ANTONIN ARTAUD

THE SCUM OF THE SOUL

ROS MURRAY

PALGRAVE STUDIES IN MODERN EUROPEAN LITERATURE

Antonin Artaud

Palgrave Studies in Modern European Literature
Published in association with the Centre for Modern European Literature, University of Kent, UK
Series Editors: **Thomas Baldwin, Ben Hutchinson, Anna Katharina Schaffner and Shane Weller**

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The Scum of the Soul

Ros Murray
Queen Mary University of London

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First published 2014 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

ISBN 978–1–137–31057–6

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Murray, Ros, 1982– author.
Antonin Artaud : the scum of the soul / Ros Murray.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Includes filmography.
ISBN 978–1–137–31057–6
1. Artaud, Antonin, 1896–1948—Criticism and interpretation. I. Title.
PQ2601.R677Z7426 2014
848'.91209—dc23 2014022064

Typeset by MPS Limited, Chennai, India.

For my brother Patrick

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Contents

List of Illustrations

Series Editors' Preface

Many of the most significant European writers and literary movements in the modern period have traversed national, linguistic and disciplinary borders. The principal aim of the Palgrave Studies in Modern European Literature series is to create a forum for work that takes account of these border crossings, and that engages with individual writers, genres, topoi and literary movements in a manner that does justice to their location within European artistic, political and philosophical contexts. Of course, the title of this series immediately raises a number of questions, at once historical, geopolitical and literary-philosophical: What are the parameters of the modern? What is to be understood as European, both politically and culturally? And what distinguishes literature within these historical and geopolitical limits from other forms of discourse?

These three questions are interrelated. Not only does the very idea of the modern vary depending on the European national tradition within which its definition is attempted, but the concept of literature in the modern sense is also intimately connected to the emergence and consolidation of the European nation-states, to increasing secularisation, urbanisation, industrialisation and bureaucratisation, to the Enlightenment project and its promise of emancipation from nature through reason and science, to capitalism and imperialism, to the liberal-democratic model of government, to the separation of the private and public spheres, to the new form taken by the university, and to changing conceptions of both space and time as a result of technological innovations in the fields of travel and communication.

Taking first the question of when the modern may be said to commence within a European context, if one looks to a certain Germanic tradition shaped by Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), then it might be said to commence with the first 'theoretical man', namely Socrates. According to this view, the modern would include everything that comes after the pre-Socratics and the first two great Attic tragedians, Aeschylus and Sophocles, with Euripides being the first modern writer. A rather more limited sense of the modern, also derived from the Germanic world, sees the *Neuzeit* as originating in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Jakob Burckhardt, Nietzsche's colleague at the University of Basel, identified the states of Renaissance Italy as prototypes for both modern European politics and modern

European cultural production. However, Italian literary modernity might also be seen as having commenced two hundred years earlier, with the programmatic adoption of the vernacular by its foremost representatives, Dante and Petrarch.

In France, the modern might either be seen as beginning at the turn of the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, with the so-called 'Querelle des anciens et des modernes' in the 1690s, or later still, with the French Revolution of 1789, while the Romantic generation of the 1830s might equally be identified as an origin, given that Chateaubriand is often credited with having coined the term *modernité* in 1833. Across the Channel, meanwhile, the origins of literary modernity might seem different again. With the Renaissance being seen as 'Early Modern', everything thereafter might seem to fall within the category of the modern, although in fact the term 'modern' within a literary context is generally reserved for the literature that comes after mid-nineteenth-century European realism. This latter sense of the modern is also present in the early work of Roland Barthes, who in *Writing Degree Zero* (1953) asserts that modern literature commences in the 1850s, when the literary becomes explicitly self-reflexive, not only addressing its own status as literature but also concerning itself with the nature of language and the possibilities of representation.

In adopting a view of the modern as it pertains to literature that is more or less in line with Barthes's periodisation, while also acknowledging that this periodization is liable to exceptions and limitations, the present series does not wish to conflate the modern with, nor to limit it to, modernism and postmodernism. Rather, the aim is to encourage work that highlights differences in the conception of the modern – differences that emerge out of distinct linguistic, national and cultural spheres within Europe – and to prompt further reflection on why it should be that the concept of the modern has become such a critical issue in 'modern' European culture, be it aligned with Enlightenment progress, with the critique of Enlightenment thinking, with decadence, with radical renewal, or with a sense of belatedness.

Turning to the question of the European, the very idea of modern literature arises in conjunction with the establishment of the European nation-states. When European literatures are studied at university, they are generally taught within national and linguistic parameters: English, French, German, Italian, Scandinavian, Slavic and Eastern European, and Spanish literature. Even if such disciplinary distinctions have their pedagogical justifications, they render more difficult an appreciation of the ways in which modern European literature

is shaped in no small part by intellectual and artistic traffic across national and linguistic borders: to grasp the nature of the European avant-gardes or of high modernism, for instance, one has to consider the relationship between distinct national or linguistic traditions. While not limiting itself to one methodological approach, the present series is designed precisely to encourage the study of individual writers and literary movements within their European context. Furthermore, it seeks to promote research that engages with the very definition of the European in its relation to literature, including changing conceptions of centre and periphery, of Eastern and Western Europe, and how these might bear upon questions of literary translation, dissemination and reception.

As for the third key term in the series title – literature – the formation of this concept is intimately related both to the European and to the modern. While Sir Philip Sidney in the late sixteenth century, Martin Opitz in the seventeenth, and Shelley in the early nineteenth produce their apologies for, or defences of, 'poetry', it is within the general category of 'literature' that the genres of poetry, drama and prose fiction have come to be contained in the modern period. Since the Humboldtian reconfiguration of the university in the nineteenth century, the fate of literature has been closely bound up with that particular institution, as well as with emerging ideas of the canon and tradition. However one defines it, modernity has both propagated and problematized the historical legacy of the western literary tradition. While, as Jacques Derrida argues, it may be that in all European languages the history and theorisation of the literary necessarily emerges out of a common Latinate legacy – the very word 'literature' deriving from the Latin *littera* (letter) – it is nonetheless the case that within a modern European context the literary has taken on an extraordinarily diverse range of forms. Traditional modes of representation have been subverted through parody and pastiche, or abandoned altogether; genres have been mixed; the limits of language have been tested; indeed, the concept of literature itself has been placed in question.

With all of the above in mind, the present series wishes to promote work that engages with any aspect of modern European literature (be it a literary movement, an individual writer, a genre, a particular topos) within its European context, that addresses questions of translation, dissemination and reception (both within Europe and beyond), that considers the relations between modern European literature and the other arts, that analyses the impact of other discourses (philosophical, political, scientific) upon that literature, and, above all, that takes each

of those three terms – modern, European and literature – not as givens, but as invitations, even provocations, to further reflection.

Thomas Baldwin
Ben Hutchinson
Shane Weller

Acknowledgements

My first and most significant debt is to Johanna Malt, whose expert guidance, fascinating intellectual insights and all-round encouragement have been a continual inspiration during the development of this project. I am also deeply indebted to Patrick ffrench, who first introduced me to Artaud's work as an undergraduate and subsequently provided detailed feedback on early versions of the book, coming up with many productive ideas during its initial stages. The French Department at King's College London was an exciting, intellectually challenging and fun research environment and I would like to thank Léa Vuong, Cécile Bishop and Zoe Roth for making it so enjoyable. I would also like to thank Gözde Naiboğlu for her comments on chapter four and Gill Partington for her input on chapter six, and Stephen Barber and Martine Beugnet for their suggestions for improvement overall. Many thanks also to Penelope Murray for her invaluable advice on Plato. Cécile Bishop patiently answered many of my persistent and often virtually impossible to answer translation questions, for which I am extremely grateful. Guillaume Fau at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France helped me access material and answered many copyright queries and I am grateful to him for his patience and efficiency. I would like to thank the anonymous reader and the series editors at Palgrave Macmillan. Finally, and by no means least, I would like to thank my family and above all my partner Ochi.

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Introduction

In one of his early texts, *Le Pèse-nerfs*, Antonin Artaud summed up his entire life's work, most of which was yet to come, in a single sentence: 'ce que vous avez pris pour mes œuvres n'était que les déchets de moi-même, ces raclures de l'âme que l'homme normal n'accueille pas' ('what you mistook for my works were merely the waste products of myself, those scrapings of the soul that the normal man does not welcome').[1] Artaud's life and his work are intricately bound, and everything he wrote was a direct result and expression of his own corporeal experiences. Much later on at the Rodez psychiatric hospital, following several bouts of electroconvulsive therapy, he wrote 'Je suis mort sous un électro-choc. Je dis mort. Légalement et médicalement mort' ('I died under an electro-shock treatment. I was dead. Legally and medically dead'),[2] yet despite claiming to have died on various different occasions, he continued to write with ever-increasing ferocity, his words, drawings and gestures scattered in fragments around his body like fallout from an explosion. The body from which these fragments emerged is, read through the fragments themselves, barely recognisable as human, described famously in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (*To Have Done with the Judgement of god*) as a perpetual striving towards an anti-anatomical 'corps sans organes' ('body without organs').[3]

Who is Antonin Artaud, and how are we to read such declarations? What is the relationship between the 'author' of these texts and the texts themselves? Where can we locate this strangely elusive writing body? These are problems that never cease to be discussed in relation to Artaud. His name is constantly reiterated, effaced and re-written throughout his work, and it is a name that is entwined with his own body; 'Artaud' designates a corporeal experience, and his many imagined deaths often coincide with real or imagined violence to his body. Yet the death of

this figure called 'Artaud' that is written into the texts also has profound implications for the outside world; when 'Artaud' dies, or when his name disappears, this is often a sign of imminent catastrophe, for example in his text *Les Nouvelles révélations de l'Être* (*The New Revelations of Being*), a prophetic instruction manual mapping out a timeline for the end of the world, which is simply signed 'LE RÉVÉLÉ' ('THE REVEALED ONE'). Indeed much of Artaud's work seems to announce, with an urgent, impending sense of doom, a vastly destructive, all-engulfing apocalypse. Of course, one of the defining features of the apocalypse as it is written about is, inevitably, that it never quite materialises. But this sense of urgency pervades all of Artaud's texts, and the fragmentary nature of his *Œuvres complètes* makes them resemble a series of hasty, incomplete sketches for what would later become a life's work, or the 'œuvre'.

(i) Artaud's work

What characterises Artaud's publications from the very beginning, as will become clear throughout this book, is the difficulty of categorising them. His first significant publication, *Correspondance avec Jacques Rivière* (*Correspondence with Jacques Rivière*, 1924), is a collection of letters that arose from the failure of his poetry; when Rivière rejected his poems for publication in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, Artaud responded with a series of letters in which he explained in great detail the anguish of being unable to find the right words. Rivière offered to publish the entire correspondence between them and, perhaps unwittingly, put into motion the difficulties that would torment Artaud throughout his life, and would make it both impossible and absolutely crucial for him to continue writing: the imperative to find the corporeal genesis of thought, and to express this directly through his writing.

The *Œuvres complètes* is a vast collection of fragments, letters, manifestos, adaptations of other texts, glossolalic outbursts and descriptions of gestures. Volumes 1 to 14 are collections of his previously published work alongside documents and letters related to these, whilst volumes 15 to 26 are transcriptions of the notebooks Artaud wrote in during the last few years of his life. Only half of these notebooks were included in the *Œuvres complètes*; in total, Artaud produced 406. The texts that were prepared for publication during his lifetime make up a small portion of what later became his complete works and were themselves often produced in very limited editions. In addition to the published works, Artaud appeared in 23 films between 1924 and 1935, including Abel Gance's *Napoléon* (1926) and Carl Theodor Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne*

d'Arc (*The Passion of Joan of Arc*, 1927), and he worked between 1926 and 1930 on his theatre project alongside Roger Vitrac and Robert Aron, *Le Théâtre Alfred Jarry*, later, in 1936, producing his own play (based on the work of Shelley and Stendhal), *Les Cenci*. Towards the end of his life he produced a series of drawings and portraits, and there have been several significant exhibitions of his artwork; during his lifetime just one, at the Galerie Pierre in 1947, but there have since been a number of large-scale exhibitions including at the Centre Pompidou in 1987 and 1994, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1996 and more recently at the Bibliothèque Nationale in 2006.

There are perhaps two initial points to be made about Artaud's work: firstly, the impossibility of separating Artaud's own corporeal experiences from the 'œuvre', and secondly, closely related to this, the question of how to approach Artaud's self-proclaimed 'madness'. To attempt to separate or place a value on Artaud's texts according to what his mental state was when he was writing them is futile, because the same issues concern both 'mad' and 'sane' Artaud. All of his work deals with questions surrounding the origin of thought, the very possibility of creation and the threat of the work's self-annihilation which are relevant to any creative endeavour. The figure that recurs throughout Artaud's work is the 'double', drawn from the Ancient Egyptian 'Kah', a spirit that accompanies human beings throughout their lives and lives on after death; in *Le Théâtre et son Double* Artaud writes that theatre is the double of life, and one has the sense that for Artaud his work was the double of his own body, constantly drawing on both the 'Kah' as a creative force, and playing on the homonym 'Caca'/ 'Kah Kah'. If Artaud makes constant references to 'caca' ('shit') in his work, it is to break down the distinction between what is to be rejected and what is to be maintained, between, as he writes, the 'raclure' ('scraping' or 'scum') and the 'œuvre', and indeed between reason and insanity.

(ii) Artaud and Surrealism

No account of Artaud's work would be complete without some mention of the Surrealist context in which he began writing in the early 1920s. Artaud had a rather ambivalent relationship to the Surrealists, having fallen out with them very publicly in 1926, but still maintaining a close, if sometimes fraught, relationship with André Breton throughout his life. Artaud became involved with the Surrealists in 1924, later becoming the head of the *Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes* and editing *La Révolution surréaliste*, a journal in which much of his work at this

time appeared. Artaud's brand of Surrealism was far more violent than Breton's, and Breton himself admitted, in retrospect, that he found some of Artaud's work rather too extreme, stating in a radio interview with André Parinaud that 'sous l'impulsion d'Artaud des textes collectifs d'une grande véhémence sont à ce moment publiés [...] ces textes sont pris d'une ardeur insurrectionnelle' ('under Artaud's direction some extremely vehement collectively signed texts were published [...] these texts are infused with an insurrectionary ardour').[4] According to Breton, it was Artaud's language that distinguished his work from more restrained versions of Surrealism such as Aragon's: 'le langage s'est dépouillé de tout ce qui pouvait lui prêter un caractère ornemental, il se soustrait à la "vague de rêves" dont a parlé Aragon, il se veut acéré et luisant, mais luisant à la façon d'une arme' ('language was stripped of anything that could lend it an ornamental air, it rejected the "wave of dreams" that Aragon spoke of, it became sharp and glistening, but glistening like a weapon').[5] Artaud's break from the Surrealists occurred in November 1926, as he became increasingly interested in the theatre, which the Surrealists viewed as bourgeois and counter-revolutionary, around the same time that Breton's Surrealism began to take on a more political direction, notably with its affiliation with the PCF (French Communist Party). Artaud was fiercely opposed to any kind of party politics, and was hostile to all forms of ideology, which for him, perhaps perversely, included Marxism.[6]

Although he denounced the Surrealists and much of what they stood for, arguably Artaud's work continued to have a distinctly Surrealist edge to it, particularly through his privileging of the irrational over the rational. Indeed Thévenin argues, echoing Artaud's own words, that his work was too Surrealist for the Surrealists: 'Artaud s'affirme, face aux surréalistes, plus surréaliste qu'eux' ('Artaud, faced with the Surrealists, turned out to be more Surrealist than they were').[7] One important aspect that distinguishes Artaud's writing from that of the Surrealists, however, comes down to the question of the unconscious, and the influence of Freud. Artaud was not interested in the unconscious, but in conscious thought as it emerged from and was mediated through the body, and he had no time at all for Surrealist practices such as automatic writing. But perhaps the most important distinction between them lies in Artaud's insistence on the more abject and material processes of the body through which thought was expressed. Roland Barthes says, in an interview from 1975: 'si les "surréalistes" n'ont pas ou ont peu déconstruit la langue, c'est parce qu'au fond ils avaient une idée normative du corps – et pour tout dire, de la sexualité' ('if the Surrealists did not manage, or

only barely managed, to deconstruct language, it's because ultimately they had a normative idea of the body – and of sexuality'). He adds: 'ils ont, me semble-t-il, *manqué* le corps' ('it seems to me that they *missed* the body out').[8] This is the crux of the distinction between Artaud's language and that of the Surrealists. If Artaud's work was sidelined by the Surrealists, one could say that to some extent the reverse happened in French theory of the 1960s, where the presence of those critical of or excluded from Surrealism (particularly Artaud and Bataille) whose texts were seen as more transgressive and revolutionary, predominantly through their advocating of a politics of the body, eclipsed that of more conventional Surrealist figures such as André Breton or Louis Aragon.[9]

(iii) Artaud's afterlives

Artaud's work has been read in a variety of contexts, the most significant being Surrealism, critical theory, anti-psychiatry and theatre and performance studies. In the years following his death there was a marked division between how his work was taken up in France and how it was taken up in the US, as chapter 3 will discuss: broadly defined, in France there was an emphasis on theory, whilst in the US it was on practice. In the French context, Artaud is one of the key figures to be taken up in the emerging critical theory of the 1960s and 1970s, inspiring the work of Maurice Blanchot, Philippe Sollers and the *Tel Quel* theorists, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva and, most significantly, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. This context is important because it has to a large extent shaped how the work has been received, as the emphasis has been placed on the text, and particularly on the later poetry. Even Deleuze and Guattari, with all their emphasis on the body, tend to concentrate solely on Artaud's texts, and Derrida, whilst paying close attention to Artaud's drawings, for example, still reads these as if they were texts. In the US, then, the context was rather different, as it was Artaud's theatre writings which were initially to have the most impact, and these were translated and read by practitioners such as those associated with Black Mountain College, Instant Theatre, Living Theatre, the Happenings movement and the Beat generation, interested in how Artaud's gestures might be performed, reworked, integrated into new forms of corporeal dissidence. Whilst some French theorists were highly critical of the ways in which Artaud's work was being appropriated and mistranslated in the US, there was an equal abuse of Artaud's texts going on in France, arguably, where it formed the basis of critical theory to which they have a marked resistance. If in the North American context

Artaud's work was being mis-translated, in France, as has emerged from recent scholarship, they were, some argue, being badly assembled: nearly half of the *Œuvres complètes* are transcriptions of Artaud's notebooks, the accuracy of which have recently been put into question.[10]

When writing about Artaud, some form of appropriation or distortion, as with any critical endeavour, is inevitable. Yet there is something about Artaud's texts that remains resistant, and forces the critic to continually question their own practice. Roland Barthes is an interesting example to cite here. In fact, although passing references to Artaud appear throughout Barthes' work, the only text dedicated exclusively to Artaud is a short preface to a book by Bernard Lamarche-Vadel; quite fittingly, considering that the book itself never materialised, Barthes writes about the impossibility of talking about Artaud. In this preface, he writes that the only way to do this is: 'ne pas en parler, ni même écrire, "sur" Artaud, mais: écrire *avec* Artaud' ('not to speak, or even write "about" Artaud, but to write *with* Artaud').[11] In an interview from 1974 Barthes reiterates this idea, saying:

> L'écriture d'Artaud est située à un tel niveau d'incandescence, d'incendie, et de transgression, qu'au fond il n'y a rien à dire sur Artaud. Il n'y a pas de livre à écrire sur Artaud. Il n'y a pas de critique à faire d'Artaud. La seule solution serait d'écrire comme lui, d'entrer dans le plagiat d'Artaud.
>
> (Artaud's writing is situated at such an extreme level of incandescence, fire and transgression that in the end there is nothing to say about Artaud. There is no book to be written about Artaud. There is no critique to be made of Artaud. The only solution would be to write like him, to enter into a plagiarism of Artaud.)[12]

Often critics writing about Artaud seem to have taken Barthes at his word, and critical writing on Artaud has to some extent been infected by Artaud's compelling style. It is certainly true that the fundamental difficulty of writing about Artaud is that one comes up against the problem of how to write about his work without separating it from the gesturing body that created it and therefore betraying its core project. Yet it is equally questionable to what extent Barthes' approach can really be considered as a valid critical practice, as arguably this is a dangerous proposition in that it simply ends up producing inexhaustible reams of weak imitations that do little to remind us of why we wanted to read Artaud in the first place. In order to write about Artaud one must to some extent be able to 'get over' Artaud, as it were, and to take a certain amount of distance.

Another context in which Artaud's work was to have a marked influence beyond critical theory in France and in the US was in anti-psychiatry. On the one hand then, this occurred through the works of those theorists critical of institutional psychiatry and psychoanalysis, such as Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari, and on the other this influence was to be felt in artistic movements that expressed this resistance in terms of practice rather than theory, such as the work of the Lettrists and Jean Dubuffet's *Art Brut* and outsider art movements. Foucault's *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, first published in 1961, was to have profound implications for the way in which people understood the historical distinctions between madness and sanity and Foucault makes reference to Artaud's work in both the preface and the conclusion. Many of Artaud's texts seem to anticipate the basis of Foucault's entire project; in 'Aliénation et magie noire' ('Alienation and black magic'), for example, Artaud writes: 's'il n'y avait pas eu de médecins / il n'y aurait jamais eu de malades' ('if there had not been doctors / there would never have been ill people').[13] Artaud's texts increasingly began to be read, particularly following Foucault, as the liberated voice of madness or unreason, putting into question the boundaries between sanity and insanity. The Lettrists were one group to take up this position; one publication in particular, comprising of Isidore Isou's *Antonin Artaud torturé par les psychiatres* (*Antonin Artaud tortured by psychiatrists*) and Maurice Lemaître's *Qui est le docteur Ferdière?* (*Who is Dr Ferdière?*)[14] draws attention to Artaud's mistreatment in psychiatric hospitals during his life, taking this as a basis for a vehement denunciation of psychiatry in general, as well as an attack on all those responsible for Artaud's internment. Deleuze and Guattari approach the texts from an equally political yet more theoretical perspective in *L'Anti-Œdipe* and *Mille plateaux*, reading Artaud's texts as the refusal of representation, and alongside this the disruption of Freudian psychoanalytic models that, they argue, form the basis of capitalist society. There is, of course, an important distinction to be upheld in such readings between a glorification of 'madness', which simply maintains the very boundaries that Artaud's work seeks to resist, and a more essential putting into question of these boundaries, which is implicit in Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari's accounts, if not always in the studies that followed this.

(iv) Artaud's media

What is unique about Artaud's work is that it refuses categorisation into different types of creative practice. Drawing and writing become increasingly inseparable, as do poetry, theatre, art, speech, gesture and cinema. Artaud's texts are characterised by their own self-annihilation,

with the consequence that most of what he produced was in his own eyes a failure, but in a positive sense, because in order to break down the boundaries between the body and the text, and between different media, Artaud's texts seem determined to prove that no single format can adequately express the corporeal thinking process. The approach of this book is comparative, choosing to focus on the intermediality of Artaud's objects, providing an overview of how this might inform a variety of different media practices. Most scholarship on Artaud has tended to separate his media into different categories, meaning that little attention has been paid to the ways in which different disciplines might inform each other. In theatre and performance studies, for example, Artaud's work has tended to be seen in the light of his emphasis on sensation and transgressive corporeal revolt, read through the insistence in his theatre writings on immediacy, presence and affect. In critical theory his work has tended to be read, particularly following Derrida, as highlighting the paradoxes inherent in any representative practice. Until recently, despite its notable influence on practitioners, relatively little attention has been paid to Artaud's work in the context of artistic practice and although it has begun to feel its influence in recent scholarship in film studies, particularly in studies inspired by Deleuze's cinema books, there as yet is no single book dedicated to Artaud's cinema work.

This book seeks to open up these disciplines and to put them into dialogue with one another. The structuring (or perhaps more accurately put de-structuring) force behind its approach is Artaud's emphasis on matter, on the material aspects of the body, the text and the physical object that his creative practice incessantly produces. Artaud's project, as he himself writes, is underpinned by an urge to '*trouver la matière fondamentale de l'âme*' ('*find the fundamental matter of the soul*').[15] Adrian Morfee's illuminating book *Antonin Artaud's Writing Bodies*, which concentrates solely on Artaud's writing, argues that this sentence is about 'the discovery of a secret, foundational truth about the soul',[16] but ignores the emphasis given to matter, an approach which is characteristic of most writing on Artaud. The title of this book seeks to situate this 'soul', and the spiritual or philosophical creative impulses that it implies, at the level of matter, arguing that it is in the physicality of the material object, which is treated as if it were scum to be scratched at, scraped away and disregarded, that Artaud's creative endeavor can be situated.

The following chapters are based around the different but not entirely distinguishable ways in which the body interacts with the text. Chapter 1 begins with the broad question of what representation is in Artaud's work, and how language becomes problematic in the early texts, where Artaud

writes of the physical pain of expressing thought as a process originating in the nervous system. I look at another type of 'nerve-language' in the 'Nervensprache' that Daniel Paul Schreber writes about in his memoirs. Whilst Schreber insists, albeit with limited success, on separating the body from the text through the use of a pseudo-scientific, 'objective' language, Artaud vehemently rejects all that might be seen as objective, scientific fact, and manages more successfully to stave off psychoanalytic approaches to his texts. Chapter 2 looks in more detail at the integration of bodily processes into the text, specifically through the digestive system. It reads Artaud's rewriting of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* as a corporeal practice, exploring how he transforms Carroll's text from a light-hearted play on words into a visceral expression of his own bodily experience during his years at Rodez, resulting in a type of writing that works towards disrupting the boundaries between the body and the text. Chapter 3 looks at Artaud's theatre texts, followed by the spells he produced in the 1930s to examine how Artaud's 'signs' can be conceived as performative and mimetic rather than representative.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 move from Artaud's texts towards broader and more recent concerns about creative practice in the domains of media and film theory. Chapter 4 addresses Artaud's cinema writings of the 1930s, arguing that in recent years they have become increasingly relevant to film theory that privileges embodied approaches to spectatorship in the cinema. Chapter 5 considers Artaud's drawings and portraits, whilst chapter 6 looks at imagery and language surrounding the machine in Artaud's drawings and radio work, seeking to question the relationship between the mechanical and the corporeal. Here the book argues that Artaud's work can be read in the context of media theory alongside the writing of North American theorist Marshall McLuhan, as well as the work of German theorist Friedrich Kittler, as an exploration of how the body appropriates and is appropriated by different sorts of machines.

I do not wish to claim that this book takes a comprehensive approach to Artaud's creative output, and given the sheer amount of it, this would be an impossible endeavour; instead, I have chosen to concentrate on the intermedial aspects of the 'work' as this seeks to exceed, perhaps even to eradicate, the limitations of any single format. The most immediate question of whether or not Artaud's output can be effectively called 'work' is the first issue to be addressed, as the following chapter discusses.

1
The Limits of Representation

Artaud's early texts deal with the problem of creating a space where expression can take place, which is to say that they begin before the beginning, not with words, but with failed words that can only speak of their own inadequacy. In *Correspondance avec Jacques Rivière* (*Correspondence with Jacques Rivière*), *Le Pèse-nerfs* (*The Nerve-Scales*) and *L'Ombilic des limbes* (*The Umbilicus of Limbo*), the three collections he published between 1924 and 1925, Artaud gestures towards the very foundations of poetic language, where language always implies its own impossibility, creating an absence that coexists with the presence of the word. For Artaud the inability to begin writing, or the difficulty of creating such a space where poetry is possible, is an urgent problem. He writes to Rivière:

> Il y a donc un quelque chose qui détruit ma pensée; un quelque chose qui ne m'empêche pas d'être ce que je pourrais être, mais qui me laisse, si je puis dire, en suspens. Un quelque chose de furtif qui m'enlève les mots *que j'ai trouvés*, qui diminue ma tension mentale, qui détruit au fur et à mesure dans sa substance la masse de ma pensée, qui m'enlève jusqu'à la mémoire des tours par lesquels on s'exprime et qui traduisent avec exactitude les modulations les plus inséparables, les plus localisées, les plus existantes de la pensée.
>
> (There is something which destroys my thought; something which does not prevent me from being what I might be, but which leaves me, so to speak, in suspension. Something furtive which robs me of the words *that I have found*, which reduces my mental tension, which is gradually destroying in its substance the mass of my thought, which is even robbing me of the memory of those turns of phrase

> with which one expresses oneself and which translate accurately the most inseparable, the most localized, the most living inflections of thought.)[1]

This mysterious 'something' arises just at the point where Artaud attempts to write, and is a force that destroys the material substance of thought that he insists so heavily upon, removing the words that he has found to directly express the movement of thought. It is something impure, distorting his words, turning them into inadequate and immaterial remnants of a more truthful, anterior process. Artaud is left 'en suspens' ('in suspense'),[2] his work perpetually 'à naître' ('unborn').[3] This strange and unidentifiable force that impedes a more direct form of expression and is opposed to the materiality of thought might be understood as representation. What gradually becomes clearer in Artaud's work is that it is in the very process of mediation that his thought emerges. Artaud perpetually searches for a direct form of expression that does not render the thinking process into a lifeless form representing something absent from the page on which it is inscribed. There is thus a distinction to be made between expression and representation, one which is, however, continually blurred, and Artaud's own theories about representation are contradictory and extremely complex. This chapter will examine some of the problems raised by representation conceived as both a negative yet necessary and inevitable function of the 'œuvre'.

(i) The physical pain of thinking

Artaud spent a great deal of time trying to describe the process of thinking, and what its relationship to the body was; this was the point of departure for his writing, and his early work deals with an incessant struggle to attempt to express his bodily and psychic experience through text. *Correspondance avec Jacques Rivière, Le Pèse-nerfs* and *L'Ombilic des limbes* are all premised on the belief that thinking and feeling cannot be separated. He writes to Rivière, 'je souffre, non pas seulement dans l'esprit, mais dans la chair et dans mon âme de tous les jours' ('I suffer, not only in the mind but in the flesh and in my everyday soul'),[4] continuing 'je ne demande plus qu'à sentir mon cerveau' ('I no longer ask anything but to feel my brain').[5] The title *Le Pèse-nerfs* draws attention to the link between thinking and feeling, playing on 'penser' (to think), 'nerfs' (nerves), and the notion of weighing the thinking process or the nervous system as if thoughts were material. If thought for Artaud begins in the nervous system, it is because this system is conceived as

a form of mediation between the self and the outside world. *L'Ombilic des limbes* incorporates in the title a sense of being perpetually in between different states, both through the idea of limbo, and through the umbilicus which is the mark of the separation of the body from its origins, literally from the womb but in metaphorical terms from what Artaud understands to be an original unity where the thinking process does not have to be separated into separate thoughts, or separate forms.

L'Ombilic des limbes comprises a series of descriptions of physical states, interspersed with short, mostly untitled poems, letters addressed to unnamed figures of authority ('docteur' ('doctor'), 'Monsieur' ('Sir'), 'Monsieur le législateur de la loi sur les stupéfiants' ('The legislator of the law on narcotics')), and an extract from a play, the characters also unnamed. Thought is spatial, substantial and a force in movement, described as 'dense', 'un abîme plein' ('a filled abyss'), 'un vent charnel' ('a carnal wind'), 'un réseau de veines' ('a network of veins'), 'la masse crispée' ('contracted mass'), 'le gel' ('frost') and 'l'enveloppement cotonneux' ('woolly membrane').[6] This is a formless and difficult to grasp substance, yet it also appears as if it were a description of the physical brain and the neurological system. Artaud describes the movement of thought as a chemical process, emphasising resonance, vibration, 'entrecroisement' (intercrossing), distillation, detachment, trembling, stratification and reduction. The collection itself seems to reflect this amorphousness in the form that it takes, as a series of fragments, with imaginary characters who are, like the words that Artaud searches for, left in suspense, and aborted, untitled texts that do not follow a logical order. Artaud writes 'toutes ces pages traînent comme des glaçons dans l'esprit' ('all these pages float around like pieces of ice in my mind'),[7] in the opening text that he insists is not a preface, but a 'glaçon aussi mal avalé' ('an ice-cube stuck in my throat').[8] Thinking is thus presented as a process of physical transformation, coming into being in a space between fragile states, acting like a melting ice cube or a chemical distillation. He states his intentions, writing, 'il faut en finir avec l'Esprit comme avec la littérature' ('we must do away with the mind, just as we must do away with literature'), and 'je voudrais faire un Livre qui dérange les hommes' ('I would like to write a Book which would drive men mad'),[9] themes which pervade all of Artaud's texts. What Artaud rejects as literature is the finished, coherent work coming from a recognisable author whose life can be distinguished from the work s/he produces. He writes: 'ce livre je le mets en suspension dans la vie' ('I suspend this book in life'),[10] the fragmentary collection becoming the material embodiment of his perpetually suspended or aborted thinking process.

Le Pèse-nerfs also explores the movement of thought through the body, again continually emphasising chemical processes, as Artaud describes thoughts as 'ces segments d'âme cristallisés' ('crystallised segments of soul'),[11] and describes thinking as a type of osmosis or absorption. Thinking occurs not in time but in space: 'à chacun des stades de ma mécanique pensante, il y a des trous, des arrêts, je ne veux pas dire, comprenez-moi bien, dans le temps, je veux dire dans une certaine sorte d'espace' ('At each of the stages of my thinking mechanism there are gaps, halts – understand me, I do not mean in time, I mean in a certain kind of space').[12] Once again this plays out in the very form of the collection, which reads as a series of fragments interspersed with large amounts of blank space, where the text takes up considerably less room than the empty page that surrounds it. Artaud describes a 'pèse-nerfs' as 'une sorte de station incompréhensible et toute droite au milieu de tout dans l'esprit' ('a kind of incomprehensible stopping place in the mind, right in the middle of everything').[13] It is a barrier to thought, but one which is, we might add, altogether necessary for the production of text.

There is a paradox inherent in these early texts, then, which is that the very impossibility of finding the right words and the impossibility of producing work is, perversely, what generates text. The period between 1924 and 1925, when Artaud wrote these three early texts describing his creative paralysis, was intensely prolific. It is also worth noting that he was already at this stage engaging with multiple forms of expression, getting involved with theatrical and cinematic projects as well as joining the Surrealists and publishing work in the journal *La Révolution surréaliste*. Indeed the crossing of boundaries between different types of media, as well as the rejection of the more conventional literary oeuvre in favour of collections of texts such as manifestos, letters and untitled fragments, might be seen as characteristic of the Surrealist movement as a whole. The distinction between Artaud's form of 'révolution' and that of the Surrealists would later become far more evident, particularly in his rejection of all forms of political thought in favour of direct, corporeal experience (which in itself has been taken as a form of politics). In these early texts such a distinction was already apparent; one such example is the text that appeared in *La Révolution surréaliste* in 1925, 'Position de la chair' ('Situation of the flesh'), in which Artaud writes: 'Tous les systèmes que je pourrai édifier n'égaleront jamais mes cris d'homme occupé à refaire sa vie' ('All the systems that I shall ever construct will never equal my cries: the cries of a man engaged in remaking his life').[14] Surrealism, for Artaud, was first and foremost a question related to the flesh, and not to ideas.

This emphasis on the physicality of the body also plays out in the materiality of the text, and is strongly linked with the production of language. For Artaud, any barrier to the thinking process means its abrupt end, the formation of a concrete thought or a word, and also necessarily the creation of a thought-object or a form that is separate from the body. Artaud's emphasis on materiality is in many respects contradictory, because whilst on the one hand he perceives the material object as something that conjures bodily presence and is a continuation of a gesture, and therefore something that can never be finished, on the other there has to be a moment when it is published, sent away from the body or discarded, that in some cases begins in the moment when it becomes a material object.

This contradiction is a painful one, and the impossibility of expression faced with its absolute necessity is linked to a physical feeling of anguish. Nowhere is this more evident than in these three early texts. For Artaud everything begins in the body and anything that is learned, rather than directly experienced through the body, cannot be trusted. In a letter addressed to the legislator of drug laws included in *L'Ombilic des limbes* he writes: 'toute la science hasardeuse des hommes n'est pas supérieure à la connaissance immédiate que je puis avoir de mon être. Je suis seul juge de ce qui est en moi' ('all the fortuitous scientific knowledge of mankind is not superior to the immediate knowledge I can have of my being. I am the only judge of what is within me').[15] The letter describes opium not just as a way of relieving the physical problem of addiction, but as a cure for the separation of consciousness from the body, and the destruction of the materiality of consciousness that this implies. Artaud describes this 'maladie' ('illness') as what happens when 'la conscience s'approprie, reconnaît vraiment comme lui appartenant toute une série de phénomènes de dislocation et de dissolution de ses forces au milieu desquels sa matérialité se détruit' ('consciousness appropriates, truly recognises as belonging to it, a whole series of phenomena of dislocation and dissolution of its forces in the midst of which its substance is destroyed').[16] There is a distinction between consciousness and thought, as he claims in this letter to have an intact consciousness but to be unable to think. Being unable to think, he writes, is not a problem of creating a concrete thought, but one of sustaining the thinking process. In other words, when the thinking process comes to its end in a finite thought, it fails: 'je n'appelle pas *avoir de la pensée,* moi, voir juste et je dirai même *penser* juste, avoir de la pensée, pour moi, c'est *maintenir* sa pensée' ('by *having thought* I do not mean seeing correctly or even *thinking* correctly; having thought to

me means *sustaining* one's thought').[17] The thinking process must be a wholly conscious, material, sustained force.

If thinking is physical, occurring through the nervous system, and thoughts must be perpetually suspended, this makes thinking both impossible and painful. What are the implications of this for representation? This experience of anguish that Artaud describes is, he suggests, not representable, yet he attempts to describe it. The conception of thinking as being a process of the nervous system is an attempt to present thinking as an anti-representational process, if representation is understood, in opposition to a more direct form of expression, to signal the body's absence or the separation of the thought-object from it. The rejection of one type of representation, however, entails a search for a new type of text that necessarily puts representative strategies into play, if only in order to destabilise the various systems on which they depend. Artaud is not alone in viewing representation as a negative and restrictive but inevitable force, and such a conception, as we have seen in these early texts, puts the very production of thought in danger. One might argue that this is a sign of Artaud's 'madness', and that these texts simply describe a pathological, neurotic or paranoid reaction to representation, exacerbated by Artaud's drug use and nascent mental health problems. However, the problem that Artaud identifies here is more fundamentally related to artistic creation, and cannot be purely reduced to what we know to have been his rather fragile mental state.

(ii) Artaud's *Pèse-nerfs* and Schreber's *Nervensprache*

To return to one of Artaud's most important early publications dealing with the physical origins of thought, *Le Pèse-nerfs*, we might question more precisely what this title means. What is a 'pèse-nerfs' ('nerve-scale')? A set of scales ('un pèse') is an object used to gauge another object's material properties, and might be seen as a kind of scientific instrument, yet the nervous system is by its very nature that which exceeds measurement, always extending beyond its material properties. The text deals not only with the problems inherent in the thinking process, but also with the difficulty of producing language. Artaud writes: 'Il ne me faudrait qu'un seul mot parfois, un simple petit mot sans importance' ('at times all I would need is a single word, a simple little word of no importance').[18] This word, he continues is 'un mot-témoin, un mot précis, un mot subtil, un mot bien macéré dans mes moelles' ('a word of witness, a precise word, a subtle word, a word well steeped in my marrow').[19] The problem is that all the words Artaud finds, he claims, act as

a barrier to the very process that he attempts to describe. He calls these words 'termes' ('terms'), drawing attention to the implied terminus or ending whilst attempting to resist this ending by leaving a blank space on the page, as he writes: 'de véritables terminaisions, des aboutissants de mes mentales' ('true terminations, borders of my mental ').[20] This nervous thinking requires a kind of nerve-language, one which is capable of expressing thinking as a process with sensational properties.

What might such a language look like? Daniel Paul Schreber invented his own kind of nerve-language in the nineteenth century, providing a useful point of comparison. Schreber was a high court judge who, like Artaud, suffered a series of nervous breakdowns. These are intricately documented in his *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* (*Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*), made famous with the publication of Freud's 'Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia' in 1911, in which Freud explains Schreber's illness in terms of repressed homosexual desires (an analysis which has since, quite rightly, received much criticism). The comparison between Artaud and Schreber is one that arises often in critical writing on Artaud. Most notably, Deleuze and Guattari, in *L'Anti-Œdipe*, use Artaud and Schreber as examples of their anti-representative *corps sans organes*, drawing attention to the fact that both Artaud and Schreber write, in what Deleuze and Guattari understand to be non-metaphorical terms, about losing organs.[21] More recently, Adrian Morfee argues that there are similarities to be drawn between the two because they both associate God with fecality and sexual aggression. He argues that whilst Schreber's texts are 'simply psychotic', Artaud's writing presents 'a more complex mixture of the extravagant with the playful and the linguistically inebriated'.[22] On the contrary, Kimberley Jannarone, in *Artaud and his Doubles*, uses the comparison with Schreber to show how Artaud's texts *do* resemble the texts of a madman with 'megalomaniacal fantasies of persecution, power and retribution' which anticipate 'the fascistic dynamic of crowds and power in the interwar era'.[23] Both of these readings, however, rely upon a reductive distinction between 'madness' and 'sanity' that Artaud's texts explicitly reject.[24]

What is of particular interest here is that Schreber, like Artaud, had theories about thinking and communicating through the nervous system, describing a phenomenon that he called 'Nervensprache' ('nerve-speech').[25] Both Schreber and Artaud draw attention to the importance of the nervous system as the link between the brain and the body and between thought and the corporeal. Artaud uses the term *pèse-nerfs* to describe a spatial barrier that both impedes and enables the thinking

process, and Schreber invents the term *Nervensprache* to describe the way that his nerves 'speak' to him, a similarly enabling yet restrictive process by which his thoughts are dictated to him from elsewhere. Whilst Artaud struggles to sustain his thoughts, which he believes are inextricably linked to the nervous system and are pre-verbal, Schreber describes the nervous system as a system whereby internal speech occurs. To think, according to Schreber, is to silently speak to oneself, a process that occurs through the nerves. For Schreber thought as a nervous process consists of words already formed.

Schreber shares with Artaud an absolute belief in the body. He describes, for example, the feeling that when he eats his food falls straight into his thighs and concludes that his digestive system is missing.[26] He also describes the feeling of his spinal cord being pumped out of his mouth 'in Form kleiner Wölkchen' ('in the form of little clouds'),[27] and argues that the loss of his organs is 'ein Vorgang, der, so unglaublich er klingen mag, nach der Deutlichkeit der Empfindung für mich außer allem Zweifel lag' ('a process which however unbelievable it may sound, was beyond all doubt for me because I distinctly remember the sensation').[28] Taking into account his emphasis on describing his own feelings, perhaps the most curious aspect of Schreber's memoirs is the language that he uses to describe his experiences. There is an insistence throughout on objective and reasoned scientific fact, and it is this notion of scientific evidence that inspires him to write the memoirs in the first place, as he explains: 'bin ich der Meinung, daß es für die Wissenschaft und für die Erkenntniß religiöser Wahrheiten von Werth sein könnte, wenn noch bei meinen Lebzeiten irgendwelche Beobachtungen von berufener Seite an meinem Körper und meinen persönlichen Schicksalen zu ermöglichen wären' ('I believe that expert examination of my body and observation of my personal fate during my lifetime would be of value both for science and the knowledge of religious truths').[29]

Schreber describes his illness not as psychological but as 'nervous'. Of course, the description of mental health conditions in the nineteenth century as 'nervous illnesses' is commonplace, but Schreber gives a rather more specific meaning to this term. He is ill, he claims, because God has invaded his nervous system, wreaking havoc in his body and implanting thoughts into his mind, forcing him to think, act and say inappropriate things. 'Nervensprache' is the system that God's rays use to do this, and is the root of his illness. The difference between this kind of nerve-language and Artaud's, then, is that for Schreber thought cannot pre-exist or indeed escape the linguistic structures through which

it comes into being, whereas for Artaud (at least in *Le Pèse-nerfs*) the thinking process arises from sensation, and only needs a language when it comes to be expressed. There is not, for Artaud, a straightforward distinction between language and sensation, as throughout his work he would increasingly search for ways in which, inversely, language could produce sensation, but at this early stage of his writing career Artaud concentrated primarily on attempting to express a physical feeling whilst highlighting the inevitable failure of the written word to do so.

Another point of interest about Schreber's 'nerve-language' is that it insists upon being spoken: once they have implanted a thought into Schreber's nervous system, God's rays torment him with the words 'Warum sagen Sie's nicht (laut)?' ('why don't you say it aloud?')[30] This language dictates how Schreber acts, and his life becomes a performance over which he has no control. The importance of speaking one's thoughts out loud in psychotherapy immediately springs to mind and this presents interesting parallels to Artaud's insistence that his glossolalia must be spoken out loud which, as we will see, might be interpreted as a method of resistance to the more restrictive representative structures through which he might otherwise be defined. For Artaud speaking out loud and performing are ways in which to resist representative discourses, whilst for Schreber, speaking out loud is merely to reproduce these repressive structures that dictate his very being, against his will.

'Representation' (a term taken from the nerve-language imposed upon him), according to Schreber, or 'der Begriff des "Darstellens"', is a kind of falsifying, 'einer Sache oder einer Person einen andern Anschein Gebens, als den sie ihrer wirklichen Natur' ('giving to a thing or a person a semblance different from its real nature').[31] This is a process controlled by God, and is the result of God's 'gänzliche Unfähigkeit, den lebenden Menschen als Organismus zu verstehen' ('total inability to understand living man as an organism').[32] God, Schreber explains, cannot tell the difference between *Darstellung* and experience. The opposition to *Darstellung*, one might argue, is the body; this certainly chimes with Artaud's insistence on finding a corporeal language to overcome the distancing effect inherent in the representative act. However, the only way that Schreber believes he can escape his torturous process of *Darstellung* is by thinking nothing; God, he claims, does not understand that human beings can think nothing and so assumes that he must be dead. The failure of 'representation' thus becomes a kind of death. The problem with Schreber's definition of *Darstellung* is that there is nothing he can do to redefine it. Artaud, on the other hand, believes that there is a pre-representational and intensive conscious force that only he can

access, and his problem becomes one not simply of how to represent it, but more specifically how to render it present.

Artaud's writing is a much more visceral, affective account of embodied experience because unlike Schreber, who simply writes about the body, Artaud incorporates elements of the body and its material presence into his textual and graphic output. The most striking difference between Schreber's writing and Artaud's, then, is the type of language they use. Schreber, as we have seen, insists on what he understands to be objective, scientific fact, and understands his memoirs to be of utmost importance to science and religion. This creates a strange contradiction whereby he is bearing witness to hallucinations and bodily experiences as scientific truths; he examines himself and his own experiences as if he were a piece of evidence. His problem, one might argue, is an excess rather than a lack of logic.

Artaud, on the other hand, absolutely rejects anything that might be considered logical, scientific or objective. What Schreber designates as 'objective reality' or 'scientific truth', Artaud calls 'science hasarde-use' ('fortuitous science'),[33] thus dismissing any notion that science is logical or true. Artaud opposes 'science' to 'connaissance immédiate' ('immediate knowledge'),[34] which is a direct perception of bodily experience. For him, poetic language is the only type of language that can be true to the experience of living. However this language is in itself contradictory, as we will see, because it must be a direct expression of thought coming from the body, and therefore outside what might be understood as language systems, yet must be comprehensible, and so always ends up being based on some sort of code. Schreber's account of 'Nervensprache' is primarily concerned with the voices that speak to him, whereas Artaud's 'pèse-nerfs' is solely concerned with trying to find his own voice and make it heard. Rather than taking the form of a carefully structured attempt at ordering what can only be taken to be complete chaos, *Le Pèse-nerfs* speaks chaotically through fragments, seeking to express an essentially poetic, creative force through the very form that the collection takes. Whilst Schreber opens his memoirs with a letter pleading for Flechsig (his doctor) to provide evidence of the objective truth of what he writes, Artaud's opening sentence (addressed to an unidentified 'vous', perhaps the reader) dispels any construction of external reality, giving way to the creation of an 'impossible space' where communication might begin:

> J'ai senti vraiment que vous rompiez autour de moi l'atmosphère, que vous faisiez le vide pour me permettre d'avancer, pour donner

> la place d'un espace impossible à ce qui en moi n'était encore qu'en puissance, à toute une germination virtuelle, et qui devait naître, aspirée par la place qui s'offrait.
>
> (I really felt that you were breaking up the atmosphere around me, that you were clearing the way to allow me to advance, to provide room for an impossible space for that in me which was as yet only potential, for a whole virtual germination which must be sucked into life by the space that offered itself.)[35]

The very notion of order is rejected in *Le Pèse-nerfs*, as the closing fragment, a single sentence surrounded by the empty space of the rest of the page, reads: 'la Grille est un moment terrible pour la sensibilité, la matière' ('the Grid is a terrible moment for sensitivity, for matter').[36] This grid might be read as the structuring force, opposed the material object and its powers of affection.

So whilst there are various similarities between Artaud and Schreber's ideas, such as the insistence that thought originates in the nervous system, there is a fundamental difference in the way that they understand and use this 'nerve-language'. Artaud's ideas about representation are related to the most basic problem of expression. He understands language to be an imperfect structure imposed from the outside, through which it is difficult to create something true to corporeal experience. This is not easily distinguishable as a pathological problem, then, but is a question that underlies all poetic language, and is essentially a problem of communication. Unlike Schreber, Artaud believed that there was something other than representation conceived as a thieving process, a process by which creation is separated from body, and he also believed that it was possible to think outside of the restrictive limits imposed by language. The result of this is that Artaud's texts tend to exceed a purely psychological reading, whereas Schreber's fascinating memoirs, which one could argue are poetic in spite of their insistence on the scientific, are, perhaps regrettably, more often than not simply reduced to his pathology.

