciplines, 'techniques that would be pictorial, poetic, musical, architectural, informational, etc.', in order to create new models for thought that he names 'philo-fictions' (135). He uses suggestively theatrical language when outlining how non-philosophy may be conjugated with such heterogeneous techniques to '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' (Laruelle 2012a, 3). This notion of the 'dual' names the arrangement of the two elements within the non-aesthetic matrix, which are ultimately to be viewed 'in-One'.

Laruelle suggests that art and philosophy can be brought together in two ways, that their combination will be 'indexed on the return of one of the variables we have at our disposal', and depending on which the result will be 'either over-determination by philosophy or under-determination by art' (Laruelle 2012a, 8). That is, if art and thought are combined according to a philosophical logic, it will result in application and domination; whereas if art is the determining factor in the matrix, then the fusion will be brought into the real in a manner that is 'generic'— which is to say, it would be determined in a particular way by 'the One', and as such undifferentiated and empty of predicates. This suggests that 'art' is identified as the immanent term of the relation, as more 'real' than philosophy, and thus that an aesthetic practice such as performance can teach us something about how thought might proceed without entering into the circle of Decision.

However, it would be a mistake to interpret this as a claim that non-philosophy is simply found in the practice of art as an other-than-philosophical activity. Laruelle states: 'art alone, or in its practice, can offer no conceptual resistance to the undertakings of philosophy and assure us of a knowledge that has some rigour' (2012a, 8). This might seem, at a superficial level, to repeat philosophy's gesture of domination, denying arts practice the agency to articulate concepts. Yet, for Laruelle, if art is unable to offer any conceptual resistance to the undertakings of philosophy this is not because it is unthinking, but rather because it already thinks *too philosophically*. That is, just as every philosophy (including every *aesthetic theory* of art) institutes itself through a circular, auto-foundational structure, so too does the *practice* of art function within a set of presuppositions about what that art form *is* in terms of its materials and techniques—and so enacts a spontaneous philosophy of art. Hence, Laruelle suggests that 'art as a positive practice is an instrumentalized intention', which is to say that because of the way 'the artist experiments concretely with a defined model of activity', arts practice is itself grounded in a Decision (Laruelle and Ó Maoilearca 2015, 181). Implicitly or explicitly, it has the same *form* as philosophy, albeit a different materiality.

Laruelle proposes 'considering every art form in terms of principles of sufficiency, and no longer in terms of descriptive or theoretical or foundational historical perspectives' (2012a, 3). This is to say

that, just as philosophical materials are prepared for their non-standard re-description through an analysis of the Decisions that ground them, so too do we need to prepare *aesthetic* materials if they are to be re-deployed as a model for non-standard thinking. Thus, if 'performance' is to be brought into non-philosophy in order to help us elaborate an immanent vision of the generic human, thereby moving beyond the critique of predicating judgement offered by Hamacher to a positive enactment of the human as generic, and thus without-predicates, we first need to render apparent its own structure of sufficiency—the way performance grounds and legitimates itself.

This raises a question as to how we define what 'performance' is, and what presuppositions underwrite and instrumentalise its practice. Laruelle places the theory and practice of art, in principle, on the same level; such is the equalising presupposition underlying his approach. Hence, we might take either some extant performance practice, or a theoretical description of performance, as our 'material'. In this instance, I am going to examine an aesthetic theory of performance. This is not because I have a preference for theory over practice, but rather because this will allow me to 'conjugate' two sets of materials that are of a similar medium, and thus help me to test Laruelle's proposal of non-standard thought as a practice of *language.* This is not to say that it would not be possible (or indeed interesting) to explore the possibilities of utilising performance practice; however, I suggest that this would raise certain issues concerning the materiality of non-aesthetics that deserve to be examined at more length than there is space for here. The aesthetic theory of performance I have selected, by Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008), is on a certain level arbitrary—just as all philosophical Decisions are equal for Laruelle in terms of how they relate to the real, so too are all aesthetic theories, and indeed practices, equally suitable for non-standard re-description. However, I have selected Fischer-Lichte's work because her characterisation of performance as a *liminal event* implicitly relates it to the notion of *krisis*, as delineated by Hamacher, and her discussion resonates with his in interesting ways.

