# SURREALIST AFTERSHOCKS:

## Artaud, Freud, and Mirrors of the Surreal schism

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*ABSTRACT: Surrealism may be our last, near-global artistic movement that took seriously the integrity of the art-maker and expressed as its purpose the same goals as that of an organized radical politics, and for this it deserves to our attention. Antonin Artaud, a disgraced Surrealist but later appreciated, would have the greatest impact on reimagining the "mystical stage" of performance and drama in the 20th Century and beyond it. This paper connects Artaud's legacy with that of the Surrealists, as well as that of Sigmund Freud, and in doing so finds value and relevance in Antonin Artaud's work as it explores a range of aesthetic, cultural, and political issues. After analyzing concepts of the Surrealists' connection to aesthetic and psychoanalytic theories, this paper explores, via Artaud, the limits of the performative subject, placing a special importance on the issue of representation, via lesser-known essays on mirrors and doubles, to illuminate these parallel issues.*

*KEY WORDS: Theater; Performance; Literature; Media; Antonin Artaud.*

# PÓS-CHOQUES SURREALISTAS:

## Artaud, Freud e os Espelhos do Surreal(-s)ismo

RESUMO: O Surrealismo pode ser o último movimento artístico quase- global que levou a sério a integridade do artista e expressou como propósito os mesmos objetivos de uma política radical organizada e, por isso, merece nossa atenção. Antonin Artaud, um surrealista que caiu em desgraça' e mais tarde apreciado, teria o maior dos impactos ao reimaginar o "palco místico" para a performance e o drama do Século. XX e além. Este artigo conecta o legado de Artaud com o dos Surrealistas e com o de Sigmund Freud, e, ao fazer isso, encontra valor e relevância no trabalho de Antonin Artaud, a medida em que este explora uma série de questões estéticas, culturais e políticas. Após analisar conceitos da conexão dos surrealistas com as teorias estéticas e psicanalíticas, este artigo explora, via Artaud, os limites do sujeito performativo, colocando uma importância especial na questão da representação, através de ensaios menos conhecidos sobre espelhos e duplos, para iluminar essas questões paralelas.

PALAVRAS CHAVES: Teatro; Performance; Literatura; Mídia; Antonin Artaud.

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Raoul Vaneigem, writing as "J. F. Dupuis" in his *Cavalier History of Surrealism*, rightly states that Surrealism's "curse was its ideological nature, and it was forever condemned to try and exorcise this curse, even going so far as to replay it on the private and mystical stage of the myth of old, duly exhumed from the depths of history" (VANEIGEM, 1999, p. 40). Surrealism, captained for its entire duration as a movement by André Breton, was as interested in publishing manifestos and pamphlets of its goals as a movement as it was in its vacillating commitments to politics and to inflating its own theoretical worth through studies of psychoanalysis. It may be our last, near-global artistic movement that took seriously the integrity of the art-maker and expressed as its purpose the same goals as that of an organized radical politics, and for this it deserves to our attention. Perhaps because of its habits for self-inflation, those artists and theorists attached to the Surrealist name who would go on to make more lasting impressions on the world stage were sooner or later derided by or ejected from the Surrealist machine. Antonin Artaud, a disgraced Surrealist but later appreciated, for one, would have the greatest impact on reimagining the "mystical stage" of performance and drama in the 20th Century and beyond it.

The Surrealist legacy can be traced through aesthetic theory combined with the measure of its cultural impact. The origins of what David G. Zinder calls a "Theater of Attack" must be traced from Alfred Jarry to the Dadaists through Artaud and onward. Coming long before the formation of Surrealism, Jarry's *Ubu Roi* (1896) accomplished what many playwrights, producers, and directors dream of: stirring an audience into a frenzy. W.B. Yeats relates his reception of the play:

> *The audience shake their fists at one another, and [my friend] whispers to me, "There are often duels after these performances," and he explains to me what is happening on the stage. The players are supposed to be dolls, toys, marionettes, and now they are all hopping like wooden frogs, and I can see for myself that the chief personage, who is some kind of King, carries for Sceptre a brush of the kind we use to clean the closet.* (apud BENEDIKT, 1966, p. xiii)