(iii) Artaud's 'universal' language

If the violent, physical language of thought is for Artaud universal, and exceeds linguistic forms of articulation, this presents an impossible feat for the writer: how to express it in universal terms. In order to try to overcome these problems of expression where the word is separate from

its meaning, or where the signifier represents an absent signified, Artaud had to conceive a language that could be universally comprehensible, a language corresponding to what he calls 'signes efficaces' ('powerful signs').[37] This is, of course, a highly problematic undertaking, and one which never fully succeeds, because arguably communication is dependent on absences and misunderstandings, and if there was a universal language, there would be no need to communicate. Artaud continually fluctuates between the desire to communicate something direct (thought as a physical force), and the fear of being misunderstood which itself stimulates a vast proliferation of text.

There are various different stages to Artaud's use of language. Firstly, in the 1920s, there are the texts which announce their own impossibility, and attempt to localise a pre-linguistic thinking process, but as described through the text. In the 1930s, Artaud looked to other cultures in order to try to escape what he perceived as the tyranny of European rationality, and find the perfect form of expression that was not dependent on the intellect, but rather engaged with magical, emotional forces. In the early 1940s, Artaud began to invent his own glossolalic language. This was based on the premise that a universal language that could be understood by anyone anywhere in the world was possible. His glossolalia is based on corporeal noises that he claims have a universal meaning, but the trouble with this is that it has to be written down, and is of course written in Latin-based text. Artaud's glossolalia always appears within French writing, often separated from the main body of the text and in capital letters or underlined. This text, he claims, is only ever a brief glance at what might have been a 'universal' language. It is almost always in verse form, and intended to be chanted aloud, like a spell. We might consider how this relates to 'Nervensprache' and the question 'why don't you say it out loud?' If speaking aloud thoughts that do not belong to him causes Schreber's 'Entmannung' ('unmanning')[38] Artaud's chanting is perhaps the opposite, a kind of protective anti-language, or an undoing of language. However, Artaud never wholly commits to a refusal of language, and often the glossolalia appears alongside an explanation or a translation of what it means in French. If the glossolalia has universal meaning, this 'translation' in French that accompanies it somewhat undermines this notion of universality.

The most 'successful' example of Artaud's universal language is an imaginary book that he claimed, retrospectively, to have written in 1934, and which was subsequently lost or deliberately destroyed by malevolent forces. He writes about this book in a letter, dated 22 September

1945, to Henri Parisot, the French translator of Lewis Carroll's poem 'Jabberwocky':

> J'avais eu depuis bien des années une idée de la consomption, de la consommation interne de la langue, par exhumation de je ne sais quelles torpides et crapuleuses nécessités. Et j'ai, en 1934, écrit tout un livre dans ce sens, dans une langue qui n'était pas le français, mais que tout le monde pouvait lire, à quelque nationalité qu'il appartînt. Ce livre malheureusement à été perdu.
>
> (For years I have had an idea of the consumption, the internal consumption of language by the unearthing of all manner of torpid and filthy necessities. And in 1934 I wrote a whole book with this intention, in a language which was not French but which everyone in the world could read, no matter what their nationality. Unfortunately this book has been lost.)[39]

This book contains mysterious and magical elements which overcome the problem of needing to be able to read the text, and Artaud describes how the reader must read it out loud in their own rhythm in order to understand it:

> Voici quelques essais de langage auxquels le langage de ce livre ancien devait ressembler. Mais on ne peut les lire que scandés, sur un rythme que le lecteur lui-même doit trouver pour comprendre et pour penser:
>
> **ratara ratara ratara**
> **atara tatara rana**
>
> **otara otara katara**
> **otara ratara kana**
>
> **ortura ortura konara**
> **kokona kokona koma**
>
> **kurbura kurbura kurbura**
> **kurbata kurbata keyna**
>
> **pesti anti pestantum putara**
> **pest anti pestantum putra**
>
> mais cela n'est valable que jailli d'un coup; cherché syllabe à syllabe cela ne vaut plus rien, écrit ici cela ne dit rien et n'est plus que de la

cendre; pour que cela puisse vivre écrit il faut un autre élément qui est dans ce livre qui s'est perdu.

(Here are a few attempts at language which must be similar to the language of that old book. But they can only be read rhythmically, in a tempo which the reader himself must find in order to understand and to think.

ratara ratara ratara
atara tatara rana

otara otara katara
otara ratara kana

ortura ortura konara
kokona kokona koma

kurbura kurbura kurbura
kurbata kurbata keyna

pesti anti pestantum putara
pest anti pestantum putra

but this is worthless unless it gushes out all at once; pieced together one syllable at a time, it no longer has any value, written here it says nothing and is nothing but ash; to bring it to life in written form requires another element which is in the book that has been lost.)[40]

Artaud presents this example of what might have been contained in the book as lacking all the essential elements: it should be chanted aloud rather than simply being text on the page, it should be blurted out all at once, rather than following the linear progression necessary for reading, and it should contain a mysterious force that brings it alive. The reader is not really a reader, as this element brings the text to life in a way that means that it does not need to be read. If this is the case, one could question why the book itself would need to exist. This book is, of course, completely impossible, yet absolutely necessary according to Artaud because it proves that universal communication is possible, so it must exist only in its imaginary status. Again the language itself contradicts claims to universality because it does contain elements whose meaning can be interpreted according to a Latin-based language – the last two lines in particular correspond well in Latin to Artaud's general themes of defecation, putrification and bodily matter – 'pesti' 'putra', and the important term 'anti' which reoccurs throughout his glossolalic

texts. The letter 'k' is repeated, referring to the /k/ sound that for Artaud refers to defecation ('le caca')[41] and the notion of the double, embodied in the Ancient Egyptian figure of the 'Kah'.

In Artaud's Mexican writings, a similar problem emerges. This is perhaps the most extreme example of miscommunication, and of a misreading on Artaud's part. Artaud had already decided, it appears, what he would find in Mexico before he even left France. His intention was not just to discover the pre-Cortesian corporeal revolution that he believed was taking place, but to actively participate, and to teach the Mexicans what they needed to discover. In a letter addressed to Jean Paulhan from before he left for Mexico he wrote: 'quand j'ai exposé à Robert Ricard mon projet et mes idées il m'a dit: ces gens ne savent pas en réalité ce qu'ils recherchent. Vous pouvez contribuer à redresser les notions' ('when I told Robert Ricard about my project and my ideas he said to me: these people do not really know what they're looking for. You can contribute to redressing their notions).[42] In other words, Artaud's aim was to teach the Mexicans how to rediscover what he understood to be their own indigenous culture. Of course, none of the surviving indigenous population would have had access to the channels through which Artaud communicated his ideas, such as the University of Mexico and the national newspaper *El Nacional*, all the lectures and articles were translated from French into Spanish (the language of the colonisers, not the indigenous population), and the question of race in Mexico was rather more complex than he admitted. His account of the Tarahumara tribe is, to say the least, highly imaginative, which has led some readers to question whether or not his trip to the desert even took place.[43] The veracity of Artaud's Tarahumara stories is perhaps not really the issue; what is really at stake is a complete incapacity to comprehend anything beyond his own vision. He literally read the landscape as if it were a text, claiming to see the forms of (Latin) letters in the mountains, and in the dance of the Tarahumara tribe: 'leurs pieds dessinaient sur la terre des cercles, et quelque chose comme les membres d'une lettre, un S, un U, un J, un V. Des chiffres où revenait principalement la forme 8' ('their feet drew circles into the earth, and something like parts of a letter, an S, a U, a J, a V. Figures in which the figure 8 recurred frequently').[44] Artaud's conception of universal language can only result in failure, because he understood letters, and therefore written text, to have a universal function, whilst at the same time recognising that the French language was not universal.

Whilst the notion of a universal language presents us with a number of insurmountable problems, it also raises many important questions

about the nature of communication itself. What Artaud communicates, or attempts to communicate, is his own corporeal experience; perhaps for this reason his language can never be universal or transcendent in the way that he seeks. His own experience is for him a reflection of universal truth, and his body becomes a microcosm of the external world. This does not take into account the possibility that the viewer, reader, or audience might not experience what he takes to be the 'direct' and 'immediate' physical response that he demands. This is never a complete destruction of language, but a creation of a corporeal language which emphasises the materiality of the body by integrating various bodily processes, both through the description of these processes and through the creation of a glossolalia which, when read out loud, produces noises corresponding to bodily functions. Artaud's glossolalia thus functions both within and outside of what might be understood as the representative limits of textual language. What is perhaps most important about this supposedly universal language is not that it succeeds, but that through its very failure, it draws attention to the non-universal nature of representation.

(iv) Representation

The question that emerges most immediately from Artaud's failed universal language, as an expression of his own bodily experience, is the problem of how we are supposed to read it. We have seen so far how representation has a highly problematic and contradictory status in Artaud's texts. Artaud's 'works' continually put into question their own status as works and Artaud himself certainly did not attempt to create any distinction between his work and his life. Does this mean that his readers should also fail to make a distinction? How are we to deal with Artaud's perceived 'madness'? These are difficult questions for anyone approaching Artaud's work because he himself writes so vehemently about the psychiatric treatment he received; his texts are not only, in many cases, a direct result of this treatment but they also explicitly draw attention to it. It is perhaps, paradoxically, for this reason that psychoanalytic readings of his texts tend to fail: Artaud anticipates such readings, at times aggressively denouncing the whole of the psychiatric profession with harrowing lucidity, bearing witness to his own experience, and at other times poking fun at the facile interpretations one might be tempted to draw. Artaud values his 'madness', at the same time exceeding its potential limitations. To return to the distinction between Artaud and Schreber, it is not, as Morfee's interpretation suggests, that Schreber's texts fall into the

category of 'psychotic' writing because they are dismissible as the texts of a madman, whilst Artaud's texts are redeemable because they have poetic value. It is rather that Artaud's texts resist a purely psychoanalytic reading more readily than Schreber's precisely because they embrace 'madness' whilst putting it into question, whereas Schreber's memoirs, by categorically refusing the notion of madness and insisting on their scientific value, seem to invite a psychoanalytic reading.

In his essay 'La Parole soufflée', Derrida famously wrote: 'si Artaud résiste absolument aux exégèses cliniques ou critiques c'est par ce qui dans son aventure (et par ce mot nous désignons une totalité antérieure à la séparation de la vie et de l'œuvre) est la protestation *elle-même* contre l'exemplification *elle-même*' ('If Artaud absolutely resists [...] clinical or critical exegeses, he does so by virtue of that part of his adventure (and with this word we are designating a totality anterior to the separation of the life and the work) which is the very protest *itself* against exemplification *itself*').[45] In other words, the resistance to both psychoanalytic and critical reading that Derrida identifies in Artaud's work constitutes a deeper resistance to any form of appropriation, psychoanalytic or otherwise; Artaud's work is neither symptomatic nor exemplary, refusing the very logic that underpins critical examination, and in doing so reducing the distinction between clinical and critical practice by refusing both. With regards the psychiatric or psychoanalytical approach, Susan Sontag expresses a similar idea, when she writes that 'psychiatry draws a clear distinction between art (a 'normal' psychological phenomenon, manifesting objective aesthetic limits) and symptomology: the very boundary that Artaud contests.'[46] In fact, just as Artaud managed to produce vast amounts of text whilst claiming to be unable to write, his work itself has produced endless volumes of critical theory, mostly dealing with the subject of the very impossibility of taking a critical approach.

One of the issues raised here is how to designate Artaud's output. Simply put, what should it be called? An 'adventure'? Sontag distinguishes two different types of 'work' that might be useful here: work as a totality of lived experience, always in process because we cannot perceive the closed or finished totality of our own life, yet cannot really inhabit the experience of others as we do our own, and 'the work' corresponding to the notion of a failed attempt to express this. She writes: 'work derives its credentials from its place in a singular lived experience; it assumes an inexhaustible personal totality of which "the work" is a by-product, and inadequately expressive of that totality.'[47] So 'work' is impossible to represent, whilst 'the work' is what Artaud defines as

'les déchets de moi-même' ('the waste-products of myself')[48] produced in this process that we mistake for his 'œuvres'. When using the word 'work' in relation to Artaud's output, we should be aware that this does not correspond to 'the work', but rather to work as a verb, a continual doing, retaining the sense of physical labour that Artaud's volatile gestures require. This 'work' requires the creation of (what Sontag calls) 'thought that undoes itself',[49] and thereby closely documents the process at the very basis of literary creation, a process rarely articulated with such intensity.

The challenge of how to read the remnants of this self-destructive thinking process can be articulated in terms of how to approach a representation of something that claims not to be representable. The problem of whether expression without representation is possible, as we have seen, is a recurring theme in Artaud's work that never reaches its conclusion; representation is something that must be constantly fought against, but is never completely denied. Stephen Barber reads Artaud's conception of representation as 'an always negative strategy, in its relationship to the human body and to the creative act, and as a strategy closely allied to those of social control and to projects of corporeal expulsion or neutralization'.[50] But we might ask whether the textual objects that Artaud produces can be stripped of any representational elements, and, if so, how it is possible to read them. On one level, one might argue that language itself can never fully escape a representational purpose, and, as we have seen, although Artaud was highly suspicious of words, he never stopped using them. Moreover, this is not only a question of language, but also one that relates to the theatre: is a theatre without representation possible?

Whilst in some respects the twentieth century is often understood to be the time when the function of representation is foregrounded, with the rise of critical theory and the proliferation of texts and artistic productions that deliberately draw attention to their own status as texts rather than referring to an imaginary or real outside, such questions are inherent in any artistic practice. Artaud's work has proved incredibly influential for post-structuralist critical thought, being taken up by theorists such as Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault, Kristeva, Barthes, Sollers and the Tel Quel group. For this reason his texts are often read, at least in the French context, through the lens of post-war critical theory. But this chapter will now turn to a rather more unlikely philosopher; one whose thinking, as will become apparent in the next chapter, Artaud's texts explicitly and violently reject: Plato. I want to argue for a distinction between the different types of 'mimesis' that

Plato's texts deploy, a distinction that reveals much about Artaud's ambivalent reaction to representation.

The most often cited Platonic definition of mimesis is the one that occurs in Book Ten of the *Republic*, through a conversation between Socrates and Plato's brother in which Socrates discusses the dangers of artistic representation, and outlines why poetry should not be allowed in the ideal city. The poet is compared to the painter who holds up a mirror to the sensible world, but because the sensible world is a pale imitation of the real, which is the realm of the 'Forms' that are inaccessible to human perception, the reflection of this world is a reflection of a reflection, far removed from the truth, and therefore, Socrates argues, from wisdom. Mimesis, he argues, deals only in appearances: 'The art of imitation [mimesis] is far removed from truth, and the reason why it produces everything, so it seems, is that it grasps only a small part of any object, and only an image at that.'[51]

Camille Dumoulié, in *Nietzsche et Artaud*, suggests that it is mimesis that Artaud rejects, and not representation. Artaud's problem with '*le drame moderne*' ('modern drama'), he argues, is that it substitutes reality for the Real. The Real is for Artaud a transcendent principle which can only be reached through art; reality, or everyday life, is simply a pale imitation of this principle. In *Le Théâtre et son Double* Artaud writes: 'l'Art n'est pas l'imitation de la vie, / mais la vie est l'imitation d'un principe transcendant avec lequel l'art nous remet en communication' ('Art does not imitate life, but life imitates a transcendent principle with which art reconnects us').[52] What Artaud criticises as modern theatre stages this reality rather than seeking to put the audience in contact with higher forces. Artaud's theatre is, according to Dumoulié, 'la déchirure de la réalité sous la poussée violente du Réel' ('the tearing apart of reality under the violent force of the Real').[53] Dumoulié argues that representation 'pour se distinguer de la mimésis, doit être Événement, entendu comme re-présentation de ce qui fut à l'origine: la "Parole d'avant les mots" ou encore l'immanence' ('to be distinguished from mimesis, should be taken as an Event, understood as the re-presentation of what was to be found at the beginning: "Speech before words", or perhaps even immanence').[54] He opposes this definition of re-presentation to mimetic representation, because the former is concerned with the Real, and the latter with reality. The use of immanence here seems to contradict Artaud's idea that art should engage with a transcendent principle that life can only reflect.

What Artaud rejects, then, is anything that constitutes a pale imitation of such a principle. This understanding of mimesis rests on an

unproblematic reading of Book Ten of the *Republic*, where mimesis is the imitation of reality which is in turn an incomplete imitation of the Forms. However, mimesis is a far more far-reaching term in Plato's writing, because it is not only used to describe painting or poetry that reflects the sensible world, but also to describe theatrical performance, and, perhaps more significantly, the way in which music evokes emotions. In Book Three of the *Republic*, Socrates warns of the dangers of theatrical mimesis, arguing:

> If a man arrived in our city, who could turn himself into anything by his skill and imitate anything, wanting to show himself off together with his poems, we would fall down and worship him as a sacred and wondrous pleasure-giver, but we would say that there is no place for such a man in our city, nor is it right that there should be.[55]

In this example we see that mimesis is dangerous because it implies actually becoming ('turning oneself into') what one is seeking to represent, thus becoming almost God-like, 'sacred' and worthy of 'worship'. In Plato's texts, as will be explored in greater detail in chapter 3 of this book, we see uses of 'mimesis' that contradict each other when translated into modern vocabulary and this is perhaps one reason why they seem to offer conflicting attitudes towards artistic and poetic production.

One question that arises from Plato's various uses of mimesis is whether the artist, poet or performer is merely reflecting or actively creating the world s/he seeks to portray, a distinction that is at times difficult to gauge. Where would Artaud's work be situated within this debate? If he claims that art should directly express a transcendent principle, rather than reflect reality, then we might suggest that this transcendent principle is a creative force that lies dormant in and amongst material objects in the world. The neo-Platonists, such as Plotinus, argued that poets bypass the sensible world and look to the Forms, a view that might coincide with Artaud's idea that art should put us directly in contact with certain principles that reality only imitates. However, Artaud's distinction between reality and the Real cannot be understood in the same terms as it is in Plato's *Republic*. I want to argue that the 'Real', for Artaud, exists in the world, and this is why he places so much emphasis on the materiality of his work. Reality, if it is a pale imitation of the real, rather than existing in the realm of the sensible, exists in our ideological interpretations of the sensible world. In other words, whereas for Plato the 'Real' would be the world of Forms which is inaccessible to us, for Artaud, this Real

would be precisely the material world which we ignore and only perceive through external systems of interpretation which modify it, such as language, and the ideas which culturally determine us. The 'Real' is therefore not inaccessible, but rather requires a change in mentality, and the world-reflecting, in Artaud's work, coincides with the world-creating.

The question of whether Artaud's representative process seeks contact with a transcendent principle, related to what he calls 'le Réel', or whether it must be of immanent origin, is closely related to debates surrounding mimesis. Rather than understanding mimesis as being about truth, we might better understand it as being a question of the origins of the creative process. Representation, if it is derived from mimesis, thus depends not on truth or logic (whether or not something really happened, or how it happened), but on the creation of a space in which corporeal experience can be reproduced (where it takes place). Artaud's work offers valuable insights into this because it continually puts the notion of truth into question, but only to undermine any distinction that the reader might perceive between what is true and what is not. His accounts of his own experiences, particularly his accounts of his trips to Ireland and Mexico, for example, are completely implausible. In order to be able to read Artaud these contradictory conceptions surrounding the nature of representation must be maintained, because they entail the impossibility of locating a single or unified origin. Distinctions between the inside and the outside of both the body and the work are difficult to grasp, and Artaud's obsession with surfaces is surely a symptom of this confusion. Any attempt to present a coherent theory of representation in Artaud's own writing results in a reductive reading of the work as a whole, either as pathological, where his ideas about representation are delusional, or as a failure where it becomes part of the literary establishment that he so vehemently rejected. Artaud's work does not sit comfortably in either of these brackets. As we have seen, what distances Artaud's theory from that which is often perceived as purely pathological is that he believed that he could actively intervene in the representative process, and his output is a continual experiment with this intervention; this is what made it possible, or even essential, for Artaud to continue writing.

(v) Representation and materiality

Artaud's most in-depth exploration of representation can be found in development of his theory of signs in *Le Théâtre et son Double*. In these texts on theatre he insists on a concrete language that refers directly

to real states of mind, rather than a psychological interpretation of reality. This language is a language of bodily presence; it is 'physique et non verbal' ('physical and non-verbal').[56] Artaud writes about signs rather than words. Signs, according to his interpretation, can express something directly, and are not necessarily based on a code that needs interpretation. This idea is not as straightforward as it might seem; one of the examples he gives is 'ce langage oriental qui représente la nuit par un arbre sur lequel un oiseau qui a déjà fermé un œil commence à fermer l'autre' ('that Oriental language which represents night by a tree on which a bird that has already closed one eye is beginning to close the other').[57] Leaving aside the exoticism inherent in the theatre writings (characteristic of all of Artaud's encounters with non-European culture, and prevalent in much of the avant-garde writing of the time), this is clearly not as direct a symbol as Artaud claims and could be interpreted as having any number of different meanings. But the fact that he uses the word 'representation' here is significant, as it is given a positive sense, referring to what he understands to be a kind of direct expression. The principal example of a sign that he uses is the hieroglyph, which again he takes to be a direct expression that needs no cultural understanding to interpret. Actors in the theatre of cruelty are to become 'hiéroglyphes animés' ('animated hieroglyphs') which, as we have seen, he calls 'signes efficaces' ('powerful' or 'effective signs').[58] These are impossible signs that convey meaning with no ambiguity. He insists on using all available dimensions, and creating poetry in space, based on all the senses, using movement, sound, colour and light. It is not just the body of the actor that is to be in perpetual motion, but the spectator also must be made to physically feel what he describes as the 'mouvements extraordinaires et essentiels de sa pensée' ('extraordinary and essential movements of his thought').[59] There is an emphasis on vibration and 'tremblements', hypnotism and violence, and at one point he suggests that the audience should be placed on mobile chairs in the middle of the room. Theatre should be an external demonstration of the interior movements of thought, an experience that appeals to all the senses: 'la projection brûlante de tout ce qui peut être tiré de conséquences objectives d'un geste, d'un mot, d'un son, d'une musique et de leurs combinaisons entre eux' ('the burning projection of all the objective consequences of a gesture, word, sound, music, and their combinations').[60]

The idea that a sign can directly express something with no need for interpretation, as we have seen, might, of course, be understood as somewhat dubious. Whilst Artaud acknowledges the need for signs in order to convey meaning, he simultaneously denies the readability of

these signs; they are not to be understood, but felt through the body. The importance that Artaud gives to the physical, bodily experience of theatre is also present elsewhere in his work in his continual insistence on materiality. Thinking becomes a materialisation, always dependent on a process rather than producing what might be taken as a finished product. He writes of 'ce *côté révélateur de la matière* qui semble tout à coup s'éparpiller en signes pour nous apprendre l'identité métaphysique du concret et de l'abstrait et nous l'apprendre *en des gestes faits pour durer*' ('this aspect of *matter as revelation*, suddenly scattered into signs to teach us the metaphysical identity of concrete and abstract and to teach us this *in gestures made to last*').[61] The materialisation of something that cannot be expressed in words, coming from 'une impulsion psychique secrète' ('secret psychic impulse'),[62] constitutes, as Artaud proposes elsewhere, an attempt to render the invisible visible. His theory of representation as a positive form of expression is based on this idea; the invisible that is to be rendered visible is a force that is present, but cannot be seen. The rendering visible of the invisible is opposed to the representation of something absent, because everything that is expressed, which is to say this transcendent Real as opposed to the pale imitation of it that constitutes reality, must somehow be physically present. These forces are materialised (or made visible) through gesture, and Artaud's insistence that the expressive gesture must be made to last implies that if it ends, it becomes a redundant or reducible form. This type of representation, as a direct expression or manifestation, is contradictory because there is always a danger that it will become an inert form that is separated from its process of creation. The medium that Artaud employs to escape this abrupt end to the thinking process is the body, and by attempting to emphasise the presence of the physical body through the material medium, such as the surface of the paper, Artaud puts into play a distinctly corporeal notion of representation.

So, whilst representation is in some instances equated with separation and distance, conceived as a theft of the thinking process from the body, and thus a kind of death, what Artaud seeks is a representation that is pure expression, and requires bodily presence. This makes the gesture the most privileged form of expression, and so theatre is theoretically Artaud's most successful venture, although in practice all his projects ended in failure and incompletion, in part due to financial concerns. But all of Artaud's work has a performative, theatrical element to it, in that it attempts to conjure bodily presence, to render it visible often through leaving material traces, rather than to simply represent

an absent body. In chapter 3 we will see how such a conception of representation might in fact be called 'mimesis'.

One could argue that this can never be truly successful, as the surface of the page carrying traces of bodily gestures simultaneously draws attention to the very thing that is absent, and to the fact of its absence, but the insistence on materiality, particularly visible in the notebook pages, the *sorts* (spells) and the drawings, as chapter 3 will argue, makes the paper act like or imitate the skin, displaying the symptoms of the thinking process. Artaud often uses skin metaphors to describe the thinking process. In *Les Tarahumaras*, for example, he writes: 'L'HOMME est seul, et raclant désespérément la musique de son squelette, sans père, mère, famille, amour, dieu ou société. Et pas d'êtres pour l'accompagner. Et le squelette n'est pas d'os mais de peau, comme un derme qui marcherait' ('MAN is alone, desperately scraping out the music of his own skeleton, with no father, mother, family, love, God or society. And no living beings accompany him. And the skeleton is not made of bone but of skin, like a walking epidermis').[63] Creative practice is often described as a scraping or scratching, variations of the verb 'racler' echoing throughout his work. In *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (*To Have Done with the Judgement of god*) he writes about being tortured by eczema, as if the difficulty of expressing himself materialises on the surface of his skin as well as the surface of the page.

Artaud's skin references seem to go beyond the realm of metaphor, then, when he scratches the surface of the page as if it were itchy skin. If Artaud's representation requires materiality, the material object fulfils the role of the skin, becoming the visible of the body. In *Le Plaisir du texte*, Barthes characterises Artaud's language as 'le langage tapissé de peau' ('language lined with skin').[64] To return to Artaud's sentence from *Le Pèse-nerfs*, we can revisit the notion of his work as 'raclures de l'âme' ('scrapings of the soul'). The 'raclure' is something dirty and undesirable, the scum that builds up at the surface, like the skin on milk, or like Aristotle's idea that the skin is formed by 'the drying of the flesh, like the scum upon boiled substances; it is so formed not only because it is on the outside, but also because what is glutinous, being unable to evaporate, remains on the surface'.[65] The waste product of thought, the fragments, 'the work', or whatever it might be called as opposed to 'work' (the process of making it), is a kind of scummy, scabby skin, an excretion that sticks to the body and needs to be scraped off. The representation of the body at the surface of the page goes against a model of representation as absence, and situates it in a more immediate space: the space of

the material object, which becomes an expression of thought as it arises through the very process of mediation.

(vi) Representation and normativity

The issue of how one might approach Artaud's work in the context of theories about representation is one of the central concerns of this book; what this chapter has attempted to clarify is that representation is not rejected outright, but rather problematised to the extent that the very existence of the text becomes contradictory. Representation is often described in negative terms, but always occurs as the inevitable result of any form of expression; nevertheless, according to Artaud, all forms of representation should be actively manipulated rather than passively assumed. We might think about representation and how it plays out in Artaud's work through the idea that representation is itself the normative function of language. In other words, rather than simply describing a subject, it anticipates and produces it. Judith Butler writes that 'the domains of political and linguistic "representation" set out in advance the criterion by which subjects themselves are formed, with the result that representation is extended only to what can be acknowledged as a subject'.[66] The question of how to represent the body becomes, in Artaud's work, one of how to express it rather than produce a 'subject' as such. To refer back to questions about whether it is possible to distinguish between 'mad' and 'sane' Artaud, and whether the work can be separated from the body that produces it, one response might be that Artaud seeks to displace the very categories that this question presupposes because both the 'sane' and the 'mad' become categories of the subject whereby its representation already presupposes how it is to be read; either as a fully-functioning subject or as a pathological one whose discourse can be appropriated and interpreted psychoanalytically. Again the question of what sort of an 'I' claims authority over the text arises; how can a 'corps sans organes' (body without organs) or a 'môмo'[67] say 'I'? When Artaud declares 'I am Antonin Artaud', this is nearly always followed by a qualification of what this 'I' might be, one which seems to put its categorisation as a representable subject into question.

Artaud's active intervention in the representative process, in other words, puts into question the normative function of language that might otherwise be taken for granted. Rather than being pathological, this interpretation of representation as prescriptive rather than merely descriptive, yet something to be battled with from within, can be understood as what urges Artaud to write. The search for something beyond

the linguistic signifier is the motivating force behind Artaud's creative practice. However, one could well argue that the corporeal and material dimensions of Artaud's work are part of its representative process, and therefore that representation is not necessarily simply normative, but can be conceived in different terms, as a kind of dangerous, affective 'mimesis'. Conceived in this way, representation does not necessarily fall purely under the realm of the signifier, but includes a-signifying processes that disrupt the subject as a fully-formed being capable of pronouncing its name, or saying 'I'. Artaud's work questions representation from within precisely by including non-semanticised phonemes, words belonging to the French language, and syllables that are in-between; when approaching his texts these different types of language should not cancel each other out, but merge together, forging a new type of relationship between the body, the word and the sign which will be explored in more detail in the chapters that follow.

This book seeks to approach Artaud's work through a critique of representation and explore how it puts into question its own function both within and outside representative limits. Artaud's 'signs' put into play a type of mimesis that disturbs the normative function of representation by testing the limits of the signifier, and those of the subject as prescriptive, or whole, relating to a fully-functioning body. His misguided attempt to create a universal textual language of course fails, but with this failure comes an inevitable and absolutely necessary failure of the normative or prescriptive function of representation. The universal language fails in two senses: on the one hand Artaud's writing fails as it succeeds when he produces something readable, in Latin-based text, or with a description in French, because it is no longer universal, but more importantly what really fails is the imaginary book, because it does not exist. Words must always fail Artaud in order for him to demonstrate that language, and the subject that it claims to represent, is a process to be intervened in. The contradictory status of representation as it occurs in Artaud's writing is a mark of the power of his texts; it is through his experimentation with various forms of corporeal expression that Artaud is able to intervene in the representative process, in an attempt to break down the barriers between the physical body and its linguistic, textual or graphic representation. The following chapters will explore these forms, starting with what is undoubtedly Artaud's favourite subject matter: 'le caca' ('poo').

2
Through the Digestive System

Artaud's obsession with digestive processes is well documented, and becomes gradually more exaggerated throughout his work. Perhaps the most memorable instance of this occurs in 'La recherche de la fécalité' ('The Pursuit of Fecality'), in the 1947 recording of *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, where Artaud gets his old friend and theatrical collaborator Roger Blin to scream the words 'LE CACA' with an unrivalled intensity. His *cahiers* are teeming with texts about defecation, farting, burping, gurgling, regurgitation, vomiting and other digestive activities. Julia Kristeva, in 'Le sujet en procès' ('The Subject in Process'), characterises Artaud's non-semanticised phonemes as the language of expulsion, drawing from Hegelian negativity to expand her theory of the semiotic, non-symbolic 'chora' that replaces the unitary subject with a conception of subjectivity as a process.[1] Jacques Derrida, in 'La parole soufflée', draws attention to the fact that Artaud had intestinal cancer when he died.[2] This information, Derrida writes, should not be given the status of a biographical reference, but rather what he designates as a new status, yet to come, which is 'celui des rapports entre l'existence et le texte, entre ces deux formes de textualité et de l'écriture générale dans le jeu de laquelle elles s'articulent' ('that of the relations between existence and the text, between these two forms of textuality and the generalised writing within whose play they are articulated').[3] Both of these readings emphasise the importance of the corporeal processes inherent in writing which for Artaud were central to his entire creative project. This writing requires a kind of representation that eliminates the distance between the living (or the Artaudian acting, in the sense of *agissant*, body) and the textual body, one which, as we will see, seems to privilege the digestive system as generator of corporeal and linguistic ejections.

(i) The 'leatherer of turds': defecation and poetry

In some instances, Artaud seems to suggest that writing is inherently related to defecation. His description of Plato in *Histoire vécue d'Artaud-mômo*[4] as a 'peaussier d'étrons' ('leather-worker of turds') refers back to the idea from *Le Pèse-nerfs*, explored in chapter 1, that the act of writing is a scraping at the surface of the page, and that the object produced is simply waste:

> Platon, ce sinistre peaussier d'étrons, / Je dis sinistre peaussier d'étrons, / sinistre, sinistre, peaussier, tanneur, râpeur, sarcleur, limeur, lipeur, laupeur, manque à gagner, manque à payer, à souffrir et à expier, / (c'est ainsi que les peaussiers travaillent, comme d'ailleurs tous les métiers), / lapeur, / étrons, résidus formels d'excréments, / qui veut dire que Platon, comme bien d'autres, mais plus que d'autres, a travaillé sur des résidus et sur des restes.
>
> (Plato, that sinister leather-worker of turds, / I say sinister leather-worker of turds, / sinister, sinister, leather-worker, tanner, grater, hoer, filer, liper, lauper, wage-less, never paid, suffered or expired / (that's how leather-workers work, just like all professions) / lapper / turds, formal residues of excrements / meaning that Plato, like many others, but more than others, worked on residues and left-overs.)[5]

Plato's practice is described here as a sinister one because the 'turds' that he scrapes on in order to produce writing are not his own, but Socrates'. If Artaud works on leftovers or remains, they are the remains of his own waste, produced by his own corporeal thinking process. What is important about this is not the product, which after all can only mistakenly be taken for the 'œuvre', but the process of producing it. The emphasis in this description of Plato is on the physical act of writing, presented metaphorically through the multiple ways of scraping. We recognise the words 'peaussier' (leather-worker), 'tanneur' (tanner), 'râpeur' (grater), 'sarcleur' (hoer), 'limeur' (filer), but Artaud adds his own variations: 'lipeur', perhaps referring to the scraping of fat, from the Greek 'lipos', as in lipids or liposuction, and 'laupeur' presumably a play on the verb 'laper' ('to lap'), a kind of lapping or licking.

Excrement has a contradictory status in Artaud's work, because it is on the one hand the undesired end of a process, marking it as over,

but on the other as something to be discarded it rejects the very idea of the product or the result being important. This recalls Artaud's description of words as the undesired end of the thinking process; in a letter to Jean Paulhan from 1933, published in *Le Théâtre et son Double*, Artaud writes: 'le mot n'est fait que pour arrêter la pensée, il la cerne, mais la termine; il n'est en somme qu'un aboutissement' ('the word is used only to stop thought; it encircles it, but terminates it; it is only a conclusion').[6] Artaud's difficulties with language, as we have seen, are to do with the inability to find the right words, which, throughout his correspondence with Jacques Rivière, he gradually came to realise was a problem related not to his own failure as a poet, but rather to the failure of words to adequately express the physical experience of thinking. Words, according to Artaud, are too fixed to express physical reality: 'il faut bien admettre même au point de vue de l'Occident que la parole s'est ossifiée, que les mots, que tous les mots sont gelés, sont engoncés dans leur signification, dans une terminologie schématique et restreinte' ('it must be admitted even from the Occidental point of view that speech becomes ossified and that words, all words, are frozen and cramped in their meanings, in a restricted schematic terminology').[7] There is a certain ambiguity when words or what particular writers produce are likened to excrement. All writing is pigshit, as Artaud famously announced in *Le Pèse-nerfs*,[8] because it is worthless, but he suggests that that is exactly what writing should be, as words should draw attention to their own status as something to be discarded. We might see excrement as being not an end-result, but a continually transforming process of production, both decomposing and fertilising, which is to say becoming a catalyst rather than a barrier for creative activity.

(ii) The hierarchy of forms: Artaud and Georges Bataille

Artaud's declaration 'je dis Chiote à l'esprit [sic]' ('I say shit to the spirit')[9] is not just that the 'esprit' should be rejected, but also that it should be brought to the level of matter. This is from a text contesting the Cartesian separation of the mind and the body, where Artaud rejects a conception of literature as coming purely from the intellect, 'comme s'il était entendu pour la vie que le corps est cette sale matière où l'esprit prend ses bains de pied' ('as if it were understood for life that the body is this murky matter for the mind to bathe its feet in').[10] How are we to envisage this rejection of the hierarchy dividing the body from the mind, or ideas from the material world? If it is a reuniting of

mind and body it might also be considered as an elevation of matter. But to simply reverse the hierarchy, resulting in the glorification of all that is considered to be lowly (such as excrement as opposed to the poetic, or feet as opposed to the head) and the rejection of anything considered intellectual, would still imply maintaining the separation between mind and body, albeit turned on its head. One response to this question might be that the body and its material processes cannot be elevated to the level of the intellectual because it is precisely this distinction between high and low that Artaud seems to refuse. However, on closer inspection the absolute loss of this dichotomy between the high and the low, or between the mind and the body, would collapse the very possibility of movement between the two that Artaud's entire project requires.

The question of the hierarchy of forms is one that also occurs in Georges Bataille's work, where it is more explicitly theorised. Since the early 1970s Artaud and Bataille have often been placed within the same bracket: they were contemporaries, each had a complex relationship to the Surrealist movement (being ousted around the same time), they both have an established yet rather uncomfortable position in the French canon, they share an interest in writing at the limits of corporeal experimentation and are often understood to be the precursors to the 'transgressive' literature that has since become France's cultural hallmark. The immediate association between the two names can be traced precisely to the 1972 Tel Quel conference 'Artaud/Bataille: Vers une révolution culturelle' ('Artaud/Bataille: Towards a Cultural Revolution'), resulting in two special editions of the journal in 1973 which included Kristeva's 'Le sujet en procès' ('The Subject in Process'), Barthes' 'Les sorties du texte' ('Exiting the Text' or 'The Outcomes of the Text') and Sollers' 'L'acte Bataille' ('The Bataille Act'), amongst other texts. From this moment on, theorists associated with the journal such as Derrida, Barthes and Kristeva, as well as other more distant but nonetheless influential theorists such as Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, would continue to refer to Artaud and Bataille's texts, rendering both figures (as the introduction argued) somewhat of an anchor for post-1968 French philosophical thinking.

In reality, Bataille and Artaud were writing in entirely different contexts and their paths crossed only very briefly: once in 1924, and a second time ten years later and a third time after Artaud's release from Rodez towards the end of his life. From Bataille's account of his meetings with Artaud it seems that Artaud both fascinated and frightened him, as he wrote of the 1924 meeting: 'il y avait quelque chose de

pathétiquement éloquent dans le silence un peu grave et terriblement agacé qu'il observait' ('there was something emotionally eloquent in his rather grave silence and terrible edginess').[11] Of the 1935 meeting, a fleeting encounter on the street, he wrote that he was both troubled and attracted by Artaud's nervous presence.[12] Finally, meeting Artaud in his ravaged state after years of incarceration in psychiatric institutions, he again betrayed a certain sense of unease, writing: 'il était dans un état de délabrement qui effrayait, l'un des hommes les plus vieux que j'aie jamais vus' ('he was in such a state of decay it was frightening: he looked like one of the oldest men I had ever seen').[13] Unlike Artaud, whose writing was infused with accounts of his own chillingly intense experiences of drug-fuelled and psychotic hallucinations, violence, paranoia, incarceration, and ECT, Bataille led a quiet and by all accounts respectable existence working as a librarian and publishing many of his early texts under a pseudonym (according to Michel Surya, 'he effaced himself beneath his books';[14] it would be impossible to say the same of Artaud). Another significant distinction between the two is that Bataille in no way shared Artaud's vehement rejection of psychiatrists, taking a sympathetic view of Ferdière's involvement in Artaud's treatment, as we will see later. If Bataille sympathised with Artaud, then, this was very much from a distance.[15] Yet whilst Artaud makes no mention of Bataille or his writing in his own texts, Bataille seemed to feel an eerie affinity, writing, of the time Artaud was incarcerated, 'j'avais le sentiment que l'on battait ou que l'on écrasait mon ombre' ('I had the feeling that someone was walking over my grave').[16]

The rise in popularity of Artaud and Bataille's texts was in the context of the early 1970s French critical theory that centred on materiality, leading theorists to approach their texts in unprecedented ways, including, at least towards the beginning of the 1970s, an association with Maoist thought. If Artaud's texts do not explicitly theorise materiality but rather bear witness to their own conception as corporeal experience in a strikingly material sense, Bataille's texts offer us a theory of materiality that is certainly relevant to Artaud. We might consider, for example, Bataille's notion of 'le bas matérialisme' ('base materialism') explored in the article 'Le bas matérialisme et la gnose' ('Base Materialism and Gnosticism')[17] and his entry on 'Matérialisme' in the 'Dictionnaire critique' ('Critical Dictionary') included in his journal *Documents*. Bataille criticises conventional materialists for maintaining the hierarchy between the body and the mind, and between matter and the ideal. He argues that rather than concentrating on matter itself, materialists idealise matter, which is to treat it as if it were an idea or concept. He writes: 'Il est temps,

lorsque le mot matérialisme est employé, de désigner l'interprétation directe, *excluant tout idéalisme*, des phénomènes bruts et non un système fondé sur les éléments fragmentaires d'une analyse idéologique élaborée sous le signe des rapports religieux' ('when the word *materialism* is used, it is time to designate the direct interpretation, *excluding all idealism*, of raw phenomena, and not a system founded on the fragmentary elements of an ideological analysis, elaborated under the sign of religious relations').[18] In rejecting both ideology and idealism, Bataille seeks to divorce materiality from its status as an idea, and pay attention to the raw phenomena existing in the world.

For Bataille, then, it is not simply a question of reuniting the two extremes, and discovering a kind of spirituality inherent in these raw phenomena. Likewise Artaud's obsession with the material should not be read as an idealising of matter, but rather as an attempt at a corporeal expression of thought, and it might be more easily interpreted as a bringing of thought, and language as its expression, to the level of matter. This, of course, introduces the problem of how to write about matter (or even simply to write with or on it), and even more problematic is the question of how to theorise it. Bataille's notion of the 'informe', or 'formless' attempts to address this question. In his 'Dictionnaire critique' ('critical dictionary') he describes the universe as formless, both in terms of resemblance and non-resemblance, writing: 'affirmer que l'univers ne ressemble à rien et n'est qu'*informe* revient à dire que l'univers est quelque chose comme une araignée ou un crachat' ('affirming that the universe resembles nothing and is only *formless* amounts to saying that the universe is something like a spider or spit').[19] The formless, as the principle of all matter in opposition to the ideal, becomes contradictory because in this description it would seem to simultaneously resemble nothing ('rien') and something ('quelque chose'). Again we might conceive of this problem of resemblance as related to the problem of representation, and embodied in the contradictory status of excrement: how can Artaud directly express physical processes (or anything that claims to be non-representative) and not simply write about them, which would be to employ representative strategies?

According to Georges Didi-Huberman, Bataille's formless embodies a dialectical process, where the thesis and the antithesis inherent within all forms create a third term, which he designates as 'symptôme' ('symptom'). It would be more accurate to describe the *symptôme* as a process rather than a conclusion, as Didi-Huberman places the emphasis on movement rather than on a fixed resolution. It is, Didi-Huberman argues,

a type of dialectics that does not resolve into a third term but displaces the fixity of forms: 'il n'est pas facile de penser la dialectique comme un mouvement voué au *symptôme* plutôt qu'à la synthèse, c'est-à-dire autrement qu'un processus de clôture et de tyrannique réconciliation logique' ('it is not easy to think of dialectics as a movement towards the *symptôme* rather than the synthesis, in other words, other than a process of closure and of tyrannical logical reconciliation').[20] 'Symptôme', Didi-Huberman argues, designates the impossibility of the 'synthèse', or synthesis, in the dialectical process, and the use of the word symptom establishes that the task of this process is to '*rendre malade des formes*' ('*render forms ill*').[21]

However, Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss argue, in the catalogue to the exhibition they curated at the Centre Pompidou in 1996, *Formless: A User's Guide*, that the mapping of Hegelian dialectics onto Bataillian thought is problematic because it seems to recreate the type of theorising that the formless explicitly rejects. The formless, they argue, should not be read as a concept, but rather as an operation. Didi-Huberman's reading of Bataille's entry on the formless, they claim, is flawed because he reads it in terms of resemblance, whereas according to them it is a description of an act – the act of spitting, or of crushing – rather than what might be read as a more metaphorical interpretation. It thus has little to do with actual resemblance: 'Generating the oxymoron "ressemblance informe", Didi-Huberman reintroduces wholesale everything the concept of *informe*, such as we understand it, wants to get rid of'.[22]

Their problem with Didi-Huberman's dialectical approach is that Bataille's mode of thought is a dualist one that does not resolve contradictions, but requires them to be maintained, whereas Didi-Huberman introduces a third term that, in a dialectical movement, would resolve these contradictions. But arguably what Didi-Huberman's 'symptôme' does is also to maintain this contradiction; the symptom is simply an expression of the movement from high to low, in other words a description of its operation. It becomes apparent that Bataille requires a distinction between high and low in order for this to process to continue. It seems that in fact the issue at stake for Didi-Huberman as well as Krauss and Bois is the idea of movement, of the process or the operation. To return to this question in Artaud's work, we might reach a similar conclusion: the contradiction inherent in Artaud's treatment of the mind, of the body with its organs, and of language, resides in the fact that he requires a distinction to be maintained in order to carry out the process of its destruction. There must always be an organ-filled body for the body without organs to be made, and language must possess a tyrannical semantic system in order for meaning to be

disrupted, because it is the process that interests Artaud rather than its result. The throwing of the 'esprit' down the toilet is not an elevation of matter, nor is it entirely a refusal of this distinction, but rather a description of the rendering low of the high, in other words an emphasis of process. Likewise the word that is likened to excrement is the word expressing mobility, so not the fixed word that terminates the thinking process but rather the excremental matter that continues it, becoming a mark of this process.

The ambiguous status of the corporeal excretion can, therefore, be compared to the ambiguous status of the word. We might recall the huge contradiction inherent in Artaud's use of words, for example when he writes sentences such as 'je ne crois pas aux mots des poèmes / car ils ne soulèvent rien / et ne font rien' ('I do not believe in words in poems / for they reveal nothing / and do nothing').[23] The reader is continually led to question why Artaud does not practice what he preaches and refuse language altogether. Through the rejection of writing as shit, and the simultaneous demand that writing be shit if it is to have any worth, excrement embodies the very contradiction at the centre of Artaud's work; the contradiction of the position of the work, being a work but denying its own status as 'œuvre', demanding a direct relationship to the body but necessarily being separated from it, rejecting language but being unable to escape from it. This contradiction is that of the process and the product; all of these problems seem to arise from the question of how something can be both a process and a material object at the same time. For, whilst for Artaud the process is the real work, he cannot escape from the problem that without the textual object, there would be nothing to read. Barthes writes about the temporal problems inherent in Artaud's work, arguing that it is the destruction of discourse not as something that has already happened, which he argues would produce only the blank page, nor as something announced for the future, in which case it would merely reproduce the structures of discourse, but as a continual process, which, fittingly, he likens to the mastication of one's own excrement: 'il faut, scandale logique, que le discours se retourne sans cesse sur lui-même avec véhémence, et se dévore à la façon d'un personnage sadien, manducateur de ses propres excréments' ('his discourse must, in a perverse logic, incessantly and vehemently turn upon itself, and devour itself as if it were a Sadean character, chewing its own excrement').[24] This does not simply follow the logic of metaphor, in which one term replaces another, but seems to enact a more subtle displacing of terms that puts writing, speaking and defecating in a complex, self-consuming chain of production.

(iii) Through the digestive system: Artaud's adaptations of Lewis Carroll

Artaud does not simply write about digestive processes; he also attempts to integrate these into language. His belief that writing should be shit directly informs his writing practice, and when he writes 'Platon, tu nous fais chier' ('Plato, you're a pain in the arse' or, literally, 'you make us shit'),[25] we can consider this in both figurative and literal terms. Plato might well be, figuratively speaking, a pain in the arse, but to recall Artaud's description of him as a 'leather-worker of turds' he is also perhaps an influence, and 'tu nous fais chier' might mean 'you inspire us to shit', or, in Artaudian terms, to create. If we understand Plato's leathering of turds to be a re-working of Socrates' words, we can draw parallels between this process and Artaud's re-writing of a series of texts that he began whilst at Rodez, although Artaud's approach is entirely different to that of Plato, who claimed to write with the utmost fidelity to Socrates. The most interesting of Artaud's adaptations in this respect is his rewriting of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*.

