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EQUALIZING THEATRE AND PHILOSOPHY: LARUELLE, BADIOU, AND GESTURES OF AUTHORITY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THEATRE

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> Philosophy is fundamentally a theatre that denies itself as such, that cannot recognize itself as final duplicity, as a tragedy and a comedy of self repetition. A *deus ex machina*: the philosopher seems to disappear into philosophy, but in reality projects himself specularly, like a curious god contemplating this game
>
> (Laruelle 2013a, 210)

Introduction

François Laruelle's non-philosophy or non-standard philosophy is one project amongst others within contemporary thought that seeks to explore the implications of a 'radical immanence' for how we relate to thought and knowledge (Laruelle 2013a, 2). An ancient idea—historically associated with theology and the question of the relationship between the divine and the worldly—immanence has gained renewed significance and currency in our supposedly 'post-secular' world as a key concept within a shared, though diverse effort to provide an alternative to the representationalist paradigm in which thought transcends the real. The concept of immanence has also provided an important new way of thinking about the relationship between philosophy and the arts: an alternative to the 'two-term' model (Cazeaux 2017, 5) wherein art is the object to which an extant model of philosophy is applied or functions as an illustration of pre-existing philosophical ideas. And of course, this debate has been at the core of performance philosophy from the outset, insofar as many of the field's advocates have shared the sense of a need to go 'beyond application' in terms of how we—as theorists, philosophers, thinkers—approach the arts, including

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performance, in as much as they are acknowledged as already thinking in their own way, philosophizing in their own way that might, in turn, mutate or qualitatively extend existing definitions of philosophy and thought. To be clear, to speak in terms of its '*own* thinking' is not to imply some exclusive or essential condition that belongs to something called 'performance' alone, as distinct from philosophy (or indeed from theatre, dance, music, or even simply "Life"). Rather, the idea of 'performance's *own* thinking' is intended to avoid the reduction of its thought to some pre-existing norm, or the merely quantitative expansion of the category of thought to include performance without any actual alteration of the category itself (which may yet turn out to be the gesture that we have seen in the concept of practice as research).

However, in recent work from 'the philosophy of theatre'—coming from both the analytic and continental traditions[1]—certain philosophers often have a tendency to position themselves in the role of gatekeeper: as authorized to determine the criteria for the identification of practices as theatre or not, to distinguish theatre from other art-forms and from non-art, and to judge which practices are better or worse, more or less representative examples of theatre in its true sense. '*This* is (true, proper, real) theatre'. In turn, insofar as recent philosophies of theatre are willing to acknowledge theatre as a kind of thinking at all (and not all do), we also find some philosophers attempting to adjudicate as to when theatre is and is not thinking on the basis of an imposed norm for what counts as proper thought: a norm that can only be determined if the philosopher assumes that he (alone) occupies a transcendent position or God's eye view which confers an exclusive power over knowledge.

As we'll see, this would seem to be precisely the kind of philosophical exceptionalism or transcendental authority critiqued within Laruelle's non-standard philosophy. Crucially though, as I'll try to reinforce, what Laruelle calls 'philosophy' is not the academic discipline of Philosophy so much as a particular kind of gesture wherein *any* thinker—regardless of discipline—enforces a singular model of 'proper thought', asserting the superiority and authority of his/her thought over others. These authoritarian gestures, in turn, become the primary material for Laruelle's own non-standard philosophy, once denuded of this authority or 'sufficiency', as he also puts it. In this article, I try to perform a parallel operation on materials from recent work in the 'philosophy of theatre' in which I perceive such authoritarian or 'philosophical' gestures to be at work. Whilst the value of Laruelle's project for the emerging field of performance philosophy has already been noted by a number of colleagues (Fisher 2015, Daddario 2015, Ó Maoilearca 2015), as well as in some of my own earlier writing (Cull 2012, 2014), I hope that this article goes some way to further that conversation and extend our understanding of that value in relation to a specific body of literature. And, correlatively, whilst the article itself could well be criticized for stopping at critique rather than enacting a positive alternative (insofar as it is an early part of a larger project), I still hope that it might provide some modest contribution to our ongoing attempts to make possible an alternative paradigm: a performance philosophy, rather than a philosophy of performance; a style of thought that is in a continuous process of rethinking itself insofar as it thinks *alongside* rather than about performance's thinking.

All too often, the philosophy of theatre seems to embark on its encounter with the field of theatre and performance sure in its knowledge of what it means to think—philosophically, theatrically, fundamentally—and authorizing its own privileged capacity to represent the nature of thought. Inspired but by no means authorized by Laruelle, an alternative, immanentist and pluralist approach might begin from the hypothetical stance: 'if performance is thinking, then what does that do to my understanding of thought?' To say that performance is its 'own' kind of thinking is not to claim some fundamental distinction between this thought and philosophy's—an identification that could only be made by presuming to know what makes philosophy what it is. Speaking in terms of performance's own thought, is rather an attempt to clarify that this is not a call for performance to be included in any dominant definition of thought, to be recognized as measuring up to whatever counts as thought in a given situation, so much as a call for a genuine democratization of the category of thought itself, for performance to be treated as an equal participant in an ongoing mutation and multiplication of thought's possibilities.

In this particular article, which emerges from a wider and ongoing project, I want to focus on developing a critique of Alain Badiou's philosophy of theatre. Whilst Badiou, the philosopher-playwright, initially appears magnanimous in relation to theatre's own thinking, and indeed to demote the function of philosophy in relation to an ontological privilege now accorded to mathematical set theory (by him), we will see how this very benevolence from a Laruellian perspective, constitutes another form of *philosophical* authoritarianism. Throughout we are concerned with what might be described as the ethics or politics of definitional thought—not only in more overtly dualistic or transcendent ways of thinking (such as those that frequently underpin Anglo-American philosophies of theatre), but also in more avowedly immanentist philosophies like Badiou's insofar as they authorize themselves to dictate what are and what are not the properties of (true, proper, real) thought whereby it is said that 'this is thinking' and 'that is not', as Laruelle exposes in his provocative text, *Anti-Badiou* (2013a). 'Beneath its philosophical appearance and its external aims', despite Badiou's 'auto-nominations or his masks' as "modern" and "militant", Laruelle seeks to demonstrate 'the profoundly conservative character of Badiou's thought', which—I propose—extends to his philosophy of theatre.

Of course, this particular iteration of such ideas may well fall foul of the very same logic of application that it critiques in Badiou's approach to theatre: reducing Laruelle's own thought to a 'philosophical decision'—just one more philosophy—which we can then authoritatively impose on the object of theatre, as if it were the same as any other 'non-philosophical' object. Likewise, the larger question of what might constitute 'non-theatre,' as distinct from 'non-philosophy' including a non-philosophical approach to the philosophy of theatre (or a non-philosophical usage of philosophical materials such as Badiou's work on theatre), remains beyond the scope of this particular text. Nevertheless, from my own perspective, the engagement with Laruelle here—however nascent, brief and no doubt superficial in relation to what is a highly complex body of work—serves a two-fold purpose: to support the articulation of the critique of 'philosophical sufficiency' in Badiou's philosophy of theatre, but also to enable the development of my own wider project to consider new means to approach the relation between theatre and philosophy. That is, the 'counter-model' of Badiou's philosophy of theatre seems to provide one means through which

performance philosophy might continue to explain itself to itself (Laruelle 2013a, xxxix). Myriad questions arise: Does theatre—and specifically theatre as a set of knowledges—really need philosophers like Badiou to come to its defence? Or, is it that theatrical knowledge needs to be defended *from* 'the legislation of the philosopher' (as I might appear to be doing here) (ibid., 162)? Or, alternatively again, can we model a strand of performance philosophy alongside non-philosophy on the basis that theatre does not need saving from philosophy but is already saved and saves itself insofar as its practice resists the essentializing privilege assigned to it by Badiou (and other contemporary philosophers of theatre)? Our own task then would be less a matter of defending theatre against philosophy, perhaps, and more a matter of practicing a new genre of thought that demonstrates the transformation that theatre imposes upon philosophy (Laruelle 2013a, 88).

