

Anti-Currere

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This article proposes anti-currere as a non-philosophical intervention in curriculum theory, drawing on the work of François Laruelle to challenge the field's foundational obsession with the Real. It argues that curriculum study, despite its surface diversity, remains structurally wedded to a philosophical decision that monopolizes reality by predetermining what is thinkable. Through incisive critique of canonical concepts like the planned/lived curriculum binary, the paper reveals how curricular discourse habitually reproduces the very structures it claims to disrupt. In response, anti-currere is posited as a radical strategy of withdrawal from the decisional compulsions of the field – a minoritarian, non-standard mode of thought that reorients curriculum toward the immanence of the Real rather than its capture. Rather than offering another curriculum-as-x, anti-currere opens a space for stranger, generic curricular thought unbound by the auto-production of identity, representation, and method.

The field of curriculum theory is ostensibly characterized by difference. Readers of curriculum will know well Pinar's (2003) allusion to this diversity in his shorthand characterization of the field as a "complicated conversation." Indeed, the synoptic texts of curriculum theory point directly to the breadth of the field. For instance, Pinar's sprawling *Understanding Curriculum* (1995/2004) surveys 14 major approaches to curriculum theory in the course of its 1,200 pages. Fast forward three decades, the field continues to be expand through its encounter with the so-called "post" movements and the unique challenges they issue for "thinking education." Although difference might be a defining feature of contemporary curriculum study, this paper posits an alternative approach to curricular analysis. Specifically, this paper aims to deduce what I contend is an "internal" limit or defining structure that founders within curriculum thought. For while curriculum studies is characterized by a vertiginous array of approaches, I intend to demonstrate how its nonetheless varied instances remain entwined with a prevailing "image of thought" that ultimately wrests curriculum from its potential radicality.

In an attempt to articulate the structure of thought that founders within the curriculum project, this paper commences with a general claim – that is, that *the landscape of curricular thought is marked by a preoccupation with the Real*. The term "Real" is undoubtedly oblique, but with it I intend to suggest something substantially straightforward. On all fronts of curriculum study, I will aim to demonstrate, persists a claim on reality, or rather, a claim to the "facticity" or identity of the Real. This paper concerns itself with the structure of this claim and its insistence as an orthodoxy within curriculum theory. Against this "standard" or common approach, this paper will attempt to relaunch curricular thought along "stranger" coordinates, ultimately fomenting what I herein call "*anti-currere*." The aim of this paper is neither to do away with curriculum study or to critique its manifold enunciations. Rather, it is to articulate the conditions for an internal revolution of the curriculum project capable of breaking from a "genetic" orthodoxy that yet constitutes a stealth fidelity within its thought.

In undertaking this task, I draw upon the work of French "non-philosopher" François Laruelle, a name that has only recently been linked to educational thought and curriculum study (Cole, 2015; Beier

& Wallin, 2020). My interest in drawing Laruelle into the already “complicated curricular conversation” of curriculum studies pertains less to courting the fashion of the new than to a desire to plot an encounter between curriculum and the singularity of what Laruelle has dubbed the science of non-philosophy – an admittedly opaque formulation that I will aim to unpack in the sections that follow. For my purposes here, it suffices to begin with a more general introduction to Laruelle’s project, following with a postulation on how Laruelle’s program foment what might be called an *anti-currere*, particularly as it formulates an anathema to the authority of curriculum’s “given” models of thought. It of course sounds preposterous to suggest that some “standard” mode of thought inheres within the field of curriculum, particularly given the preponderance of scholarship that imagines curriculum as a rhizomatic, open assemblage, profuse in its identities. This posed, Laruelle’s (1999) use of the term “standard” refers less to the representation of thought – or rather, as Deleuze and Guattari (1994) suggest, the “image thought gives itself of what it means to think” (p. 37). Instead, Laruelle (2013a) claims that Western philosophy, from antiquity to the present, is marked by a particular “standardization” of thought that begins with what he names the philosophical *decision*.

In what follows, I will attempt to describe the relationship between philosophy and curriculum theory, focusing specifically on the articulation of curriculum’s stealth fidelity to a particular model of philosophical thinking that is profuse in the West. I begin this task by first providing an overview of Laruelle’s critique of Western philosophy. As I will discuss shortly, the corpus of Laruelle’s work illustrates that the albeit diverse instantiations of Western philosophy assume a common or standard approach to thinking about reality. Concurrent with this overview is an attempt to illustrate the ways in which the project of curricular theory has been limited by philosophy and, more specifically, hampered by the authority of the philosophical model. My aim in this approach is oriented to the exploration of another “ground” for curricular thought and, further, the potential for curriculum studies to account for challenges and orientations that are withdrawn from its established models of thinking. The ideas that follow are in no way necessary and do not aim to instantiate a new authority in educational thinking. This said, there may be some for whom the following speculative journey might inspire a new experiment in curricular theorizing.

