

INTERVIEW

MY APPROACH TO NON-PHILOSOPHY HAS ALWAYS BEEN POLITICAL

On Non-Philosophy, Materialist Feminism,
the Politics of the Suffering Body,
and the Non-Marxist Reading of Marx

Interview with Katerina Kolozova by Jan Sûsa

Katerina Kolozova is a Macedonian philosopher whose publications from last two decades aim to analyze various topics using François Laruelle's "non-philosophy" or "non-standard philosophy." Non-philosophy could be roughly described as radicalized deconstruction: Laruelle claims that not everything can be grasped by a philosophy: for Laruelle, "philosophy is too serious an affair to be left to the philosophers alone."¹ Non-philosophy opposes the "principle of sufficient philosophy" through which philosophy determines and decides what is real. According to Laruelle, the ultimate limit of philosophical thought and its self-proclaimed sufficiency lies in its inherent tendency to close itself in a transcendental

¹ François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), p. 238.

system of autofetishist conceptions, which presume that one can grasp the Real (“The Real is neither capable of being known or even ‘thought,’ but can be described in axioms. [...] Even ‘immanence’ only serves to name the Real which tolerates nothing but axiomatic descriptions or formulations.”)² by a philosophical thought, or that the Real could be mediated only through human thought. Laruelle criticizes this tendency of philosophy, which is usually expressing itself through the structure of “philosophical Decision.” (“To philosophize is to decide Reality and the thoughts that result from this, that is, to believe to be able to order them in the universal order of the Principle of Reason [Logos].”)³

In Laruelle’s work, one can recognize radically critical dialogue with poststructuralist thought, and in this sense, his non-philosophy can be seen as a predecessor of recently increasing realist tendencies in continental philosophy, although without returning to dogmatic metaphysics. Instead of proclaiming the “end of philosophy,” Laruelle came up with the axiomatic conception of non-philosophy. It’s important to say that non-philosophy isn’t anti-philosophy in the sense of scientist naturalism or positivism. Its “goal” is not to cancel the philosophy. Non-philosophy can be said to be a monstrous sister of philosophy who doesn’t want to dismantle philosophy directly. Non-philosophy rather uses philosophy as a raw material for its own means, which – heavily influenced by artistic and scientific procedures – attempt to escape the limitations linked with philosophical Decision. Laruelle’s thought opens up a space for radically immanent, democratic experiment with thought, which is not subordinated to philosophical narcissism and circularity.

Katerina Kolozova use Laruelle’s non-philosophy to explore more explicitly political topics. In *Cut Of The Real* (2014),⁴ she criticized certain dogmatism of poststructuralist philosophy and feminist theory, namely their symptomatic rejection of the Real and the One. In *Toward a Radical Metaphysics of Socialism* (2015)⁵ and *The Lived Revolution* (2016),⁶ Kolozova presented a rereading of Marx, whose work she found relevant for the critique of speculative philosophical dimension of the capitalist economy, embodied in the 2008 global finance crisis, and in the latter book, she explored the possibility of a new political solidarity, based on “bodies in pain.” Kolozova doesn’t call to philosophically reconstruct Marx’s thought for the current situation, but she goes back to Marx with the help of Laruelle’s non-Marxism, contrary to the usual approach of Marxist philosophers, who often try to create a certain philosophical system of Marx’s work. Together with Eileen A. Joy,

² François Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2013), pp. 61–62.

³ Laruelle, *Dictionary*, p. 56.

⁴ Katerina Kolozova, *Cut of The Real: Subjectivity in Poststructuralist Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

⁵ Katerina Kolozova, *Toward a Radical Metaphysics of Socialism: Marx and Laruelle* (Santa Barbara: Punctum Books, 2015).

⁶ Katerina Kolozova, *The Lived Revolution: Solidarity with the Body in Pain as the New Political Universal* (Skopje: Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, 2016).

Kolozova edited the anthology After the “Speculative Turn” (2016),⁷ which addressed recent realist and materialist tendencies in feminist philosophy. In her most recent book, Capitalism’s Holocaust of Animals (2019),⁸ Kolozova aimed to explore broader philosophical foundations of neoliberal capitalism, and its dealing with nonhuman animals and their suffering. According to Kolozova, “We have to start by coming to terms with what we did to the animals in the constitutive act of philosophy and via proxy to all those dehumanised that belong to the species of man ‘by courtesy’ only.”⁹

The following interview deals with the development of Kolozova’s focus from classics to contemporary philosophy, her critical stance toward the dominating form of poststructuralist feminist theory, her critical reading of Marx and the Marxist tradition, and her commentary on the political situation in Northern Macedonia concerning European integration. The interview was conducted by Jan Sůsa via e-mail correspondence in June 2020.

