PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

LARUELLE, IMMANENCE, AND PERFORMANCE: WHAT DOES NON-PHILOSOPHY DO? [1]

JOHN Ó MAOILEARCA KINGSTON UNIVERSITY, LONDON

François Laruelle's non-philosophy aspires to bring democracy *into* thought. As a philosopher of 'radical immanence' everything is equal or equalized—no thing or thought transcends the rest. But of course all things do not *appear* equal. And Laruelle argues that philosophy is the discipline that posits itself as the power to think at the highest level—*the* utmost *unequal* thought. Despite appearances to the contrary, philosophy remains our dominant form of knowledge, according to Laruelle. Or rather, it is the very *form* of domination within knowledge. Adopting many positions, or 'decisions' as he puts it (empiricism, rationalism, idealism, materialism, scientism, even anti-philosophy), its fundamental pose is as a form of *exemplary* thinking. It is *the* model for all foundational thought, even when those foundations are differential or anti-foundational (multiplicity, alterity, *differance*, etc.). As Laruelle sees it, "philosophy is not 'first' for nothing; it is that which declares itself first and possessor [...]" (Laruelle 2013c, 110). Even in our contemporary scientistic era, in *epistemic relations*...

> [p]hilosophy holds the dominant place, science the dominated place. In positivism or scientism, the hierarchy is reversed or inverted; but it is still philosophy that dominates in anti-philosophy. The superior or dominant place is in effect always occupied by philosophy [...]. (Laruelle 2013b, 43)

So even scientism is a philosophy too (albeit a self-hating one).

Laruelle, on the other hand, believes that philosophy does *not* have a monopoly on (philosophical) thinking. In non-philosophy, all thoughts are equalized in value. However, this

PERFORMANCE PHILOSOPHY VOL 3, NO 3 (2017):718–729
DOI: https://doi.org/10.21476/PP.2017.33143
ISSN 2057–7176

equivalence or conceptual democracy is not *political* in the philosophical and representational sense of the term (with all its attendant troubles). It is not a *theoretical* democracy—which would leave alone what counts as 'theory'—but the 'democracy of theory itself'. Such a non-representational democracy aims to resolve the traditional hierarchies of philosophy "with experience, art, ethics, technology, mysticism, science, etc." by mutating just what thought and theory might be—by "universalizing thought beyond philosophy" (Laruelle 2013b, 49; 2013c, 14).

Laruelle is a strange kind of thinker to be sure, and this is no less true than when looking at him as a philosopher of immanence, or as a materialist. For if he is a materialist it is only in as much as he wants to treat *philosophy itself* as a material, yet *without* reducing it to any one or other *philosophical idea* of what (the relevant) matter is (borrowed from physics or neurology, say). The ideas of philosophy are no longer positions to be argued with, critiqued, accepted, or promoted but a raw material to be utilized: it is not a question for him of how we should study philosophy 'philosophically' but rather that "*there is a body of philosophy, a philosophical materiality, a conceptual and lived material, and one can treat philosophy as a part of physical nature*" (Mackay and Laruelle 2012, 27). (Naturally, he leaves what physical nature *is* undefined.)

And in pursuing this material treatment of thought and philosophy, we must first avoid the circular method of 'treating philosophy *philosophically*' and instead propose a "means of causing thought to function otherwise than philosophically" (Laruelle 2013c, 100). When speaking about his work, Laruelle describes his ongoing project to "treat philosophy as a material, and thus also as a materiality—without preoccupying oneself with the aims of philosophy, of its dignity, of its quasi-theological ends, of philosophical virtues, wisdom etc." He then adds: "what interests me is philosophy as the material for an art, at the limit, an art" (Laruelle 2013c, 29).

