

GENEALOGIES OF CRUELTY:
ALTERNATIVE THEATERS IN AN EARLY MODERN WORLD

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by Luisa Fernanda Rosas

February 2016

© 2016 Luisa Fernanda Rosas

GENEAOLOGIES OF CRUELTY:
ALTERNATIVE THEATERS IN AN EARLY MODERN WORLD

Luisa Fernanda Rosas, Ph. D.

Cornell University 2016

My dissertation project is entitled *Genealogies of Cruelty: Alternative Theaters in an Early Modern World* and is directed by Mitchell Greenberg and Richard Klein. In it I argue for the possibility of finding a New World theater that exists in parallel with the formal theaters of France and Spain during the Early Modern period. Taking issue with the persistent absence of the New World and its inhabitants in Classical theater, I focus on travel narratives in an attempt to discover a New World stage. Antonin Artaud's principles of dramaturgy, which free the theater of a formal script and stage, along with Victor Turner's and Richard Schechner's theories on ritual and anthropological theater, offer a new framework from which marginalized subjects can be considered actors in the historical drama of conquest and colonization. Conversely, the Theater of Cruelty, which has been dismissed as a theater impossible to stage, is plausibly embodied in the anthropological theater of cannibalism and shamanism of the New World. By employing "theatricality" as an additional lens through which travel narratives can be read, I seek to contribute to the existing literature in my field by showing first, the presence of a theatrical stage in the New World, whose "performances" destabilized existing representations of European identities constructed by political documents known as *histoires* or *relations*. These performances, which I argue are examples of a theater of

cruelty, contaminates the larger body of the text and cannibalize its primary meaning while never producing a secondary or tertiary discourse to supplant it. With the formal intention of European speech thus stolen by the performances embedded, embodied and entrenched within these histories and relations, these texts contaminate the political corpus of philosophical and juridical writings that simultaneously construct and experience an alternative founding of the New World and the making of its Other.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Luisa Fernanda Rosas is a Ph.D. candidate of French literature in the department of Romance Studies. Her research interests include Early Modern French and Spanish travel narratives, theater and 20th century French and Spanish drama. As a researcher, she firmly believes in inter-disciplinary work done across multiple languages. Her work seeks to incorporate readings of historical and literary texts from differing academic traditions and cultural perspectives.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my mother, Mariela Rosas, my father Germán Rosas and my sister, Elizabeth Rosas. Their love, support and example have provided a constant source of strength.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1:	
Narra-tueurs: Artaud, Léry and the Tupinamba	27
CHAPTER 2:	
Deviant Theaters: Cabeza de Vaca and The Shamanic Journey	57
CHAPTER 3:	
The Theater of Neptune, and It's Double	95
CHAPTER 4:	
Performing Femininity as a Theater of Cruelty	126
CHAPTER 5:	
The Savage in French Classical Theater	146
BIBLIOGRAPHY	209

INTRODUCTION

« À en croire Montaigne, le proche masque une étrangeté. Aussi « L'ordinaire » présente-t-il « des effets autant admirables que ceux qu'on va recueillant ès pays et siècles étrangers » (II, 12). À reprendre l'essai bien connu « Des Cannibales » je suppose à ce texte familier la capacité de surprendre. Il s'interroge précisément sur le statut de l'étranger : qui es « barbare » ? Qu'est-ce que le « sauvage » ? En somme, quel est le lieu de l'autre ? »¹

Michel de Certeau
Le Lieu de L'Autre

Performing Conquest,

Among the five powers that came to colonize America each would perform new rites and rituals of conquest. Banners would be planted, speeches made, and the silence of Indians would always be observed. In these political theaters the “savage,” New World other would interact with the European and yet little do we have by way of their words or actions; while the European scripts of possession in the drama of colonization could vary slightly, power dynamics rarely changed. In his work on military and missionary theater, Richard Trexler describes Hernán's Cortes elaborate *mise-en-scène*, prior to meeting Moctezuma: “The Spaniard Cortés would meet a “Spanish” Moctezuma who would obey the old-world diplomatic convention of the inferior host who wore threads gifted to him

¹ Certeau, Michel de, and Luce Giard. *Le lieu de l'autre: histoire religieuse et mystique*. Paris: Gallimard,

by a superior visitor.”² By staging a “first encounter” with a Spaniard playing the role of Moctezuma, Cortés would create a mise-en-abyme that repeated the same essential tropes of conquest: appropriation, subjugation and humiliation. Similarly in missionary theater, priests would stage the conversion or baptism of the Indians with whom they lived and this claiming of their souls would be seen as a final act of submission. When performing conquest, we discover, that though the performances could vary, in essence they shared predictably similar ends. As readers of the Early Modern period, might we not imagine a new space, as De Certeau suggests, where the other might reside? One in which the Amerindian spectator is more than a passive observer and is an actor in the shaping of the texts to which they are central objects and subjects of study? Might we not also study failed conversions, looking to the possessed bodies of women, and study how these savage performances deviate from normative civilizing scripts? Norbet Elias’ book, *The Civilizing Process*, describes the gradual changes during the early modern period in bodily demeanors and sees these changes as emerging under the pressure of new models of social organization, such as the absolutist state. Elias’ demonstrates how the individual body and the collective body of the state were shaped in a dialectical relation and, as both become a product of culture, corporeality is drained from the subject’s body. What of France’s ‘invisible’ colonized bodies of the 16th and 17th centuries, these half-forgotten stories of France’s colonial empire? What might we find in accounts of spectacular failures in conversion, both in the New World and Europe and how do the performances of colonized bodies, in revolt, influence a larger political stage?

My dissertation looks for historical moments where marginalized subjects come in

²Kaplan, Steven L. 1984. Understanding popular culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth

contact with traditional European perspectives and, through these contacts, create new kinds of theater. This theater or performances manifest themselves in a new kind of writing, and transform those who intended to civilize the ‘Savage’ Other. Greg Denning’s writing on history inspires my research and informs my own efforts as a scholarly writer. In his book, *Performances*, he outlines the implications of presenting history: “Presenting the Past’ will always imply bringing past and present together. It will also imply that the past will not be replicated or repeated, but represented, shaped, staged, performed in some way other than it originally existed.”³ My hope is that through these new representations, through these ‘genealogies of cruelty’ we might find alternatives to the developmental narratives that are privileged and momentarily halt our perpetuated divisions of genre in our separated readings of history, literature and theater.

I propose a rereading of travel narratives and autobiographies of the 16th and 17th centuries through the lens of Antonin Artaud’s Theater of Cruelty. By employing theatricality as an additional lens through which travel narratives and autobiographies can be read, I seek to contribute to the existing literature in my field by showing the presence of a theatrical stage in the New World, whose performances destabilized existing representations of European identities constructed by political documents known as *histoires* or *relations*. These performances, which I argue are examples of a Theater of Cruelty, contaminates the larger body of the text and cannibalize its primary meaning while never producing a secondary or tertiary discourse to supplant it. With the formal

century. Berlin: Mouton, p. 191.

³ Denning, Greg. 1996. *Performances*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. xiv.

intention of European speech, thus stolen, (or soufflé⁴) by the performances embedded, embodied and entrenched within these histories and relations, these texts contaminate the corpus of writings that simultaneously construct and experience the founding of the New World and the making of its Other. And what of the “Savage” Other? No longer a passive spectator, the savage performance and performers usurp the role of author with a constellation of crimes and noises, with a theater of cruelty that prompts the pen.

Artaud’s Theater of Cruelty

Artaud, Derrida writes, has been relegated to two kinds of discourses, the critical and the clinical.⁵ It is the attempt of these chapters to offer the reader a third option, an application of Artaud’s theory on theater to texts that share essential qualities with the Theater of Cruelty. What are the parameters by which we will understand and apply Artaud’s theory to texts? Artaud defined his theater in many instances, *The Theater and Its Double*, however is the primary text in which he outlines the requirements for the making of theater as he conceived it, and it is the text from which I will primarily draw from. In my reading of Artaud I will also argue that, in addition to *The Theater and Its Double*, his *Voyage au Pays de Tarahumara* can also be conceived as a series of theatrical *tableaux vivants*, where Artaud as ethnographer repeats the journey taken by many of the actors that I will study my dissertation. This encounter of place, so too becomes a space for his theater to

⁴ “Spirited [soufflé]: let us understand stolen by a possible commentator who would acknowledge speech in order to place it in an order, an order of essential truth or of real structure, psychological or other. The first commentator, here, is the reader or the listener, the receiver which the ‘public’ must no longer be in the theater of cruelty. Artaud knew that all speech fallen from the body, offering itself to understanding or reception, offering itself as a spectacle, immediately becomes stolen speech. Becomes a signification which I do not possess because it is a signification. Theft is always the theft of speech or text, of a trace.” “La Parole Soufflée,” *L’Ecriture et La Différence*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1979 175)

emerge. Roland Barthes writes that theater is, “precisely the practice which calculates the place of things, as they are observed. If I set the spectacle here, the spectator will see this; if I put it elsewhere, he will not, and I can avail myself of this masking effect and play on the illusion it provides.”⁶ If theater is defined by these limits, Artaud’s quest is for an altogether different experience, an authentic reality without illusion or delineations. A Theater of Cruelty will be found in undelineated texts, texts that contain not fragments but an entire life.

My study of colonialism (and, inseparably, conversion) is vast and in itself unruly. I’m interested in instances where conversions fail, where colonialism doesn’t firmly take hold and as a result cultural hybridities come into being, producing modern subjects who challenge religious and political hegemonic discourses of the period. I believe that travel narratives and autobiographies written during the Early Modern period can be read, not as a standard texts, but rather as inscribed performances and scenarios, wherein a particular textual passage can erupt and become characterized by different details of inscription, with surprising results regarding who inscribes whom within the text. The accounts of these colonial failures are surprising due to their theatrical nature and an innate ‘savagery’ that refuses the order of an increasingly codified social and political stage. Although persistently theatrical there is no proper critical framework from which to read travel narratives and autobiographies in the Early Modern age as theater-- therefore I will propose an ‘improper’ reading and ask how an Early Modern world might be read in an Artaudian light. Artaud’s Theater of Cruelty lends itself to this project for reasons that I will analyze in depth in each chapter. However, I will briefly outline a number of

⁵ Jacques Derrida, “*La Parole Soufflée*,” *L’Ecriture et La Différence*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1979. p. 253.

essential points in this introduction.

Artaud announces his theater as a space for the exploration of unknown inner territories. He announces the alienated self as the force behind his aesthetics, *Je ne conçois pas d'œuvre comme détachée de la vie*. Travel narratives and autobiographies acknowledge writing's proximity and failed approximations to life. These works acknowledge a writing self estranged from a spectating self—a self in constant flux because of these interior tensions and a text interpolated by contact with an outside Other. These concepts, so central to a discourse on colonialism and conversion, are at the root of Artaud's theatrical lexicon. Artaudian theater is also imbricated with subverted religious iconography, much like the studies of colonialism and conversion I will study in this project. Like Artaud, travel narratives and autobiographies come in contact with the frustrations and deficiencies of language. Actors/narrators often focus on representing the never before seen, the unrepresentable, through descriptions of rituals, music, dancing or other performances (including, the descriptions of interior landscapes of possession) in lieu of all that cannot be transmitted linguistically. Similarly, Artaud's theater requires the creation of images that would reveal suppressed insights, *images fixant de magiques situation de l'esprit*. Images transcribed through a form of transliteration would create a new language different from the ossified discourse of Western thought: *Au point de vue de l'Occident...la parole s'ossifie...les mots...tous les mots sont gelés*. This new language *refait poétiquement le trajet qui a abouti à la création du langage...toutes ces opérations par cris, par onomatopées, par signes, par attitudes, et par de lentes, abondantes et passionnées modulations nerveuses, plan par plan, et terme par terme, il les refait* (iv.106) Artaud insists on the transformative

⁶ Barthes, Roland, and Stephen Heath. 1977. *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, p. 69.

powers of theater and on eliminating the differences between spectator and spectacle. All of these principles are central to an understanding of the Early Modern texts I will be examining. Derrida states that Artaud's theater has yet to take place, but what if examples of his theater could be found in a distant genealogy cruelty?