In his lengthy introduction to the anthology *Modern French Theatre: The Avant-Garde, Dada, and Surrealism*, Michael Benedikt mainly focuses on extolling the virtues of *Ubu Roi*, especially its "anti-reality":

> *when the curtain was finally raised on King Ubu, most of the audience found itself confronted for the first time not only with a totally unrealistic stage, but with a stage that was militantly anti-realistic [….] Jarry had represented a world in which only a very few of even the most advanced poets of the era had ever dared envision, much less firmly embody.* (BENEDIKT, 1966, p. xii)

More than a revolt against the perfect realism of earlier-century drama, *Ubu Roi* offers a way toward understanding the drama that would come later. If the play is just anti-realistic, why would it incite violent reactions? Besides Ubu's portrayal as a tyrant that is all too-well drawn a representation of corrupt government officials (leading to a comedic potential that might engender convulsive laughter), one answer might be dissatisfaction with France's culture and politics at the time, which would reach a head with the strategies of Futurism, leading then to the Dada movements, which would attack the realities of culture and even art itself in France.

These two movements were strange manifestations of what some have argued was the burgeoning consciousness in art's avant-garde: the focus on the interior life of the artist, or as Zinder writes, "the production of works of art which were direct manifestations of their creators' subconscious, wholly unmodified for public appreciation" (ZINDER, 1980, p. 2). While these two preceding movements focused on attack, shock, and satire, perhaps a manifestation only of their artist's dissatisfactions with an audience that they viewed as inert and passive, Surrealism's aim was more utopian. Under the name of Surrealism, all members of society would not only align their perspectives to avant-garde artists but would be inspired to create artworks of their own, so that all would express themselves. As Vaneigem writes,

> *Surrealism… recognized the mark of the old world and its oppressive structures in the inhumanity of survival. Though it may have displayed a singular lack of discernment with regard to the ramifications of commodity fetishism, it must still be given credit for having so very rarely failed to measure up […] to the revolutionary ethic of freedom.* (VANEIGEM, 1999, p. 39)

The picture we have of Surrealism is one of the continual self-shoring up of the movement, mainly through Breton's manifestos. As Richardson states, after all of Breton's statements, we find that this era was focused on "the critique of positivism, rationalism, and reason" (FIJALKOWSKI, RICHARDSON, 2016, p.4). Breton wants

this critique to be figured by art, and through egalitarianism, a kind of cultural awakening to the possibilities of the subconscious. Breton: "Dear imagination, what I love most about you, is your unforgiving nature" (BRETON, 1999, p. 1). Some critics have explained this focus on the imagination, or subconscious (the two are certainly conflated by the Surrealists) as a focus on process rather than product. For instance, Joanna Malt states,

> *this egalitarian conception of artistic creation is also a useful one for the [S]urrealists in that it allows them to distance themselves from the tainted definition of the artist as it exists in bourgeois society, and at the same time, its shift of emphasis from the product to the process of creation seeks to exonerate them from accusations that their own work simply contributes to the mass of cultural commodities the capitalist art market offers for commercial exchange.* (MALT, 2008, p. 12)

But is this shift from product to process genuine? Ironically, what interests us about Surrealism, besides the popular and lasting acclaim for its visual art by such figures as Dali, Ernst, and Magritte, is the beginning recognition for the place of the unconscious in the production of art. Surrealism's political program, on the other hand, may not be as useful for us: "Breton's struggles to keep surrealism on the straight and narrow path between political pragmatism and irrelevant aestheticism take the form of statements of position, rather than exploring the artistic implications of such a position" (MALT, 2008, p. 13). Why should we not then, pinpoint the artistic implications of what the Surrealists claimed, and possibly, failed to do?

One way into doing so might be through the origins of the Surrealist project through sources other than Jarry, a legacy of whose impact the Surrealists seemed to want to imitate only in effects, through rational proclamations, than through artistic pioneering. One of these alternate sources would have to be the Freudian influence after which Surrealism sought to follow in aesthetic terms. This is outlined in stark terms in Breton's *First Manifesto*, published in 1924:

> *SURREALISM, n. Pure psychic automatism by means of which one intends to express, either verbally, or in writing, or in any other manner, the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, free of any aesthetic or moral concern.*

> *ENCYCLOPEDIA. Philosophy. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected association, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to the destruction of all other psychic mechanisms completely, and to the replacement of them with itself, in solving the principal problems of life* (apud FIJALKOWSKI, RICHARDSON, 2016, p.ii).