In your most recent book, the readers can see your classical background in the interpretation of Ancient Greek term *holokaustos* – the ritual burning of an animal – linked to the philosophical background of contemporary capitalism. However, there seems to be a strong connection to your earlier work – your first book¹⁰ was on the Ancient Greek conception of death. Could you describe your move from classics to contemporary philosophy? Was it some kind of a turn, or rather an organic evolution of your interests?

Well, I wouldn’t be the first classicist in the history of philosophy to have completely turned to contemporary philosophy and topical interests instead of the scholarship of certain periods and strands of thought. I can say that I studied Greek philosophy and Ancient Greek because I wanted to “start from the beginning.” I believe the genealogy of concepts, their embeddedness in a particular historical context, determines their scope and their limitations. In that sense, I concur with François Laruelle when he says that “philosophy” – not merely Western philosophy – is a Greek-Judaic intellectual artifact that cannot occupy a position of universality as to “include” other traditions of philosophy. It is endowed with finitude and it is essentially contingent, bound by contingency and its historical limitations. I was curious to examine the concepts of death in Greek antiquity, those pertaining to “folk culture” and those that arose from the

⁷ Katerina Kolozova, Eileen A. Joy (eds.), *After the “Speculative Turn”: Realism, Philosophy, and Feminism* (Santa Barbara: Punctum Books, 2016).

⁸ Katerina Kolozova, *Capitalism’s Holocaust of Animals: A Non-Marxist Critique of Capital, Philosophy and Patriarchy* (London, Oxford: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

⁹ Kolozova, *Capitalism’s*, p. 151.

¹⁰ Katerina Kolozova, *Helenite i smrta: antički koncepti za smrta i nivnata refleksija vo modernoto* [Death and the Greeks: Ancient concepts of death and their reflection in the modern] (Skopje: Kultura, 2000).

bosom of philosophy, because I trusted that the approach to human mortality (hence to materiality, corporeality, animality) underpinned the issuing history of thought. The thesis ends with Hegel and cyber-feminism, so, linking it to my most recent book, one could as well say that there is an organic development there, rather than mere moving from one topic to another.

It is also important to say that your work is not at all an illustration or application of non-philosophy, but rather focuses on its creative developing and intertwining with topics that are not explicitly present in Laruelle's work. From what I know, Laruelle is very supportive concerning creative interpretations of his own work, although he systematically doesn't use any practical examples, which can be quite tough, especially for first-time readers. Could you recommend some introductory books on non-philosophy?

I was first introduced to Laruelle after my doctoral research studies in France in 1999–2000. I admit it wasn't easy, but I was drawn to some of its fundamental theses – “Being” as a fashioning of thought whereby a projected meaning on “the out-there” or on reality and the “out-there” or the Real itself are collapsed into a higher form of “reality,” into Truth. Philosophical truth is, therefore, not exactitude, but an ontological move of an *elevation* of the Real, insofar as senseless if not “injected” with a meaning as its constitutive element, *into* its own transcendence. I started with *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy* (1989),¹¹ in its French original.¹² I believe that Laruelle should not be mystified and could be approached directly – he is not as obscure as he is generally perceived. Similarly to Heidegger, he is someone to be read to the letter. So he is very clear, in *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, as elsewhere, that his concept of “the One” or “the Real” is more of an epistemic than ontological category, and hence, all confusion with some forms of idealism or ideology (for example, “one” as despotic vs. “multiple” as – neoliberal – democratic) could be avoided. It shifts the posture of thought in a direction that could be approximated with the scientific – it is about how we examine a reality at hand rather than creating some universe or cosmology of the Real and Reality in and of itself. Still, I understand that some introductory, secondary literature may be necessary, and here I would recommend first and foremost the work of John Ó Maoilearca (Mullarkey),¹³ Anthony Paul Smith,¹⁴ Jonathan Fardy,¹⁵ and Ray Brassier.¹⁶

¹¹ François Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2013).