Artaud's relation to the Early Modern period is paradoxical. He distrusts the psychological theater of the Classical Age blaming Racine for its invention and yet one of the few examples he gives of a theater of cruelty is set in the colonial period. *La Conquête du Mexique*, written in 1935, was never produced due to financial difficulties; nevertheless, in it Artaud outlines a list of reasons why this historical moment would be a fitting first example of his theater. The conquest and colonization of Native tribes of the Americas fascinated Artaud; as for the eschatological fears of Europe on the brink of a Second World War, these were the latent aftershocks of cataclysmic New World beginnings. For Artaud, a historical spectacle that focused on the Native cultures that had been tyrannically suppressed by European colonizers was important because unlike their European oppressors, these cultures were founded, *sur d'indiscutable principes spirituels*.⁷ Artaud's view of the New World and Native Peoples can be read at best as naive, at worst as simplistic, dangerous and essentialist. But before dismissing him entirely, Artaud's second point does not emphasize the profound moral superiority inherent to Indian culture and instead focuses on the spectacular value of these conflicts:

⁷ Artaud, A., *La Conquête du Mexique*, in *Oeuvres*, Quatro, Gallimard, Paris, 2004, p. 583.

Il y a le sang qui parle et celui que l'on verse ; et les deux en réalité ne font qu'un.
Le sang parle en images torturées, et qui, à leur tour, sont devenues torturantes. Il parle dans les sacrifices humains.⁸

There is a silent language of blood that longs to communicate its suppressed *savoir* through the tortured images of the conquests and sense to be deciphered in the rituals of native tribes. Artaud, in his own way an ethnographer in Mexico, would stage the interior struggle of Montézuma as well as, “la foule, les couches diverses de la société, la révolte du peuple contre les destin.”⁹ Artaud goes on to describe what a fusion of his Theater of Cruelty and a theater of New World encounters would be able to capture:

Théâtralement, le problème est de déterminer et d'harmoniser ces lignes de force, de les concentrer et d'en extraire de suggestives mélodies. Ces images, ces mouvements, ces danses, ces rites, ces musiques, ces dialogues qui tournent court, seront soigneusement notés et décrits autant qu'il se peut avec des mots et principalement dans les parties non dialoguées du spectacle, le principe étant d'arriver à noter ou à chiffrer, comme sur une partition musicale, ce qui ne se décrit pas avec des mots.¹⁰

⁸ Artaud, A., *Textes Mexicains*, in *Oeuvres*, Quatro, Gallimard, Paris, 2004, p. 674.

⁹ Artaud, A., *La Conquête du Mexique*, in *Oeuvres*, Quatro, Gallimard, Paris, 2004, p. 584.

¹⁰ Artaud, A., *La Conquête du Mexique*, in *Oeuvres*, Quatro, Gallimard, Paris, 2004, p. 584.

Both Artaud's theater and the theater performed by the marginalized bodies emerging from the New World (but also present in the hexagon, primarily in the 'savage' bodies of unruly women), reside in a space of absences, *l'absence de son sujet propre*.¹¹ Artaud's alienation from himself and language, expresses an insurmountable loss of personhood which resonate with the wordless histories of these invisible others. Derrida speaks for Artaud in *La Parole Soufflée*, performing the crime Artaud's work seems to denounce: *Ce que je vauz, ma vérité, m'a été subtilisé par quelqu'Un qui est devenu à ma place, à la sortie de l'Orifice, à la naissance, Dieu*.¹²

The struggle of the usurped word always present in Artaud's theater is central to the discourse of colonization. Where conquerors expressed the transcendental significance of this unique moment in history and evaluated the discovered Other through a written discourse founded on God, the conquered, often inscribed in texts of the period as savage, passive or mute, encountered the European Other and expressed their dissidence through continued performances of transgressive rituals such as cannibalism, possession or witchcraft. Having their voice usurped by an other, *quelqu'Un qui est devenu à [leur] place*, what might we gleam from texts that emphasize, in spite of language, images of the body (in revolt) and the actor?¹³ To produce authentic theater, Artaud argues that one must accept alienation from the self as the theater's fundamental state: *[Le Théâtre] c'était l'état où on ne peut pas exister, si on n'a pas consenti par avance à être comme*

¹¹ Derrida, J., *La Parole Soufflée*, p. 265.

¹² Derrida, J., *La Parole Soufflée*, p. 270.

¹³ Artaud, A: *Sur le corps de l'acteur méthodiquement traumatisé on peut saisir le développement des impulsions universelles et sur lui-même les corriger*. Dans « Aliéner L'Acteur » p., 1521.

*par définition et par essence un définitif aliéné.*¹⁴ If this alienation from language was thrust upon colonized bodies that were not allowed to write their own history, what takes place when the estrangement from the speaking self, and the histories of these *aliéné* are read as theatrical performance that stage dissent through Western guises of madness, savagery or cruelty?

The word cruelty, so central to this project, should first be read within its Early Modern context. Christian Biet explains that the word is not infused with any particular moral or philosophical significance: *Avant tout, il s'agit ici de dire que la cruauté n'est pas, au milieu du XVII^e siècle, une notion moralement et philosophiquement pertinente, et qu'elle ne désigne aucune passion, ou notion essentielle, mais un effet plus ou moins spectaculaire, une sorte de spectacle formé de signes ou de symptômes réunis sous le titre commode, très général et fort spécifique de « cruauté ».*¹⁵ This inherently loose term, is simply associated with a spectacular excess that formal tragedies of the period avoid. The word cruelty is free from any discursive ties, political, religious or philosophical, and vested only with the power of its appeal: *Ce qui a séduit dans la cruauté, c'est donc l'horreur qu'on en a, mais aussi sa technique, son mécanisme froid, sa dynamique irrésistible. Et ce qui intéresse encore plus, c'est d'observer la manière dont la cruauté est vainement déniée et dont, parce qu'elle est refoulée, elle apparaîtra enfin hors du texte comme une violence inouïe.*¹⁶ The formal suppression of cruelty on the stage asks us to look for its presence elsewhere, and where else but as Biet says, “outside the text” and as an “unheard of

¹⁴ Artaud, A, « Aliéner l'Acteur » pp. 1521, 1522, le mot aliéné dans ce sens implique pas seulement aliénation mais aussi un état de folie. Ceci deviendra encore plus pertinent dans les cas des hystériques en France.

¹⁵ Biet, C., « La Tragédie Classique et son Double » dans *Les Théâtres de la Cruauté : Hommage à Antonin Artaud*, Sous la direction de Camille Dumoulié, Éditions Desjonquères, Actes du colloque organisé à l'Université de Paris X—Nanterre, Paris, 2000, p. 161.

¹⁶ Biet, C., « La Tragédie Classique et son Double » dans *Les Théâtres de la Cruauté : Hommage à Antonin Artaud*, p. 168.

violence”)? The cruelty apparent in colonialism could be freed from the stasis of history and ethnography and explored along critical terms that stress an Artaudian theatricality that stages resistance not as an act of language but as a reinvention of meaning and images, a recasting of invisible bodies as actors in their own histories. In *Baroque Bodies*, Mitchell Greenberg describes France’s aesthetic transition from the 16th to the 17th century as a passage marked on and across the body: *The individual body of those subjects for whom this passage is not navigated smoothly, the body of those who resist, knowingly or unwittingly, their own subjective insertion within the new parameters of the changing symbolic order that is painfully being put in place.*¹⁷ I believe a study of problematic bodies that refuse all call to order will reveal a theater that was actively suppressed but nevertheless managed to stage its presence in writings that are not considered immediately as theatrical.

Starting on the shores of the Atlantic and reaching a convent in Loudun, I would like to study literary, historical and cultural texts that reside outside of the theatrical cannon and try to read these texts as alternative histories and alternative theaters; not to incorporate the unincorporated, but to examine genealogies of cruelty that embody notions of Artaud’s theater present from the Renaissance to the Classical Age. The varied examples of Early Modern Theaters of Cruelty relate primarily to France but are not limited by geographical confines, as they will also address more broadly, failures of colonialism and conversion.

My first chapter begins by examining texts from a French explorer arriving on the southern shores of the Atlantic. Jean de Léry writes, *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* in 1578. A cobbler by trade, he becomes a Calvinist pastor and is sent to convert the

¹⁷ Greenberg, M. *Baroque Bodies :: Psychoanalysis and The Culture of French Absolutism*, Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University,

natives of the Brazilian colony lead by Nicholas Villegagnon. Forced to spend nine months with the Tupinmaba and unable to understand the local language his writing focuses on the rituals of war and religion, anchored in the practice of cannibalism. What I argue in this first chapter is that through his contact with the Brazilian tribe of the Tupinamba, Léry explores an uncanny space that frees his writing from religious confines and marks his transformation through a theater of cruelty of cannibalistic rituals of the Tupi and their religious leaders the *caraïbe*.

In my second chapter I study Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca's performative construction of a shamanic figure. With the absolute failure of the Narváez expedition along the Floridian coasts, the myth of Spain's colonial project collapses under the weight of *Naufragios* (1555), text that chronicles the shipwreck and subsequent wanderings endured by Cabeza de Vaca and his men from 1527-1536. *Naufragios* offers Spain a dubious gift, that of a New World theater, that exposes the deficiencies in the Spanish machine of colonization. By focusing on particular chapters that describe the rituals of Southwestern Native American tribes, as well as the performances that transform Álvaro Núñez into the American Shaman, Cabeza de Vaca, I argue that the discursive performance presented to Charles V, offers the materialization of drama, as Artaud would have it: *pleine de décharges, des perspectives infinies, des conflits*.

The third chapter focuses on Marc Lescarbot's *Theater of Neptune* (1609) a play modeled after the processional entrances of French King's and, more specifically, the *entrée* of Henri II to Rouen in 1550. In this first North American play I argue that Lescarbot contaminates the text with a parasitic doubt regarding the success of the

2001. p. 168.

colonial project and deconstructs the assumed stability of European identity. This is first achieved by calling into question the paternal symbolic as embodied by the character of Neptune/Proteus, allegorical figure for Henri IV and is sealed by the absence of a formal colonial discourse at the end of the play. Lastly, the parallels between the funeral rites of the Micmaq and Lescarbot's procession offer further proof of Lescarbot's ambivalence towards the colonial project. In spite of the formality of Lescarbot's text, there are no prescriptive actions given as to how the French will perform colonization. The New World is never ordered and the play dissolves into a complex assortment of gustatory tastes and proclivities. The *Theater of Neptune* is brimming with a savage constellation of voices and identities that are never reconstituted in a traditional hierarchical order.

The fourth chapter deals specifically with the attempted colonization of the female body and the failure of conversion in the convent of Loudun. Jeanne des Anges' nine-year theatrical performance during her exorcisms as well as her delusional pregnancy nuance Artaud's problematic relation to the body.

Three of these texts have known cinematic adaptations. L  ry's *Histoire d'un voyage fait en Terre de Br  sil* inspired Nelson Pereira dos Santos in his 1971 Brazilian film *Como Era Gostoso O Meu Franc  s*, In 1991, Nicol  s Echevarr  a directs *Cabeza de Vaca*, a Mexican film loosely inspired by *Naufra  gios*. The Polish filmmaker Jerzy Kawalerowicz directs, *Mother Joan of the Angels*¹⁸ in 1961. This stark black and white film evokes Artaud's own cinematic moment in *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) directed by the master Danish filmmaker Carl Theodor Dreyer. If for now the scope of this project is limited to the texts themselves, I believe it is nevertheless pertinent to my argument to point out their

¹⁸ Original title *Matka Joanna od aniol  w*

presence in film history and will reflect upon these cinematic adaptations at the end of each chapter. In each of these case studies the colonizer becomes colonized. The effect of savagery infects the European narrator, in the case of Jeanne des Anges, her confessor falls ill and starts displaying symptoms of her madness.