1. Laruelle's critique of philosophy as authoritarian gesture

Variously characterized as a 'machine of immanence' (Laruelle 2013a, xxiv), a 'science of philosophy' (xxiii), and a 'quantum theory of philosophy' (Laruelle 2013a, 157), Laruelle's non-philosophy resists straightforward introduction. And indeed, the specific articulation of non-philosophy as an experimental 'ongoing process' rather than an organized system (Laruelle 2013a, 29), as an 'exit from philosophy as self-encompassing' via the invention of 'new genre' of thought (Laruelle 2013a, 44), suggests a necessary modesty with respect to any pre-emptive self-understanding of its own task: 'By definition, we do not entirely know what to expect of ourselves' (Laruelle 2013a, 61). And yet, insofar as it still remains relatively 'new' or lesser known in some contexts than others, it seems necessary to provide at least a cursory exposition of non-philosophy here, as well as pointing new readers to some of the excellent, extant commentaries that have already done the important work of trying to make Laruelle's complex ideas 'accessible' for use in artistic and activist contexts without betraying their specificity.[2]

As ever, perhaps, the temptation is to begin with what it is not (or more accurately, what it claims it is not): namely, not a 'meta-theory' that contemplates philosophy (Laruelle 2013a, 76), nor simply one more philosophical critique of philosophy, albeit that Laruelle admits that non-philosophy is 'obliged to make use of philosophical procedures' (Laruelle 2013a, xxix). More positively, Laruelle describes non-philosophy as a practice which entirely renounces 'the foundational function of philosophy' (and indeed any one mode of thought) (Laruelle 2013a, 75) in favour of treating philosophy as 'a mere symptom of the Real' (Laruelle 2013a, 199).

In Laruelle, radical immanence is expressed in the idea of a 'democracy of thought' or an equality of thinking, wherein philosophy and theatre—for instance—must be rendered equal as knowledges, seen as equally thought. If it has a founding premise, it is the renunciation of foundation itself in favour of 'the multiplicities of knowledge' (Laruelle 2013a, 101). Whereas philosophy has often assumed a special status for itself with respect to identifying and ordering other knowledges—a privileged power to distinguish between and hierarchize knowledges that demonstrates in itself the assumption of a hierarchical position—non-philosophy argues that 'knowledges—including philosophy—must all become equal in the generic, while conserving their

difference in disciplinary technique and materiality' (Laruelle 2013a, 104). In this respect, non-philosophy is not a homogenizing gesture. There is a specificity to the material operations of theatre and performance, for instance; but to render these equal to philosophy is precisely to refuse the latter the power to decide upon the nature and basis of disciplinary differences in advance. For my own larger project, it is also important to note that Laruelle's refusal to impose any species-ist limits to this equality of thought and knowledges: 'thought is not the intrinsic property of humans that must serve to define their essence, an essence that would then indeed be "local"; it is a universal milieu' (Laruelle in Ó Maoilearca 2015, 34). Laruelle invites us to experiment with this hypothesis: that all of the Real is equally thought, and that all thoughts are equally part of the Real, rather than being more or less truthful representations of it. No one thought, no one part of thought, can stand apart and therefore stand for the whole. Or, as John Ó Maoilearca suggests—emphasising the ethico-political dimension of this position—if all thoughts are equal then we cannot define the nature of this equality without betraying equality itself (Ó Maoilearca 2015).

Whilst possibly frustrating from the point of view of any one trying to 'grasp' Laruelle's ideas, it is clearly consistent with his own critique that he refrains from defining what thinking is. Indeed, he goes so far as to say that non-philosophy is 'the manner of thinking that does not know a priori what it is to think' (Laruelle 2012a, 67). However, whilst the dominant or 'typical' criteria for what counts as thought and philosophy keep changing (different theories jostling with each other for exceptional status), what does not change—or has not radically changed, for Laruelle—is the tendency of some thought to assume the capacity to create the criteria in the first place. Of course, Laruelle has himself been accused of essentializing philosophy insofar as he claims that 'philosophies all possess a transcendental core, in various forms' (Laruelle 2013a, 60) and describes non-philosophy as 'a formal theory of philosophy that identifies its invariant and varied transcendental essence' (ibid., 75). In contrast, one might note his acknowledgement of phenomenology 'as a limited form of non-philosophy' insofar as it 'did try to put thinking into direct contact with the thing or object', immanently (xxvii)—as did Deleuze's philosophy of immanence via different means. But another way to construe this is to suggest that what Laruelle means by 'philosophy' is precisely a theory that is transcendental 'in essence'. What Laruelle calls 'philosophy' is a tendency that has often been performed (differently) by the discipline of Philosophy, but can also be found in other disciplinary fields. In this sense, we might suggest that when Laruelle critiques 'philosophy' he is not exclusively criticizing the discipline of Philosophy in its various institutional or historical-disciplinary formations, nor is he singling out those who are sanctioned to assume the title of 'philosopher' under current conventions—though non-philosophy has particularly focused its experiments on materials associated with European traditions within Philosophy. Rather, what Laruelle calls 'philosophy' is a particular kind of gesture wherein a thinker—regardless of discipline—enforces a singular model of 'proper thought', asserting the superiority and authority of that thought over others.

Laruelle's work aims to democratize or equalize the relationship that philosophy has to other forms of thought, including the arts. His project is an attempt to perform a qualitative extension of the category of thought without any one kind of thinking positioning itself as its exemplary form that,

therefore, is in a position to police the inclusion and exclusion or relative status of other thoughts within the category. The discipline of Philosophy has often sought to play this authoritarian role, Laruelle claims. For Laruelle, standard philosophy involves the gesture wherein thought withdraws from world in order to occupy a position of authority or power in relation to it. Or as he puts it: 'To philosophise on X is to withdraw from X; to take an essential distance from the term for which we will posit other terms' (Laruelle 2012a, 284). In contrast, in *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, for instance, Laruelle asks us to consider how we might equalize philosophy and art, 'outside of every hierarchy' (Laruelle 2013b, 289). Laruelle argues that 'we must first change the very concept of thought, in its relations to philosophy and to other forms of knowledge' (Laruelle 2012a, 232). According to this democracy of thinking, the call is not 'to think without philosophy but to think without the *authority* of philosophy' (Laruelle 2006, np).[3] Through a non-philosophical procedure, 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.[4]

Of course, other thinkers of immanence—such as Deleuze or Badiou—have tried to circumvent a tendency to hierarchize by pointing to the ceaselessly creative, inventive or otherwise processual quality of the principle shared by all things: as difference, becoming, multiplicity, and so on. Yet, insofar as these thinkers have nevertheless positioned their own thought as *ontologies* or as the superior or exemplary *science* of philosophical knowledge (even if in Badiou's case it decrees, *meta-ontologically*, that the best form for ontological thought is set theory), they enact a gesture of authority that Laruelle calls 'philosophy' (given that they tell us faithfully what it is that makes things equal). Deleuze's ontological monism, for instance, appears as a form of equality at one level insofar as it declares that everything is becoming, but when becoming is identified and defined as the process from actual to virtual, a certain inequality or hierarchy is reintroduced, overtly between modes of thought, and covertly between the philosopher's elevated perspective over his materials ('Deleuze's philosophy') and other perspectives or philosophies.

