

Thesis

**“From Alchemy to Artaudian ‘Digital Double’: A Practical Exploration in Digital
Scenography”**

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Submitted by

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Abstract:

This research seeks to better understand the position of the contemporary stage phenomenon 'The Digital Double' within the theories of Antonin Artaud. This phenomenon can be defined as; the mediated form, or presence, of a physical performer, generated upon the stage. Within the context of this study 'The Digital Double' has existed as an infrared generated digital entity.

This investigation has been undertaken utilising the methodology of Practice as Research and has accumulated a number of performative artefacts prominently featuring the use of 'The Digital Double' in order to establish a tacit understanding of the theories of Artaud. I shall be drawing upon interviews conducted with the performers and in order to enrich my understanding of the interactive process within their experience performing alongside 'The Digital Double'.

The practical research of this thesis has been contextualised alongside a thorough examination of Artaudian literature; scenographic theory and the work of fellow practitioners of interactive technology. I have also carried out a brief examination of the Alchemical philosophy in order to elicit a greater understanding of the inspiration of Artaud.

Throughout the duration of this research, I argue that the role of technologists researcher is akin to that of Artaudian 'Producer'. I argue that the 'Digital Double' as a contemporary stage phenomenon engages with the core concepts of Artaud's theatrical model. Through an exploration of the metaphor of Alchemy a deeper understanding of Artaud's theories and inspiration is generated; from this, we can sit 'The Digital Double' and strengthen its position as an Artaudian theatrical device.

Introduction

“From the foregoing it becomes apparent that theatre will never recover its own specific powers of action until it has also recovered its language” (Artaud, 1970, 63)

Antonin Artaud, theatre maker, playwright, actor and visionary, conceived of the theatre as a tool for the salvation of an ailing society. Artaud believed that the theatre of contemporary Paris was wholly inadequate for such a sacramental function. His frustration lay with the current deployment of psychologically driven discursive theatre within contemporary Paris; as he humorously remarked in writing to the Director of Comédie Française “Enough comings and goings in your state brothel. We look above tragedy, the cornerstone of your poisonous old shed, and your Moliere is a twat.” (Artaud, 1925, 34). Artaud desired a theatre which was driven through gesture, scenography, and movement culminating in “the idea of a kind of unique language somewhere between gesture and thought” (Artaud, 1970, 66). The theatrical model and analogies Artaud deployed in order to explain this theatre are inspired by Alchemy; that is to say, concerned with the process of transformation on a base and metaphysical level utilising a physical operation.

Recent digital practice has given rise to a new theatrical form, the mediation of the human body into a digital entity existing simultaneously alongside a human counterpart; this phenomenon is regarded as 'The Digital Double'.¹ I postulate that 'The Digital Double' is an effective tool for realising the theatrical ideas of Artaud, in the union of scenography and movement. Within this research I shall attempt to determine the validity of this hypothesis through a practical analysis of Artaud's theories. This shall be enriched through consideration of the metaphor of Alchemy to inform an understanding of 'The Digital Double' as being an Artaudian tool within performance.

The research undertaken is framed within the model of Practice as Research, and I shall be conducting numerous practical experiments working alongside dancers generating performance artefacts featuring 'The Digital Double'. Within this research method there lies the development of a unique conceptual framework, that of the researcher technologist as Artaudian 'Producer'. As the generator and mediator of the digital content on stage, the researcher technologist (or 'Producer') is afforded a degree of live manipulation and control of performance and engenders a state of mastery and manipulation akin to the total control 'The Producer' would have for the Artaudian

¹ The term 'Digital Double' refers to Dixon (2007). Dixon presents a taxonomy and practical analysis to explore 'The Digital Double' as a theatrical device. We shall return to this taxonomy in detail during chapter four.

production. I would also argue as the primary victim of Artaudian 'Cruelty' was 'The Producer'², and that the technologist reaches a degree of theatrical intensity as they 'conduct' the performance.

I have chosen to conduct interviews with the performers of my practice. In this research, the primary subjects of the Artaudian theatrical model are those directly involved in the production of this practice. As I am conceiving the role of the technologist as 'Producer', it becomes even more critical that I prioritise the immediate experience of the technologist researcher of this paper; as they are subjected to this metaphorical Artaudian transformation. The performers, similarly are subjects of the transformation becoming a central part of this investigation. While I acknowledge there may be shortcomings in omitting the responses of the audience, it becomes possible to explore the praxis as a process rather than analysis of the final product within this choice of the research sample.

The postulation that Artaudian theatre is metaphorically akin to alchemy has been discussed at length by Demaitre (1979) in a systematic juxtaposition of Artaud's methodology alongside the alchemical method. However, this system does not account for the contemporary practice of digital theatre. Artioli (1984) utilises alchemical language to elicit a greater understanding of Artaud's paper on *Van Gogh le suicidé de la société* and demonstrates the metaphorically alchemical nature of Artaud's notion of art; but again, there are no references towards contemporary digital idioms within theatre. Dixon (2007) conceives of 'The Digital Double' within the realms of Artaud's 'Double' and does reference the work of Troika Ranch's *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkratz* (2001) in following an alchemical narrative. However, the nature of 'The Digital Double' itself is not presented as being metaphorically alchemical; the focus of Dixon's alchemical exposition is within Troika Ranch's reference to alchemical literature and imagery. Dixon does however briefly note Troika Ranch's conception of the magic alchemical nature of sensory technology in dance. "Troika Ranch have elsewhere described how the sensory dance technologies they design and employ are "the magic of our time." and the audience should perceive this aspect of performance as magic, just as Alchemy was viewed in the fifteenth century" (Dixon 2007, 256). I hope to begin reconciling these two fields of research to establish a new understanding of contemporary adaptations of Artaudian theatre.

References have been made to Yates's *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (1964) and *The Kybalion* (Three Initiates 1908) to elicit a greater understanding of the esoteric philosophical

² See Artaud's Letters on Language (1966, 75-87) in which Artaud describes the nature of his 'Cruelty' and determines that the "executioner tormentor" would also be the primary subject of 'Cruelty'.

literature which would have inspired Artaud's theatrical ideals. Such writing also helps engender an understanding of the epistemological view of the Alchemist, while also informing an understanding of alchemical philosophy. These texts shall be used to adapt aspects of Dixon's 'Digital Double' within the realm of Hermetic esotericism referenced within the field of Artaud's theories of 'Plague', 'Cruelty', and metaphysics. This research demonstrates a rethinking of the Artaudian methodology as metaphorically alchemical, within the practical framework of a series of digitally driven theatrical experiments, formulated by the phenomenon of 'The Digital Double'.

This research begins with an outline of the working methodology. I shall first establish a greater understanding of my practice exploring the creative solutions utilised to generate 'The Digital Double'. Alongside a brief introduction to my practice, I shall explore contemporary deployments of interactive technology and differentiate these practices from my own. This chapter continues by establishing the nature of this study as being Practice as Research (Nelson, 2016). I shall explore the concept Nelson's Practice as Research, choosing to avoid the traditional binaries of theory and practice by exploring the notion of praxis; "Theory imbricated by practice" (Nelson 2016, 3). Additionally rather than approaching this study with key research questions in mind, I have chosen (following the nature of Practice as Research) to determine significant insights regarding key subject areas. The nature of Practice as Research brings about an alternative model of knowing, tacit knowledge. The concept of tacit knowledge is explored via reference to Polanyi's (1966) model *The Tacit Dimension*. In a practical understanding of Artaud's theories, a perspective is developed which is not achievable through a purely literature based discussion. Polanyi's tacit knowledge helps engender an understanding of the role of subsidiary theatrical elements formulating a theoretical model; within the formation of this model lies the 'tacit' intuition of reaching such a conclusion. Within the methodology, I justify the choice of tacit exploration by examining Artaud's distaste for literature instead choosing to "live his philosophy" (Artaud, 1970, 3). The second section of this methodology is devoted to exploring the research methods deployed, interviewing of performers and subjective analysis through the conceptual framework established within this research.

Chapter one introduces the subject of Alchemy. An entire chapter has been dedicated towards this introduction as there is a great deal of misunderstanding surrounding the actual objective of the Alchemist within their laboratory. To elucidate this mystery, I shall provide the reader with an extremely brief history of the development of western Alchemy focusing upon the core tenants upon which it is founded. I shall explore the philosophical system of Hermeticism and understand how Man's position within the Hermetic epistemological system is vastly different from that of Christianity. Man is imbued with a divine creative spirit and elevated to the status of a brother to the Demiurge God. In his participation of the alchemical method, Man is enacting both a physical and

metaphysical transformation in his pursuit of spiritual transcendence. Throughout this chapter, I aim to explore why Artaud would have been fascinated and inspired by this philosophical system.

During chapter two the focus turns to provide an understanding of the theatre Artaud hoped to achieve. Within this chapter a discussion surrounding Artaud's distaste for Parisian culture is juxtaposed by his cultural ideal within the Tarahumara people. In understanding the Tarahumara ideal, the trajectory and mission of Artaud's theatre become clearer. The Artaudian theatrical model is presented alongside the essay *'On Balinese Theatre'*. Within this investigation of Balinese theatre, I discuss Jamieson's (2007) literary double of this subject, noting that Artaud's review is a blueprint for his theatrical ideals. Through an exploration of the Balinese performance, I am able to adequately explore Artaud's concepts of metaphysics and the theatrical mediums in which the metaphysical would be evoked. A single figure would shape the theatrical direction of Artaudian performance, 'The Producer'. Within this chapter, I shall explore how 'The Producer' becomes akin to a dramatic demiurge within the Artaudian drama and crafts performances of mythic proportion.

Chapter three considers the methodology of Artaud alongside the metaphor of Alchemy. I shall examine Ann Demaitre's (1972) essay which provides a systematic juxtaposition with Artaud's methodology and the alchemical method. Additional reference shall be made towards Hamilton's (1985) consideration of the alchemical method alongside a Jungian psychoanalytical framework. I aim to engineer a deeper understanding of The Theatre of Cruelty's influence of Alchemy. By engaging in a discussion between the alchemical influences of Artaud I can further understand critical theories such as 'Plague' 'Cruelty' and metaphysics. Alongside this exploration of Artaud's alchemical inspiration, I shall discuss my practice and demonstrate how it similarly was inspired by the evocative metaphor of Alchemy. I have enriched this discussion through references to contemporary practitioners of digital theatre and an examination of scenographic theory.

Chapter four introduces 'The Digital Double' and provides a contemporary analysis of its Artaudian properties. I shall utilise the taxonomy presented by Dixon (2007) as the baseline for this commentary surrounding 'The Digital Double', and provide my working definition within the confines of the practice undertaken within this research. I shall on to explore the lineage of the double and its history spanning many atavistic cultures and the homeopathic qualities imbued within. I shall explore the four categories of Dixon's 'Digital Double' utilising the classification of; 'Alter Ego', 'Emanation', 'Mirror' and 'Manipulable Mannequin'. I present these classifications alongside my practice and that of others to generate a productive discussion surrounding the Artaudian application of this technology. Alongside this discussion, I shall present interviews taken from the performers of practice. In engaging with this taxonomy, I am afforded insight as to where the practical experimentation of this thesis sits.

Within this introduction, I have provided a clear insight into the nature of this research as a practically driven study surrounding the theories of Artaud utilising 'The Digital Double'. I hope to provide significant insight surrounding the alchemically inspired nature of Artaud's methodology in addition to establishing 'The Digital Double' as a viable tool for contemporary adaptations of the theories of Artaud. Finally, I must emphasise the importance of the subjective insight of the researcher, within the accumulation of subsidiary experience culminating in the implicit recognition of Artaudian theory. I shall now consider the working methodology and elucidate the nature of this tacit mindset.

Methodology: Artaud Within the Tacit Dimension

“The possession of Knowledge, unless accompanied by a manifestation and expression in action is like the hoarding of precious metals - a vain and foolish thing. Knowledge, like wealth is intended for use” (Three Initiates, 1908, 97)

I have chosen to open this methodology by citing the aforementioned Hermetic axiom demonstrating the serendipitous affinity between this philosophical system and the method of research undertaken within this study. This methodology begins with an introduction to my practice and will outline its individuality setting it aside from conventional practice. Within this chapter, I shall examine Nelson's (2013) model of Practice as Research (PaR) to contextualise the process undertaken. I shall investigate the role and value of the research process and discuss the placement of praxis within a theoretical body of research. In engaging with the operation of PaR I initiate an alternative model of thinking, that of tacit knowledge. The second section of this methodology shall be devoted to exploring Polanyi's (1966) model of tacit knowledge. I shall explore this idea within the context of this research and consider the process as practically driven. The final portion of this chapter shall explore the data collection methods employed, the method of research presentation and finally the analytical scheme.

The practice within this research locates itself within the realms of 'Digital Dance'; that is to say, movement based-performance accompanied by projected visuals. The intervention of projection within dance performance is not uncommon; instances such as Shijirbat (2016) *Faded* are a clear example of mainstream digital dance in which a dancer performs alongside an extremely tightly choreographed animated movie. The strict choreography of the performance gives the illusion of the visual interaction with the performer; however, if the performer misses one of their marks on the stage the illusion of interaction will be shattered. Freelusion's (2015) *Garden of Eden* suffers similarly; the performers were notably missing marks or moving prematurely thus compromising

the illusion of interactivity. Shijirbat's work while undeniably impressive lacks flexibility and cannot account for an error in the performer's movement.



(Ninh, N, 2016, *Faded*,)

Within my practice of 'Digital Dance' the interactive components are generated live through in an infrared camera. Utilising this technology I can produce a projected 'Digital Double' of the performer which exists simultaneously upon the stage. This 'Digital Double' can be affected and manipulated in real time by either the performer (through their movements) or the technologist (via the computer interface). Parameters such as colouration, blur levels, distortion and size, can all be affected to enable new dynamic relationships between performer and their digital counterpart. Due to the live nature of this technological apparatus, the performer is less strictly bound to a specific choreography as seen within the works of Freelusion or Shirbirt. The 'Digital Double' will track the performer regardless of how precise their choreography is.



(Dainius, 2018, *Rosetta Camera Focus*)



(Dainius, 2018, *Rosetta Particle Systems*)

From this infrared generated imagery I can extrapolate position data which can be utilised within particle generation systems. The performer's position on the stage will determine attraction points for 'flocks' of particles, or act as the emission point for these systems. Shirbirt and Freelusion's work is highly detailed pre-rendered animation sequences but are unable to account for an error in the position of the performer. The technological apparatus deployed within this study utilises the location of the performer as the starting point for the digital interaction.

Within my practice I open a conversation between technology and performance, exploring the dynamic of both mediums existing simultaneously. Rather than the projection leading the choreography, I engineer the projection design as an extension of the performer. Through the course of this research study, I shall determine how this tool can be considered as an instrument of Artaudian performance.

Fundamental to the nature of this study is Nelson's (2013) model of PaR. Within this model of research, it is the objective to "avoid the historical binary between theory and practice and about how the one can be seen to be imbricated within the other" (Nelson, 2013, 29). This central idea emphasises the importance of practice and theory operating symbiotically to deliver "Substantial evidence of new insights" (Nelson, 2013, 26). Therefore I have not adhered to the research

convention of providing strict research questions within this body of research, but intend to provide substantial new insight surrounding the embodiment of Artaud's theories within a contemporary stage technology, alongside the conceptual framework of Alchemy. "In my experience PaR typically affords substantial insights rather than coming to such definite conclusions as to constitute 'answers'. (Nelson, 2013, 29) The areas of focus within this study in which I aim to provide insight surrounding are;

- 1) To present Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty alongside the evocative metaphor of Alchemy to initiate a discussion surrounding the similarities between Alchemy and the Theatre of Cruelty. This discussion aims to provide insight and clarity to Artaud's theories of 'Plague', 'Cruelty' and metaphysics.
- 2) To present my practice of 'The Digital Double' as an Artaudian theatrical tool, examined utilising the lens of Alchemy and scenographic theory.
- 3) To demonstrate my role within this study (as a technologist researcher) and present how this is akin to Artaud's 'Producer' within the research conducted.