By discerning from the archive of the theatrical canon but not excluding it completely and turning to the study of scenarios of colonialism, loosely defined, I hope to trace a genealogy of cruelty that can account for a history that is too often read as absent and highlight its unspoken influence in classical works. The term genealogy comes to us with several of associations. Foucault aligns this term, which implies a series, with the singular. For him the body is the first unit in a genealogy, it is the place where social norms and conditions are inscribed: *La généalogie, comme analyse de la provenance, est donc à l'articulation du corps et de l'histoire. Elle doit montrer le corps tout imprimé d'histoire, et l'histoire ruinant le corps.*¹⁹ If we are to examine alternative genealogies and alternative theaters then we must begin with a study of the conceptual foundations of the body during this historic period. This leads us to the study of the sovereign body, to see how a reading of the King's body in the 17th century and the body of *La France Souffrante* during the 16th century establishes a diametric opposition to the fluctuating and polyphonic (if not speaking) bodies (those of cannibals, shamans and hysterics) found in a theater of cruelty.

The unruly bodies of a theater of cruelty are marked by their degradation and idealization. The cannibal though guilty of a heinous crime, is in part, absolved of full guilt because of his ignorance. His violence points to his proximity to the natural world and his uncompromising adherence to natural laws, ennobles his actions. A hysteric,

¹⁹ Foucault, Michel. 1994. *Dits et écrits: 1954-1975*. Paris: Editions Gallimard. p. 1011

though monstrous in her gesticulating body, nevertheless communes with the sacred. Though initially feared and punished, a hysteric like Jeanne des Anges, will ultimately be venerated if she can modify her performance. Likewise, a shamanic figure like Cabeza de Vaca, also undergoes an ambiguous transformation. Residing inside and outside a cultural circle of magical and religious power, these actors in a theater of cruelty are both sought after and chased away; their bodies become the locus for political and religious performances that challenge hegemonic discourses.

\

Poetics of Cruelty:

« Le théâtre ne pourra redevenir lui-même, c'est-à-dire constituer un moyen d'illusion vraie, qu'en fournissant au spectateur des précipités véridiques de rêves, où son goût du crime, ses obsessions érotiques, sa sauvagerie, ses chimères, son sens utopique de la vie et des choses, son cannibalisme même, se débordent, sur un plan non pas supposé et illusoire, mais intérieur. »²⁰

Antonin Artaud

Against the word but in search of language, Artaud imagined a theater that would

²⁰ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre de La Cruauté*, Premier Manifeste, 1935, Œuvres, p. 560.

manifest itself in life, metaphysics and alchemy—all terms that are infused with new meanings, and that within the whole of his work (poems, manifestos, letters, essays, *cabiers*) have proven difficult to delimit and define. It is perhaps this desire for a fixed understanding of Artaud's theater, *le théâtre qui [n'a pas] encore commencé à exister*²¹ that is at the source of many misrepresentations of his work. How can we *read* a theater of cruelty if *writing*, for Artaud, is already the death of his idea? How might a Theater of Cruelty be performed if it has yet ever to exist? In the first part of this chapter I propose a close reading of several of Artaud's seminal texts in order to establish an understanding of his Theater of Cruelty. My theoretical reading of Artaud will be informed by the writings of Georges Bataille and Gilles Deleuze. In the second section, I argue that Artaud's Theater of Cruelty might be used as a theoretical framework from where many marginalized texts could be enlivened, disrupting the patriarchal order of the logos, blurring boundaries of identity and giving a new voice and new agency to “actors” in textual situations from diverse genres. The third and final section of this paper is a case study of the works of Jean de Léry, 16th century French travel writer. I argue that the anthropological theater of cannibalism depicted by Léry in his two books, *Histoire d'un Voyage Faict en Terre du Brésil* (1578) and *L'Histoire Memorable du Siege et de la Famine de Sancerre* (1573) can be read as plausible embodiments of the theater imagined by Antonin Artaud.

Le Théâtre et son double is known as Artaud's most famous exposition of his Theater of Cruelty. While noting that Western theater lives under “the exclusive dictatorship of the word”²² he sets out to discover, *un langage actif et anarchique, où les délimitations habituelles*

²¹ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre de la Cruauté* dans *Pour en finir avec le jugement de Dieu*, p.73.

²² Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre de la Cruauté*, p. 60.

*des sentiments et des mot soient abandonnées*²³. In order to understand Artaud's lexicon we must begin with his definition of cruelty. For Artaud, cruelty signifies rigor, an appetite for life, an implacable necessity and desire with its own applied consciousness.²⁴ Cruelty is life and at times death; it may prompt the spilling of blood but more than anything it is meant to disrupt the order and logic of language:

Je ne cultive pas systématiquement l'horreur. Ce mot de cruauté doit être pris dans un sens large, et non dans le sens matériel et rapace qui lui est prêté habituellement. Et je revendique...le droit de briser avec le sens usuel du langage...d'en revenir aux origines étymologiques de la langue qui à travers des concepts abstraits évoquent toujours une notion concrète.²⁵

Through cruelty, in its larger sense and not as a collection of systemic horrors, Artaud will explore life and the limits language places upon it. In the first manifesto of *Le Théâtre de la Cruauté*, he outlines the techniques he will employ on stage: rhythms, sounds, resonances and words (emptied of their usual meanings)--will structure this new, concrete language of cruelty²⁶. But the greatest physical alteration to be made will destroy a distinction that marks all theater, the separation between the public and the stage: *Nous supprimons la scène et la salle qui sont remplacées par une sorte de lieu unique, sans cloisonnement, ni barrière d'aucune sorte, et qui deviendra le théâtre même de l'action. Une communication directe sera rétablie entre le spectateur et le spectacle, entre l'acteur et le spectateur du fait que le spectateur placé au*

²³ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre de la Cruauté*, p. 61.

²⁴ Artaud, A., *Le Theatre et Son Double*, pp. 158, 159.

²⁵ Artaud, A., *Le Theatre et Son Double*, p.159.

*milieu de l'action est enveloppé et sillonné par elle.*²⁷ The idea of a “total spectacle,” where the roles of spectator and actor coalesce, defies conventions of Western theater--the adversary of enormous proportions Artaud seeks to destroy. In book six of the *Poetics*, Aristotle first defines tragedy; although Artaud takes issue with all of its 6 major components (plot, characters, diction, thought, spectacle, melody) in *catharsis*, the “purgation,” that would, through identification with the characters on stage, “cleanse” the spectator of uncontrollable emotions, Western drama is at its most aberrant:

*Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions.*²⁸

For Aristotle *catharsis* distills theater to pure psychological and moral, sociological elements, the driving purpose being to moderate passion and teach virtue to the spectator. Poetic drama is conceived in terms of its edifying properties; tragedy must affect the public but its effect is limited to moral persuasion or to a temporary expulsion of psychic energy due to an illusory identification with an actor on stage. The spectacle addresses the spectators’ psychological and moral composition while leaving the body, the spirit and the senses intact.²⁹ French Classical theater follows this Aristotelian model and for Artaud this renders it: *un théâtre purement descriptif et qui raconte de la psychologie...avec*

²⁶ Artaud, A., *Le Theatre et Son Double*, p.135.

²⁷ Artaud, A., *Oeuvres*, p. 563.

²⁸ Aristotle, *Poétique*, Book VI, pp. 92,93.

*le spectacle d'un côté, le public de l'autre,--et qu'on n'a plus montré a la foule que le miroir de ce qu'elle est.*³⁰ Shakespeare as well as Racine, perpetrators of this classical tyranny, are, through this reasoning, culpable for the demise of Western drama. Theater must do more than simply show the masses a mirror of itself, but in its *doing* it must refuse didactical intent: *Qui dit que le théâtre était fait pour élucider un caractère, pour la solution des conflits d'ordre humain et passionnel, d'ordre actuel psychologique comme notre théâtre contemporain en est rempli ?*³¹ Refusing any utilitarian aim to his theater, Artaud aligns the Theater of Cruelty with gratuity. His theater is in the domain of the sovereign as defined by Georges Bataille:

The sovereignty I speak of has little to do with the sovereignty of States...I speak in general of an aspect that is opposed to the servile and the subordinate. In the past, sovereignty belonged to those who, bearing the names of chieftain, pharaoh, king...played a leading role in the formation of that with which we identify ourselves, the human being of today...But further, it belongs essentially to all men who possess and have never entirely lost the value that is attributed to gods and "dignitaries."³²

Theater, for Artaud, corresponds to the sovereign in Bataille, in that it belongs to the realm of creation, a creation that is beyond utility and not servile. Wine and the miraculous properties of intoxication that allow a worker to momentarily escape "the

²⁹ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et Son Double*, pp. 134, 135.

³⁰ Artaud, A., *Pour en finir avec les Chefs-d'Oeuvre*, p.119.

³¹ Artaud, A., *La Mise en scène et la Métaphysique*, p. 63.

³² Bataille, G., "What I Understand by Sovereignty" in *The Accursed Share*, p. 197.

necessity that is the principle of labor;³³” the sun, which transfigures the world by its effortless incandescence, are metaphors employed by Bataille to describe the sovereign and miraculous that expends its essence without limit, labor or thought of its self or its own extinction. Likewise, a Theater of Cruelty should observe no limit in the attempt to awaken the senses, all while refuting the authority of what is already known: *Au lieu d'en revenir à des textes considérés comme définitifs et comme sacrés, il importe avant tout de rompre l'assujettissement du théâtre au texte, et de retrouver la notion d'une sorte de langage unique à mi-chemin entre le geste et la pensée.*³⁴ Because knowledge is never sovereign, “to know is always to strive, to work,”³⁵ a Theater of Cruelty, were it to exist, must reside outside of the canonical texts that mark the parameters of Western knowledge.

If Artaud's theater has no aim other than to disrupt language and to detach the body, mind and spirit from what is known, remaining aim-less, then Bataille's definition of sovereignty as “the *object* of the laughter or the *object* of the tears that suppresses thought, that takes all knowledge away from us...[having] the power to endlessly recapture the moment that counts, the moment of rupture, of fissure”³⁶—is befitting of a Theater of Cruelty. For Artaud, theater should be a moment of anarchic laughter, absolute danger³⁷ and contagion. And yet, the Theater of Cruelty cannot be reduced to a purely corporal theater and must resist the organizational totality and structure of ‘the body,’ as metaphor for his theater. The body is not a simple antithesis to language/knowledge and it is not, through reductive opposition, the locus of Artaud's

³³ Bataille, G., “What I Understand by Sovereignty” in *The Accursed Share*, p. 199.

³⁴ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre de la Cruauté*, p. 137, 138.

³⁵ Bataille, “What I understand by sovereignty,” in *The Accursed Share*, vol. II., p.203.

³⁶ Bataille, G., “What I understand by sovereignty,” in *The Accursed Share*, vol. II. p.203. Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et Son Double*, p. 63, à voir: la relation entre le rire et le danger.

³⁷ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et La Peste*, p. 42.

theater. For Artaud, the body is a problematized space. Deleuze's reading of Artaud situates him in a discussion of a Body without Organs, which is a figure used by Deleuze to illustrate an assemblage of parts with no underlying organizational principles or hierarchy. Artaud marks a distinction between the organism (which is structured and organized) and the body, which remains neutral: *The body is the body. Alone it stands. And in no need of organs. Organism it never is. Organisms are the enemies of the body.*³⁸ And yet the body is sick by the presence of these organizing organisms: *L'homme est malade parce qu'il est mal construit. Il faut se décider à le mettre à nu pour lui gratter cet animalcule qui le démange mortellement, dieu et avec dieu ses organes.*³⁹ Refusing the language of Aristotle and Classical Theater, Artaud still does not fully accept the body as locus for his theater because of its contamination with the living organism that consumes it: God and the structuring properties of the Word. Deleuze summarizes the Artaudian project thusly: *For the schizophrenic, then, it is less a question of recovering meaning than of destroying the word, of conjuring up the affect, and of transforming the painful passion of the body into a triumphant action, obedience into command, always in this depth beneath the fissured surface*⁴⁰ Artaud outlines the curative properties of his Theater of Cruelty to peel away the strata of identity fictions; it will act upon the body, mind and senses in the same way as the plague.