The Philosophical Decision and Curricular Thought

While philosophy is undoubtedly varied in form, an inherent conservatism founders at its point of inception – or rather, via what Laruelle (2013a, 2013b) names the *philosophical decision*. For what is ultimately “standard” about philosophical thought, Laruelle wagers, is the founding gambit of deciding the Real of, or rather, positing the “fact” of, reality. One need not look far for evidence of Laruelle’s claim. In Platonic philosophy, the Real is composed of the “real world” and its copy. In Kant, the Real consists of the phenomenal world and its noumenal or withdrawn counterpart. For the Cartesians, the Real is expressed in the division of mind and body. Even in the work of such celebrated contemporary philosophers as Alain Badiou, the Real is correlated to the facticity of mathematical set theory (Laruelle, 2013; Culp, 2016). On all fronts of the Western philosophical project, Laruelle contends, the philosophical decision “monopolizes the Real” by drawing reality into conformity with the decision itself. In the first instance of philosophical performativity, then, the Real is “harassed” into recognizability with the genetic presupposition of the *decision itself*. For Laruelle, this gambit delimits the radicality of thought in at least two ways. First, it circumscribes the Real to an *a priori* supposition or identity that both anticipates and forecloses upon what is thinkable. Second, it assumes that philosophical thought furnishes special access to the Real. In this scenario, we are continually made to discover reality’s “givenness” to philosophical thought.

While the corpus of philosophical thinking commences with the philosophical decision, such structure ultimately becomes withdrawn from philosophical inquiry. This is due to what Laruelle identifies as a secondary process of the Western philosophical project, in which the decisional structure of

philosophy is drawn into equivalence with the Real. The Real herein is not only “monopolized” by the philosophical decision, but is everywhere made to reflect in the decisional gambit of philosophical thought. It is through the coerced equivalence of the philosophical decision and reality that the original presupposition on the Real withdraws. Such philosophical “correlationism” not only aims to predestine the Real in the image of the decision, but henceforth performs the “discovery” of the philosophical decision as a fact of the Real. This marks a second feature of the philosophical decision, in which the decision and its modes of inquiry are “given” special access to the facticity of the Real. Such an arrangement is pronounced in the so-called “methodocentrism” of philosophical inquiry, which always-already circuits thought to a particular relation with the Real (Weaver & Snaza, 2017). This is clearly “evidenced” in the application of method, as it confirms the “givenness” of reality to methodological extraction. Alongside the tired cliché of discovering what everyone already knows, however, Laruelle’s (2013a) speculation on the philosophical decision considers how the germinal performative gesture of Western philosophy not only demands the conformism of the Real, but establishes such conformity as a salient feature of the Real.

What character the philosophical decision assumes is of course varied, and as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write, there are a “thousand plateaus” of transcendent thought that insist throughout history. Withdrawn from the outward diversity of philosophical thought, however, Laruelle (2010; 2013a) posits that the philosophical decision consistently begins with a particular gesture toward the Real. For time and again, the decision of the Real commences upon the scene of its division and differentiation (Laruelle, 2010). As previously noted, Platonic philosophy divides the world into truth and simulacra, Kantian thought splits the world into its phenomenal and noumenal aspects, and in Cartesian thought, the Real is divided into the mind and body, or rationality and materiality. In each case, there insists the presupposition of a transcendent ordering principle above and beyond an *outside* or *other*. The history of philosophy is a history of its harassment of the Real, Laruelle asserts, and there is no doubt that the transcendent ossification of the Real is emblematic of such harassment. Yet, accompanying the division of the Real into its more or less significant forms, Laruelle highlights a more “fundamental” commitment that founders at the heart of philosophical thought. Namely, the division of the Real that Laruelle detects as a habit of the philosophical decision takes difference as a founding principle or fact of the Real. For ultimately, the division of the Real is anticipated by the presupposition of difference. This presupposition is not only foundational to binary (0/1) thinking, its corollary in philosophical thought (truth/simulacra, phenomenal/noumenal, rational/material), it also implicates more contemporary commitments to difference, as it has been popularized as a vehicle of radical connection and “rhizomatic,” additive outgrowth (Wallin, 2010).

Before plotting an encounter between curriculum study and Laruelle’s (2013c) project of non-philosophy, it is worth summarizing the key ideas advanced to this point. First, Laruelle posits that Western philosophy has inaugurated a mode of thinking that commences with the philosophical decision. Here, the project of non-philosophy involves an articulation of the *a priori* claim to the Real in which philosophy is invested. In this act of harassment, Laruelle posits, the Real is “monopolized” and forced into conformity with the decisional structure or presupposed facticity of the philosophical decision. This includes not only the *a priori* claim to the Real advanced by Western philosophy, but so too the act of correlation by which the philosophical decision is traced upon the fabric of the Real. In this performative act, the Real becomes consigned to its intelligibility *for-us*, and by which its facticity appears “given” to philosophical interrogation. As Laruelle (2017) demonstrates, the truth of reality is philosophically conceived through the vehicle of difference, from the bald binary configuration of 0/1 that has historically divided reality into its transcendent and material forms, to the so-called radical difference of cybernetic connectivity, as the supposed machinery of becoming.

Non-Philosophy and Curriculum Theory

Laruelle's project of non-philosophy has significant ramifications for the field of curriculum study (see Pinar et al., 1995; Pinar, 2004; Malewski, 2009). For while few would accuse curriculum scholarship of being overtly philosophical, its structural parallels with Western philosophy are remarkable. Perhaps this comes as little surprise given the influence that philosophy and its structure have exerted on the historical meaning and aims of education, even as they withdraw under the weight of bureaucratic over-determination. Evident throughout the corpus of curriculum study is a commitment to the decisional structure of Western philosophy, particularly as it commences with a fundamental claim on the facticity of the Real. In a parallel mode of thought, curriculum study has staked its claim on the Real of education, which involves nothing short of positing the "fact" of what might be called a "pedagogical life." While varied in degree, the so-called "balkanized"¹ territories of curriculum scholarship nevertheless proceed through the presupposition of an educational Real and a performative reflection of the Real in the image of its founding decision.

