

Bursting Bodies of Thought: Artaud and Hijikata

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When you have given him a body without organs... Then you will teach him again to dance inside out as in the delirium of our accordion dance halls.
(Antonin Artaud 1992: 329)

I once became a wicker trunk, which became a bellows that drove each and every one of my organs outside, then played.
(Hijikata Tatsumi 2000e: 75)

Artaud's pronouncement at the end of *To Have Done With The Judgment of God* called for a new kind of body, one in which the pain of life would 'BURST OUT' (Artaud, 1992: 324), to recreate both theatre and society with the force of an exorcism. The echo of Artaud's scream in 1948 has been heard ever since, his influence setting the stage for avant-garde performance practice and theory through to the present day.

In Japan during the 1960's and 70's, Hijikata Tatsumi's development of *butoh* dance was influenced by his exposure to French literature and philosophy, providing a catalyst for his own emerging body of thought – one of thinking about the body by forcing it to think. This French-Japanese symbiosis was a tendency typical within Tokyo art and literary circles at the time, in part a form of resistance to the impotence of American influence. For those who had been children during the war but could do nothing about it there was a critical relevance in the radicalism of Genet, Lautreamont, Sartre, Sade and Bataille. Artaud's writing in particular, inscribed on a body of cruelty and pain, provides by contrast a deeper understanding of Hijikata's *butoh*. In his exploration of darkness, death and metamorphosis Hijikata succeeded in constructing a thinking body, a bursting body of thought very much like the one Artaud had given a voice to but not the legs.

Hijikata's engagement with Artaud continued right up until his death in 1986 at the relatively young age of 57, when he was planning a collaboration with philosopher Uno Kuniichi to be called *Experiment with Artaud* (see Barber, 2004). More recently, Hijikata's student and collaborator Tanaka Min performed *Infant Body out of Joint* (Montreal, October 2002), preceded by a lecture given by Uno entitled *Corps-gense ou temps-catastrophe – Autour de Min Tanaka, de Tatsumi Hijikata et d'Antonin Artaud*, in which he investigates time, catastrophe and the body in the work of Hijikata, Tanaka and Artaud. [1] Unfortunately, none of Uno's texts are available in English at the time of writing, although clearly translations would facilitate further research and wider readership. Despite this, these connections alone indicate a path for theorising Hijikata's *butoh* in Artaudian terms. What is clear enough is the extent to which Hijikata was influenced by the recording of Artaud's *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*. In 1984 Hijikata choreographed Tanaka using the text from *To Have*

Done... in a dance performance entitled *Ren-ai Butoh-ha Teiso* (Foundation of the Dance of Love). Around this time, Mark Holborn visited him at his Asbestos Kan studio in Meguro and confirms that the recording of *To Have Done...* was 'one of Hijikata's most precious possessions' (Hoffman and Holborn, 1987: 14). [2]

Dancer Koseki Sumako once said, 'Butoh is Artaud's voice at the end of his life' (Koseki, in Barber, 1993: 5). Nonetheless, one should tread carefully in attributing too much of a causal link between the two for although there are some clear correspondences, Hijikata was an artist and thinker of singular vision who drew from myriad sources. His *butoh* presents a radical scrutiny of the body's expressive capacity through an interrogation of its materiality. It does not take 'the body' as a given but goes about constructing a specifically '*butoh* body' – seeking to capture its singular qualities (*butoh-sei*), and attitudes or states (*butoh-tai*). [3] This essay will consider what kind of body Hijikata created during this time – what were its conditions of emergence and what was it capable of experiencing or expressing. My analysis is not intended as an exhaustive exegesis of Hijikata's oeuvre, nor of *butoh*, nor even of Artaud's influence. [4] What I am interested in doing here is to discuss Hijikata and Artaud in an attempt to approach the *butoh* body as a conceptual and physical practice, to examine its complex dynamics and ideational materials.

Several of Tanaka's former students in the group *Body Weather Amsterdam* have explored how the dancing body may be compared to Artaud's conception of a 'body-without-organs,' as theorised in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's commentary in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 149-166). [5] Inspired by Artaud's words at the end of *To Have Done...* (cited in the opening quote to this essay), Deleuze and Guattari declare that the body-without-organs (or BwO) is not opposed to the organs themselves but rather to the organisation of the organism, being neither reduced to the functional articulations of the physical body, nor attributed to the sovereignty of a subject. The BwO does not assume the given facts of an organic body, nor a subject whose phantasies are decoded through interpretation, but rather develops a program of experimentation.

Certainly, Deleuze and Guattari offer a rich conceptual toolbox for theorising *butoh*, especially in terms of a body turned inside out – accessing virtual states of internal potential rather than the external mechanics of a unitary organism. In its exploration of intensive physicality the *butoh* body creates a sense of virtual presence through an experiential interplay of matter and movement, apprehended prior to external physical expression. The body may then partake in a process of symbiosis with other things, of affective *becoming* through the use of internal imagery (*butoh-fu*), proprioception (internal perception of muscular position, contraction and release), expressive restraint, and the imaginative yet no less precise tracing of somatic phenomena at the molecular level of sensation, circulation and pressure.

Deleuze and Guattari are appropriate to a reading of *butoh* and its historical emergence for a number of reasons. Firstly, theirs is an aesthetic, political and materialist philosophy that provides a useful model for understanding the practices of the postwar avant-garde; for which

Artaud was a seminal figure. Moreover, they draw from a long line of radical figures in art and philosophy, many of who also influenced Hijikata. The intersection with Artaud may be found again in the context of Artaud's groundbreaking text *The Theatre and its Double*, which clearly lays out a conception of the virtual in relation to the theatre. Translated into Japanese in 1965, it may be assumed this text is one with which Hijikata would have been familiar.