But, we must remember that to say that thought is a material part of the Real, and to say that all thoughts are equal, material parts of the Real, does not amount to claiming to know what thought is. Whilst 'philosophy', for Laruelle, tells us what thought supposedly is in its highest form, non-philosophy, again, is 'the manner of thinking that does not know a priori what it is to think' (Laruelle 2012b, 67). Adopting this stance opens up the possibility of finding new ways of thinking or locating thought in unexpected places. It is not one more authoritarian philosophical gesture. That thoughts are equal, material parts of the Real means that we cannot know what thought is in any absolute or final sense, because it is constantly changing, constantly being produced anew and differently in specific situations or performative events. Again though, this is not to render thought ineffable, but only plural and processual—or 'infinitely effable' as Anthony Paul Smith put it (Smith 2012, 21). We are always part of thought, but only ever *a* part—which we should never mistake for the whole (which remains open, indefinite, endlessly novel), nor as a position from which we might produce a picture of the whole (which cannot be pictured).

So, Laruelle even goes as far as to extend his critique of 'self-sufficiency' to those avowed philosophers of immanence like Deleuze. That is, whilst Deleuze explicitly advocates for the 'encounter' with the arts as a source of new philosophical ideas, Laruelle suggests that he does so on an unequal basis—insofar as his own philosophy retains the privilege to define how art thinks (as affect, sensation, and so forth), and to use such definitions as the criteria for both the priority or demotion of particular non-philosophical 'examples'. But rather than focus on a critique of Deleuze here, given the otherwise valuable resources he contributes to the immanent paradigm, I want to turn our attention to more recent work in the philosophy of theatre that arguably enacts the undemocratic gesture in a more pronounced and problematic fashion through an analysis of the relationship between philosophy, theatre and thought that is established in aspects of the work of Alain Badiou.

As we've noted, Laruelle has written an extensive critique of Badiou's thought in a book with the self-consciously 'malicious' title, *Anti-Badiou* (2013a). Here, Laruelle implicitly places his own 'caricatural' mocking of his 'adversary' in the lineage of theatrical parodies of philosophers (also referenced in Badiou's writing on theatre), such as the well-known parody of Socrates in Aristophanes *The Clouds* (Laruelle 2013a, xxxii). In this respect, *Anti-Badiou* is, in part, a 'critique of an individual' (and indeed the 'cult of personality' Badiou cultivates): one that makes comedy out of the way in which Badiou's appearance as a 'great philosopher' is so much a matter of self-styling as to become a ridiculous enactment of those 'antique philosopher clichés' (ibid.).[5] But ultimately, such anti-philosophical parody is too easy for Laruelle (and problematically, he notes, involves his own reciprocal or reactive positioning as the David to Badiou's Goliath, as well as the Aristophanes to Badiou's Socrates).[6] And in turn, Laruelle emphasizes that 'We should not believe, above all, that the character Badiou is the true object of the critique, nor even that we contest "his" philosophy' (Laruelle 2013a, xxxiii). Rather, the main objective of this particular work of non-philosophy is 'a dismantling of the facilities, procedures and paradoxes of *every* philosophy' (Laruelle 2013a, xxxii), using Badiou as 'a paradigm, and a privileged object of study' with respect to philosophy's perennial 'narcissistic auto-glorification and its dominant use of thought' (Laruelle 2013a, xv). Laruelle approaches Badiou with what might be construed as an anti-theatrical eye, as 'one of the most conservative and regressive philosophers that could be', despite being one who is 'dressed in the deceptive habits of modernity' (Laruelle 2013a, 24).

In the book, Laruelle identifies a fundamental paradox at the heart of Badiou's work. In his famous formulation, mathematics = ontology, Badiou ostensibly intends to reveal that being itself *qua* being is a pure multiple (as construed in set theory) rather than a substance or presence, and 'can and must be the condition, rather than the object, of "Philosophy"' (Laruelle 2013a, xxi). Likewise, Laruelle suggests, Badiou appears to 'reduce' philosophy 'in its relation to the four "truth procedures," to a simple "inventory" function—that is, to the function of a widened synthesis or weakened (weakly encyclopedic) system' rather than as a source of truth in itself. In ceding to mathematics philosophy's historical self-nomination as the privileged site of ontological knowledge—'the most essential of all knowledges, that of being itself qua being' (Laruelle 2013a, 162)—Badiou might appear to be performing the sort of flattening gesture of which Laruelle ought to approve. But Laruelle accuses Badiou of failing to really transfer the place of philosophy to

mathematics insofar as he assumes for himself a meta-ontological role. The very act of assuming to relieve philosophy of ontology exacts a meta-ontological authority and mastery (Laruelle 2013a, 14), which retains 'the primacy of philosophy over all knowledge' (Laruelle 2013a, 37). In the end, Laruelle suggests Badiou responds to the problem of how to conserve philosophy 'by amputating its sickly member (the philosophical ontology of "presence") and issuing it with a mathematical prosthesis' (Laruelle 2013a, 17)—being as multiple. Equated with set theory, ontology then becomes a special form of "non-philosophy" in the very interior of philosophy' (Laruelle 2013a, 15).

Whilst non-philosophy has not, yet, as far as I am aware, provided any explicit or substantial consideration of the relationship between philosophy and theatre as one of its 'object-materials' (although it has addressed philosophy and art), it might nevertheless be considered to have an important relationship to the 'determinate region of experience' (Laruelle 2013a, 12) we might call performance and performativity, theatre and theatricality. For instance, Laruelle describes non-philosophy as a 'performation of philosophy' (ibid., xi) and frequently considers thought—whether Badiou's or non-philosophy's—as 'a style, a posture' (Laruelle 2013a, xxi), stance (Laruelle 2013a, 85) or as a matter of 'comportment' (Laruelle 2013a, 23). But equally important perhaps, specifically in terms of *Anti-Badiou*, is Laruelle's use of a theatrical metaphor to expand upon the core 'discovery' and controversial claim of non-philosophy: namely, the universality of what Laruelle calls 'the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy (PSP)', as well as to explain how this principle is enacted in Badiou. Firstly, he states: 'Philosophy is fundamentally a theatre that denies itself as such, that cannot recognize itself as final duplicity, as a tragedy and a comedy of self repetition. A *deus ex machina*: the philosopher seems to disappear into philosophy, but in reality projects himself specularly, like a curious god contemplating this game' (Laruelle 2013a, 210). Moving on to Badiou's philosophy in particular, he then suggests that:

> Materialism begins to simplify the theatre: the philosopher is still necessary—no longer as a god, but in the wings, where he hides himself so as to pull the strings of matter and thought, of Being and consciousness. In materialism, the double or duplicitous philosopher still partitions himself out into two roles; or divides himself… He is a determinate thought that receives truths without being able to create them, but he is also this meta- ontologue of mathematical Being, this weakened philosopher at the service of mathematical matter, who helps to produce truths'. But thirdly, he also aligns non-philosophy with a process of 'de-theatricalization', proposing that: 'We must de-theatricalize the scenarios of the imagination. It is not a matter of a foundation of possible scenarios, but of the real scenario fabricated in the under-going, that real scenario of which all philosophical scenarios are but models. (Laruelle 2013a, 210)

