

Cruel: Antonin Artaud and Gilles Deleuze

Tout ce qui dans l'ordre des choses écrites abandonne le domaine de la perception ordonnée et claire, tout ce qui vise à créer un renversement des apparences, à introduire un doute sur la position des images de l'esprit les unes par rapport aux autres, tout ce qui provoque la confusion sans détruire la force de la pensée jaillissante, tout ce qui renverse les rapports des choses en donnant à la pensée bouleversée un aspect encore plus grand de vérité et de violence, tout cela offre une issue à la mort, nous met en rapport avec des états plus affinés de l'esprit au sein desquels la mort s'exprime. (Artaud 1978, 135)¹

The question of what Antonin Artaud means by positing a compatibility between goodness and cruelty is taken up at the end of his infamous last public reading, "Histoire Vécue d'Artaud-Mômo" ("The Story Lived By Artaud Mômo") where he said, "I put myself in your place, and I see very well that what I am saying isn't interesting at all, it's still theatre. What can I do to be truly sincere?"² After an hour of inundating his audience with poems, travel experiences, and stories of black magic, Artaud spoke for another two hours of his psychiatric incarcerations, his vehement refutations of death, and generally flailed about making wild gestures, cries, and screams.³ Having posed his curious question of

1 Everything in the order of the written word which abandons the field of clear, orderly perception, everything which aims at reversing appearances and introduces doubt about the position of mental images and their relationship to one another, everything which provokes confusion without destroying the strength of an emergent thought, everything which disrupts the relationship between things by giving this agitated thought an even greater aspect of truth and violence — all these offer death a loophole and put us in touch with certain more acute states of mind in the throes of which death expresses itself. (*Collected Works* [CW] 1: 92)

2 Extracts from the various reports on Artaud's reading at the Vieux-Colombier 13 January 1947, at 9 p.m. are included in *Artaud on Theatre* (180-82). "Histoire Vécue d'Artaud-Mômo" and "Tête-à-Tête par Antonin Artaud" are in *Oeuvres Complètes* [OC] 26.

3 This is quoted from a detailed description of Artaud's performance in Barber (136-39). Barber's text alludes to a number of commentators on the 13 January evening but does credits no one in particular with having heard and relayed these words by Artaud.

sincerity, Artaud, who had dropped all his papers, read his final poem, "Artaud-le-Mômo," glaring at the audience as he uttered the words, "la sale barbaque" ("the filthy meat"), and abruptly left the stage (1995, 117). Disabused of its saccharine associations, Artaud's sincerity is an "affective" theatrical plea that could just as well be a specious glance toward authenticity. What would be the difference? In a letter to André Breton, Artaud writes, "I left because I realized that the only / language I could use on an audience was to / take bombs out of my pockets and throw them / in their faces in a gesture of unmistakable / aggression" (1989, 183).⁴ And yet there is this refrain, this bow, this histrionic collapse in front of nine hundred people. Artaud's plaintive interrogation of the constitution of truthfulness is a burden to the audience and to himself (a rhetorical question, or more precisely, part of Artaud's interrogative practice of disciplined cruelty), and more importantly a repetition, a repetition of the creation of the ideal kernel of pure thought itself.

Artaud's concern with sincerity poses a difficult problem. Is "truly sincere" simply a rhetorical device or is it literal? While he endeavors to explain the relationship between thought and violence, the way thought impinges itself on the mind (a thinking thing) and erupts in the mind to split open thought itself, Artaud also attempts miserably or successfully (the answer will not concern us) to demonstrate truth. There are two ways to approach this problem. We can view Artaud's "truly sincere" as a tautology. Here "truly" is the prefix of a gracious and passionate generosity while "sincere" is a demand and challenge to the audience (language) to uphold such an impossible truth. Tautologically, of course, this equation will work equally well in reverse. True is generally presented in opposition to false but if we oppose it to sincere it becomes interrogative of sincerity itself. Sincerity, on the other hand, is most often protected by the idea of personal sanctuary, and is therefore difficult to question. Tautology ignores the existence of a first principle of truth and sincerity, truth arrives without reason but very soon becomes reasonable. What is most scandalous about Artaud's "truly sincere," however, is not that Artaud synthesizes all judgement on this single and desperate night — as if this were — anomalous to the rest of his work, work which incessantly calls into question notions such as true and sincere — but that this determination of the true could well be his work (the true is all there is is true).

In *La Logique du Sens* (*The Logic of Sense*) and *Différence et répétition* (*Difference and repetition*), Deleuze follows Artaud's pursuit of "la terrible révélation d'une pensée sans image, et la conquête d'un nouveau droit qui ne se laisse pas représenter" ("the terrible revelation of a thought without image, and the conquest of a new principle which does not allow itself to be represented")

(1968, 192/1994, 147). In addition, Deleuze and Félix Guattari employ Artaud as a model for their conception of an alternative mode of thought which they call schizoanalytic. This mode of thought promotes the freedom of desire as a productive force traversing the segmented lines of habitual thought as so many intensities. Thus "truly sincere" appears as a dialectical "attitude" which would be incongruous with the kind of schizophrenic thought Deleuze and Guattari put forward in *L'Anti-Oedipe* (*Anti-Oedipus*). Schizoanalysis repudiates the notion of self-identification of a self which is gained through the working of social structures, the family in particular. It is possible to view Artaud as injecting the audience not with the personal, but with the impotence of the personal in proposing the existence of the sincerity of truth itself. At first glance "truly sincere" demonstrates the perilous probity of the integrity of a madman, poet and actor: a little sincerity is dangerous, warns Oscar Wilde, but a lot is fatal. By "pulverizing" the fatal oneness of a true sincerity, Artaud creates a little sincerity overdoing (overcoming) the qualifications of both true and sincere.