In examining these conjunctions, actual and virtual, this essay will touch upon several features of the BwO, given the model developed by Deleuze and Guattari. The BwO has many types each with a specific set of practices, comprising singular attributes and intensive modes, all determined by what circulates through them. To define what might be considered to be the specificity of a 'butoh-bwo' this discussion will examine how Hijikata's *butoh* is informed by a specifically Japanese conception of the body and how this resonates with Artaud as a critique of modernism in the context of the postwar period. Firstly, I will outline the complementary aesthetics of Artaud and Hijikata, through the vitalist ontology that underlies the 'cruelty' of the former and the 'terrorism' of the latter. I will then posit the attributes of the butoh-bwo, in the spatial virtuality of a 'hollow-body' and the becomings of a 'dead-body'. This will be located in terms of Artaud's body-without-organs and his critique of Being in relation to death. These attributes will be further contextualised through the virtual figures of Hijikata's darkness and Artaud's shadows. Finally, the notion of a thinking body will be explored as a way of encapsulating the attributes of a dead-hollow body (the butoh-bwo), through Artaud's schizophrenia and Hijikata's silence.

Cruelty and Terror

Hijikata and *butoh* co-founder, Ôno Kazuo were both trained in modern and classical dance but sought to give their own iconoclastic response to the chaotic times in which they lived. [6] Hijikata in particular demonstrated a pronounced radicalism, rejecting traditional aesthetics of beauty as well as disciplinary boundaries. The hallmarks of his dance were readily apparent in the rawness of his first *butoh* performance, *Kinjiki: Forbidden Colors* (1959), inspired by readings of Jean Genet's *Our lady of the Flowers* and Mishima Yukio's novel *Forbidden Colors*. With its themes of homosexual love, perversity, animism, violence, the grotesque, and the parody of traditional dance forms, the performance earned him immediate eviction from the Japan Dance Association and instant notoriety. Hijikata was soon exposed to a broad circle of artists, writers and musicians, with whom he started collaborating on riotous spectacles, happenings and site-specific performances. Although many of these were in some way inspired by the writings of Genet, Bataille, Lautreamont and other French writers, it wasn't until almost a decade later that Hijikata's performance spectacle, *Rebellion of the Body* (1969) clearly indicated the influence of Artaud. In *Rebellion...* Hijikata enters on a ceremonial palanquin and later wears a golden phallus, recalling Artaud's debauched tale of the Roman emperor, Heliogabalus with its grand procession of fecund chaos rampaging through Europe.

Rebellion... constitutes an apotheosis of the raw and improvisational approach of *ankoku butoh* (Dance of Utter Darkness). The performance came in the wake of the student uprisings

of May 1968, just as *Kinjiki*... too had appeared in the lead up to the protests against the Japanese/American AMPO Treaty in 1960. As is apparent from its title, *Rebellion*... carries a certain revolutionary impetus. And yet, while the timing indicates how much Hijikata was attuned to the *zeitgeist* of the age, his performance should not be seen as an overtly political statement, nor was the sexual content or the killing of an animal simply for shock value. The themes of sexual metamorphosis and native rural experience that appear in Hijikata's *butoh* stem from a kind of primordial yearning that rejects Western modernism, while at the same time drawing on avant-garde French literature and radical philosophy. Hijikata's rebellion was one of seeking to reinhabit and reconstruct the body, a body denied and controlled by the rationalism and emerging consumerism of postwar Japan. As Tanaka Min remarks, 'He was always angry about how our bodies are controlled historically' (Tanaka, 1985: 146). Both Hijikata and Artaud claimed that the human organism was poorly constructed, the former presenting his work as a 'body-shop' for human rehabilitation (Hijikata, 2000b: 44), the latter regarding the body as nothing more than the 'bone scrap' of God's Judgment (Artaud, 1992: 319).

While Artaud had remained quite removed from the war during his incarceration in a Mental Asylum at Rodez, what he had experienced there and how he articulated it in his radio play *To Have Done*... was for many a testament to how the cruelty of war may be met with the tortured outpourings of creative expression. For Artaud however, this battle was not so much a political act as a metaphysical interrogation of being *vis-à-vis* the body, a deeper struggle in which Society and even God himself waged their relentless cruelty upon the individual; and to which the Artist must respond with his own cruelty as a self-willed creator. This notion of cruelty is predicated upon the belief in a certain *vitalism* – 'that underlying power, call it thought-energy, the life force, the determination of change, lunar menses, or anything you like' (Artaud, 1958: 78). It constitutes a vital force, a fundamental limit factor in life's unfurling.

There is in life's flame... life's irrational impulsion, a kind of initial perversity: the desire characteristic of Eros is cruelty since it feeds upon contingencies...
(Artaud, 1958: 103)

For Artaud, 'everything that acts is a cruelty' (Artaud, 1958: 85). That is to say, everything within matter and thought is inextricably linked along a continuum marked by the interplay of contrary forces. This aspect of cruelty is essentially hidden beneath the surface of fact, glossed over by the banality of everyday reality, and so it behoves the visionary artist and the radical metaphysician to reveal the lie – to harness life's hidden force and unleash its cruelty, as an act of creation. Artaud proposes a 'Theatre of Cruelty' that may place the audience in direct relation to the primary forces of life, through 'dissociative and vibratory action upon the sensibility' (Artaud, 1958: 89).

