

Northumbria Research Link

Citation: Cull, Laura (2009) How do you make yourself a theatre without organs? Deleuze, Artaud and the concept of differential presence. *Theatre Research International*, 34 (3). pp. 243-255. ISSN 0307-8833

Published by: Cambridge University Press

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0307883309990046>
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0307883309990046>>

This version was downloaded from Northumbria Research Link:
<http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/3044/>

Northumbria University has developed Northumbria Research Link (NRL) to enable users to access the University's research output. Copyright © and moral rights for items on NRL are retained by the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. Single copies of full items can be reproduced, displayed or performed, and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided the authors, title and full bibliographic details are given, as well as a hyperlink and/or URL to the original metadata page. The content must not be changed in any way. Full items must not be sold commercially in any format or medium without formal permission of the copyright holder. The full policy is available online: <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/policies.html>

This document may differ from the final, published version of the research and has been made available online in accordance with publisher policies. To read and/or cite from the published version of the research, please visit the publisher's website (a subscription may be required.)



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE



UniversityLibrary

How Do You Make Yourself a Theatre without Organs? Deleuze, Artaud and the Concept of Differential Presence

LAURA CULL

This article provides an exposition of four key concepts emerging in the encounter between the philosophical man of the theatre, Antonin Artaud, and the theatrical philosopher, Gilles Deleuze: the body without organs, the theatre without organs, the destratified voice and differential presence. The article proposes that Artaud's 1947 censored radio play To Have Done with the Judgment of God constitutes an instance of a theatre without organs that uses the destratified voice in a pursuit of differential presence – as a nonrepresentative encounter with difference that forces new thoughts upon us. Drawing from various works by Deleuze, including Difference and Repetition, The Logic of Sense, A Thousand Plateaus and 'One Less Manifesto', I conceive differential presence as an encounter with difference, or perpetual variation, as that which exceeds the representational consciousness of a subject, forcing thought through rupture rather than communicating meanings through sameness. Contra the dismissal of Artaud's project as paradoxical or impossible, the article suggests that his nonrepresentational theatre seeks to affirm a new kind of presence as difference, rather than aiming to transcend difference in order to reach the self-identical presence of Western metaphysics.

Introduction: to have done with the 'impossible'

In choosing to address Antonin Artaud now, and specifically in choosing to address him in relation to the concept of 'presence' in performance now, we are confronted with two aspects of the dominant understanding of his work: first, his posthumous construction as 'the apostle of pure, unmediated presence' by avant-garde theatre-makers of the 1960s like the Living Theatre;¹ and second, his subsequent deconstruction by Jacques Derrida. Both determinations cast Artaud's position as one in which presence and representation are opposed, and consequently current secondary literature still tends to frame Artaud's project as entirely incompatible with that of post-structuralism. In 'The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation' (1978), Derrida's performance of deconstruction on Artaud's concept of the theatre of cruelty invites us to conclude that fidelity to Artaud is impossible, because he aspires to create contradictions in the form of self-identical and immediate theatrical representations.² The theatre of cruelty, Derrida argues, constitutes the

inaccessible limit of a representation which is not repetition, of a *re*-presentation which is full presence, which does not carry its double within itself as its death, of a present which does not repeat itself, that is, of a present outside time, a nonpresent. The present

offers itself as such, appears, presents itself, opens the stage of time or the time of the stage only by harbouring its own intestine difference, and only in the interior fold of its original repetition, in representation. In dialectics.³

In this way, Derrida equates the ‘intestine difference’ of the present with representation. ‘Pure presence as pure difference’, Derrida implies, is not presence at all. Presence requires representation in order to appear, or, as Derrida puts it: ‘Presence, in order to be presence and self-presence, has already begun to represent itself, has always already been penetrated’.⁴

In contrast, this essay will argue in favour of differential presence as a concept that emerges in the conjunction between the philosophical man of the theatre, Artaud, and the theatrical philosopher, Gilles Deleuze. Drawing from Deleuze, this essay departs from the premise that the desire to break free from ‘conflictual, official and institutionalized representation’⁵ need not immediately be equated with a transcendentalist agenda. There are different ways of thinking difference: not as the ‘death’ that full presence must necessarily harbour within itself, but as ‘a free and present variation’ that registers itself with audiences as affect, operating beneath the threshold of representation.⁶ In this sense, this essay will suggest that Artaud’s nonrepresentational theatre seeks to affirm a new kind of presence *as* difference, rather than aiming to transcend difference in order to reach the self-identical presence of Western metaphysics. The reality that performance makes available to the spectator in this event of ‘differential presence’ is not an other-worldly, transcendental realm that is self-identical insofar as it occupies a space and time outside representation. Rather, the differential presence constructed by what I want to call the ‘theatre without organs’ gives us access to the real as difference in itself, as an immanent ‘perpetual variation’ from which mere representational differences are derived. Difference can make its presence felt without representation, I will suggest, in what Deleuze calls a ‘fundamental encounter’ that forces new, embodied thoughts upon us. Differential presence names an encounter with difference, or perpetual variation, as that which exceeds the representational consciousness of a subject, forcing thought through rupture rather than communicating meanings through sameness.