Artaud is ever vigilant against the "image" of thought, accusing it of fixing itself to habit in order "que la pensée ne soit pas en communication instante et ininterrompue avec les choses, mais que cette fixation et ce gel, cette espèce de mise en monuments de l'âme, se produise pour ainsi dire AVANT LA PENSÉE. C'est évidemment la bonne condition pour créer" ("so that thought is not in immediate and uninterrupted communication with things — this fixation and this immobilization, this tendency of the soul to construct monuments occurring, as it were, BEFORE THOUGHT. Evidently this is the right condition for creativity") (1965, 87-88/*Selected Writings* [SW] 79). What Artaud does, as exemplified in his famous poem "Pour en Finir Avec le Jugement de Dieu" ("To Have Done with the Judgment of God"), is to overcome the distinction between true (correct) and false (wrong) thought. Artaud throws both mind and body into consternation accusing man of thinking along the organized lines of the organism, that is, of thinking in the same way as he is constructed and vice versa. "L'homme est malade parce qu'il est mal construit" ("Man is sick because he is badly constructed") (OC 13: 104/1982, 79).⁵ In opposition to thought's presupposition of good and evil Artaud writes, "Dans le monde manifesté et métaphysiquement parlant, le mal est la loi permanente, et ce qui est bien est un effort et déjà une cruauté surajoutée à l'autre" ("In a manifested world, metaphysically speaking, evil is the permanent law, and what is good is an effort and already one more cruelty added to the other") (1964, 157/1958, 103). Artaud's will to "goodness" becomes a fundamental problem in relation to a "true sincerity" seen as a naïve idea. But Artaud's goodness is the desire of a will to cruelty, a disruption of continuous evil. Artaud-the-philosopher approaches thought acting as one who

4 A French original could not be found. This letter to Breton, one of five written between February and May of 1947, is however, forthcoming in Artaud's OC 28.

5 Artaud chastised the surrealists for wanting a psychic revolution, when to alter the body was for Artaud to alter the world.

does not know what to think, as one who is ignorant of thought's presuppositions, of thought's knowledge of the true and the good. This is why he is pleased when he finds that he has missed out on the subjective or private presuppositions which prohibit the game of philosophy (Deleuze 1968, 171/1994, 130). It is the cruelty of calling thought into question, of attacking thought with problems, or what Deleuze calls "heureuses difficultés" ("fortunate difficulties") by which "nos efforts pour les dépasser nous permettent de maintenir un idéal du moi dans la pensée pure" ("our efforts to overcome these obstacles allow us to maintain an ideal of the self as it exists in pure thought" (191/147). Morality separates truth and thought because it requires that each one judge the other by its own standard (identification). But thought and truth are inseparable, illegitimate children. It is evil, not to be confused with error or falsity, that maintains a sense of progression, a logical direction, while goodness, the vital force between bodies, moves along the edge of their depths, between form and ground, at the juncture where language and the body meet.

Artaud is an embarrassment to philosophy. He makes philosophy cringe when he flaunts his sincerity and truth. Even more persistently he is the philosopher who, through a restructuring of the actions and passions of the body, produces a discreditable practice of thought, and chastises both philosophy and its audience for their prephilosophical presuppositions, their predictable emotions and physical reactions. Artaud's sincerity becomes a theatrical phylogeny, a set of vibrations designed to connect all the audiences that have ever lived. Infectious thought staves off the dictation of reason, just as disease repudiates the liberal parasite of medicine. "Si je suis poète ou acteur ce n'est pas pour écrire ou déclarer de poésies, mais pour les vivre. Lorsque je récite un poème, ce n'est pas pour être applaudi mais pour sentir des corps d'hommes et de femmes, je dis *des corps*, trembler et virer à l'unisson du mien" ("I have not become a poet or an actor in order to write or recite poems, but to live them. I read a poem not to milk applause but to feel the bodies of men and women — and I mean their bodies — throb and quiver in harmony with mine") (OC 9: 57/CW 2: 191). This is the principle of Artaud's famous "theatre of cruelty" which generates a dramaturgical force of life forced to think. Through his "sincere" peroration Artaud flees a philosophical idealism where reactions dissolve into relative truths. But this is not because he proscribes truth; Artaud is confident that "le public qui prend le faux pour du vrai, a le sens du vrai et il réagit toujours devant lui quand il se manifeste" ("the public, which takes the false for the true, has the sense of the true and always responds to it when it is manifested") (1964, 116/1958, 76).⁶

6 Lotringer comments on Artaud's bad acting style, he was the butt of theatrical jokes but his awkward gestures and over-earnest attempts to portray a character were far superior. Artaud's atrocious acting also refers to the diabolical performances of his own work, described by Madame Denise Colomb as being acted "to the point of indecency" (Artaud 1989, x).

Artaud abolishes the kind of theatre which prepares itself for an audience that privileges the senses first. He replaces this "théâtre psychologique ordinaire" ("ordinary psychological theater") with "le Théâtre de la Cruauté se propose de recourir au spectacle de masses; de rechercher dans l'agitation de masses importantes, mais jetées l'une contre l'autre et convulsées, un peu de cette poésie qui est dans les fêtes et dans les foules, les jours, aujourd'hui trop rares, où le peuple descend dans la rue" ("the Theater of Cruelty [that] proposes to resort to a mass spectacle; to seek in the agitation of tremendous masses, convulsed and hurled against each other, a little of that poetry of festivals and crowds when, all too rarely nowadays, the people pour out into the streets") (130/85). In this sense Artaud is the tormentor, tormented and fool who thrives precisely because as ridiculous as he is on stage, he is dangerously sincere and so frightens, confuses and dismays his audience. Artaud wants to hold the body's attention, he wants to both affect and correct the anatomy (recall his famous body without organs).⁷

Like Deleuze, Artaud regards sense as that which separates the body from language, life from thought; sense is facilitated by affections at the level of the unexpected, of the new. And this passing on to the senses is a contagious, or a resonant, passing of the interminable new. Artaud's theatre is not designed to represent or reproduce (describe) man but to create a being which moves. The language of Artaud is a symbiosis of technologies — assigning semiotics, affective gestures, violent sounds and painful noises — challenging the organization of the organism in its collectivity (audience, participant, body) and in its singularity (event), occurring at the chasm between language and the body. It is, after all, Artaud who presents Deleuze with a combination of literature, schizoanalysis, and the anguished inability of thought to think. And it is also Artaud who gives us the clinical and the critical in a single unthinkable and unproductive body without organs, and who most contributes to our sense that madness, philosophy, and literature are not three ways toward the same thing. Although the idea of the colossal unthought appears as an immense and unified hope of communication (three ways toward the same thing), Artaud shows us that the experimentation of thought and the new can only be entered by innumerable disparate and invented paths, can only be entered by the shock of the new.