At the level of generality, we might deduce how various instantiations of curriculum theory habilitate a decision at the foundation of their inquiries. For instance, curriculum scholarship in autobiographical inquiry routinely locates the "I" at the heart of the educational Real. As renowned curricular theorists Connelly and Clandinin (1988) articulate, "[t]here is no better way to study curriculum than to study ourselves" (p. 31). Eisner (1985) similarly posits that educational experience is "influenced by our past as it interacts with our present" (p. 26). Such seminal claims demonstrate how autobiographical inquiry is founded through the presupposition of identity as the ground of reality and how reality is mediated by the "I" as a foundational proposition. In the field of arts-based research, the Real has increasingly figured as a vital complex of sensual and material affects. For instance, a growing body of "a/r/tographic" inquiry routinely posits the Real in relation to the image of a vital creative agent working the complex terrain of a manifold reality (Irwin & Springgay, 2008). The presupposition that art is created through the productive capacity of a vital agent is now standard in arts research, which remains committed to the idea that creativity is birthed primarily through human praxis and desire (see Jagodzinski & Wallin, 2013). Elsewhere, it is not surprising that the field of hermeneutic inquiry locates the Real genealogically, orienting itself to the demonstration of *why things are how they are*. Here, hermeneutics routinely demonstrates how the present is mediated by its historical, etymological, genealogical, and mythological antecedents. Likewise, it is not surprising that phenomenology locates the Real in the phenomenal experience of a subject. As the historical trajectory of phenomenology demonstrates, the Real is reconciled with the perceptions of subjective consciousness as it makes "sense" of the world (Husserl, 1913). This admittedly all too general overview of the curricular field is less an indictment of the orthodoxies that inhere its discourses than an attempt to illustrate how the diverse approaches of curricular inquiry are unified in their inherent claim to the Real or "fact" of educational reality. At the very least, this survey might function as a hypothesis for future work investigating the varied performances of philosophical "decisionism" in education. Perhaps it is the case that for every "name" assumed in curriculum inquiry, there is a decision that gives such names coherence and by which they might be recognized as such. If there an instance in which the investigations of autobiography did not again rediscover the "I," or in which arts-based research failed to recognize the Real as a creative vitalism, these would undoubtedly constitute a compelling anomaly. Suffice it to say, however, that the logic of the decision precludes against this kind of anomalous instance, insofar as it already determines particular conditions for thought via the affordances of the thinkable.

The ambit of curriculum discourse begins with a proposition on the Real of education, and in large part, curriculum study aims to ferret out the facticity of pedagogical life. Within the field of curriculum, such facticity is established through the coordination of discourse and reality, in that the project of

¹ Here, the term "balkanized" refers to Pinar's (2004) contention that the field of curriculum theory consists of a multitude of fragmented territories largely unconcerned with one another.

curriculum inquiry has perennially sought to demonstrate the “givenness” of the Real to its specific approaches. So it goes that the varied curriculum discourses habitually confirm their supposition of the Real through the habitual confirmation of their propositions. This game of chimeras in which decision and Real are brought into equivalence is nowhere as apparent as within the heavily critiqued dominance of method in education, in which the predestination of reality according to the conditions of methodological thought are all but completely determined (Weaver and Snaza, 2017; St. Pierre, 2021). As St. Pierre (2021) argues, the problem of method is its incapacity to apprehend its own genetic supposition of the Real. This important critique posed, the mode of correlationism that Laruelle detects in Western philosophy subtends more generally within curricular thought, where it figures not only as the conceit that the world is as we think it, or rather, that thought and reality are correspondent, but that the particular modes of curriculum inquiry are implicitly thought to have some form of special access to the Real. The critical writings on curriculum throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s are herein remarkable, but for their application of a general interpretive model supposedly commensurate with educational reality. Across a wide array of educational writing, the mode of interpretation within critical theory of the era was continually being “rediscovered,” with the conditions of conscientization/ignorance, domination/marginalization, and oppression/resistance being found to be facts of educational reality. This is not to say that such claims of facticity are wrong, only that it is today common to find that the study of curriculum involves as a salient feature the patterning of the educational Real in the image of the decision.