The model of PaR in no way demerits the value of theoretical knowledge but instead insists that the two forms sit side by side to generate substantial insight. Nelson regards the reference of key literary sources within PaR "to mobilise an interplay between practical-doing thinking...and the more abstract conceptual thinking typically understood to be verbally articulated (in books and articles)." (Nelson, 2013, 29). In the pursuit of "abstract conceptual thinking" found within consulted literature, I can construct a conceptual framework from which the practice can sit. This is paramount to the effective conduct of this research, as the practice (in isolation) is unable to take into account its context. (Nelson, 2013, 64).³ The literature consulted allows the research to locate itself within its historical lineage, identify similar studies conducted within this field and locate a niche from which substantial insight can be drawn. The simultaneous development of practice and theory generates a form of praxis; that is to say, theory explored through practice, and throughout the body of this research the literature consulted and the praxis documented through video should establish a "resonance" (Nelson, 2013, 11). It is also worth noting that the emphasis placed upon praxis invites moments of unexpected insight. "When we bring creative arts into a research process we are creating the conditions to encounter moments of surprise chance contradiction, of not knowing, as much as knowing..." (Hughes, 2014) Nelson notes that this is a key concept within

³ See (Nelson, 2013, 27-29) for a discussion surrounding the value of practice in isolation as being an inadequate form of PaR. Self evident contextual pieces of artwork are a rare phenomena.

the PaR methodology, and that a “third sense” is required in order to effectively capture these moments of insight. ⁴

The process of PaR invites a new system of knowledge to the foreground, that of tacit knowledge. Michael Polanyi chemist and philosopher author of *The Tacit Dimension* 1966 states that “we can know more than we can tell” (Polanyi, 1966, 4). Polanyi’s theories are founded upon a gestalt based predication favouring a phenomenological perception of reality. Gestalt theory explores experience from the perspective of the collected wholes surrounding you as being infinitely more valuable than the subsidiary aspects of our focal awareness. (Polanyi ,1966, 6) Within Polanyi’s epistemology, there lies the crucial factor of intuition; I shall draw this into one of Polanyi's examples.⁵ I recognise the face of my friends based not upon the individual aspects of their features (i.e. nose, mouth and ears, which form the subsidiary) but based upon the totality or gestalt of their appearance. Within this process of recognition, there lies an embodied tacit understanding that the sum parts of these features blend into the facial structure of one whom I recognise. The implicit nature of this recognition process is not present within a Positivist or Materialist epistemological view, hence Polanyi’s rejection. The concept of tacit knowledge becomes central to the exploration of the role of both researcher of this paper and the performer technologists role within this study. As the research is conducted within the practice of technological mediation of human form in real time; I can consider the technical apparatus, staging and movement, as subsidiary forms to the gestalt of the Artaudian theories being explored.

Curiously a phenomenon of transposition occurs in which attention to the individual tool is reduced in favour of focus towards the desired outcome. This phenomenon is effectively explained within Polanyi's example of the hammer and the nail. ⁶ While I swing the hammer, my focus is fixed upon the nail and the outcome of the task is centred around the driving of the nail into the surface.

⁴ Documentation of practice in effectively capturing ‘moments of insight’ is discussed by Nelson in this video lecture. He notes that often students excessively document their research leading to hours of useless material that must be sorted through and edited. Nelson encourages the researcher to develop an insight to anticipate such moments, either after significant first rehearsals or performances etc.

⁵ See (Polanyi, 1966, 4-5) for a detailed explanation of the recognition within characteristic physiognomy through reference to the police method of facial feature isolation.

⁶ Preston’s (2017) lecture provides a useful commentary on the operation of muscle-based skills and the split between focal and subsidiary awareness in the achievement of an outcome.

Extrapolating this practical example to the nature of this research, the technological apparatus becomes a hammer for the striking of the gestalt nature of the elucidation of Artaud's theories.

"The transposition of bodily experiences in of the perception of things outside may now appear, therefore, as an instance of the transposition of meaning away from us, which we have found to be present to some extent in all tacit knowing." (Polanyi, 1966, 14)

The process of 'drawing together' these subsidiary factors into one Gestalt formation is tacit, and within the body of this research, it is my objective to attempt to make the tacit explicit. As Polanyi summarises; "Tacit knowledge dwells in our awareness of particulars while bearing on an entity which the particulars jointly constitute" (Polanyi, 1966, 61). Through the integration of the praxis within this study (in the form of video documentation and photography) I can begin to make transparent the subsidiary aspects of this investigation.

The approach towards this research method is further emphasised by a consideration of the writings of Artaud. Artaud repeatedly stated the failure of consigning oneself to the realms of theory alone, and implored the reader to begin "...living philosophy". (Artaud, 1970, 3). Within the body of this study, I favour a practical approach to the theories of Artaud to immerse myself within the world of Artaud's 'Cruelty' in an attempt to 'live' this theatrical experience. This is innately tacit knowledge that cannot be accumulated without practical first-hand experience.

Artaud demonstrated his frustration with the notion that knowledge is gained entirely through the consumption of written literature. I postulate that knowledge of Artaud and theatre grows within me, through my own practical and theoretical experimentation. Within this body of research, I am attempting to make these "systems" part of my practice. This is an organic, symbiotic process between praxis and theory. "I must insist on this idea of an active culture, a kind of second wind growing within us like a new organ, civilisation as applied culture, governing even our subtlest acts, the spirit alive in things." (Artaud, 1970, 6) ⁷

The research pathway has developed from the framework of Nelson's PaR in addition to what I believe to be an effective approach to engaging in the theories of Artaud. My proposal is a heuristic investigation which places the researcher not as an objective tool for the observation and recording of phenomena, but as the active mediator and subjective recipient of the study. Moustakas notes that:

⁷ See *The Peyote Dance* (Artaud, 1976, Translated from French by Helen Weaver) Artaud's ideals of culture are formulated upon his admiration for the people of the Tarahumara as the antithesis of Western culture.

The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self awareness and self knowledge. (Moustakas, 1990, 9).

The role of the researcher is central to the outcome and analysis of this study. I shall argue within chapter three that my position of research technologist is akin to Artaud's 'Producer', and extrapolate this within my conceptual framework this to the status of Alchemist. Therefore approaching the study with an empirically detached framework seems illogical. Varela et al. notes:

[...] the strength of the researcher is precisely the ability to give up the guise of detachment and to understand the source....the researcher is an empathetic resonator with experiences that are familiar to him and which in himself a resonant chord." (Varela et al, 2007, 57).

I've repeatedly stressed the subjective nature of this study, as such I have chosen qualitative data analysis based upon practice undertaken. This analysis is generated by the opinions of performers who have been interviewed in depth during the rehearsal process and after the completion of my various practical experiments. The data gathered from these sources shall be subjectively analysed alongside a collection of Artaud's essays. I shall triangulate this utilising the Hermetic and alchemical philosophical framework built surrounding the Artaudian methodology.

I have proposed a narrative based research strategy which explores the importance of the individuals within the theatrical experience which I create. It is difficult to establish a genuine relationship between artefact and experience when dealing with quantitative data. In this instance, I favour the story as a social product, not a fact. If I consider the work of Dixon in *Digital Performance* (2007) the analysis which he presents is a description of the artefact supplemented by additional views of audience and critiques. This is quantified within the model of his taxonomy of 'The Digital Double'. The process Dixon utilises enables a description of the artefact, as well as an exploration of its effect within the performance. I believe a similar practice to be the best method of proceeding within my research. The analytical scheme has developed through my study of Dixon's taxonomy of 'The Digital Double'. The only difference being that Dixon's practice is only mentioned fleetingly within his taxonomy, and there are many other practitioners Dixon examines the practice of before his own. This in no way demerits Dixon's examination and I agree that a full taxonomy of 'The Digital Double' could not be built through only upon Dixon's own practical studies. This research on the other hand, is primarily derived through personal practice due to the importance of the development of tacit knowledge within Artaudian theory.

Within this data set attention must be paid to how the qualitative data is both handled and interpreted as such data shall be catalogued with all email dialogues and performer questionnaires upon two password-protected computers. These will act as an audit trail for ethical and professional practice to be verified.

It would also be prudent to notify the reader of the funding of three of the research projects which shall be included within this thesis. *A Shadow of Grace* (2017) was a production commissioned by the BBC as part of the Hull City of Culture Space Day Event. This production was a completely open brief and allowed me to pursue my interest in direct relation to this research.

Rosetta (2017-2018) has been commissioned by Vilnius Arts Council and is similarly an open brief. *Eidos* (2017) remained a project without funding and was created purely in order to practically explore the theories of Artaud, particularly the notion of theatrical 'Cruelty'. The Hull University Ethics Committee has approved all the research within the body of this work. All research participants have been briefed in full and signed declaring their acceptance to be involved in this study.

Within this chapter, I have introduced my method of research and justified its appropriate deployment within this study. Nelson's model of PaR enables a dialogue between praxis and theory culminating in substantial insight. Within this model I see the practice contextualised by the theory it is sat within to initiate a 'resonance' between the two forms. This discussion has helped inform the position of this research in relation to theory and practice.

Now that I have laid the foundations of this research my attention turns towards establishing the conceptual framework in which this practice sits. I shall begin with a discussion exploring the origins and philosophy of Alchemy.

Chapter One: Alchemy - The Pursuit of Gnosis

Before an exploration of the theories of Artaud in relation to Alchemy can commence, I feel it is prudent to provide the reader with a brief history of the development of Alchemy. An in-depth discussion of Alchemy's history would not be possible within the confines of this thesis, however, by briefly exploring the origins of the subject I can set aside some common misconceptions regarding Alchemy. From this brief history, I hope to provide a clearer understanding of the 'Great Work' and help the reader to consider the alchemical paradigm as a philosophical tool rather than the experimental metallurgy of charlatans.⁸ Within this chapter, I shall focus upon the development of Western Alchemy and the role of the Alchemist within this transformative operation.

⁸(Nicholl, 1980, 8) humorously refers to the Alchemist as being perceived as a "chemical con-man".

To trace the origins of this most esoteric of subjects, I shall consult some of the earliest theories regarding its development, and the frequent recurrence of the alchemical Demi God-like figure Hermes Trismegistus. I shall consider references to selected treatises from Corpus Hermeticum (commentary by Yates, 1964) which provides a critical insight into the alchemical philosophy central to the movement of Renaissance Alchemy. Additional references have been taken from The Kybalion (Three Initiates, 1916) as a contemporary source of hermetic literature which would most likely have shaped Artaud's understanding and thoughts surrounding Alchemy.⁹ My knowledge of the subject shall be enriched by reference to social commentator and alchemical scholar Terence McKenna.

By allowing the time to contextualise the subject of Alchemy properly, it becomes clearer that Alchemy would have been a considerable source of inspiration for Artaud. By better understanding the influences of Artaud I can more effectively determine the framing of 'The Digital Double' as an Artaudian scenographic language.

Origins

The origins of the word 'Alchemy' are somewhat unclear, and there are multiple theories regarding its source.

“The word may have originated from multiple sources “Kmt or chem”, the ancient Egyptians name for their country or possibly within the Greek language “chyma”, meaning to fuse or to cast metal” (Holmyard, 1957, 17)

Egypt and Greece are primary contenders for the original practitioners of Alchemy due to the common representation of the alchemical godlike figure known by the Greeks as Hermes Trismegistus (literally translating as 'thrice greatest')¹⁰ and the Ancient Egyptians, as Thoth, the Ibis-headed god of knowledge and wisdom. The hermetic tradition is crafted from the axioms of Hermes Trismegistus, and is an alchemical metaphysical school of philosophy, firmly believing in

⁹ See (Jefferson, 2011). Artaud never directly references these texts within his Oeuvre however it is speculated that Artaud did in fact read the Kybalion.

¹⁰ See (McKenna, 1970). Hermes is named 'thrice greatest' having mastered the arts of Astrology, Alchemy and Theurgy.

the transformation of the self.¹¹ These concepts are central to the alchemical practice and shall be discussed shortly within a brief exploration of the Hermetic Corpus. Alternative theories regard the origins of Alchemy within the realms of Plato's mythical tale of Atlantis.

Other tales speak of Alchemy being the teachings of Atlantean refugees, fleeing from their sinking continent to Egypt. Others state that the word Alchemy is derived from the Hebrew word "chamaman" which means 'sacred mystery'. (McKnight, 1994, 20)

Alchemy's origins are submerged within the veils of history and myth. Regardless of the true origins of Western Alchemy, it can be determined that it was practised in Hellenistic Greece and Egypt. This leads to an essential collection of literature which profoundly influenced the Renaissance Alchemist; The Corpus Hermeticum, attributed to Hermes Trismegistus and erroneously dated before Plato and Pythagoras in Ancient Egypt.¹² Yates describes the alchemical Renaissance as a "renaissance of antiquity" the Alchemists of the Renaissance believed that their salvation lied within the past. The discovery of ancient texts and artefacts from the past brought with it a sense of great excitement and wisdom, for these past civilisations were considered "better and higher than their own" (Yates, 1964, 3). However, the alchemical ideas with which this Renaissance was founded are somewhat misguided due to a radical misdating of the Corpus Hermeticum. In their lust and admiration for the wisdom of antiquity, the Corpus Hermeticum was thought to originate from ancient Egypt, but now it is known the texts origins are between 100 and 300 AD (Yates, 1964, 2). If I attribute Artaud's theatrical model to being inspired by alchemical philosophy, then I must attempt to understand the perception of those first reading the Hermetic Corpus. The authorship of this corpus is similarly incorrect, attributed to Hermes Trismegistus.

In any case, however, they were certainly not written in remotest antiquity by an all-wise Egyptian priest, as the Renaissance believed, but by various unknown authors, all probably Greeks[...] (Yates, 1964, 3).

In informing an understanding of the Hermetic alchemical model, I wish to refer to the role of 'Man' within this Corpus. This is a curious position, as within 'Pimander' (Yates Commentary, 1964) the Hermetic Genesis, Man stands as the brother of the Demiurge God.

¹¹The wisdom of the Hermetic teachings must be applied within life in order for it be truly understood. "If you are a true student, you will be able to work out and apply these Principles- if not, then you must develop yourself into one, for otherwise the Hermetic Teachings will be as 'words, words, words' to you." (Three Initiates, 1966, 4)

¹² The scale of this mistake can be seen within McKenna's (1992) humorous remark; "This is the equivalent of us finding out that George Washington was alive in Greenwich Village in the 1930s."

Now, when he saw the creation which the Demiurge had fashioned in the fire, the Man wished also to produce a work, and permission to do this was given him by the Father. Having thus entered into the demiurgic sphere, in which he had full power, the Man saw the works of his brother, and the Governors fell in love with him, and each gave to him a part in their own rule. (Yates, 1964, 25)

Man is then considered above the animal, and to be 'brother' of the Demiurge God, not an inferior being existing at the mercy of his creator.¹³ The second notion which is spoken of within Pimander and central to this understanding of Alchemy is the duality of humanity. Man's placement within the world is a fall from the past, however within Man still lies a divine nous. "He consists, not of a human soul and a body, but of a divine, creative, immortal essence and a body." (Yates, 1964, 29) In fact, Man within this corpus is considered to have a 'double'. A curious moment of serendipity within Artaud's preoccupation of 'The Double'. Ultimately this self-focussed spiritual practice led to the persecution of those practising Alchemy branding them as heretics. The Alchemist who still wished to practice their art hid their true intention under the guise of metallurgy. Alchemical literature would either be written anonymously or under the alias of another writer, philosopher, or Alchemist, lending credibility to their theories and also protecting the original identity of the author. A body of cyphers and codes hid the true alchemical intention from the eyes of the ignorant, further pushing alchemical philosophy into the veils of obscurity.

To build an understanding of the Hermetic philosophy influencing the Renaissance Alchemist, two precepts are required. The position of Man is elevated the brother of the Demiurge God, and that Man is a creature of dual being, physical and metaphysical. Now that I have established these core tenets of Hermeticism, I can discuss the philosophical ideology behind the alchemical practice itself.

Philosophy

The development of the alchemical principle can be seen as a child of Aristotelian metaphysics. Aristotle believed that the universe is composed of primary matter, which remained inactive until pressed upon by one of the four forms; fire, earth, water and air. (Holmyard, 1957, 21-23) Aristotle

¹³ This supposition counters the Christian ideology that God created the universe we inhabit but rather proposes a semi complete creation which man imbued within divine power is able to shape. McKenna humorously remarks of the Christian perspective "...you're like a worm suspended over an abyss, held there only by the love of a merciful God; implying that if he weren't a merciful God, he'd just let go of your thread and you'd go down the tubes." (McKenna 1992). Within the alchemical perspective, Man is afforded an empowering position.

thought that every substance is composed of varying amounts of these four elements; as the elements are interchangeable and can act upon one another, this school of thought believed that mastery of the four elements conferred upon the wielder the ability to craft any substance or form. Holmyard describes this:

Here we have the germ of all theories of metallic transmutation and the basic philosophical justification of all the laborious days spent by Alchemists over their furnaces. If lead and gold consist of fire, air, water and earth, why then not the dull and common metal have the proportions of its elements adjusted to those of the shining, precious ones. (Holmyard, 1957, 23).

The idea of harmony within the universe was central to the alchemical ethos, "All is one, and one is All". (Holmyard, 1957, 22) This led the Alchemist to believe the spirit of the universe could be called upon within their transmutation, in effect calling forth the Alchemist's 'double' or 'divine' aspect. "The theory of unity of the world permeated by a universal spirit had a corollary in the assumption that every object in the universal possessed some sort of life." (Holmyard, 1957, 22) The Alchemist, therefore, became a channel for this universal spirit, and by calling upon its power was gifted the ability to alter and change the materials around them. This universal spirit inherent within all matter was regarded as the Quintessence.¹⁴ But what was the objective of this power possessed by the Alchemist? Those uninitiated in the philosophy of The Great Work will consider the primary outcome to be the creation of gold from lead; however, this is merely the exoteric metaphor of an esoteric journey.

For a more select company, however the fascination of secret knowledge and the idea of grasping the hidden key to understanding the universe held an even greater appeal, and from the beginning, the practitioners of Alchemy claimed that it taught the secret of a spiritual transformation (Medieval Wisdom, 1994, 10)

The Alchemist had to recognise that there existed a power within matter outside of its physical appearance and that the Alchemist, was in fact, affecting the substance both on a physical and metaphysical level.¹⁵ As the Alchemists believed the material contained within it a hidden Quintessence, a transformation of a gross material substance into refined ones could take place; this is evident within the transmutation of the base material lead, into gold. Applying the Hermetic

¹⁴ Paracelsus, a famously gifted medicinal Alchemist, wrote of this Quintessence regarding it as; "The divine breath, the central and universal fire, which vivifies all things that exist" (Paracelsus, 1289).