One strand of my current work, then, is to explain Laruelle's strange image of 'non- philosophy'—only without relying on terms of reference found in *philosophers*' explanations of philosophy. In order to introduce non-philosophy *in the spirit of consistency*, then, we have to think about it *non*-philosophically, that is, we have to acknowledge the importance of *extra-philosophical* materials as models for non-philosophy's modes of thought—what Laruelle describes as "techniques of creation that would be pictorial, poetic, musical, architectural, informational, etc." A re-orientation of philosophy through art-material can also be seen in Laruelle's call for a 'non-standard aesthetics', which is described as "an 'installation' made up of multiple thought materials which are made at the edge of art and philosophy" (Laruelle 2012b, n.p.).

A Performance Philosophy

And so we come to performance as a model for non-philosophy.

> A Non-Parmenidean Equation: Practice = Thought [...] In order to clearly distinguish philosophy, we will say that *practice and thought are identical in-the-last-instance*, or even that *practice is the presupposed that determines thought*. This is the non-Parmenidean paradigm and it must put an end to theoreticism and idealism, which are both the effect of Philosophizability. (Laruelle 2012a, 114–115)

> A last word. They tell me I am an artist-without-art and a philosopher-without-philosophy, that I take the 'pose' of an artist without the practice, or a philosopher without the doctrine—and I would add that of a believer without a religion. This criticism recognizes me by subtraction: I am exactly not one of the sincere liars that the artist, the philosopher, and the believer are. (Laruelle and Ó Maoilearca 2014)

It was Albert Camus who described actors as sincere liars ("*l'acteur est un menteur sincère*"). Is Laruelle one of those—some kind of poseur, ironist, or dissimulator? Or does he do quite the opposite—posing *and* practicing, or even a posing that *is* a practicing? What kind of actor or performer is he? The 'non-' of non-philosophy wagers on what *could* count as thought: "Non-philosophy is not 'the highest' exercise of thought; this no longer means anything for a non-philosophy which does not know the 'superior form' of thought [...]" (Laruelle 2013b, 197). It expands, or better, *mutates* rather than negates philosophy, and so opens it up to the Real rather than relativizes it into nothing (via language, history, or culture). It in-defines or under-determines (verb), not in order to generate a vagueness for the sake of vagueness (noun), but to simplify in such a way that the copious, warring definitions of philosophy are revisioned materially in-One. As such, it is always a practice, a material behavior. Where the Parmenidean Equation is that 'Thought Equals Being' (as seen in Badiou's philosophy, to take only the latest instance of this supreme sufficiency), Laruelle performs the 'Non-Parmenidean Equation': "Practice = Thought". Consequently, the *dualism* of practice and theory dissolves:

> A great misunderstanding in fact threatens non-philosophy, that of its spontaneous definition as a theory or even as a practice. It is neither one nor the other, of course, neither practical theory nor theoretical practice or 'of' theory, but *a future thought or in-the-last-instance, determining a subject for the (non-) relation of theory and practice*. (Laruelle 2012a, 148–149)

Non-philosophy's practice is connected to its performative language, such that "to the widespread question: what is it to think?, non-philosophy responds that thinking is not 'thought', but performing, and that to perform is to *clone* the world 'in-Real'" (more on this 'cloning' anon). Non-philosophy is equally described in turns as "*transcendental practice*", an "*immanent* pragmatics" (that ensues "*from the One—of simple philosophical material*"), or a "universal pragmatics" that is "valid for ordinary language as well as for philosophy" (Laruelle 2012a, 148; 2013a, 4, 172):

> In this sense, non-philosophical pragmatics can be defined by saying, for example, that *all language becomes performative in it but in the form of a performativity of description. [...] [I]t is what it does, it does what it says by saying it.* (Laruelle 2013a, 168, my italics)

Laruelle insists that we look at 'that-which-I-do-in-saying and not just what I say'—for the latter is simply what happens when thought is "taken hold of again by philosophy" (Laruelle 2014, 38). Resisting this hold, non-philosophy performs re-descriptions of philosophy that, *in doing so*, produce effects on how philosophical texts are seen (Laruelle 1991, 40). Of course, whether

these effects are always *desired* or are merely nominally considered '*effects*' such as *any* description might create (misunderstanding, disbelief, dismay, boredom) is another matter. In accordance with this, it is notable that Laruelle objects to the focus on *activity* within the concept of a speech *act*, and instead emphasizes the 'descriptive passivity' that an immanent pragmatics obliges; statements that manifest "by their very existence what they must describe in the last instance—statements identically descriptive and performative" (Laruelle 2013a, 167). In other words, the field of speech act philosophy remains decisionistic for Laruelle: philosophical decision is "implicit when it concerns the linguistic 'performative'" (Laruelle 2013b, 178).