Laruelle’s project of non-philosophy is aimed at the dissection of the *a priori*. For while a preponderance of curricular thought occurs *a posteriori*, or rather, after the fact of the decision, non-philosophy takes the decision as its source of “data.” This distinction is important insofar as the *a posteriori* is anticipated by the decision and, moreover, that the correlation of decision and reality performed by the *a posteriori* act works to disappear the decision itself. Here, Laruelle’s non-philosophy invokes the decisional structure of philosophical thought withdrawn from the ambit of *a posteriori* production, which assumes the facticity of the decision as some discursive or methodological axiomatic. Instances of this performative are rife in curriculum study and, namely, through the terms of recognition proposed in its territorialized identities. For when students of curriculum study affirm their “field,” as they are told they must, their *becomings* as autobiographer, a/r/tographer, or arts researcher must necessarily tarry with the “rules of the household,” its sanctified figures, and “regional knowledge,” a term Laruelle plies to describe the partial or local knowledge of the Real that issues from generic modes of thought (Gray, 2023). The price of recognizability is ultimately more than domestication, then, since it involves a commitment to the decision and the duty of its repetition. If there exists an autobiographer whose inquiry renounces the “I,” an a/r/tographer who tarries with the forces of negative disaffirmation, or an arts-based research who concludes against creative vitalism, such findings might very well withdraw from the rules of the territory or disciplinary orientation as such. By and large, however, it occurs that such curricular orientations tend more often toward the affirmation of their claim to the Real, so much so that it seems foolish to mention it. In this familiar scenario, radical thought becomes circumvented by a navigational field of the possible. Here, Laruelle’s (2013a) interest in the philosophical decision assumes quite important stakes. For where the decision harasses the Real into its correlative form, thought becomes cleaved from radicality. Importantly, a key contribution of non-philosophy pertains to considering the *a priori* decision as an act of delimitation and withdrawal from the radical immanence of the Real. Laruelle’s (2010) intervention with Western philosophy herein involves the question of why thought is habitually made immanent to the decision, and not, he advances, the Real *in itself*. Perhaps a similar question might be posed in curriculum study, in which claims on the educational Real have been long substantiated by the repetition of representational forms, as they supposedly prove the facticity of the decision.

A Non-Philosophical Approach to Curriculum Theory

While the specificity of the singular case assumes conspicuous value in the field of contemporary curriculum study, Laruelle's project foregrounds a more generic interest in the study of axiomatic commitments that inform upon curriculum's field of navigational possibility. Undoubtedly, such axioms extend from the genetic event of the decision through their ramified cases, as is evident in such hallmark curriculum scholarship as Aoki's (1993) "Legitimizing Lived Curriculum," which has long been heralded for its proximity to the educational Real. As readers of curriculum will know well, Aoki's gambit in "Legitimizing Lived Curriculum" involves postulating qualitative distinctions or *kinds* of curriculum. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus*, Aoki advances a consideration of the educational Real born from two key instantiations of curriculum, dubbed the *planned* and the *lived*. While the *planned* curriculum reflects the stratification of education under bureaucratic aims and objectives, the *lived* curriculum distinguishes the singular case, in which education becomes immanent to "this classroom," "this group of students," and so on. Aoki's formulation undoubtedly marks an influential contribution to both curricular reconceptualization and its "post-reconceptualization" moment, in which the ideas of planned and lived curriculum function as a pervasive conceptual model for educational thought. It comes as little surprise that the realisms of the planned and lived curriculum proliferate throughout the curriculum imaginary and not simply as an effect of their abiding contribution to the work of the field. Rather, such conceptualizations of curricular thought bear the prevalence of the philosophical decision as a claim on the Real of education. For the ideas of the planned and lived curriculum not only proceed by way of philosophy, but commit to the general schema of philosophical thought identified by Laruelle (2010). That is, the very concepts of planned and lived curriculum follow from a familiar conceptualization of the Real as cleaved into transcendent (planned) and immanent (lived) territories of thought. While Aoki's theorization is marked by a post-structural inversion of value that subverts the primacy of transcendent rigidification, the division of the Real that it foments nevertheless persists. Herein, the navigational field of curricular thought is again born through the standard model of philosophical division, but so too a division that sides with *difference* as its primary vehicle of revolution. To rejoin with Laruelle, however, such difference might be seen in terms of its delimitation of thought, for the idea of the lived curriculum not only withdraws from thinking the mutability of transcendent or "arboreal" orders, but from its filiation with negation and *non-life* in general. This is to say that the division of the Real according to schema of "arboreal" transcendence and "rhizomatic" immanence functions to delimit the ambition of curricular thought, particularly as this conceptualization has come to auto-produce a navigational field of curriculum study.

In a generic sense, the division of education into regions of *plans* and *lives* is a corollary of the problem that Laruelle (1999) detects at the heart of the Western philosophical project. For as philosophy commences with a claim on the supposed "truth" of reality, the division of educational reality into the forms of *plans* and *lives* marks a corollary claim on the facticity of educational reality. The problematic here is not necessarily one of adequacy. Those of us who labour in schools and university classrooms know all too well the impossible pressure of bureaucratic aims and their often bald maladaptation to the lived complexities of teaching and learning. The tension between transcendent aims and the messy life of the classroom seem all too real. This said, the issue that non-philosophy advances pertains to how we might think and act in a manner that is not always-already immanent to the *a priori* decision. For ultimately, it is in the performative shadow of the decision that thought withdraws from its radicality by becoming immanent to the decision *itself*. In this logic of self-similarity, thought differs but only by degree from its *a priori* claim to the Real. While this self-referential cul-de-sac does not preclude against innovation, the decision severs the relation of educational thought to the "radical immanence" of the Real – or otherwise, the ambit of thought that *precedes* the philosophical decision. In place of this more radical trajectory, the stratagem of philosophical correlationism is maintained within educational thought as to auto-produce the decision upon phenomena. It is of course commonplace to speak today of the planned and lived curriculum as a fact of educational life. While such postulations are certainly not incorrect, their *correctness*

is in part an effect of *a posteriori* affirmation and auto-reinvention of curriculum in the axiomatic of the decision (Galloway, 2014).