The same sense of an invisible force and its violently contingent nature appears in the writing of Hijikata: 'In *butoh* we can find, touch, our hidden reality.... The character and basis of *butoh* is a hidden violence' (Hijikata, in Stein, 1986: 125). Hijikata's *butoh* intersects with the cruelty

of Artaud in many ways: in terms of a vital dimension underlying the world of appearances; in the necessity of the creative act to reveal it (and the aspect of suffering that this necessity requires); and the critique of modern society to which these aspects are subjected (and to which the artists objects and also becomes objectified). Hijikata cites Nietzsche with a similar air of protest to the cruelty with which Artaud rejects psychological realism in the theatre: 'One must strip the costume of barren perception designed by contemporary society' (Hijikata, 2000b: 47). It is this necessity for his own kind of Artaudian cruelty that Hijikata calls for when he criticises the performance practices of the *shingeki* (new theatre).

As for Happenings, I don't like them because they lack precision. The participants claim to be precise but they aren't. Because there's no terror in what they do. (Hijikata, 2000c: 50)

Such antagonism is not reserved just for those of 'barren perception.' This very terror is something he demands of his own body, 'to pull your stomach up high in order to turn your solar plexus into a terrorist' (Hijikata, 2000a: 36). The artist may not be spared the double-edged sword of cruelty and suffering; in fact he must wield it, especially upon himself for its metaphysical basis imparts an implacable exigency.

The origins of Japanese dance are to be found in this very cruel life that the peasants endured. I have always danced in a manner where I grope within myself for the roots of suffering by tearing at the superficial harmony. (Hijikata, in Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988: 185)

This is not a suffering that might be attributed to the romanticisation of an artist in his garret, though that would also be something to tear away. Hijikata's groping may be regarded as a desire to extract an affective potential from intensive states of abjection, seeking a kind of 'perverse vitality' in approaching an unattainable limit.

Hollow Body (without Organs)

It is worth considering how this vitalism may be seen to underscore the peculiar spatial ontology of *butoh*, in which inside and outside cease to function in conventional terms in relation to the actual organism. In *butoh*, movement and expression are no longer determined by space perceived as the measure of distances, of bodies situated within a Cartesian system of coordinates. Rather, interiority and exteriority take on a more absolute value, where the body becomes a kind of topological surface, an interface between what may be expressed and some other hidden realm of infinite potential that is ultimately inexpressible.

For Deleuze and Guattari this realm is a *virtual* domain, underscored by a vitalist paradigm where all matter and thought are perceived as pervasive and inherent states of consistency, differentiated according to a creative principle of *immanence*. Following from this the first tenant of the BwO is that it presupposes a generative or differential limit that cannot be

attained but may, indeed, be approached. [7] This is a limit that cannot be captured so much as created, for it constitutes the innermost mechanism of a hidden force. Deleuze and Guattari go on to describe the spatial ontology of Artaud's body-without-organs (BwO) as an 'intensive spatium' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 153) – the space of a virtual body constituted by purely intensive features and incorporeal transformations, unfettered by the reductive functions of the organism.

This is the 'pure body' of Artaud, one that conjures up a vital force of cruel contingency; a radically non-organic body that may be touched only as a 'struggle with invisible matter' (Hijikata, 2000e: 77). It is a body perceived only as a mass of singularities, caught up in transverse or topological relations with other things regardless of physical distance. It is a space where what appears in actual expression does not delimit the extent of what is considered to be 'real.' The actual is but the surface of fact beneath which lies the pure reserve of the virtual – the irreducible Whole, the open set of all conceivable choices, simultaneous with and yet also exceeding the emergence of actuality. For Artaud, this process of contiguous simultaneity occurs in alchemy just as it does in theatre, in that they are both 'virtual arts, and do not carry their end – or their reality – within themselves' (Artaud, 1958: 48). In Hijikata's words, the virtual would be like the 'hidden reality' of *butoh*, for which 'something can be born, can appear, living and dying at the same moment' (Hijikata, in Stein, 1986: 125).

The BwO appears as a kind of double that sits astride the actual and the virtual – an intensive, interstitial space that opens to and is opened by non-corporeal relations beyond the physical organism. Deleuze and Guattari envisage this interface as a kind of topological surface upon which the body-without-organs may be located – a 'plane of consistency' that slices through the chaotic and unformed substance that is immanence, through which its differential intensities may be distributed.

The specificity of what might be called a *butoh*-bwo may be found in the way *butoh* creates 'a fusing of body and space' (Umino Bin, in Waguri and Kohzensha, 1998), in a manner similar to this topological plane and its intensive spatiality. In his discussion of Hijikata's *butoh* with Waguri Yukio, Tanigawa Atsushi outlines the etymological nuances of the body in the Japanese language:

In *butoh*, it is not like a body exists as mass and moves in the already existing space. The self is a kind of transient membrane, and the space is perceived by passing through the body... the idea is that emptiness is standing. In other words, it is not mass but a hollow-body. 'Utsuro (hollow),' is related to words such as 'utsurou (shift, transform),' 'utsuru (move, shift),' 'utsusu (remove, turn),' and 'utsushimi (actual body).' (Tanigawa, in Waguri and Kohzensha, 1998)

This specifically Japanese sense of the body as a membrane of experience, or of a hollow-body, provides a way of approaching the bodies of Artaud and Hijikata. The hollowness of this

body is predicated upon a non-Cartesian view of space that moves through a surface that perceives it; just as this surface is itself constituted by this movement or perception. It is as if the body is turned inside out, in a similar manner to the dancing body-without-organs that Artaud calls for at the end of *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*. The hollow-body becomes an intensive space situated on a plane or transient membrane, a pure body constituted only by what passes through it. It is not so much a self that is created, except perhaps as the perception of space, as it's hollowing out, removal or transformation. The body is desubjectified just as the organism loses its sense of organisation through fragmentation and metamorphosis. The transient membrane is like a virtual skin – one lost beneath the actual skin of a socialised body that must be cast off.