In contrast to this, what Laruelle calls a 'Performed-Without-Performation' would be an action of the Real, or the 'in-One'—philosophical language seen as a performed without *we* using this or any language to perform. This complex thought warrants a closer look at certain concepts and practices of performance that do not come from philosophy so explicitly (Allan Kaprow's, Richard Schechner's and Michael Kirby's especially).

Beyond Illustration

With respect to the active passivity of Laruelle's performance, we need to take care to examine how the category of 'acting' (and non-acting) forms a continuum of behavior whose two vectors vary from types of performance that look wholly passive, to others that appear as full-blown acting for the theater stage or film. Alternatively—and going now in the direction of universal performance—one aesthetician, David Davies, has argued that *all* art can be seen as performance, claiming that individual artworks are snaphots of a performance towards a possible work.[2] Here, though, it is the specificity of art that is subsumed within a general concept of performance that is wholly philosophical, owing little or nothing to concepts of performance actually generated within performance studies by practitioners and performance theorists themselves. Though a number of philosophers have of late given more attention to performance art and theater in particular—Samuel Weber's *Theatricality as Medium* (2004), Jacques Rancière's *The Emancipated Spectator* (2011), or Alain Badiou's *Rhapsody For The Theatre* (2013a), for instance—this belies the ongoing 'anti-theatrical prejudice' of even these more sympathetic positions in as much as they continue to *apply* philosophical concepts to theatre and performance. Performance is allowed to think only through (seemingly non-performative) philosophy. As Laura Cull notes, "the extent to which performance might be considered a philosophical activity in its own right" remains closed for most philosophers (Cull 2014, 1; see also 4–5). Indeed, the idea of an autonomous 'performance philosophy' (one that does not merely illustrate or apply extant philosophy) remains the holy grail—though she notes that *non-philosophy* might hold some potential for such a view:

> [...] via the contemporary French thinker François Laruelle's notion of 'non-standard philosophy' in particular, we find the seeds of hope that Performance Philosophy might equally be embraced as an opportunity for the renewal of philosophy as much as of theatre and performance studies; or again, if this is not too grandiose,

> as an opportunity to reopen the very question of *what counts as philosophical thought*. (Cull 2014, 15)[3]

Performance becomes a philosophy all its own, just as philosophy becomes something else.

What is it that permits us to see philosophy as a performance (or indeed performance as a philosophy)? Laruelle wants to broaden philosophy, but by mutation rather than mere extension. Yet he is not alone in trying to create a 'new genre', as he so often puts it, nor in forming a more generic thought that can embrace art as well. Allan Kaprow, for example, claims that, as "art becomes less art" (that is, less like official 'Art'), "it takes on philosophy's early role as critique of life" (Kaprow 1972, 292). For Kaprow, the goal for practitioners is to invent "an art that was distinct from any known genre (or any combination of genres) [...] to develop something that was not another type of painting, literature, music, dance, theatre, opera" (Kaprow 2003, 195).[4] In Kaprow's *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, he describes this as the process of 'un-arting', or the taking of 'art out of art'. Art is undefined in and through practice, or what he calls an "act or thought whose identity as art must forever remain unknown" (Kaprow 2003, xxix). In his 'Activities', for example, commonplace actions such as looking into a mirror or opening and closing a door were transformed into 'art' through slight adjustments (viewing one's reflected breath as well as face, repeating the door opening over and over). This 'nonart', Kaprow wrote, "exists only fleetingly [...]. Indeed, the moment any such example is offered publicly, it automatically becomes a type of art" (Kaprow 2003, 98). Calling it 'Art' publicly is the product of a 'conceptual decision' for him; but its capacity to become such 'Art' was prefigured in the practices that created it out of the ordinary.[5] Indeed, there is a simultaneous two-way movement by which the ordinary is made into art and therewith 'Art' is 'unarted'.