Aoki's (1993) formulation of the planned and lived curriculum involve a secondary problematic that tethers to the project of non-philosophy. Specifically, while "Legitimizing Lived Curriculum" posits the facticity of the educational Real through the conceptual territories of planned and lived curriculum, it equally posits that educational life consists in the irreducible mixture of the two. Aoki's work herein follows the post-structuralist valorization of hybridization popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as it attempted to dismantle the primacy of binary "either/or" thinking by interrogating the "third space" inhering between conceptual polarities. Mixing the planned and lived curriculum, Aoki posits a middle zone or "third space" as the existential territory of pedagogy, or the complex assemblage of education's desiring forces. While the mixture of planned and lived curriculum supported the conceptualization of an increasing vital and complex educational landscape, it nevertheless found its image of difference to be always-already in relation the State (the curriculum-as-plan). In Laruelle's work, such mixtures fall short of their presumed radicality, namely for the reason that the image of difference that they mobilize always-already posits the work of radical thought from a vantage "under" the State, and in relation to which thought is habitually made to respond. The curricular "in-between" is, after all, defined through the machinations of the State and the friction they exert upon pedagogical life. The hybrid mixture of *plan* and *life* is hence a problem for radical thought in that it continues to condition educational thinkability according to the suppressive affordances of State thought. To rejoin with an earlier detraction, it is evident that education is interminably harassed by State thought, and so too that the event of pedagogy occurs at the intersection of transcendent axioms (the curriculum-as-plan) and the phenomenal muddle of lived experience. This said, to "think education" does not necessarily require passing through its nuptials with State thought. Rather, such determinism is a condition of the mixture itself, particularly as it retains State thought as a fact of the educational Real, and through which the thinkability of legible educational experience is made to pass.

Anti-Currere

The etymology of "curriculum" is today well established in the field; as curriculum workers know perhaps too well, the term derives from the Latin *currere*, or "to run." Equally accepted is the reference in "*currere*" to the Grecian chariot track, through which its etymology coincides with material instantiation. It is no coincidence that the repetitive anti-production of modern schools parallels the highly patterned *agon* (ἀγών) of Grecian chariot racing, nor that a fundamental gesture of "thinking curriculum" involves the imposition of form on matter, the designation of navigational possibility, and, otherwise, the production of a "traceable" foundation for ordering energetic flows. It is no wonder that the kind of curriculum diagnosed by Aoki's (1993) concept of the curriculum-as-plan constitutes a seemingly majority mode of curriculum. For from its inception, of the idea of curriculum is tethered to a particular realism by which a general structure is defined. Here we might conjecture on the decisional structure of curriculum, as it begins with a field of navigational possibility for thought and circuit for harnessing movement. If this is indeed the first instance of curriculum, or rather, an *a priori* decision of curriculum thought, it is from this vantage that a surfeit of curricular structures become sensible. Of course, running the Grecian racetrack finds a corollary gesture in the performative submission of school life to curricular mandates. In this all-too familiar scenario, the best that students can do is to "discover" the gestures and moves that were *always already there*. It is as compelling for me that the field has arrayed itself in an ostensibly similar pattern of "traceable" territories born from the decision. That is, the field today resembles in an image of *currere* founded in the supposition that curriculum begins with a system that is traced upon matter with such frequency that the ruts it produces become all but inescapable dams of thought. As a synonym to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) "thousand plateaus," it might be said that curriculum has birthed a *thousand gutters*

through the habit by which its thinkability cycles in the determined gestures and processes that precede it.

If such thinking amounts only to caricature, it is perhaps because the field is cut through with a general attitude of exaggerating its various “identities.” As the synoptic texts of the field have shown, the labour of curriculum study has involved the creation of its canonical identities and their associated gestures toward to the educational Real (see Pinar et al., 1995). Where the field is overwhelmingly habituated to the *a posteriori* auto-production of the decision, non-philosophy posits an alternative trajectory for curriculum study. In part, this trajectory is anticipated by Aoki (1993), for where the formulations of the curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived assume prominence as speculations on the educational Real, it occurs that these formulations foment an entryway into the non-philosophical analysis of the decision. That is, the profusion of what might be called a “conditional curriculum,” expressed in the formulation the “curriculum-as,” posits a way of “thinking curriculum” prior to its identities. The idea of the “curriculum-as” suffuses the scholarship of the field. For instance, a cursory Internet search identifies over a half million instances of the formulation within the published scholarship of the field. The idea of the “curriculum-as” is patently significant, and not simply as a term of differentiation in which we encounter the curriculum as an empty signifier for any thought whatsoever. Rather, to assume a tactic of non-philosophy, we might consider how the formulation of the “curriculum-as” already inheres the gesture of the decision through which curriculum is harassed into, or “as” a form. Yet, “behind” the formulation of the “curriculum-as” inheres another kind of curriculum, for where the “as” already designates the passage of curriculum into the registers of identity and meaning, it concurrently suggests a way of “thinking curriculum” that is not yet translated into significance. That is, the “curriculum-as” is a formulation of the issuance of curriculum into representation but also the hint of a mode for “thinking curriculum” preceding the “as” – or rather, the instance of curriculum’s identification in the formula “curriculum-as-‘x.’”