In *Le Théâtre et la Peste*, Artaud imagines a new metaphor for his theater based on contagion and disease. The Theater of Cruelty, like the plague, first takes shape in a dream and in a world of violent imagery. Artaud begins this essay with the story of the

³⁸ Deleuze, G., citing Artaud in, How do you make yourself a body without organs? *A Thousand Plateaus*, p 158.

³⁹ Artaud, A. Pour en finir avec le Jugement de Dieu, pp. 60, 61.

⁴⁰ Deleuze, G., "Thirteenth Series of the Schizophrenic and the Little Girl," in *The Logic of Sense*, p. 88.

Viceroy of Saraigne,⁴¹ who in a dream sees himself and his state ravaged by the epidemic and watches helplessly as, *les cadres de la société se liquéfient*. In his dream, unable to take action, he cannot avert the pest nor can he die. He is caught in a world of images subject to no law: *Il sait qu'on ne meurt pas dans les rêves, que la volonté y joue jusqu'à l'absurde, jusqu'à la négation du possible, jusqu'à une sorte de transmutation du mensonge dont on refait de la vérité.*⁴² Once he awakens he is still subject to this dream logic, the transmuted lie that reframes his understanding of reality. The Theater of Cruelty follows the structure of the plague and of the dream, both of which retain their own autonomy of logic and movement. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud explains how suppressed psychic material, which in a waking state would be prevented from manifesting itself, *finds ways and means, under the way of compromise— of obtruding itself on consciousness during the night.*⁴³ Using the same ways and means of dreams, repetition and the transformation of ideas into sensory images,⁴⁴ the Theater of Cruelty would cause an eruption of this psychic material into the conscious waking life, pressing man to see himself as he really is.⁴⁵ In so doing, Artaud opposes Aristotle's notion of *katharsis*, which would exorcise the repressed psychic material of its spectators and purge the emotions and the essence of the theater from the stage.

An unexpected Augustinian reference surfaces in *Le Théâtre et La Peste* and develops the metaphysical implications of this theater. During an outbreak of the plague in Rome, Augustine tells the story of the first men to found “scenic plays” and “spectacles of turpitude:”

⁴¹ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et La Peste*, p. 21.

⁴² Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et La Peste*, p. 22.

⁴³ Freud, S., *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 574.

⁴⁴ Freud, S., *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 574.

⁴⁵ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et La Peste*, p.46: Poussant les hommes à se voir tels qu'ils sont.

La ruse des Esprits mauvais prévoyant que la contagion allait cesser dans les corps, saisit avec joie cette occasion d'introduire un fléau beaucoup plus dangereux, puisqu'il s'attaque non pas aux corps mais aux mœurs. En effet, tel est l'aveuglement, telle et la corruption produite par les spectacles.⁴⁶

The physical corruption of the plague, like the spiritual corruption of this theater, is born from a pagan exchange with the Divine. These evil spirits first blight the body but, foreseeing a cure, also contaminate the theatrical play so as to also blight the mind. The plague becomes a means of communication, a touch between the metaphysical forces and man. Artaud's Theater of Cruelty seeks contact with the mysterious and the metaphysical, with the psychic materials of dreams that produce a primal and mythic ideation of the self (a body without organs as Deleuze explains it) that would supplant language, its structure and the Word at its very essence, God: *La cruauté c'est d'extirper par le sang et jusqu'au sang dieu, le hasard bestial de l'animalité humaine, partout où on peut le rencontrer...Je vous dis qu'on a réinventé les microbes afin d'imposer une nouvelle idée de dieu.*⁴⁷

The knowing force of God is displaced by a living theater that exceeds the human, attacks the senses of the spectators and presses man to see himself as he really is⁴⁸. Like the plague, theater should be "delirious" and "communicative;"⁴⁹ its powers

⁴⁶ St. Augustine, City of God, as quoted by Artaud in *Le Théâtre et la Peste*, p. 38.

⁴⁷ Artaud, A., *Pour en finir avec le Jugement de Dieu*, p. 59.

⁴⁸ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et La Peste*, p. 46.

must extend beyond an influence on morality, psychology or philosophy, and leave its mysterious (and miraculous) mark on the body: *Saint Augustin dans la Cité de Dieu accuse cette similitude d'action entre la peste qui tue sans détruire d'organes et le théâtre qui, sans tuer, provoque dans l'esprit non seulement d'un individu, mais d'un peuple les plus mystérieuses altérations.*⁵⁰

The theater of cruelty, similarly to the plague, is a sovereign and gratuitous force that disrupts the structures of language and thought. This theater is realized, not through intellectual nor exclusively physical means, but rather through the production of violent, dream-like images that shatter illusions, revealing life on stage: *Je propose donc un théâtre où des images physiques violentes broient et hypnotisent la sensibilité du spectateur pris dans le théâtre comme dans un tourbillon de forces supérieures. Un théâtre qui abandonna la psychologie raconte l'extraordinaire, mettent en scène des conflits naturels... Un théâtre qui produit des transes.*⁵¹

If the Theater of Cruelty can be read as a marginalized theater but not an impossible one, how might it function as a theoretical framework for literary texts that exist outside of the canon? In the second section of this chapter I will read the ritual of cannibalism, as described by various Early Modern writers, as a theater of cruelty that blurs the boundaries of social and individual identities. Cannibalism disrupts the patriarchal structure of Subject-King-God and imagines a radical other, granting new agency to the Native Indians as “actors” in a tragic drama of their own invention.

Of Cruelty and Cannibalism:

In 1936, prior to his internment in Rodez, Artaud visits Mexico in search of a

⁴⁹ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et La Peste*, p. 39.

⁵⁰ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et La Peste*, p. 38.

⁵¹ Artaud, A., *Pour en finir avec les chef-d'œuvres*, p. 128.

primal truth, a truth he insists has been lost upon Western culture but is preserved by the remote Indian tribe of the Tarahumara. He painstakingly chronicles his journey in *Voyage to the Land of the Tarahumara* (1936), as well as in several manifestos gathered under the title of, *The Trip to Mexico* (1936) and, most intimately, in his letters to Jean Paulhan. It is with rare enthusiasm that Artaud explains to his close friend the potential that he sees in a study of Indigenous culture: *Je me trompe beaucoup peut-être mais la civilisation d'avant Cortez c'est une civilisation à bases Métaphysiques qui s'expriment dans la religion et dans les actes par une sorte de totémisme actif, répandu partout, créateur de Symboles et qui donne issue à toutes sortes d'applications.*⁵² The history of the Native Indians, their landscapes filled with signs and symbols, magic and violence were in Artaud's own words, compatible for an exploration of his theories.

But which Indian, which “Savage”⁵³ Other might stage a spectacle that could be related to Artaud's project and open to its applications? The 18th century depiction of the Noble Savage in France, as first elaborated in the works of Rousseau but also present in various theatrical works from the Enlightenment, offers little in the ways of signs, symbols or metaphysics. The Indian Other is often a mouthpiece for the European writer, allowing him to expose the veiled criticisms he might have of his own society or his utopic vision of the world. The “Savage” in the works of the Romantic period and most notably in the novels of Chateaubriand, is converted and has had all traces of cultural identity effaced. In these works, the Savage Other becomes a domesticated myth, but if we look at texts that describe the indigenous tribes of the 16th and 17th centuries, we will discover a cruel theater at the antipode of the domestic myth. Although limited by an

⁵² Artaud, A., *Oeuvres*, p. 659. Lettre à Jean Paulhan 19 juillet 1935.

absence of texts written by these indigenous peoples, this proves less of a problem if we read their actions from the framework of a theater of cruelty. Cannibalism as a theater of cruelty can displace the anthropophagic ritual from the genre of ethnography and grant the act a more powerful force, a theatrical force, which staged a theater that allowed man to see the transmutability hidden in life and the self.

Alfred Metraux's landmark study, *Religions et Magies Indiennes D'Amérique du Sud* (1967), collects the descriptions of cannibalistic rituals and practices written by 16th and 17th century writers such as Andre Thévet, Jean de Léry, Claude d'Abbeville and Hans Staden, the Dutch adventurer whose *True History*, published in 1557, recounts his nine month imprisonment among the Tupinamba. Metraux distills and organizes the works of these and other writers. His work is considered to be the definitive ethnographic account of the cannibalistic rituals of the Tupinamba Indians of Brazil and my analysis of this ritual is based on his writings. In Metraux's *Cérémonies Préliminaires A L'Exécution du Prisonnier*, he describes a five day theatrical performance that I believe belongs to the theater of cruelty not through the simplest understanding of cruelty, but in its truest sense, by performing a theater *qui abandonna la psychologie raconte l'extraordinaire, mettent en scène des conflits naturels*.⁵⁴

⁵³ The term "Savage" is broadly if not exclusively used in the works of the Early Modern Period.

CHAPTER I:

NARRA-TUEURS: ARTAUD, LÉRY AND THE TUPINAMBA

When you have skinned, gutted and cleaned them, and cooked them thoroughly (their flesh being as white, delicate, tender and flavorful as the white meat of acapon), it is one of the best kinds of meat that I have eaten in America. It is true that at the beginning I was horrified at the notion, but after I had tasted it, as far as meat was concerned, I sang the praises of nothing but lizards.

Jean de Léry

It is dangerous to imagine history as countless abortive beginnings of perversely incomplete narratives, sexual narratives, narratives of distant bodies that haunt us, insolent bodies, *narra-tueurs* that would, if listened to, seduce (with stories) and kill what is known. 20 years after leaving South America, Jean de Léry, haunted by the plumed bodies of the Tupinambá, publishes *Histoire d'un Voyage Faict en Terre du Brésil* (1578), as an attempted return to that land, those people and their anthropophagic practices. When it comes to close calls, near misses and what might not have been, *Histoire d'un Voyage*, barely escapes oblivion's claw. Léry begins the 600 page book by listing the number of impediments that could have kept the reader from his memoirs, written in the red ink of *pau brasil* containing *les chose notables par moy observées*.⁵⁵ Amidst the turmoil of religious wars, the manuscript is lost twice, first in Lyon, later in a frenzied departure from Sancerre. 20

⁵⁴ Artaud, A. En finir avec les chefs-d'oeuvre, p. 128.

years after his return from Brazil, he offers the reader his excuses and this book:

Voila comme jusques à present ce que j'avois escrit de l'Amerique,
m'estant tousjours echappé des mains n'avoit peu venir en lumiere.⁵⁶

There is an element of the uncanny in the strange disappearance and resurgence of such an unorthodox text, as well as in the obsessive repetition of the theme of cannibalism in Jean de Léry's own life. This Brazilian history is a strange piece of correspondence from a "rather remote province" which has serendipitously fallen into the reader's hands. As we read Léry's two books *Histoire d'un Voyage Faict en la Terre de Brésil* (1578) and *Histoire Méorable du Siège et de la Famine de Sancerre* (1573) we discover that these stories can be seen as mirror images. The haunting apparition of cannibalism appears in both histories; the private language of these texts seems uncannily intended for each other. Regarding Léry's titles, both books are missing the precision of a definite article; *Histoire d'une Voyage* as well as *Histoire Méorable du Siège*, tell a story of a voyage, a story of a memorable siege, these two accounts are porous in their delineations. In neither instance does Léry propose *the* definitive reading of either event but rather modestly, commits to writing an eye witness account of the things he has seen inscribing both texts in the realm of the spectacular.

Are these histories meant to be read simultaneously, if so, how are they to be

⁵⁵ Jean de Léry, *Histoire d'un Voyage Faict en la Terre du Brésil*, (Genève: A. Chuppin, 1578; éd. critique, Paris, Le Livre de Poche, "Bibliothèque classique," 1994), p. 62.

interpreted? Is Léry destined to be considered an ethnographer of a failed Huguenot expedition to Brazil, or an historian committing to writing the horrors committed during the Wars of Religion in France? This project makes two propositions: First I venture on a literary reading of a historical text. I share Claude Levi-Strauss' conclusion: "[*Ce livre*] est de la littérature" and I would take this statement one step further and argue that Léry's work is inherently theatrical. As such, his description of the Tupí, and in particular their cannibalistic rituals, marks an evolution in history's telling, allowing for a "perverse" alternate theater that is neither Catholic nor Protestant, savage nor civilized, but rather history, theater and poetic reverie combined. Secondly I argue that what we discover in Jean de Léry's two histories is an example of an uncanny Theater of Cruelty. The theater brought forth by Antonin Artaud, though metaphysical, is decidedly non-religious and in order to read Léry as participant in a certain "genealogy of cruelty," it is important that the work be read from a non-theological schema. Thus, the psychoanalytic theory of the uncanny becomes important in our understanding of these texts because it allows us to read Léry from a non-theological framework. Later, as I present the details of the anthropological theater of cannibalism depicted by Léry in both his books, I will argue that the anthropophagic rituals he describes can be interpreted as plausible embodiments of the theater imagined by Artaud.