Of course, there is a long history of the use of theatrical metaphor as a means to understand the nature of reality, thought and philosophy—metaphors that obviously vary widely in their implications depending on how 'theatre' or theatricality are construed therein. Here, it seems, philosophy is a theatre insofar as it is a 'doubling', for Laruelle (Laruelle 2013a, xxvii); what philosophy and theatre have in common is the gesture of transcendence and withdrawal that he calls 'decision'. And indeed, as we'll see, Badiou's philosophy of theatre is a theatrical philosophy in

this sense: one that assumes a transcendent position from which to make 'a dogmatic unilateral cut between two terms' (Laruelle 2013a, 71) and in so doing reinstates an inequality between philosophical and theatrical knowledges. Insofar as Laruelle describes philosophy as a theatre, it may be that he would not see theatre—any more than mathematics—as capable of transforming philosophy or vice versa. And indeed we do perhaps see this kind of mutual reinforcement of each other as sufficient in the structural similarity identified between theatre and philosophy by those who construe both as shedding light on the reality behind appearance (Krasner and Saltz 2006, 5). But as a specific material operation rather than metaphor, there are clearly also theatres that affirm themselves as such and seek to render visible their processes of production, as well as 'theatres of immanence' that do not hold up a mirror of philosophy to itself (as a mirror of the world) and therefore might prove more compatible with the non-philosophical project.

2. 'Let none enter here who is not a Platonist': Badiou on theatre

All theatre is a theatre of Ideas.

(Badiou 2013, 93)

Badiou's enthusiasm for theatre is hyperbolically expressed in the titles of his recent books: *In Praise of Theatre* (French 2013, English 2015) and *Rhapsody for the Theatre* (English 2013, new French edition with new author's preface in 2014). Described by some as 'Badiou's masterwork of theatre theory' (Bielski in Badiou and Truong 2015, viii), the latter is a collection of Badiou's thoughts on theatre written during the 1990s and 2000s.[7] Based on this enthusiasm, we might be initially hopeful that Badiou's engagement with the theatrical field might avoid philosophical authoritarianism. It is he, after all, who lays out as first principle in his 'Theses on Theater' the need to establish 'that theatre thinks' (Badiou 2005a, 72). Here, he famously describes theatre as 'an event of thought' and as an event that 'directly produces ideas' (ibid.). Likewise, in *Rhapsody*, he states: 'I am convinced that theatre in and of itself, through its own resources, constitutes a particularly active form of thought, an act of thought. It is, as Mallarmé used to say, a "superior" art' (Badiou 2013, 290). And yet, as we'll see, Badiou ultimately positions himself as the authority on the kind of thought that theatre is (as truth-procedure for instance), the nature of the relationship between that thought and philosophy, and as the one who can bestow upon mathematics the honour of exemplifying thought 'in its highest form'.

To give a brief overview, Badiou describes philosophy as conditioned by four, non-philosophical forms of thought or 'generic truth-procedures': art, politics, science and love. In their true or proper forms—which are inevitably rare, for Badiou—each of these procedures involves the production of truths, and the co-engendering of 'events' and 'subjects'. According to Badiou, philosophy itself does not produce truth; this is solely the remit of the four procedures. In contrast, it is the exclusive function of philosophy to 'subtract' or 'seize' the truths generated by the fields that condition it, such as theatre. The unique role of philosophy—according to Badiou—is to gather together the truths produced by the four fields that he identifies as the 'conditions' of philosophy: art (including theatre), science (particularly mathematics), politics and love. In *Conditions*, Badiou talks about this relationship between philosophy and truth in terms of a 'seizing': 'By seizing I mean capture, hold

and also seizure, amazement, astonishment. Philosophy is the site of thought at which (non-philosophical) truths seize us and are seized as such' (Badiou 2008, 13). Here then, Badiou reiterates the distinction between truth and knowledge, emphasizing the extent to which philosophy's capacity to grasp truth is dependent on being grasped by it, taken by surprise by it in a way that allows for the production of new knowledge rather than the mastery of the non-philosophical according to the extant categories and concepts of representation (in a manner that resonates with the Deleuzian notion of encounter). Art is one of four domains that condition philosophy, for Badiou, in the sense that true philosophy occurs only 'on the condition' that it is prompted to think beyond its own existing knowledge by art (politics, love, or science). Indeed, Badiou even provocatively characterizes philosophy as 'the go-between in our encounters with truths' or even as truth's 'procuress' (or 'madam', as in the context of a brothel) (Badiou 2005a, 10).

In this context, Badiou argues that theatre in its true form is a theatre of Ideas, but one that is 'irreducible to philosophy' (Badiou 2005a, 9). So theatre thinks, for Badiou; but it does not think *philosophically*. Rather, he is insistent that what theatre produces are resolutely '*theater-ideas*': thoughts that 'cannot be produced in any other place or by any other means', including by philosophy, and thoughts that do not pre-exist their staging as theatrical event (Badiou 2005a, 72). For Badiou, theatre 'is the condition of possibility for a kind of truth to which we would otherwise have no access' (Reinhard 2013, xxv). This separation is a necessary consequence of Badiou's definition of philosophy as conditioned—as I've just outlined—insofar as the capacity of the four truth procedures to produce the radical rupture with existing knowledge can only occur, for Badiou, to the extent that they are understood as heterogeneous and external to philosophy. Recalling Deleuze's notion of encounter, theatre can only make philosophy think if its own thinking is that which philosophy cannot recognize according to its existing schemas. And in turn, to reassert the specifically Badiouian dimension of this proposition: when theatre thinks, what it produces (albeit often unwittingly according to Badiou) are events of truth that depend upon the philosopher to seize and be seized by them, as well as upon other subjects (audiences, other theatre-makers) who are produced as such to the extent that they faithfully pursue the implications of the events they have witnessed. This makes theatre proper a demanding rather than necessarily pleasurable experience: 'The public comes to the theater to be *struck.* Struck by theater-ideas. It does not leave the theater cultivated, but stunned, fatigued (thought is tiring), pensive. Even in the loudest laughter, it has not encountered any satisfaction. It has encountered ideas whose existence it hitherto did not suspect' (Badiou 2005a, 77).