Laruelle’s (2010, 2013a) project of non-philosophy posits at least two innovations in curriculum study. As I have aimed to demonstrate, the first pertains to rejoining the field to its commitment to philosophical process and adherence to the philosophical decision. Amidst the various “identities” of curriculum, non-philosophy constitutes an anterior project, in which analysis is made to pertain to the decision itself. Such analysis is neither exactly deconstructionist or post-structural. That is, its aim lies neither in the hybrid slippage of pre-constituted categories nor the subversion of philosophy from *within* philosophy. Rather, non-philosophy concentrates on those processes for thinking the “curriculum-as,” or rather, the curriculum according to its presupposition of the Real. This is to assume that the “curriculum-as” is always-already a performative act, and, further, one that confers its genetic identity from a particular monopolization of the Real. The impulse to begin curriculum thought via the identificatory question “What is curriculum [study]?” is resolutely evaded in non-philosophy, which posits in place the question “*Why* curriculum [study]?” While the former question has achieved prominence across the key texts of the field, it is from the vantage of non-philosophy already implicated in a particular commitment to thought that we might otherwise call curriculum’s *standard mode*. Here, the question “*Why* curriculum [study]?” is not an entreaty to rationalize curriculum study. Rather, the aim of non-philosophy might instead involve rejoining curriculum study to the analysis of the decision and, more radically, to the Real that withdraws from the decision as it is cleaved from the radical immanence of the Real itself.

A second principal intervention for curriculum study occurs through non-philosophy’s reconnection of inquiry to event of the decision. Concurrent with the strategy of taking the decision as its matter or primary *data*, non-philosophy foments an encounter with the Real, or rather, the Real *prior to* and withdrawn from the decisional event. This is no longer the “curriculum-as,” which already succeeds from the decision. Rather, non-philosophy instead habituates a way of thinking immanent to the radicality of the Real, in which mode we might foment curriculum’s *generic* identity. Such a project is undoubtedly difficult. Since the late 1990s, the field has valorized the idea of additive difference, rendering unpopular the thought of a singular, *generic* curriculum. As curriculum workers know well, it is the multiplication of identity that transfixes the field’s radical edge. Elsewhere, the pre-constituted identities rife in the field

buttress against the imposition of the Real, not to mention the thought of more fundamental or generic identity for curricular thought. Yet the measures that prevent the thought of a *generic* curriculum are shifted through the very proposition of the idea. For to conduct curriculum study in a manner immanent to the radicality of the Real is to posit both the limits of additive difference and the conservatism of the field's highly patterned identities. Where the idea of additive outgrowth is immanent to the idea of difference, it carries with a decision on the structure of reality commensurate with the auto-generation of both the "other" and, relatedly, the notion of an identity that *then* differentiates (i.e., $n+1$). The ostensible primacy of identity in the field of curriculum likewise circumvents a mode of "thinking the Real" for the fact of its relatively bounded navigational and representational systems. While such approaches to curricular thought are undoubtedly important, their potential radicality remains hampered by the field's machines of decision and auto-production of identity.

Non-philosophy plots an approach to thought that withdraws from the decisional compulsion that ostensibly orients the field. A non-philosophy of curriculum might hence begin with a strategy of withdrawal, through which curriculum work might evade its automatic resemblance to the decision. Galloway (2014) names this mode of withdrawal "pre-vent," through which thought is withheld from its standard mode (p. 16). Specifically, the "pre-vent" posits that thought be made remote to the compulsive performative of decision and the subsequent harassment of the Real, as if it were somehow "given" to decision itself. In such a task, a non-philosophy of curriculum would necessarily dissociate from the standard genealogy of the field and the "priestly" names that founder therein. The cautionary tale that historical illiteracy will doom us to history is markedly overcorrected within the habitual repetition of a history of the field. The standard genealogy of the field performed across myriad synoptic curriculum projects has today produced its own circuit for "thinking curriculum." A non-philosophy of curriculum begins not with curriculum's founding causes or the decision that consolidates its "first instance." As a non-philosophy of curriculum might posit, founding causes are preceded by the immanence of the Real, which is, in Laruelle's (2017) project, the "first instance" itself. The distinction here is important. Rather than being grounded in founding causes, a non-philosophy of curriculum might rather rejoin to a more *generic* idea of curriculum that is withdrawn from its antecedent decisions. Such a gesture might in turn habilitate a more radical mode for "thinking curriculum" by dilating the *a priori* as widely as possible. Insofar as the standard mode of curricular thought involves constricting the aperture of the Real through the process of the philosophical decision, the non-philosophical practice of expanding the *a priori* might otherwise be called *anti-currere*. *Anti-currere* is not, as one might expect, a concept of negation. Rather, it names a performative mode for "thinking curriculum" *anterior* to its axiomatization in the decision. The aim of *anti-currere* is neither the subversion of *currere* nor the creation of some deeper facticity for curricular thought. It instead describes a stratagem for ratcheting up the pre-established circuits of the field by intentionally foiling the habits of decision and correlation. Relocating inquiry astride the *a priori* of curricular decision, *anti-currere* becomes a non-standard or minoritarian practice, which, to draw from Laruelle (2017), assumes making minoritarianism a majority mode for curriculum thinking. This is to say that the project of disidentifying curriculum from its pre-constituted identities might run concurrently to the practice of dilating its performative instances – or rather, of thinking without assuming any standard gesture or referential precondition as thought's "first instance" (Laruelle, 2013b). At a minimum, *anti-currere* might function to relieve the field from overdetermination by advancing a precondition for curricular thought that begins with the immanence of the Real as its "first instance." This approach not only takes the decision as a point of analysis, but withdraws from the familiar navigational space of curricular thought to "break its alliance with knowing, and *a fortiori*, with those forces which enforce the rule of knowledge and the norm of truth" (Brassier, 2010, p. 210). *Anti-currere* might in this way name a foundation for curriculum thinking oriented to the maximization of its expressive range, specifically as it evades in practice the limitations imposed upon the educational Real (Kolozova, 2019).