Fischer-Lichte appeals to the notion of *performativity* to explain the transformative effectiveness of performance, positing the experience of the event as a liminal one. Tracing the origin of the notion of performativity to the work of J. L. Austin (1975) and its development by Judith Butler (1990), she proposes a new, specifically aesthetic, understanding of the term which neither privileges language nor social constructions, but rather focuses on the performance *medium*. She asserts that it is '[t]he bodily co-presence of actors and spectators [which] enables and constitutes performance' (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 32). As such, she identifies the bodily co-presence of two groups of people—actors and spectators—as necessary for a performance to occur, and posits this encounter as constitutive of performance's 'specific mediality' (38). That is, whatever visual, acoustic, linguistic, etc. elements might comprise part of the performance, it is the actor/spectator *relation* that constitutes the kernel of the performance experience. This is an ontological and hence trans-historical claim, which situates the ground of performance in its nature as an *event*, and in the same gesture specifies certain minimal conditions of 'production' and 'reception' that an event must satisfy to be considered a 'performance' (Ibid.).

The actor-spectator relation engenders an interactive confrontation, and Fischer-Lichte suggests that what is primarily created in this encounter is an experience of *liminality*, that 'aesthetic

experience concerns the experience of a threshold, a passage in itself' (2008, 199). The *mise en scène* of such a liminal event, which occurs at a specific place and time that is set apart from everyday life, bears a structural resemblance to the scene of *krisis,* in the sense that it both requires a certain detachment from the quotidian worldly setting, and that the rarified relationality that is produced in the performance encounter itself constitutes a transformative event. Indeed, just as death constitutes the archi-crisis that is the model for judgement in Hamacher's attempt to think the human without reinscribing the philosophical overdetermination instantiated by the discourse of rights, so we might conceive of the court of the dead as the archetype for liminal experience as such, including that of performance as Fischer-Lichte conceives it. Moreover, whilst the scene described by Plato clearly does not involve a *bodily* co-presence, because souls appear in the court undressed of their bodies, the relational set-up—the confrontation between two souls with differing roles—follows a similar choreography. Arguably, the consequence of stripping the souls bare of their phenomenological disguises only renders the confrontational structure of the encounter all the more essential: the singular and non-predicative nature of the judgement implies that it is not *what is decided*, but rather the experience of being brought *into relation* in this way that matters.

Yet this relational structure only underlines the decisional nature of the event *as such*: relation implies two or more terms which are given as separated, hence a scission in the radical immanence of 'the One'—which Laruelle characterises as constitutively indivisible. In Hamacher's staging of the Platonic *krisis*, as the originary event of *alterity*, a singular human soul is judged to be either a 'good one' or a 'bad one'; this judgement is proposed as indifferent to the philosophical work of predication, yet its very enactment presupposes the individuation of this soul, its isolation from everything else (including those souls that are charged with judging it)—thus *krisis* is given as the primary act of differentiation, the originary division of immanence from which thought proceeds. The *mise en scène* of performance as a liminal event whose minimal condition is presupposed as the (bodily) co-presence of two sets of people enacts a similar scission of immanence, individuating 'actors' and 'spectators' and placing them in relational arrangement which resembles that of the judging and the judged in the court of the dead. In both cases, the *mise en scène* presupposes a work of separation, thus what is presented is always-already detached from the indivisible immanence that is 'the One'.

Consequently, to conceive performance in this eventual manner is to attribute it with a circular structure that is similarly 'ontotautological' as the declaration of human rights that Hamacher critiques. Fischer-Lichte characterises the form of the performative relation as a 'feedback loop', understood as 'a self-referential, autopoietic system enabling a fundamentally open, unpredictable process' (2008, 39). The form of the feedback loop is circular in two senses. Firstly, this loop can be understood as a communicative circulation between the actors and spectators which generates the singular atmosphere of each performance event. Secondly, and more profoundly, Fischer-Lichte posits a 'radical concept of presence' to explain the experiential effect that is produced in the liminal space of the performance, whereby 'the spectator experiences both himself and the performer as embodied mind in a constant process of becoming' (99). That is, she gives co-presence not only as the necessary *condition* for the performance event but also as its *result.* Thus,

she attributes an auto-constituting structure to performance which articulates simple presence through the conditions of production and reception that define actors and spectators as discrete groups, and in doing so constitutes the essence of 'performance'. The result is in an enhanced and rarified sense of presence. This differentiation between two experiences of presence introduces a structure of alterity into performance and defines its transformative effects in terms of a scission and doubling which produces an added value out of nothing: presence begetting a supplementary 'Presence'. It is here, in this ontotautological circle, that the presupposition of sufficiency in Fischer-Lichte's aesthetics of performance—its decisional form—is to be found.