¹² François Laruelle, *Philosophie et non-philosophie* (Liège-Bruxelles: Mardaga, 1989).

¹³ John Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline* (London, New York: Continuum, 2006); John Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith (eds.), *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

¹⁴ Anthony Paul Smith, *A Non-Philosophical Theory of Nature: Ecologies of Thought* (Minneapolis,

Laruelle's work was classified by John Ó Maoilearca (Mullarkey) as "post-continental philosophy,"¹⁷ together with Michel Henry, Gilles Deleuze, and Alain Badiou. What do you think about the division between analytic and continental philosophy in contemporary academia? I'm asking also because in your recent books, you used a lot of sources (Wittgenstein, Turing, Churchland, Dennett, etc.), which are not usually linked to the continental tradition.

I do not believe in the division of traditions. After all, it is indeed a rather recent phenomenon and based on developments in philosophy around the first half of the twentieth century. Without the Vienna circle, Wittgenstein, and the legacies issuing from this critical tradition, there would be no "analytic philosophy." What marked the split is the pretension that the analytic turn had "done away" with metaphysics and could put itself in some use of science. The issuing preoccupation of "the analytic tradition" with itself, with philosophy's limitations and possibilities within these limitations, ends up as some twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholastics of no use to either mathematics or other sciences (certainly not to natural or computer sciences) – except tangentially perhaps. Wittgenstein is closer to Laruelle than we think, and probably closer to non-philosophy than to "analytic philosophy" – philosophy should rid itself of philosophy (or its autoreferential sufficiency), not merely of metaphysics. Dennett and Churchlands demonstrate the limitations of philosophical anthropocentrism and of philosophy's sufficiency – their work is not merely analytical, but serves the scientific research of the mind. They demolish certain philosophical fetishisms that have resurfaced vampirically in the past decade or two and have, paradoxically, brought us back to the preanalytical phase, in spite of the alleged ambition to approach the analytic strand while merging it with the "continental" tradition: "neorationalists" have revived the opposition of Reason/Emotion or Mind/Body in the old idealistic terms, in spite of a widespread tendency in contemporary philosophy to immerse the good old philosophical conversations in discussions of technology. "Reason" is used in a fashion unaffected by recent developments in cognitive psychology or neurosciences or, for that matter, in the philosophy of mind. In that sense, yes, John Ó Maoilearca is right that Laruelle

Univocal Publishing, 2015); Anthony Paul Smith, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016); Anthony Paul Smith, *François Laruelle's Principles of Non-Philosophy: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

¹⁵ Jonathan Fardy, *Laruelle and Art: The Aesthetics of Non-Philosophy* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012); Jonathan Fardy, *Laruelle and Non-Photography* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

¹⁶ Ray Brassier, *Alien Theory: The Decline of Materialism in the Name of Matter*. Dissertation thesis (Warwick: University of Warwick, Department of Philosophy, April 2001); Ray Brassier, "Axiomatic Heresy: The Non-philosophy of François Laruelle," *Radical Philosophy* 121 (Sep/Oct 2003), pp. 24–35; Ray Brassier, *Nihil Unbound. Enlightenment and Extinction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 122–149.

¹⁷ Mullarkey, *Post-Continental*.

provides the platform for an effective transcendence of the said divide undercutting and opposing principles of sufficiency one can find in both traditions – that is, in the analytical and in the post-Kantian.

In the *Cut of the Real* you maintain a unique heretical position in the field of post-structuralist feminist theory: the main aim of your critique is a certain dogmatic position of poststructuralist theory concerning the notion of subject – the One and the Real. In the *Cut of the Real*, you outlined a realist interpretation of feminist theory by close-reading the works of Luce Irigaray, Drucilla Cornell, Jane Flax, and Judith Butler. You found in their works a certain realist potential, which effectively subverts the presupposed dyad of linguistic discursivity and the more or less unsymbolizable body, embodied in claims like “there are only bodies and languages,” which sometimes are associated with this tradition. If I can simplify your argument, which continues also through *Toward a Radical Metaphysics of Socialism* and *The Lived Revolution*, this automatic rejection of the One and the Real is linked to the crisis in the radical political imagination. What is your opinion on some recent radical streams in feminist theory, such as xenofeminism?¹⁸