The Uncanny

Freud approaches the uncanny as a "marginal" and "neglected" area of aesthetics. He argues that feelings of repulsion and distress are rarely examined and the uncanny is

⁵⁶ Léry, *Histoire d'un Voyage Faict en la Terre du Brésil*, p. 62.

often relegated to the realm of the frightening and dreadful without marking precise distinctions between these varied associations. Freud first defines the uncanny as an emotion, “the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar. How this is possible, in what circumstances the familiar can become uncanny and frightening, I shall show in what follows.”⁵⁷ Thus one of the possible definitions of the *unheimlich* is a strange, unnatural familiarity that opposes the conditions of the *heimlich*, the homely and familiar, marking the antonymic and interdependent relations between these terms. The dissonance of this altered correspondence between the *heimlich*, relating to the familiar and comfortable, with the *unheimlich*, which in Latin marks the *locus suspectus*, stirs up fear.

Freud gives the example of E.T.A. Hoffman’s *Der Sandmann* (1816), to explore the uncanny in literature. In “The Sand-Man,” the recurring apparition of this uncanny figure in the mind of a young boy, carries disastrous results through his adulthood. Nathaniel, the central character of Hoffman’s story, is haunted by childhood memories of the Sand-Man, who he holds responsible for the death of his father. The question of whether the Sand-Man is the phantasmatic figure of nursery tales who tears out the eyes of children, or the real lawyer Coppelius, who visits Nathaniel’s father weekly before his mysterious death – is never resolved. This blending of magical thinking and realism creates the intellectual uncertainty that Freud attributes, at least in part, to the uncanny. Although my outline of Hoffman’s story and Freud’s analysis must be brief, the idea of being robbed of one’s eyes and the anxiety resulting from this blindness, is pertinent to a

⁵⁷ Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Trans. James Strachey. (London: 1955), vol. XVII, p. 220.

study of ethno-cultural writings in the 16th century, which are founded on the veracity of accounts written by eye-witnesses. What a story of the uncanny such as *Der Sandmann*, and travel narratives share, is the intellectual uncertainty in the representations of an Other that is not fully understood but embodies the hybrid identities of a real barbarity with a metaphysical monstrosity:

The prime function of the term ‘barbarian’ and its cognates, ‘barbarous,’ ‘barbarity,’ etc., was to distinguish between those who were members of the observer’s own society and those who were not. The observers themselves—those, that is, who applied these terms to others...were faced with the task of classifying and describing something they felt to be alien to them.⁵⁸

As these terms were attributed to the peoples of the New World, Anthony Pagden explains that such classifications were based on “something they felt to be alien.” Barbarity was attributed to New World bodies and spectacles and it was always separate from the writing spectator, whose eyes could be trusted to note deviances from civilized behaviors. André Thevet’s writings often links mythology with the discovery of the New World, and Amerindians are recurrently described as mythological creatures.⁵⁹ Yet there was much controversy surrounding Thevet’s most notable works, *Les Singularités de La France Antarctique* (1557) and *La Cosmographie Universelle* (1575). This controversy regarded the veracity of his accounts and also concerned the authenticity of his authorship, given

⁵⁸ Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1982), p.15.

⁵⁹ André Thevet, « Abordement de quelques Espagnols en une contrée où ils trouvèrent des Amazones » in *Les Singularités de La France Antarctique*, 1557, (Chandeigne : Paris, 1998) pp 316-323.

that throughout his stay in Brazil, he was ill and bedridden: “Les Singularités restaient l’œuvre d’André Thevet, auteur par défaut d’un livre conçu, rédigé et publié en dehors de lui, durant une fièvre persistante rapportée du Brésil en France, et pourtant extraordinairement féconde.”⁶⁰ Léry sets out to dispel the myths that surround the writings of this Catholic priest, and offers instead a “true account” of what was seen: “Therefore, in order to refute these falsehoods of Thevet, I have compelled to set forth a complete report of our voyage. And before I go on, lest you think that I am complaining about this new ‘cosmographer’ without just cause, I will record here the libels that he has put forth against us.”⁶¹ The uncanny, could not seem further from a text seemingly intended dispel the falsehoods in Thevet’s writings, yet Léry establishes an unexpected correlation between Thevet’s slanderous accounts of the Protestant colonizers and the inaccurate description he gives of the New World ‘Savages.’ Quoting Thevet in his preface to *L’Histoire d’un Voyage*, he cites the exact passage in *La Cosmographie*, where Thevet accuses the Protestant colonizers of trying to attack the Catholic mission in Brazil:

Moreover [says Thevet] I had forgotten to tell you that shortly before there had been some sedition among the French, brought about by the divisiveness and partiality of the four ministers of the new religion, whom Calvin had sent in order to plant his bloody Gospel... These gallant preachers, who were trying only to get rich and seize whatever they could, created secret leagues and factions, and wove plots which led to the death of some of our men.⁶²

⁶⁰ Thevet, *Les Singularités de La France Antarctique*, p. 26.

⁶¹ Jean de Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*. Translation and Introduction by Janet Whatley. (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1992), p. xlvi.

⁶² Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p. xlvi.

What is unique to the French story of colonization in Brazil, is that unlike the Spanish Conquest, France must confront notions of alterity and barbarity in French identities due to the Wars of Religion. Thevet couples the barbarous actions of New World Indians with the savagery of Protestants spreading Calvin's "bloody gospel." L  ry is thus invested in a more nuanced project than that of most New World explorers. Not only does he intend to dispute the knowledge that is being propagated by the King's cosmographer, he also gives an account of the Calvinist mission in Brazil, intending to legitimize their religious project. This situates L  ry in closer proximity to the savage Other than most European narrators, and alludes to future, uncanny and unexpected moments of identification with the barbarous tribes of Brazil.

As Freud develops his theory on the *unheimlich*, he explains the two primary means by which the uncanny appears: via the presence of the double, and also by the factor of the repetition of the same.⁶³ Throughout his writing L  ry accentuates the *d  doublement* of his identity, simultaneously present in France with momentary lapses in his 'French writings,' that describe the spectacles he witnessed in Brazil. Michel de Certeau describes L  ry's spatial trajectory as a series of successive retreats:

A partisan of the Reformation, L  ry flees France in favor of Geneva; he leaves Geneva, and with a few companions he sails off for Brazil in order to take part in the foundation of a Calvinist sanctuary... he withdraws again, disgusted by the admiral's [Villegagnon] theological fluctuations. He wanders for three months

⁶³ Freud, "The Uncanny," p. 236.

among the Tupinambous from the end of October 1557 until the beginning of January 1558, before following the same road in opposite direction from Brazil to Geneva... His is a reverse pilgrimage.⁶⁴

As he journeys backwards, L  ry’s ghost is already taking shape. Memory becomes an unassailable tyrant that blurs, tangles and disrupts the present. That which was “at first sight,” inscribed to the purity of writing, is muddled in the *d  j   vu*, in that which was already seen and experienced through eyes of the young man that edits the five editions of *Histoire d’un Voyage* and writes the cruel history of *Histoire du Sancerre*. Nicolas Royle’s study of the uncanny and Freud offers a crucial distinction in the definition of this term which bears important considerations in our reading of the uncanny in a 16th century text: “It is, in fact, one of the unstated assumptions of Freud’s essay that the uncanny is to be theorized in non-religious terms.”⁶⁵ If read through the lens of the uncanny, what would otherwise be classified as a Protestant narrative becomes, a literary creation that must be read without the *Heimlich* trope of God, or with this familiar trope disfigured. I believe that L  ry’s “reverse pilgrimage,” achieves this on two occasions: during the cannibalism scene described in *Histoire de Sancerre* as well as in the Cara  be ritual of *Histoire d’un Voyage*. Michel de Certeau describes the chanting scene of the Cara  be thusly: “An absence of meaning opens a rift in time... Nothing can be either transmitted, conveyed, or preserved.”⁶⁶ This “rift in time,” as Certeau describes it, reflects moments in which L  ry’s text accesses an uncanny Theater of Cruelty and could be understood as

⁶⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*. Translated by Tom Conley, (Columbia University Press, New York, 1988), p. 213.

momentarily free of religious meanings.

Sancerre

Cannibalism is a subject that obsessively repeats itself throughout L  ry's life and not only in his extraordinary travels. As Frank Lestringant clearly points out in his exhaustive research on the topic, cannibalism was not unknown in 16th century France, where local allusions to this practice appear alongside the complex assemblages of man-eating myths emerging from the New World. Most famously, Montaigne's essay, *Des Cannibales*, accounts for a surprisingly positive description of the New World tribes that partake in anthropophagic practices. After having observed and spoken to three of the Indians arriving from the Americas, Montaigne deems these cannibals "normal" and arrives at a surprising conclusion: "I find that there is nothing barbarous and savage in this nation, by anything that I can gather, excepting, that every one gives the title of barbarism to everything that is not in use in his own country."⁶⁷ Other, more intimate forms of cannibalism known in Europe during the Wars of Religion, seem to pose a more serious threat. We find, therefore, that the profound trauma in French imagination, vividly present in L  ry's writings, deals with two forms of cannibalism in particular: cannibalism stemming from hunger, and cannibalism stemming from vengeance. Cannibalism as the exotic practice of an indigenous tribe in Brazil and the cannibalism practiced in France during the Wars of Religion.⁶⁸ L  ry's first analysis of anthropophagic rituals as given in

⁶⁵ Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny*, (Routledge, New York, 2003), p. 20.

⁶⁶ Certeau, *The Writing of History*, p. 213.

⁶⁷ Michel de Montaigne, "Of Cannibals," *The Essays of Montaigne*, (Heritage Press: New York, 1946), p. 275.

⁶⁸ Frank Lestringant, *Une Sainte Horreur: ou le Voyage en Euchariste XVIe-XVIIIe Si  cle*, (Presses Universitaires de France: Paris, 1996), p. 62.

Histoire d'un Voyage is literary, comparing the practice of usury in France to this most abominable crime:

Je diray en premier lieu sur ceste matiere, que si on considere à bon escient ce que font nos gros usuriers (sucçans le sang et la moëlle, et par consequent mangeans tous en vie, tant de vefves, orphelins et autres pauvres personnes... il vaudroit mieux couper la gorge tout d'un coup, que de les faire ainsi languir.⁶⁹

Cannibalism is first figurative, a literary tool, a thing of language, a powerful means of describing economic inequality and exploitation that is more perverse than the Brazilian cannibalism he is witnessing. In time, however, his description gains physical proximity to France and near the end of the chapter devoted to the anthropophagic practices of the Tupi, L  ry confides to his readers the "Parisian tragedy" of August 24, 1572, and the commonplace atrocities seen during the St. Bartholomew massacre:

Entre autres actes horribles à raconter, qui se perpetrerent lors par tout le Royaume, la graisse des corps humains (qui d'une façon plus barbare et cruelle que celle des sauvages...) ne fut-elle pas publiquement vendue au plus offrant et dernier encherisseur? **Les foyes, coeurs, et autres parties des corps** de quelques-uns ne furent-ils pas mangez par les furieux meurtriers, dont les enfers

⁶⁹ L  ry, *Histoire d'un Voyage Faict en la Terre du Br  sil*, p. 375.

ont horreur?⁷⁰

This passage appears in *Histoire d'un Voyage* but it invites a comparative study of cannibalism in France and Brazil, read side by side, overlapping the events taking place in Europe and America. What we encounter in many of L  ry's descriptions of cannibalism, is that this theme seems to be imbued with the capacity to eliminate time on both continents; past, present and future merge into a familiar but unsettled horror, taking on the temporal qualities of Artaud's Theater of Cruelty, where one must, "refaire la cha  ne, la cha  ne d'un temps o   le spectateur dans le spectacle cherchait sa propre r  alit  , permettre    ce spectateur de s'identifier avec le spectacle, souffle par souffle et temps par temps."⁷¹ In these momentary descriptions, L  ry loses his footing; Brazil is superimposed onto a village in France, the barbarism of the French and savageries of the Tupinamb   are understood as different, but the reasons for this lack clarity. The narrating subject, L  ry's civilizing self, cannot make sense of what he sees and so he repeats and restages through language the things that he has witnessed.