What does Breton mean here by the "actual functioning of thought"? It would not be the actual functioning of rational thought the Surrealists would seek to mine for poetic and theatrical production. Rather, in the literature available, terms like hysteria, systematic delirium (echoing Rimbaud), and paranoia, keep recurring as ideal states for Surrealist poetry. For the Surrealists in their moment, Rabaté states that "[a]dding its erotic salt to the humdrum of everyday life, hysteria proves that the main surrealist ambition, which is to merge dream and reality, or poetry and life, is not a delusion" (apud FIJALKOWSKI, RICHARDSON, 2016, p.49). We confront here the Surrealist paradox that the rational mind must make of that which is moral-less, some source of radical freedom, art that would lead to a revolution in culture.

Breton writes,

> The mind of the man who dreams is fully satisfied by what happens to him. The agonizing question of possibility is no longer pertinent. Kill, fly faster, love to your heart's content. And if you should die, are you not certain of waking up from the dead? Let yourself be carried along, events will not tolerate your interference. You are nameless. The ease of everything is priceless. (apud FIJALKOWSKI, RICHARDSON, 2016, p.51).

Rabaté explains (echoing Vaneigem) that "the surrealist idea was that a new beauty, created out of the ruins of ancient representations, would connect them to the dream world" (qtd. in FIJALKOWSKI, RICHARDSON, 2016, p.50). What is this dream world, and why base an artistic movement on accessing and appropriating it? This impulse might owe more to the example of Freud than has been acknowledged by some critics. As Neil Hertz notes in his foreword to *Writings on Art and Literature*, a Freudian anthology,

> *Freud's generic answer to the question of art's emotional power was that it tapped into, aroused, and reconfigured unconscious energies and investments already at work "within" viewers and readers. Interpretations of works of art, then, like those of neurotic symptoms or dreams or slips of the tongue, are bound to reveal unconscious operations that are not peculiar to artists* (HERTZ, 1997, p. xi).

Finally, then, we might have a way in to understanding the Surrealists' preoccupation with dreams. Freud might be credited with showing artists that the aim of art is not to create certain effects with complete intention, but instead to give full reign to their desires and what Freud called "latent" subject matter, and let their impulses translate to their works with little (or at least less) intervention of the designing impulse than was previously understood to be of prime necessity for the maker. In light of the Surrealist project, we might amend the above quote to state that these "unconscious energies and investments" must be at work in artists and their compositions, and that these energies and investments must be transferred to the art at the time of its making with little intention from the artist, in order to be 'worked through' by the viewer, reader, and even afterwards by the artist. It is perhaps a strange and unfortunate accident of extension that this fruitful understanding of both the artistic and the interpretive process was rendered as the psychoanalytic impulse to take these energies and "explain" them by way of one-dimensional sexual drives.

It was possibly Salvador Dalí who would begin to develop solutions to this problem in aesthetic theory with his paranoiac-critical method. This method's aim was to approach the subconscious by way of the same mechanisms of paranoia: in the same way that the paranoid man or woman afflicted with this disorder sees confirmations of imaginary conflicts, the artist might express the same obsession with details that create a similar state in his composition and in its interpretation: everything in the art would lend itself toward the process of interpreting multiple possible causes for its conflicts, rather than one singular expression of one sexual or other "drive" or perhaps even "will." As Zinder states, Dalí's method of creation entails "the necessity to discover and maintain a double vision, to retain, that is, a measure of conscious control while giving oneself up completely to the work. Or, as Breton put it, to be both judge and party to the activity, actor and spectator at once" (ZINDER, 1980, p. 45). Zinder later states "the principle involved in the paranoid-critical activity – that of a systematic and complete artistic consciousness controlling every aspect of the work – is important to this study because of its striking resemblance to Antonin Artaud's theatrical theories on the role of the creative director" (ZINDER, 1980, p. 46). It may be that Dalí and Artaud have more in common than this somewhat lateral connection, but before

discussing Artaud directly, we should further analyze the Freudian connection to the Surrealist project, in order to sketch what Artaud was fundamentally against.