So theatre thinks but is not philosophy, for Badiou. In this respect, Badiou presents himself as denouncing any illustrative function for the theatre and, correlatively, any parasitic invasion of theatre by philosophy. In turn, he advocates for what he calls 'inaesthetics'—as distinct from conventional philosophical aesthetics—as a mode of relation between art and philosophy wherein the latter does not claim to think for art, recognizes that 'art is itself a producer of truths', and 'makes no claim to turn it into an object for philosophy' (Toscano and Power 2003, xxvii). Equally promising, it is clear that Badiou does not want to think of philosophy as some autonomous, contemplative discourse. On the contrary, as Justin Clemens suggests, Badiou conceives philosophy as '*entirely dependent* on its conditions. Philosophy does not and cannot think by itself'

(Clemens 2010, 26); rather, it is belatedly pressed into a mode of thought instigated and constrained by the other kinds of thinking already taking place in and as art, politics, science and love. As such, we might conclude that philosophy is not synonymous with thought *per se,* for Badiou. Philosophy is distinctive as 'that singular discipline of thought that has as its departure point the conviction that there are truths' (Badiou and Tarby 2013, 128); but it is one discipline of thought among others, rather than its essence or its paradigmatic example (Clemens 2010, 25).[8]

In such statements, Badiou might seem to be an ally for the pursuit of a democracy of thought including philosophy and theatre. And indeed some commentators, such as Reinhard, have read his work as reversing the conventional hierarchy between the two: 'For Badiou theater functions as a kind of laboratory for the experimental production and investigation of new subjectivities, new ideas, and new temporalities. As such, it may have implications for philosophy, which can learn from it… but this is not a reciprocal relationship—theatrical experimentation produces results undreamt by philosophy, which has little to offer it in return' (Reinhard 2013, xxiv). And yet, Badiou's characterization of philosophy as conditioned also includes an insistence on the fundamental externality of art to philosophy—a view which can only be expressed from an assumed position of privilege with respect to the knowledge of thought per se.

The same could be said of the relationship between philosophy and science, or mathematics in Badiou's work. On the one hand, Badiou's account of philosophy as conditioned seems to involve a demotion of philosophy to the status of a merely derivative discourse—one that appears reminiscent of Richard Rorty's reassignment of philosophy as a sophisticated form of commentary on other discourses (both scientific and non-scientific). That is, whilst Badiou is against any talk of the 'end of metaphysics', and wants to delineate a specific and important role for philosophy in relation to its conditions, there is still an abiding sense that this involves a loss of status or de-privileging of philosophy—not least because philosophy must give up its claims to ontology—which, under Badiou, becomes solely the remit of mathematics. For instance, Badiou refers to the nine core hypotheses of set theory as 'the greatest effort of thought ever yet accomplished by humanity' (Badiou 2007, 536) and elsewhere refers to mathematics as the 'unrivalled model of fully realized thought' (Badiou and Truong 2015, 7). Indeed, Badiou claims that it is mathematics alone that can speak of being as such in a manner that would appear to privilege it above the other three conditions, as well as above philosophy itself. If ontology concerns multiplicity as the nature of being or existence beyond the particularity of how different beings exist, then for Badiou, ontology is best conducted in the form of mathematics as the science of quantities rather than qualities. For Badiou, mathematics 'pronounces what is expressible of being qua being' (Badiou 2007, 8); it 'is the science… of everything that is, *insofar as it is*' (Badiou 2007, 7). Mathematical discourse is particularly well suited to this ontological purpose in that it seems to constitute a kind of asubjective form of thought, to be 'a science purged of opinion and experience' (Hallward 2003, 6). Mathematical theory, and indeed science more broadly, already allows us to think what we cannot experience through the senses. But for Badiou, set theory especially, is also the purest means to think multiplicity or the condition of belonging to a set as what all beings have in common. It presents the universal nature of being (as multiple) because it deals exclusively with quantities or sets of things, rather than with the qualities of the things counted.

But does this apparent demotion of philosophy not just conceal its authority? Does the very assumption of the position of the one who demotes or promotes undermine the apparently democratizing nature of the claims themselves? For his part, John Ó Maoilearca tends to construe this seeming relegation as a kind of 'false modesty' wherein both art and mathematics are flattered by being acknowledged as equal if not superior modes of thought in principle, but nevertheless in practice, ultimately remain subject to philosophy's explanations of the nature of that thought in a manner that performs (whilst simultaneously denying) their subordination to philosophy's all-encompassing epistemology. For instance, in relation to mathematics, Badiou often quotes the inscription that is said to have been written above the entrance to Plato's Academy: *'Let none enter here who is not a geometer'* (see Badiou 2004, 4, 68; Badiou 1999, 34).[9] The entrance marks the boundary between proper thinking and its others, and the philosopher is the author of the inscription that dictates the terms for crossing the threshold. Likewise, playing the role of a contemporary Plato, Badiou locates his own definite thought as the centre of values when he builds a pantheon of mathematical philosophers, and even in the seemingly self-effacing gesture of baptizing mathematicians as the practitioners of thought in its highest form.[10] Likewise, as we'll focus on now, Badiou also seeks to play the gatekeeper to the theatre.

3. Badiou knows what theatre is: definitions and examples

Badiou as much as other philosophers of theatre puts himself in the position to know what 'counts as theatre properly speaking' (Badiou 2013, 109). Both the translator's introduction and the back matter of *In Praise of Theatre* attempt to position this latest book as different from Badiou's previous writings on theatre on account of an expanded reflection on contemporary practice—including Jan Fabre and Romeo Castellucci as signs for the philosopher's cultural currency (Bielski in Badiou and Truong 2015, xiv).[11] However, on closer inspection, *In Praise* sees Badiou sticking fairly closely to his usual list of 'great dramatists': Chekhov, Ibsen, O'Neill, the symbolist theatre of Claudel (a conservative in terms of his religious and political views), Brecht, Pirandello. That is, Badiou's own theatrical pantheon is made up almost exclusively of individual (white, male, European) playwrights. Fabre and Castellucci are really only mentioned in passing (Badiou and Truong 2015, 17–18); the contemporary director and co-founder of the Pandora Company, Brigitte Jaques is mentioned once (Badiou and Truong 2015, 4); and a play by the contemporary playwright Bernard-Marie Koltès is briefly discussed (Badiou and Truong 2015, 66–67). Likewise, the preceding volume, *Rhapsody* includes brief mention of Robert Wilson (Badiou 2013, 47)—though it is later stated that he 'is not really a "theatre director"' (Badiou 2013, 156)—but the key exalted references are as above, along with Mallarmé, Vitez, Racine, Beckett, Genet, and Sean O'Casey. There is a self-awareness of a tendency to neglect contemporary authors staged in the dialogue sections of the earlier *Rhapsody*, when 'The Empiricist' notes that the Badiou character has only included one such in his initial list of examples of true Theatre (capital T: a rare and radical event that disrupts the status quo) rather than mere "theatre" (the 'bad theatre' that is 'tied to the State' and reinforces dominant opinion) (Badiou 2008, 220).[12] That is, whereas Badiou is willing to identify contemporary productions as Theatre (capital T), the productions tend to be of works by classic (white, male, European) playwrights.

The idea of a theatrical pantheon, of course, raises the perennial problem of the status of 'the example' in the philosophy of theatre. For his part, Fred Dalmasso argues that 'Badiou's theory of theatre largely addresses a theatre-to-come' such that it would make little sense for him to focus on 'close analysis of existing forms of theatre' or to provide illustrative examples from historical and contemporary practice (Dalmasso 2011, 23). And indeed, this is very much the topic of the dialogues between 'The Empiricist' and 'Me' in *Rhapsody*, where the latter only reluctantly provides examples of theatre vs. Theatre at the request of the former. Yet, even while Badiou might understandably resist the identification of 'examples', his tendency is still to characterize the theatre—in general, in the abstract—in formally limited terms.[13] For instance, as we'll see, his writing on theatre presumes a model that necessarily includes 'characters' (who must reveal generic humanity), necessarily combines languages and bodies (excluding mime from the category of theatre proper), and is identified as fundamentally distinct from both dance and cinema. Of course, I do not mean to suggest that the writing of plays, per se, is inherently "traditional" nor, correlatively, that there is anything intrinsically ground-breaking or innovative in all those practices that situate themselves as part of a supposed 'avant-garde' in any given period. However, one might still expect that Badiou's theatrical pantheon would include more examples of practices that teeter more precariously on the brink of what counted as 'theatre' or what was recognized as a 'play' according to their situation; practices that identify when a particular style of theatrical thinking appears to have sedimented as a norm and seek out new ways of thinking that have hitherto been excluded. That is, Badiou's characterization of the nature of the artistic event would seem to lead to an inevitable concern with those practitioners pressing the furthest with 'formal' experimentation (and what is understood to belong to that 'form' in the first place) in their particular contexts.