There is nothing new, at least within Artaud studies, if not within performance studies at large, in setting up a connection between Artaud and Deleuze. Catherine Dale, Ed Scheer and Jeffrey Bell, amongst others, have already explored the Deleuzian elements of Artaud’s *oeuvre*.⁷ Indeed, Artaud studies has – if you like – been through the tunnel of this connection and come out the other side, with theorists like Jane Goodall and Umberto Artioli both arguing that Deleuze’s project is distinct from Artaud’s in a number of crucial ways. Goodall, for example, accepts that Deleuze and Guattari are close to Artaud ‘in their quest for a return to some kind of chora of subjectivity, “the Body without Organs”, and in their fascination with becoming, metamorphosis and contagion as processes which rupture paradigmatic understanding’. However, she ultimately insists that

they hardly qualify as gnostic revolutionaries. Their campaign against stratification is not the same as the aim of Artaudian theatre: ‘... to make manifest and to plant in us ineradicably the idea of a perpetual conflict and of a seizure in which life is rent at every

moment, in which the whole of creation rises up and sets itself against our condition as constituted beings'.⁸

Likewise, whilst Artioli describes Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) as 'unthinkable without Artaud's oeuvre', he also frames the book as dissolving the 'persistent dualism' of Artaud's thinking with its positive notion of desire.⁹ Further, Artioli questions Deleuze's description of Artaud as having achieved a 'wonderful breakthrough' which 'knocked down the wall' of the signifier.¹⁰ Instead, Artioli suggests, 'If you put the two projects together, Artaud's revolt, far from attaining the miracle of the breakthrough, resonates with the devastating cry of setback'.¹¹

But my own concern is less with the extent to which Deleuze and Artaud's projects can be understood to be entirely compatible. This essay does not come from a historical perspective that claims to produce the most faithful representation of what Artaud 'truly' believed – however complex and knowing our approach to the self-difference of that thought. Rather, I want to propose that something new emerges in the encounter between Deleuze and Artaud that is particularly productive for rethinking the notion of presence in performance – not as the transcendence of difference, nor as an effect of representation, but as 'nonrepresentative force', or what I am calling 'differential presence'.

There are a number of different facets to the concept of differential presence, and therefore to the notion of a theatre without organs that creates such presence. Here, however, we will focus on its relation to language and voice with specific reference to Artaud's radio play *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1947). To aid us in this exploration we have not only Deleuze's numerous writings on Artaud, but also his little-known essay on the theatre, 'One Less Manifesto' (1979), which puts a firm emphasis on the question of how performance might release the presence of difference or 'perpetual variation' through a particular usage of language.¹² In the process I will provide an exposition of four key concepts; not only those of differential presence and the theatre without organs, but also the 'body without organs' and the 'destratified voice'. I will suggest that Artaud's censored radio broadcast, from which Deleuze borrowed the concept of the body without organs, uses a destratified voice, a voice that escapes from signification into incantation, from the illusion of communication to the affirmation of affective breath-words (*mots-souffles*) and howl-words (*mots-cris*). *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* constitutes an instance of a theatre without organs that uses the destratified voice in a pursuit of differential presence – as a nonrepresentative encounter with difference that forces new thoughts upon us. In this sense, I will conclude, to make yourself a theatre without organs is to occupy an interzone between theatre and philosophy.

What is the body without organs?

The concept of the body without organs first appears in *The Logic of Sense* (1969), in which Deleuze proposes that it corresponds to Artaud's triumphant composition of a novel usage of language. As a 'new dimension of the schizophrenic body', Deleuze argues that the body without organs does not achieve self-identical expression with its cries, but rather feels the 'problem' of language through its suffering.¹³ In this

sense, Deleuze suggests that the specifically schizophrenic experience of an absence of distinction between ‘things’ and ‘propositions’ draws attention to an ontological capacity of language to act on bodies rather than merely represent them.¹⁴ In his discovery of the body without organs as, in part, a relation to language, Artaud breaks free from passively suffering the wounds that ‘words without sense’ inflict upon the schizophrenic body. The body without organs is not sheltered from language but actively uses it as ‘words without articulation’, as words that become ‘illegible and even unpronounceable, as it transforms them into so many active howls in one continuous breath’.¹⁵