This cast-off skin is totally different from that other skin that our body has lost. They are divided in two. One skin is that of the body approved by society. The other skin is that which has lost its identity.
(Hijikata, in Hoffman and Holborn, 1987: 121)

Again, here is the notion of a doubling between what is apparent and what is hidden, or lost altogether. Hijikata seems to suggest that we must cast off one skin in order to find another ever more vital. In a discussion with Tadashi Suzuki he goes further: 'Its not about squeezing your body into a space, but it being stripped of things... if you turn the skin on things inside out, the hole created there is a space' (Hijikata, 2000d: 63). Seen as a kind of transient membrane, this is a skin where the difference between inside and outside becomes a differential limit – turning the organic, socialised body inside out, with the cruel casting off of one skin to reveal another. The hollow-body, like Artaud's body-without-organs, creates an intensive space where mere emptiness is standing, marking a plane or transient membrane where only intensities other than those of an identity may pass through.

Naked Becoming

In stripping this body, the first thing that Hijikata removes is his clothes. In an early homage to Georges Bataille he posits the loss of identity as a capacity for becoming-collective, draped upon the figure of a naked body. Quoting Bataille, he writes –

'Nakedness offers a contrast to self-possession, to discontinuous existence, in other words.' He also said, 'It is a state of communication revealing a quest for a possible continuance of being, beyond the confines of the self. Bodies open out to a state of continuity through secret channels that give us a feeling of obscenity. Stripping naked is seen in civilisations where the act has full significance if not as a simulacrum of the act of killing at least as an equivalent shorn of gravity.' These words of Bataille's seem to approximate most closely the human solidarity of a naked body, which is first attained, even as the body is solitary, through the continuity of being, which is to say, death.
(Hijikata, 2000b: 45)

By its singularity the naked body is objectified to become a multiplicity, its cast off skin attaining a state of continuity that breaches, with a sense of obscenity, the confines of both self and organism. Hijikata's friend and collaborator, Maro Akaji says 'you have to kill your body to construct a body as a larger fiction' (Maro, in Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988: 197). In doing so the *butoh* body becomes a body without organs, or a *butoh-bwo*, one that 'encounters otherness in itself... solitude turns to the plurality of chaos... drawn back into immanence which is infinity' (Ôsawa Masachi, in Waguri and Kohzensha, 1998).

The desire for a purely affective, communal subjectivity, seen above in the figure of a naked body, is also apparent in the classic *butoh* 'costume' of white powder on skin, an appearance often regarded (somewhat simplistically) as a protest to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As Gunji Masakatsu states, the *butoh* aesthetic of white powder on nakedness engenders a notion of sacrifice (Gunji, quoted by Motofuji Akiko, in Waguri and Kohzensha, 1998), in a similar sense that nakedness assumes the form of death in return for a state of continuous existence that goes beyond the individual organism and the unified self. Certainly, the theme of death in Hijikata's *butoh* operates within the historical context of the war, but in a similar manner to the 'politics' of his rebellion one must scrape beneath the skin of the *butoh* body to get a real sense of its *butoh-sei*.

Hijikata's childhood was one well acquainted with death. Growing up in the bleak northern province of Tohoku during the war, he witnessed the return home of all nine brothers from the front in a succession of funeral urns. The older sister who took care of him was sold into prostitution never to be seen again. On one occasion he almost drowned, an event that prefigures how birth and death came to be regarded in *butoh* as a process of continual metamorphosis.

'What's happened? Did he die?' Shouting, the adults come looking for me and I am rescued from the whirlpool. There I am born again... I am reborn again and again. It's no longer enough simply to be born from the womb. (Hijikata, 2000e: 75)

It is as if in the swirling of the whirlpool Hijikata discovers the transformative mechanism to turn death inside out as an endless cycle of dissolution and transfiguration.

To Die Alive in a Dead Body

To better understand the dichotomy of death in relation to life and becoming, it is worth comparing the way in which Artaud rejects the nature of being in *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*. In the face of death Artaud refuses the judgment of God upon his body, seeing it as the divine imposition of a hierarchical organisation of parts. He rejects the functional imperatives of digestion and excretion, of organs subjugated within a *whole* that is eminently closed, delimiting their diverse possibilities. Artaud condemns a derived sense of being – granted by God and inscribed in the automatism of an organic body.

There where it smells of shit, it smells of being. Man could very well have avoided shitting and kept his anal pocket closed, but he chose to shit as he had chosen to live instead of consenting to live dead.

The fact is that in order to make caca he would have had to consent not to be, but he could not resolve to lose being, in other words to die alive. There is in being something particularly tempting for man, and that something is precisely CACA. (Roarings here.) (Artaud, 1992: 316)

Here, Artaud performs a delicate operation on the notion of death as excrement and their twofold denial. The consent which man surrenders in return for being is the consent that would allow him the freedom to 'live dead,' or to 'die alive'; that is, the freedom to be the creator of himself. Artaud insists upon the necessity of his own creation, of his own *becoming*, rather than settling for a state of being assumed to be innate. The consent to 'being innately' is but only an acceptance of God's judgment upon the body in the structured form of the organism, with its hand-me-down handmaidens – the unitary self and social convention. While this position was nonetheless symptomatic of Artaud's own wavering sense of Catholic guilt, Hijikata had no such religious allegiances, generating instead a kind of promiscuous anti-theology, appropriating elements of Shinto animism, Zen Buddhism, even Christian motifs, all filtered through his own sense of 'crowned anarchy' (Artaud, 2003).