The affinity between Kaprow's project of non-art and Laruelle's of non-philosophy is clearly evident, especially in terms of the former's 'cloning' of the ordinary to render it into art, using it as a raw-material that thereby also destabilizes the decision of what counts as art. The difference is that, while creating the possibility that art-practices (and so much else) can be forms of thought equal to that of philosophy, Laruelle concentrates his efforts on *using* philosophy as his own art material, on un-philosophizing it through the very performance of non-philosophy. The second strategy lowers philosophy from its self-made pedestal just as the former elevates art, *qua thought*, from its merely illustrative or applied status. Both movements converge towards a 'flat' thought. This parallel is even more striking when we consider that, for Kaprow, nonart must keep the 'Art' establishment aware of the activity of un-arting in order "to set in motion the uncertainties without which their [non-artists'] acts would have no meaning" (Kaprow 2003, 98). Similarly, the practice, or performance, of the non-philosopher is the constant reminder to philosophy that *not everything is philosophizable*, and that there are other ways to think, or 'philosophize', than that of philosophy.

Arriving at performance from the direction of theater rather than the visual arts, Richard Schechner offers us an alternative model of performance that has an especially crucial analogue for non-philosophy in its concept of 'restored behaviour'. Since the 1970s, Schechner has promoted the

'broad spectrum' theory of performance as that which involves a range of human activity: "performance must be construed as a 'broad spectrum' or 'continuum' of human actions ranging from ritual, play, sports, popular entertainments, the performing arts (theater, dance, music), and everyday life performances to the enactment of social, professional, gender, race, and class roles, and on to healing (from shamanism to surgery), the media, and the internet." From this perspective, "any action that is framed, presented, highlighted, or displayed is a performance" (Schechner 2002, 1–2). Rather than basing this open definition on a semantic relativism, however, this is more of a 'seeing as' activity that is itself based in practice. Central to the practice is this notion of restored behavior. In his 1985 text, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, Schechner writes:

> Restored behavior is living behavior treated as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behavior can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, technological) that brought them into existence. They have a life of their own. The original 'truth' or 'source' of the behavior may be lost, ignored, or contradicted even while this truth or source is apparently being honored and observed. How the strip of behavior was made, found, or developed may be unknown or concealed; elaborated; distorted by myth and tradition. Originating as a process, used in the process of rehearsal to make a new process, a performance, the strips of behavior are not themselves process but things, items, 'material.' Restored behavior can be of long duration as in some dramas and rituals or of short duration as in some gestures, dances, and mantras. Restored behavior is used in all kinds of performances from shamanism and exorcism to trance, from poetic dance and theater, from initiation rites to social dramas, analysis to psychodrama and transactional analysis. In fact, restored behavior is the main characteristic of performance. (Schechner 1985, 35)

Performance, the way Schechner sees it, reuses behaviors of all sorts as its 'material', cuts or strips of behavior that, in being re-used—or in what he also calls 'twice-behaved behavior'—are simultaneously restored or 'reactualised'. As Peter Eckersall notes, however, this is not an act of conservation—restored behavior involves "mutation, transformation, agitation" (Eckersall 2011, 119). The cloning, so to speak, is not a mere copy, but a mutilation, cutting up its material as might a film editor re-using found footage.

Michael Kirby's work is also worth noting here. As Eelka Lampe notes, Schechner's idea of the 'restoration of behavior' is close to Kirby's own ideas of 'acting' and 'not-acting' (see Lampe 2002, 299). Indeed, Kirby forms an interesting triad with the other continuists, having documented Kaprow's earlier 'Happenings', which were themselves an important influence on Schechner's 'New Orleans Group' in the mid-1960s (as Kirby reminds us in his crucial 1972 essay, *On Acting and Not-Acting*). The question of what is *not* acting and yet still a performance is vital for this essay's argument, and may provide us with a new orientation within the performative spectrum. As Kirby notes, "the performers in Happenings generally tended to 'be' nobody or nothing other than themselves; nor did they represent, or pretend to be in a time or place different than that of the spectator" (Kirby 1972, 3). They merely 'behaved'—walking, running, speaking, singing, washing dishes, sweeping, and so on. They simply perform actions as themselves, as ordinary men and

women, without impersonating anyone or anything else. This allows Kirby to propose the concept of a range of behavioral styles set along a continuum of actings:

> In a performance, we usually know when a person is acting and when he is not. But there is a scale or continuum of behavior involved, and the differences between acting and not-acting may be quite small. In such cases categorization may not be easy. Perhaps some would say it is unimportant, but, in fact, it is precisely these borderline cases that can provide insights into acting theory and into the nature of the art. (Kirby 1972, 3)

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

Non-matrixed acting comes in three types. The first is 'non-matrixed *performing*' such as is done by the stage attendants in Kabuki theatre who move props on and off-stage, help with costume changes, or even serve tea to the actors—all on stage. Significantly (at least for Kirby), these performers "do *not do* anything to reinforce" their identification as non-actors. In other words, such an individual is not "imbedded, as it were, in matrices of pretended or represented character, situation, place and time, I refer to him as being 'non-matrixed'" (Kirby 1972, 4). The second type is a 'non-matrixed *representation*' as when "the performer does not act and yet his costume represents something or someone" (an example being when one encounters an off-duty 'Santa Clause' having lunch in the shopping mall in early December) (Kirby 1972, 4). Were we, instead, to have seen this actor on stage and in a suitably rustic setting (one aspect of a matrix), the fiction of having 'Santa Clause' before us would be closer to hand, even though the actor had still *not* acted: "[W]hen the matrices are strong, persistent and reinforce each other, we see an actor, no matter how ordinary the behavior. This condition, the next step closer to 'true acting' on our continuum, we may refer to as 'received acting'" (Kirby 1972, 4). The behavior can be 'seen as' acting, even though this Santa does nothing. This is the third of the non-matrixed performances.

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

Fig. 1: Michael Kirby's Continuum of Not-Acting to Acting (Kirby 1972, 8).

The fourth stage on Kirby's continuum, and the last to come before full-blown acting, is vital for us in as much as it also harks back to Schechner's restored behavior. Here Kirby analyses the work of the avant-garde group, 'The Living Theatre':

> Acting also exists in emotional rather than strictly physical terms, however. Let us say, for example, that we are at a presentation by the Living Theatre of *Paradise Now*. It is that well-known section in which the performers, working individually, walk through the auditorium speaking directly to the spectators. 'I'm not allowed to travel without a passport,' they say. 'I'm not allowed to smoke marijuana!' 'I'm not allowed to take my clothes off!' They seem sincere, disturbed and angry. (Kirby 1972, 6)

The question is, are they acting? Despite the fact that they are performers, they only 'play' themselves and are not portraying characters. They are also in a theatre, but even the theatre building is being 'itself', so to speak, rather than an 'imaginary or represented place'. And everything that the performers say is factual. This indefinite style of behavior—neither wholly non-matrixed nor full-blown acting (fictioning) is named 'simple acting' by Kirby. The acting here comes in the *use* of behavior, emotional behavior in particular, which is being 'pushed' for the audience. It is this use and 'projection' of behavior that distinguishes not-acting from acting, the first and minimal incursion of the matrix (see Kirby 1972, 7). The similarity of simple acting with restored behavior (albeit now with the vector of acting/not-acting mapped onto the continuum of performance), goes further still. Describing the 'mirror exercise' used in actor training (whereby two people face each other and one copies the movements of the other—an old Marx Brothers gag, by the way), Kirby argues that this 'rudimentary acting' can actually be seen as either a purely mechanical reproduction of 'abstract movements' *or* as acting:

> Even 'abstract' movements may be personified and made into a character of sorts through the performer's attitude. If he seems to indicate 'I am this thing' rather than merely 'I am doing these movements,' we accept him as the 'thing': He is acting. On the other hand, we do not accept the 'mirror' as acting, even though he is a 'representation' of the first person. He lacks the psychic energy that would turn the abstraction into a personification. If an attitude of 'I'm imitating you' is projected, however—if purposeful distortion or 'editorializing' appears rather than the neutral attitude of exact copying—the mirror becomes an actor even though the original movements were abstract. (Kirby 1972, 7)

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

In *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, Laruelle speaks of a philosophical 'ventriloquism' of the Real. Yet his own seemingly quasi-mimetic approach to philosophy can equally be seen as a ventriloquist's act that re-voices philosophical material (in an immanent mode) (Laruelle 2013b, 217; see also Brassier 2007, 134). We could thereby see *non-philosophy's* performative posture as one that 'plays the dummy' so that it can re-enact the speech of philosophy. This is also another way of understanding what Laruelle means when he says that non-philosophy 'clones' philosophy. These

clones "are not doubles or exact reproductions of philosophy", yet they are remakes of a sort—mutants (Laruelle 2014, 52). Perhaps a more suitable analogue for this cloning comes in an alternative to the philosophical 'game of positions': the non-philosophical game of *charades*. Charades is a 'parlour game' whereby players attempt to guess correctly a proposed film, book, or play, conveyed through mime alone. There are four basic approaches to playing charades that can be compared with philosophy and non-philosophy. The first and most common method involves one player analyzing the title of a film, book, or play into its component parts—either words or, at a finer level of analysis, syllables. Then, these words or syllables are mimed to the other players; that is, an attempt is made to show what those individual words refer to in the world so that the players might guess the title correctly. The problem with this method is that, all too often, the player who first guesses correctly does so on account of *already knowing* the relationship between the mime and the words being mimed (frequently because the guesser is sufficiently familiar with the person doing the mime to know the way that his or her mind works, that is, the associations that he or she habitually makes in their shared world). The method is circular: They have arrived at the title by miming a world of words *already* shared with others, but *not* by miming the film, book, or play *itself*.

A second, similar strategy involves ignoring the name of the film entirely and miming one of its iconic images (such as a shark fin for *Jaws*). Once again, though, any success earned this way rests on a set of shared cultural associations ('fin' equals 'shark' for land dwellers first and foremost). The third most common strategy is to take the individual words or syllables of the film title and convey them by analogy with other words that they sound like and that are easier to mime, perhaps because they are terms coming from more concrete domains (the biological or the physical, say). This would be a reductive approach, however, that only achieves its win by making the verbal analogy an end in itself—miming a physical phenomenon—rather than the work's title.

Non-Philosophy, however, takes the fourth, least common and most 'abstract' approach. It tries to mime the film, book, or play *in one gesture, in itself and as a whole (not via its name)*. If philosophy as a whole were the chosen object, then non-philosophy *mimes* philosophy in-One, that is, in One gesture, and as part of the 'Real-One':

> The One as clone is their essence [the 'remainders' of philosophy] and, in this way alone, is the essence of philosophy not *as* philosophy but as *the identity of philosophy*. It determines philosophy to be non-philosophy, which is to say to enter as material into non-philosophy, which is the identity of philosophy. (Laruelle 2013b, 125)

Philosophy is not broken down into its component terms as though *one* of them could stand for the whole of philosophy: Aristotelian wonder, Cartesian doubt, Hegelian dialectics, Heideggerian questioning, or, in a less personalized but more 'iconic' mode, pure argument, analysis, logic, etc. This would only work for those who *already* believed that *all* philosophy is, in essence—that is, when 'proper' or 'true'—Heideggerian, Hegelian, analytic, or some such thing. Nor is philosophy conveyed by reducing it to *another* domain such as physics, neuroscience, or linguistics. That, again, would simply assume that this reductive domain already *is* identifiable with philosophy, a move

begging the question as to what philosophy is (which was the point of this special charade in the first place—to mime philosophy as a whole).