Strategies of Curricular Non-Philosophy

In the concluding section of this paper, I will attempt to expound on the strategies of a curricular non-philosophy or *anti-currere*. In the interest of such definition, it is important that my opening gesture involves a caveat pertaining to the intent of *anti-currere*, insofar as it involves neither the negation of curriculum thought nor otherwise the assumption of some more “clever” positionality for critiquing the already decimated ranks of curriculum scholars. Rather, *anti-currere* is a performative style in the mode of non-philosophy, which is not to renounce philosophy, but rather to habilitate another, stranger project that no longer resembles the structure of philosophical thought *proper* (Maoilearca, 2015). Rather, *anti-currere* might better be characterized by a proposition issued in the work of Maoilearca, who writes in his book of the same name that “all thoughts are equal.” By way of Maoilearca’s proposition, we might understand that the significant developments, identities, and territorialities of the field – or rather, the landscape’s “thousand plateaus” – as always-already cleaved from the Real and, more promisingly, as a fulcrum for experimentations with knowledge. None is more “true,” despite the repetitions, collective affirmations, or moral rectitude that supposes it. What I take to be unique about *anti-currere* is its postulation that curricular thought is not founded in the event of the decision and its transcendental synthesis of reality, but the radical immanence of the Real and its expansive mutation of thought.

As a style “equal” in its approach to curriculum study, *anti-currere* names a “stranger” curriculum thought. Where curriculum is almost resolutely oriented toward the *a posteriori* force of thought, *anti-currere* is turned toward the Real. The “stranger” is not yet “thrown” into auto-positionality, nor established in its “essential relations” (Laruelle, 2013c, p. 88). “Where non-philosophy gives up every transcendental deduction of the World,” Laruelle writes, non-philosophy “proceeds to a transcendental ‘deduction’ of the Stranger with the support of the World” (p. 88). Oriented to the Real, *anti-currere* names a performative mode for habilitating a “stranger” thought to its neighbouring curriculum practices. For where the standard thinking of the field typically aims at the transcendental deduction or facticity of the world, *anti-currere* “deduces” the strange from the full range of the Real. Extrapolating a “stranger thought” to the neighbouring, standard practices of curriculum study, *anti-currere* becomes a practice in minoritarian thought, but specifically, a minoritarianism that involves the explication of worlds not of this world, but neither abstract for their status as such. Such a mode of curriculum thought might foment a more supple relation to the world, and for this dispensation may figure as a more adequate approach for thinking those problems “unthinkable” from within the auto-decisional structure of the field. For instance, the monumental problem of climate change and its thought may very well necessitate the deduction of worlds without bypassing through the subject’s transcendent determination, the triumph of human vitalism, or those auto-determined mixtures valorized in the contemporary education landscape.

The encroaching realisms of climatological change require an immanent approach to thinking about education. *Anti-currere* might herein function as a performative ground for navigating the mutating conditions of what we might call a post-Anthropocene boundary event. For, the reorientation of thought that *anti-currere* advances leads to positing that education’s encounter with climatological change need not begin with the familiar identitarian distinctions of “culture and nature” or “human and animal,” nor the anthropomorphization of the planet *for-us*. Nor should we presuppose that the ground for “thinking education and ecology” “naturally” extends from the human as a supposed foundation of reality. *Anti-currere* challenges the presupposition that encroaching ecological change will be abated from *within* the orthodoxies of education, positing a stranger scenario in which education might account for those concepts and postulations that have, from the vantage of the post-Anthropocene, faded into obsolescence. Linear progress narratives, anthropocentric narratives, disciplinary separations, and technocratic solutions to climate change might in this way no longer constitute obsessional objects or dominant approaches within the field. Rather, *anti-currere* suggests that the school might more adequately be rejoined to its experimental potentials to always-everywhere seek out and create conditions for thinking that are antithetical to the presupposition that the “given” world constitutes the entirety of our encounter with the world. Born through a commitment to immanence, *anti-currere* suggests the necessary

disidentification of education from its standardized model. As it relates to the challenges of climate change, such disidentification might involve education's recommitment to materialism, as to remake schooling into a deliberate, materialist practice involving at all turns its re-enjoinment with the world from which standard education is largely abstracted. This turn entails an approach in which education ideas are rethought as a raw material for analysis and experimentation. Such experimentation might in turn involve the reassessment of educational productivity, as well as a more thoroughgoing analysis of what orientations to the world educational production sustains. Such an impetus might entail the re-singularization of the school from beneath its industrial lethargy, as to rejoin education with emerging challenges unthinkable within the given conditions of modern schooling. It is in this way that *anti-currere* allies with abolitionism to induce a new image of schooling and its purposes.

For educational thought to succeed in the face of its growing problems does not necessitate having to think "through" thought's *a priori* enslavements or "essential relations." Rather, it is for the fact of this supposition that curriculum studies has been impeded from its task of extricating the educational life-world from the clutches of its transcendent overdetermination. *Anti-currere* names a style of dishabituating curricular analysis from the automaticity of its thinking the Real as somehow *always-already* mixed with the standard modes of "given" curricular orientations. As the events of the Real grow increasingly strange, as they do in the case of accelerative climate change, prevailing images of education and their claims on the world run increasingly fraught. The world as it is *for-us* is today outpaced on all fronts. This situation does not require, but perhaps becomes more discernable from, a "stranger" vantage that recedes from the containment systems of educational thought, if but to induce a profusion of "strangers" that approximates the conditions of immanence foreclosed within the standard disciplinary traditions.