7 See "To Have Done with the Judgement of God." The famous extract from the conclusion reads, "Man is sick because he is badly constructed. / We must decide to strip him in order to scratch out this / animacule which makes him itch to death, / god, / and with god/his organs. / For tie me down if you want to, / but there is nothing more useless than an organ. // When you have given him a body without organs, / then you will have delivered him from all his automatisms and / restored him to his true liberty" (1982, 61-79).

Artaud is the claimant of his own creation.⁸ His self-birth and his begetting of thought suggest that there is nothing intrinsic about thinking, about attaining and containing a thought. At the limit of thought, along its separated line, Artaud imagines an "uncreated conception," where the limit of thought is its immanence. In a letter to Jacques Rivière, Artaud writes,

Je suis un *général* inné, à y regarder de près cela veut dire que je ne me suis jamais réalisé. Il y a des imbéciles qui se croient des êtres, êtres par innéité. Moi je suis celui qui pour être doit fouetter son innéité. Celui qui par innéité est celui qui doit être un être, c'est-à-dire toujours fouetter cette espèce de négatif chenil, ô chiennes d'impossibilité! (OC 1: 9-11)

I am innately *genital*, and if we examine closely what that means, it means that I have never made the most of myself. There are some fools who think of themselves as beings, as innately beings. I am he, who in order to be, must whip his innateness. One must be a being innately, that is, always whipping this sort of non-existent kennel [*chenil*, also hole or hovel], O bitches of impossibility! (CW 1: 19)

Artaud rejects innateness as a natural and essential state, preferring to view the innate as the pure unthought within thought. This is because he disapproves of thinking of oneself as a being, as an innate being who is then able to represent/reproduce oneself. This type of innateness is synonymous with complacency, and habit, and must be whipped, stirred into being a being innately (the becoming of being innate). When Artaud places genitality beside innateness he is suggesting the birth of innateness which is the becoming innate of being born: there is nothing prior to innateness, and nothing after it in the form of the cultural. To whip the non-existent hole (the traditional image of thought) in order to be a being innately, means to force thought to its internal limit. Artaud struggles with the bitches of impossibility who suffocate the actualization (contemporaneity) of his potential for thought.

Je me suis mis souvent dans cet état d'absurde impossible, pour essayer de faire naître en moi de la pensée. Nous sommes quelques-uns à cette époque à avoir voulu attenter aux choses, créer en nous des espaces à la vie, des espaces qui n'étaient pas et ne semblaient pas devoir trouver place dans l'espace. (1978, 87)

8 The notion of self-creation may sound suspiciously like the classical notion of the creative genius, the autonomous artist fashioning his very own liberationist self, but this assumption misses the real aspect of Artaud's autogenesis. For example, when in his "In Memoriam" Salliet discusses Artaud's observation of himself, the way Artaud addresses himself, Antonin Artaud by Antonin Artaud, he writes, "His work is an inventory of himself" (qtd. in Hayman 152) and, I would add, an *invention* of himself. Artaud's self-invention is certainly not the self-production of the aspiring individualist. The individual creates himself out of already self-proliferating and already public fragments. There is nothing new except perhaps, Artaud's combinations of himself.

I put myself into this state of impossible absurdity in order to try to generate thought in myself. There are a few of us in this era who have tried to get hold of things, to create within ourselves spaces for life, spaces which did not exist and which did not seem to belong in actual space. (SW 79)

Having nothing to do with reproduction but everything to do with repetition, (always whipping one's innateness), Artaud's innateness is "genital" precisely because it is autopoietic. This is exemplified by Artaud's self-referentiality: Artaud addresses, not himself (moi-même) but a Mr. Antonin Artaud.⁹

On the subject of Artaud's "innate genitality" Deleuze writes,

Penser, c'est créer, il n'y a pas d'autre création, mais créer, c'est d'abord engendrer "penser" dans la pensée. C'est pourquoi Artaud oppose dans la pensée la *généralité* à l'innéité, mais aussi bien à la réminiscence, et pose ainsi le principe d'un empirisme transcendantal. (1968, 192)

To think is to create, there is no other creation — but to create is first of all to engender "thinking" in thought. For this reason Artaud opposes genitality to innateness in thought, but equally to reminiscence, and thereby proposes the principle of a transcendental empiricism. (1994, 147)

Why does Deleuze express Artaud's relation of genitality and innateness as an opposition? Transcendental empiricism is a crucial disjunctive synthesis which reduces the mode of the perceptual field which reasons from the empirical to the transcendental. Transcendental empiricism is the extreme point or limit of the sensible. What is sensed is the qualitative difference, rather than opposition, of genitality and innateness within creation. Artaud's transcendental empiricism calls into question the opposition between the "natural" and the "cultural" because the body becomes both. The body becomes indispensable and impulsive, distinct and assembled, inherent and assertive; it becomes self-culturing, it engenders its own innateness. Artaud embraces this engendering of self-birth in place of the oppositions of nature and culture which usually organize the body. The emphatic aspect of this autopoiesis is its impersonality, a self-governing process of self-overcoming. If, therefore, Artaud really is opposing genitality and innateness perhaps it is because he is highlighting genitality and having it match innateness qualitatively and stylistically. In *Mille Plateaux*, Deleuze and Guattari write,

Il est vrai qu'Artaud présente encore l'identité de l'Un et du multiple comme une unité dialectique, et qui réduit le multiple en le ramenant à l'Un.... Mais c'est une manière de parler; car la multiplicité dépasse dès le début toute opposition, et destitue le mouvement dialectique. (196, n10)

9 Self-referential-autopoiesis appears in so much of Artaud's writing that references are therefore extraneous.

It is true that Artaud still presents the identity of the One and the Multiple as a dialectical unity, one that reduces the multiple by gathering it into the One.... But that is a manner of speaking, for from the beginning multiplicity surpasses all opposition and does away with dialectical movement. (532, n16)

Could this "manner of speaking" then be a "speaking for" Artaud who clearly does not intend to put genitility and innateness into a dialectical relation? Artaud establishes an unusually direct alliance between the innate and the genital which circumvents the intercession of culture as it is understood as outside of the body. Artaud's theatre for example, "prend des gestes et les pousse à bout: comme la peste il refait la chaîne entre ce qui est et ce qui n'est pas, entre la virtualité du possible et ce qui existe dans la nature matérialisée" ("takes gestures and pushes them as far as they will go: like the plague it reforges the chain between what is and what is not, between the virtuality of the possible and what already exists in materialized nature") (1964, 38/1958, 27). This is Artaud's attempt to refigure the linkings, the autonomous pause, between life and death, language and the body, thought and its expression.