The adaptations of English texts were some of the first texts Artaud wrote after a long period of silence, which corresponded with his internment in various different psychiatric hospitals following his arrest in Ireland and subsequent deportation: the Quatre-Mares hospital in Sotteville-lès-Rouen, and Sainte-Anne and Ville-Évrard in Paris. Little is known about the first few months Artaud spent in hospital; even his mother was unable to locate him until December 1937, after seeking help from the Irish embassy in Paris as well as from the French police. All that survives of his work from the first few years he spent in hospital are a handful of spells and letters written in 1939 at Ville-Évrard. Artaud would remain there until January 1943, when Robert Desnos, concerned by his deteriorating state, arranged for him to be transferred to the psychiatric hospital in Rodez under the care of Gaston Ferdière, who was a friend of Desnos. This was in part to get Artaud out of occupied France, where the conditions in psychiatric hospitals were significantly worse, and where psychiatric patients were in danger of being sent to concentration camps. But it was also because as a friend of the Surrealists Ferdière was considerably more sympathetic to Artaud's case than previous doctors had been, actively encouraging him to write again. It was not Artaud who chose Lewis Carroll's texts but Ferdière, who set the translations as an art therapy exercise designed to reintegrate Artaud into society via the writing of someone else, who Ferdière thought would be particularly appropriate. We might assume

that Ferdière suggested Lewis Carroll because *Through the Looking Glass* had inspired various Surrealist interpretations, and he thought that this might appeal to what he perceived to be Artaud's Surrealist inclinations.

Ferdière's approach to psychiatric treatment in some respects seemed quite progressive compared to those who had previously treated Artaud, as he encouraged his patients to engage in artistic activities, and he claimed that it was thanks to him that Artaud began writing again.[26] However, he was also responsible for administering multiple electroshock treatments. Artaud claimed he was given 50 ECT sessions under Ferdière's care,[27] but André Roumieux writes that in fact Artaud was subjected to 58 sessions.[28] Ferdière is a controversial figure, the general consensus being that he did more harm than good (see, for example, the Lettrists' response to Artaud's psychiatric treatment, *Artaud torturé par les psychiatres*, or Paule Thévenin's *Antonin Artaud, ce désespéré qui vous parle*). Bataille, on the contrary, writes 'les injures qui accablèrent généralement le docteur Ferdière m'ont paru des plus pénibles [...] Il dut faire de son mieux, et si l'on peut lui prêter des maladresses, il est certain qu'il améliora grandement l'état d'Antonin Artaud' ('the abuse generally heaped on Dr. Ferdière seems to me unwarranted [...] He must have done his best, and if he might be criticised for applying an unsuitable treatment, it is certainly true that he greatly improved Antonin Artaud's condition)'.[29] André Roumieux notes that 'Ferdière doit détenir une sorte de record dans l'histoire des psychiatres: celui d'avoir été et d'être toujours le plus attaqué, injurié, calomnié' ('Ferdière must have reached a record in the history of psychiatry: the man who was most attacked, abused, discredited').[30] Of course, ultimately the only person who could really say with any authority whether Ferdière did a good job or not was Artaud himself, and on many occasions he insisted that none of his psychiatric treatment had had the least effect on him, and he would always maintain his hatred for psychiatrists and doctors.

Kristeva writes, in 'Le sujet en procès', that the clinical treatment of schizophrenia tends to 'inclure le sujet dans une relation à l'autre, à créer une relation de transfert qui opère sur le fil de la communication' ('to include the subject in a relation to the other, to create a relation of transference which operates along the path of communication').[31] The idea of getting Artaud to adapt texts was presumably considered along these lines, where Artaud would write through what was considered to be the rather more well-reasoned voice of the Oxford academic. In an article published in *La Tour de Feu* in 1959, 'J'ai soigné Antonin Artaud' ('I treated Antonin Artaud'), taking the credit even for Artaud being able to respond to his friends' letters, Ferdière writes:

> *La main d'Artaud a dû réapprendre à écrire*, grâce à la correspondance de plus en plus nombreuse qu'il entretenait avec ses amis (et, au début, il fallait le forcer à une réponse, même courte et encombrée de formules toutes faites), grâce surtout aux traductions que je lui demandais amicalement.
>
> (*Artaud had to re-learn how to write* and he did this in part thanks to the increasing number of letters he was writing to his friends (and, at the beginning, you had to force him to produce even a short response full of the usual formulas), but mainly thanks to the translations that I amicably asked him to do.)[32]

The use of the word 'relearn' seems to suggest that this was not simply taking up his pen, but a process of relearning how to write according to Ferdière's vision of what was appropriate. However, Artaud was as suspicious of Lewis Carroll as he was of Ferdière, believing that his writing was simply part of the bourgeois establishment, so rather than beginning to write again through someone else's voice, Artaud saw the exercise as one of writing the text that Carroll should have written but was not able to because he had not suffered, and thus did not understand what Artaud saw as the essence of all creative practice.

In a letter that Artaud wrote to Henri Parisot in 1945, in response to Parisot's request to publish Artaud's version of Carroll's poem 'Jabberwocky' in his journal *Les Quatre Vents*, Artaud claims:

> Je n'ai pas fait de traduction de Jabberwocky. J'ai essayé d'en traduire un fragment mais cela m'a ennuyé. Je n'ai jamais aimé ce poème qui m'a toujours paru d'un infantilisme affecté; j'aime les poèmes jaillis et non les langages cherchés. […] Je n'aime pas les poèmes ou les langages de surface et qui respirent d'heureux loisirs et des réussites de l'intellect, celui-ci s'appuyât-il sur l'anus mais sans y mettre de l'âme ou du cœur. L'anus est toujours terreur, et je n'admets pas qu'on perde un excrément sans se déchirer d'y perdre aussi son âme, et il n'y a pas d'âme dans Jabberwocky.
>
> (I haven't done a translation of "Jabberwocky". I tried to translate a piece of it, but it bored me. I've never liked this poem, which has always seemed to me affectedly childish; I like spontaneous poems, not artificial languages. [...] I don't like surface poems or surface languages, works which speak of happy leisure hours and felicities of the intellect,

> the intellect in question was based on the anus, but without putting any soul or heart into it. The anus is always terror, and I cannot accept the idea of someone losing a bit of excrement without coming painfully close to losing his soul, and there is no soul in "Jabberwocky".)[33]

If Artaud's texts bear witness to the practice of deliberately disrupting the surface, tearing it, poking holes, scraping, scratching and scribbling, Carroll's writing is of the surface in the sense that it does not penetrate the page or render it fragile, simply remaining, according to Artaud, passively within the boundaries of intellectual language, without any sense of real corporeal suffering. Artaud understands Carroll's writing practice as a form of defecation, but one where expulsion is not a painful process. Artaud complains that 'Jabberwocky' does not smell, and if all writing is shit, then it must stink, otherwise, he claims, it is the writing of a bourgeois man who can afford to eat well: 'c'est l'œuvre d'un homme qui mangeait bien, et cela se sent dans son écrit [...] J'aime les poèmes qui puent le manque et non les repas bien préparés' ('it is the work of a man who ate well, and this comes through his writing. [...] I like poems that reek of hunger and not of well-cooked meals').[34]

Deleuze, in his interpretation of Artaud's adaptations of Lewis Carroll, makes a clear distinction between the two: he reads Carroll as 'le maître ou l'arpenteur des surfaces' ('master and the surveyor of surfaces'), whilst Artaud is 'le seul à avoir été profondeur absolue dans la littérature' ('the only one to have reached absolute depth in literature).[35] Deleuze argues that it is on the surface where the entire logic of sense is to be located, disrupted only by plunging into the depths of a text. As a surface language, Artaud saw Carroll's made-up words as a light-hearted game rather than the violent disruption of processes of articulation that he sought to express through his own glossolalia, and indeed these adaptations coincide with the very first instances of glossolalia within Artaud's written texts and letters. Rather than translating Carroll's portmanteau words faithfully, as words containing combinations of ideas, Artaud substituted them with entirely different verbal forms.

The most radical departure from Carroll's text occurs in the poem that Alice recites to Humpty Dumpty. In Carroll's version this reads:

> 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
> Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
> All mimsy were the borogoves,
> And the mome raths outgrabe.[36]

In Artaud's version it becomes:

> Il était Roparant, et les vliqueux tarands
> Allaient en gilroyant et en brimbulkdriquant
> Jusque-là où la rourghe est a rouarghe a rangmbde et rangmbde a rouaghambde:
> Tous les falomitards étaient les chats-huants
> Et les Ghoré Uk'hatis dans le GRABÜG-EÛMENT.[37]

Here we can see an example, particularly in the third line which is added in by Artaud and bears no resemblance to the original, of how the body becomes integrated into the translation process through guttural expulsions and sounds that mobilise the mouth, as if the words were being chewed; the articulation of these sounds requires the throat ('/r/'), the nose ('/m/'), the lips ('/b/') and the teeth ('/d/'), but the sounds produced recall an intestinal rumbling as well as a throaty gurgling or a mastication. Again, when Alice asks Dodu Mafflu (Artaud's Humpty Dumpty) to translate words in Artaud's version, these words become about bodily processes and indeterminate matter: 'vliqueux' (in Carroll 'slithy') is translated as 'vif et visqueux, cela désigne des farcis liquides, des espèces de fourrés flasques, gélatineux, comme des œufs' ('bright and gooey, it designates liquid stuffings, kinds of flabby, gelatinous fillings, like eggs'),[38] and 'grabüg-eûment' is 'le bruit des cochons perdus' ('the sound of lost pigs'),[39] another kind of digestive grunting. Artaud writes, of the poem 'The Dear Gazelle', which he also adapted, but without straying particularly from the original, that poetry is a process of regurgitation of thought:

> Il y a dans ce poème-ci un stade déterminatif des états par où passe le mot-matière avant de fleurir dans la pensée, et des opérations d'alchimie si l'on peut dire *salivaire* que tout poète au fond de sa gorge fait subir à la parole, musique, phrase, variation du tempo intérieur, avant de les *régurgiter* en matière pour le lecteur.
>
> (There is in this poem a stage that determines the states through which the matter-word passes before flourishing in thought, and what one might call the *salivary* alchemical operations that every poet subjects his speech, music, phrases and interior tempo variations to in the bottom of his throat, before *regurgitating* these into matter for the reader.)[40]

Again, poetry becomes a digestive, regurgitative process, and this is where glossolalia comes in. Kristeva reads Artaud's glossolalia as a process of disarticulation, dissolving symbolic meaning and with it destroying the unitary subject in favour of an a-subjective process: 'la glossolalie ou les "éructions" d'Artaud rejettent la fonction symbolique et dégagent les pulsions que cette fonction refoule pour se constituer' ('Artaud's glossolalia and 'eructations' reject the symbolic function and mobilise the drives which this function represses in order to constitute itself').[41] Expulsion is, she argues, a necessary part of this glossolalia. Alan Weiss also characterises Artaud's glossolalic writing as a process of expulsion, when he draws attention to the fact that the sound /k/ is the one of the most frequent consonants in Artaud's glossolalia. He argues, taking things a step further, that this sound has scatological implications not only because it recalls 'le caca' ('poo') but also because 'the pronunciation of glottal occlusives creates a direct sub-glottal pressure on the diaphragm and the intestines, thus facilitating defecation'.[42] The gestural force exerted, if these plosive syllables are to be read out loud, implies the entire body, and even the digestive system, not just the voice. Elsewhere in Artaud's work the /k/ sound is recurrent; here in the adaptations of Lewis Carroll, the glossolalia is more guttural, closer to a throaty gurgling than an anal expulsion. The distinction that Deleuze makes between surface (Carroll) and depth (Artaud) might be more simply understood as a distinction between intellectual and corporeal language: whilst Carroll produces text as *œuvre*, Artaud is more interested in regurgitated, formless matter.

(iv) Which is to be master

In many respects, chapter 6 of *Through the Looking Glass* is a particularly appropriate text for Artaud to adapt. One reason for this is that the original text is about making words mean whatever the speaker wants them to mean, thus inviting a more imaginative interpretation. Humpty Dumpty uses language as he pleases, inventing words, and taking them out of their ordinary context:

> 'When *I* use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less'
> 'the question is,' said Alice, 'whether you *can* make words mean different things.'
> 'the question is' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master – that's all'[43]

The chapter describes the confrontation of Humpty Dumpty, who is a rude, authoritative, talking egg, with Alice, who is predominantly concerned about being polite and not offending him. Alice adheres to all the rules, whereas Humpty Dumpty makes them up as he wishes. She also expresses the fear that Humpty Dumpty will fall off the wall on which he is precariously balanced: 'don't you think you'd be safer down on the ground? That wall is so very narrow!', whereas Humpty Dumpty does not seem in the least bit worried by the prospect of his body shattering into pieces on the ground, as he replies: 'Of course I don't think so! Why, if ever I *did* fall off – which there's no chance of – but *if* I did – […] '*If* I *did* fall,' he went on, '*the King has promised me…*'.[44] In fact, Humpty Dumpty seems to positively desire the rupture of his bodily limits, making him a distinctly appropriate Artaudian character.

Artaud is, consequently, far more interested in Humpty Dumpty than in Alice. It is significant that Artaud's adaptation ends with the shattering of Humpty Dumpty's body that interrupts Alice mid-sentence: 'elle ne termina jamais la phrase. Car à ce moment-là un lourd craquement secoua la forêt de part en part' ('she never finished her sentence, for at that very moment a heavy cracking shook the forest right through'),[45] whereas Carroll's book does not end here, but continues to the point where eventually Alice wakes up and realises that it was all a dream. We might suggest that, for all its darkness, the function of the dream is to provide an escape route where everything that has happened previously can be excused, forgotten and made bearable. An annex added to the end of the 1923 edition of *Through the Looking Glass* in the form of 'an Easter greeting' from Lewis Carroll to 'every child who loves Alice' closes the story with the reassuring words that, thanks to Jesus, 'all the sadness, and the sin, that darkened life on this little earth, shall be forgotten like the dreams of a night that is past'.[46] Such an ending, where the horrific experience of witnessing Humpty Dumpty's body shattering on the ground occurs only in Alice's imagination, would surely be impossible for Artaud. As the text begins with the egg expanding, Artaud's ending is, for the Alice of his adaptation, the rupture of the egg and permanent interruption of speech, denying her the comfort of waking up. Whilst for Carroll order is eventually restored, for Artaud linguistic and grammatical order must be destroyed, and the subheading of his adaptation is 'Tentative anti-grammaticale contre Lewis Carroll' ('Anti-grammatical attempt against Lewis Carroll').[47]

Artaud would later write, about 'Jabberwocky', 'il y a dans ce texte plusieurs phrases où je me demandais jusqu'à quel point l'écrivain a

le droit de se croire le Maître du langage' ('in this text there are several sentences where I asked myself to what extent the writer has the right to consider himself the Master of language').[48] For Humpty Dumpty, as we have seen, meaning depends on 'which is to be master'. It is not clear what 'which' here refers to; it might mean which word is to be master, and it might mean which of the speakers is to be master, or whether it is the speaker or the word or, in a broader sense, the linguist or language. At any rate, the decision, Humpty Dumpty implies, lies only in the hands of the speaker. Yet this takes on another dimension when it comes to translation, and particularly with a translation that strays so much from the original text as Artaud's does. If Artaud's adaptation is an attempt *against* Lewis Carroll, as he writes, it is a refusal of Carroll's authority. The role of a translator ought to be closer to Alice's conception of language, where he or she politely negotiates around the text of the original author, questioning the precise meaning of words but not necessarily disrupting them, but of course what most interested Artaud about Carroll's text were Humpty Dumpty's ideas about language, and these questions surrounding the issue of authority. Again this is significant given the context of the translations, considering that it was someone in a position of authority (Dr Ferdière) who asked Artaud to undertake the project.

Another instance where Artaud's text strays from Carroll's is in the poem about the fish, in which Artaud explicitly picks up on and expands the question of authority. Carroll's version reads:

I sent a message to the fish:
I told them 'This is what I wish.'
The little fishes of the sea,
They sent an answer back to me.
The little fishes' answer was
'*We cannot do it, Sir, because - '*
I sent to them again to say
'*It will be better to obey*.'
The fishes answered, with a grin,
'*Why, what a temper you are in*!'[49]

In Artaud's far longer version of the poem, the fish undergo what could be described as a kind of existential crisis:

Celui qui n'est pas ne sait pas,
L'obéissant ne souffre pas.

C'est à celui qui est à savoir
Pourquoi l'obéissance entière
Est ce qui n'a jamais souffert

Lorsque l'Être est ce qui s'effrite
Comme la masse de la mer.

Jamais plus tu ne seras quitte,
Ils vont au but et tu t'agites,
Ton destin est le plus amer.

Les poissons de la mer sont morts
Parce qu'ils ont préféré à être
D'aller au but sans rien connaître
De ce que tu appelles obéir

Dieu seul est ce que n'obéit pas,
Tous les autres êtres ne sont pas
Encore, et ils souffrent.
Ils souffrent ni vivants ni morts.
Pourquoi?

– Mais enfin les obéissants vivent,
On ne peut pas dire qu'ils ne sont pas.

– Ils vivent et n'existent pas.
Pourquoi?

– Pourquoi? Il faut faire tomber la porte
Qui sépare l'Être d'obéir!

L'Être est celui qui s'imagine
Être assez pour se dispenser
D'apprendre ce que veut la mer...

– Mais tout petit poisson le sait!

(He who does not exist does not know / He who obeys does not suffer. / It's up to the one who exists to know / Why to completely obey / Is never to suffer / When the Being is the one that bursts / Like the swell of the sea / You'll never be set free / They'll go right to the end as you

> toss and turn / You face the bitterest fate. / The fishes in the sea are dead / Because they chose not to be / To go right to the end without knowing anything / Of what you call obeying / God is the only one who refuses to obey / All the other beings do not yet exist / And they suffer / They suffer neither dead nor alive / Why? / "But in the end those who obey live / You can't say that they don't exist." / "They live and they don't exist. / Why?" / "Why? The door that separates the Being from obeying / Must be torn down!" / The Being is the one who imagines himself / To be sufficient to not need / To learn what the sea wants... / "But every little fish knows it!")[50]

These issues of consciousness, existence, death, suffering and obeying closely resemble Artaud's discourse surrounding electroconvulsive therapy, and it is surely significant that he claimed on more than one occasion, as we have seen, to have died during ECT sessions. One of Artaud's complaints about ECT, which is commonly acknowledged and which even Ferdière admitted is entirely justified,[51] was that it disrupted his thought processes, causing him memory loss, and that it rendered him numb. ECT took away both thinking as a continuous uninterrupted process, and as the conscious suffering that Artaud needed in order to feel that he existed. If we take into consideration the context of this poem, as part of a therapeutic process that occurred alongside ECT, we might read it as Artaud's protest against his psychiatric treatment. In the poem, the speaker kills the fish using a kettle because they refuse to obey the master, and a parallel might be drawn between the boiling of the fish and the running of electrodes through the brain in ECT; the poem becomes significantly more sinister.

In a post-scriptum added to the text in 1947 when it was to be published, Artaud wrote, about this poem:

> J'ai eu le sentiment, en lisant le petit poème de Lewis Carroll sur les poissons, l'être, l'obéissance, le 'principe' de la mer, et dieu, révélation d'une vérité aveuglante, ce sentiment, que ce petit poème c'est moi que l'avais pensé et écrit, en d'autres siècles, et que je retrouvais ma propre œuvre entre les mains de Lewis Carroll. Car on ne se rencontre pas avec un autre sur des points comme: être et obéir ou vivre et exister.
>
> (I felt, when I read this little poem by Lewis Carroll on fish, being, obeying, the 'principle' of the sea and god, the revelation of a blinding truth, this feeling that I was the one who had conceived and written

> this poem, centuries ago, and that I had rediscovered my own work in Lewis Carroll's hands, for one does not coincide with someone else on points such as being and obeying or living and existing.)[52]

Even as he strays so drastically from the 'original' version, Artaud claims this poem as his own, thus refusing the text's status as a translation, along with a refusal of both Ferdière's and Carroll's authority. Carroll is no longer the author of the original text, as the original itself does not exist. Eventually Artaud claimed that another one of Carroll's poems, 'Jabberwocky', was plagiarised from a book that he himself had written (the same magical universal language book referred to in chapter 1), thereby reversing the relationship between the author and the translator and taking on complete authority. However, this 'original' text, Artaud claims, was either lost or destroyed: 'Jabberwocky n'est qu'un plagiat édulcoré et sans accent d'une œuvre par moi écrite et qu'on a fait disparaître de telle sorte que moi-même je sais à peine ce qu'il y a dedans.' ('"Jabberwocky" is nothing but a sugar-coated and lifeless plagiarism of a work written by me, which has been spirited away so successfully that I myself hardly know what is in it'.)[53] The question of authority takes on added complications when Artaud claims authority over the original whilst at the same time denying this, because if he can no longer remember what was in it, he no longer retains this authority. Moreover, it was someone in a position of authority who stole the "original" text, according to Artaud: 'des influences abominables de personnes de l'administration, de l'église, ou de la police se sont entremises pour le faire disparaître' ('abominable influences on the part of people in the government, the church, or the police caused it to disappear').[54]

Behind Lewis Carroll's light-hearted parody of authority, Artaud identifies what he considers to be a far more serious issue. For Carroll, Humpty Dumpty is a comical character because he is completely obsessed with hierarchy, believing himself to be important because he has the King's word that he will be put back together again should he fall off the wall (and as we know from the nursery rhyme the King is unable to honour this promise). Humpty Dumpty actually *wants* to fall off the wall just so that he can be put back together again; he respects authority precisely because he does not have any, and so the question of 'which is to be master' is deliberately ambiguous because just as we cannot identify a 'master' word, neither can we identify a figure of authority. For Artaud, however, the true master is the one who has most suffered. Humpty Dumpty has authority over Alice, and Artaud has the authority

over Carroll, but ultimately, like in Carroll's text, the claim of authority becomes a simultaneous denial of its very foundations.

(v) Rearranging the body

Deleuze raises the problem of Artaud's contradictory approach to Carroll's writing, questioning 'Pourquoi l'extraordinaire familiarité est-elle aussi une radicale et définitive étrangeté?' ('Why is this extraordinary familiarity also a radical and definite strangeness?')[55] Artaud himself seems to answer this question when he identifies something beneath the surface of Carroll's texts. He declares: 'Toute œuvre écrite est une glace où l'écrit fond devant le non-écrit. Et le non-écrit de Lewis Carroll est une profonde, savante et vertigineuse insatisfaction' ('every written work is a mirror where what is written dissolves in front of what is not written. And what is not written in Lewis Carroll is a profound, knowing and staggering dissatisfaction').[56] Artaud's aim with these adaptations was to bring out this 'non-écrit', to enter Carroll's looking glass and destroy it from within. Questions surrounding recognition are also picked up on in Carroll's text, for example at the point where Humpty Dumpty complains that Alice's face is boring and generic, and that he would be unable to recognise her should they meet again:

> 'I shouldn't know you again if we *did* meet,' Humpty Dumpty replied in a discontented tone, giving her one of his fingers to shake, 'you're so exactly like other people.'
>
> 'the *face* is what one goes by, generally,' Alice remarked in a thoughtful tone.
>
> 'that's just what I complain of,' said Humpty Dumpty. 'your face is the same as everybody has – the two eyes, so – ' (marking their places in the air with his thumb) 'nose in the middle, mouth under. It's always the same. Now if you had the two eyes on the same side of the nose, for instance, – or the mouth at the top – that would be some help.'
>
> 'It wouldn't look nice,' Alice objected. But Humpty Dumpty only shut his eyes and said 'wait until you've tried.'[57]

In contrast to Alice, Humpty Dumpty is unforgettable. Yet what Alice recognises in Humpty Dumpty, as a figure produced by her unconscious (given that in Carroll's version it is all a dream), is perhaps a repressed

version of herself. The encounter between Alice and Humpty Dumpty is an encounter between reason and madness, in which Alice is the voice of reason (the surface) whilst Humpty Dumpty's function is to put this in danger, exposing what lies beneath: a formless, gooey mess, like the 'vliqueux' inside of an egg.

This same opposition might be drawn, as Deleuze suggests, between Carroll and Artaud. One might be led to question: did re-writing Carroll make Artaud less 'mad' or, in other words, did Ferdière's treatment work? This is a difficult question to answer, and one which in any case seems beside the point. It is undoubtedly true that Artaud infused Carroll's texts with his own bodily processes, refusing to maintain the body at a safe distance from the surface of the page. The problem with Carroll, Artaud wrote, was that his shit did not stink. As we have seen, Artaud characterised Carroll's writing as the work of a man who ate well, and this certainly did not chime with Artaud's own bodily experience. The *non-écrit* or 'unwritten' that Artaud found in Carroll's texts resided precisely in those abject aspects of the body that cause acute suffering. The text is transformed by the reaction of a malnourished body to food that is difficult to digest, and this is not only a metaphor, but for Artaud a description of his own bodily processes: after years of malnourishment firstly as a poverty-stricken drug addict in Paris during the 1930s, and later in psychiatric institutions during the war, when rations were scarce, he claimed to be unable to eat without spitting, and to be unable to digest his food.[58]

Dr Ferdière at Rodez would often complain about Artaud's anti-social habits, such as the spitting and screaming that accompanied his wild gesturing. For Artaud, these bodily noises were an essential part of the expression of thought through the body, and were a continuation of his experiments with gesture which he began in *Le Théâtre et son Double*, as he describes in a text from his *cahiers*:

> Pendant les 3 ans que je passai à Rodez le docteur Ferdière, médecin-directeur de l'asile, ne laissa pas passer une semaine sans me reprocher une fois dans la semaine ce qu'il appelait mes chantonnements, mes reniflements, mes exorcismes, mes tournoiements. Or il y a dans *Le Théâtre et son Double* un texte intitulé l'athlétisme affectif qui concerne les diverses manières d'appliquer le souffle humain, d'utiliser la respiration.
>
> (During the three years I spent at Rodez Dr. Ferdière, the head doctor at the asylum, did not let a single week pass without complaining

about what he called my humming, my snorting, my exorcisms, my swirling. Yet in *The Theatre and its Double* there is a text titled 'An affective athleticism' which is concerned with the diverse ways to operate the human breath, to use the respiratory system.)[59]

This bodily control was what Artaud continually fought against whilst he was in hospital, and Ferdière's idea that Artaud should 'translate' Lewis Carroll in order to re-inscribe himself into society in one sense did not work, because rather than writing through Lewis Carroll's healthy body, kept at a distance from the text, Artaud used his own body to create strange corporeal glossolalia, as if Carroll's text had been ingested into his intestines and somehow got stuck. Of course on the other hand, Ferdière claimed that it *did* work, because Artaud was once again able to take up his pen.

Yet if the question of surface and depth occupies such an important place within Artaud's writing, it is precisely because the distinction between the two, along with that between sanity and madness, is destabilised. Like the question related to the hierarchy of forms explored earlier, for Artaud there needs to be a distinction but only in order to accentuate the processes that take place between the two. The depths of the body are brought to the surface, and the surface is subjected to all kinds of violence to which it must resist. To return to Derrida's question, raised at the beginning of this chapter, about what kind of status we can give to the text that speaks of bodily experience, we might add that this textual body is one that surrounds itself with imagery linking digestive processes with destruction and creation, but these are not simply metaphors because they have a direct link to what we know to have been Artaud's lived-in and experienced body. Physical contact thus plays an essential role in the process of creating a textual body, the actual object becoming a material manifestation of the process of mediation that renders it present. In some of the following chapters we will see how Deleuze's claim plays out on Artaud's paper in a rather more tangible sense, as he writes: 'rien de plus fragile que la surface' ('nothing is more fragile than the surface').[60]

3
Theatre, Magic and Mimesis

Artaud's most influential work by far has been *Le Théâtre et son Double* (*The Theatre and its Double*). His insistence on bodily presence, immediacy and corporeal language meant that the theatre seemed, at least at first, to be the perfect medium. However, Artaud's career in the theatre was relatively short-lived, and by 1935 he had abandoned the theatre after the failure of his production of *Les Cenci*, writing to Jean Paulhan 'j'en suis encore à CHERCHER *ma voie*. Le théâtre m'a laissé matériellement et socialement sur le flanc' ('I'm still in SEARCH of *my path*. The theatre has materially and socially worn me out').[1] In many respects, he would never find this path, tearing his way through each different medium with an extraordinary ferocity, constantly disappointed by the inability of the representative form to enact the kinds of corporeal explosions that he so desperately sought.

Artaud's difficulties with finding an adequate mode of expression, as we have seen, arise from the essential problem of separation. When the word became separated from the body that produced it, and from the processes of its production, it had failed. Artaud privileged force over form, seeking a language that was powerful and could act rather than needing to be deciphered as a code. Yet again this language is inherently contradictory as, for all Artaud's insistence on force, it always ends up being based on some kind of code making it open to interpretation. It is not purely a verbal language, but a language of images and symbols, acting like the 'hiéroglyphes animés' ('animated hieroglyphs')[2] that he wrote about in *Le Théâtre et son Double*. This chapter explores the question of how we are to read Artaud's 'signes efficaces' ('powerful signs'),[3] what type of signs they are and how they attempt to overcome the problem posed by representation conceived as a distancing or separation of the sign from its referent. The chapter begins with Artaud's

theoretical and practical forays into theatre, and this is followed by examining the kinds of performative objects he began to produce soon after he abandoned the stage.

Artaud's theatre was more or less ignored at the time he was producing plays in Paris, and his desire to completely revolutionise the theatre did not materialise until after his death, when it was taken up by practitioners in the US seeking to escape the tyranny of the text and push bodily gestures to their very limits. Whilst in Paris the Tel Quel group were busy analysing his texts in the late 1950s and 60s, it was in North America, arguably, that Artaud's theatre was to take on a new leash of life, albeit, as some Artaud purists grumpily point out, in an almost unrecognisable form.[4] Mary Caroline Richards, poet and tutor at Black Mountain College, was one lifeline behind this reincarnation, as she was largely responsible for the dissemination of Artaud's theories in English. She began the first English-language translation of *Le Théâtre et son Double* in 1951, and although the finished version was not published until 1958, the text was in constant circulation at Black Mountain College from 1952, reaching artists, writers, musicians and performers such as John Cage, David Tudor, Cy Twombly, John Cage and Merce Cunningham. Later in the 1960s, having been diffused widely amongst American experimental theatre and avant-garde circles, it would have a defining influence on Julian Beck and Judith Malina's Living Theatre in New York, Rachel Rosenthal and the Instant Theatre in Los Angeles, in addition to Allan Kaprow's Black Mountain-inspired happenings, the work of Sam Shepard, Richard Schechner and the Performance group and Carolee Schneemann.[5] In the UK, Artaud's most significant influence was on Peter Brook, who alongside Charles Marowitz organised the Theatre of Cruelty season with the Royal Shakespeare Company Experimental Group at LAMDA theatre club in London in 1964, including a production of Artaud's play *Le Jet de sang* (*The Spurt of Blood*). Elsewhere, Artaud's ideas also inform Jerzy Grotowski's work as well as the practice of the Vienna Action Group and Tatsumi Hijikata's Butoh work in Japan, as Stephen Barber notes.[6]

Yet in spite of their far-reaching influence throughout contemporary theatre and performance, as many of those who draw inspiration from Artaud point out, the 'success' of the theatre texts owes much to their simultaneous failure, in the sense that they announce the very impossibility of the representational act on which they depend. Grotowski's essay on Artaud, 'He wasn't entirely himself', broaches the problem of how to perform Artaud, writing 'the paradox of Artaud lies in the fact that it is impossible to carry out his proposals'.[7] Helga Finter, in her

essay 'Antonin Artaud and the Impossible Theatre: the Legacy of the Theatre of Cruelty', reads Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty as a manifestation of the Lacanian Real, and an incorporating of Bataille's notion of the heterogeneous into performance, via the 'grittiness of the voice' which 'speaks of a reality other than that of the sign and representation'.[8] For Artaud, she argues, this becomes a question of discovering a voice that would 'retain traces of [his] corporeal reality, as well as a text capable of reflecting upon and enunciating this reality'.[9] She argues, like Grotowski, that Artaud's theatre is an impossible theatre, finding its legacy in performance, defined as 'the manifestation of a subject's presence by his doing'.[10]

This notion of performance reaches far beyond what Artaud himself considered to be the confines of the theatre. The ideas explored in the theatre texts are present throughout his work, and are pivotal to an understanding of his writing, as it is here that his ideas the performative capacities of the sign are most clearly spelled out. All of Artaud's work is theatrical in the sense that it is performative: his bodily gestures are visible in everything that arises from the surface of the page, be it a written word, a hole, a dot, a line or a drawing. Yet there is a distinctly complex relationship between the performance of the physical object produced and the performance of the body that produced it. One of the questions this chapter will address, moving from the theatre texts to some of the performative objects that Artaud produced in the late 1930s, is how these strange objects might 'act' now, at a distance from Artaud's own gesturing body that they so powerfully evoke. After a brief overview of some of the most important ideas behind *Le Théâtre et son Double*, the chapter concentrates on what would become a central force fuelling the rest of Artaud's creative practice: magic.

(i) Context: pratical failures

Artaud's first experiences working in the theatre occurred in 1920, after six years of struggling with nervous depression (misdiagnosed at one point as hereditary syphilis), 'douleurs errantes' ('wandering pains') and 'angoisses' ('anxiety'),[11] which would later become the subject of his first collections, as we saw in chapter 1. He was at this point living in Villejuif asylum, under the care of Dr Édouard Toulouse, who encouraged him to edit and publish his reviews and poetry in his journal *Demain*, and his wife Mme Toulouse, with whom Artaud maintained a close friendship, evidenced in the frequent letters he wrote to her throughout the 1920s. Through Édouard Toulouse, Artaud made various contacts, including

the theatre director Lugné-Poe who he began to work for in 1920 as an extra, prompter and stage manager. A year later in 1921, having moved out of Villejuif and residing between friends and various hotel rooms, he was accepted into Charles Dullin's theatre group as an actor, having been recommended by the poet Max Jacob. A letter he wrote to Jacob in October 1921 reveals that Dullin's teaching was to have a profound effect on his later conception of theatre, as here he was to discover what he understood to be theatre's mystical properties, in addition to the importance of staging that would later become the most crucial element, to be distinguished from the text. In this letter he writes: 'on a l'impression en écoutant l'enseignement de Dullin qu'on retrouve de vieux secrets et toute une mystique oubliée de la mise en scène' ('you get the impression, listening to Dullin's teaching, that you're re-discovering ancient secrets and an entire mystics in the mise-en-scène which has been forgotten').[12] Dullin's teaching also taught him that theatre was an intensely corporeal experience, an interaction between bodies, arising from gesture and appealing to the senses rather than the intellect: 'on joue avec le tréfonds de son coeur, avec ses mains, avec ses pieds, avec tous ses muscles, tous ses membres. On sent l'objet, on le hume, on le palpe, on le voit, on l'écoute, – et il n'y a rien, pas d'accessoires' ('we act with the innermost depths of the heart, with our hands, with our feet, with all our muscles, all our limbs. We can sense the object, inhale it, feel it, see it, hear it - yet there is nothing there, no props').[13]

In 1922, on a trip to back to Marseille to see his family, Artaud witnessed a performance that was to have a profound effect on his creative vision: the Cambodian dance show at the Palais d'Indochine in the colonial exposition. This was to mark the beginning of a lifelong interest in, and sometimes misguided appropriation of, non-European cultures such as the Tarahumaras in Mexico and Balinese theatre (witnessed, once again, at a colonial exhibition in Paris), which he would explore in texts such as 'Oriental and Occidental theatre' in *Le Théâtre et son Double* and 'D'un voyage au pays des Tarahumaras', published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (*NRF*) in 1937. In these performances he saw, similar to some of the ideas he had learned from Dullin, the importance of gesture, the abandonment of the text and the mobilisation of a new 'langage théâtral extérieur à toute *langue parlée*, et où il semble que se retrouve une immense expérience scénique' ('theatrical language foreign to every *spoken tongue*, a language in which an overwhelming stage experience seems to be communicated').[14] It was this emphasis on creating a singular, corporeal experience, without recourse to linguistic representative strategies, that was to inform his own work.

Artaud left Dullin's troupe in March 1923, fed up with the state of affairs, complaining that Dullin neither paid nor fed his actors. After joining the Surrealists and taking on several film acting roles, in September 1926, alongside Roger Vitrac and Robert Aron, he began plans for the *Théâtre Alfred Jarry*, publishing his first manifesto in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and launching a brochure in order to secure funds for the project, which would, amongst other reasons, precipitate his being ousted from the Surrealist group. The first two performances, comprising of three plays written by Artaud, Vitrac and Aron, occurred in June 1927 at the Grenelle Theatre, and were well received but failed to break even. The second spectacle they produced involved the projection of *La Mère*, a Poudovkine film that was censored in France, alongside Artaud's staging of the third act of *Partage de Midi* by Paul Claudel, against the latter's will. The *Théâtre Alfred Jarry* would go on to produce two more plays: *Le Songe* by Strindberg, of which there were two performances, and *Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir* by Vitrac, of which there were three. The project did not continue for long; after Artaud wrote an unfavourable critique of Vitrac's play *Le Coup de Trafalgar* in the *NRF*, complaining that 'sa pièce sent le parisianisme, l'actualité, le boulevard' ('his play stinks of Parisianism, current affairs, the boulevard'), and, unable to reach an agreement over the play still in preparation, they decided to call it a day in 1930.[15]

It was not until 1935 that Artaud was able to produce his next play, the ambitious project *Les Cenci*, envisaged as the realisation of the ideas he had been accumulating whilst writing the Theatre of Cruelty manifestos. Artaud had great hopes for *Les Cenci*, a production over which he would have complete creative control and which he hoped would be an all-engulfing, momentous experience for its audience, employing new lighting and sound technologies in order to overwhelm the spectators, communicating with them on a sensory rather than an intellectual level. For some spectators, Artaud's aims were accomplished, as Pierre Jean Jouve writes in his review for the *Nouvelle Revue Française*: 'les lumières complexes, les mouvements de l'individu et de la masse, les bruits, la musique révèlent au spectateur que l'espace avec le temps forme une réalité *affective*' ('the complex lights, the individual and collective movements, the noises, the music reveal to the spectator that space and time together form an *affective* reality').[16] Other accounts, however, point towards a lack of subtlety, with Vitrac writing

> il faut louer ses qualités avec des majuscules car ici tout est majuscules, le texte, le décor, le bruit, la musique, la lumière. Mais hélas! les défauts aussi sont majuscules et le ballet de ces grandes luttes

> torturantes, de ces potences et de ces roues écorche trop souvent l'oreille et la rétine et tord avec trop de persistance le cou d'une éloquence qui souffre de marcher sans cesse avec les grands pieds de l'abstraction.
>
> (we must sing its praises with capital letters because everything here is in capitals, the text, the decor, noises, music, lighting. But alas! The errors are also in capitals and the ballet of these torturous battles, these powers and these wheels is too often grating on the ear and the eye and persistently strangles the neck of an eloquence that suffers from continually plodding along with the large feet of abstraction.)[17]

This perceived lack of subtlety might well be taken as a mark of its success, and demonstrates how Vitrac and Artaud's creative visions were in fact incompatible, for clearly Artaud was not particularly interested in 'eloquence', as Vitrac describes it, and his stated aim was precisely to provide a 'grating' and uncomfortable sensory experience for his audience. Yet this experience was supposed to be unsettling rather than alienating, and for the most part *Les Cenci* did not live up to critics' expectations, stopping after 17 performances, suffering from a spate of bad press reviews. Artaud himself was deeply dissatisfied, writing that one of the reasons for the piece's lack of success was his inability to be in all places at the same time, and indeed critics at the time wrote that the play suffered from Artaud's insistence on controlling every aspect of the production.

(ii) Theatre in theory

It was Artaud's theory, rather than his practice, that would propel his name into the general consciousness, and through which most people in the US and the UK would come to know his work. Artaud's name has become synonymous with cruelty, suffering, and, more recently, with a certain form of tyranny not far from that of the kind gestating in Germany and Italy around the time he was writing, as we will see. Debates rage about how to contextualise Artaud's theatre work, suggestions varying from associating it most commonly with avant-garde practice (particularly Surrealism), but also with mystical writings philosophies such as the Kabbalah or the Gnostics, and political ideologies such as Maoism and even more recently, as mentioned, fascism. The truth is that his ideas do not sit comfortably in any of these brackets: Artaud distanced himself from the Surrealists and from his avant-garde contemporaries, he refused

any form of explicit political engagement, and his ideas about magical cultures were appropriated from a mishmash of colonial exhibitions and from his trip to Mexico, resulting in a vision resting on an exoticised and simplistic separation between Occident and Orient, as was perhaps to be expected given the context in which he was writing.[18] The only politics that Artaud engaged with were corporeal, related specifically to his own bodily experience. Whilst Jannarone's account, placing it in the context of European fascism, is fascinating and compelling, and she is right to question the immediate association of Artaud's thought with radical left-wing politics, it is also strictly speaking inaccurate, and if his work is put in this context, it surely *is* important to address the fact that Artaud spent the war years in a psychiatric institution just outside occupied France, suffering from depression, psychosis and malnutrition. Artaud was, as becomes clear from the letters he wrote throughout his life, both impeded and inspired principally by his own suffering, and herein lies the paradoxical status of the work as being necessary yet impossible, as we saw in chapter 1.

His work thus poses a problem for historians and literary critics alike, continually defying easy contextualisation. The context in which Artaud was working in 1920s Paris emerges quite clearly from the numerous letters he wrote during this period; mainly to Mme Toulouse, but also to Yvonne Gilles, Max Jacob, Georges Bernanos, Jacques Copeau, André Breton and Michel Leiris, amongst others. A significant part of the letters collected in the *Œuvres complètes* are addressed to publishers and professional contacts. Yet what becomes striking from these letters is his insistence on distancing himself from the aesthetic vision of his contemporaries. Many of his letters bear witness to his suffering, and in addition to letters written to doctors and psychiatrists such as Toulouse, Théodore Froenkel and René Allendy, he wrote pleading letters to a variety of different healers, such as a thaumaturgist, a voyante, including a bunch of herbs, acupuncturist George Soulié de Morant, and Irène Champigny, including a lock of his own hair. Having been let down by the medical establishment, he began to develop a belief in alternative cures which he would continue to pursue throughout his life, none of which would provide him with a satisfactory solution. Finally, as we shall see, it was his faith in magic that allowed him to imbue his own creative work with the power to stave off the demons hanging over him. If Artaud's work always deals with his own corporeal experience, it also turns to that very same suffering body to produce its own cure.

We know much more about what Artaud explicitly refused than the influences he embraced, namely the French theatrical tradition which

he found to be creatively stifling and overly self-satisfied, as he writes in a letter to the administrator of the Comédie-Française, dated 21 February 1921: 'votre bordel est trop gourmand [...] vous êtes nommément des cons. Votre existence même est un défi à l'esprit' ('your whorehouse of a theatre is too greedy [...] you are definitively idiots. Your very existence is an affront to the spirit').[19] The influence of those he worked with, such as Roger Blin, Jean-Louis Barrault, the Surrealists, and Charles Dullin, are significant but ultimately provide an incomplete picture, as can be said of the work of predecessors such as Alfred Jarry, who he named his theatre after, and Edgar Allen Poe, Matthew Gregory Lewis, Shelley and Stendhal whose texts appear scattered across Artaud's output in mutilated forms. As his letters to Jacques Rivière prove, Artaud to some extent thrived upon on being misunderstood and by failing to fall into a distinguishable context. Indeed the debate about contextualising Artaud continues with those who reclaim Artaud's ideas for their own purposes, from the Lettrists to French critical theorists, from the American Beats to the Japanese Butoh practitioners. The search for a missing context inevitably leads to the question: did Artaud's context come after his time? Or were these appropriations facilitated by the simple fact that Artaud was not there to resist this rebirth? Ultimately, Artaud's rejection of literary, theatrical and artistic movements, his refusal to engage with politics, and his insistence on carving out his own path make for fascinating comparative analysis, but constantly frustrate a contextualising historicist approach. What this book is interested in is not so much situating Artaud's texts in their own context, but addressing how we might approach these texts now, as texts that problematise the very foundations of representative practice, both in the theatre and elsewhere.

(iii) Affect, contamination, metaphysics

Artaud's theatre writings put into place a series of affective forces, insisting on contagion, gratuity, alchemy, cruelty, the use of all available space, nervous communication and sensory overload. Theatre was to be the double of life, 'on doit en finir avec cette idée des chefs-d'oeuvres' ('no more masterpieces'), Artaud wrote, 'le théâtre est le seul endroit au monde où un geste fait ne se recommence pas deux fois' ('the theatre is the only place in the world where a gesture, once made, can never be made in the same way twice').[20] Herein lies its potential *cruelty*, not to be understood as blood, guts and gore, but as the revelation of 'forces vives' ('living forces').[21] Artaud writes: 'tout ce qui agit est cruauté' ('everything

that acts is a cruelty').[22] It is this notion of *acting* in the sense of 'agir' (to physically act), rather than 'jouer' (to act in the theatre, or to play a role) that forms the basis of the gestures essential to his theatre, as he wrote in a letter to Paule Thévenin, shortly before he died: 'on ne joue pas, on agit' ('we do not play, we act').[23] Through this acting, cruelty becomes ominous necessity made visible, audible and tangible.

Central to his aims in the theatre is the notion of the double. This is taken from the Ancient Egyptian figure of the Kah, a spirit that accompanies human beings throughout their lives and lives on after death, and which appears, as we saw in chapter 1, throughout Artaud's work, sometimes in the form of 'caca'. Theatre, Artaud writes, is the double of life and as such it must be lived as a destabilising, threatening force rather than a mere reflection. In the preface for *Le Théâtre et son Double*, he writes: 'quand nous prononçons le mot de vie, faut-il entendre qu'il ne s'agit pas de la vie reconnue par le dehors des faits, mais cette sorte de fragile et remuant foyer auquel ne touchent pas les formes' ('when we speak the word "life", it must be understood that we are not referring to life as we know it from its surface of fact, but to that fragile, fluctuating centre which forms never reach').[24] Life as Artaud understands it in *Le Théâtre et son Double* is not, as we saw in chapter 1, everyday reality, but a deeper, disruptive core that was perhaps only accessible, at least at this point, through performance. As doubles, the theatre and life are not clearly distinguishable but active entities that are always merging and communicating as if to infect one another.

The most striking instance of this contamination can be found in the image of the plague in 'Le théâtre et la peste' ('The Theatre and the Plague'), at the beginning of *Le Théâtre et son Double*. The plague destroys all social order and human laws, and creates an intensive chaos that is internal to the body, eating away at its organs, and external, spreading between different bodies. The streets of the plague-ridden city, as Artaud describes it, are reduced to mountains of corpses, and unidentifiable, crazed and agitated survivors whose actions serve no purpose. He writes: 'c'est alors que le théâtre s'installe. Le théâtre, c'est-à-dire la gratuité immédiate qui pousse à des actes inutiles et sans profit pour l'actualité' ('and at that moment the theatre is born. The theatre, i.e. an immediate gratuitousness provoking acts without use or profit').[25] The essence of theatre, Artaud writes, is not rational:

> Donner les raisons précises de ce délire communicatif est inutile. Autant vaudrait rechercher les raisons pour lesquelles l'organisme

> nerveux épouse au bout d'un certain temps les vibrations des plus subtiles musiques, jusqu'à en tirer une sorte de durable modification. Il importe avant tout d'admettre que comme la peste, le jeu théâtral soit un délire et qu'il soit communicatif.
>
> (It would be useless to give precise reasons for this contagious delirium. It would be like trying to find reasons why our nervous system after a certain period responds to the vibrations of the subtlest music and is eventually somehow modified by them in a lasting way. First of all we must recognise that the theatre, like the plague, is a delirium and is communicative.)[26]

Delirium and contagion become necessary products of effective communication, because communication must above all be affective, not intellectual. Yet whilst this contagious force should overcome all forms of rationality, restraint and social order, there is still a sense in which this must be a conscious process. In 'Le théâtre et la peste' Artaud also claims that the plague does not destroy the body's physical functions at random, but attacks only where human consciousness controls bodily processes:

> Les deux seuls organes réellement atteints et lésés par la peste: le cerveau et les poumons, se trouvent être tous deux sous la dépendance directe de la conscience et de la volonté. On peut s'empêcher de respirer ou de penser, on peut précipiter sa respiration, la rythmer à son gré, la rendre à volonté consciente ou inconsciente, introduire un équilibre entre les deux sortes de respirations; l'automatique, qui est sous le commandement direct du grand sympathique, et l'autre, qui obéit aux réflexes redevenus conscients du cerveau. On peut également précipiter, ralentir et rythmer sa pensée.
>
> (the only two organs really affected and injured by the plague, the brain and the lungs, are both directly dependent upon the consciousness and the will. We can keep ourselves from breathing or from thinking, can speed up our respiration, give it any rhythm we choose, make it conscious or unconscious at will, introduce a balance between two kinds of breathing: the automatic, which is under the direct control of the sympathetic nervous system, and the other, which is subject to those reflexes of the brain which have once again become conscious. We can similarly accelerate, retard and give an arbitrary rhythm to our thinking.)[27]

Underlying this is the notion that we can, using our respiratory system as well as our conscious thinking processes, voluntarily induce a plague-like state; indeed this is what Artaud invokes in the text 'Un athlétisme affectif' ('An Affective Athleticism'), which consists of a set of instructions for actors. The plague that Artaud desires the theatre to be is a consciously invoked collective force that is mediated through the body.