The realist potential I identified in some feminist (post-)structuralist philosophy by submitting it to a Laruelle-inspired, non-philosophical procedure of refashioning its “transcendental material” has led me to a realization that there is a body/mind, discourse/physicality hierarchy that leads poststructuralist feminism to perpetuate the old metaphysical divisions and their underlying classical hierarchy: matter is passivity to be exploited. Those with less ability to disentangle themselves from their “physiological destiny” (sex, age, or skin color) are not only “dehumanized” (the notion and reality of “the human” is also rendered meaningless because it has been exposed as historically constructed.) in order to be exploited; they are also in a far graver predicament thanks to the “linguistic turn” as reflected in continental philosophy, in particular in critical theory and poststructuralism. As “man” or “human” evades firm grounding, as she or he is disessentialised, one abandons the notion of humanity as a legitimate instance of political interpellation: instead, the spontaneous reflex of contemporary philosophy resorts to the subject. (It merges well with machines too, and leads to an enhanced post-human agency in full control and exploitative potential vis-à-vis physicality, including one’s own.) The trouble with the notion of the subject is that it presupposes an act of interpellation that takes place in a universal or widely legible language. The subject’s privileged status in language and the problem of those barred from language is a common theme in Butler’s constructivism, which I discussed in *Cut of the Real*. Those who

¹⁸ Laboria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminism: A Politics for Alienation* (New York, London: Verso, 2018, online at laboriacuboniks.net/manifesto/xenofeminism-a-politics-for-alienation [accessed July, 25 2020]); Helen Hester, *Xenofeminism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018).

do not enter the universal or widely legible language – or an imperialistically imposed conceptual *lingua franca* (that is, a discourse of global authority) – cannot actively participate in the only possible world, that of language, signs and discursive universality. Humanity doesn't need to be discussed through the notion of subjectivity, as Marx and others have explained. Nor reduced to it. Not even collective subjectivity. The concept of subjectivity as the organizing principle of thought is what I raise as a problem inspired by Marx. Accepting that “humanity” is a philosophically loaded concept underpinned by axiology, a pure contingency impossible to be fixed as a certain universality, I proposed the establishment of criteria of universality that are underdetermined by humanity, and instead are determined by their physicality (or animality). I merged Spinoza and Laruelle, but also Benjamin and Butler, Nietzsche and Greek tragedy (but also Donna Haraway), and arrived at a universal that I hoped evaded any cultural imperialism as well as anthropocentrism – it is a universal inclusive of all humanity. It may sound very simple and reductivist to take the body that suffers as the fundament of a political and moral universal, but I do think it shifts the perspective in a significant way. The valorization of life – with humanity as the universal currency, under the guise of “those capable of being subjects of language” – is not subject to anthropocentric hierarchy. It is not even a “value” but rather a material parameter that precedes the entry into language. It encompasses not only the “subaltern,” but also children, the elderly, and non-citizens, and discursive competence is not central. Therefore, we can move away from subject-centered – and hence, identity-centered – politics. Of course, there are close links with feminist materialisms, such as that of the Utrecht school led by Iris van der Tuin¹⁹ (and her treatment of the continuity between matter and technology, as well as the tension between philosophy and science). Xenofeminism is insufficiently materialist to be likened to what I do and too identity-centered for that matter. It is perhaps similar to the affirmation of the “originary alienation” that I find – admittedly, I'm possibly over-interpreting – in Marx, but the difference is that xenofeminists reify that alienation. They “celebrate” it and dream of the subject's mastery over (the human and/or animal) matter/material or materiality. As you know, I go in a different direction in my book on Marx and Laruelle, and while affirming the originary alienation, I also warn against its philosophisation, fetishisation, or reification.

Do you feel that your work has something in common with speculative realism? What do you think of the speculative realism movement almost ten years after the *Speculative Turn* anthology?²⁰ Do you agree with Ray Brassier, who said – although he originally

¹⁹ Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2012); Iris van der Tuin, *Generational Feminism: New Materialist Introduction to a Generative Approach* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015).

²⁰ Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek, and Graham Harman (eds.), *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism* (Melbourne: re.press, 2011).

coined the “speculative realism” term²¹ and even embraced it quite enthusiastically²² – that the “most signal achievement [of the speculative realism movement] thus far is to have generated an online orgy of stupidity”²³

Both me and Brassier, as well as Laruelle, have often been linked with speculative realism. We have a problem with the term. I do, and Laruelle does too. Ray Brassier has a problem, perhaps, with what it has become and has long not considered the whole “turn” a unity and a phenomenon he would like to be associated with. I do not see anything in common between what I do and what Graham Harman does. However, the signifier has grown to operate as something that refers to a change in philosophy, something that has slowly started to dethrone poststructuralism, and there are shared interests there, I think – especially the revelation of the poststructuralist ruse “there is no Real, therefore fiction is the Real” (as Laruelle would say, the places in the equation has been changed but the equation remains, namely Real = fiction > fiction = Real).