¹⁵Nicholl writes that during the transformative operation of the bass matter; "The Alchemist saw a spirit arising liberated from the embrace, the dark prison, of matter." (Nicholl, 1980, 4).

framework I have constructed, the Alchemist was first connecting to their 'double' aspect and enacting the transformative gift of Man. Through practical experimentation, the Alchemist understands better themselves, their world and the subject of their transmutation. This is a core concept of the Hermetic philosophy; in enacting their divine gift as Man, the better the Alchemist would come to know 'God' or 'The All'. "Therefore unless you make yourself equal to God, you cannot understand God: for like is not intelligible save unto like." (Ficino Translation, 1839, 33-34) From this perspective, the alchemical pursuit was far from purely material. The Alchemist, as they toiled within laboratory amidst the fumigated stench of sulphur and mercury pursued divine gnosis. "In philosophical terms, then Alchemy is the art of transforming the base metal of ignorance into the gold of wisdom, or divinity." (McKnight 1994, 23) The esoteric pursuit of gnosis was matched through the exoteric creation of the 'Philosophers Stone', or 'Alchemist Stone'.

"...it is the philosophical gold or even the marvellous stone, the *lapis invisibilitatis* (the stone of invisibility) or the *lapis aereum* (the ethereal stone) or finally the unimaginable hermaphroditic *rebis...*" (Jung, 1953, 232)

All previous transmutations served as preparation for the fabrication of this most coveted of treasures. Once fashioned the Philosopher's Stone would confer upon the individual extraordinary powers. The most renowned of these powers was the ability to transform any metal into gold, but it also served as the primary ingredient in the Elixir of Life. Additionally, the Alchemist could place the smallest of fragments into a bowl of water and watch as a miniature universe would be born in front of his eyes, thereby conferring the Alchemist a first-hand account of the laws of the universe and the powers of creation. (Hoeller, 2016)

The creation of the Philosopher's Stone was accompanied by a highly complex and deeply symbolic practical method. I must reiterate that the practice undertaken here, was merely the physical process of a deeply metaphysical experiment. The procedure listed below is the 'four-stage process' however as Hamilton notes: "The alchemical process of transformation has been variously described, according to the text that is consulted, as being a six-stage process, 12 stage, 20, 22, 50, and even 75 stage process!". (Hamilton, 1985).

This begins with the Negrado or blackening, Albedo, whitening, Citrinitas, yellowing and Rubedo, reddening. During this process both the material and Alchemist are subject to increasing purification, the material outset of the Alchemists experiment is mirrored within the psychological

process they undertake.¹⁶ A full exploration of the meaning behind these alchemical processes shall be conducted alongside the methodology of Artaud when I consider Artaud methodology as alchemically inspired.

Conclusion

Within this short introduction, I have attempted to guide the reader as to the potential origins of Alchemy and set aside the common misconceptions surrounding the subject. As I proceed in creating a model of 'The Digital Double' as an Artaudian scenographic theory, it is crucial that I establish a suitable framework for this theory to sit. Understanding the influence with which Alchemy had upon Artaud is essential in generating new understanding within his theories and also locating where my practice might fit. The concern of the Alchemists was with a spiritual purification with which metallurgy was merely the practical accompaniment. Matter is not fixed, and by demonstrating the ability to manipulate matter upon a miniature scale, the Alchemist can determine the malleable nature of their very soul. This ideology is reflected within the Hermetic axiom "As above, so below; as below, so above". (Three Initiates, 1966, 50) Within their practical experimentation the Alchemist can justify their metaphysical world view, and develop their understanding of the universe to bring about a personal transformation of their base soul into alchemical gold. The Hermetic Corpus while misdated provides a key insight into the position of Man within this alchemical paradigm. We are creatures of duality, as Yates eloquently phrases; "... This Egyptian Adam is more than human; he is divine and belongs to the race of the star demons". (Yates, 1984, 29). By placing Man at the same level of Demiurge God, the Hermetic texts infuse an otherworldly quality within humanity, which the Renaissance Alchemists pursued within their art. There is an innately theatrical profundity to both the position of Man and the alchemical process with which Artaud's fascination of the subject seems only a natural occurrence.¹⁷ Before establishing the notion of Artaud's theatre being a metaphorically alchemical process, and

¹⁶ Jung noted that the physical operation of Alchemy is mirrored by a psychological operation. "This sounds as though the alchemical maturation should go hand in hand with the maturation of the physician." (Jung, 1967, 124)

¹⁷ While not directly referencing Artaud's theatre Nicholl's *The Chemical Theatre* is an excellent source for contextualising theatre as an alchemical process. This text focusses upon the alchemical nature of Shakespearian tragedy and claims that the story of King Lear is transformative and alchemical. "...*King Lear* is deeply and intentionally alchemical. That *King Lear* is a masterpiece of 'chemical theatre'. (Nicholl, 1980, 144) Nicholl also notes the theatricality of the alchemical transmutation process by referencing the work of the notorious Edward Kelly. "Kelly's Bohemian Alchemy, whether or not it turned crude mercury into philosophical gold, was a series of performances, with some of the most powerful figures in Europe, political and intellectual, as audience" (Nicholl, 1980, 22)

ultimately determining the Artaudian nature of 'The Digital Double'; I must first identify the very nature of Artaud's theatre. This shall be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Two: Establishing Artaud

Before any comparison between Artaud and Alchemy is possible I must first establish an understanding of the theatre Artaud wished to create. Within this chapter, I shall first explore Artaud's thoughts on culture, as ultimately this vexation provided the catalyst for his new theatrical model.¹⁸ Artaud's views on Western civilisation can be effectively juxtaposed to the life style of the Tarahumara as an exemplary model of Artaud's cultural ideal. I shall draw upon *The Peyote Dance* (1976) to enrich this discussion surrounding Artaudian cultural ideals. Following this, I shall discuss a crucial moment within Artaud's theatrical life, his watching of the Balinese Troop. As I shall demonstrate within this chapter, the Balinese Troop provided Artaud with a dramatic ideal from which he could launch his Theatre of Cruelty. Artaud's vision was the product of his frustration with Western culture and the domination of the spoken word within the contemporary theatre. Artaud perceived the Western notion of culture as something of an epistemological cartoon.

Before saying anything further about culture, I consider the world is hungry and does not care about culture, and people artificially want to turn these thoughts away from hunger and direct them towards culture. (Artaud, 1970, 3)

'Culture', as perceived by Artaud, becomes a substitute for metaphysical nourishment, however, in no way does it satiate this hunger. The Western world still hungers for a form which is not present within the idioms of contemporary culture.

[...]the theatre Artaud dreams of is the spiritual double of the impoverished theatre that exists in his time, not a 'mere inert replica' of banal reality, but a double of 'another archetypal and dangerous reality' [...] (Bermel, 2001, 12)

Artaud believed works of philosophy were assembled as substitute nourishment for Western culture, and that they ultimately served little to no purpose. Culture and philosophy ought to be practiced; these systems ought to be ingrained within us from birth, pervading our every breath and action. As Artaud wrote:

¹⁸ Murphy regards Artaud's thoughts on culture in declaring it; "...a fatally decayed Western culture for which he has unremitting hostility..." (Murphy, 2016, 92).

Either these systems are a part of us and we are so steeped in them we live them; therefore, what use are books? Or we are not steeped in them and they are not worth living. In that case what difference would their disappearance make? (Artaud, 1970, 4).

The irony of this sentiment should be noted as ultimately Artaud's legacy lived on through his literature; his practice was a tragic failure.¹⁹ However, this fundamental notion with which Artaud believed, speaks of his admiration for the tradition of the Tarahumara, who had no books but instead chose to live their philosophy. "The Tarahumara become philosophers in exactly the way a small child grows up and becomes a man; they are philosophers by birth." (Artaud, 1976, 10) In addition, this idea of living philosophy speaks of the profound effect with which Artaud hoped his theatre could achieve; inducing a response so strong within his audience that their philosophical worldview would change. Artaud's frustration with Western culture is balanced by his admiration of the Tarahumara, who he believed lived spiritually rich and profound lives. The Tarahumara ultimately held the belief in a second side to their being, an unseen Double existent within all, which above all else they fear the loss of. Artaud wrote of the Double stating:

Not to be aware of what one's Double is, is to risk losing it. It is to risk a kind of abstract fall, beyond physical space, a wandering through the high planetary regions of the disembodied human principle. (Artaud, 1976, 10)

If we perceive Artaud's theatre as a vehicle of introducing elements of the Tarahumara's ideals of culture, then theatre's primary objective should be that of reconnecting this 'Double' and as a fuel to kindle the metaphysical fire within us all.

Theatre, which is nothing, but uses all languages (gestures, words, sound, fire and screams), is to be found precisely at the point where the mind needs a language to bring about its manifestation. (Artaud, 1970, 7)

Artaud thought that the seat of this metaphysical language rested upon the medium of theatre. However, the state of Parisian theatre proved inadequate for the intentions of Artaud, with its sole reliance upon the script and dictatorship of the author. Contemporary theatre had lost all sense of

¹⁹ In *A Failed Vision?* Jamieson writes of Artaud; "Although he considered himself a practical man of the theatre, his applied Theatre of Cruelty amounted to little more than a small handful of productions, each with their complications. Consequently, Artaud's theatrical vision remained conceptual, communicated solely through essay, manifesto, scenario and play text." (Jamieson 2007, 35).

its noble direction, serving as a medium of entertainment rather than spiritual emancipation.

Artaud, in frustration wrote:

Theatre is no longer an art, or it is a useless art. It conforms at every point to our Western concepts of art. We are overloaded with ineffectual, decorative feelings, aimless activity devoted solely to entertainment and the picturesque. (Artaud, 1932, 82).

The benign verisimilitude presented would never serve for the ignition of metaphysics, which Artaud proclaimed theatre could achieve. Theatre, rather than mirror the day to day trivial pursuits of entertainment, should instead present life itself, devoid of the attachment of the personal, but exists as a creative force. Artaud proclaimed this force as “sweeping human personality aside where man is only shadow” (Artaud, 1932, 6). Artaud’s inspiration for such a theatrical force was kindled during his watching of the Balinese Troop Theatre.

Balinese Troop

Key within the development of Artaud’s theories was his experience watching the Balinese troop in 1931. This event catalysed Artaud’s infatuation with the limitation of Western theatre.²⁰ Within Artaud’s essay *On Balinese Theatre* there lies a creative review of the forms deployed by the Balinese in the evocation of a theatrical experience quite removed from Western theatre. Before we briefly discuss Artaud’s essay, it is worth noting Jamieson’s (2007) ‘double’ interpretation of the Balinese performance which is vital in understanding Artaud’s essay. Jamieson believes that while indeed Artaud watched this performance; his essay primarily serves the purpose of distinguishing other theatrical models, aside from the realism which prevailed in Western theatre. As with all of Artaud’s essays, as much as describing the event taking place, the essay offers an insight into Artaud’s mind and aspirations.

Instead of idealising the performance, the objective of ‘On the Balinese Theatre’ was to prove that conventional Western theatre is merely a style of performance to which we have become accustomed (Jamieson, 2007, 18)

Rather than approaching this essay as a review, it should be considered as a framework for Artaudian performance. The essay served the purpose of shaking the readers’ conception of what

²⁰ After attending the Balinese performance Artaud wrote three articles and begun the formulation of *The Theatre and Its Double*. “These three seminal articles, all influenced by the Balinese experience, mark the beginning of his most prolific and imaginative period devoted to writings on the theatre, and would later become part of *Le Théâtre et son double...*” (Clancy, 1985, 398)

theatre is and enlightening them as to what theatre could be. "The oriental theatre he writes of is not only what Artaud sees; it is what he wishes to see. And to borrow." (Bermel, 2001, 16) As Bermel notes this essay is a useful document for identifying the fundamental concepts of Artaudian theatre and will assist in laying the groundwork for establishing the alchemical ideology axiomatic within Artaud's theories.

It is worth discussing the postcolonial implications of Artaud's appropriation of the Balinese performative ideals as he 'borrows' them within his theatrical manifesto. "One facet of post-colonial work, therefore, is to challenge the canon of western art, a challenge which take myriad forms, from outright rejection to re- appropriation and reformulation." (Fortier, 2002, 194) Artaud's primary function within his analysis of the Balinese performance is to demonstrate a theatrical form completely distinguished from Western convention. However, observation of the Balinese performance, re-appropriation and reformulation of their theatrical forms is insensitive and cannot account for the rich historical and cultural value the Balinese art form has for the Balinese people.

The worst thing is when a traditional performance is stripped of its links to the lives of the people for whom it is performed. Nothing could be more disrespectful to theatre to reduce its act of celebration to a repository of techniques and theories. (Bharucha 1993 4-5).

While I agree with Bharucha that reduction of the rich performative practice into a series of techniques is disrespectful, it is apparent when reading Artaud's essay he has nothing but the utmost respect for the methods of Balinese troop. Artaud idolises them as antithetical to Western Culture and wishes to 'borrow' to enrich his own theatrical model. Pavis (1996) notes that the outcome of postcolonial re-appropriation is not necessarily negative and for me summarises Artaud's ideals with his cultural appropriation of the Balinese performance. "To call [...] into question Western universalism, in order to give greater respect to cultural differences and their relativity" (Pavis 1996: 12) (202) Artaud's deployment of oriental theatre is appropriation to undermine Western cultural hegemony.

Paramount to the Artaudian theatrical model and noted within this essay is the debasement of the text, both in the form of the spoken word and the authority of the script. "They triumphantly demonstrate the absolute superiority of the producer whose creative ability *does away with words*" (Artaud, 1970, 38). Here lies one of the vital creative principles of the Artaudian performance model. Within the Balinese performance Artaud noted that the emphasis was upon gesture, expression, and rhythm of movement. Artaud still believed that voice would have a place

within performance, but that it would be used in the non-discursive form of incantation, or 'inflection'.²¹

The mental profundity of this new stage language based upon gesture left a great impression upon Artaud. "These mental signs have an exact meaning that only strikes one intuitively, but violently enough to make any translations into logical discursive language useless". (Artaud, 1970, 39) This theatrical language had a precise and engineered effect upon the intuition of the audience, rather than the intellectual side of their being. Within this description Artaud laid out a key concept within this theatrical language, violence. Within this new language, violence serves as a severing of the rational understanding of literal meaning, preventing any form of translation into "discursive language". The audience would experience something that was 'beyond words'. Ultimately this violence would evolve into 'Cruelty' within Artaud's theatrical model.

The mental profundity with which Artaud spoke of developed into a recurring concept within his literature; this is the idea of metaphysics. This term scholars of Artaud must approach with a certain amount of prudence, as Artaud himself never provided a concrete definition. Metaphysics is referred to as an otherworldly quality inferred by the poetic profundity of compelling art, notably discussed within Artaud's essay '*Production and Metaphysics*'. Within this essay Artaud described the metaphysical quality of the painting *Lott and His Daughters*, however, my focus shall be upon its practical application within the Balinese performance. The metaphysical literally translates as 'that which is beyond the physical'. Jamieson suggests that by approaching the relativity of perception we perceive, our environment around us based upon sensory stimulation.²² "In this way, all human perception is cerebrally constructed, and consequently, the breadth of experience is restricted to the physical limitations of the body's senses". (Jamieson, 2007, 28) If we accept that our breadth of experience is limited to that which we are brought into contact, Jamieson argues, then perhaps certain sensations are omitted from the human experience. Jamieson concludes that "These 'un-sensed' experiences are metaphysical and Artaud wanted to bring his spectators into contact with them". (Jamieson, 2007, 28) Herein lies the first key concept of Artaudian

²¹ Artaud regarded this new value within speech in stating; "Theatre can still derive possibilities for extension from speech outside words, the development in space of its dissociatory, vibratory action on our sensibility". (Artaud, 1970, 63). Therefore the voice still has a place within Artaud's theatrical model but emphasis is placed upon its sonic quality and not its psychologically driven discursive effects.

²² Jamieson's discussion surrounding the relativity of our sensory perception is informed by Immanuel Kant.

metaphysics, being brought into contact with that which you were unable to perceive under normal circumstances. Bermel defines this metaphysics similarly as being beyond the physical.

[...]a synonym for abstruse philosophical speculation, but suggests a type of artistic investigation that goes literally beyond the physical or outward limits of the art and into its virtuality, or what is capable of becoming. (Bermel, 2001, 12)

Bermel's definition helps contextualise this abstract subject, but the question turns to how Artaud intended to achieve this? Within the Balinese essay, one can discern Artaud's belief that it is motion and gesture which evoked this sense of metaphysical profundity. The quality of movement provides an instinctual evocation of that which our mind previously held secret. Artaud regarded this; "...to give rise in our minds, to crystallise a new concept, what one might term a concrete concept of the abstract". (Artaud, 1970, 43). The quality of this motion is central to the generation of this new found meaning. The use of metaphysics should stimulate the growth of unseen or neglected aspects of the mind. It is at the heart of this notion of metaphysics where we find the focus of Artaud's dramas. Rather than engaging in the trivial pursuits of Western life, Artaud suggested the performance of a cosmic battle.