In 'La mise-en-scène et la métaphysique' Artaud develops a theory of what he calls 'la *métaphysique en activité*' ('*metaphysics in action*'),[28] which must inform all forms of expression in the theatre. This active metaphysics opposes psychological drama or purely text-based theatre, as well as the western philosophical tradition of metaphysics. He characterises Oriental theatre as a theatre 'à tendances métaphysiques' ('of metaphysical tendencies') in opposition to the Occidental theatre of 'tendances psychologiques' ('psychological tendencies'),[29] writing, 'faire la métaphysique du langage articulé, c'est faire servir le langage à exprimer ce qu'il n'exprime pas d'habitude' ('to make metaphysics out of a spoken language is to make the language express what it does not ordinarily express').[30] All the operations that Artaud identifies here might also apply to his use of poetic language. Firstly he writes that theatre should produce a kind of language that has physical properties and is able to shock the spectator through his or her nervous system;[31] we can see such operations at work in the spells, for example, which seek to actively engage with bodies, as well as in the way Artaud's text seeks to invoke speech through glossolalia that accentuates the physical processes of articulation over those of signification. Another way to render language metaphysical is 'le diviser et le répartir activement dans l'espace' ('to divide and distribute it actively in space'),[32] a methodology that is also present in his texts, where the space surrounding words as they are laid out on the page often plays an essential role in disrupting a linear reading, as we saw in chapter 1.

An actively metaphysical language, Artaud continues,

> c'est prendre les intonations d'une manière concrète absolue et leur restituer le pouvoir qu'elles auraient de déchirer et de manifester réellement quelque chose, c'est se retourner contre le langage et ses sources bassement utilitaires, on pourrait dire alimentaires, contre ses origines de bête traquée, c'est enfin considérer le langage sous la forme de l'*Incantation*.
>
> (is to deal with intonations in an absolutely concrete manner, restoring their power to shatter as well as really to manifest something; to turn

> against language and its basely utilitarian, one could say alimentary, sources, against its trapped-beast origins; and finally, to consider language as the form of *Incantation*.)[33]

The only kind of language that can achieve this function, and strip itself of all representational elements in order to act upon and physically infect bodies, is, for Artaud, magical language. The notion of contagion and physical contact is more evidently possible in the theatre, a real space involving the interaction of bodies, than in the text. Yet, as we will see in the rest of this chapter, Artaud infused all of his work with these magical, mystical properties, and incantation was to have an important place in this. It comes as no surprise, then, that following the failure of his theatre in practical terms, Artaud went in search of what he perceived to be magical cultures, hoping to find the true enactment of a language capable of acting effectively and transforming the world around it, rather than simply describing it.

(iv) Mimesis

We now turn to the use of contagion as a mimetic and performative force in the theatre, to see how this sheds light on Artaud's entire project. For if Artaud's texts are anti-representative, they are not necessarily anti-mimetic. Artaud sought, as we have seen, to bypass the intellect and to physically engage with spectator's bodies, although, perhaps paradoxically, this is not always an unconscious process. Theatre's double, that is to say 'life', but not as we know it or as it is lived in the every day, is a dangerous, mimetic force. A conception of mimesis as contagious and destructive can be found in Plato's writing, and is exactly why, according to Socrates, theatre should be banned from the ideal city. For the Socrates in Book Ten of Plato's *Republic*, mimesis in art and poetry is the creation of a pale imitation of reality, acting like a mirror of the forms which themselves are merely reflections, and it is this interpretation of mimesis that has led most critics to claim that Artaud's theatre is anti-mimetic.[34] However, the performative mimesis that Socrates outlines in *Ion* is, in opposition to that of Book Ten of the *Republic*, much more perilous and immediate, becoming an affective force which invades the actors' bodies, and in turn infects the spectators who are powerless to resist. Ion and Socrates' dialogue on the dangers of reciting poetry perfectly illustrates this:

> Socrates: 'When you give a good recital and especially stun your audience [...] are you then in your right mind or are you beside

> yourself? And does your soul, in its enthusiasm, imagine that it is present at those events which you describe, whether in Ithaca or in Troy or wherever the epic sets the scene?'
>
> Ion: 'How vividly you make your point, Socrates, and I'll tell you without concealment. When I recite something pitiful my eyes fill with tears, when it's something terrifying or dreadful my hair stands on end in terror and my heart thumps'.
>
> Socrates: 'Well now, Ion, when a man, dressed in fine robes and a gold crown, bursts into tears at a sacrifice or festival, although he has lost none of his finery, or feels afraid when he is standing amongst more than twenty thousand friendly people, none of whom is trying to rob him or do him any harm – are we to say that such a man is in his right mind?'
>
> Ion: 'No, by Zeus, not at all, Socrates, to tell you the truth.'
>
> Socrates: 'And are you aware that you people produce the same effects on most of your audience?'
>
> Ion: 'Yes, very much so. For I look down on them every time from the platform and see them weeping and looking at me with awestruck gaze, amazed at my story.'[35]

Ion's recitals invoke passions that overcome the audience's capacity for rational thinking, disrupting all the 'finery', social order and discretion on which a civilised society is based, and for this reason such theatrical performances should, according to Socrates, who describes them as a form of divine possession, be banned. According to Artaud's manifestos for the theatre, however, this potential for theatre to wreak havoc on all forms of social order, possessing the audience and reducing its members to quivering vessels of emotion, is exactly what should be exploited. Actors in the theatre must do this by acting like magicians, conjuring rather than representing something symbolically. This puts into motion a type of sign that does not have an arbitrary relationship to its referent, but rather, as we will see, a mimetic one in that it both acts like it and invokes a physical presence that is always mediated by the body; in other words, the sign *becomes* its referent.

Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen makes a distinction between mimesis and representation in *The Freudian Subject*, arguing for a theatrical model of

mimesis where mimesis is to act, whilst representation is to consciously reflect upon that action. In psychoanalytic terms, Borch-Jacobsen reverses the Freudian conception of the relationship between the subject and desire, arguing that 'identification brings the desiring subject into being, and not the other way around'.[36] This suggests that before the formation of the subject, there is a non-individual, collective affect. Mimesis is anterior to the subject rather than being produced by him or her. Mimesis is pre-reflexive in its very essence, according to Borch-Jacobsen, and it is perhaps worth quoting him here at some length. He writes:

> The subject cannot see himself miming another at the moment he is miming, just as he cannot say he is playacting precisely while he is acting. In order to do that [...] he would have to arrive at the vantage point of the lucid spectator (philosopher, analyst, director) who sees both the model and its copy, who distinguishes what is imitated from what is imitating, and thus gives himself a way to denounce either the lie of the mimetician who is passing himself off as another (as Plato shows in the *Republic*, and Brecht) or the misrecognition of the Self that takes itself for another in the so-called specular relation (as Lacan argues). But then *he is no longer miming*.[37]

This might be taken as a useful way of understanding the distinction between the two different forms of acting encapsulated in the French terms 'agir' and 'jouer'. 'Agir', in the Artaudian sense, means to physically become something, and in turn to affect one's surroundings, whilst 'jouer' is to playact, to be consciously aware of representing something, acting stripped of its emotive power. Borch-Jacobsen writes: 'mimesis is unrepresentable for the subject in the mode of *Vorstellung*: ungraspable, inconceivable, unmasterable, because unspecularizable'.[38] Mimesis is a more direct form of communication where the subject becomes other through acting as other, rather than representing it; in other words it moves the subject beyond him or herself. Mimesis, he argues, is the 'lack of distinction between self and other'.[39] This is not a consciously reflected process, and escapes all forms of representation: '*mimesis is, in a wholly new sense, nonreflexive, prereflexive*. By that very token, it is unrecountable, inaccessible to analytic self-narration.'[40]

By using mimesis as distinct from representation, he posits a model of subjectivity as a kind of collective affect, one which threatens any notion of the subject as unified or whole, and as such coincides with readings of Artaud's work such as Kristeva's in 'Le sujet en procès' that we saw in

chapter 2. Borch-Jacobsen posits mimesis in explicitly theatrical terms; it is a non-reflexive and unrepeatable performance. For Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, following a similar interpretation, mimesis is in essence a demiurge or double, as he writes '*Seule l'interprétation démiurgique de la mimesis* permet d'en libérer l'essence, qui est l'installation, ou, plus exactement, la "désinstallation"' ('*only a demiurgic interpretation of mimesis* allows us to liberate its essence, which is installation, or more precisely "disinstallation"').[41] We can see now how this might be particularly relevant to Artaud's ambivalent conception of the double as a force that can be appropriated to combat the subject as a normative entity, yet also threatens to act on his or her behalf, stealing or infiltrating her/his thoughts as if s/he were a passive receptacle. Lacoue-Labarthe argues that this is why 'la folie est une affaire de mimesis' ('madness is a matter of mimesis').[42]

Although Borch-Jacobsen and Lacoue-Labarthe use psychoanalytic models at a similar point where Artaud's texts explicitly reject psychoanalytic interpretation, these analyses of mimesis are useful here because they show how it potentially undoes the subject, how it threatens the limits that allow him or her to act rationally, or simply interpret what s/he is witnessing or experiencing on the stage. The entire auditorium becomes a stage; the passivity of the spectators is transformed into collective affect, but one with no apparent goal other than this disruption, or 'disinstallation'. The refusal to provide any kind of vision for what follows the momentous destruction of the subject in Artaud's theatre is where the potential appropriation of his texts lies, but is, as we will see towards the end of this chapter, also how it remains resistant to any forms of ideology, including fascism.

(v) Magic and the departure of language

If *Le Théâtre et son Double* announced the departure of the text in favour of physical action, the spells that Artaud began to send after his theatrical experiments failed take this departure further and might be seen, as I have suggested, as a continuation of the search for a meaningful and communicative form of performance, one which, inevitably, also ends in failure and alienation. Initially, Artaud's increasing interest in magic and mystical forms of expression that would overcome the problems he had encountered in the text and the theatre led him to abandon France in search of other cultures. The first trip he took was to Mexico, where he hoped to find, as he wrote to Paulhan in July 1935, 'une civilisation à bases Métaphysiques qui s'expriment

dans la religion et dans les actes par une sorte de totémisme actif' ('A civilisation based on Metaphysics that are expressed in religion and in acts through a kind of active totemism').[43] He spent nearly a year there, leaving on 31 January 1936, stopping off in Havana for a week on the way, and arriving back in France on 12 November. During his time in Mexico he made contact with Diego Rivera, Maria Izquierdo and Luis Cardoz y Aragón and gave a series of lectures: three at the University of Mexico and one at the Alliance Française. He published various articles in the Mexican paper *El Nacional Revolucionario*. But the most influential experience of his stay was his month-long trip to the Sierra Tarahumara, which he documented in 'D'un voyage au pays des Tarahumaras' ('A Voyage to the Land of the Tarahumara'), published in the *NRF* in August 1937.

After Mexico came the fateful trip to Ireland, in search of mythical and magical Celtic cultures, resulting in his incarceration, as we saw in chapter 2. This was the time at which he began to send spells and to write *Les Nouvelles révélations de l'Être*, a manual for the apocalypse whose date he continually announced only in order to suspend. As with many of Artaud's texts, there is an immediate question raised about the status of some of this work. This is particularly problematic with the spells; Artaud was psychotic when he sent them, believing himself and his friends to be in great danger from malevolent forces from which they must be protected. Medical certificates from the Quatre-Mares and Sainte-Anne hospitals before his transfer to Ville-Évrard testify to the extremity of Artaud's condition at this time, speaking of 'troubles mentaux caractérisés par des idées de persécutions avec hallucinations', 'état psychotique', 'syndrome délirant de structure paranoïde' and 'paralogisme délirant' ('mental disturbances characterised by ideas of persecution and hallucinations', 'psychotic state', 'delusional state of a paranoid nature', 'delirious paralogism').[44] These certificates also describe Artaud's interest in the occult as a pathological symptom: 'mélange d'idées très diverses sans organisation stable', 'préoccupations ésotériques', 'sympathie pour occultisme et magie' ('a mixture of diverse and disorganised ideas', 'esoteric preoccupations', 'an interest in occultism and magic'), and one certificate even goes so far as to refer to 'prétentions littéraires peut-être justifiées dans la limite où le délire peut servir d'inspiration' ('literary aspirations that may be justified to the extent that madness can serve as inspiration').[45]

It might seem in some respects slightly problematic to 'read' the spells in the same sense as one would read the rest of Artaud's 'œuvre'. They were certainly not intended for publication. However, this could be said

of many of the texts that made their way into the *Œuvres complètes*, and, as I have argued elsewhere, even if we can be sure that Artaud was psychotic and paranoid when he made the spells, there is no clear dividing line to be drawn between 'mad' and 'sane' Artaud; the very idea that literary inclinations or aspirations were considered as a symptom of his illness demonstrates this. Rather than dismissing these strange and difficult objects outright, I want to consider how they in fact embody a contradiction at the heart of all of his output, and how they put into play a conception of language, following on from *Le Théâtre et son Double*, that would become indispensable for the later work. The drawings and portraits would not be possible without the spells, nor would the publications *50 dessins pour assassiner la magie* (*50 Drawings to Assassinate Magic*), *Artaud le mômo* (*Artaud the Momo*) or *Suppôts et suppliciations* (*Henchmen and Torturings*), all of which put into question the distinction between what was intended for publication and what was not, because they are collections of drawings and texts carefully chosen but taken directly from the notebooks in which they were hastily scribbled.

In the text 'Dix ans que le langage est parti' ('Ten Years Since Language Has Gone') he claims 'depuis un certain jour d'octobre 1939 je n'ai jamais plus écrit sans non plus dessiner' ('from a certain day in October 1939 I never wrote again without also drawing').[46] This text is dated 1947. According to Artaud drawing and writing, or not drawing and not writing, went hand in hand. It is strange that Artaud is relatively specific about the date, because if he was celebrating the tenth anniversary of this not-drawing-not-writing process, then this would have been 1937, not 1939; however, both dates are perhaps significant as it was in September 1937 that Artaud made and sent his first spells, addressed to Lise Deharme and Jacqueline Breton, and the last surviving spell, addressed to Hitler, dates from September 1939. Whenever this new conception of the relationship between text and image might be situated in Artaud's work, the spells play an important role either as the first examples of this new type of language, or as the immediate precursor. They might be considered as pivotal objects, both in chronological terms and as the most extreme manifestation of the Artaudian contradiction between the 'œuvre' and the 'raclure', or the body and the textual object, and between creating something that is imbued with corporeal presence but nonetheless imposes distance and violently rejects physical contact. If this is a new type of language, it is no less contradictory than the language Artaud was using before.

Jane Goodall argues that the spells are 'unmistakably products of that crisis of the signifier created by the contracting of difference

into absolute dichotomy, where the sign acquires a magical function as marker and guard of divisions'.[47] She associates this with Gnostic thought, and argues that Artaud's double might be understood in Gnostic terms, writing 'the experience of Gnosis is the revelation of the doubleness of consciousness and the doubleness of human being in itself'.[48] Gnostic thought is imbued with a theatricality, deploying what Goodall refers to as a 'mise-en-scène', that is certainly relevant to Artaud's work. As this chapter will argue, a magical conception of language might be seen as intrinsically theatrical. Artaud's work is clearly informed by his reading of different types of mystical texts such as the *Zohar*, the Tibetan *Bardo Thodal* and the Ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, amongst others. This interest in esoteric literature was not simply (as his medical certificates suggest) a symptom of his psychotic state, but an integral part of his creative practice. What is really at stake here, to use Goodall's terminology, is perhaps this notion of the 'crisis of the signifier'. For if Artaud was more interested in the *Book of the Dead* than in the writing of his contemporaries, it was because he saw a different type of language at work within it, one which was not based on lack or on the separation of the signifier and the signified. The signs within the *Sorts* can only work as markers or guards of divisions if they themselves are active forces, rather than arbitrary signifiers referring to an absent concept or meaning.

In other words, what we might characterise as the crisis of the signifier points to a new theory of the sign that is put into play. The spells are not simply signs, but also objects that seek to materially embody what they would otherwise represent. Monique Borie, in *Antonin Artaud et le retour aux sources* traces Artaud's 'return to the source' in anthropological terms, looking at how Artaud approached non-European cultures. She writes, following Lévi-Strauss, 'ce mouvement de regard vers l'Autre est apparu chaque fois qu'il y a eu crise de la conscience européenne' ('this movement of the gaze towards the Other has appeared every time there has been a crisis of conscience in Europe').[49] The anthropological search is closely linked to a sense of colonial regret, as Lévi-Strauss writes of anthropology; 'son existence même est incompréhensible sinon comme tentative de rachat' ('its very existence is incomprehensible as anything other than an attempt to seek redemption').[50] The 'return to the source', or the search for effective communication that has been lost in post-Enlightenment modern European thought is certainly not exclusive to Artaud: from nineteenth-century writers such as Nerval and Flaubert, to Artaud's contemporaries, such as Michel Leiris, who looked to Africa, or Henri Michaux, who looked east to China and

India as well as Africa, to those who he inspired, such as Peter Brook (who again turned to Africa) and the Living Theatre, who drew inspiration from Buddhism and the Kabbalah.

There is a danger, of course, which is that from the outset, the search for a source or meaning that has been lost in European thought, coming from a sense that communication is not possible using the tools that European culture provides, always rests upon the exoticisation of the 'Other'. 'Oriental' cultures are appropriated for the European subject's self-development, linked to a sense of colonial guilt or regret that attempts to hark back to a pre-colonial era, but one which is imagined always from the starting point of the European subject's crisis, with the risk of being, as Saïd puts it with reference to Chateaubriand, 'an indefatigably performed experience of self'.[51] This is why Artaud's appropriation of 'Oriental' thought, such as that he found in Balinese and Cambodian dance, and the secrets he claimed to unearth in the Tarahumara desert, can only tell us about his own crisis, informed by his aesthetic vision and by an increasing inability to communicate meaningfully through the theatre in France, with what he perceived as its bureaucratic, antiquated and aristocratic institutional structure.

We learn far more about the context in which Artaud was writing in Europe, and the kind of representation that he rejected, than we do about the cultures he was writing about. Artaud's 'object-sign', like the animated hieroglyph, the magical gesture, the symbol or the figure of the Double, is opposed to what might be understood as a linguistic sign based on Saussure's hugely influential *Cours de linguistique générale*, in which he famously writes: 'le lien unissant le signifiant au signifié est arbitraire, ou encore, puisque nous entendons par signe le total résultant de l'association d'un signifiant à un signifié, nous pouvons dire plus simplement: *le signe liguistique est arbitraire*' ('the link between signal and signification is arbitrary. Since we are treating a sign as the combination in which a signal is associated with a signification, we can express this more simply as: *the linguistic sign is arbitrary*').[52] In his preface to *Le Théâtre et son Double*, Artaud wrote: 'si le signe de l'époque est la confusion, je vois à la base de cette confusion une rupture entre les choses, et les paroles, les idées, les signes qui en sont la représentation' ('If confusion is the sign of the times, I see at the root of this confusion a rupture between things and words, between things and the ideas and signs that are their representation').[53] For Artaud, Saussure's interpretation of the sign, separating it into signifier, signified and referent, cannot account for the magical function of the sign, nor does it allow for a sign to physically be what it claims to represent. Saussure's approach is overly

schematic and points towards a categorisation or separation of the sign into different functions which in Artaud's conception are indistinguishable. Whilst for Saussure language is a structure to be interpreted and analysed according to a system of arbitrary differences, Artaud vehemently rejected this discourse, arguing instead for a type of sign that could 'briser le langage pour toucher la vie' ('break through language in order to touch life').[54] This is arguably what Artaud was trying to achieve, in a very literal sense, with his spells.

(vi) Performing bodies

The capacity for a spell to act is inherently and inextricably linked to its meaning. For Artaud this meant moving beyond descriptive language to incorporate visual elements: as well as written language, the spells are covered with symbols and figures, such as the triangle, the six-pointed star (made up of two superimposed triangles), clefs, crosses and hanging figures. These are difficult to make out, often furiously scribbled and burned through with holes. The symbol, as a magical sign, was designed to act ('agir'). These symbols occurred more frequently in the later spells, and Guillaume Fau notes in the spells from Ville-Évrard what he calls 'une gradation dans la mise en scène par rapport aux Sorts d'Irlande' ('an intensification of the staging in relation to the spells from Ireland').[55] Paule Thévenin also makes reference to the theatricality of the spells, writing that 'nous ne pouvons difficilement regarder ces objets sans être atteints par leur véhémence, ou alors c'est que nous ne comprenons rien, que nous ne savons pas voir qu'une extraordinaire théâtralité se dégage de ces pages' ('we can scarcely face these objects without being affected by their vehemence, unless we understand nothing and cannot see that an extraordinary theatricality emerges from these pages').[56] Variations of the verb 'agir' occur in the text of almost every spell and we might take them as a kind of stage, or a space for physical action to take place.

It is this notion of performance, perhaps above and beyond the theatrical, that should be emphasised here; an acting not so much as playing but as inhabiting a role. The text of the spells is often written in such a way as to evoke speech, through frequent use of capitalisation, exclamation marks, heavy pressure and excessive underlining, as if the spell were shouting out loud. We are again reminded of Barthes' description of Artaud's writing as 'une écriture à haute voix' ('writing out loud').[57] Writing and speaking are material processes that defy an understanding of language as purely producing meaning, but point also to the physical

properties of the object and its texture as both a noisy and visual entity. This use of language within a spell to evoke speech is, of course, characteristic of all types of magical language. Gershom Scholem writes that in a Kabbalist conception of language 'every act of speaking is at once an act of writing and every writing is potential speech, which is designed to become audible'.[58]

There is thus a distinction to be made, which Artaud himself certainly saw, between a modern conception of language as representative and distanced from the real world and an earlier conception of language as having a direct link to the physical world. In *Les Mots et les choses* (*The Order of Things*), Foucault identifies a shift in the way that language was used in the seventeenth century, marking the end of the possibility of magical thinking. Magic is conceivable in the sixteenth century, Foucault writes, because it has a material relationship with the real world: 'le langage réel [...] est plutôt chose opaque, mystérieuse, refermée sur elle-même, masse fragmentée et de point en point énigmatique, qui se mêle ici ou là aux figures du monde, et s'enchevêtre à elles' ('real language [...] is rather an opaque, mysterious thing, closed in upon itself, a fragmented mass, its enigma renewed in every interval, which combines here and there with the forms of the world and becomes interwoven with them').[59] Language resides in the world: 'parmi les plantes, les herbes, les pierres et les animaux' ('among the plants, the herbs, the stones and the animals').[60] Artaud's interest in esoteric and magical writing corresponds to a desire to rediscover a type of language that was not yet divorced from the physical world, and this is perhaps what he was looking for when he claimed that in the Sierra Tarahumara letters and numbers occurred naturally in the landscape. For the Ancient Egyptians, a similar conception of language existed, as Manfred Lurker argues, when he writes that a magical view of the world like that of the Ancient Egyptians 'sees the image and its original as one, therefore the symbol is reality'.[61]

In his book *Language and the Decline of Magic*, Richard Santana, following Foucault, uses this distinction to approach different aspects of religious thinking. In the Middle Ages, he writes, religion was characterised by magical thinking, whilst after the Reformation this became representative thinking. Magical language is a language that is understood as being 'based in reality and having a real efficacy in the physical world',[62] whilst a modern conception of language is as 'commemorative or symbolic and having efficacy only in the human mind'.[63] He maps this distinction on to Austin's theory of speech acts in *How To Do Things With Words*, which distinguishes between performative and

constative statements. Austin writes: 'it was far too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a "statement" can only be to "describe" some state of affairs'.[64] He explains what he means by the 'performative': 'the name is derived, of course, from "perform", the usual verb with the noun "action": it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action – it is not normally thought of as just saying something'.[65] The performative speech act is a statement that does something rather than simply describe it; by the very act of speaking we are not merely describing but actively creating the reality we seek to define. This relates back to some of the debates about world-reflecting and world-creating versions of poetic mimesis, as discussed in chapter 1.

For Artaud the distinction between what might be called a representative or constative and a performative language is of the utmost importance. The *Sorts* for Artaud were, at the time he made them, his principal means of communication. In 'Le Mexique et la civilisation' he writes: 'si la magie est une communication constante de l'intérieur à l'extérieur, de l'acte à la pensée, de la chose au mot, de la matière à l'esprit, on peut dire que nous avons depuis longtemps perdu cette forme d'inspiration foudroyante, de nerveuse illumination' ('if magic is a constant communication between interior and exterior, between acting and thinking, between the thing and the word, between matter and the mind, it is reasonable to conclude that we lost this blistering inspiration, this nervous illumination, a long time ago').[66] With the loss of magic, Artaud suggests, comes the loss of the possibility for meaningful communication, and words can no longer act like things, physically affecting their surroundings. Grossman notes that magic becomes like a cure for Artaud: 'elle seule sans doute peut guérir cette "pénible scission", cette rupture entre les choses et les mots, les idées et les signes' ('it is doubtlessly only magic that can cure this "painful rift", this rupture between things and words, between ideas and signs').[67] His project for the theatre, as we have seen, is characterised by one essential aim: how to make words physically *act*, rather than merely representing a text onstage, or how to make the actors communicate directly with the audience through signs that were not dependent on interpretation. Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty', as we have seen, was designed to work like a spell, having an efficacy that was inevitable, cruel, threatening, and magical.

One problem with this, in the spells as well as elsewhere in Artaud's work, is of course that there seems to be a contradiction between the supposedly universal nature of the symbols and the text which appears

in French. In what sense, one might ask, can these spells really be read as performative, given Artaud's ambivalence towards the magical capacities of the French language? What they perform, we might suggest, is what makes them distinctly corporeal entities: the very act of mediation. Yet, as we shall see, this is a distinctly complex process once one takes into account the temporality of the spell's creation and reception, and the spatial lapse that occurs when the object is conceived as a substitution for a body that can never, by the very nature of the spell, be physically present.

(vii) A delay will surely be accorded...

As active objects, the spells are intended to have a mimetic, non-representative relationship to both Artaud's body and to the body of the recipient, blurring the boundaries between self and other through their acts of violation or protection, and putting into play active, contagious forces rather than representative distance. Yet this becomes contradictory when the very existence of the spell depends upon the absence of the body and the impossibility of the two bodies actually coming into contact. To take the most extreme and troubling example, the earliest surviving spell is addressed to Lise Deharme and was sent to André Breton. It is dated 5 September 1937, reduced through Kabbalist reductions to the number 7. Artaud writes: 'Je ferai enfoncer une croix de fer rougie au feu dans ton sexe puant de juive et *cabotinerai* sur ton cadavre pour te prouver qu'il y a ENCORE DES DIEUX !' ('I will shove a red-hot poker into your smelly Jewish sex and I will prance about on your corpse to prove to you that THE GODS STILL EXIST!'). The text is smudged by liquids, and there is a hole burned through the centre of the page, as if to demonstrate the action described. The symbol that became Artaud's signature, an amalgamation of a cross, the number 7 and two small triangles, occurs several times. The spell is an object imbued with corporeal presence, drawing attention to its own materiality, whilst simultaneously referring to two absent bodies; the piece of paper is treated as if it were Lise Deharme, by being violated, but also as if it were Artaud, acting as an active force that would have consequences for the recipient determined by Artaud himself.

This spell came accompanied with a letter to André Breton, asking him to send it to Deharme, in which Artaud explains his motives: 'Je suis en contre les Juifs dans la mesure où ils ont renié la Kabbale, tous les Juifs qui n'ont pas renié la Kabbale sont avec moi, les autres, Non' ('I am against the Jews to the extent to which they have denied the Kabbalah, all the Jews who have not denied the Kabbalah are with me, the rest

are not').[68] Belief in magic in a distorted form of Jewish mysticism, for Artaud, had become a matter of life or death. Of course, the vision that the spell provides is quite different to what one might find in Kabbalist spiritual texts, and Artaud's form of 'magic' is especially abhorrent considering the date that the spell was made, inviting the kind of contextualisation that Jannarone employs in her analysis of Artaud's theatre practice. But however horrific this object is, the rationale behind it has little to do with Nazi ideology, and cannot be placed in the same bracket as, to take the most infamous example, Louis-Ferdinand Celine's anti-Semitic pamphlets. Artaud's spell to Hitler, in which he invites him to gas the Parisians, is again an extremely disturbing example of his confused state of mind and extreme removal from reality. 'Une amie anonyme' ('an anonymous friend') explains in an interview published in Alain and Odette Virmaux's *Antonin Artaud*, that at one stage Artaud believed that Hitler had invaded France in order to liberate him from his psychiatrists.[69] Aside from this, Artaud makes hardly any direct references at all to the Occupation in his texts from the early 1940s, and all political awareness comes only as an indirect reference through descriptions of his own physical suffering, due to the lack of food and supplies in psychiatric hospitals at the time.

In another letter, dated 8 September, just three days after the spell to Deharme, Artaud tells Breton to warn her: 'qu'elle ne triomphe pas trop vite si elle est encore vivante le 1er janvier 1938. Un délai lui sera sans doute laissé' ('tell her not to rejoice too quickly if she is still alive on the 1st January 1938. A delay will doubtlessly be accorded').[70] The complex and contradictory temporality of the spell plays out in its very materiality: we can see that the hole has already been burned in the paper, but the action described is in the future tense, as he writes 'je ferai enfoncer' ('I will shove'). In fact, all the actions described in the spells occur in the future tense, and this perpetual suspension is what allows Artaud to assert the spell's capacity to act, whilst simultaneously completely undermining any sense of effectiveness. This suspension is also spatial: the spells simultaneously depend on distance and proximity, and as such put into play a dynamic of presence and absence that is materially embodied in the form of holes in the surface of the page.

These holes present a series of contradictions between presence and absence, the material and the immaterial, and between force and form, because the act of burning a hole in the paper draws attention to the materiality of the object whilst literally causing parts of it to disappear, leaving behind what is both the trace of a force that cannot be articulated in words, and a form. The hole is not just present in the spells but

is a figure that punctuates the entirety of Artaud's oeuvre; the holes in the spells are the most immediately evident example but should not be taken as a symptom, as a symbol, or solely in the context of the spells themselves. In fact the hole, as we will see in chapter 5, or the act of making it, infuses Artaud's entire oeuvre, marking its very structure; this is linguistic as well as material, with Artaud often playing on the assonance between 'trou' ('hole'), 'coup' ('blow') and 'clou' ('nail'). Artaud also draws holes, dots, hammers, nails and objects that bore through the surface of the page at the same time as he writes about them and strikes holes through the work. Again, through their most extreme manifestations of this motif, the spells can be seen as pivotal objects in Artaud's trajectory.

Whilst the spells from 1937 look like letters, those from Ville-Évrard written in 1939 are more elaborate, comprising of a double-sided two-page spread. The *Sort* to Sonia Mossé, dated 14 May 1939, comprises both a letter, containing the words: 'JE VOUS JETTE UN SORT DE MORT' ('I CAST A DEATH SPELL UPON YOU', and a spell, in which Artaud writes 'je te lance une Force de Mort' ('I throw a Deadly Force your way').[71] As with the other spells, the action described within the spell itself is in the future tense: 'tu viveras morte / tu n'arrêteras plus / de trépasser et de descendre' ('you will live in death / you will never cease to pass away and to descend'), and in the letter side of the spell it reads 'IL AGIRA' ('IT WILL ACT'). To one side on the spell itself are the words: 'et ce sort [agit] / immédiatement' ('this spell [acts] immediately'); the word 'agit' barely legible because of a hole burned through the page with a cigarette, as if the action described in the present tense is negated at the very point at which it is enacted. The spell sent to Roger Blin from 1939 is so full of holes as to be almost illegible; yet it is possible to make out from the words left over that, again, the holes have been burned through the words that describe the actions: 'toucher' ('to touch'), 'brûler' ('to burn') and 'percer' ('to pierce'). On the one hand the act of burning the hole seems to illustrate the action described, but on the other it negates it, where words are disrupted or silenced by being literally effaced. As with the spell to Sonia Mossé, the negation of the word is a simultaneous negation of the act. In the corresponding letter part of this spell he writes, in careful, legible capitals: 'IL AGIRA DE TOUTE FAÇON / QUE VOUS EN AYIEZ CONNAISSANCE OU NON' ('IT WILL ACT ANYWAY / WHETHER YOU KNOW IT OR NOT').[72] The use of the future tense coupled with a subjunctive dependant clause here might be seen again as if not a negation, then a perpetual suspension

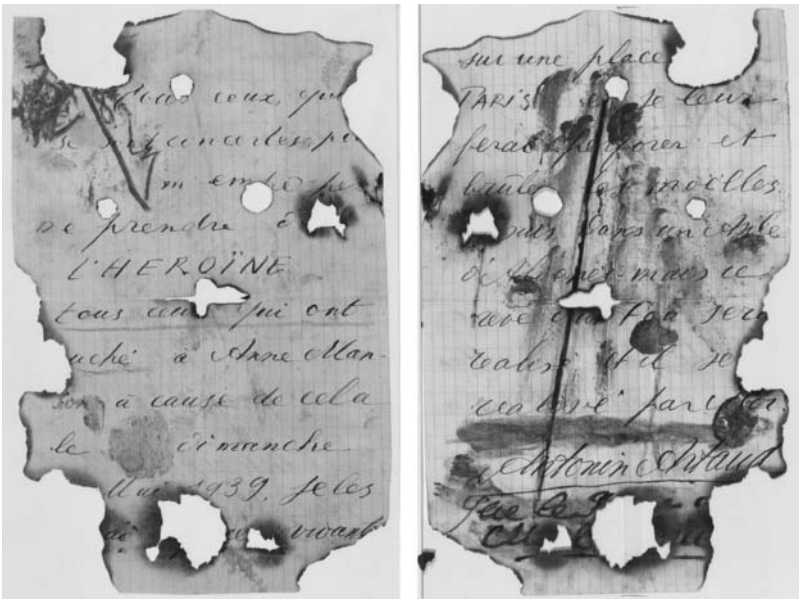

Illustration 3.1 Artaud, Antonin, *Sort remis à Roger Blin*. Signed, not dated (estimated 22nd May 1939) © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2014.

of the present, and the spell seems to cancel out its own action through an absurd logic where Artaud insists that the spell will work even if the recipient doesn't notice the action. Artaud warns Mossé so that she knows that it will happen, and that it possibly already has happened and so, in spite of its lack of noticeable effect, the spell has not failed.

The spell to Léon Fouks from 8 May 1939, claiming to have the power to evaporate his body into smoke at any sign of danger, contains specific instructions:

> Gardez ce sort sur votre cœur, Et en cas de
> danger touchez votre cœur avec
> l'Index et le Médius de la Main
> Droite *ET LE SORT S'ÉCLAIRERA*.
>
> (Keep this spell on your heart, And in the case of / danger touch your heart with / the Index and Middle finger of your Right / Hand *AND THE SPELL WILL LIGHT UP*)[73]

In order to be activated, the spell must be touched, and in turn only works because Artaud himself has already touched it. The spells work through contact between bodies, but across the necessary distance of space and time, the scrap of paper on which they materialise acting as an intermediary.

The spells are affective, seeking to transform the world around them, existing between bodies rather than replacing or representing a body, but ultimately failing to ever reach their destination through a deliberate series of temporal and spatial suspensions. They are objects that question the contradictory status of language as presence and absence, silence and articulation and rational and emotional or magical. What emerges most effectively from them is their exaggerated materiality, disrupting a representational or metaphorical reading. Here, a reading arises that illuminates Artaud's entire project, and its dependency on materiality, on the physical presence of the body, legible through the exaggerated and violent traces etched into the paper that bears witness to this presence. Artaud writes in *Artaud le Mômo*, naming himself 'le vieil Artaud' ('old Artaud'): 'Il est ce trou sans cadre / que la vie voulut encadrer' ('he is this unframed hole / which life wanted to frame').[74] One has the sense that he is describing the anti-anatomical body produced through the material object rather than his own body, and we might think of how the spells are accessible now in exhibition spaces, as fragile scraps of paper, covered in holes but placed in a protective frame at an even greater distance from the bodies that they never quite managed to reach.

The lasting legacy of Artaud's theatre texts has been an emphasis on corporeal transgression and revolt in theatre and performance; critics and practitioners have focused on the visceral, sensational and terror or awe-inspiring side of cruelty, present in Artaud's descriptions of the plague and of the Tarahumara rituals. Josephine Machon situates Artaud within a tradition (for want of a better word) of visceral performance style that she calls (syn)aesthetics, evoking sensory perception above intellectual interpretation, due to his theatre's 'power to disturb and enliven through the interaction of the live physical body in performance affecting the sensate physical body in the audience'.[75] This emphasis on affect and sensation is also what underpins Jannarone's analysis of Artaud's theatre practice as reminiscent of fascist modes of thought. Interpretations of Artaud's theatre as a theatre of affect are pertinent and do not betray the aims of his theatre texts, but they tend to overlook one crucial aspect of the work. Whilst Artaud's writings proved inspirational, the ability to put his proposals into practice

always seem to rely on a shift in temporal structure: Artaud's own corporeal revolt depends on a body that is in the process of construction, but that has not yet arrived, whilst many of the extreme corporeal performances (such as those of the Vienna Actionists, for example) inspired by his work rely on the destruction of the body as present at the moment it is being performed.

It is of no coincidence that the most performative of Artaud's objects – the magical spells that were designed to act, never to represent – came following the perceived failure of Artaud's theatre. It is also, by extension, inevitable that these objects too were incapable of fulfilling their aims. We might return to this question of failure in the light of the spells, which, after all, also constituted a failure in terms of their capacity to act. One of the central arguments of this book is that failure constitutes the very strength of the work, underpinning its capacity to question the entire basis of representation. Henri Goutier argues that the essence of theatre lies in the presence and the present of representation, 'ce double rapport à l'existence et au temps' ('this duel relationship to existence and to time').[76] Yet following a reading of Artaud's spells, it becomes clear that the first aspect to be challenged is precisely that of temporal and spatial presence. What can be said of the temporalities of performance as they play out across Artaud's work? In spite of their imperative to act, all of Artaud's texts and objects serve to announce, but simultaneously to suspend. His time frames follow an apocalyptic logic, if we understand that the very nature of the apocalypse resides in its imminence, the fact that it is always announced, just about to happen, provoking the feeling of danger faced with the threat of annihilation, but never reaching a conclusion, because the only conclusion to be reached would be that of complete eradication. The very existence of the text, of the object and even of the performance relies on suspension. In his very early texts, as we saw in chapter 1, Artaud was already writing about suspension: at the beginning of *The Umbilicus of Limbo* he wrote: 'ce livre je le mets en suspension dans la vie' ('I suspend this book in life').[77] Suspension is both temporal and spatial, and all of Artaud's writing might be taken as an attempt to create a space where creation becomes possible, which is to say that in many respects Artaud's work exists in a virtual realm, always coming into presence, but never quite arriving. The 'not yet' of Artaud's work is its defining feature, as we will see in chapter 5 in relation to the drawings; in the theatre, too, Artaud continually wrote that he had not yet achieved his aims and that the theatre had not yet become what it was destined to be, even at the very end of his life: in a text entitled 'Le théâtre de la cruauté', from

November 1947, he wrote 'la danse / et par conséquent le théâtre / n'ont pas encore commencé à exister' (dance / and therefore also theatre / have not yet begun to exist').[78] Before turning to the diagrammatic drawings that Artaud produced, inspired by the spells, the book first turns back to Artaud's writing on film in the 1920s, to look at how questions of corporeal presence and affect emerge in relation to the cinema.

4
Artaud on Film

This chapter examines Artaud on film in two ways: Artaud as a writer, perhaps one could even go as far as to say a theorist, of cinema in the 1920s, and Artaud the actor as a gesturing body visible on screen. For somebody who wrote so persistently about his own corporeality, it seems pertinent to discuss the very physicality of this body as it appears to us across the diverse array of films in which Artaud acted, yet the first aspect that the viewer of these films is confronted with is how impossibly far this body is from the disrupted, anti-representative, dissident body (the 'body without organs') that Artaud built for himself through his work. This book has argued so far that the body is expressed in Artaud's work through the process of mediation, always pointing towards the materiality of the physical objects that he produced. The question this chapter turns to is the following: where might this body be located in the cinema, and how can it avoid the normative structures of representation, or a type of representation that rests on the separation between the signifier and signified? The chapter will begin to answer this sweeping, overarching question by looking at Artaud's acting career, followed by his writing on cinema, situating this in the context of 1920s European film theory. It then addresses how his writing was put into practice in Germaine Dulac's interpretation of one of his scenarios, *La Coquille et le clergyman (The Seashell and the Clergyman*, 1928) and finally it considers how Artaud's search for a direct, embodied and mimetic form of expression in the cinema bears out in more recent film theory.

(i) Practical contexts: Artaud as actor

In some respects Artaud's relatively short-lived acting career, which spanned from 1924 to 1935, could be considered as his most successful

venture; his film roles provided him with his main source of income, and before his work was revived in the 1950s and 60s he was most well known as an actor. Artaud appeared in 23 films, including Abel Gance's *Napoléon* (1926), *Mater Dolorosa* (1932) and *Lucrèce Borgia* (1935), Marcel L'Herbier's *L'Argent* (1928), Fritz Lang's *Liliom* (1933) and Carl Theodor Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1927). Yet Artaud's involvement with the cinema, both in practical and in theoretical terms, was highly ambivalent. On the one hand he was incredibly excited about the possibilities that cinema as a medium offered, yet on the other it was the context in which he was forced to make the most compromise. As an actor, Artaud was not often satisfied with his performance, and many of his letters betray a profound sense of unease with seeing himself on-screen. In a letter to Mme Toulouse, following his second acting role in Luitz-Morat's film *Surcouf, roi des corsairs* (1925), Artaud writes: 'Surcouf vient de me donner une déception *terrible*, insupportable, inavalable, *je m'y suis vu* avec horreur' ('*Surcouf* has *terribly*, unbearably, indigestibly disappointed me. I was horrified when *I saw myself in it*').[1] Artaud had no fixed abode at this point, living between hotel rooms and friends' apartments, having recently left the care of Édouard Toulouse, and his living conditions were extremely chaotic; in one of his letters, for example, he describes being kicked out of a room after he deliberately flooded it in order to drown a mouse. It is of little surprise, then, that most of his letters from around this time concentrate on financial or material concerns, and he himself saw film acting as potentially his most profitable endeavour. In a letter to Roland Tual he writes: 'si bas que je me prostitue mon esprit est ailleurs, mon âme ailleurs' ('as low as I prostitute myself my mind is elsewhere, my soul is elsewhere').[2] Clearly, Artaud was far more willing to make compromises in his acting career than he was in any other context. Despite his reticence about his acting, many critics writing about it in retrospect make reference to his striking, sharp physique and nervy, wild gestures, and it is true that Artaud's presence on screen has a certain auratic authority to it. It is also true, however, that he was willing to accept pretty much any role he was offered.

Artaud's roles varied enormously; he played, amongst other characters, a young lover, a guardian angel, a traitor, a murdered French revolutionary, a teacher, an intellectual, a beggar, a monk, a secretary in the stock exchange, the head of a criminal gang, a law student and a librarian. Tracking down the films in which Artaud appeared provides an interesting overview of French cinema from the 1920s, which is often remembered as a period of innovation and avant-garde experimentation. As was characteristic of films of the time, the vast majority of the films

Artaud appeared in (all bar one) were literary, theatrical or historical adaptations. Adaptations were, as we shall see in the following section, the exact opposite of what he believed in, which was a cinematic form completely independent of other art forms, not subordinated to them. Having said this, a handful of the films Artaud appeared in were innovative and deserving of consideration in their own right, rather than simply as adaptations that were derivative of the texts from which they drew. The most notable role in terms of its influence on Artaud's own scenarios, and coincidentally also the only film that was not an adaptation, was the first film in which he appeared, Claude Autant-Lara's *Fait divers* (1924). Like *La Coquille et le clergyman*, the plot revolves around a ménage-à-trois, with Artaud playing the lover. This was a loosely narrative film, but more concerned with formal experimentation, and included a strangulation sequence that reappeared in Artaud's scenario for *La Coquille et le clergyman*. The theme of strangulation or asphyxiation would crop up again and again throughout Artaud's notebooks and later works and so the terrifying vision of the young Artaud being strangled and falling to the ground in slow-motion seems strangely apt. Many of the techniques used in this film, such as slow motion, double exposure and rhythmic camera movements, which were characteristic of avant-garde filmmaking at the time, would also be employed in Dulac's film, and Dulac's gyrating, rhythmic and poetic cityscapes in *La Coquille* are reminiscent of Autant-Lara's film.

Other memorable roles were Artaud as Girolamo Savonarola in Gance's *Lucrèce Borgia*, or stabbed in the bath as Marat in *Napoléon*, in an image recreated from the 1793 Jacques-Louis David painting *The Death of Marat*. It is roles such as these that seem to best resonate with Artaud's writing, with its emphasis on violence and incendiary destruction, and at times Artaud seemed to physically embody his characters long after his roles had ceased. Anaïs Nin writes of when she met Artaud:

> It was Savonarola looking at me, as he looked in Florence in the Middle Ages while his followers burned erotic books and paintings on an immense pyre of religious scorn. It was the same drawn childish mouth of the monk, the deep-set eyes of the man living in the caverns of his separation from the world.[3]

Certain themes crop up across the films in which Artaud appeared, such as the burning of bodies and books, apocalyptic visions, religion and miracles, murder and death. Taken in isolation the stills of Artaud's own body on screen are arresting, yet it is also the case that many of his

roles were distinctly un-Artaudian, and visions of Artaud in the stock exchange or as an intellectual seem to be at odds with the incomplete, destructive corporeal entities that his work seeks to create. Much has been made of these filmic images of Artaud: Jannarone points out the importance of the still image taken from *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, chosen to illustrate the cover of the most well-known English edition of his *Selected Writings*. She raises the issue of the incongruity of this image in relation to Artaud's work, writing that Artaud appears as a Christ-like figure and as 'the noblest sufferer in history'.[4] The film roles have certainly shaped the way that Artaud is perceived, and in 2005 Dominique Païni and Jean-Jacques Lebel devised an entire exhibition on Artaud as actor in the Kunst Palast in Düsseldorf, using 22 television screens, each with images of Artaud's gesturing body taken from different films. What is significant about this is that removed from its context in each individual film Artaud's body becomes a fragmented mass, the viewer's attention drawn to its individual gestures as they interact across time and space, outside any narrative sequence. The very fact that such an exhibition was conceived proves that Artaud as actor provokes more interest than the roles he was given. If Artaud's on-screen presence has developed an auratic force, this is not simply in its own right, but is also a result of his writing and it is striking how often critics referring to Artaud's acting will refer to his later writing. As such, perhaps retrospectively Artaud did in fact recreate his own body by radically transforming the way that this on-screen body is viewed. Fundamental to such perceptions of Artaud as an actor were, of course, his cinema texts, and it is to these texts that this chapter now turns.

(ii) Vibration and shock: Artaud's early cinema texts

In his early cinema texts, Artaud identified cinema as a new form of expression through which he could potentially overcome all the difficulties he had experienced with writing. In response to René Clair's survey of writer's reactions to the cinema published in *Théâtre et Comedia Illustré* in 1923, Artaud wrote that cinema offered a completely different way of seeing the world that would revolutionise human logic and values: 'le cinéma implique un renversement total des valeurs, un bouleversement complet de l'optique, de la perspective, de la logique' ('the cinema involves a total reversal of values, a complete revolution in optics, perspective and logic').[5] He describes it as being like a new drug that allows direct communication with the brain, without mediation: 'le cinéma est un excitant remarquable. Il agit sur la matière grise

du cerveau directement' ('the cinema is a remarkable stimulant. It acts directly on the grey matter of the brain').[6]

There was initially something magical about cinema, as Artaud understood it, originating in its ability not only to communicate directly with vital forces lying dormant in everyday reality, but also to transform this reality and to act upon or move its spectator. In another text entitled 'Sorcellerie et cinéma' ('Sorcery and Cinema'), he writes about how cinema reveals the invisible forces hidden inside the objects it portrays: 'Le cinéma est essentiellement révélateur de toute une vie occulte avec laquelle il nous met directement en relation' ('the cinema essentially reveals a whole occult life with which it puts us directly in contact').[7] This emphasis on direct communication and on the physical and material properties of thought recalls the problems he wrote about in his earlier texts such as *Le Pèse-nerfs* (*The Nerve Scales*) and *L'Ombilic des limbes* (*The Umbilicus of Limbo*), namely, what he described as the detaching of thought from its corporeal origins and the impossibility of expressing the inner truth of the mind, or the physical experience of thinking, without separating it from the process of its production. Cinema seemed, at first, to offer a potential solution.

Cinema was for Artaud, then, explicitly physical, mirroring what he understood to be the structures of thinking. A recurring theme was that of vibration, conceived as a type of movement that physically engages the body, communicating with it directly rather than through representative images. In the scenario for *La Coquille et le clergyman* Artaud describes vibration as being fundamental to the cinema, as the essential aspect that links thought and image:

> J'ai estimé en écrivant le scénario de *La Coquille et le clergyman* que le cinéma possédait un élément propre, vraiment magique, vraiment cinématographique, et que personne jusque-là n'avait pensé à isoler. Cet élément distinct de toute espèce de représentation attachée aux images participe de la vibration même et de la naissance inconsciente, profonde de la pensée. Il se dégage souterrainement des images, et découle non de leur sens logique et lié, mais de leur mélange, de leur vibration et de leur choc.
>
> (I considered whilst writing the scenario for *The Seashell and the Clergyman* that the cinema possessed a unique, truly magical, truly cinematographic element, and that no one up until then had thought of isolating it. This element, distinct from all kinds of representation attached to images, participates in vibration itself and the

> unconscious, profound birth of thought. It emerges from underneath the images, and flows not from their logical, connected meaning, but from their association, their vibration and their shock.)[8]

Deleuze returns to these ideas in *L'Image-temps* (*The Time-Image*), writing that the work of cinema is to '*produire un choc sur la pensée, communiquer au cortex des vibrations, toucher directement le système nerveux et cérébral*' ('*to produce a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous and cerebral system directly*').[9] The specifically cinematographic aspect Artaud identified might be considered not just as montage (the 'association' of different images), but also a vibration of light within the image itself, and the creation of moving images that produce what Deleuze describes as an 'automate spirituel' ('spiritual automaton')[10] in the spectator, shocking us into thinking. Deleuze calls this force the *noochoc*,[11] and we might think of it as a kind of direct and affective communication, where the affective is understood as that which produces an immediate physical or emotional response, unmediated by the distancing effect of symbolic representation.