So, for instance, in *Anti-Badiou*, Laruelle describes Badiou's thought as an "affirmation, a style, a posture, a statue that forms around it in the type of circular void to which young badiolisers will gravitate" (Laruelle 2013c, xxi). Badiouism (as opposed to Badiou) is a void of circulations. Treating his thought in this manner (in an 'exercise of philo-fiction') transforms it into "a body or a part of nature, a new philosophical object upon which we would carry out an experiment or provoke a reaction" (Laruelle 2013c, 61–62). But, as Laruelle continues, the "characteristic, celebrated and foundational gestures" of other philosophies can also be transformed into verbal objects: "founding, reducing, subtracting, withdrawing, suspecting, critiquing, anticipating/retarding, overthrowing, meditating, elucidating, analyzing, synthetizing, deconstructing and constructing, etc." (Laruelle 2013c, xxi; 212–213).[6]

Michael Kirby, by the way, even mentions the game of charades as one type of simple acting, though it can become more complex or full-blown as the gestures become more detailed (merely 'putting on a jacket' versus putting on a jacket and acting out how the "resistance of the material, the degree of fit, the weight of the jacket" and so on feels) (Kirby 1972, 8–9).

Conclusion

In *Anti-Badiou*, Laruelle writes of a "process of quasi-transfer" that sees the Real "as superposition", that is, as something that "should be a non-acting capable of 'acting' non- mechanically in the form of a simple under-potentialization or under-determination of transcendence." Whereas Badiou thinks in terms of lack and 'the void', non-philosophy thinks in terms of the "*radically* passive (that is to say, non-contemplative) effect, generated or resumed by an occasional cause or a unilateral complementarity" (Laruelle 2013c, 220–221). Passive performance or immanent pragmatics, therefore, if it can be thought of in terms of performance art (as we strive to here) is nonetheless *not* based around the voluntary human subject (that either acts—heroically, say—or lacks action— as an animal or victim, say). There is a nonhuman matrix that creates a radical passivity in performance *vis-à-vis* the human and the Real, the former only 'performing' the latter in its radical, immanent behavior, that is, in *not* representing the Real. *If* the matrix is a condition of representation, it is not itself a representation and cannot be represented. And yet, Laruelle does not work in *conditions*: the matrix, the Real or in-One, performs through non-philosophy as it clones and un-philosophizes philosophy (the charade or 'absurd pretense' that is gestured in-One). This is not merely imagination at work, a fictioning (of philosophy) that is less real. The non-philosophical attitude or posture becomes a '*fictionale*' acting: less a 'sincere lie' (to refer back to Laruelle's reference to the 'artist, philosopher, or believer') than unconcealing the lie of authority; a welcome mockery of the absurd pretense of the (philosophical) *subject's* power. Power does not belong *to the subject's thought*, but *is the philosophical position in thought.* Non-philosophy is the attempt to adopt another posture that performs the *equality* of thought.

Notes

[1] This essay is a condensation and expansion of arguments set out in Ó Maoilearca (2015).

[2] See Davies (2004): "Artworks in the different arts, I argue, must be conceived no as the products (decontextualized or contextualized) of generative performances, but as the performances themselves. Vermeer's *Art of Painting*, then, represents not a possible performance productive of a work, but a moment in the unfolding of a possible work" (x).

[3] She continues: "[…] according to a non-philosophical perspective, philosophy and theatre would be realigned as equal yet different forms of thought—embedded in the whole of the Real, with neither being granted any special powers to exhaust the nature of the other, nor indeed the nature of the whole in which they take part" (Cull 2014, 18).

[4] Kaprow makes this statement in respect to his earlier work on 'Happenings'.

[5] See Cull (2012): "Rather than being a conceptual decision, 'Performing Life' is an aspect of the process of what Kaprow calls 'un-arting': a new mode of research and development in the preparation of works, distinct from the conventional idea of the artist at work in her studio—especially if the studio is a place detached from daily routines of eating and sleeping and so forth. Kaprow's concept of 'performing everyday life' names a research process in which the un-artist engages before creating an Activity" (174–175).