Because he disregards any notion of a psychological model of perception, sensation, thought and understanding, Artaud's problem does not concern the orientation, expression and method of his thought so much as the problem of being able to think at all. According to Deleuze, Artaud "poursuit en tout ceci la terrible révélation d'une pensée sans image, et la conquête d'un nouveau droit qui ne se laisse pas représenter" ("pursues in all this, the terrible revelation of a thought without image, and the conquest of a new principle which does not allow itself to be represented") (1968, 192/1994, 147). Artaud's impossible image of thought then is split in two, thought which struggles to exist, and thought which is presupposed to exist, which for him is only vile and reasonable government. There is then only one thought, the multiple anarchic force of thought always at its limit, about to happen and having happened, an ungraspable image of thought. And it is precisely through Artaud's self-birth, his innate genitility, that he is able to take on the terror of thought without an image because in becoming violently new at every turn of his mind he never allows his new self to become incorporated.

Je ne commanderai pas à mes désirs et à mes envies, mais je ne veux pas non plus qu'ils me conduisent, je veux être ces désirs et ces envies, et cela certes est difficile dans un monde qui n'a cessé d'être sous le commandement de l'esprit, et cela jusqu'au péril de l'âme et à la perte de tout corps. (OC 9: 225-26)

I shall not command my desires and my inclinations, but neither do I want them to direct me, I want to be those desires and those inclinations, and this of course is difficult in a world which has never ceased to be under the command of the mind, and this to the imperilment of the soul and the loss of every body. (SW 446-47)

Artaud collapses the distinction between himself and his thought, annihilating the possibility of the domination of either. Artaud's sense of cruelty is a confrontation with the force of thought which in another sense confronts the mind (here mind is another word for the thought which presupposes good and evil) with the soul (another word for thought without an image).

Artaud is pleased to be wrong and stupid, he is pleased not to think if it means the pitiful huffing and puffing of language's straightforward denotations and expressions.¹⁰ "Je souffre que l'Esprit ne soit pas dans la vie et que la vie ne soit pas l'Esprit, je souffre de l'Esprit-organe, de l'Esprit-traduction, ou de l'Esprit-intimidation-des-choses pour les faire entrer dans l'Esprit" ("I suffer because the Mind is not life and life is not the Mind; I suffer from the Mind as organ, the Mind as interpreter, the Mind as intimidator of things, to force them to enter the Mind") (1978, 51/SW 56). Artaud frees (liberates) thought by limiting the domination of its proper or prephilosophical image. Artaud does not reject the mind, he denounces it as an organ of the organized body and as an interpreter of meaning. What Artaud suffers to force into the mind is the mind's organizational presuppositions, which is to say that he suffers to force the mind's difference from itself to enter the mind.

When Artaud declares, "I would rather work than feel myself alive" (1965, 222), this is hardly surprising for a man who says he can feel his thoughts stirring within him (can feel his mind move). But what does it mean to feel oneself alive? To feel "oneself" is absurd but to feel oneself alive is truly abominable. "La vraie douleur," announces Artaud, "est de sentir en soi se déplacer sa pensée. Mais la pensée comme un point," he adds, "n'est certainement pas une souffrance" ("The real pain is to feel one's thought shift within oneself. But thought as a fixed point is certainly not painful") (1978, 103/SW 84). It is this dimensionless point of thought that Artaud tracks, in the sense that he pursues the chance to show that it is there. Artaud follows the movement of change, the transformation or becoming of thought, as it eschews the distinguishable present along its mode of existence. Deleuze refers to this paradox, where that which happens differs from the materiality attributable to it, as an event or effect without a cause. An event is always destroyed when understanding or perception divide it into consecutive states that hide the inseparability of its continuous transformation of reality. Artaud dislikes the weakness of thought which cannot think without the interim necessary to distinguish objects from their repeated state of conversion. He is burdened by the inarticulation of the point of

10 Artaud's approach to ignorance is perhaps evocative of Spinoza's. Both view ignorance or inadequate ideas as catalysts for creating active affections out of what Spinoza called joyful passions. Where Artaud cruelly confronts common forces of bodies, Spinoza, who is also harsh, encourages everyone to work toward joyful relations between bodies, what he calls "common notions." Both are thinking of the energy of the forces of bodies.

change in *Le Théâtre et son double* (*Theatre and Its Double*), he writes, "le déterminisme philosophique le plus courant est, du point de vue de notre existence, une des images de la cruauté" ("from the aspect of our own existence, the most current philosophical determinism is an image of cruelty") (154/79). Artaud spies difference in itself as the act of cruelty in thought, and cruelty as the primary object of change. Recalling Artaud's idea that "la cruauté, c'est seulement LA détermination" ("cruelty is nothing but determination as such"), Deleuze writes, "On ne doit pas s'étonner que la différence paraisse maudite, qu'elle soit la faute ou le péché, la figure du Mal promise à l'expiation. Il n'y a pas d'autre péché que celui de faire monter le fond et de dissoudre la forme" ("We should not be surprised that difference should appear accursed, that it should be error, sin or the figure of evil for which there must be expiation. There is no sin other than raising the ground and dissolving the form") (1968, 44/1994, 29). A point of change is the sudden shock when thought realizes itself in the body. As an autonomous affect this point is separate from the actions and the passions of the body. An affect is not nothing, it still produces signs. The affect is the implied relation between intensities of pure difference as it is experienced by the senses. These intensities become forces within a formless ground: in the vertiginous depths of the body desire materializes in Artaud's theatre "au degré pas encore humain" ("on a level that is not yet human") (OC 3: 304/SW 307).