Here we are suddenly in the thick of a metaphysical struggle and the rigid aspect of the body in a trance, tensed by the surging of the cosmic powers attacking it, is admirably expressed in that frenzied dance full of angular stiffness, where we suddenly feel the mind's headlong falls begins. (Artaud, 1970, 47)

Within the performance lies the revelation of that which is beyond reality, and ultimately the show serves the purpose of teaching the audience how to recognise these metaphysical concepts; in essence, the drama opens the spectator's eyes to that which lies beyond. The drama staged is above and beyond anything seen in the contemporary playing houses of Paris; it is a struggle beyond words. Ultimately it is this conjuration of metaphysics which engages with Artaud most notorious yet illusive notions, that of 'The Double'. It is within this cosmic drama which surmounts all logic and rational understanding that the audience meets it.

And behind the Warrior, beset by the fearful cosmic storm, stands the Double giving himself airs, given up to the childishness of his schoolboy gibes, who, aroused by the repercussions of the surging gale, moves unaware in the midst of un-comprehended charms. (Artaud, 1970, 42)

Within Balinese performance and a-priori Artaudian drama, the metaphysical is an aspect which is tapped into to reveal Artaud's 'Double'. The performance returns to the philosophy of the Tarahumara. The audience are met with 'The Double', and the notion of duality is conferred. This duality is a momentary experience within the Artaudian performance and ultimately is reconciled into a singular state. However, recognition of this metaphysical 'Double' is a necessity before the reconciliation of the conscious mind can take place. This is a powerful and profound experience engineered through the medium of metaphysics. Jamieson notes the ritualistic trance-like state conferred by this theatricality. "Artaud envisaged a ritual powerful enough to throw the spectator in a trance and reveal the stark realities of human existence" (Jamieson, 2007, 24).

It is difficult to process these ideologies with which Artaud spoke. Jamieson claims that Artaud's theatre sits between the two worlds of reality and death, the sensed and un-sensed. (Jamieson 2007, 29) This paradoxical state is perhaps generated by Artaud's admiration of the Tarahumara who already believe themselves dead (Artaud, 1976, 3) and value the existence of their Double far more than the physical reality they inhabit. Following the philosophy of the Tarahumara, Artaudian performance (and the use of metaphysics) can be seen as the meeting point of the Tarahumara 'living' Double, and the 'dead' physical experience of everyday reality.²³ This speculation is one of many interpretations, but helps illustrate the philosophical ambiguity and complexity of these ideas. The quality of Artaud's metaphysics requires as Jamieson rightly puts "a leap of faith" (Jamieson, 2007, 27). Artaud's theatre is an invitation to another world. I encourage you the reader to step over the precipice of the every day and enter the dramatic imagination of Artaud. This dramatic imagination required a channel or medium to translate, and it is at this point I must introduce 'The Producer'.

The Producer

The source of the Balinese drama, which Artaud idealised, are generated from the playing space itself. "All creativity stems from the stage in this drama, finding its expression and even its sources in a secret physic impulse, speech prior to words." (Artaud, 1970, 43)

This is an outcry, a frustrated scream at the failure of the stage within Western theatre, it being perceived as a supporting element or practical necessity. Within the Balinese performance, the

²³ Artaud claimed to have experienced death multiple times, during his incarceration at Rodez and ECT at the hands of Dr Gaston Ferdière, and during the Peyote Ritual of the Tarahumara. Jamieson writes; "He describes these deaths as 'out of body' experiences, transgressing beyond his material flesh and, for a short time, occupying the metaphysical realm" (Jamieson, 2007, 29) Such experiences within Artaud's life help inform an understanding of the nature of his theatre. Artaud's life and theatre are inextricably linked.

stage's primacy is assured as an engine for the generation of these metaphysical ideas; it is the device for the expression of ideas "prior to words". The role of engineering the stage space, performance, and metaphysical direction of the Artaudian drama was given to 'The Producer'. In discussing the differentiation between author and 'Producer' Artaud inferred 'The Producer' as a dramatic Demiurge. "But the latter becomes a becomes a kind of organiser of magic, a master of holy ceremonies." (Artaud, 1970, 43) The ecstatic expression of the power of 'The Producer' is further confirmed by Artaud's comment "What he sets in motion is MANIFEST." (Artaud, 1970, 43). The drama explored on stage is not a psychological drama developed from the mind of an author, but rather 'The Producer' acts as a channel, or medium of a source of universal, metaphysical ideas. "the subjects he makes thrilling are not his own, but descend from the gods." (Artaud, 1970, 43). Therefore Artaud is promoting a complete overhaul of the conventions of theatrical creation, both in method and subject. Within this theatrical creation Artaud's aim was to incur an archaic revival of the subconscious mind in which the audience are reunited with metaphysical concepts which have been quelled by the onset of Western civilisation. Artaud perceived this as; "A kind of ancient Natural philosophy, from which the mind has never been separated". (Artaud, 1970, 43). 'The Producer's' role is to utilise all the stage elements available to them for this philosophy to be practised upon the stage.

Conclusion

Artaud constructed his theatre in stark contrast to the practice of contemporary Parisian drama. Within his oeuvre, he carried the hope that his theatre could cure the stagnation of culture. Within this short exploration of Artaudian theatre concerning Balinese performance I have attempted to determine four fundamental notions. The entire essay is not an accurate representation of Balinese performance but instead a blueprint of Artaudian theatre. Secondly, that the performance which Artaud wished to create would emanate from gesture and movement and not be determined by script or words. These movements and gestures would have a tangible effect on the intuition and feeling of the audience and engage in my third key notion of metaphysics. Artaud aimed for his theatre to engage with metaphysical ideas which transcended the benign reality of contemporary Parisian living and enter into a state of cosmic conflict. Finally, the orchestrator of this performance would no longer be a series of independent craftsmen, the author, director, stage designer and technician etc. Artaud desired an overhaul of these individuals in favour of one singular creator, 'The Producer'. 'The Producer' would draw from ideas "from the god's themselves" and create a vision of totality on stage not dissimilar from the Wagnerian notion of Gesamtkunstwerk. (Bermel, 2001, 42) It is from the role of 'The Producer' which I can begin to explore the notion of Artaudian theatre as metaphorically alchemical. In the next chapter, I shall discuss how the role of 'Producer' could be seen as Alchemist, and consider the stage he creates as a theatrical laboratory.

Chapter Three: Artaud Through the Lens of Alchemy

A secret similarity exists between the fundamental principles of theatre and those of Alchemy. (Artaud 1974, 34)

The above quotation marks Artaud's initial thoughts within his essay on 'Alchemists Theatre' and offer the first direct reference to Alchemy within his theatrical model. However, this essay provides only an initial invitation for comparison between Alchemy and theatre. To truly grasp the magnitude of this essay within the confines of Artaud's theories, one must explore the Artaudian methodology itself and consider Artaud's place within this theatrical model. I will compare Artaud's theatrical method utilising Ann Demaitre's essay 'The Theatre of Cruelty and Alchemy: Artaud and Le Grand Oeuvre' (1972) to the material process of Alchemy and demonstrate that there exists an undeniable parallel between the two arts. Once I have established a dialogue between Artaudian theatre and Alchemy, it becomes possible to explore Artaud's numerous theories such as 'Plague' and 'Cruelty' as the theatrical counterparts inspired by the alchemical process. This chapter shall enable an understanding of Artaud alongside his influence of Alchemy and lay the foundations for considering 'The Digital Double' as an Artaudian theatrical device.

I shall be exploring my practice alongside the works of pioneering scenographer's Adolphe Appia (1862-1928) and Joseph Svoboda (1920-2002). Appia rejected the 19th-century scenographic convention of the pictorial scene in favour of expressive and dynamic three-dimensional spaces. Such a rejection can be seen to be shared by Artaud both within his scenography and a dismissal of the antiquated forms of contemporary Parisian theatre. Christopher Baugh (2005) writes that rejection is a recurring trait within modern artistic expression "...it has been, and continues to be, an ever present artistic condition of modernity." (Baugh, 2005, 34). Exploring theatrical rejections before Artaud will assist in laying the foundations of my stage language within this Artaudian context.

Svoboda's innovative use of stage technology to explore the human condition provides a valid comparison to my practice within this research. "Svoboda's stage existed as a place of transformation and magic, a place that would employ high technology to generate mystery and metaphors of complex human experiences..." (Baugh, 2005, 89) Svoboda's theatrical innovations can be seen as a realisation of Artaud's call for the stage technology being inadequate; Artaud called for the use of "[...]oscillating light effects, new waves of diffusing lighting into

waves...” (Artaud, 1974, 67). Svoboda utilised the technology and financing available to generate similar lighting techniques ²⁴ and in doing so pursued an exploration of the human condition.

Alongside this, I shall be examining feedback from performers’ Wolstenholme and Long from the production *Eidos*. Their feedback during the process will be crucial in determining how successful my Artaudian scenographic choices were within performance. I shall examine the performers’ feedback alongside the alchemical method which has inspired my dramaturgical decisions within practice. I have supplemented my practice with interviews taken from Gideon Obazanek of ‘Chunky Move’ examining his collaboration with digital artist Frieder Weiss in their performance *Glow and Mortal Engine*. Such supplementation enriches the perspective of digital technology intervention within performance and can be seen to invoke a similarly metaphorically alchemical quality.

Artaud wrote: “For when one considers theatre’s nature, its foundations, like Alchemy it is anchored to a certain number of bases, the same for all arts, aiming in the imaginary, mental field...” (Artaud, 1970, 34). The Alchemist assembles a range of base materials as the practical accompaniment of his transmutation while the theatre-maker, or Artaudian ‘Producer’, organises a series of stage elements; sounds, props, and lights to transform the theatre into a performance space. The key between these two mediums, however, lies within “aiming in the imaginary, mental field.” For within this Artaud proclaimed that both forms, while resting upon a physical interaction ultimately brought about a metaphysical revelation.

The subject of this transformation must be considered; initial thoughts may lead to the conclusion that the object of alchemical transmutation may be the audience, however, this is not necessarily the case within the Artaudian methodology. Artaud wrote that: “Practising cruelty involves a higher determination to which the executioner tormentor is also subject and which he must be resolved to endure when the time comes.” (Artaud, 1932, 72-73). If we are to extrapolate that the ‘executioner tormentor’ is the figure enacting the Cruelty, then performers Long and Wolstenholme as well as ‘Producer’ become primary candidates within this metaphor.

The Alchemical Method

In this brief exploration of the alchemical process, I shall explore both esoteric and exoteric operations taking place. Accompanying my research of the alchemical process are references taken from Hamilton’s web article ‘The Alchemical Process of Transformation’ (1985). Hamilton

²⁴ Similar lighting techniques of “diffusing lighting into waves” were notably seen within Svoboda’s production *Tristan and Isolde* (1967) in which a curtain of light was formed through the use of ionised particles of water in the air. (Butterworth and Mckinney, 2009, 66).

provides an introduction to the subject of Alchemy, the process, and a Jungian psychoanalytical discussion surrounding each of the stages of the 'Great Work'. Hamilton's reference to Jungian psychology provides a pathway to the application of the Jungian 'Individuation' process taking place within Alchemy.²⁵ In addition, I have referenced Demaitre's (1972) paper on Artaud and Alchemy which provides a systematic juxtaposition of a five-point alchemical method alongside the methodology of Artaud.

There are varying accounts of the stages within the alchemical process and many of the operations listed involve substages. However throughout all these stages there lies the constant heat of the Alchemists flame. This alchemical flame becomes the theatrical double of Artaud's 'Cruelty'.²⁶ Demaitre's explanation lists five steps and omits the Citrinitas phase with the addition of Solutio and Coniunctio. These two steps represent an important part within the alchemical process, especially within the confines of this comparison of the Artaudian theatrical model. The exclusion of Citrinitas as a separate phase is made up by its partial inclusion within the Albedo. The exact operational order of the Grand Oeuvre isn't necessarily the focus, instead, it should be perceived as a guide to the similarities shared between Alchemy and Artaud's methodology.

Method

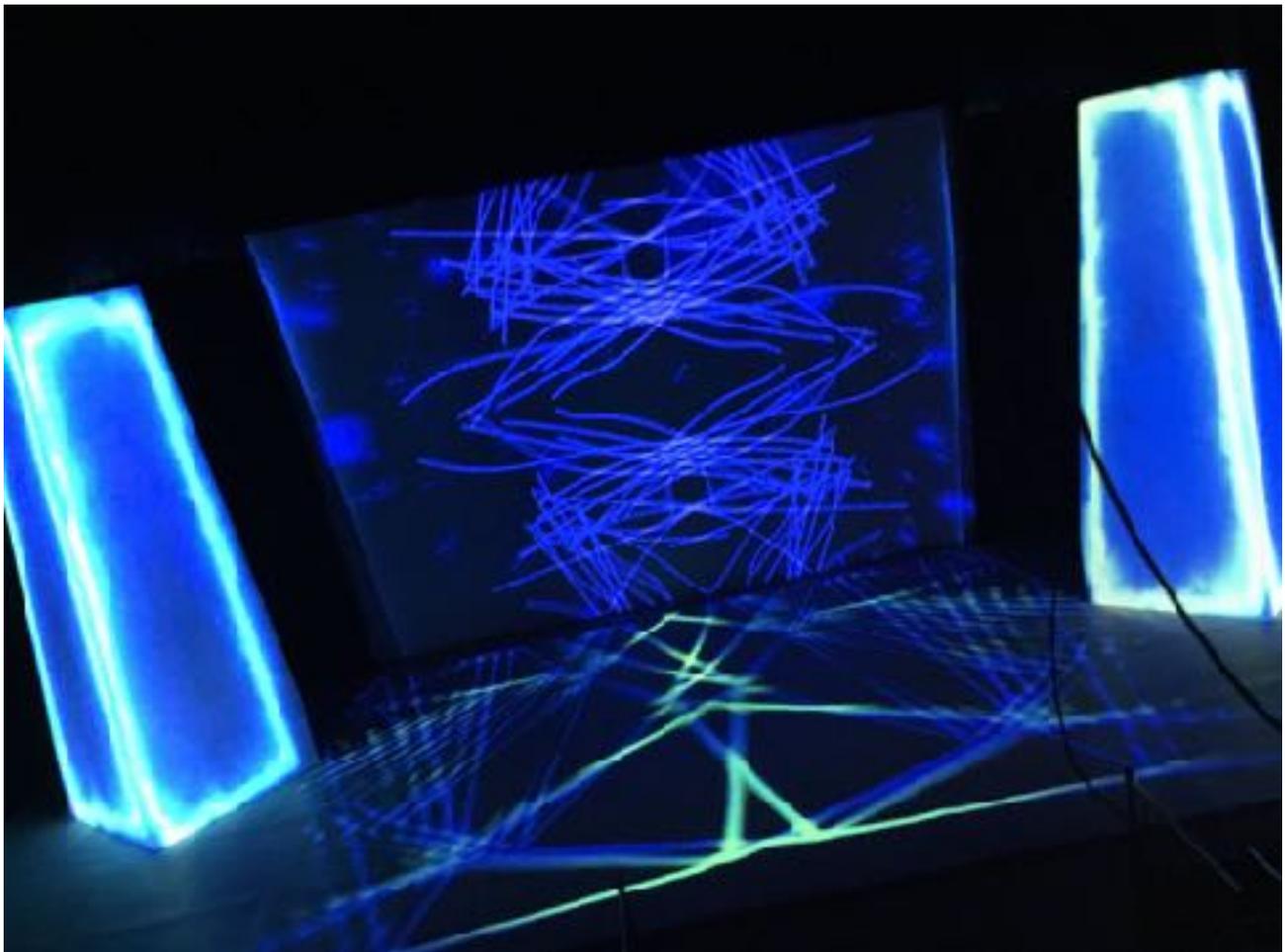
The first stage within this comparison between alchemical and Artaudian methodologies is the Solutio. The Solutio entails the separation of the base and noble elements within the Alchemist's laboratory. "The purpose of this operation was to recognise the parts that formed the whole in order to establish a proper hierarchy between base and noble elements". (Demaitre, 1972, 242) Within the Artaudian framework, Demaitre claims that this is represented by the separation of discursive language from the material language of the stage. This material language consists of

²⁵ Within the Jungian therapeutic framework the process of 'Individuation' is akin to an alchemical transformation in which the subject is placed as Alchemist.

"As Jung noted, for the genuine Alchemist the production of gold was not an end in itself but merely a symbol of a far more portentous transformation" (Demaitre, 1972, 250) 'Individuation' becomes a double for the alchemical process, with the creation of the Philosophers Stone signifying the completion of the journey.

²⁶ 'Cruelty' as perceived by Artaud is an unrelenting necessary force which is required to initiate change. Within the Alchemist's laboratory, the force which initiates change upon the material is the flame of the Alchemist. "For it seems to me creation, life itself, can only be defined by a kind of strictness, the fundamental cruelty guiding things towards their inexorable goal, whatever the cost." (Artaud, 1932, 74) 'Cruelty' guides Artaud's theatre towards its goal of reconciliation of duality, while the flame of the Alchemist guides the substance towards its final form, The Philosopher's Stone.

tangible scenographic elements, such as scenery, light, movement and architecture. Approaching my practice within the production *Eidos*, I created the show with this metaphorically Alchemical mindset. The production was elaborate; featuring physical scenic elements, multiple infrared cameras, various angles of projection and interactive control of the digital projection using Nintendo Wii remote controls. Within this scenography, two performers (Wolstenholme and Long) performed a choreographed sequence of movement. Inside this production, numerous visual elements were contributing my Artaudian vision encompassed within this work.