There are no specific indications from the available translations as to how Hijikata may have been influenced by Artaud's critique of being and death. Certainly, Hijikata's preoccupation with death predates his reading of Artaud, just as it is also marked by other personal and cultural factors. However, it is interesting to see here how a comparative analysis of the two authors highlights their commonalities and differences, while in the process offering a deeper understanding of *butoh*. Maurice Blanchot has much to say about Artaud's dilemma, and his comments regarding the nature of death are also useful in theorising the dead-body of Hijikata. Deleuze credits Blanchot with distinguishing two aspects of *the event* through the figure of death. Firstly, there is the event as a definitive moment, grounded in relation to oneself and the fact of the body, in the mortality of one's own personal death. Then there is the other side to the event that constantly eludes the present. It is interminable and ungraspable, except as a mobile and impersonal instant, forever floating between a past that is already gone and a future that is always yet to come (Deleuze, 1990: 151-152). Where the incorporeality of the event slices the corporeality of the body, here death resists being realised or accomplished, preferring to persist as a shadow grounded only in its own relation. Death is absolute impotence. It is not so much that it robs one of life, but that it robs life of its own appearance.

Artaud rejects a body that merely eats and excretes a death that is always outside itself, even when it is *passing through*. The two sides of death redouble, so that to die alive means *enacting* a relation to the interminable event. Death appears as a limit, not as the end of one's life but as the internal limit of a *becoming*, in eternal conflict with derived being: 'I am he who,

in order to be, must whip his innateness' (Artaud, 1970-4, vol.1: 19). Here in the limit lies the task of making death one's own, not of choosing the time of the final hour but of creating a singular life by subjecting oneself to the 'hidden god' of self-willed cruelty. The innovation of Hijikata's dead-body lies in its very internalisation of that death that is otherwise without relation to the body. Like Artaud, he prefers to 'live dead' in a 'dead-body,' in a manner that serves to redouble death's impersonal aspect. However, instead of a just one relation to a mortal self, he created a multiplicity of relations, where 'the self was a graveyard of accumulation of dead bodies' (Ichikawa Miyabi, in Waguri and Kohzensha, 1988).

I would like to make the dead gestures inside my body die one more time and make the dead themselves dead again. I would like to have a person who has already died die over and over inside my body. I may not know death, but it knows me. (Hijikata, 2000e: 77)

To 'die alive' is no longer undertaken only in terms of one's own body and the turning of *its own* being in relation to innateness (ontogenesis). In a dead and hollow-body this *turns into* an affective communication with other beings, through a form of continuity or becoming as infinite opening (morphogenesis). This is where transmutation occurs – 'the point at which death turns against death; where dying is the negation of death' (Deleuze, 1990: 153). For Hijikata, it is also where the impersonal aspect of death (that part that knows him even if he doesn't know it), offers the chance to experience so many deaths, and to have these other deaths transfigure him.

Bodies of Shadow and Darkness

Going deeper into these bursting bodies of thought one encounters a rich reserve of shadows and darkness. For Hijikata, death assumes the form of continuity and becoming, but it is darkness that constitutes the 'unformed substance' for which death appears as a limit within the body. In its opposition to light, darkness becomes the figure by which Hijikata confounds so-called innate values of good and evil, refusing the illusion of modernism to embrace instead the rich primordialism of the premodern. Hijikata's derision of modern society is clearly evident when he says 'I abhor a world which is regulated from the cradle to the grave. I prefer the dark to the dazzling light' (Hijikata, in Asbestos Kan, 1987: 84). This is not meant to merely refute notions of beauty and morality but to unearth the hidden, vital force lying beneath interpretation and representation. This is why Hijikata seems to draw all dichotomies through an aesthetic logic of contradiction, when he says:

All we have now is light. The light was carried on the back of our darkness. That little devil throws its weight around, gobbling up darkness. That's why darkness runs away from the night. We haven't got darkness at night these days. The darkness of the past was clear and limpid.
(Hijikata, in Asbestos Kan, 1987: 84)

In another translation of this speech, the darkness of the past is described as 'translucent' (Hijikata, 2000e: 77), inferring a luminous quality. Darkness acquires what light claims only for itself – the light of that little devil that gobbles up the darkness, reducing what exists only to those things that see the light of day.

Tanizaki Jun'ichiro first proposed a Japanese 'aesthetic of darkness,' writing in 1933: 'the darkness in which Noh is shrouded and the beauty that emerges from it make a distinct world of shadows which today can be seen only on the stage, but in the past it could not have been far removed from daily life' (Tanizaki, in Klein, 1986: 49). This resonates with Hijikata's yearning for a luminous darkness that now runs away from the night, a tendency to find 'beauty not in the thing itself but in the patterns of shadows, the light and the darkness that one thing against another creates' (Tanizaki, in Klein, 1986: 49).

In a similar vein, Artaud uses the shadow as a metaphor for how theatre may strip away the illusory appearances of modern society to reveal a hidden realm, from which life and art receive their vital power.

Our petrified idea of the theatre is connected with our petrified idea of a culture without shadows, where, no matter which way it turns, our mind (*esprit*) encounters only emptiness, though space is full. But the true theatre, because it moves and makes use of living instruments, continues to stir up shadows where life has never ceased to grope its way. (Artaud, 1958: 12)

For Artaud, the shadow play of hidden forces is precisely what he believes to be theatre's double and from which it receives its power: 'Every real effigy has a shadow which is its double' (Artaud, 1958: 12). It is this awareness of life's double that drives Artaud to the cruel necessity of the creative act. The fullness of space is one replete with gestures and events, virtual shadows with which the actor 'brutalises forms, nevertheless behind them and through their destruction he rejoins that which outlives forms and produces their continuation' (Artaud, 1958: 12). There is a sense in which such events, where forms appear and disappear, have some other dimension. Deleuze and Guattari describe how an event is actualised 'in a body, in a lived, but it has a shadowy and secret part' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 156). The locus of the pure event carries the shadow of the virtual, and it is here where the actual and the virtual coalesce, where the hidden force of immanence lurks and with it an infinite abundance of pure potential. The theatre is then an intensive space full of virtual relations and incorporeal transformations, a threshold between what actually exists and what may or may not yet appear.