By the time we reach *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), however, the body without organs – now called the BwO for short – has become a central concept for Deleuze and Guattari’s ontology. Here they distinguish between different types of BwO, which we can find once we have ‘sufficiently dismantled our self, and what they call ‘the totality of all BwOs’.¹⁶ Like the distinction between specific becomings and the fundamental becoming they affirm, the totality of BwOs has less to do with ‘the body’ as such, and more to do with ontology. According to Deleuze and Guattari, once the self is taken apart, what we reach is ‘nonstratified, unformed, intense matter’ or ‘energy’. The BwO is this primary ‘glacial reality’ on which organisms and subjects form – nothing but these flows of energy, of difference in itself.¹⁷ It is what Deleuze and Guattari refer to elsewhere as a plane of consistency.

To make yourself a BwO (that is, in turn to position oneself on the totality of all BwOs) involves a process of disorganization or destratification. The strata block our way to the BwO and, as such, must be removed or undone in order for the BwO to be made. In *Plateau Six*, Deleuze and Guattari focus on what they call ‘the three great strata . . . that most directly bind us’: the organism, signifiante and subjectification; although the indication is that there are many, many more besides.¹⁸ Each stratum attaches to a different aspect of life: the organism to the body, signifiante to the ‘soul’ (or unconscious) and subjectification to the conscious.¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari suggest that as much as we need to liberate the creativity of the body from the limits of the organism as form, we also need to ‘tear the conscious away from the subject in order to make it a means of exploration’ and to tear the unconscious ‘away from signifiante and interpretation to make it a veritable production’.²⁰

Pre-empting the logic of his deconstruction of the theatre of cruelty, in ‘*La Parole soufflée*’ (1965) Derrida argues that Artaud’s concept of the body without organs constitutes an appeal to simple, or metaphysical, presence without difference. For Artaud, Derrida says, it is the division of the body into organs which introduces difference into the body and ‘opens the lack through which the body becomes absent from itself’.²¹ In turn, given their appropriation of the concept of the body without organs, Bell has recently questioned whether Deleuze and Guattari, along with Artaud,

long for a lost homeland, a deeply buried purity and freedom which has since been covered over by layers of impurities (in this case, organs) which only serve to hinder the freedom necessary for thought and creativity. If this is how Artaud is to be read, it is evident, then, that his longing is a metaphysical longing, a striving to regain a lost presence.²²

If this is how Deleuze is to be read, then he too would fall foul of deconstructive critique.

But as Bell goes on to emphasize, the enemy of the BwO is not the organs for Deleuze and Guattari (as what divides and differentiates an otherwise unified body), but the organism as the ‘*organic* organization of the organs’.²³ The organism inserts itself into the BwO in order to prescribe to bodies a distinct and restricted function, molar identity, or specific, fixed strata. For Deleuze and Guattari,

The BwO is not undifferentiated, but has its own inner differentiation, its composed and positioned ‘true organs’, and it is in this manner, then, that Deleuze and Guattari can read Artaud’s call for a BwO as not being a call for a One in opposition to the multiple²⁴

– or for presence as opposed to difference, monism as opposed to dualism. In this sense, the concept of the BwO plays a central role in Deleuze’s effort to rethink the process of creation (whether as thought, art or nature) without the need to posit a transcendent, organizing Law, or what Artaud called ‘the judgment of God,’ which controls the creative process from a position outside it. Conjoining Artaud with Spinoza, the BwO constitutes a refusal of any distinction between worldly products and a transcendent producer, between organizing mind and organized matter, in favour of a univocal notion of being as a processuality ‘immanent in whatever manifests it’.²⁵ To make yourself a body without organs is both to find and to construct that immanent processuality as it is manifested in the processes of writing, performing, thinking, living.

The theatre without organs and Artaud’s *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*

Given this conception of the BwO, what is a theatre without organs and how does it operate in the world? It is at this point, I want to suggest, that Deleuze’s essay ‘One Less Manifesto’ is of vital importance – helping us to bridge the gap between philosophy and performance, ontology and practice. In this essay, Deleuze develops the concept of a theatre of ‘perpetual variation’, a theatre that subtracts the organizing elements of theatrical representation – such as plot, character and dialogue – in order to ‘release a new potentiality of theatre, an always unbalanced, nonrepresentative force’.²⁶ Immediately, this proposed theatre presents itself as in alliance with the body without organs, which is involved in a similarly subtractive process when it dismantles the strata as the ‘phenomenon of sedimentation’ that imposes organization and stasis on an otherwise mobile, material energy.²⁷ In both cases it is a question of taking away that which attempts to fix the moving and homogenize the differing, a matter of undoing that which forms speed and subjectifies affect.