(Grimoldby, 2017, *Eidos Stage Design*)

The second step 'Conjunctio' marks the "recordation of the elements according to their hierarchy." (Demaitre, 1972, 243). Within the alchemical process this can be seen as the Alchemist selecting the elements they will first use within their work and appropriately preparing them for the heat of the flame. Inside of the Artaudian framework of performance, this process is marked by the arrangement of the scenography by 'The Producer'. Assuming the mantle of 'The Producer' within my production *Eidos*, I arranged the scenography of the performance with obelisks flanking the performance space. These structures were mapped with projection allowing them to simulate the effect of glowing lines of energy across them. The combination of projection technology and

physical set pieces metaphorically engages with the Coniunctio process as the coordination of scenic elements. Through the combination of effective projection technology and set design, the scenography of the performance truly excelled.

In isolation, the obelisks lacked any theatrical profundity within the performance, however when expertly lit they evoked a powerful and mystical quality. It is this quality which Artaud calls for within his stage design that I sought for. "Thus stage space will not only be measured by size or volume but from what one might term *a mysterious aspect*." (Artaud, 1971, 89) When considering the scenographic theories of Appia, it is worth noting the crucial role in which lighting played within his stage designs. Baugh states within *Theatre Performance and Technology*: "Appia rightly insisted that his scenography might only serve to energise a truly living space when lit with skill and artistry and when fully brought to life in performance." (Baugh, 2005, 57). Appia recognised that effective set design required powerful lighting and conversely effective lighting was dependent upon the stage that was being lit. Artaud noted that the stage languages used within performance and scenography ought to blend into one powerful image. "The overlapping of imagery and moves must culminate in a genuine physical language, no longer based on words but on signs formed through the combination of objects, silence, shouts and rhythms." (Artaud, 1971, 90) Within both theories of Artaud and Appia, we can see the common denominator of effectively combining mediums into one effective scenography, a system of thought I attempted to replicate within my practice. The obelisks presented within the stage design of *Eidos* would have lacked their intended mysterious and powerful aesthetic had they not been effectively lit through projection mapping.

Artaud wrote of the composition of his theatrical image stating:

Every show will contain physical, objective elements perceptible to all. Shouts, groans, apparitions, surprise, dramatic motions of all kinds, the magic beauty of the costumes modelled on certain ritualistic patterns, brilliant lighting... (Artaud, 1970, 66).

Artaud's intention appears to have been influenced by the Coniunctio process within the arrangement and organisation of these theatrical elements. Within my practice, I have embodied this metaphorical alchemy in the crafting of my scenographic design. Coniunctio and Solutio mark the theatrical preparation of this alchemically inspired Artaudian theatre.

The following stage of the alchemical operation is marked by the gentle heating of the initial material which culminates in the blackening or Negrido. The initial material within this operation is the culmination of these base and noble elements arranged from the Solutio and Coniunctio processes. A fundamental notion within this process of putrefaction is the alchemical ideology that



(Fergusson, 2017, *Eidos Obelisk Mapping*)

all nature must die before being renewed. “An apple, for example, has to putrefy before its seed can take root and produce more apples” (Hamilton, 1985) Hamilton also notes the key notion that this putrefaction takes place both upon material and spiritual level. “Just as material death is necessary for the material rebirth of things, so spiritual death is necessary for the spiritual rebirth of man.” (Hamilton, 1985) Within the practice of Alchemy the operation takes place on both esoteric and exoteric levels; similarly, Artaudian theatre operates upon a physical level, but “[...]aiming in the imaginary, mental field...” (Artaud, 1970, 34).

Once this stage of the process has been completed, the original form of the object has metaphorically ‘died’; all sense of previous self is lost within its transmutation, this Demaitre notes is a “necessary preamble for resurrection.” (Demaitre, 1972, 247). During this part of the alchemical process, the Artaudian notion of ‘Cruelty’ is engaged. Demaitre notes this; “As a means of destroying deep rooted ideas, certitudes, and convictions. Preamble to the awakening of the unconscious and sub-conscious contents of the psyche” (Demaitre, 1972, 242) Within the metaphorically alchemical confines of Artaud’s theatre, the audience is subjected to a

psychological annihilation, in which prior conceptions and cultural values of 'Carrion Man'²⁷ are disintegrated. This is entirely necessary for a 'resurrection' to take place, that is to say, a meeting of the metaphysical other, reconciliation of the conscious mind and the 'return' to the body.

"[...]the bright metal emerging from the conjunction of noble and base elements had to pass through a state of corruption, it had to turn into a black malodorous mass, before turning back to a 'glorious existence'" (Demaitre, 1972, 244)

Within my process, this Negrido phase was metaphorically linked to the placement of the performers upon the stage. Rather than performing alongside the scenography I intended to connect the performers to the space they inhabited, a desire that was shared by Appia. "For Appia there needed to be fusion between the actor and the performance space." (Butterworth and McKinney, 10, 2009) Appia's theatrical ideal was born from his rejection of the painted scenic backdrops or *trompe l'oeil*. Appia recognised that the performance of a body in front of this illusion of reality was a contradiction and sort to reconcile the two forms. "In fact, the principle of illusion obtained by painting on flat canvas and that obtained by the plastic and living body of the actor are in contradiction" (Beauchamp, 1989, 2) Within my practice I sort to reconcile the scenography and performance through the medium of infrared motion tracking projection. The use of motion tracking projection, as well as visuals responding to the performers actions helps blur the distinction between projection and performer. Performer Wolstenholme noted:

Sometimes while performing within this space it feels like you are swallowed up by the stage and projections. You lose your identity, but you sort of become part of the whole. I think it makes me almost insignificant at times. I'm almost lost inside of this intense experience. (Wolstenholme 2017).

This response is fascinating within the realms of the metaphorical Negrido Wolstenholme's identity has been displaced by the surrounding projection technology and stage design. It is a metaphorical 'death' of sorts in which Wolstenholme as an individual ceases to be, and becomes one with the scenography.

Negrigo becomes an alchemical double of Artaud's 'Plague'. Upon a physical comparison, the state of putrefaction inflicted upon the plague-ridden body follows a similar blackening and

²⁷ The term 'Carrion Man' is used with the utmost repugnance to signify Artaud's distaste towards contemporary theatre's obsession with personal and trivial pursuits. "All the topics detailed above stink of mankind, of materialistic temporary mankind, I might even say *carrion man*." (Artaud, 1970, 29)

reduction into vile necrotic ooze so to the conjunction of base and noble elements are reduced to a blackened mass. Both within Alchemy and Artaud's 'Plague' this destruction is a necessary state for the revelation of a reborn spirit and body. Within Alchemy this is the emergence of 'The Lunar Form'. Within 'The Plague' this is the awakening of the repressed unconscious animal form of humanity. As Artaud stated within *Theatre and Plague*; "It is at this point at which theatre establishes itself" (Artaud, 1970, 15) noting that during the most cataclysmic of events, the true human spirit shows its face. The quality of Plague is embodied within Wolstenholme's response: "I'm almost lost inside of this intense experience" (2017). Wolstenholme becomes part of a greater theatrical whole.

This following stage of the alchemical process is known as the Whitening or Albedo. This stage of The Great Work brings about an introspective awareness towards the very nature of being; this is the revelation of the Artaudian metaphysical principle. The practical accompaniment to this psychic operation is the Sublimatio of the matter, the vapour rising from the alembic vessel extracting the 'essence' of the substance. Hamilton notes that: "This is a metaphor for the soul rising from the confines of the rich psyche, with the extraction of the essence representing the soul at last becoming conscious of itself." (Hamilton, 1985). Within the Artaudian performance model, this is marked by the awakening of the unconscious, now that it has been liberated from the trivial demands of a 'Carrion Man' culture. This, in turn, marks the recognition of the metaphysical, the poetic profundity with which Artaud idolised within the Balinese performance.

If cruelty, in the Artaudian sense, is the theatrical counterpart of the alchemical *mortificatio*, the liberation of the unconscious that follows purification in Artaud's metaphysical theatre is the dramatic counterpart of the fourth stage of the *opus* known as *albedo*[...]
(Demaitre, 1972, 245)

Within a theatrical context, this metaphorically alchemical operation would act upon the spectators unconscious minds as it is "[...]awakened by the merciless effects of a 'theatre sans limites' begins to surge towards the conscious." (Demaitre, 1972, 245). Through the use of a 'theatre without limits' Demaitre supposes Artaud's theatrical model mirrors the awakening of unconscious repressed thoughts. Demaitre notes that the revelation is brought about deliberately by the 'Artifex' (skilled craftsman, smith, artificer etc). Within the context of the Artaudian drama, the Artifex is the alchemical double of 'The Producer'. The alchemical world which the Artifex would create is referred to as "A new reality has been produced that until then had lain dormant in the womb of matter." (Demaitre, 1972, 246). The role of Artaudian 'Producer' can be seen as that of Artifex, or indeed Alchemist within the drama. Within the practice referenced within this chapter I carry out the role of Artifex or Artaudian 'Producer' in revealing this "new reality".

The stage space for *Eidos* became a 'psychokinetic space', evolving alongside the drama according to my design as Artaudian 'Producer' or Artifex. The concept of the 'psychokinetic space' originates with the works of the pioneering scenographer Svoboda. Svoboda sort to create theatre spaces which evolved alongside the action of performance to; "be a kinetic place of performance, not in the historical sense of changing scenes to change locations, but a kinesis that will create and change the qualities of liminality within the environment of the stage." (Baugh, 2005, 87). The movement Svoboda utilised was not constrained with physical change, but also abstraction in the form of projection, sound and light. "None the less, Svoboda always considered movement of all kinds - both physical and atmospheric" (Baugh, 2005, 84) Within *Eidos* I sought to change the quality of the space performers' Long and Wolstenholme inhabited utilising abstract environments crafted through projection mapping. Each scene was marked by a striking colour scheme and visual texture attempting to evoke the ritualistic qualities Artaud describes within his experience ingesting Peyote.

Examining the contemporary practice of Chunky Move's *Mortal Engine* we can perceive a similar use of lighting technology to engender a 'psychokinetic space'. Creator Obarzanek describes the piece as "[...] Bio-fiction Evolution." (Obarzanek, 2015). The performance is continually lit through motion tracking projection programmed by software engineer Frieder Weiss. While the system of light obscures the identity of the performer, it blends them with the stage which creates an evocative image as the particles of light emerge. The body of the performer is rendered an amorphous shape on the stage skilfully weaving themselves into beautiful postures, their identity a mystery but from their form, the emergence of "semi autonomous particles" (Obarzanek 2015) ignites the stage. Obarzanek describes this aesthetic: "It gave a sense of something was emanating from the body. Seeing into someone's imagination". (Obarzanek 2015). Obarzanek's vision shares a striking semblance to the metaphorical qualities of *The Whitening*; with the emergence of a new quality of light after the annihilation of the human form into unknown shape. The Artaudian quality of: "A new reality has been produced [...]" (Demaire, 1972, 246) is apparent within the life gifted to these emerging particles of light.

The Albedo is the result of an alchemical awakening, which in turn prepares the next stage of the operation. "The liberation once accomplished the way is open for the junction of the conscious and the unconscious on the level of perfection where reality appears in its ultimate unity" (Demaitre 1972) As the vapours of the substance rise so begins the next stage of the alchemical process, the Yellowing or Citrinitas. This stage begins with the death of the lunar light of Albedo, the substance darkening. From this darkness emerges a new light, a solar light which "[...]we cannot see it as our inner sight is veiled and it appears as darkness" (Hamilton 1985). This light, therefore,

represents an entirely metaphysical quality outside of conventional sensory perception. Referring back to the discussion surrounding Artaud's metaphysics, Jamieson (2007) regarded this as exposure to the previously 'un-sensed'. Jamieson utilises Kantian philosophy (Jamieson, 2007, 28) to describe that which lies outside of our directly experienced reality. Jamieson postulates that exposure to this may result in a metaphysical experience. Within this alchemical process, a light beyond sensory experience has been achieved and appears as an almost direct parallel to the light of the Citrinitas. "It is a complete dying of the dualistic state of mind that perceives subject and object as separate." (Hamilton, 1985) Hamilton uses the schizophrenic mindset as analogue towards this state of being, stating that the individual struggles to objectively separate themselves from the experience. Indeed this resembles the objectives of the Balinese Theatre essay and a-priori The Theatre of Cruelty, in the intuitive lived experience of the drama rather than the objective observation. ²⁸

During the evaluation process of *Eidos* performer Long noted the effects of dancing within the digital scenography. "The process is intense like I've said before. But at the end of it, you feel like you're one with your 'Digital Double'. It's dancing with you. It's with you." (Long, 2017) Within this statement it appears that Long has grown accustomed to the experience of performing within this scenography and found a level of unity between herself as a performer and environment around her; this could be perceived as a metaphorical achievement of the Citrinitas. Long's sentiments indicate the process is arduous but unity can be achieved within this scenographic environment.

The alchemical process culminates in reddening or 'Rubedo'. The stage marks the return of the enlightened spirit of the substance (and Alchemist) into the body of the original matter being transmuted. Hamilton states this is the return of:

"[...]illuminated consciousness into the mind and body. In order for this to be achieved a flame of greater intensity must be applied bringing about the "coagulation of spirit and matter". Once this process has completed and the enlightened soul of the Alchemist is reunited with their body, this marks a state of spiritual completeness[...]" (Hamilton, 1984).

The spiritual journey of the Alchemist is mirrored by the exoteric generation of the Philosophers Stone, a symbolic representation of the psychic perfection attained by this Alchemy. The evaluation undertaken within this work represents a metaphorical 'Rubedo' in this instance. The metaphorical

²⁸As discussed when establishing Artaud's theatre, the reason for abandoning discursive language was to invite a more direct and profound response within his audience. "He hoped such a break from literary forms would interrupt intellectual responses to the theatre, devoid of emotion and 'life', and enable visceral experiences" (Jamieson, 2007, 18)

alchemy carried out within the practical exploration culminates with the creation of *Eidos*. “[...] this then is the philosopher's stone that the Alchemist has been seeking for. It is the grand culmination of the Great Work.” (Hamilton, 1984).

Hamilton explains this final stage of Alchemy within the psychotherapeutic setting represents the client overcoming their complexes and being able to implement their newfound understanding within life. Thus the individual ‘healed’ by this alchemical therapy has transmuted their psyche, overcome their troubles, and been reborn within their body. This can be seen within the theatrical counterpart of Artaudian performance; the audience and creator have reached a level of theatrical intensity, engaged with a metaphysical power, recognised ‘The Double’ and brought this gnosis back into their being. “Inside of its theatrical counterpart, we see this stage as marked by the unconscious mind merging with the conscious. Unity is achieved on the highest level of reality.” (Demaitre, 1972, 246) This is the climax of the Artaudian methodology Demaitre notes that this is the point at which Artaud’s theatre “accomplishes its sacral function” (247). This is within the debasement of the cultural values through theatrical intensity, the meeting of the metaphysical ‘other’ and the culmination of this new found knowledge being reunited within the waking mind.

If we are to present the alchemical method alongside Artaud’s notion of Cruelty, then a fascinating parallel can be drawn. “Death is cruelty, resurrection is cruelty, transfiguration is cruelty, for true death has no place in all the meanings of an enclosed circular world...” (Artaud, 1932, 74) All these aspects lie within the alchemical methodology indicating that Artaud’s ‘Cruelty’ is possibly inspired by the metaphor of alchemy.

Within this chapter, I have attempted to present Artaud’s methodology alongside my practice examined utilising the metaphor of Alchemy. I have followed the alchemical method in my process as a source of inspiration; a metaphor imbuing my own creative research. From this metaphorical approach I have placed myself as the Alchemist, or Artaudian ‘Producer’ engineering a complex piece of performance research. Interviews conducted with performers Long and Wolstenholme have yielded fascinating insight into the Artaudian nature of the performance as well as supporting the metaphor of Alchemy. While not a literal system being adhered to within my practice, it is fascinating to note that experiences shared by the performers resemble the phases of the alchemical process.

Examining the theories of Svoboda is a useful exercise, Svoboda was gifted the technology and resources which Artaud desired for his Theatre of Cruelty. With these tools Svoboda sort to create a *psychokinetic* space, a scenography in which the emotional movement of the drama would be reflected within the physical and emotional movement of his stage designs. Within my practice this

has been reflected in my use of projection as a medium to generate a performance space which evolves alongside the drama. By investigating the works of Chunky Move we are provided with a contemporary practice which can be explored alongside my research. Obarzanek's thoughts regarding *Glow* and *Mortal Engine* share an evocative quality reminiscent of the alchemical process.

The use of projection mapping to bring to life the scenery within *Eidos* was an effective realisation of the theories of Appia; "[...] to energise a truly living space when lit with skill and artistry and when fully brought to life in performance." (Baugh, 2005, 57) Through the effective combination of lighting and scenery, I effectively evoked the ritualistic aesthetic central to the stage design and inspiration of *Eidos*. "...the idea that there should be a necessary and seamless integration between dramatic intention and its physical realisation as a *mise en scène*" (Baugh 2005 103).