[6] In Annette Baier's list of 'postures of the mind', she includes "[…] wondering, revising, correcting, rejecting, ignoring, welcoming, repenting, forgiving, redeeming" (Baier 1985, 39).

Works Cited

Badiou, Alain. 2013. *Rhapsody For the Theatre*. Translated by Bruno Bosteels. London: Verso.

Baier, Annette. 1985. *Postures of The Mind: Essays on Mind and Morals*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Brassier, Ray. 2007. *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction.* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230590823

Cull, Laura. 2012. *Theatres of Immanence: Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

———. 2014. "Performance Philosophy: Staging a New Field." In *Encounters in Performance Philosophy,* edited by Laura Cull and Alice Lagaay, 1–19. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137462725_2

Davies, David. 2004. *Art as Performance.* Oxford: Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470774922

Eckersall, Peter. 2011. "Australian Performance Studies Marginally O Centre." In *Rise of Performance Studies*, edited by James Harding and Cindy Rosenthal, 118–132. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230306059_8

Kaprow, Allan. 1972. "Manifesto." In *The Discontinuous Universe,* edited by Sallie Sears and Georgianna W. Lord, 291–292. New York: Basic Books.

———. 2003. *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life.* Expanded ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kirby, Michael. 1972. "On Acting and Not-Acting." *The Drama Review* 16 (1): 3–15. https://doi.org/10.2307/1144724

Lampe, Eelka. 2002. "Rachel Rosenthal Creating Her Selves." In *Acting (Re)Considered: A Theoretical and Practical Guide,* 2nd ed., edited by Phillip B. Zarrilli, 291–304. London: Routledge.

Laruelle, François. 1991. *En tant qu'un.* Paris: Aubier.

———. 2012a. *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy.* Translated by Drew S. Burke and Anthony Paul Smith. Minneapolis: Univocal.

———. 2012b. "The Generic Orientation of Non-Standard Aesthetics." Paper presented at the Weisman Art Museum, University of Minneapolis, November 17, 2012. http://univocalpublishing.com/blog/111-lecture-on-the-orientation-of-non-standard-aesthetics.

———. 2013a. *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy.* Translated by Taylor Adkins. Minneapolis: Univocal.

———. 2013b. *Principles of Non-Philosophy.* Translated by Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith. London: Bloomsbury.

———. 2013c. *Anti-Badiou.* Translated by Robin Mackay. London: Bloomsbury.

———. 2014. *Intellectuals and Power: The Insurrection of the Victim. François Laruelle in Conversation with Philippe Petit*. Translated by Anthony Paul Smith. Cambridge: Polity.

Laruelle, François, and Ó Maoilearca, John. 2014. "Artistic Experiments with Philosophy: François Laruelle in Conversation with John Ó Maoilearca." In *Realism Materialism Art,* edited by Christoph Cox, Jenny Jaskey, and Suhail Malik, 177–83. Berlin: Sternberg/CCS Bard.

Mackay, Robin, and Laruelle, François. 2012. "Introduction: Laruelle Undivided." In François Laruelle, *From Decision to Heresy: Experiments in Non-Standard Thought*, edited by Robin Mackay, 1–32. Falmouth: Urbanomic/Sequence Press.

Ó Maoilearca, John. 2015. *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rancière, Jacques. 2011. *The Emancipated Spectator.* Translated by Gregory Elliott. London: Verso.

Schechner, Richard. 1985. *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812200928

———. 2002. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Weber, Samuel. 2004. *Theatricality as Medium.* New York: Fordham University Press. https://doi.org/10.5422/fso/9780823224159.001.0001

Biography

John Ó Maoilearca is Professor of Film and Television Studies at Kingston University, London. He has also taught philosophy and film theory at the University of Sunderland, England and the University of Dundee, Scotland. He has published ten books, including (as author) *Bergson and Philosophy* (2000), *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline* (2006), *Philosophy and the Moving Image: Refractions of Reality* (2010), and (as editor) *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy* (2012) and *The Bloomsbury Companion to Continental Philosophy* (2013). His latest book is entitled *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

© 2017 John Ó Maoilearca

Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.