Artaud's peculiar conception of cruelty devotes itself to a pitiless persistence toward the production of thought. Rather than relate simply to the production of pain and suffering where cruelty is regarded as cause, that is, as producing effective torment, Artaud's cruelty is a form of severity in thought, diligent and strict, "cruauté signifie rigueur, application et décision implacable, détermination irréversible, absolue" ("cruelty signifies rigor, implacable intention and decision, irreversible and absolute determination") (1964, 154/1958, 101). According to Artaud, we are in a degenerative state and so "c'est par la peau qu'on fera rentrer la métaphysique dans les esprits" ("it is through the skin that metaphysics must be made to re-enter our minds") (151/99). Metaphysics enters the body as cruelty. Cruelty is a practice designed to force the mind to be affected, it is the production of a desire to become self-affected and active (Spinoza, *Ethics* II, D3).¹¹ Artaud's cruelty has nothing to do with blood and war, it is "celle beaucoup plus terrible et nécessaire que les choses peuvent exercer contre nous" ("the far more terrible, essential cruelty objects can practice on us") (121/79), because for Artaud, "tous ce qui agit est une cruauté" ("everything that acts is a cruelty") (130/85). It is the movement (direction) of objects which determines our relationship to the world and to each other. Artaud's famous cane is an example of how objects move between us as so many trajectories deciding our lives. In 1934,

11 By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections. Therefore, if we can be the adequate cause of any of these affections, I understand by the affect an action; otherwise, a passion.

Artaud read about the Jesus-stick of Saint Patrick. On his release from a drug detox centre in 1937 he was given a cane. Artaud claimed that this cane, due to its thirteen knots, was none other than the Jesus-stick, the staff of Saint Patrick. Artaud made extravagant, imposing and pretentious tours around Paris with his cane and it ruined his chance to marry, so scandalous was its appearance to his fiancée's family. He had the cane steel-tipped and also dipped in holy water and then he took it to Ireland. The cane allowed Artaud to replace Christ. Artaud said later that in Dublin it had been at the centre of street riots. The riots were "in fact" imaginary and the cane was lost either in a Cathedral or a police station just before Artaud's deportation from Ireland in a straight-jacket.¹² The story of the cane invokes Artaud's "Théâtre de la Cruauté," which reduces the role of understanding, shrinking the size of logic's importance and highlighting words as objects of cruelty and direction: "les mots seront pris dans un sens incantatoire, vraiment magique, — pour leur forme, leurs émanations sensibles, et non plus seulement pour leur sens" ("words will be construed in an incantational, truly magical sense — for their shape and their sensual emanations, not only for their meaning" (189/125). Cruelty makes us move, it wakes up the heart and nerves and tests our vitality in order to confront us with our potential, in order to force us into combat with our chaos. Deleuze follows Artaud's schizophrenic thought as it plunges into universal depths where the word loses its meaning but not its affect.

The unlanguage of howls and syncopated rhythms requires utter diligence and determination. Contrary to popular belief there is nothing sloppy about the workings of the depths. Artaud is not interested in a theater of chance and improvisation, nor in the "caprice de l'inspiration inculte et irréfléchie de l'acteur; surtout de l'acteur moderne qui, sorti du texte, plonge et ne sait plus rien" ("caprice of the wild and thoughtless inspiration of the actor, especially the actor who, once cut off from the text, plunges in without any idea of what he is doing") (166/109-10). In presenting the paradox of language and things, Artaud thwarts the collapse of the mind, but his intensity threatens to collapse even itself, and yet death can never die, and so Artaud's language of crazed cruelty is always accompanied by mercilessly direct and commanding writing.

Artaud intends to create signs rather than meaning. In the language of absolute depths these signs, the cruelty of objects, are "false," which, it must be remembered, is not the same as evil. Artaud, like Nietzsche, sees evil as the opposite of good. Evil belongs to the man whose value system judges life from a moral origin of truth (Nietzsche 1990, *passim*). Good, on the other hand, is not opposed to bad or false. The False is an eternal truth. "C'est une puissance du faux qui remplace et détrône la forme du vrai, parce qu'elle pose la simultanéité de présents impossibles, ou la coexistence de passés non-nécessairement vrais"

12 A whole chapter devoted to Artaud's cane is in Rattray 143-70.

("It is the power of the false which supersedes the form of the true, because it poses the simultaneity of impossible presents, or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts") (Deleuze 1985, 171/1989, 131).

The good that Artaud distinguishes from continuous evil is the good which "sait se transformer, se métamorphoser d'après les forces qu'elle rencontre.... Certes, il n'y a pas plus vérité dans l'une que dans l'autre; il n'y a que du devenir, et le devenir est la puissance du faux de la vie, la volonté de puissance" ("knows how to transform itself, to metamorphose itself according to its encounters.... Of course there is no more truth in one life than in the other; there is only becoming, and becoming is the power of the false of life, is the will to power") (Deleuze 1985, 185/1989, 141). According to Deleuze, "Artaud est le seul à avoir été profondément absolue dans la littérature, et découvre un corps vital et le langage prodigieux de ce corps, à force de souffrance, comme il dit" ("Artaud is alone in having been an absolute depth in literature, and in having discovered a vital body and the prodigious language of this body. As he says, he discovered them through suffering") (1969, 114/1990, 93). Artaud's language is intended to incite the body into action, to contaminate it like a disease through indigestible sounds and syncopated rhythms. Invented language, says Artaud, must issue from torment, words (Artaud's *mots-cris* [howl-words]), which act at the level of pure phonetics and his unwritable *mots-souffles* [breath-words]) (108/88) must have value in themselves, which in effect means that at some level they must be meaningless. This "value in itself" is the transcendent principle of the physicality of the word. The language of the depths of the body is before and after the judgement of man (it is not really God that Artaud rejects, but the judgement of god as instructed/constructed by man).

Que reste-t-il? Il reste les corps, qui sont des forces, rien d'autre que des forces. Mais la force ne se rapporte à un centre, pas plus qu'elle n'affronte un milieu ou des obstacles. Elle n'affronte que d'autres forces, elle se rapporte à d'autres forces, qu'elle affecte ou qui l'affectent. (1985, 182)

What remains? There remain bodies, which are forces, nothing but forces. But force no longer refers to a centre, anymore than it confronts a set of obstacles. It only confronts other forces, it refers to other forces that it affects or that affect it. (1989, 139)

Artaud's body, having lost its centre, its unvarying organization, becomes, like Deleuze's comment on Orson Welles's Don Quixote, "la 'bonté' de la vie en elle-même, une étrange bonté qui porte le vivant à la création" ("the 'goodness' of life in itself, a strange goodness which carries the living being to creation") (186/142). In the depths of Artaud's language words become senseless and swamped by the harsh sounds and materiality of the body as so many phonetic elements which wound the body with unwieldy consonants and a plethora of

bellows, yells and moans, and exhaust the body with breath-words and asphyxiation (1969, 108/1990, 88-89).