Anti-currere is by implication of its functions a practice of de-territorialization, or more prescient to this paper, an overturning of curriculum's "balkanized" state of arrest. I posit this for two reasons. First, *anti-currere's* practice of "pre-vent" or withdrawal from the decision posits another "foundation" for curriculum thought. Such a "foundation," if I can venture this fraught term, is immanent not to some system and its auto-decision, but to the nonstandard Real that everywhere foments singularity. The perennial curricular question of what knowledge is of most worth is disabused in the mode of *anti-currere*, which deduces not only that knowledge proceeds from the decision, but that from a certain vantage of the Real, knowledge is equal for its immanence to the Real itself. The desire to canonize the field and its founding names is similarly reoriented by *anti-currere*, which shunts the aim for transcendental synthesis that founders in canonical desire. In routing curriculum thought through a *generic* model of curriculum, *anti-currere* sides with the unofficial or unrecognized account in which the curriculum does not yet resemble other figures ("the curriculum-as-x"). At its base, canonization is a betrayal of the Real that educators are tasked with preserving, and according to which education's facing direction must be corrected. For despite our adherence otherwise, it would be futile to transfuse atrophied organs with new blood.

The meanings of education are undoubtedly profuse. Yet a key aspect of its identity might be defined according to its monopolization of the Real. This is no doubt already apparent to those who labour in schools and universities, where the question, "Of all the ways that education could go, why this one?" is rehabilitated through the standard model, the reality effect of which is affirmed through the very modes of reflection and determination advanced by the standard form. Yet, what education pretends is its encounter with the world and its full range of expression. What has been realized as both the abstract and the material progeny of this project, however, is patently horrifying. The "new blood" of the profession runs its course in the atrophied organs of education's cancerous body (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Of course, *anti-currere* is no remedy to this protracted state of decline. Insofar as *anti-currere* contends directly with the event of monopolization and its correlation, however, it minimally disabuses the notion that education somehow reflects the Real. Non-philosophy circumvents the standard protocol of correlationism by withdrawing from the proposition $n=n$, or rather, the decisional presupposition that reality reflects in our thinking of it (Meillassoux, 2010). The interest of *anti-currere* is rather how thought might foment for education the conditions for reinvesting the idea of curriculum in its *generic* relationship

to the Real – which is to say, how education might recommit to its experiment with knowledge. What *anti-currere* “looks like,” as the familiar request for determination dictates, involves – albeit inconclusively – the following attitudes:

a) “The curriculum-as-*x*” involves an *a priori* decision that is the analytic interest of *anti-currere*, which assumes the decisional structure as data for apprehending the embedded commitments of educational thought.

b) *Anti-currere* posits that “the curriculum-as-*x*” is not immanent to itself, but rather to a more generic model of curriculum that is withdrawn from auto-decision. This is *anti-currere*’s staging point for a “stranger” curriculum theory that eludes determination within the readymade systems of signification and those priestly names that founder within them.

c) *Anti-currere* is a mode of non-standard thought that withdraws from its automatic mixture with such dogmatic formations as the planned curriculum. This is not to disavow the stranglehold exerted upon education by bureaucratic or State thinking, but rather to posit a “stranger” vantage that is neither overburdened by the demand to think itself *through* the State assemblage nor foreclosed by the navigational limits it purveys. In all instances of curricular performativity, *anti-currere* clones the *generic* curriculum in place of curricular determinism.

d) *Anti-currere* resists the equation of thought and reality, as though there could be a theory of curriculum somehow more “true” or “exact” than another. *Anti-currere* performs a mode of pedagogy that issues not from the normative dimensions of the “more true” or “factual,” but from the fact of immanence and the expressive range of the Real. This is unequal to the idea of “experimental” practice, which already presumes a mixture with the conditions of normativity, buttressed by the particularity of the decision. As a practitioner, one does *anti-currere* by eschewing the enslavement of thought to the regimen of the institution, and moreover, by deducing from the immanence of the Real a surfeit of curricular singularities.

e) *Anti-currere* is a name for a “stranger” practice within the neighbourhood of standard curricular thought, since its pedagogical or performative modes veer toward singularity. Such singularity is not simply a synonym of a quantitative multiplicity, as it is in the formulation that there are “as many curricula as there are courses and students.” This formula of the mixed state between *plan* and *life* already posits the component parts for world-making. *Anti-currere* instead presumes that curriculum is immanent to a much fuller range of performativity that is withdrawn from the “essential relations” that pretend to precede it.

f) The influence of non-philosophy for curriculum thought has scarcely touched the dominant operations of the field. Equally, I myself am dubious about the ways that *anti-currere* could inhabit the highly patterned spaces of the institution. It is worth noting, however, that the ambition of non-philosophy is neither the negation of education’s standard mode nor to assume a prominent position as a majoritarian practice of critical analysis. Laruelle (2017) conjectures that non-philosophy is both “last and least.” I would like to clone this aspiration onto the idea of *anti-currere*, which we might think as a kind of “last instance.” For in the “last instance,” *anti-currere* will become the name for education, as its performative standardization of reality disperses across a cosmos of worlds that are this world.

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