Aside from his 'examples', Badiou also generates explicit accounts of the conditions for theatre. In the essay, *Rhapsody for the Theatre*, Badiou clearly lays out what he describes as three 'elementary', 'transcendental' or 'apriori' conditions of theatre (Badiou 2013, 39): 'first, a public gathered with the intent of a spectacle; second, actors who are physically present, with their voices and bodies, in a space reserved for them with the express purpose of the gathered public's consideration; and, third, a referent, textual or traditional, of which the spectacle can be said to be the representation' (Badiou 2013, 36). Here then, Badiou is not yet concerned with the question of the rare conditions under which theatre (or later, Theatre—capital T) operates as a truth-procedure, but the conditions for theatre per se as distinct from the other arts and from daily life. Badiou refers to 'the power proper to each of the arts' (Badiou and Truong 2015, 52), assigns essences to each form, and warns against the dissolution of any one into any other (Badiou and Truong 2015, 49). He also gives clear precedence and privilege to theatre over dance and cinema, calling it 'the most complete of the arts' (Badiou and Truong 2015, 62), and reserving for theatre the aim towards 'subjective orientation' that it is said to share with philosophy (Badiou and Truong 2015, 51). In his recent work in particular, it is clear that Badiou is ultimately very keen to preserve a distinctiveness to theatre, in a manner that leads him to insist on an arguably restrictive priority to the text. Theatre may selectively borrow from a diverse range of artistic resources (perhaps in a similar manner to the way in which philosophy might borrow theatrical language and form), but it should not allow itself

to be dissolved in the tendencies which characterize the other, seemingly less valuable, arts of dance and cinema (no more than philosophy should confuse itself with theatre).

Among the exclusions from what appears as theatre in Badiou would be: any closet drama or imagined theatre or otherwise 'unperformed' text. Badiou argues that because the text 'is only one of the many constitutive elements of theatre,' then 'only that which has been, is, or will be played counts as theatre properly speaking' (Badiou 2013, 109). Theatre must *take place*, before an assembled audience. Likewise, recent attempts to extend public access to theatre via mediatization—such as NTLive—will also be demoted. Badiou is dismissive of the possibility of encountering genuine theatrical events through their mediatization or documentation, in a manner that implies a resistance to live broadcast as well as its arguable precedent in televised theatre: 'True theatre is invisible to the television camera. A televised play is a journalistic approximation of a representation, and never the transmission of the representation itself. Theatre is absent from it, and all we obtain is vague and obscure information about what happened. Only the theatre of opinion makes the crossover to the screen' (Badiou 2013, 221). In turn in so far as theatre, for Badiou, must be a representation of a referent, such as a text he necessarily 'excludes mime and dance from being considered theatre, at least when they make up the entire spectacle; it also excludes pure and unrepeatable improvisation. These are theatrical exercises or ingredients, but they are not theatre' (Badiou 2013, 36).[14]

As well as distinguishing theatre from dance and cinema, and outlining three essential conditions for theatre per se, Badiou also develops a distinction, particularly in *Rhapsody*, between what he calls true Theatre—or Theatre with a capital T—and "theatre". The latter is broadly equated with entertainment and with the reinforcement of conventional opinion. As Badiou puts it, 'bad theatre is a collection of established identities, which it works to reproduce with conventional ideas and the corresponding decent opinions which come along with them' (Badiou and Truong 2015, 84). As a consequence, this false theatre fails to make any particular demands of or to change its audience, who Badiou characterizes as homogeneous and yet particular insofar as they share the same limited class or set of opinions, in contrast to the universal audience produced by Theatre (Badiou 2013, 62). In "theatre", Badiou suggests, 'nothing has happened to anyone, except sinking into the basest of opinions' (Badiou 2013, 221); rather, small 't' theatre 'induces a convivial satisfaction in those who hate truth' (Badiou 2013, 62). In contrast, in true Theatre, 'we come upon the process of a truth, of an elucidation whose spectacle would be the event' (Badiou 2013, 66). True Theatre is never 'a phenomenon of opinion': 'To the truths, and not to the opinions. Therein lies the force of all genuine theatre. The false theatre, which I call "theatre", by no means represents an encounter with eternity, since it calls upon vulgar opinions; it has no universality, since it is aimed at an audience that is pre-formed by its opinions, most often of a repulsively reactionary nature' (Badiou 2013, 220). This distinction also allows Badiou to emphasise the rarity of true Theatre: 'there is little, very little Theatre, because 'theatre' most often protects us from it' (Badiou 2013, 64). False "theatre" can take many forms for Badiou—such as an instance of a mere execution of an existing text with no creative merit, in theatres that involve 'copying a dead tradition, of a run-of-the-mill classic' (Badiou and Truong 2015, 79). But it might also be what Badiou describes as 'boulevard theatre'—from 'Jean de Létraz to Harold Pinter'. This is theatre that is commercially successful and

finances itself without state support; highly conventional albeit better packaged than much theatre on the 'cultural circuit' (Badiou and Truong 2015, 58–59), but it is clear that such theatre has no philosophical or political consequences for Badiou.

The idea of a distinction between true Theatre and some illegitimate and less valuable version is continued in *In Praise of Theatre*. Here though Badiou specifically characterises theatre proper as something of an endangered art in our current context: as under threat both from what he describes as its 'right' and 'left'. Ironically, that is, Badiou suggests that true Theatre is at risk from the exclusive or monopolizing tendencies of the clichéd entertainment of 'musical comedies based on the American model' on the one hand (Badiou and Truong 2015, 9–10) and from the anti-representationalist 'theatre without theatre' exemplified by Fabre and Castellucci on the other (Badiou and Truong, 18). That is, he is himself seeking to monopolize theatre when he argues that *what he defines as* "entertainment" complicit with the status quo, and "theatre without theatre" 'cannot and must not constitute the whole of the theatre' (Badiou and Truong 2015, 19). Badiou claims that 'All theatre is a theatre of Ideas', but only specifically if we understand 'the Idea (in Plato's sense)' (Badiou 2013, 93). As such, this is not to say that all theatre thinks, but rather that, for Badiou, any so-called "theatre" that fails to think according to his model of thought is one that is unworthy of the name.[15]

Conclusions: Non-philosophy does not know what it means to think

> How do we equalize [...] philosophy and art [...] outside of every hierarchy and its last avatar (anarchist and nihilist leveling)? [...] This is to universalize them within the common layer of an a priori of a new style, rendering regional knowings more uni-versal than they spontaneously are, or rendering them co-extensive with philosophy; and rendering philosophy more empirical than it now is.
>
> (Laruelle 2013b, 289–290)

From one perspective, philosophy 'is' what philosophers typically *do*, what is taught in philosophy departments, what calls itself and is recognized by others as 'philosophy'. But there are, of course, greater and lesser degrees of a kind of structural violence and exclusion enacted in such conventional identifications; othering the plurality of ways of doing philosophy into so many non-philosophical categories: the 'pseudo-' or 'pop philosophy' of the media scholar, amateur or outsider; the patronizing use of terms like 'proto-philosophy' to describe the thought of non-Western cultures, 'bad poetry' of the philosopher-artists, the merely symptomatic expression of madness. In contrast, inclusion of other forms of thought within an extended practice of philosophy here does not mean re-inscribing such forms as mere 'proto-philosophies' on the way to the 'true' philosophy done within the Western tradition, or using a reductive definition of that tradition (which is in itself highly diverse) to determine the extent to which that thought can be rightly assigned to the category of philosophy per se. Rather, it is to disrupt and dethrone the authoritarian image of thought that Western philosophy attributes to itself. It is to remove its 'self-sufficiency' (as Laruelle would put it).