Freud's statements on theater can help us further to understand the Surrealist attraction to psychoanalysis. Notably, what Freud explains as the stimulating source of the theater, that is, identification with a hero struggling against a kind or kinds of adversity, is arguably what Artaud would reject as the purpose for his theater. Yet, we look to Freud, as the Surrealists did, for examples of the contemporary thinking:

> *The spectator is a person who experiences too little, who feels that he is a 'poor wretch to whom nothing of importance can happen', who has long been obliged to damp down, or rather displace, his ambition to stand in his own person at the hub of world affairs; he longs to feel and to act and to arrange things according to his desires- in short to be a hero. And the playwright and actor enable him to do this by allowing him to identify himself with a hero… His enjoyment is based on an illusion; that is to say, his suffering is mitigated by the certainty that, firstly, it is someone other than himself who is acting and suffering on the stage, and, secondly that after all it is only a game, which can threaten no damage to his personal security. In these circumstances he can allow himself to enjoy being a 'great man', to give way without a qualm to such suppressed impulses as a craving for freedom in religious, political, social and sexual matters, and to 'blow off steam' in every direction in the various grand scenes that form part of the life represented on stage* (FREUD, 1997, p. 88).

In *The Theater and Its Double*, it is precisely this illusion which Artaud would fight, along with, in the minds of some critics, representation. Freud himself, though, does not always seem as faithful to the need of explaining the mystery of art through sexual drives and classic Freudian concepts like the castration complex, the Oedipus complex, and others which might be explained by this simple identification with an illusion. He further states

> *But drama seeks to explore emotional possibilities more deeply and to give an enjoyable shape even to forebodings of misfortune; for this reason, it depicts the hero in his struggles, or rather (with masochistic satisfaction) in defeat. This relation to suffering and misfortune might be taken as a characteristic of drama, whether, as happens in serious play, it is only concern that is aroused, and afterwards allayed, or whether, as happens in tragedies, the suffering is actually realized. The fact that drama originated out of sacrificial rites (cf. the goat and the scapegoat) in the cult of the gods cannot be unrelated to this meaning of drama. It appeases, as it were, the rising rebellion against the divine regulation of the universe, which is responsible for the existence of suffering* (FREUD, 1997, p. 89).

What we see here might be limiting though, by Freud's insistence on analysis from the viewpoint of the audience, and not from a more metaphysical, holistic perspective on what occurs in the theater, the magic that is so difficult to express in writing. In his chapter titled, "Theater, Magic and Mimesis," Ros Murray offers some useful analysis toward understanding where our division begins between the Freudian analysis so lauded by the Surrealists, and the counter-force of Artaudian theory.

Murray explains the problem in this way, citing a few critics beside Artaud first, in order to examine mimesis:

> *Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen […] argu[es] 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'. This suggests that before the formation of the subject, there is a non-individual, collective affect"* (MURRAY, 2014, pp. 70-71).

This model gives far more agency to the actor, as Artaud would have it as well. In *The Theater and Its Double*, Artaud draws a metaphor for the theatrical affect as being like the bubonic plague: a kind of death in life by way of the actor's losing his subjective 'I' and becoming plagued by the theatrical 'desiring subject' (for lack of a better term). Artaud states,

> *The state of the victim who dies without material destruction, with all the stigmata of an absolute and almost abstract disease upon him, is identical with the state of an actor entirely penetrated by feelings that do not benefit or even relate to his real condition* (ARTAUD, 1958, p. 24).

So when Artaud writes of the actor's "real condition" he perhaps means to posit that not only are the actor's identity or identification with his/herself or a character are done away with by way of the theatrical effect, but that all the actor's desires, self-control, indeed anything that would allow such identification, is destroyed by the process of acting in Artaud's model and in ideal theater. He further writes, that "the images of poetry in the theater are a spiritual force that begins its trajectory in the senses and does without reality altogether" (ARTAUD, 1958, p. 25).