Theatre takes gestures and develops them as far as they will go... it reforges the chain between what is and what is not, between the virtuality of the possible and what already exists in materialized nature. (Artaud, 1958: 27)

In his *ankoku butoh*, or 'Dance of Utter Darkness,' Hijikata draws upon this pure reserve of the

virtual from the very depths of the body. In another of his many childhood anecdotes, Hijikata relates how, as a child with nothing to play with, he would often 'steal' the gestures of his family, even animals, and place them inside his body:

Take the neighbor's dog for instance. Fragmented within my body, its movements and actions became floating rafts. But sometimes these rafts get together and say something, there inside my body. Then they eat the darkness, the most precious food my body has inside it. One time the gestures and movements I had gathered inside my body got connected to my hands and came out. When I tried to grasp something, the following hand held onto the grasping hand. A hand chasing a hand ends up being a senile hand unable to reach anything. It does not go directly to the thing. (Hijikata, 2000e: 76-77)

The key to Hijikata's capacity for continual metamorphosis lies in this fragmentary, contingent multiplicity of virtual relations that he holds within his body memory. In the semblance of a senile hand may be seen the operative contiguity of dead and hollow bodies. The hollow-body stands as that condition of emptiness that is absolute fluidity – the intensive space of a *butoh*-*bwo*; while the dead-body has a complementary relation that is twofold – objectifying the *butoh* body by 'killing the ego' and reclaiming death as a form of continuity, of becoming naked matter. Where the former is like a vast chaotic fiction – 'massive but also light and transparent' (Maro, in Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988: 197), the latter appears where this fiction approaches the limit of an actual organism. At the same time this limit is an internal one, on one side multiplying wildly towards infinite virtual conjunctions, on the other delimited by the body's expressive capacity.

An unstable lump of flesh in a container. Being pulled out and back in, the flesh goes through multiplication and condensation.
(Waguri, in Waguri and Kohzensha, 1998)

The hollow-body and the dead-body are like two sides of the transient membrane, formed through the contiguous process of fluidity (multiplication) and fossilisation (condensation). The *butoh* body is torn between multiplicity and singularity. This tear in the membrane appears in the fossilised senility of a hand that is always on the cusp of apprehending the ungraspable multiplicity of all possible movements, the pure virtuality of routes not taken but nonetheless perceived or imagined. Hijikata asks, 'Can even expression, when it reaches the place it set out for actually accomplish anything?' (Hijikata, 2000e: 78). And yet, in the fragmentary gestures of a senile hand is held that other death that cannot be accomplished, bearing in its very singularity the hidden multiplicity of the event.

I keep one of my sisters alive in my body. When I am absorbed in creating a *butoh* piece, she tears off the darkness in my body and eats more than is necessary of it.... And she speaks to me like this. 'You call it dance and expression and are mad about it, but don't you think that what you can express can only emerge by not being

expressed?’ Then she quietly fades away. That is why the dead are my butoh teachers. (Hijikata, in *Asbestos Kan*, 1987: 84)

To tear off the darkness is to reveal the tear in the transient membrane – to apprehend the butoh-bwo, albeit only as a rupture of the surface where it appears as a shadow or luminous contour around the *butoh* body. For the dancer, expressive restraint becomes a strange dance of riding that fragile threshold where the event both reveals and conceals its secret part, lest it be caught in the glaring light of its own imitation. It is a relationship of dire contingency, where the pure/virtual body of the butoh-bwo is scored upon the skin of the actual organism. As Deleuze remarks, ‘The eternal truth of the event is grasped only if the event is also inscribed in the flesh’ (Deleuze, 1990: 161). Drawing on Artaud, he provides a way of understanding how the performer attempts to inscribe the impossible fluidity of the depths upon the surface, the virtual upon the actual, through a kind of dissimulation:

But, to be the mime of *what effectively occurs*, to double the actualisation with a counter-actualisation, the identification with a distance, like the true actor or dancer, is to give to the truth of the event the only chance of not being confused with its inevitable actualisation. (Deleuze, 1990: 161)

To somehow preserve the pure reserve of the virtual one must create a double, a state of resistance between what is and what is yet to appear. This is also where the figure of death is redoubled, appearing as a visage for the virtual, in the dark, shadowy guise of the pure event. To reveal life’s hidden force, call it ‘thought energy’ or ‘invisible matter,’ the creative act conjures up the affective power of a proxy. It is a mime that may never fully accomplish that which cannot be expressed, but in being forever pulled back within the body, stopping short of accomplishing a representation, it is one that may enter an area of internal becoming rather than an external imitation. It is a mime in which Deleuze echoes Artaud’s own words when Artaud identifies –

The plastic and never completed specter, whose forms the true actor apes, on which he imposes the forms and image of his own sensibility. (Artaud, 1958: 134)

For Hijikata, the peculiar mechanics of counter-actualisation may be found in the faltering grasp of his senile hand, in an expression that does not accomplish what it sets out for, and in the chiding of his dead sister. The light – that little devil, likes to throw its weight around, gobbling the virtual in the process of actualisation, but this is also countered by the tear in the transient membrane. Tearing off the darkness and eating it with relish is to both nourish and devour the dead-hollow body, to consume the internal/external limits of an organic body that only eats and excretes, as was Artaud’s objection. Hijikata expressed pleasure in the idea of being eaten, as described in some of his choreographic imagery; while Artaud also speaks of ‘a living whirlwind that devours the darkness’ (Artaud, 1958: 102), with a self-willed cruelty that whips his inattentiveness, to counter the CACA that chokes his desire to die alive.