A few years later, in his theatre writings, Artaud would return to vibration as a means of direct communication, expressing the desire to treat the audience as if they were snakes and make them perceive through vibration rather than interpreting events onstage. This was a way of engaging with the audience on a physical and spiritual level rather than appealing to their intellect or rational capabilities, as he wrote 'on peut physiologiquement réduire l'âme à un écheveau de vibrations' ('we can physiologically reduce the soul to a bundle of vibrations').[12] The desire to physically move the audience in the theatre also led him to suggest placing them in revolving chairs. Artaud was certainly not alone in thinking up new and innovative ways of engaging audiences' bodies: Sergei Eisenstein had a similar idea for one of his plays and wrote about this in a text entitled 'Through Theatre to Cinema', dealing with the cinematic aspects of his theatrical productions.[13] The move from theatre to cinema for Eisenstein was about engaging the body of the spectator physically, as well as creating a greater realism of setting. He saw aspects such as eliminating distance between the audience and the stage (a very Artaudian notion), setting the production in a real place in the outside world such as a factory or a gasworks, and being able to communicate with the audience on an affective level as cinematic.[14] He writes that such ideas failed in his theatrical productions due to what he identifies as the conflict between the material and practical and the fictitious or descriptive principles, believing that they were much easier to achieve in the cinema.[15]

The cinematic, according to Eisenstein, appeals directly to the audience's senses. In his theatre production of *The Mexican*[16] he insisted on positioning the boxing fight in the auditorium in order to emphasise the physicality of the bodies of the actors. He describes the action as 'bodies crashing to the ring floor, panting, the shine of sweat on torsos, and finally, the unforgettable smacking of gloves against taut skin and strained muscles'.[17] We see here how sound, sight, and physical bodily processes such as breathing and sweating interact, eliminating the distance between the bodies of the actors and spectators; this he saw to be a move towards cinema rather than being specifically theatrical, because he argues that the 'actual-materialistic element in theatre'[18] is what brings us closer to the cinema. He writes: 'the cinema is able, more than any other art, to disclose the process that goes on microscopically in all other arts'.[19]

In fact, although Artaud later would abandon cinema in favour of theatre, initially his ideas about the cinema might be placed in a similar bracket to that of Eisenstein. Eisenstein also believed that film should shock the spectator into thinking; through montage he wanted to create conflicts that produced vibrations and physical sensations in the viewer, to make him or her feel a 'concept' rather than reach a logical conclusion. He writes about Japanese hieroglyphics 'in which two independent ideographic characters ("shots") are juxtaposed and *explode* into a concept.'[20] Artaud also writes about hieroglyphs, but in his theatre writings, suggesting that the actors should become living hieroglyphs that could communicate meaning by acting as moving images, without the need for linguistic interpretation. However, Artaud's cinema writings are far less systematic than Eisenstein's, and Eisenstein argues for a dialectical approach to montage, using shock or conflict as something that resolves into meaning, producing a rather more concrete 'concept', whereas for Artaud cinema should not produce concepts but disrupt these to access a more physical form of engagement with the audience.

Whilst he rejected rational thought and all forms of ideology and was thus at odds with the Soviet avant garde, what Artaud shared with Eisenstein, as Martine Beugnet writes, was 'a belief in film as a signifying process in itself'.[21] She argues that Artaud's cinema writings seek a type of cinema that 'would draw its raw material from the recording of a pro-filmic reality',[22] in other words, that the materiality of the medium played an important role in a similar way that it did for theorists such as Eisenstein. Daniel Frampton, in *Filmosophy*, places Artaud, Eisenstein, Jean Louis Schefer, Deleuze and Jean Epstein together as the promoters of

'cinematic thought',[23] which is to say that they all believed that there was a new type of thinking that could be accessed through cinema. Frampton shows how they all point towards the possibility of a cinema that exceeds individual human experience, and so posit the idea that the film can have its own thinking processes. Artaud's cinema writings, Frampton argues, suggest that films can reach much further than the limits of human imagination. Approaches such as these, directly informed by Artaud's cinema texts, find resonances with many of the concerns of film critics writing in the 1910s and 1920s.

Artaud's notion of cinema as a medium that could physically affect the spectator, and transform our thinking processes, can be situated in the context of the early twentieth century, where theorists and practitioners writing about film such as Germaine Dulac, Abel Gance and Jean Epstein also wrote about the transformation of our ways of thinking through film. The notion of shock carries particular weight in early film theory, and it would have profound repercussions on the way critics understood the role of cinema throughout the twentieth century. In 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit' ('The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'), published in 1936, Benjamin writes:

> Der Film ist die der gesteigerten Lebensgefahr, der die Heutigen ins Auge zu sehen haben, entsprechende Kunstform. Das Bedürfnis, sich Schockwirkungen auszusetzen, ist eine Anpassung der Menschen an die sie bedrohenden Gefahren. Der Film entspricht tiefgreifenden Veränderungen des Apperzeptionsapparates.
>
> (Film is the art form that is in keeping with the increased threat to his life that modern man has to face. Man's need to expose himself to shock effects is his adjustment to the dangers threatening him. The film corresponds to profound changes in the apperceptive apparatus.)[24]

Theorists of early cinema have argued, following Benjamin, that it expresses new modes of perception characterised by shock and distraction, which came into being through adjusting to life in post-industrialised cities.[25] Yet for Artaud, the notion of shock had little to do with the modern environment, and he was not interested in cinema as distraction. Rather, it was to be an all-engulfing perceptual experience, where the brain and the body were both physically and directly engaged with the action. Rather than, as Benjamin suggests, allowing the viewer to adapt to

his or her modern environment more easily through repeated exposure to cinematic representations that mirrored the experience of continual change and distraction, it would allow the audience direct access to new types of corporeal experience.

Perhaps the most important concern that pervades early film theory is the notion of spectatorship as a collective rather than an individual experience, and it is here that the cinema, according to many critics, affords new and potentially dangerous ways of thinking. The importance of this emerging notion of cinema as 'l'art des foules' ('the art of the crowd')[26] in the early 1920s might be particularly useful in relation to how it influences visions of new types of bodies. On the one hand, there were theorists who welcomed the idea of an art for the masses, whilst on the other there were those who feared the cinema, believing it to have a bad influence on the spectator precisely because it threatened her or his individuality. The vision of cinema as a kind of influencing machine frequently arises. Gustave Le Bon's *La Psychologie des foules*, published in 1895, was to have a marked influence on the way that cinema, as a collective rather than individual experience, was understood. Le Bon writes that by definition a crowd 'se trouve le plus souvent dans cet état d'attention expectante qui rend la suggestion facile' ('is in a state of expectant attention, which renders suggestion easy'),[27] with the result that the individual in a crowd 'n'est plus lui-même, il est devenu un automate que sa volonté ne guide pas' ('is no longer himself but becomes automated and ceases to be guided by his will').[28] If cinema was conceived as the art of the crowd, this meant, for some, that it had exaggerated powers of influence over its spectators. For example, André Saurès writes: 'le ciné dispense l'homme d'être lui-même. Il le dispense surtout de penser. Il le rend serf de l'image' ('the cinema stops man from being himself. Above all it stops him from thinking. It enslaves him to the image').[29] As we saw in the previous chapter, Jannarone uses crowd theory to argue that Artaud's theatre practice betrayed an underlying model of fascist thought; she does not, however, address the fact that, if taken in the context of cinema rather than theatre, Artaud's ideas were not at all out of place and sit quite comfortably amongst cinema practitioners and writers of the time, who were interested in breaking down the boundaries between self and other and exploring a kind of affective thought that did not rely on the distance of reflection and representation. Just as it is too defiant of logic and order to fit with the Maoist politics that the Tel Quel group attributed to it, Artaud's thought also stops short of a fascist model which ultimately requires a high level of organisation; in fact in Artaud's work

there is always, as chapter 6 will discuss, a tension between control and conscious resistance that plays out around the figure of the body as automaton or electrical discharge.

Artaud attributed the shock of cinema to the materiality of the images, and was directly opposed to psychological interpretations, as he writes in the scenario for *La Coquille et le clergyman*: 'on en est à rechercher un film à situations purement visuelles et dont le drame découlerait d'un heurt fait pour les yeux, pris, si l'on ose dire, dans la substance même du regard, et ne provenant pas de circonlocutions psychologiques d'essence discursive' ('we have yet to achieve a film with purely visual situations whose drama would come from a shock designed for the eyes, a shock drawn, so to speak, from the very substance of our vision and not from psychological circumlocutions of a discursive nature').[30] References to shock occur in terms of the collision of images, which are always conceived as a kind of physical substance or matter: 'par le fait qu'il joue avec la matière elle-même, le cinéma crée des situations qui proviennent d'un heurt simple d'objets, de formes, de répulsions, d'attractions' ('because it works with matter itself, cinema creates situations that arise from the mere collision of objects, forms, repulsions, attractions').[31]

Artaud's cinema was, as with all of his work, conceived in opposition to the films being made in France at the time. In the preamble for the scenario for *La Coquille et le clergyman* Artaud identified two trends within the prevalent cinema in France in the 1920s: 'le cinéma abstrait ou pur' ('abstract or pure cinema') and 'le film à fondements psychologiques' ('the fundamentally psychological film').[32] Abstract cinema, he claimed, was made up of geometrical forms that could not communicate emotionally with the spectator, and psychological dramas simply reproduced the world of the everyday rather than transcending this to connect with a more essential creative life force. He called for a cinema that was neither abstract nor psychological, but which could affect the audience physically. His conception of cinema was close to that of poetry, as he declared in response to René Clair's survey: 'Je réclame des films fantasmagoriques, des films *poétiques*, au sens dense, philosophique du mot' ('I demand phantasmagorical films, films that are *poetic* in the accurate, philosophical meaning of the word').[33] Poetry, for Artaud, always occurred as an expression of the very impossibility of thought. His first film scenario, *Les Dix-huit secondes* (*Eighteen Seconds*), explores the same themes that permeate his early texts about the inability to write poetry; indeed *Les Dix-huit secondes* in many respects can be read alongside *Le Pèse-nerfs* or *L'Ombilic des limbes*.

In these texts, as chapter 1 discussed, Artaud describes the strange 'illness' that is the inability to express himself. The protagonist of *Les Dix-huit secondes* suffers from the same unidentifiable disease: 'Il est devenu incapable d'atteindre ses pensées; il a conservé sa lucidité entière, mais quelque pensée qui se présente à lui, il ne peut plus lui donner une forme extérieure, c'est-à-dire la traduire en gestes et en paroles appropriées' ('he has become incapable of reaching his thoughts; he has retained all his lucidity, but no matter what thought occurs to him, he can no longer give it external form, that is, translate it into appropriate gestures and words').[34] This man, strikingly similar to Artaud himself, is an actor, and the spectator is presented with his subjective experience of time, as 18 seconds are stretched out to 'une ou deux heures' ('an hour or two').[35] The scenario ends with the protagonist looking at his watch and seeing the fissure between his own experience of duration, and the time counted by the second hand on his watch, at which point he pulls a revolver out of his pocket and shoots himself in the head. These 18 seconds are filled with images that overwhelm the protagonist, 'un surcroît d'images contradictoires et sans grand rapport les unes avec les autres' ('an enormous number of contradictory images without very much connection from one to the next').[36] This scenario seeks to explore the very essence of cinema which is to make the spectator experience time in all its plasticity; the protagonist shooting himself in the head is an abrupt ending that jolts the spectator out of the shared experience of the film. Artaud's vagueness about the length of the film ('an hour or two') is quite deliberate and stands in opposition to the extremely precise yet seemingly arbitrary time span announced by the scenario's title. It seems as if in this scenario Artaud sought to create a kind of collective consciousness that would allow the viewer to share the duration experienced by his protagonist – we are exposed to his thinking process, rather than viewing his body from the outside – the man is neither subject nor object but an expression of his own thought as it occurs, and if the spectator abandons her or himself to the images, according to Artaud, s/he is experiencing these very thought processes. The scenario displays several important aspects of Artaud's initial approach towards cinema: firstly, the idea that a proliferation of images can overcome the problem of trying to express thought in words, secondly, that films should reveal a sequence of events but not necessarily adhere to the chronological or temporal logic of narrative, and, thirdly, that the film should not simply follow but actively express the inner workings of the mind. Unfortunately, although perhaps inevitably, the scenario itself was never realised, but it becomes clear at this stage that Artaud

thought cinema could go beyond the limitations of written language. Artaud's conception of poetry, it would seem, was itself intended to be a new type of thought that could escape such limitations, and express corporeal experience.

Cinema seemed, initially, to offer an escape route from the French language because it was image-based and had no need for words. The use of moving images could correspond to the movement of thought before it identified its object. The thinking process for Artaud was part of the nervous system and thought was material or substantial and always in movement. In 'Cinéma et réalité', Artaud explores the relationship between internal reality and its projection on screen. He writes:

> Si profond que l'on creuse dans l'esprit on trouve à l'origine de toute émotion, même intellectuelle, une sensation affective d'ordre nerveux qui comporte la reconnaissance à un degré élémentaire peut-être, mais en tout cas sensible, d'un quelque chose de substantiel, d'une certaine vibration qui rappelle toujours des états soit connus, soit *imaginés*, états revêtus d'une des multiples formes de la nature réelle ou rêvée.
>
> (No matter how deeply we dig into the mind, we find at the bottom of every emotion, even an intellectual one, an affective sensation of a nervous order. This sensation involves the recognition, perhaps on an elementary level, but at least on a tangible one, of something substantial, of a certain vibration that always recalls states, either known or *imagined*, that are clothed in one of the myriad forms of real or imagined nature).[37]

Cinema provided the perfect medium because it could potentially tap into this affective sensation, revealing the multiple possibilities of thought through its use of moving images that did not rely solely on text in order to create meaning. The problem with this is that Artaud's scenarios are all texts and, with the exception of Dulac's *La Coquille et le clergyman*, none of them were made into films. Artaud insisted that films should not be based on text, but should directly reach this part of the mind where the thinking process had not yet materialised into concrete thoughts. Images should 'faire oublier l'essence même du langage et transporter l'action sur un plan où toute traduction deviendrait inutile et où cette action agit presque intuitivement sur le cerveau' ('make us forget the very essence of language and transport the action onto a level where all translation would be unnecessary and where this action would operate almost intuitively on the brain').[38]

Cinematic images ought to create, therefore, a kind of touching; images should produce vibrations in the brain that do not lead to concrete thoughts but physically move the spectator, having direct contact with his or her nervous system. We might recall the frequent skin imagery in Artaud's writing, and not only does he write about skin, but, as the following chapters will discuss, he often also treats the surface of the page as if it were a skin. These skin images can also be found in his texts about cinema, for example as he writes: 'la peau humaine des choses, le derme de la réalité, voilà avec quoi le cinéma joue d'abord' ('the human skin of things, the epidermis of reality: this is the primary raw material of cinema').[39] The epidermis of reality might be understood both in the sense of the material – the surface of things that we touch – and in terms of affect, in other words, the ability of reality to touch us 'directly' or emotionally, without what might otherwise be seen as the distance imposed by an arbitrary code requiring rational interpretation. Most importantly, as this chapter aims to show, such an emphasis on both the affective powers and the materiality of things, elements which are far from incompatible, works towards removing the boundaries between the subjective and the objective that Artaud's material, gesturing body insistently seeks to destroy.

It was mainly financial concerns that led Artaud to abandon the cinema, as eventually he could no longer secure acting roles, and was unable to sell any of his scenarios. In 1933 he published 'La vieillesse précoce du cinéma' ('The Premature Old Age of the Cinema') in *Les Cahiers jaunes*, a text in which he emphasised his disillusionment with the cinema, claiming that 'le monde cinématographique est un monde mort, illusoire et tronçonné […] un monde clos, sans relation avec l'existence' ('the world of the cinema is a world that is dead, illusory, and fragmented […] a closed world, without relation to existence').[40] One reason for this was, as he would later find with the sound recordings, what he called 'l'arbitraire de la machine' ('the arbitrariness of the machine'),[41] which rather than allowing the viewer direct access to the objects portrayed on-screen, as his initial cinema writings suggested, simply got in the way and made these objects all the more inaccessible. Another reason that he abandoned the cinema was because he disagreed with the introduction of sound. He believed that it was impossible to ever fully synchronise sound and vision, and he wrote in a letter to Yvonne Allendy, that this would only be possible if sound came from the screen itself: 'Il faudrait créer un écran tout entier parlant et qui arriverait à créer des perspectives de bruit sur les trois *dimensions*, de la même façon que l'écran visuel crée des perspectives pour

l'œil' ('one would have to invent a completely talking screen which would create auditory perspectives in all three *dimensions*, just as the visual screen creates perspectives for the eye').[42] Such comments may have seemed strange in the context of the late 1920s but might be seen now to actually predict advances in sound technology that came long after, such as the introduction of surround sound systems. According to Artaud, sound as it was employed in its early permutations in the cinema disembodied the voice, making its relationship to the body arbitrary, which meant that the actor could have little control over the interaction between vocal and corporeal gesture. Given the importance that Artaud conferred on the voice as a means through which to expand and disrupt the limits of the living, acting body, it was perhaps inevitable that he would reject what he perceived to be this arbitrary or enforced separation.

Although Artaud abandoned the cinema in favour of theatre, many of the ideas he explored in the theatre, such as his emphasis on vibration and shock, might be seen as inherently cinematic, and were certainly informed by his experience working in cinema; for similar reasons to Eisenstein's, Artaud went in the opposite direction, from cinema to theatre. We could perceive many of the ideas that pervade his later work as relevant to some of the main concerns of film theory, particularly with Artaud's continued emphasis on corporeal gesture, and on the distortion or disruption of the represented body, which potentially finds its most advanced permutations in the cinema. It is no surprise that theorists interested in how cinema might provide us with a new type of body, following Deleuze, have returned to Artaud's cinema writings for inspiration. Before addressing how Artaud's cinema writings are relevant to more recent film theory, the chapter examines how his ideas were put into practice in greater detail, through an account of Dulac's often all-too-quickly overlooked interpretation of *La Coquille et le clergyman*.

(iii) Germaine Dulac and *The Seashell and the clergyman*

No account of Artaud's scenarios and writings on film is complete without an examination of his most substantial scenario, *La Coquille et le clergyman* (*The Seashell and the Clergyman*). It is equally important, then, to consider Dulac's film and the way in which her ideas and aesthetic vision both diverge from and intertwine with Artaud's. Artaud's attitude towards Dulac's film was overall rather hostile, and for a long time accounts of the film were mired in chauvinism and misogyny, to some extent coming from Artaud himself and the Surrealists who purportedly

sabotaged the film's Parisian screening (although accounts vary), but more significantly later on from French film critics, with Dulac accused alternately of remaining too faithful to the script, diverging too much from it, misunderstanding Artaud's aims, and, most preposterously, of having too much of a feminine sensibility. In their account of the quarrel Alain and Odette Virmaux point out that as a result of this film Dulac was quite literally written out of cinematic history: in the *Dictionnaire du cinéma* (*Dictionary of Cinema*) published by Éditions Universitaires in 1966 the authors of the entry on avant-garde cinema (Raymond Bellour and Jean-Jacques Brochier) use the film to justify leaving Dulac out, writing 'nous sommes-nous défaits de Germaine Dulac. Considérant qu'on la voyait toujours en bonne place et que ses films, fussent-ils historiques, sont diablement mauvais' ('considering that she has always been well-represented and that her films, if historical, are devilishly bad, we got rid of Germaine Dulac').[43] The claim that Dulac has always been well represented in comparison to her male peers is evidently false, and this seems like a suspiciously flimsy premise on which to 'do away' with the only woman to represent this history of avant-garde cinema; moreover, this is not really an omission, as Bellour and Brochier claim, but conversely one that deliberately and unnecessarily draws attention to itself. They write that in *La Coquille et le clergyman* she 'massacrait allégrement un très beau scénario' ('blithely massacred a beautiful screenplay').[44]

Bellour and Brochier rely heavily on Ado Kyrou's account in *Le Surréalisme au cinéma* (*Surrealism in the Cinema*), in which he writes: 'cette dame n'arrivait pas à comprendre ce que demandait Artaud' ('this woman was unable to understand what Artaud wanted').[45] Kyrou continues 'Germaine Dulac trahissant l'esprit d'Artaud, en fit un film *féminin*' ('Germaine Dulac, betraying the spirit of Artaud, made a *feminine* film').[46] Kyrou's book dates from 1963, yet surprisingly little has been written to rectify such interpretations of the film, with Artaud scholars for the most part overlooking Dulac's film. Alain and Odette Virmaux's '*La Coquille et le clergyman*: Essai d'élucidation d'une querelle mythique' ('The Seashell and the Clergyman: An attempt to shed light on a mythic incident') made a start in this direction, as did the various interviews included alongside this essay in the most recent Light Cone / Paris expérimental edition of the DVD that came out in 2009. Most of these accounts, however, focus on the quarrel between Dulac, Artaud and the Surrealists, and look at the film from a purely historical perspective. I want to consider the film from the point of view of its formal innovations, paying attention to ways in which Dulac's cinematic vision might in fact coincide in many respects with Artaud's.

In her writings on cinema, many of which predate Artaud's, Dulac argues that cinema is a completely new art form that connects directly with the inner life of the soul, and owes nothing to other arts. She declares herself to be completely opposed to literary adaptations. In 1923 she writes: 'le cinéma n'est pas un art pour exprimer des actes purement extérieurs, mais pour *visualiser* les moindres nuances de l'âme, dans sa vie intérieure' ('cinema is not an art for the expression of purely exterior acts, but one which *visualises* the slightest nuances of the soul, in its interior life').[47] Like Artaud, she saw the potential power of the cinema in its ability to express inner sensations, and to communicate with the world through the body describing it as:

> art de la vie intérieure et de la sensation, si étranger au théâtre et à la littérature, expression nouvelle donnée à la pensée… un art non tributaire des autres arts, un art original avec son sens propre, un art qui fait de la réalité, s'en évade en faisant corps avec elle: le cinéma esprit des êtres et des choses!
>
> (an art of interior life and of sensation, so foreign to theatre and to literature, a new expression given to thought… an art that does not derive from other arts, an original art with its own meaning, an art which creates reality, escaping from it to embody it: the cinema spirit of beings and things!)[48]

The idea that cinema escapes reality by embodying it ('en faisant corps') might be seen as incredibly pertinent to Artaud's demands. Dulac believed in a 'cinegraphic thought' (pensée cinegraphique')[49] that was able to escape verbal communication. In a conference she gave at the Galliera museum in June 1924, she spoke about what goes on in the mind of the filmmaker: 'il vit en des songes peuplés de formes, d'expressions. Les gestes, les images qui passent se heurtent, se mêlent, se juxtaposent, deviennent pour lui les seuls éléments susceptibles d'exprimer sa pensée. Il oublie les mots' ('he lives in dreams populated by forms, expressions. Gestures, the images which pass by collide, mingle, juxtapose each other, becoming for him the only elements capable to express his thought. He forgets words').[50] Dulac's filmmaker undergoes the same imagistic thinking process as the protagonist of Artaud's *Dix-huit secondes*, and it is surprising how closely their visions correspond in this respect.

She also shared with Artaud a frustration with the kinds of films that were being made in France at the time, including the films that Artaud

was obliged to act in and that she was obliged to make to meet the demands of the industry (this discrepancy between writing and practice emerges most clearly, as we have seen, in their involvement in literary adaptations, which they claimed not to believe in). When questioned in an interview with Paul Desclaux about the cinema of the future, she states that it will be 'un art des sensations. Une histoire conçue, non sur des données dramatiques, mais sur des données émotives. Bref: un art plus intérieur qu'extérieur!' ('an art of sensation. A story conceived, not on dramatic givens, but on emotive givens. In short: an art that is more internal than external!').[51] Dulac, just like Artaud, saw the potential of cinema as reaching far beyond the kinds of films that were being made in France at the time, although she was perhaps more interested in some of these films (and writings, such as those of of L'Herbier, Gance and Epstein) than Artaud was. In fact, *La Coquille et le clergyman* was an incredibly innovative film that actually did push the boundaries of cinematic representation, precisely because Dulac managed, in this film more than any other, to use cinema as an art form independent from literature.

As a filmmaker, Dulac was rather more specific in her cinema writings about how formal visual techniques correspond to the inner life of beings that they sought to animate. She develops what she calls a grammar of the cinema, explaining how particular techniques enabled the expression of thought on screen; this grammar is uniquely related, for her, to the intimate life of things. She argues, for example, that the close-up expresses interior change whilst double exposures render a character's thinking process visible, materialising their inner drama. Fade-in and fade-outs serve to unify disparity, rendering distinct elements part of a poetic sequence, and the dissolve is a form of punctuation. Finally she describes blurring and deformation as forms of visual philosophy. Despite the reliance on grammatical terminology that seems to refer back to the written word (particularly references to punctuation and poetry), Dulac argues that the closest art form to cinema is music, and that films ought to create a visual symphony. It is this emphasis on harmony that jars with Artaud's vision, which was arguably more violent, seeking to highlight the clashing of images rather than their juxtaposition in smooth, lyrical sequences. Whilst both Dulac and Artaud essentially attributed the same function to cinema, which was the ability to express interior life, rendering it visible on-screen, they had a different vision of what this interior life was. It is for this reason that Kyrou, rather too predictably attributing violence, disjunction and shock to the masculine, and lyricism or poetic continuity expressed through techniques such as the dissolve and soft focus to

the feminine, distinguishes their visions. It is worth remembering that Dulac's use of these kinds of techniques can also be found in the films of her male contemporaries such as L'Herbier, Gance and Epstein, rarely being described as feminine.

It was Dulac's aesthetic vision of film as visual symphony that would underpin her adaptation of Artaud's scenario. In a text entitled 'Rythme et technique' ('Rhythm and Technique') in that appeared in the journal *Filmliga* in April 1928, Dulac explains in detail how she approached *La Coquille*. Her working methods were rigorous, leaving absolutely nothing to chance. In an earlier interview she claimed that the cinematic work was always conceived on paper, implying that improvisation was for the disorganised, and this was certainly the case for *La Coquille*. She explains:

> tout mon effort a été de rechercher dans l'action du scénario d'Antonin Artaud, les points harmoniques, et, de les relier entre eux par des rythmes étudiés et composés. Tel par exemple le début du film ou chaque expression, chaque mouvement du clergyman sont mesurés selon le rythme des verres qui se brisent. Tel aussi la série des portes qui s'ouvrent et se renferment, et aussi le nombre des images ordonnant le sens de ces portes qui se confondent en battements contraries dans une mesure de 1 à 8.
>
> (my whole endeavour was to find the harmonic points in the action in Antonin Artaud's script and to link them together using studied and composed rhythms. Such as for example the beginning of the film where every expression, every movement of the clergyman is measured according to the rhythm of the glass vials that break. The same goes for the series of doors which open and close, and also the number of images organising the direction of the doors which switch around, slamming alternately in a sequence of 1 to 8.)[52]

This rhythm can be found in Artaud's script, as he writes: 'à chaque nouvelle fiole brisée correspond un saut de l'officier' ('each jump of the officer corresponds to a flask as it breaks').[53] Dulac was taking germs of ideas that were already present in terms of rhythm, lighting and formal techniques and simply developing them further; the play of light and shade, and particularly the reflections of light on shiny objects that punctuate the film are hinted at in Artaud's scenario (variations of the verbs 'miroiter' ('to glisten') 'trembler' ('to tremble') and 'vaciller' ('to swing') reoccur throughout). He also writes of using double exposure and camera movements that fluctuate and vibrate to correspond to the

bodies of the objects and characters in the image. It was Dulac who possessed the technical knowledge to put such ideas into practice, and to apply them to the whole film, creating her own form of visual poetry. She explains the techniques she used:

> Surimpressions simples (la tête dans le bocal), surimpressions compliqués (les pensées du clergyman encadrent sa tête). Jeu de caches et de contre-caches et de vues prises en différentes fois, puis raccordées. Parlerai-je des figures, ou des corps déformés au moyen de prismes et de miroirs d'acier? … Diastréphore qui élargit ou allonge, brachiscope… qui éloigne et double le champ. Polytipare… aux surimpressions directes, plaque miroitante aux ondes mouvantes. Jeux de lumière captés dans l'eau sur les verres avec des gazes qui étoilent… instruments de la musique visuelle, créateurs d'harmonies
>
> (simple double exposures (the head in the goldfish bowl), complex double exposures (the thoughts of the clergyman framing his head). A game of masks and counter-masks and angles shot different times, and then edited together. Should I speak of the figures, or bodies deformed through prisms and stainless steel mirrors? The Diastréphore which enlarged or elongated them, the Brachiscopes… which lengthened and doubled the depth-of-field. The Polytipare… for the direct double exposures, a reflective sheet with waving movements. Games of light captured in water on the glasses with cracked gauzes… instruments of visual music, creators of harmony)[54]

All of these meticulously planned techniques result in a film that is visually astounding and a highly accomplished work. In relation to Artaud's scenario, the only betrayal, if there is one, is the extension of Artaud's brief hints at reflections, movements and lighting techniques to drive the rhythm of the whole film. Dulac provided the film with a coherence and cadence that reflects her own musical terminology, serving to accentuate rather than deplete the emotive effect the film has on its viewer. Dulac's techniques seek to evoke and express rather than to represent the inner life of thoughts, feelings and even objects.

It is the inner life not just of the characters but also of objects that is explored, animated in ways that echo and resound with the animation of bodies. Bodies become objects, objects become bodies, double exposures and dissolves seek to break the boundaries between the subjective and objective, meaning that bodies spill out of their limits, becoming liquid (the clergyman's head in the shell, for example), and objects and

items of clothing grow as if alive. The effect of seeing the film now is very different to the effect it would have had on its 1920s audience; the film comes from a tradition of cinema as active creation of a new kind of reality, having its origins in the magic show, rather than as documentation, and viewers might well have marvelled at and been swept away by the techniques used, which to a modern viewer, given the advances in special effects, might appear to emphasise rather than mask the materiality of the filmic apparatus.

Yet both aspects of the film, as creation of new forms rather than reflections of existing ones and as drawing attention to the materiality of the medium through which we experience this creation, interact to create an expressive film that explores cinema as an art of sensation, to borrow from Dulac's terminology, resounding closely with Artaud's vision. As an emotive film, *La Coquille* mobilises a series of affects that appeal to the viewers' senses rather than their intellect. Dulac achieves this effect by treating the film as if it were music, which can be seen to rely heavily on vibration and physical movement. Music also, as we have seen, brings us to a different conception of mimesis as opposed to a kind of representation that distinguishes between signifier and signified, relying on distance and absence. It is cinema as presence, gesture and affect that resonates with Artaud's ideas, and this was precisely what Dulac, in accordance with both Artaud's and her own theories, sought to mobilise in her film.

(iv) Artaud and theories of embodied spectatorship

Artaud's writings both on film and overall, whilst not necessarily constituting a body of theory in themselves, have had a considerable impact on theories of embodiment in the cinema. The most obvious influence comes through the work of Deleuze in his two volumes on the cinema, as most of the more recent engagements with Artaud's ideas about the cinema (for example, Beugnet and Frampton) come via a discussion of Deleuze. Deleuze's cinema books form one of the key reference points for film philosophy and for post-phenomenological accounts of cinematic experience, although Deleuze's thought excludes phenomenology for being too rigidly anchored in the individual subject. The reason that film theorists interested in phenomenology often refer to Deleuze is that he insisted on cinema as corporeal experience, drawing explicitly from Artaud's writing.

In two key consecutive sections of *L'Image-temps*, 'La pensée et le cinema' ('Thought and cinema') and 'Cinéma, corps et cerveau, pensée'

('Cinema, body and brain, thought') Deleuze returns to Artaud's work, suggesting that the essential *impuissance* (powerlessness) of thought, or the problem of how to begin thinking that Artaud's early texts express with such intensity, is what is put into practice in the cinema. This problem requires a return to the body, as Deleuze writes: '"Donnez-moi donc un corps": c'est la formule du renversement philosophique' ('"Give me a body then': this is the formula of philosophical reversal').[55] The cinema, according to Deleuze, gives philosophy a new body. Deleuze writes that for Artaud: 'Ce que le cinéma met en avant, ce n'est pas la puissance de la pensée, c'est son "impouvoir", et la pensée n'a jamais eu d'autre problème' ('What cinema advances is not the power of thought but its "impower", and thought has never had any other problem').[56] This is what, Deleuze argues, distinguishes Artaud's approach from Eisenstein's, because for Eisenstein the cinema is capable of producing a shock that jump-starts the thinking process (and can then be interpreted logically) whilst for Artaud the result of this shock is that we are confronted with a void at the very centre of thought.

According to Deleuze, the 'impensé' ('unthought') of thought, which is what all of Artaud's work addresses, is its physical and corporeal aspect. The cinema thus offers us a privileged starting point for the investigation of the relationship between body and thought because it insists so much upon bodily presence. Deleuze writes: 'Le corps n'est plus l'obstacle qui sépare la pensée d'elle-même, ce qu'elle doit surmonter pour arriver à penser. C'est au contraire ce dans quoi elle plonge ou doit plonger, pour atteindre à l'impensé, c'est-à-dire à la vie' ('the body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself, that which it plunges into or must plunge into, in order to reach the unthought, that is life').[57] Cinema, Deleuze argues, provides thought with a body, displaying this body with all its philosophical difficulties.

When faced with the question of what makes the cinema a particularly appropriate medium for bodily rupture we might respond that in the cinema more than in any other representational means, the interrelation of bodies is put into play. Cinema is the medium that privileges bodily experience as a process or becoming, as Beugnet writes: 'film is, by definition, the medium of being as change.'[58] In Artaud's writing, the body without organs can be understood as pure mediation or expression, denying its own representative function, and demanding a body that is felt rather than simply seen from a distance. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the body without organs is a body without organisation, disrupting anatomical boundaries, and in the cinema it might be understood to be this grey area between bodies,

or the way in which different bodies interact, creating a strangely unrecognisable, fragmented, transcorporeal being. This body is itself a mediating force, always seeking to transcend its bodily immanence. It is an affective body, if we use the term affectivity to contrast with the realm of the individual subject, the idea and representation.[59] Artaud insists on the cinema as an affective medium because it relies on moving images without the need for words; it becomes a means by which to radically alter bodily experience. Perhaps the main distinction between Deleuze and Artaud resides in the different emphasis placed on the body in relation to thought; for all his emphasis on the corporeality of thought, Deleuze seems to draw inspiration more directly from Artaud's writing about thought than his writing about the material body. Artaud's writing emphasises visceral, corporeal processes and the material body in a way that seems often to be strangely overlooked by Deleuze, particularly in the cinema books which ultimately focus more closely on the brain: whilst for Deleuze 'le cerveau c'est l'écran' ('the brain is the screen'),[60] for Artaud the screen, just like the paper on which he wrote, might more aptly be described as a kind of damaged, scabby skin, and it is perhaps for this reason that theorists writing about threatened or transgressive corporealities in recent French cinema often return to Artaud for inspiration.

Artaud's notion that cinema can produce a shock to thought that rearranges our experience of our own body, deploying a kind of visuality that appeals to our sense of touch, is one that has increasingly gained currency in film studies, particularly in theoretical approaches to cinematic spectatorship. Laura Marks, in *The Skin of the Film*, argues for a haptic visuality that appeals to our memory of touch, placing emphasis on how our eyes engage with surfaces rather than relying on or engaging with illusionistic depth.[61] This is particularly interesting in relation to Artaud's ideas about cinema, primarily because Marks accentuates the importance of an embodied response in the viewer, suggesting that this is a way of overcoming what might be perceived as a tyrannical, masterly and purely cognitive type of representation she associates with dominant patriarchal and capitalist modes of vision. Deleuze too writes about haptic visuality, but more explicitly in his book on Francis Bacon, *Logique de la sensation*, which is arguably his most heavily Artaud-inspired book, and Marks in turn draws on Deleuze's writing.

Haptic visuality, according to Marks, allows us to experience things that are not accessible purely through symbolic representation. Symbolic representation, in this instance, is a type of representation that implies distance between the spectator and what is perceived; it

is a type of representation based on a code that must be deciphered. Marks argues that tactile epistemologies posit a mimetic relationship between the signifier and the signified, one which implies contact because it is a form of representation 'in which one calls up the presence of the other materially'.[62] This can be understood as an indexical form of representation, whereby the object represented has at some point actually been there, and mimesis read through Marks becomes a material, embodied process. Marks translates mimesis specifically as 'imitation', implying a form of representation designed to counteract the symbolic 'world of abstraction'[63] that she argues ignores the position of the body: 'Mimesis, from the Greek *mimeisthai*, "to imitate", suggests that one represents a thing by acting like it. Mimesis is thus a form of representation based on a particular, material contact at a particular moment'.[64] In fact, Marks argues that 'mimesis is mediated by the body',[65] a notion that is particularly relevant to Artaud, as we saw in the discussions of mimesis in chapters 1 and 3. Mimesis, as a memory of material contact, has the power to physically evoke presence, and might be taken as closer to the type of representation that Artaud required in order to express bodily presence. Indeed, understood in this way mimesis has the power to disrupt the boundaries between different bodies and even between the animate and the inanimate, where the boundaries between subject and object become blurred. Marks writes: 'Mimesis shifts the hierarchical relationship between subject and object, indeed dissolves the dichotomy between the two',[66] and ultimately for her it is a form of representation that requires an emotional rather than purely rational engagement with the world.[67] We can see, therefore, how this conception of mimesis, like Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's mimesis, discussed in the previous chapter, might take us closer to a notion of contagious affect that works against individual subjectivity. Artaud's thought, particularly when read through Deleuze, exceeds a phenomenological approach and his ideas apply to what are sometimes referred to post-phenomenological or even post-human theories about how cinema can create a collective, affective consciousness (not just between humans but amongst objects, animals and other life-forms), and this is perhaps why he is increasingly referred to alongside Deleuze as a pioneer of embodied cinematic thinking.

Artaud's position is unique in this debate, precisely because he was not primarily a theorist, but an actor. To return to the first part of this chapter, we might question the implications of these theories of cinematic corporeality have for Artaud's gesturing, on-screen body. On the one hand, as

we have seen, most of his filmic appearances seem to oppose the ideas in his writings, exposing his body as a complete, functional and representative whole to be viewed from a distance rather than experienced affectively. On the other hand, however, some of the films he appeared in are peculiarly apt. I turn now to a particular example of a film in which corporeal boundaries are constantly threatened: Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne D'Arc*. This might seem like a strange example given Artaud's relatively minor role in the film, and also given that Artaud himself comes across as a sympathetic, religious and, as Jannarone argues, stunningly beautiful figure, at far remove from his later self and from the body that emerges through his work. Yet I want to argue that this film, through its persistent, excessive use of the close-up works precisely to disrupt the boundaries between bodies and to create an overall affect that undoes any sense of individual subjectivity.

(v) Affect, Mimesis, Materiality: *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*

In *L'Image-temps*, Deleuze makes the connection between Artaud and Dreyer, writing: 'Avait-il chez Artaud une affinité avec Dreyer? Dreyer, un Artaud auquel la raison aurait été "redonnée", toujours en vertu de l'absurde?' ('Was there in Artaud an affinity with Dreyer? Was Artaud a Dreyer to whom reason would have been 'restored', once again by virtue of the absurd?')[68] It is here that he writes about 'cette impuissance au cœur de la pensée' ('this powerlessness at the heart of thought')[69] that pervades Artaud's texts as a paradoxically driving force behind any attempt at creation. There are parallels to be drawn between the protagonists of Artaud's texts and those of Dreyer's films: the difficulty of living in the world when it has become intolerable seems to be central to many of Dreyer's films, and Dreyer too focuses on the affective powers of dissident, resistant bodies. Deleuze characterises *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* as 'le film affectif par excellence' ('the affective film *par excellence*').[70] One reason for this is its use of the close-up, and particularly the close-up of the face. Both the close-up and the face are frequently understood as being the locus of affect in the cinema, from Dulac and Epstein's early cinema writings, where the close-up was described as the very soul of the cinema, right up to current approaches to cinema spectatorship which often associate the close-up with haptic forms of visuality.

Much attention has been devoted to Dreyer's use of the close-up as an affective technique in *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, and it is perhaps worth paying attention to some of these responses to draw out their implications for the way that Artaud's ideas about the anti-representative

expression of the body might be understood. In *La Sémiologie en question* (*Semiotics and the Analysis of Film*) Jean Mitry writes that Dreyer's use of the facial close-up is unique because rather than interrupting the signifying function of images, which is what he sees as the conventional purpose of the facial close-up, Dreyer's facial close-up simultaneously signifies and expresses:

> Un plan de visage en effet *ne signifie pas*: il *exprime* et n'acquiert presque jamais ce caractère de signe que prend un objet isolé. Sauf précisément dans *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*: opposés et juxtaposés dans une sorte de figuration abstraite, les gros plans de visages y deviennent comme *le signe de ce qu'ils expriment*.
>
> (In effect, a facial close-up *does not signify*; it *expresses* and almost never acquires the quality of a sign which the isolated object assumes. Except, that is, in *The Passion of Joan of Arc*: contrasted and juxtaposed in a kind of abstract representation, the facial close-ups become, as it were, *the sign of what they express*.)[71]

The power to merge signification into expression seems to point towards a kind of representation based on presence rather than absence; Mitry suggests that this new form of expression occurs through the way that facial close-ups interact with each other throughout the film, which he characterises as 'une confrontation de visages' ('a confrontation of faces').[72] He argues that conventionally the facial close-up relates to the presence of one particular body in order to draw attention to or valorise an individual actor's talents, whereas in Dreyer's film it fulfils a different purpose.[73] He does not specify what it is that the facial close-up as a sign expresses; if the words 'une sorte de figuration abstraite' ('a kind of abstract figuration') seem vague, it is because he is referring to affect as what is, he writes, beyond the limits of structural semiology. Mitry criticises semioticians such as Christian Metz for understanding cinema as a form to be analysed as if it were a language, arguing that rather than appealing to the intellect, films are first experienced as sensual and exceed structural or grammatical analysis. He writes:

> Rien au cinéma n'étant intelligible qui ne soit passé par les sens (la perception visuelle rappelant toutes les sensations, tactiles et autres, relatives à un objet donné), le principal reproche que l'on peut faire à la sémiologie structurale […] c'est de n'envisager jamais les significations qu'au niveau de l'intelligible et de négliger totalement le sensible.

> (Since there is nothing intelligible in the cinema which has not been given through the senses (visual perception evoking all sensations, tactile and others, relating to a given object), the main criticism to be levelled at structural semiology […] is that it considers significations only at the level of what is intelligible, totally ignoring what is felt)[74]

That Mitry's criticisms of structural semiology should occur within his discussion of Dreyer's use of the close-up comes as no surprise. Dreyer himself claimed that he wanted to humanise the tragedy, again emphasising the importance of affect as that which eliminates the distance between the audience and the faces they perceive on screen: 'mon intention en tournant *Jeanne d'Arc* était, à travers les dorures de la légende, de découvrir la tragédie humaine […] Je voulais montrer que les héros de l'Histoire sont eux aussi des humains' ('my intention whilst filming *Joan of Arc* was, through the gilded frame of the legend, to discover the human tragedy […] I wanted to show that the heroes of History are themselves also human beings').[75] The hero as an individual is unattainable, placed at a distance from the spectator. If Dreyer claims here that he wants to portray the hero differently, one way of understanding this might be to suggest that to humanise the hero is to simultaneously de-individualise her/him, and to render him/her a vessel for collective affect. The humanity of an individual is precisely that which destabilises their individuality and disrupts the limits between self and other. Dreyer also wrote about choosing to portray all the actors in *La Passion de Jeanne D'Arc* with no make-up, in order to get closer to what he perceived to be their human qualities, as if these were visible on their skins.

In fact, as in Artaud's work, human skin seems to occupy a privileged position for Dreyer. Maurice Drouzy, in his biography *Carl Th. Dreyer né Nilsson*, draws attention to the fact that Dreyer suffered from debilitating eczema, and describes him as being 'mal dans sa peau' ('ill at ease'; literally 'uncomfortable in his skin').[76] This might lead us to draw parallels with Artaud (who, as we have seen, often writes about suffering from eczema), and Dreyer too suffered from a psychological breakdown that Drouzy (albeit perhaps questionably) links to his skin condition.[77] Artaud's description of work as skin extends to his acting, as he claims to inhabit the very skin of the characters he plays. In a letter to Abel Gance, requesting the role of Maître Usher in Epstein's *La Chute de la maison Usher* (*The Fall of the House of Usher*), Artaud wrote 'si je n'ai pas

ce personnage dans la peau *personne au monde ne l'a*' ('if I don't have this character in my skin then *no one in the world does*').[78] Artaud's most famous role, that of Marat in *Napoléon*, again appears peculiarly appropriate as Marat's fate was linked to his skin; Marat was stabbed in the bath where he spent most of his time working due to a debilitating skin condition. In Artaud's work, skin references seem to work materially and mimetically, beyond a purely representative function, by continually disrupting the boundaries between surface and depth and between metaphor and the material.

André Bazin writes that *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* is an exploration of the interior states of the soul, again emphasising the affective power of Dreyer's images, writing that the invisible interior spiritual movement can be accessed, or rendered visible, through the face. He links this spirituality to the material quality of the negatives, adding 'il n'est peut-être pas de film où la qualité matérielle de la photographie ait plus d'importance' ('there is perhaps no other film in which the material quality of the photography is more important').[79] The close-up, according to Bazin, undoes the distinction between actor and character and the actors' individual facial characteristics, alongside the material quality of their skin, evoke their souls: 'vu de si près et en très gros plan, le masque du jeu craque […] La verrue de Silvain (Cauchon), les taches de rousseur de Jean d'Yd, les rides de Maurice Schutz sont consubstantielles à leur âme, elles *signifient* plus que leur jeu' ('Seen from so close up, the actor's mask cracks […] Silvain's wart (Cauchon), Jean d'Yd's freckles, and Maurice Schutz's wrinkles are of the same substance as their soul. These things *signify* more than their acting does').[80] Rather than individualising characteristics, as Bazin describes them, these features seem to communicate beyond the limitations of the subject. Bazin's emphasis of the verb 'signifier' here draws attention to signification as more than what is accessible though interpretation, in other words, he suggests that there is something direct about the way that these material facial 'signs' communicate meaning. Artaud too placed great emphasis on the physicality of his actors, suggesting that they should not simply act their characters, but become them, eliminating the distance between reality and its representation. His claim to have Usher in his very skin is not simply a metaphor, and might be understood in a similar way to Bazin's suggestion that the actor's body signifies more than the limitations of its role. Artaud projected a kind of mimetic relationship, in the sense that Laura Marks writes, on to his interpretation of the character of Usher, as he writes: 'Ma vie est celle d'Usher et de sa sinistre masure. J'ai la pestilence dans l'âme de mes

nerfs et j'en souffre. Il y a une *qualité* de la souffrance nerveuse que le plus grand acteur du monde ne peut *vivre au cinéma* s'il ne l'a un jour réalisée. Et je l'ai réalisée' ('My life is that of Usher and his sinister hovel. I have the plague in the soul of my nerves and I suffer from it. There is a *quality* of nervous suffering that the greatest actor in the world cannot *bring to life in the cinema* unless he has experienced it. And I have experienced it').[81] There is once again a tension between the individual body, as Artaud seems to be claiming here that only he can play this role, and its disruption, where his success depends upon dissolving the boundaries between self and other and between reality and its representation by becoming the fictional character Usher, physically embodying Usher's experience and in turn infecting the body of the potential spectator with this nervous energy. This tension exposes the difficulties intrinsic to any form of acting, as well as those that underpin Artaud's entire creative project which depends upon disrupting the subject, thereby eliminating the distinction between self and other, whilst remaining utterly unique.

Artaud's film writings, particularly his ideas about acting, place significant emphasis on materiality, at times evoking, to use Marks' expression, the skin of the film and the materiality of the medium which, according to Artaud's vision, seems to merge together with the bodies on-screen and the bodies in the cinema auditorium. Arguably all of Artaud's bodies, whether paper, pencil, pen, crayon, photographic negatives or sound recordings, are necessarily mediated by their own materiality. Artaud's acting body is no exception, and it was Artaud's over-investment in his roles that lead Epstein and Gance to maintain their distance with respect to his request to play Usher. In turning Artaud down, Epstein wrote: 'je redoute la *suracuité* de votre inteprétation du rôle d'Usher' ('I fear the *over-intensity* of your interpretation of the role of Usher'),[82] whilst Gance wrote 'il faut avoir la force de contenir et de posséder les idées pour ne pas être possédé par elles. L'Homme ne doit pas être le contenu mais le contenant. Là est votre unique problème' ('one must have the strength to contain and possess one's ideas so as not to be possessed by them. Man should never become the content, but the container. That is where your unique problem lies').[83]

Yet for Artaud it was precisely this unique problem, the inability to 'contain' himself (which we might understand once again as playing rather than inhabiting a role) that would become the defining feature of all of his work. The role that Artaud plays in *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* – a monk who is sympathetic to Joan of Arc's plight – may not be the most obvious role for Artaud and certainly does not correspond as well to his own experience as the character of Usher that he was so desperate to play.