Artaud was always concerned with, as Murray sees it, "a consciously invoked collective force that is mediated through the body" for his theater (MURRAY, 2014, p. 68). Where the Surrealists' official program was to reject theater for its bourgeois and marketplace trappings, Artaud's concepts would, posthumously, revolutionize theater, inspiring such figures as Peter Brook, Herbert Blau, and Jerzy Grotowski to free the theater from the conventional stage as the Surrealists knew it during their time. So, the question arises: what inspired Artaud? Why do his theories continue to be scrupulously analyzed, and what writings contemporary to Artaud might shed light on his, and by extension, the Surrealist influence?

Contained in a section of Dawn Ades' *The Surrealism Reader* called *The Annihilation of Self-Identity*, there is an essay called "Mirrors" by Pierre Mabille. First published in *Minotaure* no. 11 in 1938, one of the numerous early Surrealist journals, the editors state that this essay was "an influence on (as well as being influenced by) Jacques Lacan as he was developing his notion of the mirror stage" (ADES, 2015, p. 49). In this essay, Mabille establishes a psychological conception of human development "even while differentiating it in terms of the relation we establish with mirrors as uncanny reflections of ourselves" (ADES, 2015, p. 49). This conception is less about the "internal constitution of the ego" and more about the formation of ego "as it has to divide itself in order to find itself, creating a double that materially has no relation to itself and yet is an integral part of its own perception of itself, to the extent that it is unable actually to perceive itself without the use of this reflection" (ADES, 2015, p. 49). It is a dialectic of "self" and "image," a process central "not simply to human becoming but also as an aspect of phenomena itself" (ADES, 2015, p. 49).

Mabille further notes that in development,

> *the person soon perceives itself as the essential axis of all experience [… .] Yet if we desire a complete representation of our person, we have to imagine it through the impression of others… Sometimes the 'self' dominates with its spontaneity and the representative system is not very well developed, but sometimes, on the contrary, the external social image dominates the stage…. If due to habit, we manage to recognize our reflection in the mirror, it no less remains that this image constitutes a mystery whose explanation we seek. What is this second person who suddenly appears at the same time as ourselves? We readily constitute it as a double in which we impart all the hopes of which reality deprives us. We wish to be eternal, weightless, invulnerable, always vigilant. The double will become these things for us. It becomes an improved, idealized representation of the 'ego'* (apud ADES, 2015, p. 65).

This thinking is almost in stark contrast to Freud's more scientific explanation as to what occurs in the theater. Where Freud argues that an audience member "identifies," by way of his or her desires, with the actor's 'representation' of desires, Artaud argues something else happens entirely. It is not the simple 'ego' of the audience member represented; it is this double which Mabille almost successfully traces, and in fact this double is, perhaps, manifested, rather than represented in Artaud's drama. In Artaud's *The Theater and its Double*, this theatrical double, necessarily, cannot be fully sketched, as it seems to be a "dangerous reality, a reality of which the Principles, like dolphins, once they have shown their heads, hurry to dive back into the obscurity of the deep" (ARTAUD, 1958, p. 47). But one can see in Artaud's language these clues, like the hieroglyphs he elsewhere sketches, pointing toward what he is seeking.

For Artaud the theater *is* a kind of reality and not a game to be 'played', nor an entertainment as Freud calls it. Where it is reality is where it is in communication not with our "wish to be eternal, weightless, invulnerable, always vigilant" as Mabille states, but where it is communication with the double itself. That is, Artaud's double would never correspond to human desires, nor would it represent them. Artaud's double is that which is immanent in reality itself, somehow behind a veil, which can be accessed through artistic means, particularly theater, but could never be perceived directly except in brief glimpses, never for long durations. The process of acting and staging is what can manifest the double, but it is not something as stable as a character on stage. Artaud writes,

> *Every real effigy has a shadow which is its double; and art must falter and fail from the moment the sculptor believes he has liberated the kind of shadow whose very existence will destroy his repose…Like all magic cultures expressed by appropriate hieroglyphs, the true theater has its shadows too, and, of all languages and all arts, the theater is the only one left whose shadows have shattered their limitations. From the beginning, one might say its shadows did not tolerate limitations* (ARTAUD, 1958, p. 12).