‘Only affects and no subject, only speeds and not form’ – this describes the theatre without organs, or TwO, as much as the BwO.²⁸ If the BwO is a plane or surface which, once we have leapt onto it, allows us to perceive ourselves and the world not as discrete subjects and objects, but as relations of speed and slowness and powers to affect and be affected, then the TwO is equally an already-existing – and yet also waiting-to-be-constructed – plane, produced by performance-makers and their audiences. In the TwO, all elements of theatricality become the ‘material for variation’.²⁹

the variation of costume ‘that falls off and is put back on’,³⁰ the variation of gesture in which no gesture is repeated ‘without obtaining different characteristics of time’,³¹ or the variation of language in which the ‘phonological, syntactical, semantical and even stylistical’³² elements of language are all intensified through ‘methods of stammering, whispering’ and mumbling.³³

And it is this last aspect of the TwO that I want to focus on here, in relation to Artaud’s radio play. In contrast to the elaborate scenic and theatrical effects required by his first dramatic text, *The Spurt of Blood* (1925), *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* eliminates every aspect of theatre except the voice.³⁴ Likewise, we might note that it is the variation of language that receives the greatest amount of attention in ‘One Less Manifesto’. In both cases, it is important to emphasize the attention paid to language as a means to counterbalance the tendency to conceive the pursuit of nonrepresentational theatre (whether as the theatre without organs, a subtractive theatre of perpetual variation, or the theatre of cruelty) as one that reinstates a dichotomy between language and body, and falls down heavily in favour of the presence of the latter over the alienating power of the former. All three theatres may well be antitextual, as Martin Puchner implies,³⁵ but only if by ‘text’ we mean a self-identical script the truth of which must be faithfully reproduced in performance, or a homogenizing force that serves to fix the creativity and variability that Deleuze argues is immanent to language. But they are by no means antiliterary or uninterested in speech as a theatrical element; on the contrary, ‘One Less Manifesto’ argues that a ‘public reading of poems by Gherasim Luca is a complete and marvellous theatrical event’.³⁶ Correlatively, Artaud describes the purely vocal theatre of *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* as ‘providing a small-scale model for what I want to do in the *Theatre of cruelty*’.³⁷ In this way, although Artaud’s polemics sometimes suggest otherwise, it is important to acknowledge that the theatre of cruelty is not conceived in terms of the exclusion of words. ‘There is no question of abolishing speech in theatre’, Artaud states; rather, Deleuze and Artaud share the notion that language ought to be handled as the ‘concrete’ entity that it is.³⁸ It is not language itself that is the problem, so much as the codified ways in which it is used.

Since the story of Artaud’s censored broadcast *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* is well known I will not rehearse it here; suffice it to say that the occasion of the ban acts as a good example of Deleuze’s argument that the strata are perpetually recasting themselves in the BwO.³⁹ The starting point for the radio play was a series of short texts, written by Artaud, and then performed by Roger Blin, Maria Casarès, Paule Thévenin and Artaud, interrupted by rhythmic passages played on xylophones and drums, ‘beating and exchanges’ between Blin and Artaud, and the latter’s ‘cry in the stairwell’. It is with this performance of language, I will now go on to suggest, that we see a genuine instance of Artaud’s TwO performing its philosophy of destratification.

The theatre without organs cries out in a destratified voice

As a theatre without organs, *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* performs its philosophical work in its construction of a destratified voice. In the case of the voice, destratification involves putting elements like intonation, diction, pitch and meaning into

variation. For example, in *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari argue that the BwO resists the ‘torture’ of organization partly by way of a particular relation to the phonological aspect of language: ‘In order to resist using words composed of articulated phonetic units, it utters only gasps and cries that are sheer unarticulated blocks of sound’.⁴⁰ In this sense, the phoneme is like an ‘organ’ of language that the destratified voice would rather be without.