Quoting Schelling, Freud points out the following, "Unheimlich is the name for everything that ought to have remained... secret and hidden but has come to light."⁷² In these moments of uncanny, ungodly recognition, the body is accounted for but dismembered, what should not be seen is seen, (hearts, livers, and *autres parties*). L  ry's narration needs, desperately to establish order, mark parameters, reconstitute the shape

⁷⁰ L  ry, *Histoire d'un Voyage Faict en la Terre du Br  sil*, p. 376.

⁷¹ Antonin Artaud, « Un Athl  tisme Affectif », *  uvres*, (Quatro Gallimard : Paris, 2004), p. 589.

⁷² Freud, "The Uncanny," p. 224.

and understanding of bodies, sacrifice, monsters and God. As both cases are carefully interwoven, L  ry begins the task of differentiation by attributing values; immediately he argues that the European practices he observed are by far worse than their Brazilian double.

Although the cannibalism of the Tup   is horrifying, it holds a strange logic that aligns the action with an ethical good or truth, while the cannibalism occurring in France exists as a by product of an economy of persecution, performed against the Protestant minority by the Catholic Church. Moreover, not only are Protestants cut to pieces, livers, hearts and other parts consumed, they are lured to partake in these practices themselves. In *Histoire M  morable du Si  ge de Sancerre*, L  ry devotes a chapter to “extreme hunger,” that speaks to the chapter on cannibalism in *Histoire d'un Voyage*. In what amounts to a strange inventory of consumption, L  ry steadily lists a series of foods that escalate in offensiveness to the laws of nature. Driven mad by hunger, the town’s people devour horses, rats, cats, dogs, anything alive; belts, shoes, harnesses, parchment, anything dead. As the list progresses, horrors collected, classified, taxonomized, object to object, the reader and L  ry fall prey to a hypnotic sway broken and finally culminated in cannibalism:

Simon Potard, Eugene sa femme, et une vieille femme... avoyent mang   la teste, la cervelle, le foye et la fressure d’une leur fille aag  e d’environ trios ans, morte toutesfois de faim et en langueur.⁷³

⁷³ Jean de L  ry, *Histoire M  morable du Si  ge de Sancerre*, (  ditions Anthropos: Paris, 1975), p 291.

Now to the crime of cannibalism, one must also add infanticide. L  ry goes on to describe in detail the setting of a crime: the preparation of a meal. In an enclosed and impoverished hearth that mirrors the stifled city of Sancerre, a father is incited by an elderly woman to eat the flesh of his own daughter. Unable to resist temptation he insists that his wife partake as well, which she does after some convincing. L  ry continues with the story, of which he gives an eyewitness account:

Ceste pauvre fille, cur   et rong  , et les Oreilles mang  es, ayant veu aussi la langue cuite, espesse d'un doigt... je fus si effroy   et esperdu, que toutes mes entrailles en furent esmeues.⁷⁴

L  ry is revolted, the inverted and incestuous schema of cannibalism cannot be rationalized or understood. Unable to exert mastery over this cruel matter, L  ry invokes God: "Mais, o Dieu   ternel, voicy encores le comble de toute misere et du jugement de Dieu."⁷⁵ Frank Lestringant's reading of this scene comes to the following conclusion: "le crime alimentaire ne peut   tre   clair   que par cette ascension du regard jusqu'au ciel... le cannibalisme ne perd rien de son caract  re atroce et monstrueux, mais il rentre d  sormais dans un sch  ma d'explication th  ologique."⁷⁶ Shocked by a horror that exceeds the very notion of God, L  ry invokes the bestial, the tearing down of cultural boundaries that are foundational to civilization. France's religious body and civilized identity are vulnerable

⁷⁴ L  ry, *Histoire M  morable du Si  ge de Sancerre*, p. 291.

⁷⁵ L  ry, *Histoire M  morable du Si  ge de Sancerre*, p. 290.

⁷⁶ Lestringant, *Une Sainte Horreur*, p.65.

and endangered by an inherent savagery in man that is never enlightened by God. L  ry does not lift his gaze to the sky, his injunction invites God to look down and behold the horror of a decidedly foreign, ungodly, *unheimlich* space. What I believe L  ry avows, in spite of himself, is precisely the opposite of Lestringant's conclusion: cannibalism will not enter a theological schema, this scene represents non-culture and non-religion, what he has seen cannot be understood nor contained not even within this amplest of narratives.

In *La Mise en Sc  ne et La M  taphysique*, Artaud uses another disturbing family scene to illustrate how an artist might create the metaphysical language needed for a Theater of Cruelty. Granting Lucas van den Leyden's painting, *Les Filles de Loth*, a place of prime importance in his writing Artaud analyzes the metaphysical ideas that are presented in this painting thus so: "Je dis en tout cas que cette peinture est ce que le th   tre devrait   tre s'il savait parler le langage qui lui appartient."⁷⁷ Artaud finds that Leyden's image stages a familial scene of such horror that the structures of civilization are ruptured (the taboos of incest and cannibalism are closely related) and through that break, a metaphysical language emerges: "Loth qui semble mis l   pour profiter de ses filles... comme un frelon...[c'est] la seule id  e sociale que la peinture contienne. Toutes les autres id  es sont m  taphysiques."⁷⁸

What are the metaphysical ideas that this painting evokes and do they match L  ry's own disturbing tableau of a cannibal hearth in Sancerre? For Artaud the metaphysical ideas shown in this painting underscore fatality. Like the village of Sancerre

that is under siege, Lot and his daughters seem to be preparing for a final meal before the impending chaos, shown in the background, reaches their hiding place. The divine, represented by the fire descending from heaven seems to be looking down on this summit of perversion and misery. Although both Artaud and L  ry invoke a biblical scene – having compared the siege of Sancerre to the siege of Jerusalem – this does not tie the narrative to a theological discourse. L  ry refers to this instance of cannibalism as “spectacular cruelty,” trying to understand Eugene Potard’s actions in a wider context: “L’histoire tragique et prodigieuse durant le siege de Jerusalem, o   ceste mere et femme honorable, dont Joseph faict mention s’armant contre les loix de nature, occit et mangea le propre fruit de son ventre, avec horreur des plus cruels qui veirent ce spectacle.”⁷⁹ Armed against the laws of nature, the horrors of cannibalism stage, above chaos and fatality, the inadequacy of language to contain what has been seen: “Les impuissances de la Parole dont cette peinture sup  r  ment mat  rielle et anarchique semble nous d  montrer l’inutilit  .”⁸⁰ With the futility of the word, Artaud argues that a metaphysical language emerges and is accompanied by a language of the concrete: “Je dis que la sc  ne est un lieu physique et concret qui demande qu’on le remplisse, et qu’on lui fasse parler son langage concret. Je dis que ce langage concret, destin   aux sens et ind  pendant de la parole... et que ce langage physique et concret auquel je fais allusion n’est vraiment th   tral que dans la mesure o   les pens  es qu’il exprime   chappent au langage articul  .”⁸¹ L  ry’s inventory of consumed objects, clearly shows the stylistic use of a language that is

⁷⁷ Antonin Artaud, « La Mise en Sc  ne et la M  taphysique », (  uvres, (Quatro Gallimard : Paris, 2004), p. 524.

⁷⁸ Artaud, « La Mise en Sc  ne et la M  taphysique », p. 524.

⁷⁹ L  ry, *Histoire M  morable du Siege de Sancerre*, p. 280.

⁸⁰ Artaud, « La Mise en Sc  ne et La M  taphysique », p. 524.

⁸¹ Artaud, « La Mise en Sc  ne et La M  taphysique », pp. 524, 525.

both concrete and metaphysical and therefore by Artaud's definition, theatrical. L  ry weighs the eating of books in Sancerre, with as much symbolic importance and detail as the cannibal crime he describes: "Non seulement les peaux de parchemin blanc furent mang  es, mais aussi les lettres, tiltres, livres imprimez et escripts en main, ne faisant difficult   de manger les plus vieux et anciens de cent    six vingts ans."⁸² Sancerre ate its own history, ate its future in its offspring and nothing could absolve their collective guilt or satiate their hunger.

L  ry's confusion regarding temporality and space when facing the trope of cannibalism is evident in this citation: "Reprenant le propos un peu de plus loing, sans poursuyvre si exactement l'ordre du temps et des mois."⁸³ The cannibalism of Brazil blends into the Sancerrian uncanny, the unhomely space, creating a Theater of Cruelty through the use of a paradoxically concrete and metaphysical language, that is unable to fully express nor contain the narrating subject's horror. The identification between the savage and the self fluctuates due to the uncanny, disfigured presence of the homely in Sancerre. With the loss of this locus of reference, the physical and the textual dissolve into the pure and terrifying spectacular.

A Momentary Taste of Being

Early upon his arrival to Brazil, we discover L  ry's pleasure: to observe meticulously and note, all that surrounds him, all of the time. "A fin de mieux voir    mon

⁸² L  ry, *Histoire M  orable du Si  ge de Sancerre*, p. 285.

⁸³ L  ry, *Histoire M  orable du Si  ge de Sancerre*, p. 279.

plaisir,”⁸⁴ L  ry’s *devise*, is the phrase that could qualify the beginning of each chapter. From the strange animals and fauna of the New World, to the anthropophagic practices of the Tup  , L  ry will do most anything in order to catch a better glimpse of the monstrous that so delights him. L  ry’s *Histoire d’un Voyage* follows the trajectory of similar travel narratives, dedicating several chapters to the details of his journey from France to Brazil and the descriptions of the natural surroundings of the New World. The text diverges from an otherwise established literary tradition when L  ry reveals the circumstances that force him to flee Villegagnon’s camp. Villegagnon, sent to found a Protestant colony in Brazil, turns once again to Catholicism, imposing a forced exile on L  ry. Once again amidst religious persecution, this time in the New World and enacted by Villegagnon, the devout Protestant seeks refuge among the Tupinamb  . L  ry’s own take on the aberrant practices of the Catholic Church can be seen in the opening passages of *Histoire d’un Voyage*. He openly denounces Villegagnon’s actions, who having left France to start a Protestant mission has a change of heart and starts incorporating more Catholic rituals into religious ceremonies: “Without knowing how it might be done, they wanted not only to eat the flesh of Jesus Christ grossly rather than spiritually, but what was worse like the savages named Ouetaca of whom I have already spoken, they wanted to chew and swallow it raw.”⁸⁵ For L  ry, Catholicism’s insistence on these pagan blood rites surpasses the barbarism of even the Tup  : “These words and expressions are figures – that is, that Scripture is accustomed to calling the signs of the Sacraments by the names of

⁸⁴ L  ry, *Histoire d’un Voyage Faict en la Terre du Bresil*, p.399.

⁸⁵ L  ry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p. 41.

the things signified.”⁸⁶

Léry is part of an exhaustive discourse of his time that accuses Catholicism of partaking in cannibalistic rituals. According to the 16th century proponents of this theory, the taking of the Eucharist points to the symbolic defiance of a fundamental prohibition repeatedly violated by the Catholic Church. The transubstantiation believed in and performed, is as symbolically aberrant and theologically worse than the cannibalism of the Tupinambá because it is willfully chosen in spite of the enlightened status of Europeans. What is propagated in mass is a bloody, totemic feast where the *peccator* eats the flesh not of his own offspring but of God’s divine son. Calvin’s injunction would have the Reformed Church stand apart in order to “discover [a] difference... [between] his peculiar flock and wild beasts.”⁸⁷ Maggie Kilgour’s study of cannibalism and communion, deftly outlines the unconscious implications of this rite: “It is a ritual to restore a primal unity, in which man and God are returned to an original identity, ideally not through absolute identification but through the obfuscation of identity and rigid role-playing. Both God and man play ‘host,’ a metaphor that itself has a variety of meanings which permit both identification and differentiation. Man is a host in that he literally takes God, in the form of the Host, into himself... The act is one of reciprocal incorporation, as both are identified by the single word and substance, the Host, so that the absolute boundary between inside and outside, eater and eaten, itself appears to disappear.”⁸⁸ Léry’s absolute resistance to the Eucharist ritual is interesting in light of the relative nuance he shows in

⁸⁶ Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, pp. 40, 41.