Classical Balinese theater was a great influence on Artaud for this reason. Being bereft of language, which Artaud saw as a contaminating influence, this "pure" theater, is composed of gestures and careful attention toward production of an everywhere-

overwhelming spectacle. Like hieroglyphs, the theater Artaud sought would be composed of images, extending to actions and gestures which would form a new language for drama entirely. This would propel Artaud toward the creation of a "Theater of Cruelty." In reflecting on classical Balinese theater, he writes,

> *It is certain that this aspect of pure theater, this physics of absolute gesture which is the idea itself and which transforms the mind's conceptions into events perceptible through the labyrinths and fibrous interlacings of matter, gives us a new idea of what belongs by nature to the domain of forms and manifested matter. Those who succeed in giving a mystic sense to the simple form of a robe and who, not content with placing a man's Double next to him, confer upon each man in his robes a double made of clothes* (ARTAUD, 1958, p. 62).

We furthermore see here that Artaud writes in a manner that approaches the condition he wants for his theater. The relation that the audience should have to "the Double" is again gestured to, suggested to be, not a simple representation by way of an actor on the stage, but as "double made of clothes," an almost ghostly human form that allows the audience access to pure theater, all the while maintaining distance from relegating the capitalized "Double" to something so easily conceivable. As many critics state in following Artaud, so much representation is essentially "re-presentation"; characters presenting on stage the recycled and recompressed words of the playwright in the manner that the director dictated to them like so many marionettes on strings. The Double is always adumbrated as "the idea itself" that might be accessed, but never in limiting language.

For this reason, conceptions of the ideal theater are not communicated here in rational, pragmatic language, but in gestures at the level of language, a kind of writing performance that would go on to influence many writers in Critical Theory, besides those analyzing performance, especially in figures such as Derrida and Herbert Blau, who would be, at times, at odds with Artaud's concepts. Before examining Artaud's legacy in Derrida and Blau, what might we glean from his brief time as an official Surrealist, and possibly his influence on them then and afterward?

Artaud's tenure within the Surrealist fold saw the publication of only a few journals titled *La Révolution surréaliste* from the official Bureau of Surrealist Research, a two-story house opened on October 11th, 1924 (DUROZOI, 2002, p. 63). This space and periodical were intended to bring more notoriety to the Surrealists as an institution.

They hosted student visits and galleries of works on the second floor, and on the first floor they discussed ideas for direction and worked on *La Révolution surréaliste*. Curiously enough, each issue contained a questionnaire, with its first issue, as Vaneigem notes, being concerned with the question of suicide (that is, a survey asking why readers thought people committed such violence against themselves). At this early stage in the Surrealist movement, or as Vaneigem argues, the Surrealism ideology, one still saw the vestiges of the Dada influence that Surrealism grew out of, as, perhaps, an indirect response. Vaneigem quotes Artaud[2], who oversaw publication of this new magazine: "the first issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* is replete with press clippings concerning suicide. In the survey conducted in that issue on the question, Artaud's response remains exemplary:

> *I suffer frightfully from life. There is no state I cannot attain. And without a doubt I have been dead for a long time already – I have already committed suicide. I have, as it were, been suicided. But what would you think of a suicide before the fact – a suicide that made you redirect your steps, but to somewhere beyond being, not towards death* (apud VANEIGEM, 1999, p. 38).

Vaneigem explains that Artaud's "nihilism" would eventually turn out to be the Surrealists' stance, but only partially:

> *For Artaud, in 1924, the hope of a classless society, the hope of a coming reign of freedom, so passionately entertained by Surrealism, had already been dashed. Later, when the unmasking of Stalinism cast a dark cloud over these aspirations in the hearts of Breton and his friends, Surrealism embraced Artaud's conclusion in an intellectual way, and resolved like him to live the drama of everyday alienation as a cosmic tragedy of the mind.* (VANEIGEM, 1999, pp. 38-39)

[2] As it is not difficult to hear Rimbaud's influence in Artaud (the Rimbaud who said "Je est un autre"or "I is another"), we might hear Artaud's influence in Genet here, especially in *The Balcony's Judge* who states early on in the drama,

> *(facing the audience) Right before your eyes: nothing in my hands, nothing up my sleeve, [I] remove the rot and cast it off. But it's a painful occupation. If every judgment were delivered seriously, each one would cost me my life. That's why I'm dead. I inhabit that region of exact freedom. I, King of Hell, weigh those who are dead, like me. [The Thief] [is] a dead person, like myself.* (GENET, 1994, p. 17).