The problem Artaud faces is that he cannot distinguish between an incorporeal event and the body's actions and passions. But truth, says Deleuze, is an undecidable alternative, it is not to be produced or achieved but to be created. "Il n'y a pas d'autre vérité que la création de Nouveau" ("There is no other truth than the creation of the New") (1985, 191/1989, 146-47). Beneath the surface of language, between the actions and passions of the body lies thought which can only be sensed, but which cannot be understood. Artaud writes, "il y a par-dessus tout la complétude du nerf. Complétude qui tient toute la conscience, et les chemins occultes de l'esprit dans la chair" ("Above all else there is the wholeness of the nerves. A wholeness that includes all of consciousness, and the secret pathways of the mind in the flesh") (1978, 190/SW 259). Artaud's pain, his inner feeling, no longer corresponds to images of sensation but only to sense. "And it looks so good, I can see it / And it smells so good, I can smell it / And it sounds so good, I can hear it / And it feels so good, I can feel it / so why iye, iye, iye iye / can't I touch it?" (lyrics of "Why Can't I Touch It?," The Buzzcocks, *Singles Going Steady* L.P.). Deleuze reiterates this when he writes, "on ne saisis la vérité éternelle de l'événement que si l'événement s'inscrit aussi dans la chair" ("the eternal truth of the event is grasped only if the event is also inscribed in the flesh") (1969, 188/1990, 161). Again we turn to Artaud's "Le Théâtre et la Peste" ("Theater and the Plague") where he writes, "le théâtre lui aussi prend des gestes et les pousse à bout: comme la peste il refait la chaîne entre ce qui est et ce qui n'est pas, entre la virtualité du possible et ce qui existe dans la nature matérialisée" ("theater takes gestures and develops them to the limit. Just like the plague, it refigures the links between what does and does not exist, between the virtual order of the possible and the material nature of experience") (OC 4: 38/CW 4: 17). This is the flesh, the depth of bodies certainly, but at the synapses of the nerves which act as virtual intensities in continuous agitation.

Artaud's language of depth is related to Deleuze's commentary on the crack as the suddenness of the event within the flesh. In *La Logique du sens*, Deleuze discusses the crack (after F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Crack Up"), which persists at the frontier of the depths and the surface. In the twenty-second series ("Porcelaine et volcan") of *La Logique du sens*, Deleuze returns repeatedly to the problem of depth and surface, of Artaud's madness and senselessness and Carroll's humour and nonsense, of how to stay at the surface of the crack, at the incorporeal event, without actualizing oneself in the quicksand and clamour of its body (1969, 180-89/1990, 154-61). Is Deleuze striving for a kind of balance between the two poles of surface and depth? He wills the crack and its perils and yet he warns us to stay at its edges like the paradox of the intrepid tourist.

Toutes ces questions accusent le ridicule du penseur : oui, toujours, les deux aspects, les deux processus diffèrent en nature. Mais quand Bousquet parle de la vérité éternelle de

la blessure, c'est au nom d'une blessure personnelle abominable qu'il porte dans son corps. Quand Fitzgerald ou Lowry parlent de cette fêlure métaphysique incorporelle, quand ils y trouvent à la fois le lieu et l'obstacle de leur pensée, la source et le tarissement de leur pensée, le sens et le non-sens, c'est avec tous les litres d'alcool qu'ils ont bu, qui ont effectué la fêlure dans le corps. Quand Artaud parle de l'érosion de la pensée comme quelque chose d'essentiel et d'accidentel à la fois, radicale impuissance et pourtant haut pouvoir, c'est déjà du fond la schizophrénie. Chacun risquait quelque chose, est allé le plus loin dans ce risque, et en tire un droit imprescriptible. Que reste-t-il au penseur abstrait quand il donne des conseils de sagesse et de distinction? Alors, toujours parler de la blessure de Bousquet, de l'alcoolisme de Fitzgerald et de Lowry, de la folie de Nietzsche et d'Artaud en restant sur le rivage? Devenir le professionnel de ces causeries? Souhaiter seulement que ceux qui furent frappés ne s'abîment pas trop? Faire des quêtes et des numéros spéciaux? Ou bien aller soi-même y voir un petit peu, être un peu alcoolique, un peu fou, un peu suicidaire, un peu guerillero, juste assez pour allonger la fêlure, mais pas trop pour ne pas l'approfondir irrémédiablement? Où qu'on se tourne, tout semble triste. En vérité, comment rester à la surface sans demeurer sur le rivage? Comment se sauver en sauvant la surface, et toute l'organisation de surface, y compris le langage et la vie? Comment atteindre à cette *politique*, à cette *guerrilla* complète? (183-84)

All these questions point out the ridiculousness of the thinker: yes, they are always two aspects, and the two processes differ in nature. But when Bousquet speaks of the wounds eternal truth, it is in the name of a personal and abominable wound which he bears within his body. When Fitzgerald or Lowry speak of this incorporeal metaphysical crack and find in it the locus as well as the obstacle of their thought, its source as well as its drying up, sense and nonsense, they speak with all the gallons of alcohol they have drunk which have actualized the crack in the body. When Artaud speaks of the erosion of thought as something both essential and accidental, a radical impotence and nevertheless a great power, it is already from the bottom of schizophrenia. Each one risked something and went as far as possible in taking this risk; each one drew from it an irrepressible right. What is left for the abstract speaker once she has given advice of wisdom and distinction? Well then, are we to speak always about Bousquet's wound, about Fitzgerald's and Lowry's alcoholism, Nietzsche and Artaud's madness, while remaining on the shore? Are we to become the professionals who give talks on these topics? Are we to wish only that those who have been struck down do not abuse themselves too much? Are we to take up collections and create special journal issues? Or should we go a short way further to see for ourselves, be a little of an alcoholic, a little crazy, a little of a guerrilla enough to extend the crack, but not enough to deepen it irremediably? Wherever we turn everything seems dismal. Indeed, how are we to stay on the surface without staying on the shore? How do we save ourselves by saving the surface and every surface organization, including language and life? How is this politics, this full guerrilla warfare to be attained? (158)