In your books *Toward a Radical Metaphysics of Socialism* and *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals*, you came with rereading of Marx and the Marxist tradition. You are very much against the Althusserian conception of epistemological break: you claim, together with Michel Henry,²⁴ that there is not any break or rupture in Marx's work. Instead of creating some new philosophical treatment of Marx, you go back to explore Marx's texts as such, and you aim to subtract the level of philosophical abstraction created by dialectical materialism. Could you specify: what is the main difference between non-Marxism and dialectical materialism?

This is one of the axioms of Laruelle's non-Marxism²⁵ that I have built on. Laruelle argues that Marx and Marxism can break with the principle of philosophical sufficiency²⁶ if they center themselves on its radical core of “labor-force” [*force de travail*] that could translate

²¹ See the proceedings of the first symposium on speculative realism in *Collapse III* (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2007).

²² Ray Brassier interviewed by Bram Ieven, “Against an Aesthetics of Noise,” *Transitzone*, Oct. 5, 2009 (online at ny-web.be/artikels/against-aesthetics-noise [accessed July 25, 2020]).

²³ Ray Brassier, interviewed by Marcin Rychter, “I Am a Nihilist Because I Still Believe in Truth,” *Kronos*, 4 Mar. 2011 (online at web.archive.org/web/20160303221317/http://www.kronos.org.pl/index.php?23151,896 [accessed July 25, 2020]).

²⁴ Michel Henry, *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).

²⁵ François Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, trans. Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2015).

²⁶ The “principle of philosophical sufficiency” or the “principle of sufficient philosophy” is one of the main axioms of non-philosophy: it expresses the ultimate belief of philosophy, which presupposes that it can determine and decide what is real. The main problem with philosophy lies in

itself immediately into “thought-force” [*force (de) pensée*], had it not been mediated by the layers of philosophy in it, in particular dialectical materialism. Laruelle rejects dialectical materialism insofar as it is a philosophical layer in Marx’s oeuvre. I argue that even though the dialectical method – as an epistemic model – has been employed by Marx (in his own words), the rejection of Hegel’s ontology and philosophy as such can assure the reader that Marx’s own work is already an accomplished non-philosophical project. Thus, in my previous and my latest book published in 2019 by Bloomsbury Academic in London, I establish a continuity between Marx and Laruelle, a terrain upon which I deploy an exchange between Saussure, Wittgenstein, Sohn-Rethel, Irigaray, and Haraway. A compound of dialectical-materialism, as a ready-made conceptual unity, cannot be found in Marx’s own work, whereas he insists that philosophical materialism is always already an idealism. The notion of dialectics is also avoided by Marx, including the dialectical method throughout his work – even though Marx admits to have coquetted with Hegelian expressions “here and there” – whereas he adopts a certain realism and prefers the terms “physicality,” “sensuous,” and “real” as his preferred terms over “materialism” and “materialist.”²⁷ So the radical core is already there in Marx’s own work. I have employed the term non-Marxism (in the Laruelian sense), or non-philosophical Marxism, simply because I have resorted to Marx via the avenue of Laruelle. I am able to keep within the limits of the non-philosophical posture when working with Marx, because I insist on the thought of unilaterality that presupposes the *submission of thought to the Real* (always already evading thought yet always already determining it, as a disinterested and or disinvested exteriority), leading us to the radical dyad (of thought and the Real), which mimics the scientific posture of thought. The “dialectical method” – which I criticize as ontology, not as method, and certainly not as the one Marx refers to when discussing Greek philosophy – is in fact the logic of contradiction and