Conclusion: The Thinking Body of a Butoh-bwo

In our contemporary context the global effects of terrorism, natural disasters and new technologies subject the body to an affective dissociation, to which these bodies of thought bear fresh relevance. The incessant bursting of the body is a ceaseless rebellion, its limits and potential forging communication with an ineffable outside that may be touched only at the depths of an absolute inside.

For Deleuze, the inscription of the event in the flesh may be grasped in the figure of a 'crack' – a bursting threshold that subtends the surface and the depths. Deleuze finds the crack in the 'schizophrenic body' of Artaud, in his lucid, volatile dance across the fragmented surface of thought. Watching Hijikata dance for the first time in *Rebellion of the Body*, Suzuki Tadashi describes a similar impression – 'a sense of crisis or in that sense of terror that if you take even one wrong step you will fall backwards into a dreadful abyss' (Suzuki, in Hijikata, 2000d: 62). This is how Suzuki describes his impression of *Rebellion of the Body*, to which Hijikata replies in the same interview, 'I am not being visited by a sense of crisis, rather I am demanding it' (Hijikata, 2000d: 64). The abyss of the virtual, gaping through the crack, makes its own demands upon the actual – never exhausted by it, always subsisting in that impersonal aspect of the event that expression cannot reach.

The affective utterances of Artaud's 'schizophrenic body' could never fully articulate the depth of the crack, but in their excessive physicality extended it just a little further across the despoiled surface of representation. His solution to the dilemma of adequately expressing the pain of the depths was to extract from language its affective force. To be the mime – to simulate the power of the 'plastic specter' by dissimulating its appearance, Artaud fragmented the surface of language with his screams and *glossalia*, creating absurd word collages spoken with a pain that knows neither self nor non-self, but only – 'how much it wants to BURST OUT: ...the menacing, never tiring presence of my body' (Artaud, 1992: 324).

Hijikata drew on the *butoh-sei* of his darkness and the *butoh-tai* of a dead-hollow body, to transform the affective power of words and images into tactile becomings. Extracting pure sensations from his *butoh-fu* choreography he found a strange communion between body and thing – a virtual materialism of sorts, created through proprioceptive precision, expressive restraint, and the capacity to be torn in many directions at once. In the accumulation of their virtual relations, the affective qualities of words and images constantly fragment and recombine, gathering and proliferating like floating rafts until they eventually 'say something' and come out. These utterances do not emerge as the literal imitation of a thing, appearing only as a web of contingencies, an articulation of pure qualities and their combinative potential proliferating silently beneath the skin of liminal perception. 'The silent body is more eloquent than words' (Hijikata, quoted by Hasegawa Roku, in Waguri and Kohzensha, 1998).

The *butoh* body does not act with a full sense of conscious agency, so much as the body is *activated*, moving both towards the thing(s) it is becoming *and* the proliferating multiplicity of

their virtual relations (such is the nature of a becoming, that it moves in two directions at once). Hijikata produces what Tanaka calls a 'thinking body' (Tanaka, 2002), in the sense that he puts thought into the body and also draws it out of matter, perceiving this multiplicity of relations with a tactile precision. Torn in two directions, the *butoh* dancer allows a kind of thought-matter to appear through a continual diagramming of affects, passing through the incorporeal tear in the transient membrane. This is not to express 'a thought' as the representation of a concept, but to conjure up the inexpressible cruelty of thought itself by floating in the crack between the external limit of the actual and the internal limit of the virtual; the two subtended by a mime that resists its own presentation. This is how Hijikata appears in *Rebellion*... when he dances in a manner that refuses form, or 'the intention to get into form' (Sakurai, in Waguri and Kohzensha, 1998).

In the same mode as his critique of innateness, Artaud claims that thought must be created and that *we have not yet begun to think*, just as we seem content to live dead: 'thought is a matron which has not always existed' (Artaud, in Deleuze, 1989: 165). The sense of affective activation one observes in the thinking body is a kind of absorbent capacity for being automated by the contiguous materiality of thought and thing; akin to what Deleuze describes as the 'impower' (*impouvoir*) of an 'unthought' within thought (Deleuze, 1989: 167-170). This problem of thought was particular to Artaud and his schizophrenia, constituting a dissociative force that nonetheless offers a great power. 'True expression hides what it makes manifest... it creates a void in thought' (Artaud, 1958: 71). For Hijikata this impower may be seen in the spectral mechanics of the *butoh-bwo* and its attributes: as a crack between the absolute fluidity of a hollow-body and the fossilisation of a dead one.

With his thinking-body Hijikata provides an innovative method for discovering what Deleuze sought in his appraisal of Spinoza – 'We do not yet know what a body can do. To think is to learn what a non-thinking body is capable of' (Deleuze, 1989: 189). In the process, the distinction between body and brain becomes somewhat fuzzy. Just as the transient membrane may only exist through the perception of a thought-matter which both passes and posits itself there, in the same manner – 'The identity of world and brain, the automaton, does not form a whole, but rather a limit, a membrane which puts an outside and an inside in contact' (Deleuze, 1989: 206). For Hijikata the brain is merely a part of the body, a comment which Kurihara claims is borne out by recent findings in cognitive science – that the mind is inherently embodied (Kurihara, 2000: 16). Deleuze also advocates a return to the body, to believe in the body, 'giving discourse to the body and, for this purpose, reaching the body before discourse' (Deleuze, 1989: 172). Perhaps in one sense the body is always slower than our awareness (Tanaka, 2002), although it is not exactly a matter of making the body think at the speed of the brain, or its language, but of perceiving the heterogeneous speeds particular to it: 'The speed of thought, of nerves, of blood circulation, of muscular tissues, of the spirit; the chaotic coexistence of various speeds' (Tanaka, 1986, 154).