Yet Artaud maintained great respect for Dreyer and for the film, seemingly feeling a particular affinity with Dreyer's way of working, as he states in an interview in the film journal *Cinémonde*, from 1929:

> Je sais que j'ai gardé de mon travail avec Dreyer des souvenirs inoubliables. J'ai eu affaire là à un homme qui est parvenu à me faire croire à la justesse, à la beauté et à l'intérêt humain de sa conception. Et quelles qu'aient pu être mes idées sur le cinéma, sur la poésie, sur la vie, pour une fois je me suis rendu compte que je n'avais plus affaire à une esthétique, à un parti pris, mais à une œuvre.
>
> (I know that I've been left with some unforgettable memories of my work with Dreyer. I had the chance to work with a man who got me to believe in justice, in beauty and in the human interest of his creation. And whatever my ideas about the cinema, about poetry, about life, for once I realised that I was no longer involved in an aesthetic or a political stance, but a work of art.)[84]

Dreyer's film is successful in Artaud's eyes where it functions on an affective level, beyond, as he states here, aesthetics or politics. Given Artaud's emphasis on materiality and embodiment, it is also relevant to take into account the material fate of the film stock of *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*. In a bizarre twist of fate, the negatives themselves underwent a similar fate to the body they portray as it is consumed by flames; the original version was destroyed in a fire in 1928, so Dreyer had to re-edit the entire film using the discarded footage from the first montage. This second version was yet again destroyed in a fire at the GM Société de Tirage in 1929, and thought to be lost. In 1952 the negatives of the second version were rediscovered and the film was remade with new intertitles and a new soundtrack by Lo Duca. The film only existed as what Drouzy calls a 'version mutilée' ('mutilated version')[85] until 1981, when what might be called a miraculous discovery was made: a copy of the original version was found in a Norwegian psychiatric hospital.[86]

There are various parallels to be drawn between Joan of Arc's fate and the fate of the negatives: both were destroyed by fire, reappropriated via various different versions, and miraculously resurrected (Joan as a Saint, the film as a deluxe, digitally-enhanced Criterion Collection DVD edition). At a stretch, one might even see a parallel in Drouzy's (somewhat peculiar) implication that Joan, like all of Dreyer's characters, suffered from a borderline personality disorder[87] and the fact that the negatives were found in a psychiatric institution. All this

is to say that in its very materiality, the body of the negatives has a mimetic relationship to the body on film, not only because it has an indexical relationship to the body that was there, but perhaps also because it suffered the same fate. This seems like a typically Artaudian end; never content with simply writing about the body's destruction, Artaud destroyed the surface of the paper or material with which he was engaging as if it were that very same body, stopping short of complete annihilation. Artaud's own work, like Dreyer's, is full of strange coincidences where its material fate is somehow linked to that of the body that produced it.[88] Of course, this emphasis on materiality might be seen in another light, where the fate of the negatives of *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, for example, may also remind us that the film is ultimately nothing other than the celluloid strip on which it is stored. Likewise, where the traces of Artaud's active intervention in the representative process demand that we take into account the materiality of his work, they both evoke the gesturing body as the work's double, yet simultaneously point to that work's status as nothing more than film-stock, tape recording, or scrap of paper.

5
Artaud on Paper

So far this book has been concerned with the text and the gesturing body in their physical, material dimensions. Chapter 1 argued that thought for Artaud is a material force that plays out through text in ways that exceed what might be understood as representative language. Chapter 2 addressed Artaud's adaptations as forms of corporeal regurgitation, and chapter 3 looked at how Artaud's theories of performance play out in relation to his spells, whilst chapter 4 interrogated the on-screen body seeking to link Artaud's film writings to more recent work on cinematic affect. I now want to turn to the physicality of the support or surface that Artaud engages with in his drawings and portraits, and question exactly how the complex relationship between force and form is enacted on paper, and what the implications of this are for reading, looking at, or, perhaps more accurately, being confronted with the work.

Artaud displayed an interest in art from an early age, but, just as with theatre, cinema and poetry, this would develop into a questioning and ultimately an utter rejection of the very terms under which art is considered to be 'art'. In the early 1920s Artaud began frequenting André Masson's workshop, and was writing short texts and reviews of artists such as Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee. Artaud's 1929 collection *l'Art et la mort* (*Art and Death*) was accompanied with two illustrations by the painter Jean de Bosshère: an etching for the title-page and a reproduction of his painting *L'Automate personnel* (*The Personal Automaton*), a portrait of Artaud for which Artaud wrote a commentary, also included in the collection. Artaud himself wrote a preface to a collection of de Bosshère's etchings which was supposed to be published with Denoël but never came out. Right from the beginning of his work, it becomes clear that Artaud refused to fully separate drawing and writing: art was to be accompanied by written text, but text which expressed its

inadequacy in relation to the image, as well as the image's inadequacy in relation to the unnameable forces behind it, the implication being, as he would state explicitly with his later graphic work, that one had to know how to look at the work, not as art but as living force, in order to really see it. To return to some of the questions raised in chapter 3, this was not so much to do with knowledge, but with belief in the kind of magical gestures that lie behind any pictorial form.

In spite of his explicit rejection of art, Artaud never lost interest in it and notably his understanding of theatrical cruelty was inspired by a painting: Lucas van Leyden's *Lot and his Daughters*, which he saw at the Louvre museum and wrote about in *The Theatre and its Double*. Much later on, in 1945 when Artaud was at the Rodez asylum, Art Brut founder Jean Dubuffet visited him and took an interest in his work, becoming instrumental in his release and acting as secretary for the sale of the drawings to help him raise enough money to live on in Ivry.[1] Artaud's descriptions of his own drawings emerging from his letters differ according to who he was writing to and it is perhaps his letters to Dubuffet that most freely describe his own creative vision. Van Gogh became a great inspiration for Artaud's later visual work and his theories behind what graphic work should do; once again, however, it seems that Artaud's vision of Van Gogh's work more closely reflects his own concerns, where Van Gogh's paintings are rendered, through Artaud's descriptions, a frenzied, combative, anti-psychiatric expression of corporeal dissidence. This chapter traces a trajectory in Artaud's graphic output through various different kinds of embryonic forms; from sketches, diagrams and blueprints to detailed depictions of decomposing faces, all serving to announce the arrival of a new kind of body, one which, as with the spells, is maintained in perpetual suspension.

(i) Anatomies in action

Artaud began to work on his later drawings whilst under the care of Ferdière in Rodez, soon after his adaptations of English texts, encouraged by the painter Frédéric Delanglade. Ferdière welcomed Artaud's creative endeavours although, as with the adaptations of Lewis Carroll, they constitute an intense resistance to all forms of psychiatric treatment rather than products of art therapy. The drawings are evidently informed by Artaud's conception of magical forms of language and by his spells, and many of the embryonic forms, symbols and Ancient Egyptian influences that appear in the spells emerge more clearly amongst the figures, machines and weaponry scattered across the drawings.

The first of the more significant, large-scale, later drawings appeared in January 1945.[2] Artaud described these large coloured drawings in a letter to Jean Paulhan dated 10 January 1945, writing 'ce sont des dessins écrits, avec des phrases qui s'encartent dans les formes afin de les précipiter. Je crois de ce côté aussi être parvenu à quelque chose de spécial, comme dans mes livres ou au théâtre et je suis sûr que vous les aimeriez beaucoup' ('These are written drawings, with sentences inserted in the forms so as to make them fall. I think that I may have managed something special, as in my books or in the theatre, and I am sure that you will like them a lot').[3] Unlike the spells, the drawings did not have specific addressees whom they were intended to harm or to protect, although they often have the names of the people Artaud gave them to written in a corner. However, the text included in the drawings served a purpose, which Artaud uses the verb 'précipiter' (to make something plunge, fall or drop) here to describe. The idea of the fall, or as Leo Bersani writes, the 'dropping away',[4] plays an important role throughout Artaud's work, as we saw in chapter 2 with the question of the hierarchy of forms; his work is a continual destruction of the pedestal on which the 'œuvre' remains, yet, at the same time relies on the elevation of forms in order to make them fall. We might understand this as a putting into motion; the drawings were not simply forms but mobile forces, put into process, interestingly, through their interaction with written text. In a letter describing his drawings to Jean Dubuffet, he wrote about 'l'action des forces qui ont présidé au calcul des formes' ('the action of forces which have presided over the calculation of the forms').[5] The drawings bear the influence of the spells particularly through this question of the relationship between force and form. Written text and drawing cannot be separated as the forms of both language and representative figuration are disrupted through gestural force, at once linguistic and visual.

Like the spells, the drawings set in motion the interaction between bodies. However, whilst in the spells this interaction occurs at a distance because Artaud is engaging with the body of his recipient through the medium of paper, here he engages more explicitly with the paper itself, which is to say that he is staging the support, interacting with it and using it in a similar way to how he mobilises space in the theatre; the stage itself is put on stage. In a global, overarching sense, Artaud's drawings, writing and theatre practice implement a constant battle between force and form, in both graphic and linguistic terms, which means that all elements of their composition, whether material, linguistic, corporeal, or all of these at the same time, must be rendered visible.

The drawings are not just performative but also more explicitly theatrical, as references to the theatre reoccur throughout in visual or verbal form. Many of the figures or limbs in the drawings resemble distorted versions of the kinds of bodies Artaud drew in the 1920s in his sketches for costume design, following a similar style as they are filled with hasty sketches of unfinished bodies with rounded hips or limbs. The drawings often include miscellaneous items that appear as if they were props, and Artaud's uses of space and composition is much like a staging, recalling his use of *Lot and his Daughters* as an inspiration for his theatre. One drawing, depicting four entombed women, one lying diagonally across the page with the other three placed vertically as if rising from the dead, their bodies made up of geometrical forms and repeated lines, dots and angles, is named *Le Théâtre de la cruauté* (*The Theatre of Cruelty*). Just as his theatre was filled with active hieroglyphs and signs made corporeal, the drawings are infused with a form of theatre that plays out on paper, engaging with staging, lighting, costumes and special effects, as if they were unnerving stage-plans.

Artaud's drawings are extensions of his notebook pages, as many of the figures and shapes in the drawings appear sketched in the notebooks, as do sentences that are be used as titles to the drawings. Some of the drawings have commentaries attributed to them; there are six commentaries surviving and reprinted in the complete works, for the drawings *Couti l'anatomie* (*The Anatomy Ploughed*), *La Machine de l'être ou dessin à regarder de traviole* (*The Machine of Being, or Drawing to be Looked at Sideways*), *La Maladresse sexuelle de dieu* (*The Sexual Clumsiness of god*), *L'Homme et sa douleur* (*Man and his Pain*), *La Mort et l'homme* (*Death and Man*) and one commentary for a drawing that has not been identified, *Dépendre corps – l'amour unique* (*To Unhang the Body – the Unique Love*).

It becomes apparent when reading the commentaries that accompanied some of Artaud's drawings, as well as looking at the drawings themselves, that like the spells they were intended to perform. Artaud describes his drawings as 'des *anatomies* en action' ('*anatomies* in action'),[6] replacing the existing body with a force-field that would never become a complete form, but an entity existing between the form and the force that puts its own process of destruction in motion. Artaud had not abandoned his belief in the symbol as an active force, as the drawings are covered in Egyptian mummy-like figures, totems and symbols, as well as glossolalia, invoking a spell-like chanting to accompany the images. What is perhaps explored to a greater extent than in the spells is the violent and necessary destruction of the subject as a universal entity, with its linguistic constitution, its figuration, genealogy and anatomy.

It is here that the drawings, like the spells, would have an explicit purpose as physical objects.

It is relevant here to recall the ways in which Artaud's work was taken up by French theorists in the 1960s and 70s, and specifically by the Tel Quel group. Artaud's disruption of representation and the subject upon which it depends, as discussed, was an important source of inspiration for post-structuralist theories of subjectivity. Amongst Artaud's work published in Tel Quel was an untitled text from one of his notebooks in which he describes his drawings as documents, rejecting any form of skill, training, literacy and notions of artistic competency. He argues that in order to understand his drawings the viewer has to return to a primal, illiterate state. The drawing practice that he describes is clearly embodied, prompting a very specific vocabulary related to the anatomy. He writes: 'il y a dans mes dessins une espèce de morale musique que j'ai faite en vivant mes traits non avec la main seulement, mais avec le raclement du souffle de ma trachée-artère, et des dents de ma mastication' ('there is a kind of moral music in my drawings which I've brought to life through living my traces not just with my hand but with the scraping of my breath in my windpipe, and with the teeth of my mastication').[7] The anatomy that Artaud describes here does not simply form the work, but is itself formed by it, as the drawing gestures etch both into and out of the body. Drawing is thus conceived as a kind of antidote to repressive representative forms that preserve the external image of a complete and undamaged body of the author or artist, maintained at a safe distance from the work. He continues:

> Notre vision oculaire actuelle est *déformée*, réprimée, opprimée, revertie et suffoquée par certaines malversations sur le principe de notre boîte cranienne; comme sur l'architecture dentaire de notre être, depuis le coccyx du bas des vertèbres, jusqu'aux assises du forceps des mâchoires sustentatrices du cerveau. Luttant contre ces malversations j'ai pointillé et buriné toutes les colères de ma lutte, en vue d'un certain nombre de totems d'êtres, et il en reste ces misères, mes dessins.
>
> (Our current ocular vision is *deformed*, repressed, oppressed, reversed and suffocated by certain malpractices from the origin of our cranial box, as with the dental architecture of our being, from the coccyx at the bottom of the vertebrae, reaching to the seat of the forceps of the sustaining jaw-bone of our brain. Fighting against these malpractices

> I've stippled and chiselled all the angers of my fight, overseen by a certain number of totems of beings, and all that is left are these impoverished drawings.)[8]

Artaud's drawing practice is one involving physical work, and he describes how he chisels his forms, digging into the surface of the page as if it were stone. Through the variation, above, of the verb 'racler' (to scrape), recalling the distinction between the 'œuvre' and the 'raclure' (scraping), Artaud once again reminds us that what is left over after this battle is not the real work, but a diminished form that nonetheless bears witness to the force through which it came into being. Artaud offers us, in his drawings, another way of reading the 'work' at once as the practice of scraping and as the scum that is left over.

(ii) The subjectile

As important as the work, then, is the material support, imbued with all kinds of qualities that negate its status as a passive receptacle. Artaud calls this support his 'subjectile', a strange term that seems to belong simultaneously to a specific, technical vocabulary related to physical drawing practice, and to act as an expansive, more complex term that often invests a sense of agency in the surface. The first time Artaud uses the word it is in a letter to André Rolland in 1932: 'Ci-inclus un mauvais dessin où ce que l'on appelle le subjectile m'a trahi' (I'm including a bad drawing in which what is called the subjectile has betrayed me).[9] The subjectile here appears almost as a subject that is capable of betraying the artist; the drawing is bad because the surface on which it was created had an active role, rather than simply being an inert, blank page.

In 1946 in the commentary for *La Machine de l'être* he again makes reference to the subjectile, writing:

> Ce dessin est une tentative grave pour donner la vie et l'existence à ce qui jusqu'à aujourd'hui n'a jamais été reçu dans l'art, le gâchage du subjectile, la maladresse piteuse des formes qui s'effondrent autour d'une idée après avoir combien d'éternités ahané pour la rejoindre. La page est salie et manquée, le papier froissé, les personnages dessinés par la conscience d'un enfant.
>
> (This drawing is a grave attempt to give life and existence to what until today had never been accepted in art, the botching of the subjectile, the piteous awkwardness of forms crumbling around an idea after

> having for so many eternities laboured to join it. The page is soiled and spoiled, the paper crumpled, the people drawn with the consciousness of a child.)[10]

Here it appears as if it were a normalising force that is to be challenged; the subjectile is implicitly likened to the form and the idea, or the way in which the form is always bound to an idea. In order to disrupt the representative form as an expression of an idea, the material support must be spoiled, messed up and partially destroyed. When Artaud uses it again, in February 1947 with reference to an unidentified drawing, the subjectile appears as something that ought to react to Artaud's frantic scribbling, but does not:

> Les figures sur la page inerte ne disaient rien sous ma main. Elles s'offraient à moi comme des meules qui n'inspireraient pas le dessin, et que je pouvais sonder, tailler, gratter, limer, coudre, découdre, écharper, déchiqueter et couturer sans que jamais par père ou par mère le subjectile se plaignît.
>
> (The figures on the inert page said nothing under my hand. They offered themselves to me like millstones which would not inspire the drawing, and which I could probe, cut, scrape, file, sew, unsew, shred, slash and stitch without the subjectile ever complaining through father or through mother.)[11]

Artaud's fondness for lists of verbs describing forms of attack on the physical object infuses his texts, and we might recall his description of Plato as a leather-worker of turds, and the long list of words he employs to describe Plato's filing and scraping practice, quoted in chapter 2 of this book. The collection of his later poetry *Suppôts et suppliciations* (*Henchmen and Torturings*) is full of such lists, as Artaud describes the parasites and thick-lipped, bearded vampires that invade his body, and what they do to him, he is 'limé, raboté, / râpé, tondu, / pompé, sucé, / pioché, percé, troué/ rompu, etc., etc.' ('filed, planed, / grated, clipped / pumped, sucked, / dug, pierced, holed / broken etc., etc.').[12] The use of the abbreviation 'etc., etc' suggests that the list could go on and on ad infinitum, and, judging by Artaud's texts and their obsession with his eternal battle against bewitching forces, the recurring lists of verbs do have a never-ending cyclical structure, as if his work is a Sisyphian struggle uphill, a continual search for the right kind of activity that can chip away at the solid foundations of language, but also the solid support of the surface

of the paper. His plosive glossolalia can be also related to these lists, as a continual, repetitive, chipping away at language, producing fragments and scraps of words that are determined by the sounds that they make and the labial, guttural and dental gestures required to produce them. Similarly, then, it is possible to conceive of some of the elements included in Artaud's drawings such as the marks, dots, holes and indefinable fragments of objects and entities, as a visual form of glossolalia.

In the above quotation, the subjectile appears almost as a kind of subject, capable of complaining and having a mother and a father. Yet the very word 'subjectile' seems to point elsewhere, to something other than the subject, recalling the word 'projectile'. Jacques Derrida writes in his essay on Artaud's subjectile, that 'cela peut prendre la place du sujet ou de l'objet, ce n'est ni l'un ni l'autre' ('it can take the place of the subject or of the object - being neither one nor the other').[13] He explores, mimicking Artaud's poetic style, a long list of words and fragments of words phonetically deriving from and semantically related to the subjectile: 'subjectif' ('subjective'), 'subtil' ('subtle'), 'sublime', 'il' ('he'), 'li', 'projectile', 'tactile', 'suppôt' ('henchman'), 'support', 'succube' ('succubus'), 'jeter' ('to throw'), 'gésir' ('to lie') and 'jet' ('a spurt').[14] The subjectile, Derrida writes, in another alliterative, playful sentence, is an entity that exists in-between subject and object, in the sense that it intervenes between the two: '*L'entremise* d'un subjectile, dans cette affaire de dessin à la main, dans cette manœuvre ou ces manigances, voilà peut-être ce qui importe' ('the *interposition* of a subjectile is what matters, in this matter of drawing by hand, in this manoeuver or meddling').[15]

The complexity of Derrida's article reflects the complexity of linguistic, graphic and material play that is going on in Artaud's work, present in both the drawings and their commentaries. Artaud's drawings and his commentaries on them move between semantic, enunciative and linguistic play; often the sentences he writes and some of the figures he depicts drop in and out of meaning, which is to say that the both make sense and do not, continually disrupting any logical understanding whilst steering clear of complete abstraction. The words he uses to describe the drawings are strange distortions, creating unfathomable juxtapositions of images which are then rendered visual, making it clear that Artaud's drawings are verbal entities as much as they are pictural. For Derrida the subjectile is interesting not just as a material being, or body, but also as a linguistic entity, as his reproduction of Artaud-style lists and wordplay reveals. He writes, bearing in mind his article's context which was originally to appear translated into German for an exhibition of Artaud's drawings, that the 'subjectile' is untranslatable. This means that 'le mot "subjectile"

est lui-même un subjectile', ('the word "subjectile" is itself a subjectile')[16] because it exists as a paradox; on the one hand by exceeding translation it properly belongs to language, whilst on the other, anything that exceeds linguistic transfer is outside language. A subjectile is both interior and exterior, and Derrida likens it to 'une sorte de peau, trouée de pores' ('a sort of skin, holed with pores')[17] which might recall the skin-like surface of the spells, but also the way in which Artaud's glossolalia seems to bore holes in the flow of speech.

The word 'subjectile' thus incorporates the linguistic and the material, the bodily and the textual, in a way that is particularly appropriate for Artaud's work. It epitomises the very genesis of Artaud's thought and his insistence on force over form, perfectly encapsulating his affinity with the spurt or the jolt that compels thought into being. The surface becomes for Artaud a kind of vigorous, combative battleground in which to engage with active forces that exceed the subject and its accepted forms. As Derrida writes, Artaud does not write about his drawings but 'plutôt à même' ('in' or 'right up against them').[18] Drawing becomes an interaction of two bodies, merging at the surface, this use of 'à même' suggesting an extreme proximity that works to close the gap between the body and work, the paper having a mimetic relationship to the skin it comes into contact with. The expression 'à même' operates a displacement of metaphor, and is put to use often in Artaud's own writing, being also taken up by Jean-Luc Nancy in relation to Artaud's portraits, as we will see later in this chapter.

(iii) Artaud on Van Gogh

To return to Artaud's frequent references to agricultural activities such as ploughing, hoeing, reaping or sowing to describe how he engages with the surface of the page, these find their inspiration in the work of Van Gogh. Artaud's 1947 publication *Van Gogh le suicidé de la société* (*Van Gogh, the Man Suicided by Society*) was an enraged response to an article written by a psychiatrist, Dr Beer, published in the weekly journal *Arts*, in which Beer describes Van Gogh's work as the work of someone who is mentally ill. Artaud produced this furious, beautifully written homage to Van Gogh's work, which reads as much a response to his own pathologisation as to that of Van Gogh. This text represents one of Artaud's most vehement and successful protests against not only psychiatry itself, but also any potential psychoanalytic readings of his own texts, seeming once again to anticipate and undermine such an obvious critical response.

Artaud identifies a sense of brooding apocalypse in Van Gogh's paintings, writing of the way they portray a 'sensation d'occulte étranglée' ('sensation of strangled occult').[19] He transforms Van Gogh's paintings into bodies, emphasising their synesthetic properties and the visceral corporeal forces they mobilise, they are 'remise à même la vue, la ouïe, le tact, l'arôme' ('restored directly to sight, hearing, touch, smell').[20] Whilst Artaud here seems, as with his adaptations of Lewis Carroll, to ingest and regurgitate Van Gogh's work to produce it anew, he argues that Van Gogh carries out similarly embodied transformations of his raw material, nature: 'Van Gogh est peintre parce qu'il a recolleté la nature, qu'il l'a comme retranspirée et fait suer' ('Van Gogh is a painter because he recollected nature, because he re-perspired it and made it sweat').[21] In what has since become Van Gogh's most famous painting, Artaud describes how he sees 'le visage rouge sanglant du peintre venir à moi, dans une muraille de tournesols éventrés' ('the blood-red face of the painter coming toward me, in a wall of eviscerated sunflowers').[22] Van Gogh's work is rendered violent, interspersed with Artaudian blows, hammering, shredding, collisions, jostling, tearing, welding, nerves and the 'météorique d'atomes' ('meteoric bombardment of atoms').[23]

Van Gogh is, according to Artaud, picking and chiselling away at his own subjectile, that of the canvas but also nature itself rendered a surface to be torn through in order to reveal the forces at work behind it. Artaud quotes a letter Van Gogh wrote to his brother in which he describes how he envisages the act of drawing:

> Qu'est-ce que dessiner? Comment y arrive-t-on? C'est l'action de se frayer un passage à travers un mur de fer invisible, qui semble se trouver entre ce qu'on *sent* et ce que l'on *peut*. Comment doit-on traverser ce mur, car il ne sert de rien d'y frapper fort? On doit miner ce mur et le traverser à la lime, lentement et avec patience à mon sens.
>
> (What is drawing? How does one do it? It is the act of working one's way through an invisible wall of iron which seems to lie between what one *feels* and what one can *do*. How is one to get through this wall, for it does no good to use force? In my opinion, one must undermine the wall and file one's way through, slowly and with patience.)[24]

Yet in Artaud's vision of Van Gogh's work, it seems that this invisible wall is not undermined or slowly and patiently filed, but exploded,

bombarded onto the surface of the canvas, in an act designed to 'faire jaillir une force tournante, un élément arraché en plein coeur' ('make a whirling force, an element torn right out of the heart, gush forth').[25] Artaud's subjectile is inspired by Van Gogh's description of the invisible wall, which recalls the immense boundaries Artaud identified in his early texts between the body, or what one really feels, and its expression in words, through poetry. In fact, Artaud seems at times to read Van Gogh's work as if it were a linguistic text, the brush strokes or dashes and marks on the canvas becoming forms of punctuation, as he describes 'l'épouvantable pression élémentaire d'apostrophes, de stries, de virgules, de barres' ('the awful elementary pressure of apostrophes, hyphens, commas and dashes').[26] As readers, we might be tempted to read Artaud's reading of Van Gogh back into his own drawings, and see the dots and lines as punctuation marks, an expression of visual grammar in a move that both merges together and disrupts the relationship between drawing and written word.

(iv) Perverse incubators

Artaud's *dessins écrits* are explicitly battlegrounds, as they are crammed with depictions of cannons, bombs, mutilated body parts, bones, sharp implements, machinery and instruments of torture, nails, crosses, gallows, scythes, explosions and coffins. They are often covered in heavy lead dots, which are residues of where Artaud stabbed the surface of the page with his pencil. These are at times reminiscent, like the holes in the *Sorts*, of bullet-holes. This is a battle against the subject and its figuration as a linguistic and graphic entity, and the signifying structures and authorities that work towards creating a subject are continually denied. This becomes apparent from the very titles of many of the drawings, which often refer to the refusal of conception, or to the artificial engendering of bodies, for example, to list a few: *L'Être et ses foetus* (*Being and its Foetuses*), *L'Immaculée conception* (*The Immaculate Conception*), *Couti l'anatomie* (*The Anatomy Ploughed*), *La Machine de l'être* (*The Machine of Being*), *L'Exécration du Père-Mère* (*The Execration of the Father-Mother*) and *La Maladresse sexuelle de dieu* (*The Sexual Clumsiness of god*). This last drawing is a fierce attack on God, the family, language as a symbolic structure, and form as a representational structure. The page is covered with objects that resemble instruments of torture, womb-like circles with spikes, bones and small foetus-like bodies inside them, and brown and red circles recalling faecal matter and fleshy wounds. There is a cannon, a stretch-rack with spikes on it, and a table with more

unidentifiable objects which also looks like a person on all fours. In the centre of the page is a larger figure, presumably God, an unformed and open body with tubes instead of limbs, a small egg-like head in a clamp, and machinery where the digestive system and sexual organs would be.

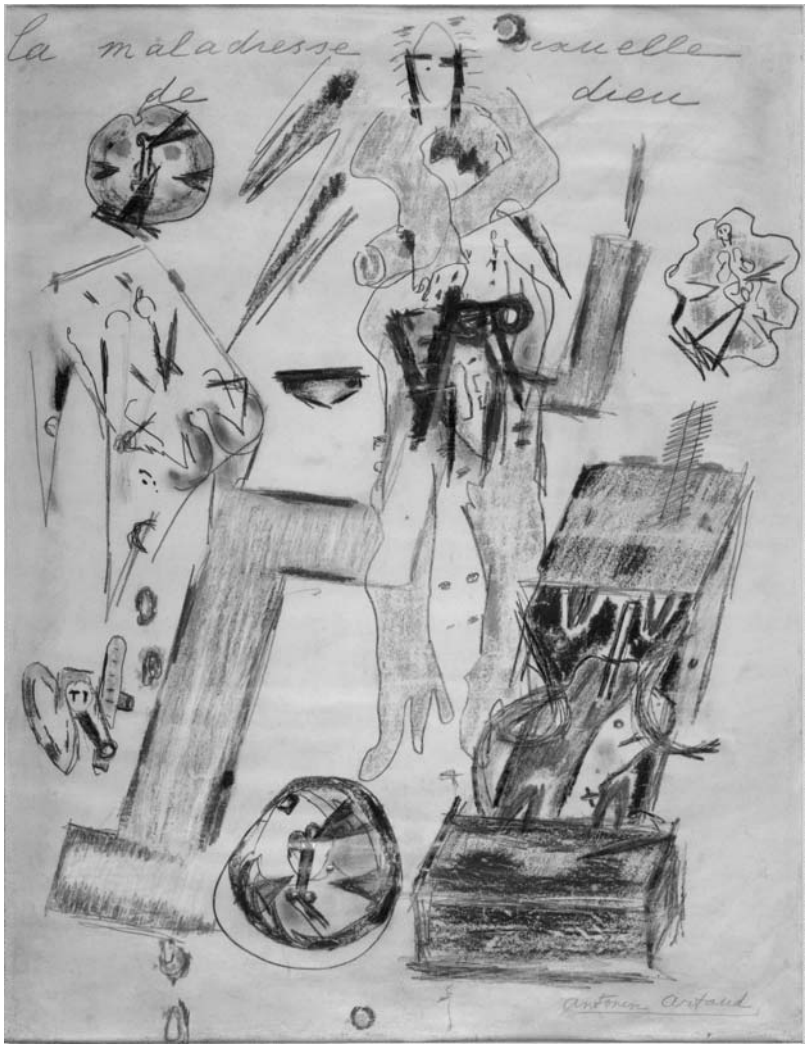

Illustration 5.1 Artaud, Antonin, *La Maladresse sexuelle de dieu*. Signed bottom right, not dated (estimated February 1946) © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2014.

The title, as with most of Artaud's drawings, is included in the drawing itself, scrawled across the top in pencil.

The commentary that accompanies this drawing is no less violent than the drawing itself, with insults directed at God, addressed in the second person singular (itself an insult, given that the second person plural, 'vous' as the formal form of address, is what is usually used in prayer):

> Pendant que tu pètes dans tes nuages, espèce d'incapable d'esprit, sorti de la tombe de mes fesses,
>
> **yak ta kankar ege**
> **narina**
> **ege narina**
> **anarina**
>
> (Whilst you fart in your clouds, you spiritual incompetent, coming out of the tomb of my buttocks,
>
> **yak ta kankar ege**
> **narina**
> **ege narina**
> **anarina)**[27]

The glossolalia here, as well as the French language, is full of plosives accentuating the force of the words and like the language in the spells it has a performative presence. Among the glossolalia the words 'et je / ja ja ja / j'appelle / Ani' (and I / IC IC IC / I call / Ani)[28] appear underlined as if to be shouted out loud. This is as much a refusal of the father as it is of God, the entity pronouncing these words stuttering, unable to pronounce 'je', struggling with the words 'j'appelle' as if incapable of presenting itself as a fully-formed subject capable of distinguishing itself from the other that it designates as 'Ani'.

Alongside the refusal of the subject as a complete entity comes a refusal of its process of creation. The womb-like circles are torture chambers filled with bones rather than places of comfort. Artaud's project to build a new anatomy and his fantasy of being self-engendered is rendered visual in the drawings as a refusal of existing forms of incubation like the womb, as well as the genitals which are often replaced by instruments of torture. In the commentary Artaud describes how God is endowed with non-functioning sexual organs: 'au lieu de son ventre les instruments dont il n'a pas su servir' ('in the place of his stomach some instruments that he didn't know how to use').[29] If God relates to

the figure of the father in *La Maladresse sexuelle de dieu*, 'Ani' is perhaps the mother:

> cette pauvre vieille mamelle comme une table à quatre petits,
> Ani, en grec aniksa,
> ouvre comme on ouvre la table,
>
> **tia sekadi ghezola**
> **ya te ghezola adi**
>
> cette vieille ananké de l'âme, qui veut faire caca pipi
>
> **tia petuzar adrartra**
> **tra petuzar atrartra**
>
> (this poor old breast like a table on all four smalls
> Ani, in Greek aniksa
> open like a table opens out,
>
> **tia sekadi ghezola**
> **ya te ghezola adi**
>
> that old ananké of the soul, who wants to do a poo and a wee
>
> **tia petuzar adrartra**
> **tra petuzar atrartra)**[30]

'Ani' could be a reference to 'Ana' or 'Anie', the names of two of Artaud's 'filles du cœur à naître', an army of imaginary daughters that he began writing about and drawing in his notebooks at Rodez. These daughters were made up of his two dead grandmothers, Neneka and Catherine Chilé, as well as various women that he met in a variety of different circumstances: Colette Thomas, who he met whilst he was in hospital at Rodez;[31] Anie Besnard, a 16-year-old girl from Luxembourg who he had found crying on a bench on the Boulevard de Montparnasse in 1934; Cécile Schramme, who he had been briefly engaged to in 1937; Yvonne Allendy, who he met in 1926, and on whose dream he based his script for *La Coquille et le clergyman*; and Ana Courbin, who he claimed to have met whilst working on *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* in 1928.[32] Some of these women were still alive, others had died. Artaud's genealogies were becoming increasingly absurd: his grandmothers became his daughters, and he himself became his own self-engendered child.

In *La Maladresse sexuelle de dieu* the mother is presented as an abject figure, defecating, urinating and fornicating with her own father. The

name 'Ani' could even at a stretch be taken as a diminished form of 'Antonin', or 'Nanaqui' (Artaud's childhood nickname, given to him by his mother): a reference to Artaud himself. The whole drawing appears as a kind of perverse incubator, with its wombs and boxes. The central figure, portraying God as a vast machine, has an egg, another type of embryonic incubator, in the place of its head. In the commentary Artaud writes:

> Et je dis que mon âme c'est moi et que s'il me plaît de faire une fille qui un jour veuille se coucher sur moi, faire caca et pipi sur moi, je la ferai envers et contre dieu l'esprit de retenue cacadeuse qui ne cesse de péter sur moi, fuser en bombe avec son paradis sur les parois de mon crâne niche, où il a incrusté son nid.
>
> (I say that my soul is me and if I want to make a daughter who one day wants to sleep on me, poo and wee on me, I will make her through and against god the spirit of pooish self-restraint who keeps farting on me, like a bomb with his paradise on the lining of my skull niche, where he has incrusted his nest.)[33]

Here we can identify an example of Artaud's semantic and enunciative slippages between meaning and wordplay, particularly the 'paradis sur les parois de mon crâne niche' which is very difficult to translate. The above translation (my own) is a very literal and rather impoverished one, failing to reproduce the assonance between 'paradis' 'niche' and 'nid', the alliteration between 'paradis' and 'parois', or the word play on the strange expression 'crâne niche' which refers to the word 'caniche' ('poodle') in French. In this quotation Artaud describes a very child-like parent; he gestures like a child, draws like a child, is unable to produce recognisable forms, and speaks either like a disobedient child (with his constant references to 'poo and wee'), or like an infant, unable to form words. He also refuses any notion of artistic skill, a point which he repeats at several points in the commentary; the instruments are 'maladroitement dessinés' ('clumsily drawn'), he writes about 'l'idée maladroite de dieu volontairement mal dressée sur la page' ('the clumsy idea of God deliberately badly placed on the page') and insists: 'ce dessin est volontairement bâcle, jeté sur la page comme un mépris des formes et des traits, afin de mépriser l'idée prise et d'arriver à la faire tomber' ('this drawing is deliberately botched, thrown onto the page like a contempt for forms and lines, in order to disregard the accepted idea and try to make it drop').[34] None of the objects on the page are

fully formed, just as the 'subject' is a botched result of God's malfunctioning sexual organs.

All of Artaud's drawings appear more like sketches than drawings, and he did not produce anything that resembled a finished artwork. His preferred materials were pencils, wax crayons and cheap paper, which was perhaps all that was available to him at the time, but also served to provide a much more easily disrupted surface. These 'written-drawings', as he called them, look rather more like diagrams or blueprints than drawings; there is not much sense of depth, and many of the bodies appear as geometrical stick figures. A blueprint serves a purpose rather than being an aesthetic object, and in this sense might be taken, like the spells, as a kind of warning against a physical action to be carried out in the future.

Like the spell that Artaud sent to Léon Fouks, the drawings sometimes need to be activated by specific gestures, and might be understood as diagrammatic instruction manuals for machines that are yet to be built. Sometimes instructions for the viewer are included not only in the commentary, but also within the drawing itself, for example in *La Machine de l'être*, where a series of words written around the drawing as if to frame it read: 'dessin à regarder de traviole / au bas d'un mur en se / frottant le dessous / du bras droit' ('drawing to look at askew / at the bottom of a wall whilst / rubbing the underside / of the right arm').[35] In the commentary Artaud refers to drawing with the conscience of a child, and again refers to the subjectile.[36] The process of drawing for Artaud must always be rendered visible as a child's figures are rarely fully-formed, the lines do not join up properly and the bodies seem to spill out of their limits because children are more prone to colouring outside the lines. A child's graphic rendition of a body might resemble, as Artaud describes man's true anatomy in *Artaud le mômo*, 'une carne / hors membrane' ('meat / outside the membrane').[37] Another aspect of children's drawing style that perhaps appeals to Artaud is the tendency either to abandon the work before it is finished, or to keep on drawing until there is no more space on the paper. The decision to stop working on a particular drawing for Artaud sometimes appears to have been due to a lack of space, and none of the drawings contain what we might think of as 'finished' figures or forms; they often lack faces, or limbs, and are only half coloured in. One has the sense, then, that like the spells these drawings are perpetually 'à naître' ('unborn'); incubators for threatening, embryonic forms that never quite materialise.

La Machine de l'être is unfinished and can remain in process, precisely because this 'tentative grave' ('serious attempt') on the subjectile's life

has not been achieved; it survives in its abject state, covered in the stains of a yellow liquid, smudged, creased and wrinkled. The surface is threatened on both sides, as there is another drawing on the reverse side of the paper. It appears as a strange palimpsest, with the layering of text or drawings one on top of the other. We might think of what Barthes writes about Cy Twombly's drawings: 'aucune surface, si loin qu'on la prenne, n'est vierge: tout est toujours, déjà, âpre, discontinu, inégal, rythmé par quelque accident' ('no surface, no matter what the distance from which one looks at it, is truly virginal. A surface is always already asperate, discontinuous, uneven and rhythmed by accidents').[38] Artaud's paper surfaces were rarely blank because he used whatever paper he could get his hands on, not worrying about whether it was gridded, discoloured, or poor quality and whether he had already used the other side or indeed, sometimes, the very same side. Barthes describes Cy Twombly's work as 'un palimpceste pervers' ('a perverse palimsest')[39] because each layer of writing serves to render more visible the rubbing out or obscuring of the other. A subjectile, as a surface that can never be empty, blank space, might also be understood as a perverse palimpsest, something that simultaneously obscures and reveals what is etched onto its surface.

Another sense in which the surface is never empty emerges from Deleuze's writing on Francis Bacon, where he writes that for the painter there is no such thing as a blank canvas: 'La surface est déjà tout entière investie virtuellement par toutes sortes de clichés avec lesquels il faut rompre' ('The entire surface is already invested virtually with all kinds of clichés, which the painter will have to break with').[40] In this book, making reference to Artaud and the body without organs, Deleuze posits the problem of how to escape figuration, which he aligns with representation and narrative, in opposition to sensation. Deleuze argues that Bacon's free marks on the canvas are one way to combat the clichés always already invested on its surface. These are, he writes, paraphrasing Bacon himself in his interviews with David Sylvester, 'le *hasard manipulé*' ('*manipulated chance*').[41] These free marks recall the dots and holes in Artaud's drawings and spells, Artaud himself often makes reference to the place of chance in his magical actions, for example in the spell to Léon Fouks, where he writes 'j'ai piqué au hasard' ('I randomly stabbed').[42] Magic becomes a kind of controlled chance where Artaud's body and the surface of the paper are rendered active media for haphazard forces that are involuntary yet consciously mediated.

Such involuntary but consciously executed gestures are an attempt to incorporate the body into the material object rather than relying on

a representative or figurative code. If there is an evolution to be traced through Artaud's images, it is perhaps visible in the way that Artaud drew gradually closer to the surface of the page; the spells, as we have seen, were attempts to touch other people through the medium of the paper, whilst with the drawings Artaud directed his attentions closer to the paper itself. Embryonic forms persist throughout the spells and the 'written drawings' in the form of eggs, wombs and distorted sexual organs, as well as unformed words; what emerges in the later stages of this process, peering out at the viewer, is Artaud's own haggard and frenzied face, pressed right up against the surface of the page.

(v) The human face

From August 1946 onwards Artaud began working on a series of portraits of his friends, which, as we will see, seemed to distinguish the face from the rest of the body. He wrote a text called 'Le Visage humain' ('The Human Face'), originally intended to go in the catalogue for an exhibition of his drawings at the Galerie Pierre in July 1947, republished in the review *L'Éphémère* in 1970. Here Artaud writes that the face is 'une force vide, un champ de mort / La vieille revendication révolutionnaire d'une forme qui n'a jamais correspondu à son corps, qui partait pour être autre chose que le corps' ('an empty force, a field of death. The old revolutionary demand for a form which has never corresponded to its body, which left to be something other than the body').[43] Once again the question of force and form emerges; for Artaud, the face is always in search of its true form, and is an empty force moving towards death. It is the artist's preoccupation, he writes, to save the face from death, not by accurately reproducing it but 'en lui rendant ses propres traits' ('by giving its own features back to it').[44] The French word 'traits' used here translates as features but also as traces, lines or strokes, relevant to Artaud's scribbled pencil lines and the way that they merge with his sitters' features, disrupting the distinction between portrait and face, or paper and skin.

The 'pas encore' ('not yet') that motivates all of Artaud's work can also be applied to the face, as it reoccurs four times in this text: 'les traits du visage humain tels qu'ils sont n'ont pas encore trouvé la forme qu'ils indiquent et désignent' ('the features of the human face as they are have not yet found the form that they indicate'), 'le visage humain n'a pas encore trouvé sa face' ('the human face has not yet found its face'), 'n'a pas encore commencé à dire ce qu'il est et ce qu'il sait' ('has not yet begun to say what it is that it knows'), and finally 'je ne suis pas

encore sûr des limites auxquelles le corps du moi humain peut s'arrêter' ('I am not yet sure of the limits where the human self can stop').[45] Many of the faces that recur throughout his portraits are those of his chosen army of 'filles du cœur à naître' ('unborn daughters of the heart'), such as Yvonne Allendy, yet to be born according to Artaud, but in reality at this point already dead. Rather than trying to give the face an impossible form that it has 'not yet' found, we might see Artaud's work as maintaining this perpetual unrealisable or virtual force, by rendering the process visible.

Van Gogh, he writes, is the only artist to succeed in rendering the forces of the face explicit in a portrait: 'Le seul Van Gogh a su tirer d'une tête humaine un portrait qui soit la fusée explosive du battement d'un cœur éclaté. / Le sien. […] le visage de ce boucher avide, projeté comme en coup de canon à la surface la plus extrême de la toile' ('only van Gogh was able to draw out of a human head a portrait which was the explosive rocket of the beating of a shattered heart / his own [...] this face of an avid butcher, projected like a cannon shot onto the most extreme surface of the canvas').[46] Yet this is still not a form, for Artaud sees Van Gogh as bursting it onto the surface of the page, and we are reminded of the numerous cannons that populate Artaud's own drawings or the holes in the spells which are like remnants of an explosion. Artaud is interested in the face precisely because it is covered in holes: 'la face humaine telle qu'elle est se cherche encore avec deux yeux, un nez, une bouche et les deux cavités auriculaires qui répondent aux trous des orbites comme les quatre ouvertures du caveau de la prochaine mort' ('the human face as it is is still searching with two eyes, a nose, a mouth and two auricular cavities which correspond to the holes of orbits like the four openings of the burial vault of approaching death').[47] The holes in the spells take on a new meaning, as facial cavities, rendering visible the deadly forces at work that at once deny all sensation, like empty sockets without organs to perceive with, yet also render this absence of sensation visible, and tangible.

Artaud's idea that the face does not correspond to the body perhaps explains why the figures that appear throughout his drawings are nearly always without faces, and why, correspondingly, very few of his portraits have bodies (one notable exception is *La Projection du véritable corps* (*The Projection of the True Body*), made shortly before his death in 1948). There is a distinct variation in Artaud's drawing style between the drawings and the portraits. Whilst the drawings tend to look like diagrams, containing geometrical forms or stick figures, and often almost unrecognisable body parts, the portraits depict recognisable faces of

many of his friends: Jacques Prevel, Jany de Ruy, Pierre Loeb, Roger Blin, Paule Thévenin, Minouche Pastier, Colette Thomas and Arthur Adamov, amongst others.

But if the portraits bear some resemblance to the people that they depict, they too display a preoccupation with force, and with a violent disruption of any sense of the finished form. In many of them one has the impression of being confronted with an image of decay, for example in the portraits of Jacques Prevel, Mania Oïfer, Paule Thévenin and Henri Pichette. Those who were unlucky enough to have been chosen as sitters must have felt like they had been brutally exposed to an image of their own mortality. Jacques Germain describes Mania Oïfer's reaction when she saw the portrait Artaud had done of her: 'elle a été épouvantée' ('she was terrified').[48] There are also portraits in which parts of the face are quite literally rubbed out, as if effaced, such as the portraits of Colette Thomas and Colette Allendy, and many of the faces are covered in scribbles, and heavy marks, nails and bolts boring through the skin. Rather like the drawings, they look like unfinished sketches from which a proper portrait is still to be made.

The most striking of all are Artaud's self-portraits. Curiously, Artaud's own face only appears at two stages in his work: at the very beginning, with a couple of undated sketches assumed to be from some time between 1915 and 1920, and at the very end, where a ravaged, skeletal figure emerges, sometimes amongst others in the portraits, sometimes intertwined with texts in the notebooks, and sometimes alone on the page, merging with the stains and holes in its surface. It is here that the work of death is most evident, as Artaud resembles a corpse in the process of decomposition, his skull clearly visible beneath his wispy hair and his emaciated face marked by heavy, black pencil lines and dots. Once again, the face is often deformed to the extent that it looks like a scribble, emphasising the materiality of the paper.

In a chapter on Artaud's portraits included in a catalogue of Artaud's work for an exhibition at the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris in 2006–7, Jean-Luc Nancy writes about the face as pressed up against the surface of the page to such an extent that it suffocates. He points out that in all of Artaud's portraits his lips are clammed shut, as if incapable of communication: 'Un grand silence entre ces lèvres si minces que ne cesseront pas de barrer tous ses portraits de la cicatrice du silence. Car il est fermé, bloqué, il est blindé à la parole qui s'échange' ('a great silence between these very thin lips which will not stop blocking all the portraits with the scar of silence. For he is closed, frozen, armoured against the exchange of words').[49] Yet he also writes that Artaud's face emerges 'comme un

projecteur, comme une lampe d'interrogatoire' ('like a projector, like an interrogation lamp').[50] We might ask what kind of a sign Artaud's face is in his self-portraits, and what it can communicate. For Nancy suggests here that whilst it is condemned to silence, it either accuses or demands something of the viewer. He writes of Artaud's face as an emblem or symbol, suggesting that it has a representative quality, or that it symbolising suffering, as if Artaud were a Christ-like figure. But he also writes of the impossibility of Artaud's face being represented, arguing that it is simply exposed.[51] To be exposed is to be at the surface, and Nancy suggests that what the self-portraits display is the act of sticking or pressing on the surface, rather than the presence of a figure that might be called Artaud.[52] In fact Nancy is paraphrasing Artaud's words throughout, as Artaud writes 'le corps actuel n'est qu'un plaquage' ('the actual body is only a plating'),[53] and 'je suis *fermé*, bloqué / je suis blindé à la langue de l'être' ('I am *closed*, frozen, armoured against the language of being').[54]

Like the spells, the portraits also put into play a series of contradictions: between surface and depth, because they appear both merged with the surface of the page, but also invested with a sense of depth that is absent in the drawings; between presence and absence; the abstract (a sense of suffering) and the concrete (Artaud's own face); resemblance and difference; and silence and the urge to communicate. What these contradictions seem to announce with a sense of urgency is the idea of existence at the very limit between life and death, or as Nancy writes 'à la limite de lui-même, à la limite de son image' ('at the limit of his self, at the limit of his image').[55] In a literal sense, Artaud really was at this limit, as he was drawing his self-portraits shortly before he died and uncannily one of these portraits, initially given to Paule Thévenin (and used to illustrate the cover of this book), is dated December 1948,[56] nine months after Artaud's death, as if his death marked the beginning of a pregnancy from which this frightening work was born.

It is this sense of an experience of existing at the limit, under the constant threat of annihilation, which most clearly comes across in Artaud's graphic output. Firstly perhaps in a material sense this is evident in the importance of deformation and decomposition for Artaud, where he always sought to create a sense of incompletion. With the spells the limits of the object are also difficult to define; it is unclear where the spell ends and where the letter begins, or which part of the spell is a spell, and the idea that they are invested with magical powers suggests that they are intended to expand beyond their own materiality. If they have a mimetic relationship to the body this is as an anatomy in the continual process of merging with and withdrawing from the other.