Throughout this analysis a question is raised, was Artaud's methodology a direct mirror of the alchemical method, or are these similarities coincidental? Artaud's references to Alchemy are fleeting, the greatest of references are made within the shortest of his essays. However, it is clear from Artaud's sentiments that he held high esteem for the work of the Alchemist. Why then did Artaud fail to include any reference to the alchemical work itself being an essential part of his theatrical method? Perhaps a volume of Artaud's work has been lost or omitted? Demaitre suggests that Artaud may have been "[...] responding to the same subconscious psychological stimuli that prompted the Alchemist to recreate primal unity in the Philosopher's Stone'." (Demaitre, 1972, 248). Certainly, Demaitre's suggestion ignites the imagination of the reader of Artaud's work and kindles the notion of a metaphysical drive surrounding both the Alchemist and Artaud. However, I believe that a quintessentially Artaudian principle lies within this mystery. Jamieson (2007,13) notes that Artaud's works were never meant as instruction manuals, direct conveyers of meaning with a set outcome. Perhaps *On Alchemist's Theatre* should be seen as a guiding essay which invites the reader to consider first the similarities of alchemical philosophy and theatre. Once the reader has seen there exists a similarity, they are presented with the chance to delve deeper into the theatrical parallels between the two subject matters.

A true understanding of the inspiration Alchemy had upon Artaud is impossible without the reader first applying themselves to their study of the subject of Alchemy, and noting, practising and living the theories of Artaud. Once again I must return to the idea of exploring Artaud through the notion of tacit knowledge. One reading of *The Theatre and Its Double* may serve to kindle the imagination of theatrical possibility, however to begin to understand, and one must apply these theories and practice them. Through a closer study of the alchemical method, I believe I have determined the undeniable influence Alchemy must have had upon Artaud. The reader of Artaud's work stands as

a neophyte and must apply themselves diligently (as the Alchemist) with further reading and practice to transmute their understanding of Artaud's theatre. Whoever's supposition is correct within this understanding, I believe the Alchemy of Artaud's theatre is an certain and highly influential aspect of his theories.

In trying to attain his goal, the Alchemist used the still; Artaud chose the theatre for an instrument of salvation. The quests were identical. The difference between the god of the Alchemists and Artaud's "equilibre supreme" was merely a matter of terminology. (Demaitre, 1972, 250)

The 'Producer' represents the theatrical Alchemist or Artifex of the stage. Artaud placed such a high value on the role of 'The Producer' within his theatre that surely it is they who should be in control of the theatrical laboratory. Returning to the initial two stages of the alchemical process then, 'The Producer' is faced with the Solutio, that is the dissolution of the (theatrical) materials that they will use. This dissolution enables 'The Producer' to break his theatre into separate stage elements as Artaud identified the 'higher' theatrical forms (light, gesture, space) from the 'base' forms such as discursive language. Once this has been achieved 'The Producer' engages with the alchemical process of Coniunctio, that is to say, the arrangement of these isolated stage languages into a form that enables the beginning of the reactive alchemical process. This scenographic process within the Artaudian methodology is the arrangement and organisation of stage elements to engineer a performance of metaphysical profundity. Now my attention turns towards my specific research tool of 'The Digital Double', exploring how it fits within the metaphor of Alchemy and determine its Artaudian theatrical value.

Chapter Four: Conceiving the Digital Double as an Artaudian Stage Language

In the previous chapter, the focus was on establishing the methodology of Artaud as alchemically inspired and, it was concluded that numerous similarities were shared between Artaud's theatre and Alchemy. This discussion was informed through an examination of my practice in which I assumed the mantle of Artaudian 'Producer'. As I turn my attention to applying this Artaudian alchemical paradigm to more specific aspects of my research process, I may introduce the phenomenon of 'The Digital Double'. The focus of this chapter shall be to elucidate the Artaudian nature of 'The Digital Double'. I shall be foregrounding my practice alongside the work of other practitioners contextualised through Artaudian and scenographic theory. I will draw upon Alchemy as an evocative metaphor which has inspired me throughout the research process.

Dixon's (2007) initial commentary surrounding the realisation of Artaud's 'Double' within the realms of the digital technology shall be the first focus of this chapter. In addition, I shall discuss the

'healing' qualities of this stage phenomena in light of the mysterious lineage of the Double. I shall explore the examples presented by Dixon and offer further commentary on the Artaudian application of these individual instances of 'The Digital Double'.

While I may utilise the taxonomy presented by Dixon, it is worth establishing a working definition of 'The Digital Double'. This is somewhat challenging as 'The Digital Double' is an extremely varied and capricious entity. It may be prudent therefore to curtail this definition of 'The Digital Double' to its deployment within the practical research of this thesis. Suffice to say then, 'The Digital Double' is a digitally born presence which shares a quality of similarity between its physical counterpart. This may be in its aesthetic similarity or kinetic character. I have chosen the term 'digitally born presence' as 'The Digital Double' is not limited to a purely aesthetically driven duality and may exist as a sonic entity (Ploeger, 2010). Within the context of this study 'The Digital Double' is generated through the mediation of an infrared silhouette of a performer which exists simultaneously alongside them. As alterations are made to this silhouette, the nature and classification of 'The Digital Double', and therefore its Artaudian application evolve.

Dixon claims that: "The notion of the double has been a particularly potent concept since the publication of Antonin Artaud's *Theatre and Its Double*" (Dixon, 2007, 241). Within Artaud's theatre, The Double evokes an idea of a transcendental aspect in performance. If I am to explore this thought, then performance must either evoke or contain within it an aspect of duality. This duality Dixon claims has been visualised through digital performance through the simultaneous presence of performer and mediated form. Artaud's noted the similarity between theatre and Alchemy was within their aims "in a higher imaginary field" (Artaud, 1974, 34). Performance and Alchemy operate upon both physical and metaphysical levels and similarly produce a physical and metaphysical outcome. Within this model 'The Digital Double' can be conceived as analogous to the metaphysical.

Dixon traces the notion of the 'second self', The Double which exists within many ancient cultures. As we have discussed previously, Artaud held a great deal of admiration for the Tarahumara and so Dixon's discussion of the shamanic nature of the 'second self' becomes relevant to the nature of 'The Digital Double' as Artaudian stage language. Dixon notes the magical quality of The Double, regarding it as: "[...]an alternate and simultaneous second body for the performing subject." and also a vessel of healing in "[...]relation to the ancient laws of imitative and homeopathic magic." (Dixon, 2007, 245) If 'The Digital Double' shares this capacity as the spiritual Double of these cultures, then its "homeopathic" properties can be compared to the cleansing power Artaud believed theatre could possess, if it was able to restore its lost language (Artaud, 1970, 63).

In addition, Dixon sites specific performances which literalise directions of Artaud (through the use of the digital technology) for instance “[...]like those tortured at the stake signalling through the flames” (Dixon, 2007, 242) within the works of 4D arts ‘*Anima 2002*’. It is worth noting that through the deployment of contemporary stage technology the limitations of visualisation have been somewhat lifted. With greater ease is the audience able to confront that which was previously thought impossible. However my understanding of the theatre of Artaud is not as a literal manifestation of his language, but a development of his intention. I feel emphasis should not be placed on a literal depiction of his imagery, but instead upon the creation of the atmosphere and visceral effect he wished to achieve. Dixon provides three key links to the Artaudian nature of ‘The Digital Double’; the duality of performance being made manifest, the realisation of the abstract directions of Artaud’s text, and the homeopathic quality of its presence. I shall now explore the taxonomy which Dixon offers for ‘The Digital Double’.

Dixon’s Taxonomy

Dixon presents a taxonomy of ‘Digital Doubles’ split into four categories. Within his taxonomy, Dixon accompanies these particular doubles with practical case studies and explores their presence. These doubles are; the double as ‘Reflection’, the double as ‘Alter-Ego’, the double as ‘Spiritual Emanation’, and ‘The Digital Double’ as ‘Manipulable Mannequin’. (Dixon, 2007, 245) It is also important to note that he stresses the lucidity of these definitions and that The Double rarely exists within a strict categorisation and often flits between multiple aspects of each. This analysis of Dixon’s taxonomy shall be presented alongside consideration of the application of ‘The Digital Double’ as an Artaudian stage language.

Mirror

When considering ‘The Digital Double’ as a ‘Mirror’, Dixon’s primary focus is the myth of Narcissus, the Greek hero who met her peril through a fascination with her reflection. Dixon explores these notions through the performance of Blast Theory’s *10 Backwards* (1999) in which the main character ‘Nicky’ sits in front of her ‘Digital Double’, repeating the pre-recorded actions of her eating cereal. Dixon notes how the relationship between her and her ‘Digital Double’ links “past, present, and future” (Dixon, 2007, 246). Within the performance, Nicky is progressively becoming more synced up between her actions on stage and her previously recorded ‘Digital Double’. Blast Theory blurs the lines between live and previously recorded action demonstrating the lucidity of memory; they regard it as: “A play about time travel and déjà vu seen through the unreliable lens of digital video.” (Blast Theory 2008). This deployment of technology speaks of the ‘Carrion Man’ culture humanity has descended into and offers a subjective view of its ludicrous nature.

“The blurs, judders and pixellations of digital video fascinated us. These artefacts provided a rich metaphor for the ways in which technology (and art) struggles to capture reality” (Blast theory n.d.)

Within *10 Backwards*, Blast Theory have engineered a stage language utilising this level of familiar uncertainty to initiate a feeling of unease.

The 'Digital Double's' deployed with this research study notably differs from those of Blast Theory's *10 Backwards* and engage with the latter three definitions of Dixon's taxonomy. I have omitted the Digital Double as 'Mirror' in favour of the other definitions as I believe they better fit the alchemically inspired aspects of Artaud's theories and occurred more frequently during practice.

Spiritual Emanation

Exploring the works of Suzan Kozel and her motion responsive ground projection within the performance *Contours* (1997) Dixon compares the halo surrounding the performer to Christian religious art of Hippolyte Baraduc (1850-1909) and Louis Darget (1847-1921) “purportedly showing the paranormal phenomena of etheric spirits and ectoplasm emanating from the bodies of clairvoyants.” (Dixon, 2007, 254). 'The Digital Double' as 'Spiritual Emanation' represents an otherworldly quality or aspect of divine light emanating from within. “ 'The Digital Double' as 'spiritual emanation' symbolises a mystical conception of the virtual body, performing a projection of the transcendent self of the soul.” (Dixon, 2007, 269).



(Fergusson, 2017 *A Shadow of Grace*)

Within *A Shadow of Grace*, the solo performer Wolstenholme is lit continually through her 'Digital Double' as 'Spiritual Emanation'. The Digital Double as 'Spiritual Emanation' is generated through the feed of an infrared camera. The camera is setup directly underneath the projector to ensure the camera's image is aligned to the output of the projector. A still image of the empty stage is captured through the software *Isadora*. This image is subtracted from the live feed resulting in a 'difference based track'. This video feed is blurred and coloured to achieve the desired aesthetic. The result of this operation is that any element moving across the stage will be lit leaving the rest of the stage in darkness. This technical operation formed the metaphorical alchemical quintessence²⁹ of my operation; a starting point necessary for further 'Digital Doubles' to be developed.

The 'Digital Double as 'Spiritual Emanation' has a profound aesthetic both for audience and performer. Wolstenholme describes this experience:

It's a really weird experience, knowing the light is coming from where you stand. It makes you seem like you're more important, almost angelic I guess. It's more than just a light because the light comes from within me. I shape the light around me in an active way. (Wolstenholme, 2017).

Wolstenholme's comments offer an insight into the experience of being the subject of this 'The Digital Double'. As Dixon noted the nature of 'The Digital Double' as 'Spiritual Emanation' is similar to the "clairvoyant light" of religious artwork, Wolstenholme regarding the light as "angelic" therefore seems to be an affirmation of its similarities.

The quality of light and prominence of the performer's shadow within this 'Digital Double' is evocative of Appia's concept 'Active Light'. Appia distinguished two forms of lighting within his scenographic theories; 'Active Light' and 'Diffused Light'. Appia's intended to utilise 'Diffused Light' as a general cover of lighting across the stage. 'Active Light' would be employed through the use of high intensity and steeply angled mobile lighting units. (Butterworth and Mckinney, 2007, 14-15) These lighting fixtures would cast striking shadows across the stage and the performer. Palmer regards Appia's innovations stating: "Appia aimed to liberate the entire stage to become one that no longer offered a static image to be illuminated but rather a fluid space choreographed through

²⁹ 'The Digital Double' as 'Spiritual Emanation' is one of the most basic forms of programming via the software *Isadora*. I compare this phenomenon to the metaphor of alchemical 'Quintessence', as the 'Quintessence' is the vital energy required within Alchemy for transmutation to occur. Similarly, the 'Spiritual Emanation' is required for any of my more varied guises of 'Digital Double' to be generated.

light and shadow” (Palmer, 2005). Through the use of ‘The Digital Double’ as ‘Spiritual Emanation’, we can perceive an aspect of this ‘Active Light’ in the creation of a dynamic space crafted through light and shadow. ‘The Digital Double’ as ‘Spiritual Emanation’ evokes a striking and expressive aspect to performance similar to Appia’s desire for lighting to convey profound levels of human expression. Baugh regards Appia’s theatrical pursuit in the use of lighting stating: “Such a conception of lighting would operate beyond illumination, beyond visibility, or even beyond an accompaniment to the drama. Appia conceived of stage lighting as being capable of the deepest and most profound human expression[...].” (Baugh, 2005, 104).



(Fergusson 2017 *A Shadow of Grace*)

Dixon considers the theories of Roy Ascott, who believes that technology is a means of transcendence and a tool for exploring consciousness. Ascott proposes that the digital ‘Double Vision’ mirrors a model of conscious exploration similar to that of shamanic tradition. Ascott, in particular, cites the use of the sacred hallucinogenic plant Ayahuasca.

By double consciousness I mean the state of being which gives access, at one and the same time, to two distinctly different fields of experience. In classical anthropological terms this is to describe the shamanic "trance" in which the shaman is both in the world and at the

same time navigating the outermost limits of other worlds, psychic spaces to which only those prepared by physical ritual and mental discipline, aided often by plant "technology," are granted access. (Ascott, 2003, 357)



(Weiss, 2012, *Glow*)

Ascott believes that through the use of digital and plant based technology we are able to access two distinctly different realities, virtual and physical. We access these two realities through our conceptual technological framework (in this instance the use of 'The Digital Double') but can see this technology as a Western counterpart to the shamanic sacrament of Ayahuasca.

Ascott's proposal is fascinating and should be considered alongside Artaud's appreciation of the theatricality of the Peyote Ritual of the Tarahumara.³⁰ Both Artaud and Ascott recognise that the altered state resulting from both Ayahuasca and Peyote allowed for the theatrical exploration of consciousness. As the reader may recall, Jamieson regards Artaud's theatrical ideal straddling the point of life and death.

³⁰ Artaud was enamoured by both the world view of the Tarahumara and their choice of ritualistic activity. He wrote of their Peyote Ritual: "Absolute, Eternity, Infinite—still exists in this race of old Indians who say they have received the Sun in order to transmit it to the deserving, and who in the Rites of Ciguri have preserved the organic gate of that ordeal by which our being has rejected, knows that it is connected with that place beyond bodily perceptions where the Heart of the Divine burns to summon us." (Artaud, 1976, 72)

He described these deaths as out of body experiences, transgressing beyond his material flesh and for a short time, occupying the metaphysical realm. Such images reoccur throughout his work and serve as a reminder of his belief that material corporeality is not an absolute requirement for existence. (Jamieson, 2007, 29)

Perhaps then I may consider the role of 'The Digital Double' as 'Spiritual Emanation' as a 'Double Vision' of life and death or physical and metaphysical. 'The Digital Double' as 'Spiritual Emanation' engenders a visualisation of the metaphysical reality simultaneously existing alongside the physical. Within my practice of *A Shadow of Grace* Wolstenholme is granted an angelic visage, her Digital Double serving as a visualisation of her 'angelic' light. In this regard, the 'Spiritual Emanation' visualises Ascott's model of plant and computer-based technologies conferring a state of 'Double Vision'.

Within Frieder Weiss and Gideon Obazank's practice of *Glow* we can perceive highly effective deployment of 'The Digital Double' as 'Spiritual Emanation'. The performance takes place in an intimate and secluded setting in which the audience seated around the performer who moves upon the flat surface of the projection. The performer is tracked continually through infrared cameras and illuminated via their 'Spiritual Emanation'. Within interview, Weiss notes: "[...]the projection surface is very close to the performer, so it's about a visual integration, the video is not in competition with the performance. That's very important." (Weiss, 2016). This visual integration of performer and scenography appears as a similar realisation of Appia's concept of lights power within performance. When discussing the aesthetic progression of *Glow* Weiss regards the show stating:

The first half is like formal studies, it's about geometric shapes almost like squares and circles. But then it becomes a lot more emotional, when we enter the range of shadows and delays and it's becoming something mythical almost. (Weiss, 2016).

The aesthetic progression of *Glow* culminates in an aspect reminiscent of Artaud's call for the evocation of the metaphysical within his writings: "And both the upper and lower strata of the mind will play their part. The reality of the imagination and dreams will appear on a par with life." (Artaud, 1974, 89)

Within both *Glow* and *A Shadow of Grace* 'The Digital Double' as 'Spiritual Emanation' engage with the metaphysical preoccupation of Artaud's writing. The clairvoyant halo which Dixon compares the 'Spiritual Emanation' to is a representation of the higher self or 'soul' of the performer. Wolstenholme within *A Shadow of Grace* describes the effect as angelic, and Weiss notes the

effects confers upon the drama an almost mythical status. Both instances of 'Spiritual Emanation' make manifest the lighting theories of Appia in the prominence of the shadow and the depiction of profound and emotional concepts.