The thinking body encapsulates a sense of how the attributes of a *butoh-bwo* (its dead and hollow bodies, or actual/virtual poles) may facilitate the emergence of multiple becomings.

The affective limit of thinking with the body is reached in attempting to trace its proliferating multiplicity. In doing so the body reveals the immanent limit of 'invisible matter' in its absolute singularity. Through a kind of 'affective athleticism' (Artaud, 1958: 133), the thinking body attempts to apprehend the infinite speed of thought-energy in the grasping of a senile hand. What appears is but a shadow, yet one all the more luminous for feeding upon the depths. What may be seen or felt as stage 'presence' is perhaps this tension between the virtual and the actual as a state of resistance in the body; the haunting of some 'thing' glimpsed in the crack of continual metamorphosis.

Ah, that thing which is form emerges as it disappears; form becomes vivid in disappearing. (Hijikata, 2000e: 76)

Artaud articulated the very solitary pain of existence as the particular problem of his own body and thought, compounded by drug addiction, the isolation of schizophrenia, cancer and finally suicide. Despite the trauma of family loss, Hijikata was able to create an aesthetic movement that while iconoclastic drew on a range of collective phenomena: the communal identity of Japanese cultural life, the group ethos of dance studio practice, the physicality of moving bodies, and the communion with nature via childhood memory, rural experience and the nativist tradition. His view of death as a graveyard is informed by the cultural context of ancestral lineage and the incorporation of the spirit world in everyday Japanese life, as much as it was the suffering of his own upbringing.

Artaud's 'failure' to fully actualise his Theatre of Cruelty was both a testament to the fact that he had already gone further than most in giving a voice to the dark night of the soul (at the price of his own sanity), and that society wasn't ready to hear it. His struggle became a lean meal from which theatre praxis fed throughout the twentieth century. In rejecting representational forms he proposed the mastery of what does not yet exist, to be realised through affective spectacles of the spirit, grounded in cruel matter and the fact of the body, making us all 'like victims burnt at the stake, signalling through the flames' (Artaud, 1958: 13). In the final year of his life, during his own struggle with cancer, Hijikata revisits the childhood memory of a blustering entity called a *wind-daruma*, imagining it skipping along the path between the paddy fields, 'thinking all the while about its own bones burning up ... conducting an aerial burial of its own body, its own soul' (Hijikata, 2000e: 72). Both Artaud and Hijikata were to burn twice as brightly but half as long, ever more consumed by their own anarchic spirit.

Notes

[1] Uno Kuniichi wrote his Doctoral Thesis on Artaud under the tutelage of Deleuze. He directed the Japanese translations for both *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) and *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (Artaud, 1992). Unfortunately, at the time of writing there is no available translation of Uno's lecture, *Corps-gense ou temps-catastrophe – Autour de Min Tanaka, de Tatsumi Hijikata et d'Antonin Artaud*. Tanaka was Hijikata's

student and collaborator from 1982 to 1986, while already known as a dancer and choreographer in his own right. Tanaka refers to himself as – ‘a legitimate son of Tatsumi Hijikata’ (Tanaka, 1986: 155).

[2] According to Boyce-Wilkinson, Ichikawa Miyabi and Susan Sontag also visited Hijikata six months before his death, during which time he played them a tape copy of Artaud's *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (Ichikawa, in Boyce-Wilkinson, 2005).

[3] ‘The *butoh* body is a literal translation of *butoh-tai*, ‘*ta*’ meaning an attitude, a mental-physical state, a state wherein opposites are held in equatorial tension’ (Boyce-Wilkinson, 2005).

[4] See my Master of Arts Thesis (Hornblow, 2004), for further analysis of Hijikata’s choreographic method of working with images (*butoh-fu*), in relation to Artaud, Deleuze’s *cinéphilosophy*, and Deleuze and Guattari’s approach to the percept, the affect, sense and sensation.

[5] The initial impetus for their research comes from a thesis written by Claudia Flammin entitled, *Un lieu, une danse, Min Tanaka et la météorologie du corps*, University of Paris 8 (1996). Members of *Body Weather Amsterdam*, including Flammin and Frank Van de Ven have conducted research in collaboration with De Quincy Co. in Alice Springs, and at Chisenhale in London. Van de Ven describes his work as an engagement with the BwO in terms of concepts including; multiplicity, identity, inbetweenness, impersonality and becoming (Van de Ven, 2001). Both Van de Ven and Tess De Quincy are former members of Tanaka’s dance group, *Maijuku*. Bodyweather is the name given to Tanaka’s dance training methodology, based in Hakushu, Japan, where I also participated in a four-week summer school in August 2002.

[6] Ōno Kazuo is widely recognised as *butoh*’s co-founder, although it was Hijikata who gave the movement its name and a method of choreography. This is not to downplay Ōno’s contribution but to limit the scope and focus to Hijikata.

[7] Their view of immanence is itself founded upon a vitalist philosophy inherited from Henri Bergson’s notion of the *élan vital*. The notion of a limit turns on a double negative, in that it constitutes an *internal* limit factor, limit point or differential threshold, which opens the *external* limitations of the organic body to the immanent flow of the virtual. This is predicated on a transcendental principle of difference-in-itself, following Deleuze’s revision of Bergson’s demarcation between difference-in-kind and difference-in-degree.

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