its desire to create a transcendental system of knowledge, which autoreferentially claims it can exclusively and universally approach the Real. In *François Laruelle’s Principles of Non-Philosophy*, Anthony Paul Smith quotes an illustrative passage from Laruelle: “Each philosophy defines then a non-philosophical margin that it tolerates, circumscribes, reappropriates, or which it uses in order to expropriate itself: as beyond or other to philosophical mastery. So its concern is with a ‘non’ whose content and means of action are ontic or empirical, ontological in the best cases, but whose reach is limited by this mastery.” François Laruelle, “Is Thinking Democratic Or, How to Introduce Theory into Democracy,” in *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy*, p. 229. According to Smith, “these materials and disciplines are not properly philosophical but they are tolerated in some sense by philosophy proper and not without philosophical reason. *Philosophy treats these materials and disciplines in the same way that the capitalist treats the worker*: philosophy expropriates value from the labor of these materials and disciplines in order ultimately to provide support for the very system that is expropriating that value.” Smith, *François Laruelle’s Principles of Non-Philosophy*, p. 12 (emphasis J.S.).

²⁷ For a detailed discussion on Marx’s preference of terms like “physical,” “sensuous,” and “real” over “material” and “materialism,” see Kolozova, *Toward a Radical Metaphysics*, pp. 1–14, 28–35. Kolozova, *Capitalism’s Holocaust of Animals*, pp. 5–28, 89–111.

sublation (a more generic notion than the one developed by Hegel) that do not end up in a superior form of unification or “synthesis” but rather into a qualitative transformation of reality when the dominant narrative of it (or what Laruelle would call “the world”) and the contradiction it establishes with the Real does not hold anymore.

Would you agree there has been some kind of “theological turn” in post-Marxist philosophy during last thirty years (for example Badiou’s *Saint Paul*²⁸ or Žižek’s *The Puppet and Dwarf*²⁹ and *The Monstrosity of Christ*,³⁰ which share to some degree an emphasis on a community of believers and their collective subjectivity)? In this sense, you criticized Leninist revolutionary Marxism as too much based on the concept of theological martyrdom.³¹ Would you agree there is a grain of truth in Eric Voegelin’s description of Marxism as certain kind of Christian heresy?

Well, there might be some truth to it, but still, that would be an oversimplification I believe. After all, we just talked (above) of its material determination of the last instance, the logic of contradiction, and I would say absence of teleology. I do not think communism is an eschatology, and it could be just one possible organization of the society better than capitalism and better than our (formerly Eastern European) vulgar socialism. I quite like this quote from Dominic Fox in his review of my book on Marx and Laruelle, where he offers a reference to Christianity understood in a way which reminds me of Dostoyevsky’s appropriation of Orthodox Christianity (and there may well be overtones of heresy, be it in Fox’s reading of my work or in my own work on Marx). It is a form of some “deep Christianity” that ends up reconciling Lucifer with the creator. Here is the quote:

Lucifer, in rebellion against his Creator, declares that he is his own creation, and declares it better to reign in hell than serve in heaven—is not this an exemplary figure of philosophical auto-position/Decision? But Lucifer’s rebellion is possible precisely because of his creaturely self-estrangement, his access to the symbolic which enables him to “say the thing which is not” (his own self-creation) and proceed as if the philosophical syntax of mastery and Decision were the syntax of creation (i.e., of the Real).³²

²⁸ Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2011).

²⁹ Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

³⁰ Slavoj Žižek and John Milbank, *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?* ed. Creston Davis (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

³¹ Kolozova, *Toward a Radical Metaphysics*, pp. 87–88.

³² Dominic Fox, “Under Pressure,” *Syndicate Philosophy*, Feb. 13, 2017 (online at syndicate.network/symposia/philosophy/toward-a-radical-metaphysics-of-socialism [accessed July 25, 2020]).

Besides Žižek and Badiou, there is also Laruelle's *Future Christ*³³ and his project of non-Christianity, which is quite different – contrary to Žižek and Badiou, he is not working with the community of believers at the first place: Laruelle's figure of the heretic and her rebellion aims more to an individual level...

Well, he does refer to the issue of the subjectivisation of the rebellion and it seems to be central to his more recent political thought: one ought to become a messiah, each and every one of us, which forms the collectivity of a rebellion. I do not think that the reasoning centered on subjectivisation necessarily excludes the possibility of discussing mobilisation, collective consciousness, which I take on as a task in *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals*: structural oppression and exploitation is discussed hand in hand with subjectivisation. Analyzing the workings of the latter does not prevent one from discussing the development of class consciousness from a “third person's view” as Marx terms it – subjectivisation accomplished thanks to the ability to think one's own condition (individually and/or collectively) as an externality, as a detached object. Unlike positivism, this is not a form of thought operating *sub specie aeternitatis*, but rather a posture of the thinking self submitted to the Real of the social relations it participates in.