In *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*, this phonological variation can be most obviously heard in the passages of glossolalia that erupt from the text, and in Artaud’s distant, resonating cries from the stairwell. Whereas the stratified voice speaks ‘perfectly and soberly’,⁴¹ Artaud’s destratified voice speaks too high and too fast to act as the servant of communication; Artaud uses his voice to enter into proximity with the madwoman who speaks only to her selves, or to the wolf that howls at the moon. Alternatively, we might look to the example of Artaud’s little-known ‘translation’ of Lewis Carroll’s *Jabberwocky* which Deleuze discusses in *The Logic of Sense*. Here, Deleuze suggests, Artaud breaks with the conventional schizophrenic experience of passively suffering the woundings of words, in favour of actively transforming words into actions by subtracting the difference between the phonetic elements; turning discrete phonetic units into ‘a fusion of consonants’.⁴² ‘It is a question’, Deleuze says,

of transforming the word into an action by rendering it without articulation . . . One could say the vowel, once reduced to the soft sign, renders the consonants indissociable from one another, by palatalising them. It leaves them illegible and even unpronounceable, as it transforms them into so many active howls in one continuous breath.⁴³

The concept of the destratified voice can be contextualized with reference to the theory of language that Deleuze and Guattari articulate in *A Thousand Plateaus*, in which they argue – contra linguistics – that language’s variability comes from within itself rather than from external circumstances. Language is not a homogeneous system that acts as theme to the variations performed in instances in speech; rather, they argue, ‘it is the variation itself that is systematic’ in language.⁴⁴ And it is this immanent difference of language that Artaud’s destratified voice allows us to apprehend – for instance, in the fluctuations of pitch in his particular brand of *Sprechgesang*, as one procedure ‘in which several voices seem to issue from the same mouth’.⁴⁵ In this way, the voice is neither the phenomenological medium that allows the presence of self-consciousness to itself, nor is it the mere ‘simulation’ of presence as Derrida contends in *Speech and Phenomena* – the response to the threat of the difference that language is said to introduce into self-presence.⁴⁶ Rather, the destratified voice embraces the potential ‘to be a foreigner, but in one’s own tongue’, or to perform the difference in one’s own voice, in a gesture that learns from, and expresses a solidarity with, those minorities who ‘work over’ a foreign language from within.⁴⁷ Indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari, placing the voice in variation is revolutionary, insofar as it both goes against the political enterprise to impose a homogeneous system of language on speakers that they claim is coupled with the study of linguistics,⁴⁸ and has the capacity to bring forth perpetual variation as the ‘the essential element of the real beneath the everyday’.⁴⁹

As Adrian Morfee has proposed, the final phase of Artaud's working life might be characterized as a search for a nonrepresentational and 'non-alienating form of writing' in which a perpetually differing self might be created. Morfee argues that, in his late texts, 'what Artaud desires is not observational consciousness that treats his life as something distinct from what he is, but to feel life itself, to be aware of himself existing'.⁵⁰ But from Morfee's perspective, this will always be a fated ambition insofar as awareness, or any kind of presence with life, is understood to necessarily involve mediation, distancing or the introduction of difference as representation. Artaud is setting himself an impossible task, Morfee argues, when he aspires to engage in writing as a ceaseless process of undetermined self-creation, rather than as an act that binds the self to a fixed representation that betrays or alienates that creativity. In contrast, a Deleuzian perspective allows us to suggest that 'life itself' is already self-differing rather than self-identical, and that this difference is not somehow beyond our experience altogether – only beyond the limits of representational consciousness. For Deleuze, difference is that which presents itself to affect and sensation alone. In the final section of this paper, I want to explore how the theatre without organs might be understood to put us in the presence of difference in a manner that brings together the projects of theatre and philosophy.

The theatre without organs creates differential presence

To construct oneself a theatre without organs, I also want to suggest, is to learn to think, as well as to speak, differently. In *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*, Artaud suggests that man thinks as he is made. As Catherine Dale argues, 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'.⁵¹ Likewise, in *Difference and Repetition* (1968), Deleuze argues that he and Artaud agree on the idea that to think – genuinely – is to create, to make something new in contact with the world rather than to approach it with preconceived ideas. And it is this creative nature of thought that makes it difficult, for all of us, to really think. However, this difficult, incapacitated thought – which Deleuze calls 'thought without image' – is given a positive spin as the only thought that can approach difference in itself.

For Deleuze, thought is not the product of language but of what he calls a 'fundamental encounter'.⁵² Here, Deleuze makes a clear distinction between what he calls 'objects of recognition' and those of encounter. Objects of recognition, Deleuze argues, 'do not disturb thought' insofar as they provide thought with 'an image of itself'; they reaffirm for thought, in other words, what it already thinks it knows. For Deleuze, instances of recognition do not involve genuine thought. We only 'truly think' when we have difficulty in recognizing something.⁵³ Such things produce encounters as the forcing of thought, or, as Deleuze puts it,

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*. What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering.

In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that *it can only be sensed*. In this sense it is opposed to recognition.⁵⁴

The object of encounter, then, presents itself to affect or sensation alone, rather than to conscious thought or recognition. Indeed, the encounter ‘defies consciousness, recognition and representation’.⁵⁵ Conceived in terms of its power to be affected, Deleuze also argues that the body can think in ways from which consciousness would do well to learn. Deleuze is not arguing that sensation is able to recognize nuance, as constituted by small degrees of difference between meanings. Rather, he argues that difference in itself is that which ‘can only be sensed’, since consciousness works with identities.