The humour of this conundrum encapsulates a certain ironic burden toward change, toward the perception and the knowledge of change, (and a call to loosen up if not fall apart, to live a little if not on the edge, to want a little pain, if not to die from it). Deleuze and Guattari say that because of the infinite speeds of chaos and because of its shocks, we are always losing our ideas. We need a

"little order" in ideas, in things, in states of affairs, a little empirical imaging, a little sensation, as protection against plunging into black holes. In *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (*What Is Philosophy?*), it is the philosopher, the artist, and the scientist who attempt to hold back opinion on the one hand, and chaos on the other. It is a precious juggling act. The fisherman who casts his net over concepts but risks being swept away is Deleuze's reiteration of concern at the loss of the shore. "C'est comme si l'on jetait un filet, mais le pêcheur risque toujours d'être entraîné et de se retrouver en pleine mer quand il croyait arriver au port" ("It is as if one were casting a net, but the fisherman always risks being swept away and finding himself in the open sea when he thought he had reached port") (191/203). A little bit crazy, just enough to create. The question is, what does Deleuze see in Artaud's energy — life — chaos that he so admires? The second question follows, does Deleuze limit these "Artaudian values," by means of his caution? But this is to position Deleuze on a rigid line of pedantic philosophy, and Artaud on some kind of fluid line of dissolution, when the two are really not all that opposed. Perhaps Deleuze's caution is a way of assembling life so that it can support the most extreme intensities, so that it can risk anything at all? Deleuze's desire for Artaud's craziness is still dangerous, in staying so stratified he risks repeating the banality of the destruction of a transvaluation of both their forces of life. Similarly, Artaud, even with his own position in the literary canon, can still be said to have written himself into dissolution.

In *their* quest for being a little crazy and a little alcoholic, Deleuze and Guattari favour Henry Miller who suggests getting soused on water, and William Burroughs, who tries thinking the possibility that things usually attained by chemical means are also "accessible par d'autres chemins" ("accessible by other paths") (Deleuze 1969, 189/1990, 161). Deleuze and Guattari, like the masochist, the schizo and the drug addict are hankering for a taste, for the effects of a practice. This is not to suggest that Deleuze and Guattari ought instead to differentiate altered states by their causes (as if one could), but it is to point out that to get drunk on water is still to solicit (an) intoxication. In talking about a pure experience without drugs Deleuze and Guattari are the ultimate clichéd junkies "just" hankering for an effect, an effect without a cause where intoxication has little, if nothing at all to do with supposed causal substances, (except to suggest itself — junk, sex, alcohol) and more, or everything, to do with the active affections of the flesh of an inhuman body. Along a crack between the flesh and its sense (at its "cutting edge"), Deleuze and Guattari

ne [peuvent] renoncer à l'espoir que les effets de la drogue ou de l'alcool (leurs "révélations") pourront être revécus et récupérés pour eux-mêmes à la surface du monde, indépendamment de l'usage des substances, si les techniques d'aliénation sociale qui déterminent celui-ci sont retournées en moyens d'exploration révolutionnaires. (Deleuze 1969, 188-89)

cannot give up the hope that the effects of drugs and alcohol (their "revelations") will be able to be relived and recovered for their own sake at the surface of the world, independently of the use of those substances, provided that the techniques of social alienation which determine this use are reversed into revolutionary means of exploration. (1990, 161)

However, Deleuze and Guattari find the masochist and the drug addict hapless and empty because their "sub-cultural" identities are ever reliant on the state. These failed bodies are said to produce the structured rigidities which a full body must eliminate.

What is problematic about this differentiation of the full and the empty (and which at all costs, should not be ignored), is Deleuze and Guattari's dubious proposal to the problem of the social order. Their exemplary empty bodies without organs are also the nominal examples of socially stigmatized forms of subjectivity. While it can be argued that the economies of drugs, pain and madness do not operate entirely as the effect of the substances or movements they take on any more than thought and writing do, Deleuze and Guattari leave little room for anything other than the operation of the effect. Alternative operations by these empty bodies are regarded simply as processes of restrictive identification. And yet when Deleuze questions the paradoxical nature of the experimental, he cites its becoming within the aesthetic categories of madness (Artaud and Nietzsche), masochism or suicide (Bousquet) and drugs (Lowry and Fitzgerald). If this is a method of achieving a new intellectual record, what kind of record is it? The body without organs is described as "Chose simple, Entité, Corps plein, Voyage immobile, Anorexie, Vision cutanée, Yoga, Krishna, Love, Expérimentation" ("the simple Thing, the Entity, the full Body, the stationary Voyage, Anorexia, cutaneous Vision, Yoga, Krishna, Love, Experimentation") (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 187/1987, 151). Because the masochist, the addict and the madman (as empty bodies without organs) are said to be degenerative and empty, they are only valuable because of the effects and ideas they engender in other visions and experimentations and not as experiments in themselves. Curiously, Deleuze and Guattari are all too happy to overlook the aesthetic practices of masochism, madness and alcoholism.¹³ Concentrating on the adjectival force of "a little," when executing a little cruelty, a little craziness and a little alcoholic, might enable the effect or the event of the risk to be separated from its myriad nominal expressions, thereby acknowledging its applicability to any number of bodies.

13 This is not always the case: in *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch: Le Froid et Le Cruel* (Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty), Deleuze studies the aesthetics of masochism. On the discrepancy between the masochist in *Le Froid et le Cruel* and the masochist in Deleuze's collaborations with Guattari, see Dale. Of course, Deleuze and Guattari's caution can also be understood as a cruelty, something hard, a disciplinary machinism.

The alcoholic's maxim is "One thought is too many and a thousand is never enough." Thought moves in both directions at once, like Deleuze's Alice who is becoming both larger than she was and smaller than she is becoming (1969, 9/1990, 1).

Car le Grand et le Petit ne se disent pas naturellement de l'Un, mais d'abord de la différence. On demande donc jusqu'où la différence peut et doit aller — quelle grandeur? Quelle petitesse? — pour entrer dans les limites du concept sans se perdre en deçà ni s'échapper au-delà. (Deleuze 1968, 45)

For the Large and the Small are not naturally said of the One, but first and foremost of difference. The question arises, therefore, how far the difference can and must extend — how large? how small? — in order to remain within the limits of the concept, neither becoming lost within, nor escaping beyond it. (1994, 29)

"A little" is the seed of creation occurring on both sides of an opposition of too much and too little movement and rest, life and death. It is an implied limit, and difference, which is infinitely small, and infinitely large is only ever implied. "A little" is the presence of the actor in the event. In terms of a becoming crazy or alcoholic one is not a little crazy, one becomes a little crazy, which, like Alice, means that one can be a little crazy and a little stratified or cautious at the same time. "A little" is neither particularly spatial nor temporal, it is not of the relations of subjects and objects, it is an affect and its sign.