To bring performance into the non-standard matrix we need to suspend its spontaneous presuppositions, emptying the notion of its instrumental functionality and utilising it instead as the model for a thinking determined by the undifferentiated immanence of the One. That is, as I will demonstrate in a moment, we deploy a notion of performance emptied of its determining predicates as a stage on which to manifest thought, without enacting a cut in the immanence that enables it. This model, which will be put into play as a hypothesis, is the enactment of a non-standard utilisation of fiction—where the latter indicates neither allegory nor the indirect presentation of concepts on a crisis plane; but rather, the hypothetical *mise en scène* which serves as the apparatus enabling an immanent performance of thought: a *vision-in-One*.

Performance-fiction: Radicalising *Krisis;* Re-staging the Human

Having rendered the differential structure of both the performance event and the event of *krisis* apparent, we are now ready describe this non-standard model, to conjugate 'performance' and 'philosophy' in order to produce our 'performance-fiction'. That is, having elaborated how Laruelle's non-standard philosophy works, I will now follow through on this explanation (which as yet remains a *representation*) by *enacting* the non-standard re-description of the conceptual materials I have 'prepared'. I will thus utilise Fischer-Lichte's aesthetics of performance as a material support in order to construct a hypothetical framework for a thinking focused on the generic plane. This will enable me to elaborate the dimensions of non-philosophy's own *performativity,* which is ultimately neither theatrical nor linguistic. The aim of this process is to produce—or perhaps better, perform—a radicalised notion of *krisis* that will allow us to accomplish what Hamacher's deconstruction of human rights discourse could not: to stage the human-without-predicates in a way that is accessible to theorisation.

I will begin by stating a set of axioms, which are adapted from Laruelle (2012b, 45) using terms from the materials under consideration:

1) *Krisis* is radically immanent, which is to say that it is not mixed with any structure of transcendence.

2) Its causality is unilateral. That is, the immanence of *krisis* has a particular determining relation to thought which is irreversible, because *krisis* is indifferent to the images that thinking projects onto it—to predicating judgement.

3) The object of this causality is philosophy complicated by performance. This means that what *krisis* produces, when viewed according to the vision-in-One, is an experience of the conceptual material provided by Hamacher refracted through a non-standard aesthetics, which is arrived at by radicalising Fischer-Lichte's performance theory.

Recall that Laruelle uses the name of 'the One' to describe both the indivisibility of radical immanence and the style of thought adequate to it. I have now posited '*krisis*' as an alternate first name for the real, and so proceed from the supposition that *krisis* is similarly indivisible and foreclosed. As indivisible, *krisis* must be thought as an immanent unity, which is not arrived at through any process of differentiation and/or unification, but simply given. As such, it precedes even the event of discretion in the court of the dead that Hamacher proposes gives the possibility for every predicative judgement. The syntactic apparatus that allows us to describe the manifestation of the 'human' through a radicalised notion of *krisis* is what I am calling 'performance-fiction'. It has three dimensions:

First, performance-fiction is a site of *manifestation*. What is manifested, however, is not a mimetic image of the object individuated in the judgement of *krisis*, but rather the transcendental conditions for the latter—the conditions for thought as such. This shift in our view radicalises the notion of 'myth', allowing us to see all thought as mythic or fictional—not in the sense that it is a false representation, but in the sense that thinking entails a transcendence by which it detaches itself from immanence. Yet, radicalised *krisis*, which we have posited as a name for the indivisible One, is indifferent to this separation; hence if we view concepts through the performance-fiction apparatus we see that they individuate themselves only in a one-sided manner, because from the point of view of the One (if the One could indeed be said to have a 'point of view', which is not quite accurate) nothing is separable: everything is equally immanent. This is what it means for *krisis* to determine thought *unilaterally*—it provides the condition that enables thinking, but which cannot be determined in return by the concepts that emerge from it. Thus, if we stage the concept of the 'human' according to the axioms of the performance-fiction apparatus we have delineated, then we *superpose* this concept with the *krisis* that we have named as the enabling condition for its manifestation, 'conjugating' them into the arrangement of a 'dual'. This enables us to stage the conditions for thinking by looking *through* the manifest concept of the human as we might look through a lens. Accordingly, *what* performance-fiction manifests is the non-mimetic correspondence between the immanent cause of thought (radicalised *krisis*) and the non-standard concept (in this example, the human), allowing the latter to appear on the generic plane.