In this way, Deleuze allows us to perceive Artaud as aspiring to create a TwO as an object of encounter rather than recognition, as forcing thought through rupture rather than communicating meanings through sameness, or as differential rather than self-identical presence. This is a function Artaud associates with poetry – theatre becomes poetic, Artaud argues, when it seizes its capacity to shake our existing understandings of the relations between things. In ‘The Theatre of Cruelty – First Manifesto’ (1932) Artaud argues, ‘Through poetry, theatre contrasts *pictures of the unformulated* with the crude visualization of what exists’ – a process he associates with cinema.⁵⁶ Contemporary society, he complains, ‘has made us forget the slightest idea of serious theatre which upsets all our preconceptions’.⁵⁷ Once distilled to its essence, we must not ask whether theatricality can define thought, Artaud argues, ‘but whether it *makes us think*’.⁵⁸

Deleuze’s concept of the encounter with that which can only be sensed also allows us to return with fresh eyes to Artaud’s references to ‘bodily transmission’ and his concept of the ‘flesh’. In ‘Theatre and Cruelty’ (1933), for example, Artaud argues, ‘One cannot separate body and mind, nor the senses from the intellect, particularly in a field where the unending repeated jading of our organs calls for sudden shocks to revive our understanding’.⁵⁹ Here, the body, or what Artaud sometimes names ‘flesh’, is located at the very source of genuine thought, as distinct from the kind of habitual thinking involved in the interpretation of the psychological theatre that Artaud rejects.⁶⁰ Likewise, in ‘Situation of the Flesh’ (1925), Artaud assigns a particular definition to the notion of flesh beyond a common-sense understanding:

For me the word Flesh means above all *apprehension*, hair standing on end, flesh laid bare with all the intellectual profundity of this spectacle of pure flesh and all its consequences for the senses, that is for the sentiments. And sentiment means presentiment, that is, direct understanding, communication turned inside out and illumined from within. There is a mind in the flesh, but a mind as quick as lightning. And yet the excitement of the flesh partakes of the high substance of the mind. And yet whosoever says flesh also says sensibility. Sensibility, that is, assimilation, but the ultimate, secret, profound, absolute assimilation of my own pain, and consequently the solitary and unique knowledge of that pain.⁶¹

For Deleuze, too, the presence of difference or perpetual variation has an electric quality: ‘It is like lightning coming from somewhere else and announcing something else – a

sudden emergence of creative, unexpected and subrepresentative variation'.⁶² Using the destratified voice, differential presence is characterized by the 'sudden shock when thought realises itself in the body';⁶³ it is a moment of performance that addresses an acephalic 'mind in the flesh'.

Conclusions

Of course, strata are always contextually specific, and, as such, the creation of a destratified voice will require different methods in each new event of performance. Artaud, here, is one debatable example, not a recipe to be followed. In the same way, the TwO has no prescribed form; indeed, we could argue that a contextually determined resistance to recognition, and a commitment to experimentation, are exactly what allow us to make ourselves a theatre without organs. Equally, it must be noted that Artaud's radio play is not purely a performance of the destratified voice; it is not a voice that 'utters *only* gasps and cries'. Clearly, especially in the opening critique of American warmongering, Artaud does use language to communicate as well as to affect. But Deleuze and Guattari recognize this need to maintain a connection to the strata, arguing, 'You don't reach the BwO . . . by wildly destratifying'. Rather, whether we are making ourselves a body without organs or a theatre without organs, we need to look for a 'point' at which we can 'patiently and momentarily dismantle' the organism, the subject, signification.⁶⁴ Moments of differential presence, when we are forced to *really* think, may be few and far between, but they are not impossible.