Alter-Ego



(Lemieux Pilon 4d Art, 2011, *Anima*)

Dixon introduces his second category of 'Digital Double' as 'Alter Ego' which "coexists with the live performance but is not directly watched and acknowledged by her, or where the double undertakes asynchronous activity, or presents another side or visual embodiment of a character" (Dixon, 2007, 250).

Within his discussion of the 'Alter Ego', Dixon focusses upon the two personas with which this figure may take; that of a beacon of light, or a vessel of shadows. Dixon focusses his exploration upon the work of 4D Art citing their production of *Anima* (2002). Within this production through the use of carefully placed mirrors a holographic projection with a three-dimensional quality, interacts and performs alongside its physical counterpart. This case study becomes all the more fascinating within the realms of Artaudian application when its narrative influences are considered. *Anima* (2002) explores the schism of intellectual and emotional reasoning, influenced by the work of Desmond Morris author of *The Naked Ape* (1967).

Morris' social analysis is examined in terms of the themes of soul searching, interpersonal relations and up rootedness. These juxtapositions illustrate the feeling of alienation resulting from our increasingly disembodied interaction with each other. (Lemieux Pilon, 2017)

Of particular interest to Dixon is the duet between performer and his 'Alter Ego', in which the two violently, yet gracefully, fight each other. The conflict between man and his digital 'Alter Ego' can be perceived as canalisation of the turbulence between emotional and intellectual reasoning. The performance engages with the Artaudian notion of the bestial nature of humanity; this is revealed through the cleansing power of an expressive theatrical language, perceived here as 'The Digital Double'.³¹ "The clash between the real and the virtual brings out other dichotomies: those between body and soul, the biological and the technological, the present and the past, wakefulness and dreams." (Lemieux Pilon, 2017)



(Grimoldby, 2016, *A Shadow Of Grace*)

Within my practice *A Shadow Of Grace* 'The Digital Double' as 'Alter Ego' was used in order to deepen the dramatic theme of self discovery. During the latter half of the production the stage erupts into a swirling vortex of blue light, Wolstenholme's 'Digital Double' appears as a separate entity copying her motions.

³¹ My formation of the Artaudian bestial nature is taken from *Theatre and Plague*. "The remaining survivors go berserk; the virtuous an obedient son kills his father the continent sodomize their kin..." (Artaud, 1970, 15)

It changes the dynamic within performance. When 'The Double' is used to illuminate me, it's like it's just coming from within. But when 'The Double' is flipped and performing alongside me, I feel like it's another figure, or a shadow of myself. It's mysterious . It's almost like a conversation. A conversation between me and a deeper part of myself. (Wolstenholme 2017)

The separation of 'Digital Double' from 'Emanation' to 'Alter Ego' had a profound effect upon the performers experience, changing the dynamic and evoking a conversation with "[...] a deeper part of myself."

The idea of the simultaneous presence of performer and mediated self forms an active embodiment of the theories of Robert Edmond Jones (1887-1954). Jones sort to create scenographies which evoked an emotional response, pursuing an atmosphere for performance. "In contradistinction to his contemporaries, Jones perceived the setting as an atmosphere that physically and emotionally reinforced the action and contributed to the mood of the play." (Sweet, 1981, 59) Jones believed that through the combination of film and performance that both subjective inner and objective outer worlds would be revealed resulting in a total image. Jones writes: "In the simultaneous use of the living actor and the talking picture in the theatre therein lies a wholly new theatrical art, whose possibilities are as infinite as those of speech itself." (Jones, 2004, 15-16).

Jones's theories form some of the earliest approximations of multimedia theatre of the 20th century (McKinney and Butterworth, 2009, 53). This revelation of the inner and outer world reconciled within one image appears as a true engagement of the Artaudian ethos, utilising scenic elements to activate a metaphysical quality within performance. Jones wrote of this metaphysical profundity which projection if used correctly could explore: "[...] man's inner life, in the unexpressed and hitherto inexpressible depths of the self." (Jones, 2004, 7).

The simultaneous presence of Wolstenholme and her 'Digital Double' as 'Alter Ego' enabled a conversation between her physical form and her 'metaphysical self'. Jones wrote of the exploration of two worlds within performance stating:

Some new playwright will presently set a motion picture screen on the stage above and behind his actors and will reveal simultaneously the two worlds of the conscious and the unconscious which together make up the world we live in the outer world and the inner world, the objective world of actuality and the subjective world of motive. (Jones, 2004,17).

Jones theorised that the combination of projected imagery and physical performance would allow for the exploration of inner and outer worlds. Artaud similarly called for his theatre to reveal a metaphysical aspect within performance: "In our present degenerative state, metaphysics must be made to enter the mind through the body." (Artaud, 1971, 70). Artaud sought what Jones believed was capable within the use of film in theatre. My practice aimed to place both performer and 'Digital Double' as symbiotic partners pursuing a revelation of the metaphysical. This was a conversation between performer and a depiction of their 'higher self'. This depiction of 'The Digital Double' as 'Alter Ego' demonstrates the digital entity representing a beacon of light, a figure alluding towards the metaphysical within the performer. The stage image consists of two halves of a single entity moving alongside each other. Within my practice, 'The Digital Double' as 'Alter Ego' forms a beacon of light, whereas within Anima 'The Digital Double' is a creature of shadows.

In a similar approach, 'The Digital Double' as 'Alter Ego' was deployed within Rosetta as a vision of shadow. This 'Digital Double' was adjusted both in scale and position to become a looming figure of distorted black light, merging between displaced patterns of projection to an ominous amorphous dark creature. This 'Digital Double' served the function of presenting a hidden darkness within the performer. Through its depiction, I was attempting to evoke the Alchemical phase of The Negrado.

This 'Double' is very powerful. It's showing what's inside. Another layer inside of me which is revealed. This layer is darker, much darker. And 'The Double' shows the inside of that.

(Virkutyte 2017)

The Negrado within Alchemy is marked by the blackening of the substance, its 'death' and an emergence of a new form. This phase of the alchemical process is evocative of the Artaudian notion of 'Cruelty'; this 'Cruelty' is a revelation of a truth which we (Western culture) would rather not face. As Artaud wrote within *No More Masterpieces*: "We are not free and the sky can still fall on our heads". (Artaud, 1970, 57). Virkutyte's comments indicate that through the use of the 'Digital Double' an additional unsettling aspect of the performance is revealed. The layer revealed through the 'Alter Ego' is powerful and disconcerting.

To help illustrate the similarities that tie this thematic deployment of 'The Digital Double' to Artaud's 'Cruelty', I shall consider Jung and the facing of 'The Shadow'. 'The Shadow' represents the aspects of the unconscious mind which we have chosen to repress or would rather not face.



(Dainius, 2018, *Rosetta*)

The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognising the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. (Jung, 1961, para 14)

Jung believed that for process of 'Individuation' to take place that one would first have to face their 'Shadow'. Jung proposed a psychological Alchemy to transform the mind of the individual into alchemical gold. Within this model, the alchemical gold is represented by the completion of the 'Individuation' process. (Hamilton 1985) A necessary part of that process, however, was an alchemical putrefaction, destruction of the inhibitions holding back 'The Shadow' for it to be made visible. "This act is the essential condition for any kind of self knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule meets with considerable resistance." (Jung, 1968, para 14) The 'Alter Ego' serves in the position of 'The Shadow' in the revelation of the repressed, hidden beast inside of us all. The revelation of 'The Shadow' in this instance is an analogue towards the principle of Artaudian 'Cruelty' in bringing forth of the darker side of our humanity. This 'Cruelty' lies not in bloodshed or torture but within a revelation of both dark and light sides of our being. Artaud regards this cruelty stating:

Cruelty connects things together, the different stages of creation are formed by it. Good is always an external façade, but the inner façade is evil. Evil will eventually be reduced, but

only at the final moment, when all forms are on the point of returning to chaos. (Artaud, 1974, 74)

Within the definition of 'The Digital Double' as 'Alter Ego', we perceive three aspects of Artaudian theatre. The 'Digital Double' within *A Shadow of Grace* was depicted as an aspirational beacon of light, a metaphysical figure performing alongside Wolstenholme conversing with her. *Anima* utilised the 'Alter Ego' to display the conflict between rational and bestial aspects of humanity. Within *Rosetta* 'The Digital Double' as 'Alter Ego' was a creature of shadow revealing the "inner façade" of evil necessary within the 'Cruelty' Artaud wished to pursue within his theatre. In all of these examples, the recurring theories of Robert Edmond Jones are notable. It is through the simultaneous presence of both physical and digital forms which gives rise to this plethora of thematic expression and Artaudian theatricality within performance.

Manipulable Mannequin

Dixon's final classification engages with the notion of 'The Digital Double' as a 'Manipulable Mannequin', exploring the perception of The Double existing in cyberspace as an avatar. Interestingly Dixon notes the similarities between the 'Manipulable Mannequin' and Artaud's stage language within the use of 'giant stage mannequins':

Artaud's calls for the use of giant stage mannequins in *The Theatre and its Double* have thus been answered in a myriad of ways within digital performance, from avatars and robots to virtual dancers, to the reduction of the live human body itself to a puppet, manipulated by audience at a distance. (Dixon, 2007, 270)

The 'Manipulable Mannequin' is a loose and flexible definition for 'The Digital Double'. In this chapter I shall focus upon the aspect of the 'Manipulable Mannequin' as a "[...] reduction of the live human body itself to a puppet...". (Dixon, 2007, 270)

The manipulable mannequin, the most common of all computer doubles, plays myriad dramatic roles, as a conceptual template, as a replacement body, and as the body of a synthetic being. (Dixon, 2007, 269)

A unique exploration of this concept of 'The Digital Double' as 'Manipulable Mannequin' as a 'conceptual template' was deployed during the production of *Eidos*. Wolstenholme was outfitted with a Wii Remote mounted upon her wrist. The pitch data of this Wii Remote was converted into OSC messages read by software *Isadora*. This data was used to control the position of a

previously rendered ink drop animation. As Wolstenholme's hand descended, the ink would flow around her. A genuine partnership between Wolstenholme and her 'Manipulable Mannequin' was formed.

For me, this was the most powerful interaction within the show. The interaction between the ink and my hands position was so synchronised, it really felt like I was pulling the ink myself. For me, this elevates my position as a performer. I have this dark power. It's kind of creepy but beautiful at the same time. (Wolstenholme 2017)

'The Digital Double' as 'Manipulable Mannequin' has blended both imagery and movement. Artaud called for a symbiosis between the two elements when he stated:

In addition to the greatest possible number of moves in a given time, the greatest possible amount of physical imagery and meaning must be combined with these moves. The moves and imagery used will not exist solely to please the eye and ear, but more profitably to please the intimate self, the mind. (Artaud, 1970, 89)



(Fergusson, 2017, *Eidos Ink Drop*)

My intention within this blending of projected image and performers movement was a revelation of the conflict between light and dark. As Artaud writes, the union of movement and imagery cannot be purely based upon aesthetics: “[...] but more profitably to please the intimate self, the mind.” (Artaud, 1970, 89). I attempted to demonstrate that Wolstenholme’s actions were a balance between light and darkness and that while her ‘Digital Double’ throughout the performance was a figure of light that it could also be a conceptual template shrouded in darkness. This had a profound effect both upon myself as Artaudian ‘Producer’ and the performer Wolstenholme. Artaud’s call for his language to be: “[...] a pure, unworldly feeling, a true mental process modelled on the gestures of life itself. (Artaud, 1970, 82) was my primary inspiration for this relationship. Wolstenholme’s sentiments indicate that this ‘Manipulable Mannequin’ was an effective embodiment of this concept. “[...] I have this dark power. It’s kind of creepy but beautiful at the same time.” (Wolstenholme, 2017)

A different example of ‘The Digital Double’ as ‘Manipulable Mannequin’ can be seen in the use of particle systems as a “conceptual template” for the body. Klaus Obermaier’s work demonstrates a close relationship between performer and technology. Within *Apparition* 2004 I believe Obermaier best exemplifies this synergy, through the use of digital systems as conceptual templates for the human body.

The objective was to create an interactive system that was something more than an extension of the performer, rather its partner. There are three fundamental parameters in the interaction with dancers: the proximity, the velocity and the size of the movement. (Obermaier, 2013)

Obermaier utilises this data to produce impressively dynamic particle systems which gravitate towards the performer. Obermaier’s particles present themselves as a suitable candidate for ‘The Digital Double’ as ‘Manipulable Mannequin’. Within this ‘Digital Double’ the kinetic quality of the performer is inherited, and translated into an abstract system of light; while aesthetically they are different, they are undoubtedly related. There is a duality within this aesthetic between performer and ‘Digital Double’ however the duality coalesces into a singular image. Obermaier describes this process: “I’m not adding something. I want to make a complete, whole of it.” (Obermaier 2013). In this manner Obermaier adheres to the Artaudian role of ‘Producer’, orchestrating multiple stage languages into one total image.

Obermaier’s particle systems operate as ‘partners’ within his performance, whereas the ink-drop effect utilised within *Eidos* acts as an extension of Wolstenholme’s action reflecting the conflict between light and dark within her performance. Both ‘Manipulable Mannequins’ operate via

inherited parameters from the performers' movements and actions and are realised aesthetically different but share a kinetic duality. Both 'Digital Doubles' can be perceived as an aspect of the "cosmic content" of Artaud's Dramas with which he idolises within the Balinese performance: "These ideas on Creation, Growth and Chaos are all of a cosmic order, giving us an initial idea of a field now completely alien to theatre" (Artaud, 1970, 64). The depiction of movement in such a chaotic and expressive manner is a manifestation of the energy surrounding the body as it moves through space. 'The Digital Double', when acting as a conceptual template for movement, allows the revelation of such energy.



(Obermaier, 2004, *Apparition*)

In a similar aesthetic to the work of Obermaier, the performance *Rosetta* featured a 'Manipulable Mannequin' rendered as a dynamic particle system. The system was programmed within *Quartz Composer* which allowed for complex particle behaviours including; flocking, gravitational effect and 3D purloin noise. These effects generated a life-like quality to the particle system, similar to the concept of "semi-autonomous particles" discussed by Obarzanek (2015) in the previous chapter. These particles would emit from performer Virkutyte as she moved across the stage. The use of these particles within *Rosetta* occurred during the climax of the performance. It was my intention as Artaudian 'Producer' to show a metaphorical 'Albedo' or emergence of a metaphysical light during this moment. It was noted that during this pivotal moment within the production that the performer experienced a moment of metaphysical intensity.

Virkutyté: I felt the third space, within the visuals. I was somewhere else.

Grimoldby: You were outside the stage do you think, or were you in a deeper layer of the stage?

Virkutyté: In a deeper layer, because of my image.

Grimoldby: Do you think the space transcended at that moment?

Virkutyté: Yes... there were definite moments where it transcended...not all the time. A very abstract, I mean indescribable stage.

(Virkutyté and Grimoldby 2017)

Virkutyté noted due to the presence of her 'Digital Double' as 'Manipulable Mannequin' that she was able to access a deeper layer within the performance. While even momentary, this phenomena is fascinating and demonstrates the catalytic properties of 'The Digital Double'. This would support the notion that 'The Manipulable Mannequin' can be an instrumental tool for the achievement of Artaudian metaphysical intensity. Within his essay on *Production and Metaphysics* Artaud states that the painting *Lott and his Daughters* engages with these metaphysical qualities since they are deeply interwoven into the paintings "external symmetry".

And I might even say their poetic greatness, their tangible effect on us arises from the fact that they are metaphysical, that their mental profundity cannot be separated from the paintings formal, external symmetry. (Artaud, 1970, 25)



(Fergusson, 2018, *Rosetta*)

The powers within *Lott and His Daughters* lie inside of a tangible aspect of the painting, but it is the paintings profundity that gives rise to the metaphysical effect upon the minds of the spectator. Jamieson writes of Artaud's sensitivity towards the effects of the painting. "He senses something deeper, a force emanating from behind the oils on the canvas." (Jamieson, 2007, 18) The metaphysical aspects arise from *Rosetta*, but they exist as part of the performance for Virkutyté; in this regard, the metaphysical cannot be separated from the "external symmetry" of the performance. The reader may recall that the audience are not the only subjects of Artaudian 'Cruelty' within performance and so Virkutyté's experience provides a fascinating insight into the catalytic potential of 'The Digital Double'.³²

The use of 'The Digital Double' as 'Manipulable Mannequin' is complex and multifaceted. Within my practice, it has been used as a 'conceptual template' controlled through the actions of a performer on stage. Within its varied guises the 'Manipulable Mannequin' has blurred the destination between action and imagery and evoked the metaphysical energy which Artaud called for theatre to conjure.

In *Digital Parts/Modular Doubles* (2010) Ploeger criticises Dixon's oversimplification of 'The Digital Double' in a number of ways. First he notes that the identity of primary performer and 'The Digital Double' within Dixon's examples are always separated, that is to say one can discern the physical from 'The Digital Double'.