Besides your work on non-philosophy, you are also a professor at, and the director of, the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje. Your research at ISSH-S is oriented toward policy studies and more concrete political analysis: you and your team authored various research articles on the political situation in Northern Macedonia, and generally in southeast Europe. Recently, your research was addressing a certain illiberal turn in Europe. Do you find it going well with your research on non-philosophy? Could you highlight some of the activities of the ISSH-S?

The way I operate with non-philosophy is very much in compliance with my work at the institute, whose philosophy is to begin with practice. The material moves toward an abstraction and generalization, only to return and explain a reality in a very concrete manner. For example, in 2014 it was next to impossible to prove to the authorities in Brussels that the stellar reports they gave to Macedonia on the issue of its EU integration missed the point: behind the EU-focused technocratic perfection of the surface, a particular and highly problematic method of governance hiding in legal details and intricate policy tricks lurked – we called it “state capture,”³⁴ referring to the state being

³³ François Laruelle, *Future Christ: A Lesson in Heresy*, trans. Anthony Paul Smith (New York: Continuum, 2011).

³⁴ Katerina Kolozova, Jordan Shishovski, and Kalina Lechevska, *Technology of State Capture: Overregulation in Macedonian Media and Academia*, Second ed., (Skopje: Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje, 2019, online at isshs.edu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/

captured by a ruling party, in a populist manner and through its business elites. We argued that it was not only about corruption – the blurring of borders between party and state institutions and crony capitalism – but also about populism’s undergirded control of the nation by means of an excessive power of the executive branch. “Hybrid regime” and “illiberal democracy” (as Viktor Orbán termed it) were identifications that were never adopted by the ruling party. Thus, through a bottom-up approach, we had to demonstrate, in terms of intricacies of policymaking and specific models in specific areas of governance, that there existed an authoritarian penchant in the model of governance. I believe the two coincide perfectly – my approach to non-philosophy has always been political.

In your interview with Romyana Kotchanova for *Europost* from May 2020, you mentioned³⁵ the hypocritical stance of EU representatives toward Northern Macedonia. Do you think that the 2019 French rejection of holding Albanian and Northern Macedonian accession talks was a symptom of a deeper crisis of European political integration? It seems like there is no longer a shared opinion about whether the EU should expand and accept new members. Could you comment on the French rejection of the accession talks? Was it just a symptom of Macron’s political play, as some commentators said, or was it a real symptom of the EU’s deeper crisis and its post-Brexit blues?

Currently, Macron seems to be strongly supporting the accession (his previous reservations concerned more Albania than Northern Macedonia, but EU member states were voting on the “package”) – he sees the so-called expansion as deepening the Union rather than loosening it. His position seems to have shifted lately, and I do not see it as very different from what one of his former mentors, Jacques Rupnik, has argued recently, namely that the “deepening and strengthening of Europe do not exclude one another.”³⁶ I concur and I would reiterate what I said in the above-mentioned interview: the deepening or strengthening of the Union is also about strengthening Europe as a territory, as well as a geopolitical player, which, if dissolved into small nation-states, is hardly going to remain an important player on the global multi-centered scale of massive regional geopolitical powers.

TECHNOLOGY-OF-STATE-CAPTURE-Overregulation-in-Macedonian-Media-and-Academia-second-edition.pdf [accessed July 25, 2020]).

³⁵ Katerina Kolozova, interviewed by Romyana Kotchanova, “Prof. Katerina Kolozova: The EU Should Unify and Consolidate Itself to Remain a Player,” *Europost*, May 18, 2020 (online at europost.eu/en/a/view/professor-katerina-kolozova-the-eu-should-unify-and-consolidate-itself-to-remain-a-player-28971 [accessed July 25, 2020]).

³⁶ Sébastien Maillard, Thierry Chopin, Lukas Macek, and Jacques Rupnik, “L’Europe d’après. Pour un nouveau récit de l’élargissement,” *Espirit*, May 2020 (online at esprit.presse.fr/actualites/jacques-rupnik-et-lukas-macek-et-sebastien-maillard-et-thierry-chopin/l-europe-d-apres-pour-un-nouveau-recit-de-l-elargissement-42754 [accessed July 25, 2020]).