What Deleuze regards as an *actual* or real problem is the imperial exigency of thought; it is a piece of chaotic reality that plagues our calculations and anticipations, and their habits. But what does this "little piece of chaotic reality," this absolute and unthinkable chaos make us think? And what is its relation to the "little order" so necessary for thought to become actual at all? Artaud parallels Deleuze's move toward a transcendental empiricism where order and chaos co-produce each other in an uncaused or self-propelling process. The "little bit of chaotic reality" which forces us to think can only be sensed, it cannot be recognized. Deleuze's commentary on the image of thought and of thought without an image, tells us that if "an encounter" with thought is invested in an object then it becomes recognized or recalled and is no longer an encounter, for it no longer forces us to think — it has become a product of common sense produced by a combination of the faculties (by their oppositions, their analogies, and their judgements) (1968, 182/1994, 139). Artaud did not recognize his sacred cane, to others it was an old cane, but Artaud sensed, felt, intuited that it was more than (other than) a cane, it was magic. So what of the "little bit of order," that stops us from thought, rather than encourages it, is it recognition itself and is it different from the bit of order? A "little bit of order" prevents the loss of ideas, it is less order than before and also more order than "a little chaos."

If we construe order itself as a Kantian faculty then Deleuze's transcendental empiricism would take "a little" of it, not as the overwhelming of another faculty as in the sublime, nor as a turning toward the other faculties (connection), but as the movement which extricates a single faculty out from all the others, "en présence de son 'propre'" ("in the presence of that which is its own") (Deleuze 1968, 184/1994, 141). What concerns order essentially is creation. What is ordered in order is creation, the coming of the new, which in itself is forever coming, and has never been ordered. Similarly, what is not chaotic in chaos is a moment of creation, the chance swerve of an atom, the swing in a change of direction which necessitates that what is, is already no longer chaotic. The faculty of order then in confronting its own limit communicates to a little piece of chaotic reality, a little craziness and to a little alcoholic (and *vice-versa*) only "une violence qui la met en face de son élément propre, comme de son disparate ou de son incomparable" ("a violence which brings it face to face with its own element, as though with its disappearance or its perfection") (184/141). This is the original necessity of violence inflicted in thought. The coexistence of the contraries of order and chaos or of crazy and secure are non-relational mad-becomings of philosophy. Following Deleuze we ask, what is it that can only be ordered, yet is chaotic at the same time. What is it that can only be drunken, yet is sober at the same time, and what is it that can only be crazy, yet is also sane or secure?

Artaud's well-documented mania parallels Deleuze's transcendental empiricism. Unable to think Artaud strives to show that the unthought is there in thought. He tracks the unthought down, he raises thinking in thought to the level of the affect. This level of the affect corresponds with the "just" of "just a little order." It is to "just" that we must look in order to confirm, even in its imperceptibility, the event and its affect. Just crazy or just thinking implies an only just and a pure determined moment, an only crazy within the realms of a little crazy. It is Artaud's just madness, his very nearly more than mad and very nearly more than nonsensical that constitutes both his, as much as Deleuze's attachment to the shore. If a "little" alcoholic is to be "just" alcoholic then this is also to engender alcoholic or crazy, innately. "Just" forces thought to its limit by creating "just" such a limit within the unthought. Just is inconsiderable, small, it is also perfect and exact, choiceless and necessary, and it is not extreme. It is not extreme when it is revalued in relation to an "extremity" specific to Artaud's project, which seeks to approach an immanent limit rather than to exceed its boundaries. "Just" evokes a transcendental empiricism, it is the necessary determination of the imperceptibility of "a little anything" because it bypasses the possibility of measuring the quantity and the quality of a sense of the affect. Artaud bypasses the crazy loop of death because he declares that his thoughts, although he can

feel them stirring within him, are unthinkable.¹⁴ He asks Rivière whether it is better to write something (the rejected poems that he sends him), than nothing at all.

La réponse à cela, c'est vous qui la ferez en acceptant ou en refusant ce petit essai. Vous le jugerez, vous, du point de vue de l'absolu. Mais je vous dirai que ce me serait une bien belle consolation de penser que, bien que n'étant pas *tout* moi-même, aussi haut, aussi dense, aussi large que moi, je peux encore être quelque chose. (1978, 27)

It is you who will give the answer by accepting or rejecting this little attempt. You will judge it, of course, from the point of view of the absolute. But I shall tell you that it would be a very great consolation for me to think that even though I am not *all* of myself, not as tall, not as dense, not as wide as myself, I can still be something." (SW 36)

And he asks Rivière to judge it then, by being "vraiment absolu" ["truly absolute"].

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14 After writing my first draft on "just," as a way of thinking about the affect, I found a similar use of the word in Deleuze's *Pourparlers* (*Negotiations*) in a discussion on the film maker Goddard: "Bien, mais les idées, ce n'est pas de l'idéologie, c'est de la pratique. Goddard a une belle formule: pas une image juste, juste une image. Les philosophes devraient dire aussi, et arriver à le faire: pas d'idées justes, juste des idées. Parce que, des idées justes, c'est toujours des idées conformes à des significations dominantes ou à des mots d'ordre établis, c'est toujours des idées qui vérifient quelque chose, même si ce quelque chose est à venir, même si c'est l'avenir de la révolution. Tandis que 'juste des idées,' c'est du devenir-présent, c'est du bégaïement dans les idées, ça ne peut s'exprimer que sous forme de questions, qui font plutôt taire les réponses. Ou bien montrer quelque chose de simple, qui casse toutes les démonstrations" (57). Deleuze talks about conforming and confirming ideas which he calls "just" ideas, which he differentiates from a becoming-present, from a stammering of ideas which he calls "just ideas," and which "can only be expressed in the form of questions, that tend to confound any answers. Or you can present some simple thing that disrupts all the arguments" (39).

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III. FORCES OF EXPRESSION

"...everything which provokes confusion without
 destroying the strength of an emergent thought..."