Accordingly, performance-fiction's second dimension is that it is a mode of *vision*. However, this vision, as 'vision-in-One', entails neither a distance between perceiving subject and perceived object, nor a separation between spectators and actors as in the performance encounter. Rather, it can be thought as an experience-(of)-vision which is transcendental, hence radically non-phenomenological. It resembles the pure gaze of *theoria* experienced by bare souls in the court of the dead in the sense that it is disembodied, but where those souls confront each other in the act of judgement which both produces and reveals their alterity, the vision-in-One refuses to enter into the originary event of individuation presupposed in this relational arrangement. The vision-

without-distance of radicalised *krisis* can be understood as an experience of the *immanent identity* of the non-phenomenological subject. This again supposes a 'dual' arrangement: performance-fiction names the *mise en scène* that allows us to stage ourselves as thinking subjects that are 'non-phenomenological', by superposing the concepts staged through the performance-fiction matrix with *krisis,* thought as the experience-(of)-vision whose force enables the advent of thought.

Thirdly, performance-fiction extracts the notion of performativity from both its linguistic and theatrical contexts, and radicalises it so that it can be deployed at this transcendental level. In contrast with Hamacher, whose understanding of the performative as a speech act—the effectiveness of which is dependent upon the consensus of a community on the conditions of speech—is essentially linguistic, Laruelle proposes a non-philosophical usage of language that is not grounded in the *logos*. He argues that such a supposition itself already requires an exit from philosophy, because '[i]t is a defining characteristic of philosophy […] to believe that all use of language is philosophical', which is to say that from a philosophical perspective, language as such is inseparable from the *logos*, and thus is 'constitutive of the Being of things' (Derrida and Laruelle 2012, 87–8). Hamacher's assertion that '[t]he judgement of the court of the dead is the event of a mere saying—of a *logos*, as Socrates stresses—which must precede everything that is said' clearly conforms to this philosophical paradigm (2006, 677). Whereas Laruelle proposes a radically performative usage of language, as radical fiction, which cannot but do what it says and say what is does (2013b). Articulating *krisis* according to this non-philosophical language re-stages its myth as the immanent advent of thought, understood to be performed prior to any event of performance—such as the sudden appearance and judgement of souls in the court of the dead. The performance-fiction apparatus thus transforms our vision of the *mise en scène* of the performance event given by Fischer-Lichte. As a transcendental apparatus for manifesting thought, performance remains a liminal experience; yet it is no longer conceived in the circular and relational form of the feedback loop. Instead, as a unilateral vector of thinking that is determined by the immanent One without departing from the latter, it can be understood as a pure 'passage in itself' (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 199). This radicalised notion of performativity helps us to envision the subject of thought in the non-phenomenological terms suggested above, by viewing it not as an individual, but as a transcendental function. *Krisis* is thus performed as a generic experience-(of)-thought, and accorded with the force to determine its own immanent manifestation—that is, to enact its own *mise en scène,* but without thus establishing an onto-tautological foundation.

These descriptions, which together mutate our understanding of performance, together entail a performative enactment that radicalises *krisis*, rather than merely representing the latter as the self-interrupting ontotautological event that grounds (philosophical) thought. This epistemological approach, drawn from Laruelle's non-standard pragmatics, enables us to disentangle *krisis* as an instance of manifestation—and the force that it personifies—from its philosophically-supposed essential relation to *logos*. It proceeds not by enacting an analytic scission between *logos* and immanence, but rather by supposing the latter as already-given, as simply performed without any structure or process that would determine the manner of its performance. By supposing that thought proceeds from this immanence, and constructing a performance-fiction, a radicalised *mise en scène* of *krisis,* I have (hypothetically) accorded the subject of thought the performative force to

effectuate its own manifestation—to *stage itself*—but not the power to determine predicates that would *decide* its essence. This is how the human resists conceptual domination through the non-standard matrix: having constructed the performance-fiction apparatus using dimensions extracted from Fischer-Lichte's performative aesthetics whilst suspending the presuppositions of sufficiency that attribute performance with an evental structure, we are now able to use this matrix to re-stage conceptual materials in an immanent mode. Thus the 'human' that is declared as a juridical subject in the declarations of rights critiqued by Hamacher no longer needs to be dominated by this predicative logic—instead, this overdetermined subject can be entered into the performance-fiction matrix and 'dualysed', and so viewed according to the immanence of *krisis*, such that the authority of the predicates attached to it is suspended.