For Martin Puchner, Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty is a nontextual theatre of the avant-garde; another call for a theatre of 'unmediated presence'. And as such, he would suggest, it is 'entirely at odds' with the 'pursuit of philosophy' which Puchner defines as 'dependent . . . on the written word, on distancing abstraction and mediating reflection'.⁶⁵ Likewise, Puchner argues that Deleuze's 'speculative theatre without representation' is 'at odds with the actual practices of the theatre as we know it'.⁶⁶ The philosopher's manifesto for a new theatre fails to resonate with how existing performance works. With the concept of the theatre without organs I hope to propose a greater compatibility between performance and philosophy. Or rather, contra Puchner's representationalist account, the TwO constitutes a plane on which these disciplines can reciprocally transform one another. In 'One Less Manifesto', Deleuze actively intervenes in, rather than simply borrows from, theatre – presenting us with a critique of the theatre of representation, just as Artaud rails against the emphasis on being, over becoming, in the history of Western metaphysics. Further, in these interventions, each one affirms the difference of the disciplines of theatre and philosophy from themselves: Deleuze finds the real at the heart of the theatre; Artaud, the delirium from which all reasoned thought emerges. In the Deleuze–Artaud conjunction, it is not that Deleuze makes clear what remained fuzzy for Artaud, that the philosopher can state what the poet can merely gesture towards. Rather, the theatre without organs occupies this very interzone between theory and practice, between thinking and doing – where we can sense, rather than recognize, thinking as a kind of doing and doing as a kind of thinking: philosophy as a kind of theatre and theatre as a kind of philosophy.

NOTES

- 1 Roger Copeland, 'The Presence of Mediation', *TDR: The Drama Review*, 34, 4 (1990), pp. 28–44, here p. 29.
- 2 Jacques Derrida, 'The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation', in Timothy Murray, ed., *Mimesis, Masochism and Mime: The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Thought* (Ann Arbor Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), trans. Timothy Murray and Eliane dal Molin, pp. 40–62, here p. 56.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 58.
- 5 Gilles Deleuze, 'One Less Manifesto', in Murray, *Mimesis, Masochism and Mime*, pp. 239–258, here p. 253.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 See chapter 5 of Jeffrey Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos: Gilles Deleuze and the Philosophy of Difference* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Edward Scheer, 'I Artaud BwO', in Laura Cull, ed., *Deleuze and Performance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 37–53; Catherine Dale, 'Falling from the Power to Die', in Gary Genosko, ed., *Deleuze and Guattari: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 69–80; *idem*, 'Knowing One's Enemy: Deleuze, Artaud, and the Problem of Judgement', in Mary Bryden, ed., *Deleuze and Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 126–137; and *idem*, 'Cruel: Antonin Artaud and Gilles Deleuze', in Brian Massumi, ed., *A Shock to Thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 85–100. The Deleuze–Artaud connection is also addressed by Rex Butler, 'Non-genital Thought', in Edward Scheer, ed., *100 Years of Cruelty: Essays on Artaud* (Sydney: Power Publications and Artspace, 2000), pp. 23–57; by Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); by Alan Lopez, 'Deleuze with Carroll: Schizophrenia and Simulacrum and the Philosophy of Lewis Carroll's Nonsense', *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 9, 3 (2004), pp. 101–120; and briefly by Adrian Morfee, *Antonin Artaud's Writing Bodies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- 8 Jane Goodall, 'The Plague and Its Powers in Artaudian Theatre', in Edward Scheer, ed., *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 65–76, here p. 75.
- 9 Umberto Artioli, 'Production of Reality or Hunger for the Impossibility?', in Scheer, *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader*, pp. 137–148, here p. 145.
- 10 Gilles Deleuze, 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia', in David Lapoujade, ed. *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974* (Los Angeles and New York: Semiotexte, 2004), pp. 232–241, here p. 240.
- 11 Umberto Artioli, 'Production of Reality or Hunger for the Impossibility?', p. 147.
- 12 Deleuze addresses Artaud in a great many of his works, most notably in Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (London: The Athlone Press, 1994), trans. Paul Patton; *idem*, *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), trans. Charles Stivale and Mark Lester; in *idem*, 'To Have Done with Judgment', in *idem*, *Essays Critical and Clinical* (London and New York: Verso, 1998), trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, pp. 126–135; and in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: The Athlone Press, 1984), trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane; and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Athlone, 1988), trans. Brian Massumi.
- 13 Gilles Deleuze, 'Thirteenth Series of the Schizophrenic and the Little Girl', in Scheer, *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader*, pp. 27–36, here p. 32.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 16 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, pp. 151, 157.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 153.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 159.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 160.