And indeed, the practice of immanent thought is an ethico-political project for Laruelle. Ethico-political insofar as it aims to enact an equalization or democratization of thought and, correlatively, to challenge the presumptions of those authoritarian gestures within thought (that Laruelle calls 'philosophy') which divide up an equality of the world into so many unequal parts: ways of thinking that count as 'proper philosophy' or not, ways of life that are perceived as 'human' or not, modes of existence that are seen as 'alive'/a life at all, and those that are not. Of course, these distinctions are not merely 'academic' but have real, material consequences. To speak in terms of the equality of the Real is not to demote the often violent reality of social inequalities in relation to some supposedly more real ontological equality that lies beneath or behind them. The idea that all thoughts are equally determined by but also foreclosed to the indefinite Real does not discount the fact that some thoughts really appear to be and are treated as more equal than others.

As such, the Laruellian project suggests that such contextually-specific material inequalities should be the starting point for the ceaseless invention of an opposing, immanent and equalizing gesture, which cannot be defined in advance. Whilst Laruelle calls upon us to strive to think democratically, he nevertheless allows for and indeed encourages an immanent form of evaluation in which thoughts that operate to pluralise and dehierarchize what counts as thought in a given situation are to be valued over the thought that considers itself as both the arbiter and model for thought as such. The call is that we attend to the performative power of our thinking practices and the extent to which they enact varyingly pluralist or exceptionalist identifications, the degree to which they reinforce the appearance of standard inequalities between modes of thought—human and nonhuman, philosophy and the arts—or perform new propositions that enable qualitative changes in our current categories.

Still, a wide range of concerns and questions might be raised by the broadly Laruellian stance I have explored here. In a recent event, *Beyond Application: Immanent Encounters between Philosophy and the Arts*, for instance, Anna Pakes questioned the substantive rationale, beyond 'mere intellectual fashion', motivating the call to leave application behind. Why discount, in advance, the potential insights that might come from bringing philosophy to bear on the arts or vice versa, from the arts to philosophy? (Pakes 2017). In response to this, we might begin by admitting that what counts as 'application' or an instance of philosophical self-sufficiency in Laruelle's terms will always be subject to debate. After all, Laruelle's own work might be construed by some as giving a totalizing account of philosophy as authoritarian per se, as if even his own censure comes from the same God's eye point of view that his radically immanent approach rejects. There can be no privileged position from which to judge one body of philosophical material as egalitarian or authoritarian once and for all, nor to predict when or how moments of transcendence might emerge, whether within an artistic process or an interdisciplinary exchange. Application here does not signal some defined method, so much as a tendency or perception that might emerge within a wide variety of ways of thinking no matter their conscious attempts to adopt a particular methodology. 'Application' appears whenever a thinker (possibly including an avowedly Laruellian one) assumes the authority of the gatekeeper to essentialize or normalize a particular definition or exceptional account of thought. The argument is not that we need to leave application behind in order to do non-philosophy, *as if non-philosophy knows what it means to think*. Quite the

contrary—it is only that we should strive to be attentive and indeed resistant to material gestures that claim to know what thinking is such that they can bring 'it' to bear on other fields, and attentive to events that might retrospectively make possible the perception of thought in places where we might least expect it. Clearly, there is a delicate balance to be struck here between, on the one hand, avoiding the mistaken impression that the project of a thought consistent with radical immanence has somehow been 'completed' by our latest set of clever ideas—where Laruelle's work, for instance, is positioned as the new orthodoxy claiming to know the nature of thought—and on the other, paradoxically situating immanence as some unthinkable and transcendent horizon of thought (as if there were only one kind of thought, as if what is unthinkable from my perspective is somehow unthinkable for all, including nonhuman thought). We can never have *the* answer to immanence—yet this is not to say that there are no answers; *there will have been* many and varied immanent philosophies—our retrospective attention to the reality of which makes future inventions possible (more so than any putatively 'Laruellian' how-to guide might).[16]

Related to this, questions might be raised as to the seeming relativism of 'the democracy of thought', and its political implications. If—as John Ó Maoilearca suggests, 'all thoughts are equal' for Laruelle (Ó Maoilearca 2015), does this mean that there can be no evaluation of different thoughts at all: no better or worse, no greater or lesser expressions of immanence, even and especially if refusing the logic of representation seems to force us to do away with categories of truth and illusion? Clearly, Laruelle's own critiques suggest the ongoing possibility—not of transcendent judgment but of an immanent, context-bound evaluation wherein equalizing thoughts are preferred over authoritarian ones. The Laruellian model is not one of 'anything goes'; rather, its form of democracy allows us to prefer those thinking practices that tend towards pluralism rather than authoritarianism whatever form that might take *in any given situation*.

Finally, in this article we have suggested that performance and philosophy are equally thought. But why—it might be asked—call these processes "thinking" at all? Doesn't this amount to a homogenizing gesture that makes everything—the arts and philosophy—the same, collapsing the differences between processes that are, in the end, fundamentally different from each other? Why reduce performance to thinking—as if this were an immediate means of conferring value—rather than celebrating it as feeling, 'just doing', or 'showing doing'? To respond to the first of these, the idea is that to call performance thinking is the gesture that might equalize the arts and philosophy. For Laruelle, 'philosophy' is when thought considers itself as normative exception (whether as rigorous thinking, conceptual creation, poetic or bodily thinking), and as the gatekeeper to that exception. In relation to this, to insist we explore the hypothesis that performance thinks is a kind of trespassing. It is a saying that might do something in terms of how we (whether we feel authorized to call ourselves 'philosophers' or not) see, make, and write in relation to performance.

It does not, however, imply that other art forms or (activities not yet identified as 'art' at all in a given context) do not think, in the way that Badiou arguably implies in terms of the relationship between theatre and dance. And further, this naming is not permanent and universal, but must itself be pluralized or made to operate as a pluralizing gesture rather than to reinforce the priority of a particular type of thinking that excludes or demotes other activities. For instance, Heidegger

(1976) famously appealed to the notion that we are 'not yet thinking': that the ultimate goal of philosophy is simply to engage in the struggle to think; and as we've seen, Badiou contrasts the true Theatre's ideas with the mere opinion by forms such as commercial musical theatre. In the current Western climate, the capacity of both of these discourses to contribute to the invention of the unthinking people as distinct from an elite of experts (enabling both an anti-intellectualism and an elitist othering of populism) makes this ongoing attention to uses of the notion of 'thought' seem particularly pertinent. In turn, to say that performance thinks is not a homogenizing gesture in that nothing prevents us from continuing to create new distinctions between types of thought: scenographic thinking, improvisational thinking, sonic thinking—as long as we are willing to change these categories too should they ever become tools for producing new types of *inequality*. And finally, the notions of 'performance as philosophy' and 'performance thinks' would only be reductive if we already had a (limited and limiting) definition of thinking already in mind with which we wanted to identify performance. Performance thinks, but not because it possesses some exclusive or definite quality. Rather, the aim is to allow performance to change how we understand thinking or again, to be attentive to the ways in which performance has already provided new possibilities for thought.