The theatre has a double, which it supposedly refers to and is based on, but this double is not perceptible in the work itself. Dixon's double, on the other hand, is a digital artefact which is actually present in the performance and can be perceived by the audience.
(Ploeger, 2010)

Ploeger's comment is hugely relevant, Artaud's 'Double' is an intangible concept which is evoked through his theatre however, Dixon's 'Digital Double' is a literal manifestation. Secondly, he notes that Dixon's 'Digital Doubles' are all driven visually, whereas through Ploeger's performance of *Feedback* (2010), Ploeger identifies that 'The Digital Double' may be composed as a sonic entity. Ploeger also remarks on the oversimplification of the similarities drawn by Dixon between 'The Digital Double' and Artaud's 'Double', citing Artaud's call for 'The Double' to be an aspect outside of

³² Virkutyté's experience becomes that of Artaud's "executioner tormentor" within the exploration of Artaudian 'Cruelty'. Artaud writes that: "But a *theatre of cruelty*" means a theatre that is difficult and cruel for myself first of all" (Artaud, 1970 73) As co-creator of *Rosetta*, Virkutyté's placement within this theatrical experiment is at the centre of this Artaudian 'Cruelty'.

man's grasp.³³ Therefore 'The Digital Double' can be conceived as a scenographic means to the discovery of Artaud's 'Double' and not a literal manifestation of it.

The taxonomy presented is by no means definitive, 'The Digital Double' is a malleable concept which often straddles multiple aspects of each definition. However, by approaching each category within Dixon's taxonomy, I am afforded greater insight as to the Artaudian theoretical engagement each 'Digital Double' presents. The 'Digital Double' as 'Mirror' presents the ludicrous nature of 'Carrion Man' culture. 'The Digital Double' as 'Spiritual Emanation' forms the metaphorically alchemical quintessence of my practical research. It is the base from which my 'Digital Doubles' are born. With it, the performer is granted an angelic visage, and the notion of Artaudian metaphysics engaged. 'The Digital Double' as 'Alter Ego' presents itself as a figure of light and shadow. This 'Digital Double' was used in performance as a metaphorical Negrido and displayed the inner putrefaction necessary for a resurrection to take place. This was seen as akin to Artaud's concept of 'Cruelty.' Alternatively, the 'Alter Ego' was deployed as a guiding beacon of light, and aspirational figure with which the performer Wolstenholme conversed. Once again the Artaudian concept of a metaphysical aspect within the performance is achieved through this spectacle. The 'Manipulable Mannequin' was considered as a conceptual template controlled through the performers' movements. This conceptual template was effectively utilised in blurring the distinction between gesture and imagery while evoking the cosmic conflict of Artaudian drama.

Ploeger's comments are hugely relevant and it should be noted that 'The Digital Double' in no way replicates Artaud's 'Double'. 'The Digital Double' within my practice has been a tool utilised to investigate and practically explore the theories of Artaud.

Conclusion: The Alchemical Wedding of Thought

This then is the philosopher's stone that the Alchemist has been seeking for. It is the grand culmination of the Great Work. (Hamilton, 1985)

Within the undertaking of this study, I have pursued a practically driven exploration of the Alchemy of Artaud to generate an understanding of 'The Digital Double', as being perceived as a tool for the realisation of Artaud's theatrical ideals. This journey has been a metaphorically alchemical experiment, in the use of a practical method (digital scenography) to explore a metaphysical epistemology (Artaud's theories).

³³ When writing to his publisher Jean Paulhan, Artaud states that 'The Double' is "reality untouched by the men of today" (Artaud, 1989, 87)

If I am to follow this alchemical metaphor, the conclusion of this study would logically lie within the creation of the Philosopher's Stone and the Reddening of the alchemical process. Within this alchemically inspired journey, the Philosopher's Stone lies within an enlightened understanding of Artaud's theatre. Within this short chapter, I wish to bring together an understanding of the alchemical inspiration of Artaud's theatre. I shall briefly discuss the tacit nature of this study and determine how a practical method was an effective manner in which to assess the validity of my research aims.

By establishing an adequate understanding of the alchemical philosophy, I can determine that Alchemy inspired Artaud's pursuit within the theatre. Alchemy is not the pursuit of creating gold from lead but rather a far more esoteric operation in the personal transformation and ascension of consciousness. This conclusion was reached through an examination of the Hermetic literature to understand the epistemology of the renaissance Alchemist. In enacting their practical study, the Alchemist was bringing themselves closer to understanding God and unlocking the secrets of their universe. The Alchemist believed that they were the brother to the Demiurge, and that Man was afforded an empowering position in calling forth the Quintessential principle entombed within all matter.

Artaud's theatre sort for a transformation of consciousness through the attempted rediscovery of a stage language beyond the conventions of discursive speech. This was an attempted restoration of theatre's sacral function. Artaud, (utilising the Balinese performance as a conceptual template) placed his emphasis upon the use of gesture, light and sound within his theorised 'Theatre of Cruelty'. Artaud wished to engineer a performance of metaphysical profundity. The orchestrator of such a performance would no longer be a series of independent craftsmen working to satiate the imaginations of a playwright; but rather a single individual, 'The Producer', who would engineer a performance of cosmic conflict. Within this chapter, I inferred that 'The Producer' of such a drama was very similar to the Alchemist in the arrangement of scenography to initiate a transformative theatrical performance. The primary focus of Artaudian drama lied in 'The Producer's' ability to bring forth a metaphysical aspect within the drama.

Through Demaitre's systematic juxtaposition of the Artaudian and alchemical methodologies, I established the theatre Artaud wished to create was inspired partially by Alchemy. Each stage of the alchemical method of *Conjunctio*; *Solutio*, *Negrudo*, *Albedo*, *Citrinitas* and *Rubedo* has an equivalent within the Artaudian performative model. Through close examination, it was determined that *Conjunctio* and *Solutio* marked the preparatory steps of 'The Producer' (or Alchemist) within the Artaudian performance. This was then followed by the reactive stages of *Negrudo* which was

considered as the alchemical double of Artaud's 'Plague' in the dissolution of prior conceptions of form. Emerging from the mortified mass are the white and yellow lights of Albedo and Citrinitas, marking the discovery of the Artaudian metaphysical aspect of theatre. The process culminated in the Reddening or Rubedo; the formation of the Philosophers Stone and the ascension of conscious thought. It is here that the Artaudian performance concluded, its sacral function completed and its audience cleansed of their 'Carrion Man' fixations. By following a metaphorically alchemical approach within my theatre practice, I was able to determine the Artaudian nature of my scenographic choices and explore these concerning responses from my performers.

Understanding the nature of Artaud's theatre permitted an exploration of the Artaudian nature of contemporary stage technology. Through an investigation of Dixon's taxonomy of 'The Digital Double' I have established Artaudian synergy between the many guises in which 'The Digital Double' takes. 'The Digital Double' within my metaphor of Alchemy acts as the catalyst in achieving a deeper understanding of Artaud's theatre. However an important conclusion as to the placement of this digital artefact was established; 'The Digital Double' in no way presented itself as Artaud's double which is "reality untouched by the men of today" (Artaud, 1989, 87) but rather presented itself as the composite stage language of light, gesture and scenography in order to engineer a metaphysical profundity within performance. I inferred that within the creation process of Eidos that I was took the mantle of Artaudian 'Producer' or 'Artifex' in the creation of an alchemically inspired performance.

I can conclude that Alchemy is an influential aspect of Artaud's theatrical model and that 'The Digital Double' is an effective medium for the exploration and deployment of this metaphysical profundity. A key component of the conclusion which I draw here is determined through my practical exploration of the theories of Artaud. Reflecting upon Polanyi's understanding of subsidiary aspects coming together in order to realise a single goal ³⁴ then the use of a practical framework, in the deployment of 'The Digital Double', has become an analogue for the practical accompaniment of understanding the Alchemy of Artaud's theatre.

The practical methodology within this research has also helped inform an understanding of the Artaudian 'Producer' as metaphorically Alchemist. Within the process of this research I have assumed many roles; researcher, theatre maker, Artaudian 'Producer', and metaphorically, Alchemist. I have arranged scenographic elements in order to engineer performances which elicit a

³⁴ Polanyi regards the accumulation of knowledge by stating; "...knowledge dwells in our awareness of particulars while bearing on an entity which the particulars jointly constitute." (Polanyi, 1966, 61)

metaphysical engagement. The validity of this achievement can only be considered alongside the responses of my participating performers; these responses demonstrate that 'The Digital Double' is an effective tool for the exploration of metaphysical concepts and ideas. As metaphorical Alchemist then I have engineered a performance which utilises an arrangement of scenographic tools culminating in the reactive agent of 'The Digital Double'. "In completing the circle the *opus* reaches its final stage, called *rubedo*, with the appearance of the King, or gold." (Demaitre, 1970, 246)

My metaphorical alchemical gold within this study lies within my understanding of Artaud and 'The Digital Double' as an effective embodiment of his theories.

Appendix

I)

A Shadow of Grace (2017) was a performance commissioned by the BBC Space Academy. The performance was an open brief, the only stipulation being that it demonstrated a form of interactive technology and dance. With this brief, I was able to engineer a performance which directly explored the critical areas of my technological contextualisation of the theories of Artaud and Alchemy.

The performance explored the subject of finding yourself; discovering both darkness and light within your being. In this regard, *A Shadow of Grace* has informed my understanding of utilising 'The Digital Double' as a source of 'Spiritual Emanation' (Dixon 2007) and as that of the 'Shadow' (Jung 1908).

It was my objective to portray multiple aspects of the self, demonstrating that a genuinely introspective experience is at times both wondrous and frightening. This multi-faceted portrayal of the self developed into a model of Jung's 'Individuation'. (Jung 1908) The 'Individuation' process is a form of 'psychological Alchemy' in which the subject faces both the light and darkness to transform their psyche.

A full video recording of the performance can be found following this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kc7g-Gqo3Qc&t=30s>

II)

Eidos (2017) was developed at the University of Hull alongside performers Long and Wolstenholme. The performance explores the notion of Artaudian 'Cruelty' in particular the notion of one losing ones 'Double'. Within *The Peyote Dance* (1938) Artaud notes that the loss of ones 'Double' is a far greater thing than death, it forms an abstract fall which the native Tarahumara feared the most.

This performance did not present 'The Digital Double' as Artaud's 'Double' but rather 'The Digital Double' (in its many depictions) was a means to attempt to elevate the performance to the required Artaudian mythic proportions.

The performance attempted to realise Artaud's stage language through the use of physical set elements mapped with projection technology. The more complex scenography of this production aided in exploring critical concepts of Artaud as well as 20th-century scenographic theory.

A full video recording of the performance can be found following this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_X0GW3bKKNY&t=19s

III)

Rosetta (2017-2018) is an internationally developed collaboration between Grimoldby and Virkutyte. The project (while funded by Menu Spaustuve) was delivered as an open brief, and as such was tailored as a practical exploration of accompanying theory of this research.

The performance explores the philosophy of the Rosetta Stone, in the deciphering of an ancient, mysterious language using two known languages. Within performance this is doubled through the known languages of gesture and light, is used to explore the Artaudian metaphysical 'other'.

As this project was the last performance devised within the period of research for this thesis, a system of refined working was developed. All rehearsals took place in a space in which both movement and technology could develop simultaneously. In this regard, the interactive systems were explicitly designed around the movements of Virkutyte allowing for a more harmonious partnership of light and gesture.

Due to the close working relationship between performer and technologist, a degree of mastery of the system was developed in which the performer was able to use the technological apparatus as a system of audiovisual performance. The level of interaction was thus elevated from a state of play to that of intentional design, being pushed to the utmost limits of its capability; both within the movement and digital response.

Accompanying the development of this project are many filmed interviews in which the performer Virkutyte and digital designer Grimoldby discuss the ontology of the interactive process.

A full video recording of the performance can be found following this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xr5bgblACrk&t=75s>

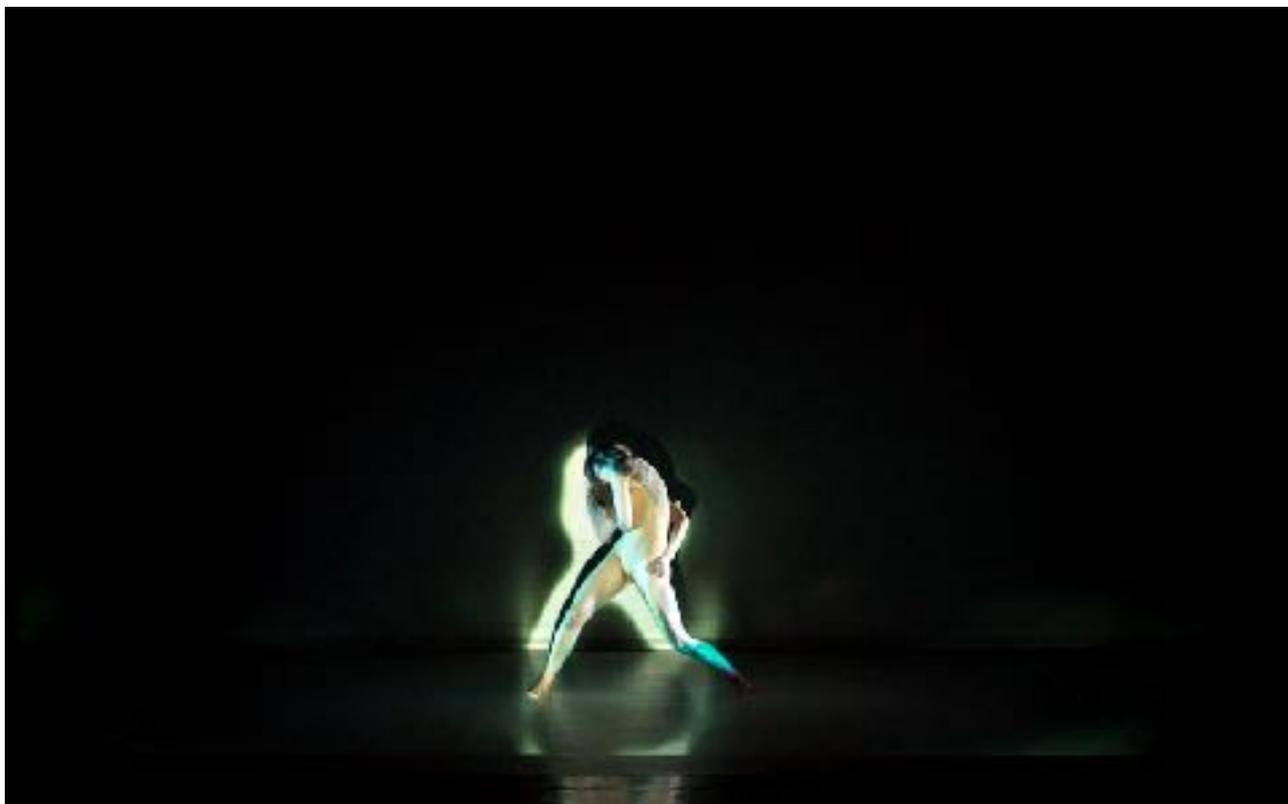
IV)

The performances explored within this research were driven through the interactive multimedia software Isadora. Isadora developed by Coniglio of Troika Ranch allows for the integration of multiple hardware options and software within performance. The program utilises a system of node based coding to enable a streamlined and intuitive interface.

Within my practice, Isadora acted as a creative hub for the integration of critical technical aspects within the performance. The Digital Double was generated through the use of an infrared security camera. This feed was overlaid across a still image of the stage and subtracted from the image currently visible from the camera. The result is a clean outline of only the body in space.

Thresholding of the image and the application of Gaussian blur are used to clean the image further and allow for stylistic alterations. The setup for such a solution is delicate, the camera must be aligned almost entirely to the projector light source, (underneath the projector is sufficient) and must be focussed correctly on the performer. The infrared light source must also be aligned with the light source of the projector. If the angle at which the infrared light illuminates the stage is incorrect, then an infrared shadow is cast; this shadow interferes with the track and gives the illusion of a human form with four arms.

This image provides the basis of the Digital Double from which effects can be applied. The image also provides a template from which necessary 'blob tracking data' can be extrapolated. The image is tracked generating X, Y, Z and velocity data. These coordinates are fed into particle systems



(Dainius, 2018, *Rosetta*)

programmed in Quartz Composer (Apple's open source programming language) and used as accompanying extensions of the performer's body in space.



(Ferguson, 2017, *Eidos Computer Station*)

An extra layer of complexity is added through the live mediation by the 'performer technologist'. Isadora's programming interface allows for live manipulation of inputs. An Ipad running touch OSC is transformed into a touch screen slider control system. These sliders inputs and transferred via OSC data from the Ipad to Isadora. The performance is therefore controlled via two levels. The performer forms the basis of the interaction; however, the technologist can manipulate parameters and trigger internal cues within the performance.

During the performance, Eidos the performers Long and Wolstenholme were outfitted with Wii Remotes. These Wii Remotes were used to generate a pitch, roll, and yaw data from the performers' right hands. This information was sent via OSC data from the remotes to Isadora. The data collated was used to drive the visualisations on stage. A specific instance of this was the video scrubbing of a droplet of ink effect; as Wolstenholme raises her hand the droplet recedes, as she lowers her hand the droplets falls and cascades across the stage.

Isadora's flexible and extremely useful integration of hardware and software allows artists to create performances utilising multiple layers of technology. The use of technology and performance can be engineered into an organic instrument from which both performer and technologist operate.

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