Artaud explores what the limit of the artwork might be by insisting that his drawings and portraits are not art, refusing what he sees as traditional modes of composition, writing in 'Le Visage humain': 'J'en ai d'ailleurs définitivement brisé avec l'art, le style ou le talent dans tous les dessins que l'on verra ici. Je veux dire que malheur à qui les considérerait comme des œuvres d'art, des œuvres de simulation esthétique de la réalité' ('I've definitively broken with art, style or talent in these drawings that you see here. I want to say that there will be hell to pay for whoever considers them works of art, works of aesthetic stimulation of reality').[57] Just as in his written work, the œuvre is refused: 'Aucune n'est à proprement parler une œuvre. Tous sont des ébauches' ('not one is properly speaking a work. All are sketches').[58] He also sought to break down the distinction between different formats; the 'dessins écrits' exist between the text and the drawing, as Stephen Barber writes there are elements of the cinematic in Artaud's drawings and notebooks,[59] and, as this book seeks to argue, all of Artaud's output might be considered as inherently performative, recalling the theatre texts. Most importantly, what these different objects express is this sense of living at the limit of communicability, where communication is extremely difficult but nonetheless absolutely urgent.

As entities that speak of the limits of communicability, they also operate a continuous merging and displacing of different types of signs. The spells, drawings and portraits are nearly always accompanied by text because for Artaud language is always invaded by other types of signs (graphic, linguistic, representative, anti-representative, mimetic, iconic, magical, hieroglyphic). Most importantly, then, this disrupts the primacy of the signifier in both Saussurian and Lacanian terms, as that which renders the speaker a 'subject'. This critique of the signifier, and an attempt to engage with other types of signs that displace its hegemony, is present in Artaud's refusal to write without drawing, or draw without writing, and in his insistence on the materiality of the object as well as in his creation of paradoxical entities that both claim to be what they mediate, and to be nothing, to simply demonstrate the impossibility of communicating real corporeal presence.

If there is something persistently acted out, or staged, in all of these examples, it is the body and its signifying processes. Artaud portrays a body performing its own creation; this is no longer simply his own body, the body depicted in the object, or even the body of the intended recipient or audience, but also the material body of the paper itself. There is a sense then in which this physical surface exceeds its metaphorical relationship to other bodies; the use of the term 'subjectile'

works to disrupt the subject–object dichotomy, and to point towards a kind of collective affect. The essential question for Artaud in creating a new anatomy becomes the following: how can one act in a way that is not already anticipated by structures of representation which dictate the creation of a 'subject', in opposition to the non-figurative *body without organs*? In the final chapter, we will see how this battle plays out in Artaud's work, through the intervention of various different types of machines.

6
The Machinic Body

In November 1947, whilst working on what would be his last project, the radio broadcast *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, Artaud wrote: 'je ne crée que / des machines / instantes / d'utilité' ('I create only / machines / of instant / utility').[1] These words seem to define much of the later work, which takes the form, much like everything he produced, but with ever-increasing intensity, of a series of fragments once again designed to act rather than to represent and to act instantly in the very process of coming into being, emerging from the surface of the page. The machine takes on, for Artaud, both a productive and a destructive role. Machine imagery populates and at times overtakes the drawings, working both with and against bodies, appearing in many different forms, and it is sometimes difficult to ascertain what exactly a machine is for Artaud or what it is supposed to do. If the machine is to exceed the purely metaphorical, in that Artaud's work is intended not simply to depict machines but to act as if it were a machine, as the above quotation suggests, it is worth asking: what happens when the machine becomes a means of communication? How are these machinic fragments productive, and how do they resist their own reproduction in material terms?

(i) The electrical body

One way to read the non-signifying lines, dots and grid-like structures covering the surfaces of the pages of the drawings, portraits and notebooks might be as electrical circuits. Artaud uses electricity repeatedly to describe bodily functions; electricity is both the potential of the body to liberate itself and the tool used against the body in order to control it. An allusion that continually arises in Artaud's work during

the Rodez years, as we have seen, is to his experience of ECT, which he understood as an attempt to appropriate the body via electrical means. *L'Homme et sa douleur*, for example, where the body is portrayed as a disfigured, skeletal form with its bones ruptured at strange angles and with boxes and nails attached to it, is dedicated to Dr Jacques Latrémolière 'pour le remercier de ses électro-chocs' ('to thank him for his ECT sessions').[2] As chapter 2 discussed, Artaud understood ECT as a method of detaching thought from the body and therefore detrimental to the central aim of his work, which was to create and live in a thinking body. The body can be controlled by electrical means as if it were a machine, then, as long as it is not conscious, but as a thinking body it is also capable of producing its own electricity without outside influence. If the existing body is a machine, it is, according to Artaud, an automaton that must be destroyed in order to be rebuilt as its true self, in contrast to the body controlled by exterior forces. The title of Jean de Bosshère's portrait of Artaud published in *L'Art et la mort*, 'L'Automate personnel' (1927), plays on the similarities between the words 'automate' ('automaton') and 'anatomie' ('anatomy'). The anatomy for Artaud is always opposed to the experience of the living body, and the anatomical body is therefore its false double, as he describes in 'je ne supporte pas l'anatomie humaine' ('I cannot stand the human anatomy'), a text from one his notebooks written in Paris in 1946:

> l'anatomie humaine est fausse, elle est fausse et je le sais pour l'avoir de la tête aux pieds *éprouvé* pendant mes 9 ans de séjour dans 5 asiles d'aliénés.
>
> (the human anatomy is false, it is false and I know it because I have from my head to my feet *experienced* it during my 9 years of residence in 5 insane asylums).[3]

The anatomy is imposed on the body from the outside, and is implicitly linked to incarceration, the suggestion being that whilst he was physically confined to the interior of a psychiatric institution, he was also forced to remain within enforced anatomical limits.

Paule Thévenin suggests that Artaud's own corporeal experiments enabled him to survive and to resist the horrors of ECT, writing: 'Peut-être l'exercice du souffle et de la voix qu'il n'a jamais abandonné l'a-t-il aidé à se maintenir en vie?' ('perhaps the breathing and vocal exercises that he never abandoned helped him to stay alive?)'.[4] Such claims

certainly correspond to Artaud's own ideas about the ways in which the body can fight its imposed, restricted form. Thévenin writes of the relationship between the body and the institution: 'l'homme privé de sa plus élémentaire liberté a, d'une certaine manière, été aussi privé de son propre corps' ('the man who was deprived of his most elementary freedoms was also, in some respects, deprived of his own body').[5] The body for Artaud became a microcosm; rather than physically trying to escape from the institution, he concentrated on stretching the limits of his own corporeality, through gesturing, expulsions, spitting, screaming and stabbing surfaces with a knife or pen.

His drawings, then, became a matter of resistance. In the commentary for *La Maladresse sexuelle de dieu*, discussed at some length in chapter 5, he describes how the human body can produce electrical force by its own means: 'C'est mon travail qui m'a rendu électrique, dis-je à dieu, quand tu t'es toujours pris pour un pile' ('It's my work that made me electric, I tell god, when you always thought you were a battery').[6] God's authoritative power is thereby undermined by the force produced through the body working according to its own methods. The description of ejaculations to describe the creative and destructive process – for example as Artaud writes 'quand j'éjacule ce pet foireux' ('when I ejaculate this livery fart')[7] – and the crackling of electrical charge are closely linked, and the glossolalia throughout the commentary is loaded with plosives, particularly the sounds /k/ and /t/, which read aloud together sound like the stopping and starting of a malfunctioning machine:

yo kutemar tonu tardiktra
yo kute drikta anu tedri
yak ta kankar ege[8]

This drawing appears as if it were a diagram, depicting various machines of torture surrounding severed limbs, tubes and body parts. Artaud describes the battle against God as a battery who attempts to connect the body to other bodies, and, perhaps like electroconvulsive therapy, to reprogramme the body and the brain back into a functioning circuit.

The drawing *La Machine de l'être ou dessin à regarder de traviole* (*The Machine of Being or Drawing to be Looked at Sideways*) can also be viewed as a type of electrical diagram. The paper is covered in small creases, echoing and emphasising the pencil marks, whilst giving the surface of the page the appearance of a wrinkly skin as well as a malfunctioning electrical circuit. The human figure in the centre appears as if it were a

robotic automaton, wearing handcuffs and with its head in a clamp, and next to it there is something that resembles a mutilated, skeletal being or a machine encased in a coffin-like box, the fragments of broken circuits, holes and creases covering the page resembling the impulsive electrical charge that this hybrid figure produces in protest at its incarceration. If the use of a diagrammatic style serves to flatten all the figures and to emphasise the surface rather than pointing to the illusion of depth, we might also think of the circuit as a surface, exposed in this drawing rather than hidden inside a protective case. The surface, conversely, is what normally should be concealed; we are not supposed to look at the materiality of the surface of the paper in a drawing or text, just as we are not supposed to open up a machine and fiddle with its circuitry. One reason for Artaud's constant references to machinery is to do with his insistence on the materiality of the body and the idea that any attempt to express thought must also be a disruption of the structures of articulation and representation through which it must pass. The machine, like the body, is always an instrument of mediation, communicating in Artaud's work through contagious and impulsive electrical discharge rather than functioning according to its programmed circuitry.

(ii) Dysfunctional machines

This interest in electricity and machinery situates Artaud clearly within the context of the avant garde. The early twentieth century saw a proliferation of texts and artworks that focused on man's relationship to machines; perhaps the most influential innovations were on the one hand those related to destruction and warfare, such as the bomb, tanks and weaponry which would lead to (and arise from) the two world wars, and on the other to creation. At the end of the nineteenth century, following the increasingly widespread use of the typewriter, as well as the use of photography and following this the arrival of cinema, people increasingly began to use machines as vehicles for artistic expression. According to some media theorists, such as Marshall McLuhan and Friedrich Kittler, these two opposing forces of destruction and creation are not as distinct as they might seem, because, they argue, new technologies are often developed initially for military purposes.[9] In the early twentieth century the prospect of destruction on a massive scale had become possible, and the time when Artaud was drawing his strangely mechanised and electrified bodies, in the period just after the Second World War, must have felt like an incredibly ominous age.

To put Artaud's work in context, then, it is perhaps useful to start by looking at some of his contemporaries. No one had as glorified a vision of the technological age in the early twentieth century as the Futurists. Their use of machine imagery emphasised speed, power and warfare, as Marinetti wrote with great enthusiasm about racing cars, tanks and machine guns.[10] Whilst Artaud did reportedly write to Marinetti at one stage, when he was desperate to sell his film scripts, his creative vision was quite different. The Futurist machine is an image of fascist supremacy, shiny and impenetrable, in contrast to Artaud's machinic bodies which tend to be reduced to pure electrical discharge or force that cannot be used for any function. Artaud's sieve-like, fragile paper body, covered in holes and eczematic disruptions, is at odds with the armoured surface of the Futurists' imagery, and Futurist machines always appear as the exaltation of the masculine, impenetrable body. In *Prosthetic Gods* Hal Foster argues that the Futurist machines follow the logic of prosthesis as an extension of the body which only serves to expose its lack,[11] but if Artaud's machine imagery can be seen as a type of prosthesis it is always explicitly threatening, destroying the organs rather than seeking to extend them. We might think, for example, of the mechanical apparatus seeming to drill into both the surface of the page and the space between the legs in the drawing *L'Exécration du Père-Mère*. There are elsewhere parallels between Artaud and Marinetti's writings, when, for example, in his 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature' (1912) Marinetti writes that 'l'arte è un bisogno di distruggersi e di sparpagliarsi' ('art is the need to destroy and scatter oneself').[12] He advocates, in this manifesto, doing away with literature as it is known and substituting ideas for the material world, speaking of 'la vita multiforme e misteriosa della materia' ('the multiform and mysterious life of matter').[13] The language used here is strikingly similar to Artaud's, who also frequently writes of scattering and dispersing himself, and of the mysterious inner life of matter, linked always to his own corporeality. Yet ultimately Artaud rejected the Futurists' vision of force because he claimed it was still too limited by the representation of forms: 'il n'y a aucune pensée dans le futurisme; on n'y trouve que des représentations trépidantes de formes, alors que le surréalisme s'empare des formes manifestées pour en extraire le Non-manifestée' ('there is no thought in Futurism; all one finds there are shaking representations of forms, whereas Surrealism takes over manifest forms in order to bring out the Non-manifested').[14]

Another early twentieth-century movement that bears a strong resemblance to Artaud's use of machine-imagery is Dada. If the Futurists'

machines always seem to have a purpose, which is to enhance man's capacities for power, Dada machines are explicitly futile and seem rather to parody this blind faith in technology. The Dadaists were also interested in creating hybrid entities that combined machines with the human body. We might think, for example, of Francis Picabia's 'mechanomorphic' drawings from 1919, or his *Poèmes et dessins de la fille née sans mere* (*Poems and Drawings of the Girl Born without a Mother*, 1918), where birth becomes technological and children can be mechanically built, no longer requiring parents. Max Ernst's machines, too, serve not only as a parody and exposure of the dysfunctional man-machine, but also as a testament to the trauma of war. The body appears as a self-constructed machine that recalls Artaud's fantasy of self-creation, particularly in the collage *Petite machine construite par lui-même* (*Little Machine Built by Itself*, 1920), divided into two separate but interdependent mechanisms. Perhaps the most appropriate of these collages in relation to Artaud is *Ça me fait pisser* (*That Makes Me Piss*, 1919), a diagram of a phallic tower which also seems to be a pump, containing the words 'le gratte popo' ('the popo scraper'). This is at once a reference to the skyscraper, 'gratte-ciel', and also a scratching of the skin, a 'gratte-peau peau' ('skin skin-scraper'). Ernst, like Artaud, scratched away at the surface of the page, inventing techniques such as *frottage* and *grattage* which seem to emphasise bodily contact with the material object, and the idea that the surface is a 'subjectile', neither object nor subject, seeking to eliminate the distance between the body and the work, seems as relevant here as it does to Artaud's work. To take another example, in *The Punching Ball or the Immortality of Buonarroti* (1920), Ernst superimposes the diagram of an *écorché* on to a photo of himself, creating a kind of palimpsestic representation of his own body. Both Ernst and Artaud use the surface of the page as if it were a skin in order to explore the vulnerability and malleability of the limits of the self, combined with machine imagery that also emphasises the process of constructing this new kind of body.

(iii) The machine as medium

Inevitably, another point of comparison when considering hybrid mechanical or electrical and human bodies is that of outsider art, and some of the bodies depicted in the Prinzhorn collection bear considerable resemblance to Artaud's drawings, particularly representations of influencing machines such as the work of Jakob Mohr, or the drawings of James Tilly Matthews.[15] Victor Tausk, who famously invented the

influencing machine as a symptom of schizophrenia in his 1919 article 'Über die Entstehung des "Beeinflussungsapparates" in der Schizophrenie' ('On the Origin of the "Influencing Machine" in Schizophrenia'), writes that the influencing machine is 'eine Maschine von mystischer Beschaffenheit. Die Kraken vermögen seine Konstruktion nur andeutungsweise anzugeben. Er besteht aus Kasten, Kurbeln, Hebeln, Rädern, Druckknöpfen, Drähten, Batterien u. dgl.' ('a machine of mystical nature. The patients are only able to give vague hints of its construction. It consists of boxes, cranks, levers, wheels, buttons, wires, batteries and the like').[16] This could be a description of many of Artaud's drawings of the body with various unidentifiable mechanical instruments surrounding it. Like depictions of influencing machines, Artaud's bodies often appear as double, such as in *La Projection du véritable corps*, in which the 'true' and the 'false' body are linked together, with the true body bursting out of its seams, fighting its inert, imposed form. Yet they also seem to do this in a rather tongue-in-cheek way, and as such work to exceed the all-too-tempting psychoanalytic approaches. Artaud's drawings are as witty as they are disturbing, and their strangely affective power lies in these uneasy boundaries between the horrific and the humorous; the drawing dedicated to Jacques Latrémolière to thank him for ECT is one example of this.

I want to side-step the comparison to the influencing machine, then, to look at these robotic and electrified bodies from another angle, one that finds its crux in the central argument of this book. If the machine is considered as means, these strange corporeal depictions take on an altogether different dimension. They are not representations of bodies in which metaphor (the body is *like* a machine) is confused with reality (the body *is* a machine), but rather material entities that seek to expose their own being *as* means. In these terms, the paper itself becomes a kind of machine, exposing its intermediality at its very surface. To put Artaud's work into another context in which it found a new lease of life, it is relevant to return here to 1960s North America. Chapter 3 argued that the success of Artaud's work in North America was due precisely to this emphasis on gesture, performance and its power in the present moment. Yet another reason for the increased interest in Artaud's work in the US might be that the 1960s was that people were increasingly interested in the means of communication, and consequently in art that paid attention to its own materiality and means. Marshall McLuhan's hugely influential *Understanding Media* was first published in 1964, and was to have far-reaching effects for artists, writers, poets and theatre practitioners, both in the US and further afield;

notably, Deleuze and Guattari make reference to McLuhan in *L'Anti-Œdipe* (*Anti-Oedipus*), and McLuhan may well have been read alongside Artaud. There are arguably parallels to be drawn between McLuhan's work and some of the ideas circulating in French structuralism,[17] so it comes as no surprise that Artaud's work seems in many ways to anticipate and pre-empt McLuhan's dictum that 'the medium is the message'.[18]

McLuhan understands all media as extensions of the human body, arguing that 'during the mechanical ages we had extended our bodies in space', whilst 'after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace'.[19] Artaud's descriptions of his own work as electrical following this has far-reaching consequences, responding to his early wish, as stated in *Le Pèse-nerfs* (*The Nerve Scales*), to communicate via the nerves. McLuhan writes that the effect of mechanisation is fragmentation,[20] whilst electricity is a kind of total and inclusive force, with ambivalent consequences, much how it is described in Artaud's work: it at once has the capacity to numb our senses and to heighten them.[21] There is a distinction in McLuhan's writing between the electrical and the mechanical which does not occur in Artaud's writing, where both processes imply simultaneous fragmentation and unification, and both are seen as means of external control and conversely of resistance to this control. Perhaps most relevant in McLuhan's analysis is his understanding of the role of the artist. McLuhan writes about the sense of touch, which he identifies as the 'haptic' sense,[22] pre-empting some of the concerns of Deleuze's Artaud-inspired writing on Francis Bacon as well as more recent work in film theory on haptic visuality. According to McLuhan,

> the sense of touch, as offering a kind of nervous system or organic unity in the work of art, has obsessed the minds of artists since the time of Cézanne. For more than a century now artists have tried to meet the challenge of the electric age by investing the tactile sense with the role of a nervous system for unifying all the others.[23]

The artist's job becomes to create an 'inclusive consciousness' to combat the fragmentation of the mechanical age, and he continues: 'it may well be that in our conscious inner lives the interplay among our senses is what constitutes the sense of touch. Perhaps *touch* is not just skin contact with *things*, but the very life of things in the *mind*?'[24] For McLuhan, touch is an all-engulfing sense that unifies all others, replacing the

nervous system which has been numbed by electricity. Art no longer seeks to be seen but to be touched or to transform our consciousness through bringing us closer to things, rather than imposing a distance between the object depicted and the viewer.

In other words, art is no longer representative, and herein lies McLuhan's professed interest in abstract art which he believes fulfils this purpose. There are clearly strong parallels with Artaud's aims, although Artaud does not believe that abstract art is the way to achieve this touching, or direct communication. But if we consider that Artaud claims to have experienced electricity precisely as numbing, in a very literal sense, through ECT, and that his drawings are often a direct response to this, what they communicate is that metaphorical representation is no longer enough, and that the very conditions in which these drawings were produced are central to what they seek to portray. Artaud's bodily experience is never separate from the means through which it is communicated and his insistence that his work must be affective and transform consciousness in a physical sense is a compelling example of the kind of art described by McLuhan. This chapter now turns to what is arguably Artaud's most privileged means of communication: the notebook.

(iv) Notation

The importance that Artaud placed on his means of communication, as we have seen, lead him to experiment with a wide range of different media, only in order to discover the limitations of each of these. If Artaud abandoned poetry, cinema, theatre and the published text, lamenting that ultimately none of these were able to adequately express his bodily experience, it is perhaps significant that the one medium that he did not abandon was paper itself. When he was at Rodez he wrote in a letter to Jacques Latrémolière: 'j'ai cessé depuis très longtemps de voir quoi que ce soit hors du papier sur lequel j'écris' ('I have for a long time now, ceased to see anything outside the paper on which I write').[25] This was, of course, a desperate attempt to persuade Latrémolière that ECT treatment was no longer necessary, but it takes on a different meaning in relation to the kind of work that Artaud was producing at the time, which consisted of notebooks and drawings that refuse to allow their viewer to ignore their damaged surfaces, covered in holes, rhythmed by dots, cigarette burns, and the grain or the grid of the paper, scribbled through and disrupted. In a letter to Pierre Bordas from February 1947, Artaud referred to these notebooks as 'mysterious, operational

machines',[26] implying the process of notation as a kind of mechanical but also manual labour.

Artaud produced a total of 406 notebooks in the last three years of his life (the notebooks date from February 1945 to March 1948). These are formed by a prolific mass of fragmented but continuous sketches and text with barely any punctuation, few full stops or capital letters, sentences abandoned halfway through and handwriting that seems to disintegrate into illegibility as the drugs Artaud was taking took effect, only to start up again as he regains consciousness. They are covered in stains from spilt laudanum and unidentifiable scum stuck to the pages, and all bear a crease down the centre from where Artaud would fold them in half and shove them in his pocket when he went out. It is impossible to ignore the material conditions through which they came into being, as it is equally impossible to ignore the suffering that is not only written and drawn about but also visible in the corporeal traces left on the surface of the paper. They seem to act as an extension of the very ravaged body that moulded them. Like objects of manual labour, they also must to some extent have formed that body itself, through the repeated gestures required to produce them, such as, like we saw in chapter 5, the sustained hammering, blowing and stabbing that is discernible in the holes bored through them.

Again, the glossolalic writing in the notebooks when read aloud often mimics the plosive, staccato and hissing sounds of malfunctioning machines, such as in this example from one of the Ivry notebooks: 'STA / IRAPT / POUMPT / PURD / POUMPT / PURT / POUMPT / TI /Après K R R I S S T'.[27] Artaud describes how he forges weapons using his own body: 'des clous, / des leviers, des masses, /des pics, des bâtons, / des marteaux, des scies, / des potences et des / poteaux, mais aussi / des arbres, des caissons blindés, / des guillotines, des billots, / et surtout d'authentiques / machines électriques' ('nails, levers, sledge-hammers, pick-axes, clubs, hammers, scythes, gallows, but also shafts, reinforced caissons, guillotines, blocks, and above all authentic electrical machines').[28] The notebooks are crammed full of lists of instruments of torture, body parts and the like, often mixing wordplay, alliteration and assonance with semantic content. Whilst many Artaud scholars have been tempted to overlook the notebooks in part because there are simply so many of them and they have until recently not been readily available, but also because they are so difficult to classify, such lists seem to form the core of Artaud's creative practice, proving that the published texts that emerge from them are only a small part of the complex activities, both textual and extra-textual, that Artaud's poetic practice requires.

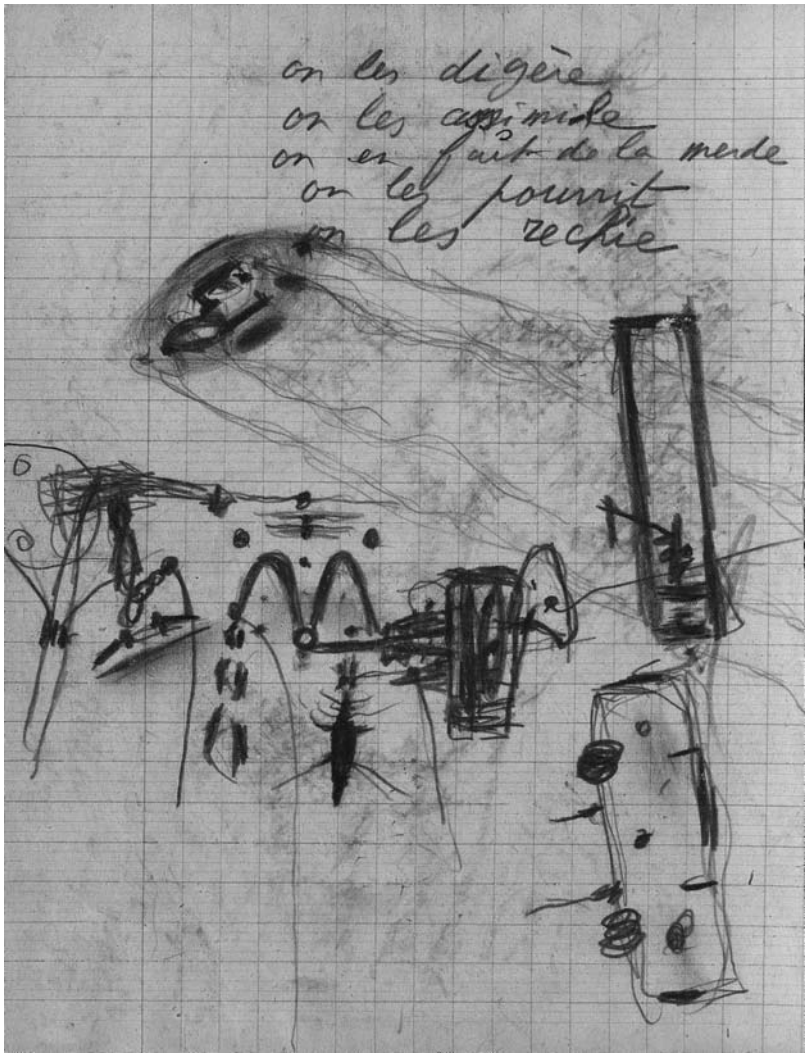

Illustration 6.1 Artaud, Antonin, page from notebook number 310 © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2014.

Artaud describes the rendering of his body and his consciousness as surface, writing in notebook 242 'J ettoufe tout / esprit et tout / être a l'interieur / sur la surface / de mon corps' [sic] (I suffocate all / spirit and all / interior being / on the surface of my body'), and 'la conscience / est

une / proliferation de l epiderme' ('consciousness / is a / proliferation of the epidermis').[29] Consciousness, passing through the skin, is extended on to the material surface, as are all other bodily functions that Artaud writes about in detail. Breathing is just one of these functions, as Artaud makes repeated references in these notebooks to asphyxiation, asthma, spitting, coughing, sneezing, hiccupping, snorting, grunting, burping and other interruptions of regular breathing patterns. The breath ('souffle') is invested with magical powers and Artaud writes about projecting objects into the air using his respiratory system; these objects materialise as mangled sketches on the paper surface, as if flattened onto it by force.

At the beginning of notebook 395, Artaud describes his creative process in the following terms: 'Il se décontracte / et cesse de / poursuivre un / objet arrêté, / il abdique / abandonne l'idée de / son corps / mais en fixe / plus fortement / un point / avec un membre / ou un doigt (ferme)' ('He decontracts / and ceases to / pursue an / inert object / he surrenders / abandons the idea of / his body / but fixes / a point / more forcefully / with a limb / or a (firm) finger').[30] Gesturing in space, contorting the body, and fixing this gesture on a specific point on the page, leaving a tiny dot or a series of small holes in the paper is the closest that Artaud can achieve to an expression of corporeal thought, outside language, but nonetheless inseparable from it, appearing alongside a description of the process. This is not the *idea* of the body then, but its direct expression; this is not *a* thought but the perpetually moving, never-ending thinking process, for which the surface of the page is not the site of form or finitude, but rather a site it traverses, putting it into process. Thought is a relation of surfaces, to be expressed through the act of scraping and to be read through the scum (or 'raclure') that is left over. In the absence of his own body, and considering the impossibility of actually carrying out the corporeal transformations that he calls for with the creation of a 'body without organs', perhaps the only truly organless body for Artaud becomes the material surface of the paper itself, as an extension of the body's largest organ: its skin.

Later on across the pages of the same notebook, he scrawls the words: 'il joint / les mains / et s'évade / du domaine / de la pensée / du monde / de la / pensée arrêtée / et il entre dans / la pensée / illimitée / en mouvement / Il n'y entre pas / il y est' ('he joins / his hands / and evades / the domain / of thought / of the world / of / *arrested* thought / and he *enters* into / unlimited / moving / thought / He doesn't enter it / he is in it').[31] The notebook for Artaud is the domain of unlimited thought, because it allows him to escape the printed, finalised or published 'word' that arrests the thinking process, thus denying it a discernable form and

activating its capacity as a force, or a powerful, affective sign. As Barber notes,[32] the last words that Artaud wrote in his final notebook, shortly before he died, in note form with no punctuation, were 'etc etc'. These words say much about how we might approach the entire oeuvre, which seems to declare its own impossibility, as if to say that the work Artaud is writing about is yet to come, with no beginning or end, like the apocalypse he continuously predicted that never quite materialised, or the body that he was always in the process of building, interrupted, as with his writing, only by his own death. The notebook provides the perfect conditions for the material writing-yet-to-come because it bears witness to a particular form of physical presence, being portable, disposable, and malleable, and resisting completion and publication. Most importantly for Artaud, it is marked by traces of all kinds of bodily gestures that cannot be put into words, and it would certainly not be a stretch to suggest that one could read all of Artaud's work as a form of notation.

(v) Reproduction

One of the greatest difficulties that editors of Artaud's works have faced is how to reproduce it without detracting from this distinctly material presence. This difficulty has resulted in a series of disputes, in particular, and tellingly, surrounding the notebooks. When Artaud died he purportedly left a large trunk full of notebooks in the care of Paule Thévenin (according to Thévenin herself), instructing her to destroy them. Instead, Thévenin began to type them up to include them in Artaud's complete works, but only got as far as transcribing half of them, comprising volumes 15 to 26. When she died in 1993 she left the remaining notebooks to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, but in the meantime, members of Artaud's family, accompanied by some Artaud scholars, began to dispute her methodology. They state that she had no legal claim to the notebooks and refused to allow anyone else access, and that her transcription of the notebooks was haphazard, with punctuation added, sections missing and the original layout completely ignored. The text forms only a minor part of the complex machinations, gestures and unidentifiable scribblings that take place across the notebook pages, and the dispute over ownership is clearly formed and informed by the various stances on how the work should be translated into a printed format and read (or indeed whether they should be 'read' or simply faced).

Philippe Sollers points out, in an interview from 1994, that one of Artaud's notebooks sold for 400,000 francs at auction, and that 406 notebooks together would be worth 160 million francs, which, Sollers

claims, is the equivalent of 16 per cent of the capital at Gallimard.[33] The notebooks are no longer cheap and disposable, having entered an altogether different economy, and they now circulate as reproductions in a variety of different formats. In response to the quarrels surrounding Thévenin's version of the Rodez notebooks in the complete works, Gallimard published, in 2006, a facsimile version of notebook 395 from Ivry. This facsimile attempts to reproduce the notebook in exact detail, including all its physical blemishes, but it somehow fails, becoming a fetishised, limited edition collector's item that betrays the immediate, disposable nature of the original object. The reader can see the damage that the paper has sustained, but the paper is glossy, thick and expensive. It even comes with a protective cardboard envelope, which is in turn wrapped in cellophane, and it also comes with a legible version which is the transcription of all the text contained within with an introduction by Évelyne Grossman. What this object, enveloped in various protective layers of packaging, seems to suggest is that the reader should keep it in pristine condition, safe from sticky, inky hands and accidental spillages. This notebook lacks a sense of suffering that in the original object is difficult to ignore.

Yet another incarnation of the notebooks occurred in 2011, when the notebooks from Ivry were published in two volumes by Gallimard, edited by Évelyne Grossman. This version is certainly more reliable than Paule Thévenin's transcriptions of the Rodez notebooks, and comes with small-scale images of some of the notebook pages to give the reader an idea of the layout and drawings surrounding the text. But it offers still no sense of the blank pages and makes up quite a cumbersome book to read due to the extensive notes. Perhaps, ironically, because much of the space of the volumes are taken up by descriptions of the physical state of the notebook in the form of footnotes, the impact that these footnotes are intended to highlight is again depleted.

And finally, the format in which the notebooks are available in their entirety to readers is at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris on microfilm, a format that both amplifies and illuminates them. The effect of seeing the notebooks in this way, unlike the facsimile, seems to accentuate their fragility, somehow retaining a sense of aura and giving the – albeit illusory – impression that one is drawing closer to the real object that is nonetheless too fragile to handle. Stephen Barber writes about the theoretical complexities inherent in the planned process of digitisation of Artaud's notebooks, which means that the notebooks will be available online from any location in the world. Barber argues that whilst on the one hand the digitised archive space 'holds parallels with the spatial

imperatives which that work itself demands', on the other, the digital medium also 'presents an extreme conflict with Artaud's own preoccupations: with corporeality, with representational processes, with the status of the fragment, and with the immediacy of the gestural act'.[34] It is arguable that the digital archive lessens the impact that seeing the notebooks on a format such as microfilm has on the viewer; the computer screen may well imply a level of disengagement that betrays the violence, fragility, resilience and very materiality of the paper which is still retained on photographic film precisely because it highlights rather than masks the materiality of the object.

In the more legible and palatable printed text version, it is the handwriting, scribbling and materiality of the original object that is lost. Media theorist Friedrich Kittler writes, with reference to handwriting: 'wenn eine Hand zur Feder griff, geschah das Wunder. Dann hinterließ jener Körper, der doch nicht aufhörte, sich nicht zu schreiben, seltsam unvermeidliche Spuren' ('once a hand took hold of a pen, something miraculous occurred: the body, which did not cease not to write itself, left strangely unavoidable traces').[35] Such a statement seems all the more relevant to Artaud's notebooks, which at times seem to express more through these unavoidable traces than through the content of the text itself. Kittler cites Heidegger, who writes (presumably by hand) 'Die Schreib-maschine verhüllt das Wesen des Schreibens und der Schrift. Sie entzieht dem Menschen den Wesensrang der Hand, ohne daß der Mensch diesen Entzug gebührend erfährt und erkennt, daß sich hier bereits ein Wandel des Bezugs des Seins zum Wesen des Menschen ereignet hat' ('the typewriter veils the essence of writing and of the script. It with draws from man the essential rank of the hand, without man's experiencing this withdrawal appropriately and recognizing that it has transformed the relation of Being to his essence').[36] Again, Heidegger here is pre-empting McLuhan's statement, which in turn inspired Kittler, that the medium is the message; the medium transforms not only an individual's own essence, but the essence of his or her relationship to others.

Might readers see, following this somewhat technophobic response, the resistance of Artaud's work to all forms of mechanical reproduction as an aspect that the work itself, with its horror of all forms of reproduction, announces? It is tempting to draw parallels between Artaud's refusal of forms of derivation, evident in his insistence on creating his own body in protest to the body that was so rigorously controlled, incarcerated and subjected to ECT, and the work's resistance to completion and publication. Yet there is a distinction to be made between the reproduction of the

work and the media that this reproduction utilises, as Artaud's reaction to new forms of media available to him was on the whole enthusiastic, so it would be incorrect to assume that all machines are forms of appropriation. To take the most obvious example, in *The Theatre and its Double* he advocated using forms of lighting and amplified sound that relied on the most recent technology available. Artaud was always looking for ways to extend his body in new and unprecedented ways; the problem came when the media available to him failed to fulfil its idealised promise. In contrast to the technophobe, then, it was in actual fact Artaud's unbounded enthusiasm for new forms of media that would always and inevitably let him down in the end. This chapter now turns now to another means through which Artaud sought to test the limits of his body, one that in Artaud's work is once again intimately tangled up with the process of notation: radio.

(vi) Noisy machines

In 1946, Artaud recorded two short texts for the radio programme *Club d'essai*,[37] 'Les Malades et les médecins', recorded on 8 June and broadcast the following day, and 'Aliénation et magie noire', broadcast on 16 July. Both of these were damning denunciations of the psychiatric profession, written in textual form and read out by Artaud himself. In November 1947, the director of dramatic and literary programming on the national French radio station RDF (Radiodiffusion française), Fernand Pouey, asked Artaud to prepare a recording for his programme *La Voix des poètes*. This was to become Artaud's last large-scale project, *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (*To Have Done with the Judgement of god*), written specifically for the radio, and he envisaged it as his ultimate masterpiece in which he would finally be able to transmit his message of corporeal revolt across the airwaves to a vast and unsuspecting audience. His plans for a piece on the final judgement were suitably ambitious, yet inevitably, as with all of his other projects, they ended only in failure and disappointment, as the day before the broadcast, upon listening to the recording, Wladimir Porché, who was then the head of RDF, decided that it was far too controversial and exercised a veto.

This decision to effectively censor the programme was unforeseen; Artaud had been given a completely free rein over the recording, being allowed, in addition to composing the text, to choose his actors and to have as many rehearsals as he deemed necessary, and he was even provided with a secretary to type up his script. Artaud chose his old theatrical collaborator Roger Blin, in addition to Paule Thévenin and

Colette Thomas, who was later replaced by Maria Casarès. He himself read the introduction and the conclusion, and participated in glossolalic dialogues with Blin, as well as providing sound effects, using a gong, a xylophone and various bits and pieces of percussion, accompanied by his own strange vocal interjections.

Artaud's voice in the opening text is harsh and grating, crackling, popping and hissing alongside the crackling of the tape. The intonation is downright bizarre, resembling a kind of ritualistic chanting at times, breaking in and out of a ringing falsetto, the enunciation exaggerated, with words spat out, with throaty 'r's gurgling and elongated hissing 's's as Artaud pronounces words such as 'sperme' and 'soldats'. The voice sounds old, trembling and rasping, both vulnerable and resistant, rising and falling throughout. The timing of the chanting is meticulously planned, with the pauses as important as words, and it often has a startling effect when it seems like the sentence has finished, only for Artaud's voice to burst through the silence. The second text is a short series of bird-like glossolalic squawks, accompanied by banging that Artaud referred to as 'bruitages' ('sound effects'). Maria Casarès provides the voice for the third text, mimicking Artaud's own vocal style as closely as possible, again sounding, despite the fact that she must have been barely 25 years old, as if she were on death's doorstep, her sing-song voice trembling, rasping, chanting, her throat cracking and croaking as her words alternately mount and descend in pace.

Following another short interlude of clumsy-sounding xylophone playing, Roger Blin's voice interjects, deeper and perhaps less distressed than Artaud's, but providing one of the most memorable texts of the piece. His shouting of 'le caca' and the glossolalia that echoes this towards the end of the track comes across like a war-cry. This is followed by a glossolalic interchange between him and Artaud, with a back-and-forth structure in which it seems each is trying to outdo the other, in part humorous, particularly when it sounds like they are holding their noses to produce muffled mumblings, yet at the same time deeply unsettling. Paule Thévenin's text sounds, in comparison, rather more calming, but builds up into a crescendo, rising in tone and intensity until another of Artaud's gut-wrenching shrieking cries emerges, this time recorded in the stairwell, producing a distant, echoing effect, with the yelping continuing until he reaches the very end of his breath so that the voice fades out, accompanied by minimal drum and gong-banging. The conclusion to the text, read by Artaud, lists in numbered points the purpose of the recording, again with exaggerated enunciation. As Artaud proclaims the famous words: 'l'homme est malade parce

qu'il est mal construit […] Lorsque vous lui aurez fait un corps sans organes, alors vous l'aurez délivré de tous ses automatismes / et rendu à sa véritable liberté' ('man is sick because he is badly constructed […] when you have made him a body without organs, / then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions / and restored to him his true freedom'),[38] one cannot help but think that breaking with all conventional-sounding vocal gestures is a way of reshaping the vocal chords and organs of speech in order to forcibly reconstruct this badly designed anatomy; the voice of the recording becomes an attempt at creating this body without organs.

The content of the text is as arresting as its performance, and many of Artaud's favourite themes crop up: machinery, warfare, the digestive system, the Tarahumaras and peyote rituals, alongside vehement denunciations of North American imperialism, the Catholic Church, psychiatry and the US education system. Like in *Artaud le mômo*, Artaud self-consciously performs as a madman, and pre-empts listeners' potential responses by staging an interview with himself, where he repeats words to the effect: 'Vous délirez M. Artaud. / Vous êtes fou' ('You are raving Mr Artaud. / You are mad'),[39] only to denounce and reject such an interpretation. The text fluctuates between chaos and order, evident from its very structure, framed by an introduction and conclusion, but punctuated by throttled moans and glossolalic outbursts. Maria Casarès recalls how she was barely able to sleep and suffered from nightmares throughout the recording due to the terrifying contents of the text.[40] The most striking aspects of the content are the continual descriptions of corporeal processes, expulsions, appropriations and suffering, alongside references to nothingness and the abyss, all the more salient given that Artaud was dying, although he himself may not have been aware of it, of intestinal cancer. He speaks, through the voice of Paule Thévenin, of 'la présence, / menaçante / jamais lassante / de mon / corps' ('the menacing / never tiring / presence / of my / body').[41]

Unsurprisingly, Artaud was outraged when the decision not to broadcast the recording was exercised, and numerous attempts were made to get this decision revoked. On 5 February 1948 the recording was presented to a group of poets, critics and artists, including Jean-Louis Barrault, Raymond Queneau, Jean Cocteau, René Clair, Paul Éluard and Jean Paulhan. Amongst the audience, strangely, there was also a Dominican priest, Reverend Père Laval, who declared alongside all the others present that the recording should be broadcast (by all accounts, Artaud was not too pleased that his blasphemous recording gained the approval of a member of the cloth).[42] This was all to little effect, as

Porché did not change his mind, and *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* ended up being published simply as text, its impact greatly diminished. It was not until long after his death that the recording would reach a wider audience, as Artaud died of a chloral hydrate overdose just one month later, on 4 March 1948, his body found appropriately mid-gesture, sitting upright at the foot of his bed holding one shoe in his hand.

The reason that Artaud invested such grand expectations in this final project was that he hoped to reach an audience of ordinary people, and not just the Parisian avant-garde literary circles who had access to the limited editions of his previously published work. When critic René Guilly insinuated that *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* was not suitable for a working-class, mass audience, Artaud responded in a letter published in *Combat*, writing about his intended audience:

> Ceux qui lundi soir assiégeaient la radio et attendaient, avec une curiosité et une impatience jamais vues, l'émission intitulée « Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu » étaient justement des gens de ce grand public, garçons coiffeurs, blanchisseuses, marchands de tabac, quincailliers, menuisiers, ouvriers imprimeurs, bref, toutes gens qui gagnent leur vie avec le jus sanglant de leurs coudes, et non tels capitalistes de fumier enrichis secrètement, qui vont tous les dimanches à la messe et désirent par-dessus tout le respect des rites et de la loi.
>
> Those people who crowded around their radios Monday evening and awaited, with a curiosity and impatience never seen before, the broadcast entitled *To Have done with the Judgement of god* were in fact members of this mass audience, hairdressers, laundresses, tobacconists, ironmongers, carpenters, printers, in short, all people who earn their living by the sweat of their elbows, and not certain capitalists of dung grown rich in secret who go to mass every Sunday and who desire above all the respect of ritual and of the law.[43]

Artaud again expresses an interest in physical work, seeming to draw parallels between his own creative process and that of people working with tangible material objects (hair, clothes, tobacco, iron, wood and paper), rejecting literary pretensions in favour of manual labour. Of course, there was no way of knowing who would have tuned in to listen to Artaud's programme, so this assumed audience was in reality the audience he actively desired, not necessarily the one he would have had.

If Artaud saw radio as a popular, non-elitist means of communication, it was equally invested with mysterious, almost magical properties. He writes, again in retrospect, that:

> je voulais une œuvre neuve et qui accrochât certains points organiques de vie, / une œuvre / où l'on se sent tout le système nerveux / éclairé comme au photophore / avec des vibrations, / des consonances / qui invitent / l'homme / A SORTIR / AVEC / son corps / pour suivre dans le ciel cette nouvelle, insolite et radieuse Épiphanie
>
> I wanted a work that was new and that struck upon certain organic points of life / a work / in which one could feel one's entire nervous system / lit up like a miner's lamp / with vibrations / consonance / that invite / man / to emerge / WITH / his body / to follow in the sky this new, unusual, and radiant Epiphany[44]

What is interesting about this is that radio, perhaps more than any other medium, tends to be invested by media and conspiracy theorists alike with precisely the kinds of mystical properties that Artaud describes here. Marshall McLuhan describes radio, quite cryptically, as 'a subliminal echo chamber of magical power to touch remote and forgotten chords'.[45] Being, as with all media, an extension of man, McLuhan attributes radio to the nervous system, stating that it is 'that extension of the central nervous system that is matched only by human speech itself'.[46] In fact, he believes that while the printed page strips language of all its gestural qualities, these qualities return via radio, especially if one listens to the radio in the dark.[47] Finally, he writes that 'radio is not only a mighty awakener of archaic memories, forces, and animosities, but a decentralizing, pluralistic force'.[48]

Many of these ideas are pre-empted by Artaud's work, for example the importance of vibration, and communicating via the nervous system, the putting into motion of mysterious, magical and archaic forces, and of course the use of radio to diffuse information ('diffuser' in French means to broadcast) as if it were a truly non-hierarchical, levelling medium. Artaud placed great importance on the actor's voice in his theatre practice; what is missing from the radio, in comparison to the cinema and theatre, most notably, is the visual presence of the body. It is the indeed idea of radio as a form of disembodiment, arguably, that makes radio and sound-recording spooky, sinister or mysterious to certain listeners, as becomes apparent with EVP (Electronic Voice Phenomenon),

where unidentified ghostly sounds and even whole monologues or conversations appear to interfere in the recording process.

Yet despite the apparent absence of the body in sound recordings, there remains, some theorists argue, a corporeality that is nonetheless very different to the kind present in bodies on screen or on stage. In some instances it is argued that bodily presence may even be accentuated rather than diminished by the lack of visible images of bodies. For example, Friedrich Kittler argues that the phonograph, by announcing the very possibility of recording, storing and transmitting sound, stores and transmits 'physiologischer Zufall, stochastische Unordnung von Körpern' ('the physiological accidents and stochastic disorder of bodies').[49] In a weaving together of McLuhan's media theory with Lacanian psychoanalysis, he claims that 'Seitdem es Phonographen gibt, gibt es Schriften ohne Subjekt' ('ever since the invention of the phonograph there has been writing without a subject').[50] The destruction of the subject in sound recording occurs, according to Kittler, through the body, which without the imaginary illusion of completeness that its image provides actively disrupts identification. This relies on his assertion that the phonograph captures all kinds of background and bodily noise regardless of signification so that 'Damit wird Artikuliertheit zur zweitrangigen Ausnahme in einem Rauschspektrum' ('articulateness becomes a second-order exception in a spectrum of noise').[51] In other words, what emerges from early sound recording, rather than content, is simply, according to Kittler, white noise that overshadows the message transmitted. Kittler is interested in this noise precisely because, conversely, it expresses the presence of the body, emerging from all kinds of accidental, unintended noises. Kittler aligns such noise with the Lacanian Real, arguing that it exists in excess of or even in opposition to imaginary or symbolic interpretations. This 'writing without a subject', then, is entirely dependent on the body exceeding its intended functions: 'Nicht Gedichte, sondern Indizien speichert der Phonograph […] und diese Indizien sind sprechend in genau dem Maß, wie ihr Sender sie nicht manipulieren kann' ('the phonograph stores indices rather than poems. And these indices speak precisely to the extent that their sender cannot manipulate them').[52] In fact the white noise Kittler writes about emerges not from the body as a complete and self-contained entity, but from its expansion and interaction with the space it operates with, ambient room noise and the recording mechanism itself. The body that becomes audible in sound-recording thus constitutes a kind of inter-being, posing a continual threat to the subject with its illusion of completeness.

One could choose to listen to *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* entirely as noise; the noise of dust settling on the surface of the tape, the interference of white noise from the tape machines and ambience from the room and the bodies inhabiting it at the time of recording, and over time the deterioration of the tape material itself, hissing, buzzing and crackling. One could also listen to the voices as multiple connections between organs in the body vibrating with the air, and vibrating on to the recording apparatus, and even the voices themselves as undermining the sentences, distracting from meaning through strange-sounding intonation, and drawing attention to the fact that they come from bodies rather than emerging from a written text. Artaud's constant references to communicating through vibration is surely relevant here, given that noise is produced through vibration, as is the entire recording process; the vibration of the larynx, the vibration of the ear drum, the vibration of valves in a microphone, of the membrane of the speaker, and, of course, the vibration of the gramophone needle, as Kittler identifies. Tape recordings are produced through another type of surface contact that interested Artaud: magnetism, and *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* would almost certainly have been recorded on the relatively new AEG Magnetophon.[53]

Yet in spite of what Kittler perceives as recording technologies capacities to counteract the representation of subject, Artaud's reaction to sound recording, as with all other media forms, was ambivalent: all of these recording processes necessitate the involvement of a machine, and it is here, according to Artaud, that the real problem lies. He wrote to Paule Thévenin, in a letter dated 24 February 1948: 'Là où est la *machine* / c'est toujours le gouffre et le néant, / il y a une interposition technique qui déforme et annihile ce que l'on a fait' ('Wherever the *machine* is / there is always the abyss and the void / there is a technical intervention that distorts and annihilates what one has done').[54] The limitations of media become apparent at this point; if for Kittler the means overtakes the message, for Artaud the message must be within and inseparable from the means itself, otherwise all effective communication fails.