Notes

[1] Of course, what counts as 'analytic' and 'continental' thought is constantly changing and one could see the very invention of the category of 'continental' thought as a means of covering over the internal difference within Anglo-American philosophy itself. I use the distinction here in part as a counter to those that refer to 'the philosophy of theatre' in general, when the modes of thought they are engaging with are primarily or exclusively informed by dominant attitudes in Anglophone, analytic tradition.

[2] Interested readers looking for further Anglophone texts to support an initial engagement with Laruelle's thought, particularly from an interdisciplinary perspective, might turn to John Mullarkey/Ó Maoilearca and Anthony Paul Smith (2012), John Ó Maoilearca (2015).

[3] In the original French: 'pas de penser sans philosophie mais de penser sans l'autorité de la philosophie'.

[4] In *Anti-Badiou* and elsewhere, Laruelle speaks of philosophy's relationship to 'the radically immanent Real' (Laruelle 2013a, 211). Non-philosophy, contra ontology, 'implies an inversion between the Real and philosophy: the latter ceases to be the object of the former, the former ceases to be the subject that decides the latter' (Laruelle 2013a, 212).

[5] It is worth noting the extent to which this appearance of Badiou as a rare instance of a "great philosopher" may be specific to the French context. Laruelle notes the 'media glorification' of Badiou, for example, as well as Badiou's own acts of self-aggrandizement (Laruelle 2013a, xx).

[6] See, for instance, Laruelle's key question in *Anti-Badiou*: 'How can we oppose Badiou without entering into a mere "relation of forces," setting against him a force of the same nature as his own?' (Laruelle 2013a, xvi).

[7] The volume includes an essay also called *Rhapsody for the Theatre* which was first published in full in French in 1990—only shortly after *Being and Event* (1988). Other key texts by Badiou on theatre include *Handbook of Inaesthetics* which incorporates the essay 'Theses on Theater', whilst there are also brief discussions of theatre in *In Praise of Love* (French 2009, English 2012) and *On Beckett* (French 1995, English 2003)—an edited volume which

collates various texts by Badiou on Beckett published in French from the early to the late 90s, albeit that these are primarily concerned with Beckett's prose rather than his plays.

[8] And yet, one could argue that philosophy remains a special kind of thought for Badiou, insofar as it alone is construed as capable of a kind of immanent meta-thinking in which it serves as a 'recording apparatus' of its own conditioning (Badiou 2005b, 61). As Hallward notes, Badiou defines philosophy as 'the apprehension in thought of the conditions under which thought is exercised, in its different registers' (Badiou in Hallward 2003, 243). In contrast, Clemens suggests that just as philosophy is not 'a synonym for "thought" in general… nor is it even what interrogates thinking as such' (Clemens 2010, 25).

[9] It is worth noting Laruelle's point however that geometry has more recently been surpassed by topology as the discriminating discourse: "The mathematical etiquette that authorizes our entry into the aristocratic society of scientists was at first geometrical (Plato). It is now, as all philosophers will tell you, principally topological" (Laruelle 2013a, 33).

[10] Laruelle exposes this underlying authority and distance when he describes Badiou's over-arching project as '*the project of the re-education of philosophy through mathematics, and not at all that of the constitution of a mathematically based science of philosophy (supposing such a thing were possible*' (Laruelle 2013a, vii—emphasis original).

[11] Likewise, as an aside, we might note that while translator Andrew Bielski argues that *In Praise of Theatre* includes 'Badiou's principled dismissal of the call for the theatre's subsumption under a single "broad spectrum approach"' (Bielski in Badiou 2015, xviii), there is no mention of Schechner in Badiou's responses to Truong. Indeed, much of the translator's introduction would seem to be a reflection of his own views, rather than those one can find in Badiou's responses to Truong. For instance, Bielski presents a rather reductive account of the relationship between notions of 'theatre' and 'performance' in performance studies discourse, ignoring altogether the latter's intercultural critique of traditional theatre studies. Likewise, to quote Abramovich's simplistic opposition of theatre and performance as somehow representative of an inherent anti-theatricalism within performance studies seems particularly misguided. There was, of course, a good deal of anti-theatrical sentiment bound up in performance studies' first articulations of itself, thirty years ago, but this has since been rigorously critiqued from within theatre and performance studies itself—for instance, by authors like Steve Bottoms. As such, to describe Badiou's dialogues with Truong as 'one of the most compelling interrogations… to date' of the field of performance (which Bielski rather strangely describes as 'emergent') seems to me to be an overstatement of fairly gross proportions.

[12] The list runs as follows: Wagner's *Tetralogy* directed by Chéreau-Boulez in Bayreuth; Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, by Chéreau; Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, by Peter Stein; Racine's *Bérénice*, by Vitez; and *Bérénice* by Grüber; *Phèdre* by Stein; Guyotat's *Tomb for 500,000 Soldiers*, by Vitez; Marivaux's *Triumph of Love*, in Italian, by Vitez; Goldoni's *Harlequin, Servant of Two Masters*, by Strehler" (Badiou 2013, 73). He later adds: Bernard-Marie Koltès's *In the Solitude of the Cotton Fields*, by Chéreau; René Kalisky's *Falsch*, by Vitez (cf. Badiou 2013, 73).

[13] One could also note the lack of 'examples' both in Laruelle and in this essay, apart from the specific philosophical materials engaged with in both. In my defence, this is partly due to the 'in-progress' nature of the project of which this article forms a part and one I hope to find suitable ways to address in future work. But a lack of 'examples' is also a consequence of trying to avoid both the illustrative paradigm I am critiquing here, and the tendency for any given performance practice to become fetishized as *the* way in which performance might operate within a democracy of thought. Allowing an article to take the form of or otherwise act as an analogue to a specific performance may be one way to address this problem, as might the use of multiple 'voices' (something I've explored elsewhere, see Cull and Daddario 2013).

[14] When Badiou does note the existence of 'beautiful productions without texts', it may well be that he is thinking of Beckett. He emphasizes the importance of physicality in Beckett's work noting that, in some cases, "the stage directions that describe the postures and gestures of the characters occupy as much, if not more space than the text itself. Besides, let us not forget that Beckett was always tempted by mime, as testified by *Acts Without Words* (1957)" (Badiou 2003, 74).

[15] This also includes any kind of nonhuman contribution to theatre, which for Badiou, does not count as thought

at all. In *Metapolitics*, for instance, Badiou announces that: 'Thought is the one and only uniquely human capacity, and thought, strictly speaking, is simply that act through which the human animal is seized and traversed by the trajectory of a truth. Thus a politics worthy of being interrogated by philosophy under the idea of justice is one whose general axiom is: people think, people are capable of truth' (Badiou 2005b, 97–98).

[16] In this thinking, and indeed in all of my thinking, I am indebted to John Ó Maoilearca and in particular to his most recent book *All Thoughts are Equal*. I hope that my own work is a thinking alongside this work rather than purely parasitic upon it.

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Biography

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