Although Artaud's statements above may indeed seem nihilistic, it may instead better be seen as the performative writing discussed above. Artaud's words are always full of paradox, and these paradoxes point, again, not to their logical conclusions, but to something immanent within them that suggests a kind of affect that would release, in the words of Herbert Blau, "flow-producing aporias of unfinished forms." What could Artaud seek to highlight otherwise (BLAU, 1987, p. xix)? It then seems limiting for Vaneigem here to cast these words as nihilistic. But what more can we glean from his view that the Surrealists, later in their movement, did work with different ideas than those from their beginning, and what role would Artaud and others have played therein? And In examining these influences, we might ask also what impact would the Surrealist movement have afterward. The next section of this prospectus will seek more fully to understand Surrealism's influences, as well as its legacy in examining critical work by Blau, Derrida, and others.

We find that Blau, in the opening to his celebrated essay "Universals of Performance" for instance, cites Sigmund Freud, an important influence on the Surrealists. Blau states,

> *The most minimal performance is a differentiating act: fort (gone)/da (there). It is an act which introduces (or is introduced by) an element of consciousness in the function, like "the economic motive" – the yield of pleasure in the anxiety – of the apparently gratuitous play of Freud's grandson rehearsing the two-act drama of the wooden reel: the representation of a lack which is the recovery of a loss* (BLAU, 1987, p. 161).

While Freud explains, once again, that this child's "play" is motivated by the loss and recovery of the mother figure, he extends his definition (via some performative leaps of logic) to drama. He discusses how in more 'adult forms of play' like performed tragedy, the pain of tragedy is received with enjoyment by an audience, and that, "This is convincing proof that, even under the dominance of the pleasure principle, there are ways and means enough of making what is in itself unpleasurable into a subject to be recollected and worked over in the mind" (FREUD, 1997, 11). This approach, though, limits our understanding of the possibilities for understanding performance as something beyond simple enjoyment or pleasure.

Jacques Derrida, in his essay, "The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation" discusses this issue directly, acknowledging Artaud's Theater of

Cruelty as being the dominant influence on new directions for drama, and that its guiding principle is its opposition to representation: "[t]his question is historic in an absolute and radical sense. It announces the limit of representation. The theater of cruelty is not a *representation*. It is life itself, in the extent to which life is unrepresentable. Life is the nonrepresentable origin of representation" (DERRIDA, 2017, p. 294). We have, therefore, between Blau's and Derrida's descriptions of what would be the characteristics of a Modern theater, the conception that binary oppositions must be examined and questioned as to whether they are, in actuality, oppositions: is a person on stage simply an actor representing a character to an audience, or might this one-to-one relationship be somehow complicated? And in this deconstruction of supposed oppositions, what might arise as challenges to the frameworks that have led to these conceptions of opposites? Derrida, and subsequently Blau, refer to these concepts that arise in this sense as the "trace." Blau discusses this trace, in speaking of the "dialectic of appearances", which one might take simply to be arguments toward "appearance" in the Nietzschean sense of that which "appears" or is physically present before an audience. Blau writes,

> *There has been, then, a chastening accession of belatedness in the dialectic of appearances. And it points to the almost undeniable remembrance of history that there is something in the nature of theater which from the very beginning of theater has always resisted being theater. Or "always already" resisted, as Jacques Derrida might say, if there were no beginning of theater, and thus no nature but a trace. It is, indeed, the inevitable reappearance of history in performance which corrects the illusion of performance that refuses the future of illusion – the reign of representation – and insists that the theater is life, or if not yet so, that it must be so* (BLAU, 1987, p. 165).

Here, Blau takes the notion of the trace beyond Derrida's essay to the very essence of performance itself, arguing that the trace has always been there in interactions and forces that exist not only in theater, between actors and audiences, but toward all aspects of our lives which might be "performative" themselves. That this line of thinking extends from Artaud to Derrida to Blau demonstrates Artaud's deep understanding of the modern mind, and of the developing consciousness of his time that would lead to the modern theater we know, and that is still to come.

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