Thus supposed as a manifestation of the One, the human is given, in principle, as an instance of immanence that is non-exclusive. According to the axioms I have proposed, '*krisis*' now indicates that the One, as the necessary condition for all thought, tolerates a unilateral relation to individuated structures, including that of the thinking subject. The dimensions of the performance-fiction apparatus I have described—those of manifestation, vision and performativity—allow the thinking subject to identify with the 'human' in a non-determining mode (or indeed, to identify with the 'animal', the 'machine', etc.). This 'identity' is not a synthesis of discrete elements, but merely the manifestation of a *non-mimetic correspondence* between the experience of the subject and what I am here calling, after Laruelle, the '*generic human',* thought as an instance of the real. Thus, to re-envision *krisis* through the 'performance-fiction' apparatus is to think it as an immanent experience—the experience of thought that is radical immanence *in-person*. I suggest that adopting this non-philosophical posture is very much consonant with the aims of Hamacher's thought, although its method differs from the latter's ontological framework; moreover, I suggest that this radicalised vision of *krisis* allows us to conceptualise the human without the latter being recuperated by the circle of Decision. It offers a positive vision of a non-predicative usage of language that manifests the human on the *generic* plane—thus manifesting the human-without-predicates as a force that determines thought, rather than a being determined *by* thought.

Conclusion

In this article I have taken seriously Laruelle's claim that his non-standard pragmatics can only be demonstrated through their enactment, and I have attempted to show the complexities of such an approach to thinking by putting it into practice. This has entailed an analysis of two sets of conceptual materials—drawn from philosophy and performance theory—and a re-description of both that has 'conjugated' them in order to perform an immanent vision of *krisis* as the advent of thought. Being a hypothesis, this practice does not deceive itself about its nature as fiction—rather than reinscribing the auto-foundational gesture of mythic representation, which sustains thought 'at the level of a crisis' (Stewart 1960, 25) and so perpetuates the decisional form of philosophy, it instead describes a theoretical mechanism through which concepts can be viewed according to the immanence that is their enabling condition. What this accomplishes is a positive theorisation of how the 'human' may be manifested as a concept-without-predicates, through a performative

usage of language that refuses to enter the ontotautological circle—the crisis-economy—that constitutes the enunciative structure of human rights declarations.

This non-standard vision has been effectuated by utilising Fisher-Lichte's aesthetics of performance as material support for the construction of a transcendental model for thinking. Thus it can be said to be a form of 'performance philosophy' inasmuch as it experiments with the idea that *performance thinks*, as Cull (2014) suggests; but this enactment of Laruelle's pragmatics has at the same time revealed certain effects this approach has for our understanding of 'performance'. Equalising performance with philosophy according to this matrical arrangement is not to affirm that spontaneous thinking occurs either in the positive practice of performance or its aesthetic theorisation, but rather to extract an immanent identity from the notion of performance-as-event, suspending its authority as an 'instrumentalized intention' (Laruelle and Ó Maoilearca 2015, 181) so that it can be redeployed in the staging of the generic human. From the point of view of performance as an aesthetic practice, the price paid for this is a rather severe kind of abstraction— what is extracted is a transcendentally reduced essence that is expressed linguistically and hence stripped of its empirical materiality: that which constitutes the specific mediality of performance in all its dimensions. The performance-fiction I have delineated can be understood as 'a philosophical artistic genre that strives to make work with pure abstract thought' (Laruelle 2012a, 6); yet, it may be the case that some performance practitioners, and indeed theorists, would not recognise the image of performance that is thus manifested in the non-standard matrix, and it is arguable that the mode of abstraction by which Laruelle extracts the immanent identity from performance risks occluding the rich variety of thinking that occurs in the positive practice of performance. Thus the enactment of Laruellian pragmatics I have performed here, this description of a performance-fiction apparatus for manifesting the human generically through the immanent experience of krisis, has also rendered apparent some of the consequences that assuming the Laruellian posture has for our understanding of performance, and the manner in which the latter is equalised with philosophy.

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Biography

Hannah Lammin is a philosopher with a background in dance and performance practice. Her doctoral thesis, *Staging Community: A Non-Philosophical Presentation of Immanent Social Experience*, develops a theoretical framework for theorizing "community" through a re-conceptualization of theatre as a model for representation—providing a new understanding of both social identity and the performance experience. She lectures in media and cultural theory at the University of Greenwich and University of the Arts, London.