⁸⁷ Jean Calvin, *Institute of the Christian Religion in Classics of Protestantism*, (Philosophical Library: New York, 1959), p. 115.

⁸⁸ Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1990), p. 15.

his discussion of cannibalism. The process of differentiation and identification instituted for centuries as central to European cultural identity is aberrant in ways the consumption of human flesh in the New World is not. The atheism and savagery of Brazilian Indians, categorized by their bodies and war rituals crystallize the essential difference of the American Other but that difference, though at times shocking, is far from horrifying and proves to be for Léry a source of unmitigated and unexpected spectacular pleasure:

I will say this about it, however: although I have often seen men of arms over here, both on foot and on horseback, nevertheless I have never taken so much pleasure in seeing the infantry, with their gilded helmets and shining arms, as I delighted then in seeing those savages do battle. There was not only the entertainment of seeing them leap, whistle and wield their swords so dexterously in circles and passades; it was also a marvel to see so many arrows fly in the air and sparkle in the sunbeams with their grand featherings of red, blue, green, scarlet and other colors, and so many robes, headdresses, bracelets, and other adornments of these natural feathers with which the savages were arrayed.⁸⁹

The energy, movement and attraction present in Léry's writing is clear. Rather than seeing the Tupinamabá as monstrous he describes their bellicose actions with a distant but vivid and admiring tone. As a Protestant whose religious tenants focus on the dissolution of all external structures, Léry emphasizes the external forms and materialism

⁸⁹ Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p.120

of Tupí rituals with unexpected detail. Léry's writing breaks from the traditional models of travel narratives where the descriptions of the Native peoples are given without lyricism. The poetry in these passages conveys a spectacular chaos and seems to follow an Artaudian model that would by any mean possible convey the energy from the scene: "Il y a d'ailleurs dans la façon dont le peintre décrit ce feu quelque chose d'affreusement énergique, et de troublant comme un élément encore en action et mobile dans une expression immobilisée Peu importe par quels moyens cet effet est atteint, il est réel."⁹⁰

Amid these early observations Léry concludes that cannibalism, among the Tupí, is a part of war and is not linked to nutrition nor to sensual pleasure: "Although all of them confess human flesh to be wonderfully good and delicate" Léry writes, "nonetheless it is [practiced] more out of vengeance than for the taste."⁹¹ Thus in the ethical economy of what we'll call Brazil, this greatest of European horrors and fear, forms the basis for the definition of good. Léry refers to cannibalism as a "strange tragedy," and it is upon this term that we must now concentrate. The ritual of cannibalism is the perpetual theater of life and death, war and peace, the external staging of interior beliefs. Though staged as an act of vengeance, it's meaning transcends the simply political, marking a social triumph that extends itself not only over enemies but over death. Even the prisoners whose flesh is to be consumed seem aware of the larger "role" that they are playing in this theater of cruelty and, "consider themselves fortunate to die... publicly in the midst of their enemies."⁹²

The necessary lapse of time in this anthropophagic drama, adds an important

⁹⁰ Artaud, « La Mise en Scène et La Métaphysique », p. 523.

dimension to the ritual. Once captured the prisoner is given a wife who tends to his every physical need in preparation for the inevitable *dénouement* of the play. During this time, the enemy is assimilated into all parts of society, and the duration of his life depends on his usefulness to the community. In her anthropological study of the Tupinambá, Isabelle Combès makes an important distinction between the cannibal meal and the ritual murder that precedes it. Both these acts, though intricately related always exclude each other: “Le meurtrier ne mange pas – il jeûne au contraire –, les cannibales par contre n’ont pas pris part au meurtre.”⁹³ This relation/distinction between killers and eaters, is crucial to our understanding of Léry’s role in this cannibalistic theatre. If he is not an eater, or a killer what then is his function? I believe that Léry’s role as narrator of these primal scenes implicates him in surprising ways to the act of cannibalism. If Léry’s story is based on observation, it is also paradoxically based on the author’s blindness. Artaud describes the Theater of Cruelty as a series of images that shift violently and give birth to related images in a same spiritual vein.⁹⁴ Léry’s writing is a collection of similar explosions of images and ideas. The text was published with copper engravings of Brazilian Indians by Theodore de Bry that merit a detailed study and Léry includes a musical passage and a brief dialogue between himself *Le Grand Huître* (a name he adopted in Brazil) and a local Indian.

⁹¹ Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p. 127.

⁹² Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p. 125.

⁹³ Isabelle Combès, *La Tragédie Cannibale Chez Les Anciens Tupi-Guarani*, (Presses Universitaires de France: Paris, 1992), p. 154.

⁹⁴ Artaud, « La Mise en Scène et la Métaphysique », p. 529 : Le passage intempestif, brusque d’une image pensée à une image vraie... qu’elle donne naissance à son tour à d’autres images de la même veine spirituelle.

Shifting from the images of cannibalism, Léry outlines the actual murder and meal relatively briefly in comparison to other writers of the period, concentrating on the philosophical structure behind these cannibalistic practices. European observers first interpreted cannibalism as an act of vengeance between warring tribes, which they chronicled with fear and fascination. Having captured the enemy during war, the Indians would create an elaborate *mise en scène* before their anthropophagic meal. The duration of captivity varied, a prisoner could be killed immediately if he were old, or he could be housed and cared for, given a wife and kept for several years before the formal announcement of his sacrifice.⁹⁵ In preparation for that day, the greatest warriors of the tribe would braid a sacrificial rope known as the *mussurana*. This delicate work could take as long as a year to complete, when finished, the first day of official ceremonies could begin.

On the first day of the ceremonies, the *mussurana* was whitewashed in lime and tied in complicated knots. The prisoner's front part of the head was shaved and he traced tribal drawings on his own body with *genipa* and dyed his legs red with *roucou*. Women from the tribe would also paint their bodies in black before the prisoner (s), imitating the act of painting themselves like the enemy. That night the prisoner would be taken to a different hut and, surrounded by women, he would not be allowed to sleep due to the chanting that would go on the entire night. In this anthropophagic theater the divide between spectator and spectacle is shattered. The prisoner is as much a spectator to his fate as he is actor, forced to participate in the ceremony by painting his own body without assistance. The symbolic importance of the *mussurana* links the prisoner temporally,

⁹⁵ Women from warring tribes were not killed but were taken as wives.

symbolically and spatially to the spectacle, it becomes the textile/text of a theater by the Tupinamba. For Artaud a renewed understanding of time and space was crucial to develop a theater of cruelty: *Il faut pour refaire la chaîne, la chaîne d'un temps où le spectateur dans le spectacle cherchait sa propre réalité, permettre à ce spectateur de s'identifier avec le spectacle, souffler par souffler et temps par temps.*⁹⁶ Time in the cannibalistic ceremony forces the spectators and the actors to create a shared reality, one that acknowledges the absolute danger and the impending horror of the sacrifice thus extending the moment of anticipation and fear. Theater becomes life, as Artaud wished, and repressed fears erupt into daily consciousness shaping, with the agonizing details of the *mussurana*, the outside world. The identification that will take place is so complete that on the first day of the ceremonies the prisoner transforms himself, as do the women, creating a strange reflexivity and blurring of identities.

On the second day the Indians gather long reeds and organize them in a circle. That night, setting the reeds on fire, they dance inside the burning circle while the victim throws stones at his aggressors. The third day is devoted entirely to dancing and creating a trance like state over the entire village: *Hommes et femmes, réunis sur la place du village, une trompette à la main, dansaient au son de cet instrument, martelant alternativement le sol avec chaque pied, suivant un rythme déterminé*⁹⁷. On the fourth day the victim is washed and released. What follows is a restaging of the symbolic capture. Once the prisoner is set free he is chased by the warriors and tied with the *mussurana* using various elaborate knots. The focus shifts from the prisoner to the club that will be used to kill him. The club is painted

⁹⁶ Artaud, Oeuvres, p. 589.

⁹⁷ Metraux, A., Religions et Magies Indiennes d'Amérique du Sud, p. 57.

and adorned with feathers and shells. These objects used for its decoration are thought to be magical and used for protection during war. That night the women of the tribe sing and pray over the club, infusing it with magical powers. The fifth and final day is the day of the ritual sacrifice. The prisoner is once again painted in black, this time by his enemies, except for his feet, which are reddened with *roucou*. He is covered in the same shells and feathers of the club and while the tribe members drink, the prisoner is led by a group of old women to the place where he will be killed:

Durant ce temps, celui qui allait procéder à l'exécution, le « matador » restait enfermé dans sa hutte. Il en sortait magnifiquement paré...ses parents et ses amis venaient le chercher. Le « matador » s'avance en dansant et faisait le tour de la place en se contorsionnant et en roulant les yeux d'une façon terrible. Avec les mains, il imitait le faucon prêt à s'abattre sur sa proie.⁹⁸

The victim is given his own club so that he might defend himself from the blows of the matador. Within this theater of cruelty, individual identity integrated into a whole larger than the self. The conclusion of this five-day spectacle could be read as a form of sublimation and transcendence in which the body of the victim is transformed countless times into the double of his enemy. The matador, representative of the entire tribe, is also subject to a final transformation from warrior to falcon. This last scene is one of a natural savagery that exceeds the human. The ambiguity of the cannibalistic meal is implicit as it

implies change and continuity. All ordinary acts of incorporation presume an absolute distinction between inside and outside, eater and eaten, but these distinctions break down in the anthropophagic theater. The spectacle finally ends with the consumption of the victim's flesh and yet this theater is never finished as the victim/actor continues to sustain the enemy and becomes a part of him. Cannibalism, when studied as its own theater and not as a screen for European fears and fantasies, takes on performative significance because it embodies the seemingly impossible ideas of a theater of cruelty. This performance of prelinguistic⁹⁹ lawlessness, results in the creation of a new bodily figure, the cannibal, who exceeds the hyperdelineation of categories at the center of the Early Modern period. The cannibal reflects another possible construction of the self, separating man from the confines of a hierarchal structure that only accounts for Subject-King-and God: *Le théâtre, comme la peste, est à l'image de ce carnage, de cette essentielle séparation. Il dénoue des conflits, il dégage des forces, il déclenche des possibilités.*¹⁰⁰

The chapter following Léry's discussion on cannibalism is entitled, "What May Be Called Religion Among The Savages" and in his opening paragraph Léry makes two claims: The Tupinambá know nothing of writing (they have no holy *script*) and nothing of God. What may be called religion is therefore a strange adherence to the dictates of cannibalism where the good are those that eat their enemies, and are rewarded for their virtue in the afterlife:

Not only do they believe in the immortality of souls, but they also firmly maintain

⁹⁸ Metraux, A., Religions et Magies Indiennes d'Amérique du Sud, p. 62.

⁹⁹ Although the Native Indians do have language, the ritual of cannibalism is more concerned with chanting, dancing and singing than with the pronouncement of words.

¹⁰⁰ Artaud, A. Oeuvres, p. 521.

that after the death of bodies, the souls of those who have lived virtuously (that is, according to them, those who have properly avenged themselves and have eaten many of their enemies) go off behind the high mountains where they dance in beautiful gardens with the souls of their forebears... While on the contrary, the souls of the effeminate and worthless, who have neglected the defense of their fatherland, go with Aygnan (for so they call the devil in their language), by whom, they say, these unworthy ones are incessantly tormented.¹⁰¹

In this passage Léry, intent on establishing the otherness of what passes for religion, inadvertently highlights the elements that impinge dangerously on the essence of his own beliefs. This simulacrum of an *other* heaven and an *other* hell, is uncanny by its godless functionality where, the unique character of Christ's body is replaced by the flesh of countless, anonymous men. Paradoxically by consuming their enemies, so they are saved. Léry continues, "False prophets" named *Caraiibes*, travel from village to village, diffusing these godless ideas. As killers of European discourse, these *narra-tueurs* work through music and their effects are binding. These wandering men tightly wind their stories between neighboring tribes, establishing a shared alternative history on the nature of the soul and the supernatural.