- 20 Ibid., p. 160.
- 21 Jacques Derrida, quoted in Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, p. 157.
- 22 Ibid., p. 156.
- 23 Ibid., p. 158; emphasis added.
- 24 Ibid., p. 159.
- 25 Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (New York: Zone Books, 1990), trans. Martin Joughin, p. 16.
- 26 Gilles Deleuze, 'One Less Manifesto', p. 242.
- 27 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 159.
- 28 Gilles Deleuze, 'One Less Manifesto', p. 249.
- 29 Ibid., p. 246.
- 30 Ibid., p. 248.
- 31 Ibid., p. 249.
- 32 Ibid., p. 244.
- 33 Ibid., p. 247.
- 34 At one point, the stage directions of *The Spurt of Blood* call for 'Silence. Noise like a huge wheel spinning, blowing out wind. A hurricane comes between them. At that moment two stars collide, and a succession of limbs of flesh fall. Then feet, hands, scalps, masks, colonnades, porticoes, temples and alembics, falling slower and slower as if through space, then three scorpions one after the other and finally a frog, and a scarab which lands with heart-breaking nauseating slowness'. See Antonin Artaud, *The Spurt of Blood*, in Claude Schumacher, ed., *Artaud on Theatre* (London: Methuen, 1989), pp. 19–21, here p. 18. The directions later demand that 'At a given moment a huge hand seizes the WHORE's hair which catches fire'. Ibid., p. 19. From such examples it is not difficult to imagine why the play remained unperformed in Artaud's lifetime. See Ruby Cohn, 'Artaud's "Jet de Sang": Parody or Cruelty?', *Theatre Journal*, 31, 3 (1979), pp. 312–318, here p. 315.
- 35 Martin Puchner, 'The Theater in Modernist Thought', *New Literary History*, 33, 3 (2002), pp. 521–32.
- 36 Gilles Deleuze, 'One Less Manifesto', p. 247.
- 37 Antonin Artaud, 'Last Letters (1947–48)', in Susan Sontag, ed., *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976), pp. 575–588, here p. 577.
- 38 Antonin Artaud, 'Oriental and Western Theatre', in Schumacher, *Artaud on Theatre*, pp. 135–137, here p. 123.
- 39 As Schumacher reports, the radio programme was recorded between 22 and 29 November 1947 by Artaud and his collaborators. Originally commissioned by Fernand Pouey, the programme was censored by Wladimir Porché, the director-general of the radio station, on the day before it was scheduled for broadcast: 2 February 1948. The broadcast had two private hearings for Artaud's friends and colleagues. The first was held on 5 February 1948, in the hope of changing Porché's mind about the ban. Those who attended – including Jean-Louis Barrault and Roger Vitrac – passed a favourable verdict on the recording, but the ban was maintained, resulting in Pouey's resignation. The second private hearing was held on 23 February 1948 in a disused cinema. See Schumacher, *Artaud on Theatre*, p. 188.
- 40 Deleuze and Guattari *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 9.
- 41 Deleuze, 'One Less Manifesto', p. 247.
- 42 Deleuze, 'Thirteenth Series of the Schizophrenic and the Little Girl', p. 33.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 93.
- 45 Ibid., p. 97.
- 46 Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), trans. David B. Allison, p. 15.
- 47 Deleuze, 'One Less Manifesto', p. 247 (italics in original).
- 48 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 101.

- 49 Ibid., p. 110.
- 50 Morfee, *Antonin Artaud's Writing Bodies*, p. 177.
- 51 Dale, 'Cruel: Antonin Artaud and Gilles Deleuze', p. 87.
- 52 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 139.
- 53 Ibid., p. 138.
- 54 Ibid., p. 139; first emphasis original, second emphasis added.
- 55 Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 78.
- 56 Antonin Artaud, 'The Theatre of Cruelty – First Manifesto', in Schumacher, *Artaud on Theatre*, pp. 112–117, here p. 105 (italics in original).
- 57 Ibid., p. 108.
- 58 Artaud, 'Oriental and Western Theatre', p. 122; original emphasis.
- 59 Artaud, 'The Theatre of Cruelty – First Manifesto', p. 109.
- 60 Artaud has a particular theatrical tradition in mind here. In the essay 'Theatre and Cruelty', Artaud argues that society has become unaccustomed to a theatre of presence as the forcing of thought, largely on account of 'the damage wrought by psychological theatre, derived from Racine'. See Antonin Artaud, 'Theatre and Cruelty', in Schumacher, *Artaud on Theatre*, pp. 120–122, here p. 108.
- 61 Antonin Artaud, 'Situation of the Flesh', in Sontag, *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, pp. 109–114, here p. 111.
- 62 Deleuze, 'One Less Manifesto', p. 252.
- 63 Dale, 'Cruel: Antonin Artaud and Gilles Deleuze', p. 91.
- 64 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, pp. 160–1.
- 65 Puchner, 'The Theater in Modernist Thought', pp. 526–7.
- 66 Ibid., p. 525.

LAURA CULL (laura.cull@northumbria.ac.uk) is a scholar–artist based in Newcastle, UK. She is editor of *Deleuze and Performance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009) and chair of the Performance & Philosophy Working Group within Performance Studies International. Laura is also Part-Time Lecturer in Performance at Northumbria University and a member of the SpRoUt artists collective.