Sound recording was problematic for Artaud precisely because there would always be an aspect of it that he could not control. Rather than the transmission of meaningless noise, Artaud wanted to generate a form of universal meaning, based on direct contact rather than symbolic distance. This again brings us to the contradictory status of all of Artaud's output with its impossible undertaking to produce universal non-representational meaning, but one that, unlike Kittler's phonograph, he could control; treating the audience like snakes and making them perceive through

vibration was one way to deal with this. Making marks on the paper is perhaps another, for the surfaces of the notebook pages are covered in dots, marks and scratches which at times resemble the scratches on old, uncared-for vinyl records; there is a sense in which the notebooks can be read as noisy, covered in non-signifying lines. These 'noises' are the traces of the body's movement, where Artaud would gesture in the air before scribbling on or stabbing the notebook paper. The surface is invaded by the traces of corporeal gestures which communicate material presence, interacting with the glossolalia that begs to be read out loud, again recalling Barthes' description of Artaud's writing in *Le Plaisir du text* as 'l'écriture à haute voix' ('writing out loud').[55]

The machine-like notebook pages serve as a vital site of interaction between corporeal and vocal gesture, as well as an incubator for all the mysterious forces that Artaud sought to put in motion via the theatre, film, radio and other forms of media. Yet this incubator acts in retrospect, as the notebooks came after most of these other forms of media, and in this sense Artaud's output seems to work backwards, as he began his career trying to work out how to get published, only to end it by producing objects that absolutely resisted publication. The media Artaud engaged with was never simply a means of communication, but in itself shaped the content of what was being communicated. In this sense, it is evident that whilst Artaud at times denounced the technical obstacles created by using machinery, had technologies such as those required by radio and cinema not existed, Artaud's notebooks, splattered with sketches of film cameras and unidentifiable machines, would have looked entirely different. McLuhan writes that 'the moment of the meeting of media is a moment of freedom and release from the ordinary trance and numbness imposed on them by our senses';[56] for Artaud this thundering, electrifying meeting of media (radio, drawing, theatre, poetry, film), announcing the dispersal of his own body scattered across his work, materialises frenetically in a series of blueprints, fragments and sketches, always in note-form, and often only on paper.

Conclusion

Anaïs Nin writes, meeting Artaud in 1933: 'he was a knot of tangled nerves vibrating in all directions without a core of peace'.[1] This reads as much like a description of his work as of the man himself: shattered, fragmentary and full of nervous energy. How do we reach a conclusion when writing about a body of work that by its very nature resists finality or resolve, a work that itself ended with the words 'etc etc'? It is certainly not by writing 'with' Artaud, as Roland Barthes suggests, that any kind of conclusion can be advanced. Yet my conclusion lies at the heart of this incompletion. By resisting completion Artaud's work draws attention to the processes through which it comes into being, without ever arriving at what it aims to become, because this arrival in itself would constitute the end of the work and the creation of a 'work' rather than a series of fragments. Essential to the fragmentary nature of the work is its very materiality, which constitutes a continual merging of signs, corporeal matter and material and textual practice. The relationship between the body and the work is, I have argued, essentially mimetic: the work mimics the body by behaving like it, but also by materially coming into contact with it, and this merging of body and work creates a new expression of corporeal experience that might, I have suggested, itself be called a 'body'.

This particular body hovers above the fragmented paper mass that Artaud left behind, never quite fully accessible to the reader, but communicating on an affective level, in the sense that it explicitly threatens the subject, pushing beyond any boundaries that would separate subject from object, or would constitute the basis on which subjectivity might be formed. Whilst Artaud's work was a fundamental reference for post-structural theorists seeking the destruction of the subject of psychoanalysis, of discourse and of representation, it reaches beyond

the implications of these, by questioning the work in its material as well as its ideological status. The merging of matter in Artaud's work is also a merging of media, and this process itself is yet to be complete, as Artaud's work, by drawing attention to its own materiality, will continue to draw attention to the new forms of media it is incorporated into; from the paper to the digital, from cinema screen to computer monitor, from facsimile, to microfilm, to installation.

What sort of a 'body' is produced through the various different textual and extratextual operations that Artaud employs in his work? We have seen a variety of different figures, that might be called bodies, in action; in chapter 1, a body seeking to prevent its own annihilation through language, only to communicate the impossibility of expressing the thinking process adequately; in chapter 2, a body that infiltrates the text via glossolalia and digestive processes; in chapter 3, a series of performative yet perpetually suspended bodies; in chapter 4, a cinematic entity that communicates via a form of collective affectivity; in chapter 5, a collection of blueprints for bodies intended to dismantle the anatomy and disrupt the formation of the subject; and in chapter 6, a mechanical, always mediated body. The question of who the 'Artaud' present in the text is comes down to what kind of signs emerge in order to destabilise the signifying processes of the speaking subject. This can be read as a reversal, where writing becomes, as Philippe Sollers declares, 's'écrire et se produire' ('writing and producing oneself') rather than simply writing and producing a text, a process by which 'on est soi-même un signe' ('one becomes a sign oneself').[2] Yet the emphasis on writing here is misleading, as the sign cannot be reduced to a linguistic signifier, but must be understood, like the kinds of magical signs Artaud sought to engage with in the spells that were discussed in chapter 3, as a performing, physically active yet always suspended entity.

When Artaud writes that theatre is the double of life, we might say that this is true of all of the signs that he creates, and that this is perhaps where their essentially performative nature might be located. The double is not to be understood as a mirror in the Platonic sense, which is to say a mirror that implies a separation between the living entity and the reflection of it; if we consider Artaud's approach to Lewis Carroll's looking glass we can see that it is difficult to distinguish one side of the mirror from the other. Artaud writes that language can be conceived as a mirror, and criticises Carroll for remaining safely on the side of reality, not being able to break through the surface to draw out what he calls the 'non-écrit' ('unwritten'). Artaud's double is a destabilising, threatening force rather than a mere reflection. It is also important to

remember that what Artaud calls life is not an objective, exterior reality because both the double and life exist at a kind of threshold, or limit, and as such are not clearly distinguishable concepts but active entities that are always merging and communicating at the limits of what we might understand to be a physical creative space, interacting between the material and the immaterial.

To conclude, then, one might be tempted to ask what is to be gained from reading Artaud. The mimetic, affective and contagious forces put into process in his work are certainly compelling, but could, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, produce something rather less desirable, which they identify as the body without organs of the fascist. In *Mille Plateaux*, they address the question of how to avoid producing such a body, to which Artaud's work sometimes draws dangerously close. Artaud's work might find its most appropriate engagement through the moving image, as ultimately the cinema is perhaps the most suitable medium through which to carry out Artaud's form of corporeal revolt, especially in a kind of cinema that pushes beyond phenomenology, beyond the subject towards the post-human, or towards a form of expression that advocates hybridity, exchange and communication between bodies. Again here there is a danger of falling into the trap of advocating a form of unconscious affectivity that removes all sense of agency from its spectators. At the end of *L'Image-temps* Deleuze writes about the spiritual automaton that cinematic images give rise to, arguing that there are two potential types, one that reveals the very essence of thought as it is thought, and the other that becomes dispossessed of its own thinking process and susceptible to exterior suggestion. This latter is clearly the example of a fascist appropriation of the affective, collective body, and Deleuze provides his reader with the example of 'l'automate hitlérien' ('the Hitlerian automaton') that came out of an appropriation of expressionist cinema.[3]

Deleuze's reading is relevant here because it reveals that Artaud's attempt to engage with the affective powers of matter can lead elsewhere than to the conclusion that his thought is essentially fascist. The body as an unformed mass of matter, no longer human, must be communicative, but fails when it communicates an idea that can comfortably be slotted into ideology or logic. This is not to say that Artaud's work and the body that it produces is a-political, although it does reject many of the politics attributed to it, whether Marxist, Maoist or Fascist. Of course, Artaud's work will always be subject to appropriation, but its politics are material as opposed to ideal, corporeal as opposed to intellectual. This emphasis on materialism is what initially led many of the

Tel Quel theorists to associate it with Marxist materialism, but it stops short of this through its rejection of ideas in favour of new forms of bodily revolt. What Artaud's work addresses is the very genesis of creativity, and it tells us that this cannot be channelled through an organisational principle or system, because it is anterior to this; it is anarchic, chaotic and can only speak through the fragment. Any attempt to politicise Artaud's work must take this into account; politics becomes a question of mediation, and of how one actively intervenes in the process of signification, or representation. For Artaud, this was always an emphatically corporeal form of mediation, as resistance to fascism, or any form of totalitarian politics could, for him, only occur in the body's intervention in and disruption of the representative process.

Notes

Introduction

1. Antonin Artaud, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 94. *Selected Writings* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 83. Hereafter *SW*.
2. Artaud, *OCIX* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), p. 123.
3. Artaud, *OCXIII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 104. *SW*, p. 571.
4. André Breton, *Entretiens* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), p. 113.
5. Breton, *Entretiens*, p. 113.
6. Artaud's rupture with Surrealism is intricately documented and analysed in Paule Thévenin's *Antonin Artaud: Fin de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris: Éditions Lignes-Léo Scheer, 2006).
7. Thévenin, *Antonin Artaud: Fin de l'ère chrétienne*, p. 21.
8. Roland Barthes, *Œuvres complètes* vol. III (Paris: Seuil, 1995), p. 364.
9. More recent critical accounts of Bretonian Surrealism have tried to break down this opposition between a Bataille- or Artaud-inspired materialist version of Surrealism on the one hand and the more idealist version attributed to Breton. See, for example, Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993) or Johanna Malt, *Obscure Objects of Desire: Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
10. See Florence de Mèredieu, *L'Affaire Artaud: Journal ethnographique* (Paris: Fayard, 2009).
11. Barthes, *OCIII*, p. 1187.
12. Barthes, *OCIII*, p. 63.
13. Artaud, *OCXII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 57.
14. Isidore Isou and Maurice Lemaître, *Antonin Artaud torturé par les psychiatres. Les ignobles erreurs de André Breton, Tristan Tzara, Robert Desnos et Claude Bourdet dans l'affaire de l'internement d'Antonin Artaud. Suivi de: Maurice Lemaître: qui est le docteur Ferdière?* (Paris: Lettrists, 1970).
15. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 175. Artaud's italics.
16. Adrian Morfee, *Antonin Artaud's Writing Bodies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), p. 106.

1 The Limits of Representation

1. Artaud, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 28. *OCI* from here on. For English translation, *Selected Writings*, trans. Helen Weaver (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 35. Translation modified. *SW* from here on.
2. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 28.
3. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 43.

4. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 41. *SW*, p. 44.
5. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 43. *SW*, p. 46.
6. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 51. *SW*, p. 60. Translation modified.
7. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 49. *SW*, p. 59.
8. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 50. *SW*, p. 59.
9. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 49. *SW*, p. 59.
10. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 49. *SW*, p. 59.
11. Artaud, *OC1*, p. 81. *SW*, p. 79.
12. Artaud, *OC1*, p. 98. *SW*, p. 84.
13. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 101. *SW*, p. 86.
14. Artaud, *Œuvres complètes* vol. I** (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 50. *SW*, p. 109.
15. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 67. *SW*, p. 71. Translation modified.
16. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 65. *SW*, p. 69.
17. Artaud, *OCI,* p. 65. *SW,* p. 69.
18. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 88. *SW*, p. 81.
19. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 88. *SW*, p. 81.
20. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 97. *SW*, p. 83.
21. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Œdipe* (Paris: Minuit, 1972). The phrase 'corps sans organes' is taken from Artaud's *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*.
22. Adrian Morfee, *Antonin Artaud's Writing Bodies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), p. 151.
23. Kimberley Jannarone, *Artaud and his Doubles* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2010), p. 11.
24. Jannarone and Morfee seek to nuance this distinction in Artaud's own texts but by suggesting that Schreber's memoirs are simply psychotic, they reintroduce the distinction they seek to avoid.
25. Daniel Paul Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* (Berlin: Kadmos Verlag, 1995), p. 34. *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* trans. Ida MacAlpine and Richard A. Hunter (New York: New York Review Books, 2000), p. 54.
26. 'Die genossenen Speisen und Getränke ergossen sich dann ohne Weiteres in die Bauchhöhle und die Oberschenkel' ('Food and drink taken simply poured into the abdominal cavity and into the thighs'). Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, p. 112. *Memoirs*, p. 144.
27. Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, p. 113. *Memoirs*, p. 146.
28. Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, p. 112. *Memoirs*, p. 144.
29. Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, p. v, *Memoirs*, p. 3.
30. Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, p. 97. *Memoirs*, p. 127.
31. Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, p. 94. *Memoirs*, p. 124.
32. Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, p. 94. *Memoirs*, p. 124.
33. See note 15.
34. See note 15.
35. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 81. *SW*, p. 79.
36. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 109.
37. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 53. *TD*, p. 55.
38. Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, p. 38. *Memoirs*, p. 59.
39. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 171. *SW*, p. 450.

40. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 172. *SW*, p. 451. I have not re-written the glossolalic verse in the English translation as this is the same as in the French.
41. The letter 'k' is pronounced '/kæ/' in French, the word 'caca' translates as 'poo'.
42. Artaud, *OCVIII*, p. 286.
43. See, for example, J.M.G. Le Clézio, *Le Rêve mexicain, ou, la pensée interrompue* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988).
44. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 22.
45. Jacques Derrida, 'La Parole soufflée' in *L'Écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), p. 261. *Writing and Difference* trans. Alan Bass (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 175.
46. Susan Sontag, 'Approaching Artaud', in *Under the Sign of Saturn* (London: Readers and Writers, 1983), p. 63.
47. Sontag, 'Approaching Artaud', p. 16.
48. Artaud, *OCI*, p. 95. *SW*, p. 83.
49. Sontag, 'Approaching Artaud', p. 17.
50. Stephen Barber, *Terminal Curses: The Last Words of Antonin Artaud* (London: Solar, 2008), p. 115.
51. Penelope Murray (ed.), *Classical Literary Criticism*, trans. Penelope Murray and T. S. Dorsch (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 44. 'Mimesis' has been translated as 'imitation' here.
52. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 242.
53. Camille Dumoulié, *Nietzsche et Artaud: Pour une éthique de la cruauté* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992), p. 46.
54. Dumoulié, *Nietzsche et Artaud*, p. 48.
55. Murray (ed.), *Classical Literary Criticism*, p. 38.
56. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 66. *TD*, p. 68.
57. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 38. *TD*, p. 40.
58. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 53. *TD*, p. 55.
59. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 80. *TD*, p. 82.
60. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 71. *TD*, p. 73.
61. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 57. *TD*, p. 59.
62. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 57. *TD*, p. 60.
63. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 27.
64. Roland Barthes, *Le Plaisir du texte,* in *Oeuvres Complètes* vol II (Paris: Seuil, 1993), p. 1529. *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 66. Translation modified.
65. Aristotle, *De Generatione Animalium (On the Generation of Animals)* trans. Arthur Platt, in J.A. Smith and W.D. Ross (eds), *The Works of Aristotle*, vol. V (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), II.6.743b.
66. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 1.
67. 'Môмo' is an unusual word that Artaud appropriated and reworked for his own use. The origin comes from Marsellais slang for 'village idiot', but takes on a rather different meaning in Artaud's work, emerging after his ECT treatment as a name Artaud adopted, both humourously and defiantly. Most translators opt to keep the original. For further discussion on the translation of 'môмo' see the notes in Clayton Eshleman and Bernanrd Bador's translation of Artaud's late poetry *Watchfiends & Rack Screams: Works from the Final Period* (Boston: Exact Change, 1995), p. 336.

2 Through the Digestive System

1. See Julia Kristeva, 'Le sujet en procès' in Sollers (ed.), *Artaud / Bataille* (Cerisy-la-Salle: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1973). 'The Subject in Process', trans. Patrick ffrench in Patrick ffrench and Roland-François Lack (eds) *The Tel Quel Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998).
2. Although he did not, as Derrida writes, die of cancer, but rather of a chloral hydrate overdose.
3. Derrida, 'La Parole soufflée' in *L'Écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), p. 272 (fn). 'La parole soufflée' in *Writing and Difference*, p. 325.
4. The *Histoire vécue d'Artaud-môMo* makes up volume 26 of the *Œuvres complètes*, edited by Paule Thévenin. The book is made up of what Paule Thévenin assumed to be the texts that Artaud took with him to his final public appearence at the Vieux Colombier theatre in Paris on 13 January 1947, just over a year before he died. The accuracy of Thévenin's selection has since been put into question, and this remains the most controversial volume of the *Œuvres*, with critics such as Florence de Mèredieu claiming that Thévenin's choice of texts was simply arbitrary. See Florence de Mèredieu, *L'Affaire Artaud* (Paris: Fayard, 2009) for a more substantial discussion.
5. Artaud, *OCXXVI* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), p. 48.
6. Artaud, *OCIV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), p. 114. *TD*, p. 118
7. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 114. *TD*, p. 117.
8. 'Toute l'écriture c'est de la cochonnerie', Artaud, *OCI*, p. 100.
9. Artaud, Antonin, *Œuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), p. 1506. My translation.
10. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 1504. My translation.
11. Georges Bataille, 'Le Surréalisme au jour le jour' in *Œuvres complètes*, vol. VIII (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 179. Translation 'Surrealism from day to day' in Edward Scheer (ed.), *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 17.
12. 'cela me laissa un sentiment désagréable, mais à moitié seulement: il m'effraya, mais non sans m'avoir donné une bizarre impression d'accord' ('the incident gave me a rather disagreeable feeling, but only partly: he frightened me, but not without giving me a strange feeling of sympathy'). Bataille, *OCVIII*, p. 179. Scheer (ed.), *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader*, p. 17
13. Bataille, *OCVIII*, p. 180. Scheer (ed.), *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader*, p. 17.
14. Michel Surya, *Georges Bataille: An Intellectual Biography* (London and New York: Verso, 2002), p. 74.
15. As Surya writes, in his biography of Bataille, 'during their lifetimes there existed between them or their work nothing more than distant relationships or affinities'. Surya, *Georges Bataille*, p. 74.
16. According to Bataille, Artaud had read *L'Expérience intérieure*, causing him to write a 'more than half-mad letter' from Rodez urging him to return to God. See Bataille, *OCVIII*, p. 180, Scheer (ed.), *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader*, p. 17.
17. Bataille, *OCI* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 220. *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927–39* ed. Allan Stoekl (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. 45.
18. Bataille, *OCI*, p. 180. *Visions of Excess*, p. 16.

19. Bataille, *OCI*, p. 217. *Visions of Excess*, p. 31.
20. Georges Didi-Huberman, *La Ressemblance informe ou le gai savoir visuel selon Georges Bataille* (Paris: Macula, 1995), p. 333.
21. Didi-Huberman, *La Ressemblance informe ou le gai savoir visuel selon Georges Bataille*, p. 343.
22. Yve-Alain Bois, 'Figure' in *Formless: A User's Guide* ed. Bois, Yve-Alain and Krauss, Rosalind (New York: Zone Books, 1997), p. 80.
23. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 1523.
24. Roland Barthes, 'Artaud: écriture/figure' in Barthes, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. II (Paris: Seuil, 1995), p. 1186.
25. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 1505.
26. 'On me demandera ce qu'il en fut d'Artaud. Je réponds que les électrochocs l'ont toujours tiré de sa torpeur et de son accablement, car il se remettait à écrire et à dessiner' ('I am often asked about the case of Antonin Artaud. I respond to these questions by saying that the electroshock therapy sessions always brought him out of his apathy and depression, for he began to write and to draw again'). Ferdière, Gaston, *Les Mauvaises fréquentations* (Paris: Simoën, 1978), p. 192.
27. 'Le Dr. Ferdière m'a imposé 50 fois en 3 ans les affres de l'électro-choc afin de me faire perdre le mémoire de mon moi qu'il trouvait beaucoup trop conscient' ('Dr. Ferdière imposed the horrors of ECT on me 50 times in 3 years in order to make me lose the memory of myself.which he found far too conscious'). Artaud, *OCXIV*, p. 138.
28. André Roumieux, *Artaud et l'asile* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Séguier, 1996), p. 129.
29. Bataille, *OCVIII*, p. 182.
30. Roumieux, *Artaud et l'asile*, p. 166.
31. Kristeva, 'Le sujet en procès', p. 94. 'The Subject in Process' p. 164.
32. Gaston Ferdière, 'J'ai soigné Antonin Artaud' in *La Tour de feu*, n. 63–4, December 1959. Ferdière's italics.
33. Artaud, *OCIX* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), p. 169, *SW*, p. 448.
34. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 170, *SW*, p. 449.
35. Gilles Deleuze, 'Treizième série du schizophrène et de la petite fille' in *Logique du sens* (Paris: Minuit, 1969), p. 114. 'Thirteenth series of the schizophrenic and the little girl' in *The Logic of Sense* trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (New York: Colombia University Press, 1990), p. 93. Translation modified.
36. Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* (London: Macmillan, 1923), p. 116.
37. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 140.
38. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 141, translation my own. This does not stray too far from Carroll's version (although Carroll does not go into so much detail, nor does he mention the inside of the egg): 'Slithy means "lithe and slimy". "Lithe" is the same as "active"' Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass,* p. 117.
39. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 168, translation my own. Carroll's version reads: '"outgribing" is something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle'. *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 117.
40. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 913, translation my own. Artaud's italics.
41. Kristeva, 'Le Sujet en procès', p. 45. 'The Subject in Process', p. 134.
42. Weiss, Allen S., 'K' in *Art and Text*, 37, September 1990, p. 56–9.
43. Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass,* p. 144.

44. Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 114.
45. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 146, translation my own.
46. Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 208.
47. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 133.
48. Artaud, *OCX* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 98.
49. Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 149. Carroll's italics.
50. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 145.
51. 'Le principal inconvénient de l'électrochoc convenablement pratiqué, c'est une action très défavorable sur la mémoire qui peut se prolonger quelques jours ou quelques semaines.' ('The main inconvenience with ECT practiced properly is a very unfavourable effect on the memory which can last several days or weeks.'). Ferdière, *Les Mauvaises fréquentations*, p. 192.
52. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 147. Translation my own.
53. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 172, *SW*, p. 450.
54. Artaud, *OCIX*, p. 171, *SW*, p. 450.
55. Deleuze, 'Trezième série du schizophrène et de la petite fille', p. 105. 'Thirteenth series...', p. 86.
56. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 914.
57. Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 123.
58. In a letter to Paule Thévenin from 24 February 1948, Artaud wrote 'Il y en a qui mangent trop et d'autres qui comme moi ne peuvent plus manger sans *cracher*' ('There are some people who eat to much and there are others who like me are unable to eat without *spitting*'), *Œuvres* p. 1677, Artaud's italics.
59. Artaud, *OCXXVI*, p. 103. My own translation.
60. Deleuze, 'Treizième série du schizophrène et de la petite fille', p. 101. 'Thirteenth series...', p. 82.

3 Theatre, Magic and Mimesis

1. Antonin Artaud, *Œuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), p. 661.
2. Artaud, *OCIV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), p. 52. *TD*, p. 54.
3. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 53. *TD*, p. 55.
4. See, for example, Paule Thévenin's 'Artaud naturalisé beatnik!' in *Le Figaro littéraire*, 9, December 1965, 2, quoted in Bradnock, Lucy, '"Mantras of Gibberish": Wallace Berman's Visions of Artaud', *Art History*, 35, (3), 2012, p. 628.
5. For an in-depth account of Artaud's influence at Black Mountain College, see Lucy Bradnock, 'White Noise at Black Mountain' in *Spectres of Artaud* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2012), pp. 65–78.
6. See Stephen Barber, *The Screaming Body* (London: Creation Books, 1999), p. 31.
7. Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, trans. M. Buszewicz and J. Barba (London: Methuen, 1968), p. 118.
8. Helga Finter, 'An Impossible Theatre: the Legacy of the Theatre of Cruelty', trans. Matthew Griffin in Edward Scheer (ed.) *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 53.
9. Finter, 'An Impossible Theatre', p. 52.
10. Finter, 'An Impossible Theatre', p. 48.

11. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 1711.
12. Artaud, *OCIII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), p. 94.
13. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 94.
14. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 55. *TD*, p. 57.
15. Artaud, *OCII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), p. 154. Also see Virmaux, Alain, *Antonin Artaud et le théâtre* (Paris: Seghers, 1970), p. 187.
16. Quoted in Virmaux, *Antonin Artaud et le théâtre*, p. 308.
17. Roger Vitrac, 'Après *Les Cenci*', in Virmaux, *Antonin Artaud et le théâtre*, p. 299.
18. Much has been written on the Orientalist perspectives of 19th and 20th Century French writing, see for example Saïd, Edward, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 166–91, or, specifically with reference to Surrealism and Artaud, Hollier, Denis, 'Surrealism and its Discontents' in *Papers of Surrealism*, no. 7, 2007. Online at http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal7/index.htm, last accessed 8th April 2013.
19. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 116.
20. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 73. *TD*, p. 75.
21. Artaud, *OCIV*, p 83. *TD,* p. 85.
22. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 82. *TD*, p. 85.
23. Paule Thévenin, '1898–1948' in *Antonin Artaud et le théâtre de notre temps*, XXII-XXIII of the *Cahiers de la compagnie Madeleine Renaud – Jean-Louis Barrault*, Paris, Julliard, mai 1958, pp. 44–5. In Monique Borie, *Antonin Artaud et le retour aux sources* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), p. 347.
24. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 14. *TD*, p. 13.
25. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 23. *TD*, p. 24.
26. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 26. *TD*, p. 26.
27. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 20. *TD*, p. 21.
28. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 43. *TD*, 44. Artaud's emphasis.
29. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 43. *TD*, p. 44.
30. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 44. *TD*, p. 46.
31. 'lui rendre ses possibilités d'ébranlement physique' ('reveal its possibilities for producing physical shock'). Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 44. *TD*, p. 46.
32. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 44. *TD*, p. 46.
33. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 45. *TD*, p. 46.
34. See, for example, Dumulié in *Artaud et Nietszche*, Derrida in 'Le théâtre de la cruauté et la clôture de la représentation', Monique Borie in *Antonin Artaud: Le théâtre et le retour aux sources*.
35. Penelope Murray and T.S. Dorsch, *Classical Literary Criticism* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 7.
36. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 47.
37. Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, p. 39.
38. Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, p. 42. Borch-Jacobsen's use of *Vorstellung* is informed by Hegel's use of it, implying it is *'reflectively* a step *above* the deceptive presentational immediacy of sensuous perception', as James Yerkes writes in Yerkes, *The Christology of Hegel* (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1983), p. 80.
39. Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, p. 40.
40. Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, p. 40.

41. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, 'Typographie' in *Mimesis des articulations*, ed. Sylviane Agacinski, Jacques Derrida, Sarah Kofman, Ph. Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-Luc Nancy, Bernard Pautrat (Paris: Flammarion, 1975), p. 209.
42. Lacoue-Labarthe, 'Typographie', p. 270.
43. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 659.
44. 'Cinq certificats médicaux' in *Œuvres*, p. 847.
45. 'Cinq certificats médicaux' in *Œuvres*, p. 847.
46. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 1513.
47. Jane Goodall, *Artaud and the Gnostic Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), p. 168.
48. Goodall, *Artaud and the Gnostic Drama*, p. 15.
49. Monique Borie, *Antonin Artaud: Le théâtre et le retour aux sources* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), p. 11.
50. Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Tristes Tropiques* (Paris: U.G.E., coll. "10/18", 1965), p. 350, quoted in Borie, *Antonin Artaud: Le théâtre et le retour aux sources*, p. 11.
51. Edward Saïd, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 177.
52. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (Paris: Payot, 1972), p. 100. Saussure's emphasis.
53. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 9, *TD*, p. 7.
54. Artaud, *OCIV*, p. 14, *TD*, p. 13.
55. Guillaume Fau, *Antonin Artaud* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France / Gallimard, 2006), p.40.
56. Paule Thévenin, 'À La Recherche d'un monde perdu' in *Dessins et Portraits*, p. 26.
57. Barthes, *OCII*, p. 1529.
58. Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, trad. Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken, 1996), p. xiv.
59. Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p. 49. *The Order of Things* (London: Tavistock, 1970), p. 34
60. Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses*, p. 50. *The Order of Things*, p. 35.
61. Manfred Lurker, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), p. 7.
62. Richard Santana, *Language and the Decline of Magic* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), p. 6.
63. Santana, *Language and the Decline of Magic*, p. 6.
64. J.L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), p. 1.
65. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, p. 6.
66. Artaud, *OCVIII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), p. 131.
67. Evelyne Grossman, in Artaud, Antonin, *50 Dessins pour assassiner la magie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), p. 6.
68. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 826.
69. Alain and Odette Virmaux, *Antonin Artaud* (Besançon: Editions la Manufacture, 1991), p. 124.
70. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 828.
71. See *Sort* reprinted in Guillaume Fau, *Antonin Artaud*, p. 42.
72. *Sort* reprinted in Guillaume Fau, *Antonin Artaud*, p. 42.
73. *Sort* reprinted in Guillaume Fau, *Antonin Artaud*, p. 42.
74. Artaud, *OCXII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 19. *SW*, p. 528.
75. Josephine Machon, *(Syn)aesthetics: Redefining Visceral Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 44.
76. Henri Gouhier, *L'Essence du théâtre* (Aubier-Montaigne: Paris, 1968), p. 16.

77. Artaud, *OCI* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 49. *SW*, p. 59.
78. Artaud, *OCXIII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 293.

4 Artaud on Film

1. Artaud, *OCI*** (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 116. Artaud's emphasis.
2. Artaud, *OCI***, p. 143.
3. Anaïs Nin, *Under a Glass Bell* (London: Penguin, 1983), p. 49.
4. Kimberley Jannarone, *Artaud and his Doubles* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2010), p. 7.
5. Artaud, *OCIII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), p. 63. *SW*, p. 181.
6. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 64. *SW*, p. 181.
7. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 66.
8. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 71.
9. Gilles Deleuze, *L'Image-temps* (Paris: Minuit, 1985), p. 203. *The Time-Image*, trans Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone Press, 1989), p. 156. Deleuze's emphasis.
10. Deleuze, *L'Image-temps*, p. 203. *The Time-Image*, p. 156.
11. Deleuze, *L'Image-temps*, p. 203. *The Time-Image*, p. 156.
12. Artaud, *OCIV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), p. 127.
13. Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form*, trans. Jay Leyda (New York: H.B.J., 1949), p. 3.
14. Eisenstein, *Film Form*, p. 7.
15. Eisenstein, *Film Form*, p. 8.
16. This was based on Jack London's story and was staged at the Proletkult Workers Theatre in May 1921.
17. Eisenstein, *Film Form*, p. 7.
18. Eisenstein, *Film Form*, p. 7.
19. Eisenstein, *Film Form*, p. 5.
20. Eisenstein, 'The Dramaturgy of Film Form (The Dialectical Approach to Film Form)', in Richard Taylor (ed.), *The Eisenstein Reader*, trans. Taylor and William Powell (London: BFI, 1998), p. 95 (Eisenstein's emphasis).
21. Martine Beugnet, *Cinema and Sensation: French Film and the Art of Transgression* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 23.
22. Beugnet, *Cinema and Sensation*, p. 23.
23. Daniel Frampton, *Filmosophy* (London: Wallflower Press, 2006), p. 49. Frampton adapts this term from Dulac, who first used the term 'pensée cinégraphique' in 1925 (see Germaine Dulac, *Écrits sur le cinema* (Paris: Éditions Paris experimental, 1994), p. 53).
24. Walter Benjamin, 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit' in *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit und weitere Dokumente* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2007), p. 44. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Collins/Fontana Books, 1973), p. 252.
25. David Bordwell, *On the History of Film Style* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 143.
26. See Emmanuel Plasseraud, *L'Art des foules : Théories de la réception filmique comme phénomène collectif en France (1908–1930)* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 2011).

27. Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules* (Paris: Ancien Librairie Germer Baillière, 1895), p. 28. *Psychology of Crowds* trans. Anonymous (Bodmin and King's Lynn: Sparkling Books, 2009), p. 34.
28. Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules*, p. 20. *Psychology of Crowds*, p. 26.
29. Quoted in Christophe Gauthier, *La Passion du cinéma, cinéphiles, ciné-clubs et salles spécialisées à Paris de 1920 à 1929* (Paris: ARFHC/ École Nationale des Chartes, 1999), p. 241.
30. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 19. *SW*, p. 151.
31. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 20. *SW*, p. 152.
32. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 19. *SW*, p. 150.
33. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 63. *SW*, p. 181 Artaud's emphasis.
34. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 9. *SW*, p. 115.
35. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 9. *SW*, p. 115.
36. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 10. *SW*, p. 115.
37. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 18. *SW*, p. 150. Artaud's italics.
38. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 19. *SW*, p. 151.
39. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 19. *SW*, p. 151.
40. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 83. *SW*, p. 312.
41. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 84. *SW*, p. 314.
42. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 145. *SW*, p. 173. Artaud's italics.
43. Quoted in Alain and Odette Virmaux, 'La Coquille et le clergyman: Essai d'élucidation d'une querelle mythique', in Artaud/Dulac, *La Coquille et le clergyman* (Paris: Lightcone, 2009), p. 13.
44. Virmaux and Virmaux, 'La Coquille et le clergyman', p. 13.
45. Ado Kyrou, *Le surréalisme au cinema* (Paris: Le terrain vague, 1963), p. 182.
46. Kyrou, *Le surréalisme au cinema*, p. 183. Kyrou's itallics.
47. Germaine Dulac, *Écrits sur le cinéma* (Paris: Éditions Paris expérimental, 1994), p. 27.
48. Dulac, *Écrits sur le cinéma*, p. 28.
49. Dulac, *Écrits sur le cinéma*, p. 53.
50. Dulac, *Écrits sur le cinéma*, p. 31. Dulac uses masculine pronouns here.
51. Dulac, *Écrits sur le cinéma*, p. 28.
52. Dulac, *Écrits sur le cinéma*, p. 112.
53. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 20.
54. Dulac, *Écrits sur le cinéma*, p. 113. The diastréphore and the brachiscope were lenses that used by other filmmakers such as Abel Gance and Jean Epstein to create similar techniques.
55. Gilles Deleuze, *L'Image-temps*, p. 246. *The Time-image*, p. 189.
56. Deleuze, *L'Image-temps*, p. 216. *The Time-image*, p. 166.
57. Deleuze, *L'Image-temps*, p. 246. *The Time-image*, p. 189.
58. Beugnet, *Cinema and Sensation*, p. 129.
59. Patrick ffrench writes with reference to Bataille, that affectivity refers to 'the realm of human behaviour which relates to the dynamics of charge and discharge, and which contrasts sharply with the realm of ideas, representations, discourse, the entire field of the subject'. Patrick ffrench, *After Bataille: Sacrifice, Exposure, Community* (London: Legenda, 2007), p. 11.
60. Gilles Deleuze, *Deux régimes de fous: Textes et entretiens 1975–1995* (Paris: Minuit, 2003), p. 264.

61. Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 162.
62. Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. 139.
63. Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. 139.
64. Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. 138.
65. Marks, *The Skin of the Film.*, p. 139.
66. Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. 141.
67. Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. 141.
68. Deleuze, *L'Image-temps*, p. 221. *The Time-Image*, p. 170.
69. Deleuze, *L'Image-temps*, p. 221. *The Time-Image*, p. 170. Translation modified.
70. Deleuze, *L'Image-mouvement,* p. 150. *The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone, 1986), p. 106.
71. Jean Mitry, *La Sémiologie en question* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1987), p. 81. *Semiotics and the Analysis of Film*, trans. Christopher King (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), p. 71. Mitry's emphasis.
72. Mitry, *La Sémiologie en question*, p. 81. *Semiotics and the Analysis of Film*, p. 71.
73. Mitry, *La Sémiologie en question*, p. 81. *Semiotics and the Analysis of Film*, p. 71.
74. Mitry, *La Sémiologie en question*, p. 79. *Semiotics and the Analysis of Film*, p. 68.
75. Maurice Drouzy, *Carl Th. Dreyer, né Nilsson* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1982), p. 241.
76. Drouzy, *Carl Th. Dreyer, né Nilsson.*, p. 149.
77. Drouzy, *Carl Th. Dreyer, né Nilsson.*, p. 149.
78. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 129.
79. André Bazin, *Le Cinéma de la cruauté* (Paris: Flammarion, 1975), p. 37. *The Cinema of Cruelty*, trans. Sabine d'Estrée (New York: Seaver Books, 1982), p. 19.
80. Bazin, *Le Cinéma de la cruauté*, p. 38 (Bazin's emphasis). *The Cinema of Cruelty*, p. 20.
81. Artaud, *OCIII*, p. 129. Artaud's italics.
82. Quoted in Guillaume Fau, *Antonin Artaud* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France / Gallimard, 2006), p. 157.
83. Quoted in Fau, *Antonin Artaud*, p. 157.
84. From an interview in *Cinémonde*, 1 August 1929, quoted in Fau, *Antonin Artaud*, p. 148.
85. Maurice Drouzy, *Carl Th. Dreyer né Nilsson,* p. 248. David Bordwell also argues that 'no film-maker's work has been more mutilated'. David Bordwell, *The Films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), p. 4.
86. See the prologue included in the Criterion Collection reissue.
87. Drouzy, *Carl Th. Dreyer né Nilsson,* p. 149.
88. Perhaps the most extreme example of this is the one Stephen Barber gives when he describes how Artaud's corpse was subjected to a practice known as 'reduction', in which, as Barber describes it, 'the bones were part-incinerated and then mechanically compressed into tiny shards' so that the remains could be more easily transported. As Barber argues, Artaud's own body mimics the fragmentation and anti-representative nature of his oeuvre, violently dispersed into an undefined, formless mass rather than being left to decay gradually. See Stephen Barber, *Terminal Curses* (London: Solar, 2008).

5 Artaud on Paper

1. Dubuffet did not form the *Compagnie de l'Art brut* until after Artaud's death, and Artaud's work has never, from the point of view of Artaud scholars, had a straightforward relationship to the term. See, for example, Mèredieu, Florence de, *Antonin Artaud: Portraits et gris-gris* (Paris: Blusson, 1984) or 'Antonin Artaud et L'Art Brut' (http://florencedemeredieu.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/antonin-artaud-et-lart-brut.html), last accessed 8 June 2013.
2. Of the new kind of drawings, that is – there were four small charcoal drawings from 1944.
3. Artaud, *OCXI*, p. 20. Translation from Jacques Derrida and Paule Thévenin, *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), p. 19. Translation modified.
4. Leo Bersani, 'Artaud, Defecation and Birth' in *A Future for Astyanax: Character and Death in Literature* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co, 1976), p. 262. Bersani links this dropping to birth, death and derivation, arguing that Artaud's work is a resistance to all forms of derivation or dropping away.
5. Artaud *OCXIV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), p. 57.
6. Artaud, *Œuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), p. 958. Artaud's emphasis.
7. Artaud, *OCXXI* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), p. 266.
8. Artaud, *OCXXI*, p. 266.
9. Quoted by Derrida, in 'Forcener le subjectile' in Artaud, *Dessins et portraits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), p. 55. 'To Unsense the Subjectile' in *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud*, p. 61 (translation modified).
10. Artaud, *OCXIX*, p. 259, translation from 'To Unsense the Subjectile', p. 122.
11. In Antonin Artaud, *Cahiers d'Ivry* (Paris: Gallimard, 2011) p. 78. Quoted in Derrida, 'Forcener le subjectile', p. 99, 'To Unsense the Subjectile', p. 136.
12. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 1413.
13. Derrida, 'Forcener le subjectile', p. 55. 'To Unsense the Subjectile', p. 61.
14. Derrida, 'Forcener le subjectile', p. 56.
15. Derrida, 'Forcener le subjectile', p. 60. Derrida's emphasis. 'To Unsense the Subjectile', p. 71.
16. Derrida, 'Forcener le subjectile', p. 57. 'To Unsense the Subjectile', p. 65.
17. Derrida, 'Forcener le subjectile', p. 56. 'To Unsense the Subjectile', p. 64. Translation modified.
18. Derrida, 'Forcener le subjectile', p. 60. Derrida's emphasis.
19. Artaud *OCXIII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 44. *SW*, 500. Translation modified.
20. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 26. *SW*, p. 488.
21. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 42. *SW*, p. 499.
22. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 46. *SW*, p. 502.
23. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 47. *SW*, p. 502.
24. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 40. *SW*, p. 498.
25. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 46. *SW*, p. 502.
26. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 42. *SW*, p. 499.
27. Artaud, 'Commentaire du dessin intitulé la maladresse sexuelle de dieu', *OCXX* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), p. 170.
28. Artaud, *OCXX*, p. 171.
29. Artaud, *OCXX*, p. 170.

30. Artaud, *OCXX*, p. 171.
31. The title of Colette Thomas' book *Le Testament de la fille morte* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954) makes reference to Artaud's designation of her as a 'fille du cœur à naître'.
32. See *OCXV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), p. 374, note 13, and *OCXIV*, p. 9.
33. Artaud, *OCXX*, p. 172.
34. Artaud, *OCXX*, p. 173.
35. Artaud, *Dessins et portraits*, p. 165.
36. See footnote 10.
37. Artaud, *OCXII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 14. Clayton Eshleman translates the word 'carne' as 'old bag', which is one of many connotations it bears. See his notes on this in *Watchfiends & Rackscreams* (Boston, MA: Exact Change, 2004), p. 337.
38. Roland Barthes, 'Cy Twombly ou "non multa sed multum"' in *OCIII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), p. 1036. Translation from *Cy Twombly: 50 Years of Works on Paper* (New York: Schirmer/Mosel, 2008), p. 27.
39. Barthes, *OCIII*, p. 1039.
40. Gilles Deleuze, *Logique de la sensation* (Paris: Éditions de la différence, 1981), p. 14. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 8.
41. Deleuze, *Logique de la sensation*, p. 61. *Francis Bacon*, p. 66.
42. See *Dessins et Portraits*, p. 257.
43. Artaud, 'Le visage humain', *Œuvres*, p. 1534, *Watchfiends and Rackscreams*, p. 277.
44. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 1534. *Watchfiends and Rackscreams*, p. 277.
45. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 1534. *Watchfiends and Rackscreams*, p. 277.
46. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 1534. *Watchfiends and Rackscreams*, p. 277. Translation modified.
47. Artaud, *Œuvres*, p. 1534. *Watchfiends and Rackscreams*, p. 277.
48. Jacques Germain quoted in Guillaume Fau (ed.), *Antonin Artaud* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France / Gallimard, 2006), p. 82.
49. Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Le visage plaqué sur la face d'Artaud' in Guillaume Fau (ed.), *Antonin Artaud*, p. 12.
50. Nancy, 'Le visage plaqué sur la face d'Artaud', p. 12.
51. 'Il n'est ni présenté, ni représenté, ni figuré. Il est exposé' ('it is not presented, or represented, or figured. It is exposed'). Nancy, 'Le visage plaqué sur la face d'Artaud', p. 12.
52. 'ni l'un, ni l'autre, ni le même, ni le différent: seulement un plaquage de soi en soi, un collage de la face sur le plan de surface où n'affleur rien d'autre que l'effacement de la profondeur' ('not one, nor the other, nor the same, nor the different: just a flattening of self to self, a plating of the face on the surface plane where nothing crops up other than the effacing of depth'). Nancy, 'Le visage plaqué sur la face d'Artaud', p. 15.
53. Artaud 'Il fallait d'abord avoir envie de vivre' in *K* 1–2, 1948, p. 130.
54. Artaud, *OCXIV***, p. 223. Artaud's italics.
55. Nancy, 'Le visage plaqué sur la face d'Artaud', p. 12.
56. See 'À la recherche d'un monde perdu' in *Dessins et portraits*, p. 44, for Thévenin's description of this work.
57. Artaud, 'Le visage humain', in *Œuvres*, 1535. *Watchfiends and Rackscreams*, p. 278.

58. Artaud, 'Le visage humain', in *Œuvres*, 1535. *Watchfiends and Rackscreams*, p. 277.
59. 'Artaud's notebooks, with their charged spatial form, possess a filmic dimension.' Stephen Barber, *Terminal Curses*, p. 56.

6 The Machinic Body

1. From notebook 374, November 1947 in Artaud, *Cahiers d'Ivry: Février 1947–Mars 1948* (Paris: Gallimard, 2011), vol. II, p. 1993. Also quoted in Barber, Stephen, *Terminal Curses: The Last Words of Antonin Artaud* (London: Solar, 2008), p. 40.
2. Artaud, *OCXIV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), p. 46.
3. Artaud, *OCXXII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), p. 133.
4. Paule Thévenin, *Antonin Artaud: ce désespéré qui vous parle* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), p. 154.
5. Thévenin, *Antonin Artaud: ce désespéré qui vous parle*, p. 151.
6. Artaud, *OCXX* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), p. 170.
7. Artaud, *OCXX*, p. 170.
8. Artaud, *OCXX*, p. 170.
9. Friedrich Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter* (Berlin: Brinkmann and Bose, 1986), p. 352. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 243.
10. F.T. Marinetti, 'Manifesto of Futurism' in *Futurist Manifestos* (Ed. Umbro Apollonio, translated R. W. Flint, London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), p. 21.
11. Foster borrows the term 'prosthetic Gods' from Freud, arguing that 'no other phrase quite captures the unsteady compound of anxiety and hubris, of loss and compensation, of narcissistic wounds and phallic fantasies'. Foster, Hal, *Prosthetic Gods* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), p. xii.
12. F.T. Marinetti, 'Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista' in *I Manifesti del Futurismo* (Milan: Firenze, 1914), p. 95.
13. Marinetti, *I Manifesti del Futurismo,* p. 94.
14. Artaud, *OCVIII*, p. 299.
15. See depictions of influencing machines in *The Airloom and Other Dangerous Influencing Machines* Ed. Röske, Thomas and Brand-Claussen, Bettina (Heidelberg: Prinzhorn/Wunderhorn, 2006).
16. Victor Tausk, 'Über die Entstehung des "Beeinflussungsapparates" in der Schizophrenie' in *Gesammelte psychoanalytische und literarische Schriften* (Wien-Berlin: Medusa, 1983), p. 246. English translation: 'On the Origin of the "Influencing Machine" in Schizophrenia' in *Sexuality, War and Schizophrenia: Collected Psychoanalytic Papers*, trans. Eric Mosbacher et al. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991), p. 22.
17. For more on the links between McLuhan and structuralism, see James M. Curtis, 'Marshall McLuhan and French Structuralism' in *Boundary 2*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Autumn, 1972), pp. 134–46.
18. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 7.
19. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 7.

20. 'The restructuring of human work and association was shaped by the technique of fragmentation that is the essence of machine technology'. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 7.
21. 'With the arrival of electric technology, man extended, or set outside himself, a live model of the central nervous system itself. To the degree that this is so, it is a development that suggests a desperate and suicidal autoamputation [...] shock induces a generalized numbness or an increased threshold to all types of perception', McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 47.
22. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 116.
23. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 117.
24. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 117.
25. Artaud, *OCXI*, p. 14
26. Quoted in Barber, *Terminal Curses*, p. 40.
27. Artaud, Cahier 240, February 1947, in *Cahiers d'Ivry*, vol. I, p. 108.
28. Artaud, Cahier 237, in *Cahiers d'Ivry*, vol. I, p. 80.
29. Artaud, Cahier 242, in *Cahiers d'Ivry*, vol. I, p. 138.
30. Artaud, Cahier 395, in *Cahiers d'Ivry*, vol. II, p. 2218.
31. Artaud, Cahier 395, in *Cahiers d'Ivry*, vol. II, p. 2225.
32. Barber, *Terminal Curses,* p. 131.
33. Philippe Sollers, *Éloge de l'infini* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), p. 873.
34. Barber, *Terminal Curses*, p. 121.
35. Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter*, p. 13. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. 8.
36. Heidegger cited in Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter*, p. 292. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. 199.
37. *Studio d'Essai* was a radiophonic workshop set up by musique concrète pioneer Pierre Schaeffer in 1943, taken over by the poet Jean Tardieu in 1945, and renamed 'Club d'Essai'. See Pierre-Marie Héron (ed.), *La Radio d'art et d'essai en France après 1945* (Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2008).
38. Artaud *OCXIII*, p. 104, *SW*, p. 570.
39. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 103, *SW*, 569.
40. See Stephen Barber, *Blows and Bombs* (London: Faber & Faber, 1993) p. 152.
41. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 96, *SW*, p. 566.
42. For a detailed account of the reception of *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* see notes in Artaud, *OCXIII*, pp. 323–40.
43. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 135. *SW*, p. 582.
44. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 131. *SW*, p. 579. Translation modified.
45. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 329.
46. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 330.
47. 'All those gestural qualities that the printed page strips from language come back in the dark, and on the radio'. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 330.
48. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 334.
49. Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter*, p. 28. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. 16.
50. Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter*, p. 71. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. 44.
51. Kittler, *Grammphon, Film, Typewriter*, p. 40. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. 23.
52. Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter*, p. 129. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. 83.
53. Artaud makes reference to recording on magnetophon in a letter to Porché dated 4 February 1948, in *OCXIII*, p. 131.

54. Artaud, *OCXIII*, p. 146. *SW*, p. 584
55. Roland Barthes, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. II (Paris: Seuil, 1995), p. 1528.
56. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 61.

Conclusion

1. Anaïs Nin, 'Je suis le plus malade des surréalistes' in *Under a Glass Bell*, p. 53.
2. Philippe Sollers, 'La pensée émet des signes', in *Logiques* (Paris: Seuil, 1968), p. 140.
3. Deleuze, *L'Image-Temps*, pp. 342–4.

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Index