Here, Léry's description of the *Caraiibes* ceremony enters the space of night writing, not simply by the fact that what follows is one of the few "night scenes" in this history, but also by the obscurity and confusion that pervades his own narration. Léry

¹⁰¹ Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p. 136.

acknowledges his fear, and relinquishes any grasp he might have on what may follow: “Although I had been among the savages for more than half a year and was already fairly well used to their ways, nonetheless (to be frank) being somewhat frightened and not knowing how the game might turn out, I wished I were back at our fort.”¹⁰² Nevertheless, he not only stays but gets closer to the action, expecting to see “something extraordinary.”¹⁰³ Léry and his companions are initially confined to the feminine space of the household, a space reserved for the uninitiated where he can interpret the images but not language, which is sung. At night, as he approaches the men’s quarters, Léry makes a small hole in the wall and observes at length the unfolding of this savage ritual:

We quietly withdrew to a corner to drink in the scene... I had been somewhat afraid; now I received in recompense such joy, hearing the measure harmonies of such a multitude... I stood there transported with delight. Whenever I remember it, my heart trembles, and it seems their voices are still in my ears.¹⁰⁴

The voyeuristic enterprise of Léry’s writing, now fully and finally embraces his fear and his language makes explicit the sexual undertones that have been pulsating throughout this history. Though in his earlier descriptions of the naked body of the Indian, Léry steadily refuses their sexuality and his own, the writer finally “takes in” the impenetrable lyricism of the Tupinambá (of their sung words, he can only make out a

¹⁰² Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p. 141.

¹⁰³ Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p. 140.

¹⁰⁴ Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p. 140.

primitive panting, *heu beuare, heura, heuraure*). The Narrra-tueurs' theater exists, as Artaud intended, outside of language: *Ce que le théâtre peut encore arracher à la parole, ce sont ses possibilités d'expansion hors des mots, de développement dans l'espace, d'action dissociatrice et vibratoire sur la sensibilité.*¹⁰⁵ Relinquishing the position of the colonizer, allowing himself and his narrative to be colonized, the narrator is taken in by these *narra-tueurs*, these killers of words and killers of discourse that offer him for a moment an alternate taste of being.

This scene of “night writing,” is nearly a moment by moment reconstruction of Léry's daylight encounter with a lizard at the beginning of his voyage. Lost at high noon, Léry accompanied by his men, comes across a monstrous creature:

Seeing him, and fearing that if we took flight he would outrun us and, having caught us, would swallow us up and devour us, we looked at each other stunned, and remained stock-still. This monstrous and terrible lizard opened its mouth; because of the great heat (for the sun was shining and it was about noon), it was breathing so hard that we could easily hear it. After it had stared at us for about a quarter of an hour, it suddenly turned around... It has occurred to me since, in accord with the opinion of those who say that the lizard takes delight in the human face, that this one had taken as much pleasure in looking at us as we had felt fear in gazing upon it.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Artaud, A.,

¹⁰⁶ Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p. 83.

Although these passages are separated by several hundred pages the spectacular fear and delight with the lizard and the *Caraïbes* is the same. Horror is surmounted by the interiorization of the lizard's terrifying flesh: "It is true that at the beginning I was horrified at the notion, but after I had tasted it, as far as meat was concerned, I sang the praises of nothing but lizards."¹⁰⁷ The same is true of Léry's aural surrender to a music and a ritual he could not understand. What goes unsaid because it remains unseen by the European voyeur, by this perpetual observer, is that Léry as ethnographer gra(fts)/gra(phs) himself unnaturally to this foreign soil and is in spite of himself, consumed and changed by it. Léry in the uncanny territory of the *narra-tueurs* leaves Brazil without realizing that his modest *devise*, "*voir mieux qu'avoir*" has permanently altered him. What he has seen and consumed provide a schema for questioning the Protestant and Catholic narratives that existed creating a space for conceptual displacement, if not transforming than at the least creating the potential to transform, hegemonic discourses.

Reading Léry alongside Artaud defies us to carve out an alternative, New World theater. Perhaps it may be unorthodox to study the obvious horror of cannibalism as theater alongside the uncanny events in Brazil and Sancerre but this illustrative and textual stage provides an example of a sixteenth-century travel narrative that achieves all the basic tenants of Artaud's Theater of Cruelty, and why not look for this theater here? "Au lieu d'en revenir à des textes considérés comme définitifs et comme sacrés, il importe avant tout de rompre l'assujettissement du théâtre au texte, et de retrouver la notion d'une sorte de langage unique à mi-chemin entre le geste et la pensée."¹⁰⁸ This real

¹⁰⁷ Léry, *History of A Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Transl. Janet Whatley, p. 82.

¹⁰⁸ Artaud, « Le Théâtre de La Cruauté, Premier Manifeste, 1935 », *Œuvres*, p. 558

manifestation of diverse temporal and geographical “stages of cruelty” in the Renaissance can be illuminated by the atemporal eruption of an Artaudian alchemy. L  ry’s literary and historical enterprise speaks, (if it cannot come fully into being through writing) to the powers of a Theater of Cruelty, capable of causing a momentary shift, in one’s momentary taste of being.

CHAPTER II

DEVIANT THEATERS:

CABEZA DE VACA AND THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

Naufraños (1555) written by Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca tells the story of the failed Narváez expedition and the wanderings of its four survivors. In 1527, Pánfilo de Narváez gained royal authority to conquer the mainland of “La Florida” which at the time extended from Río de las Palmas to the Florida Peninsula. Charles V entrusted Narváez with this task, rather than the more experienced Hernando Cortés, since the latter had fallen out of favor with the Spanish emperor, having conducted his expeditions along the Pacific coast north of Mexico City and to the south, as far as Honduras without royal authority.¹⁰⁹ Narváez, a long time enemy of Cortés, was therefore entrusted with the tasks of conquering and governing the Floridian provinces. His fleet consisted of six hundred soldiers, colonizers and sailors and included a dozen wives and five monks.¹¹⁰ All, save for four, would be lost. With the absolute failure of Spanish interests along the Floridian coasts, the central story of this *relación* is the shipwreck and the subsequent wanderings

¹⁰⁹Krieger, Alex D., Margery H. Krieger, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *We Came Naked and Barefoot: The Journey of Cabeza de Vaca across North America*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002) p. 21, 22.

¹¹⁰ Krieger, *We Came Naked and Barefoot*, p. 21, 22.

that Cabeza de Vaca and his men endured between 1527-1536. In light of the failure of the colonial project and in the absences of home, the preservation of the body became the central enterprise of the men that survived. This required cross-cultural transactions between Native tribes and Europeans that upset the usual order of their exchanges. I argue that *Naufragios* offers Spain a dubious gift, that of a New World theater, which exposes the deficiencies in the Spanish machine of colonization. Further, Cabeza de Vaca's narration seems to enact elements of theatricality as understood in Artaud's Theater of Cruelty, where actor and spectator are transformed by the spectacle they jointly create. By focusing on particular chapters that describe the rituals of Southwestern Native American tribes, as well as the performances that transform Álvaro Núñez into the shaman Cabeza de Vaca, we will witness the materialization of drama, as Artaud would have it: *pleine de décharges, des perspectives infinies des conflits*.¹¹¹

First published in 1542 as *La Relación*, Cabeza de Vaca's account of the Narváez expedition would become better known under the title *Naufragios*, reprinted over a decade later in 1555. This second edition included corrections, additional passages, names of places previously forgotten, as well as the insertion of chapter titles. These strategies of narrative exposition clearly highlight the dramatic elements of his misadventures. However, what could be interpreted as a literary and strategic maneuver on the part of an opportunistic first person narrator proves more complicated. As Cabeza de Vaca, principle actor of the narrative, confronts increasingly dangerous situations, a new theater emerges marking his text as different from a traditional *relación* which would focus on the transcription of a very specific kind of knowledge. Thus the narration becomes more

¹¹¹ Antonin Artaud « Le Théâtre Alchimique » dans *Le Théâtre et son Double suivi de Le Théâtre de Séraphin*,

than a dramatic retelling of a failed expedition and is overtaken by the performative endeavor of a Spaniard transforming into an Amerindian Shaman. The stakes of this theater are high, as this theatrical transformation will determine the survival of the actor. Alvar Núñez's dédoublement into Cabeza de Vaca calls to mind some of Artaud's thoughts on the nature of the actor: *Rejoindre les passions par leur forces, au lieu de les considérer des abstractions pures, confère à l'acteur une maîtrise qui l'égale à un vrai guérisseur.*¹¹² In order to skillfully perform this Theater of Cruelty, Cabeza de Vaca must convince the Amerindian spectator of the authenticity of his performance so that they might accept him as a healer.

An apocryphal story links Cabeza de Vaca's name to the actions of an ancestral hero. It was Alvar Nunez's mother, Doña Teresa, whose surname was Cabeza de Vaca, or Head of a cow. This name has been said to have originated as a title of honor from the Battle of Las Navas de Tolsa in the Sierra Morenas on 12 July 1212, when a peasant named Alhaja detected an unguarded pass and marked it with a cow's skull. A surprise attack by the Spaniards over the pass defeated the Moorish enemy and King Sancho of Navarre created the title, Cabeza de Vaca, to honor the peasant Alhaja.¹¹³ This service rendered to the crown of Spain is paradoxically personified in Cabeza de Vaca, who, estranged from a knowledge of the New World, is forced to repeat, relive and perform discursively the reterritorialization of a new spiritual and physical terrain:

Bien pensé que mis obras y servicios fueran tan claros y manifestos como fueron

(Paris : Gallimard, 1964), pp. 76, 77.

¹¹² Antonin Artaud « Un athlétisme affectif » dans *Le Théâtre et son Double suivi de Le Théâtre de Séraphin*, (Paris : Gallimard, 1964), p. 203

¹¹³ Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Alvar, and Cyclone Covey. *Cabeza de Vaca's Adventures in the unknown interior of America*. (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), p. 8.

los de mis antepasados y que no tuviera necesidad de hablar para ser contado entre los que con entera fe y gran cuidado administran y tratan los cargos de Vuestra Majestad... Mas como ni mi consejo ni diligencia aprovecharon para que aquello a que éramos idos fuese ganado conforme al servicio de Vuestra Majestad, y por nuestros pecados permitiese Dios que de cuantas armadas a aquellas tierras han ido ninguna se viese en tan grandes peligros ni tuviese tan miserable y desastrado fin, no me quedó lugar para hacer más servicio de éste, que es traer a Vuestra Majestad relación.¹¹⁴

The failure of Cabeza de Vaca's colonial project opposes his legacy; where his ancestor's service was "clear" and "manifest," he must seduce the distinguished spectator and rescue his name from obscurity through a series of "moving pictures," through an affective as well as mobile stage. Knowing he must supplement the failed actions of his voyage with performance, following Schechner's definition of this term as "twice-behaved behavior,"¹¹⁵ Cabeza de Vaca begins a theatrical reframing of the Narváez expedition that stages his interactions with barbarous nations and valorizes that which in no other context would be considered of worth: *peligros, extrañas tierras, animales que en ella se crían, diversas costumbres, bárbaras naciones con quien conversé y viví*. Throughout *Naufragios*, Cabeza de Vaca is invested in this theatrical reframing of his failed expedition. Victor Turner's writings on performance theory and ethnography can help explain how the strategy of framing may be used to analyze anthropological or ethnographic material in a

¹¹⁴ Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Alvar, and Juan Francisco Maura. *Naufragios*. (Madrid: Cátedra, 1998) pp. 75, 76.

theatrical context:

To frame is to discriminate a sector of sociocultural action from the general ongoing process of a community's life...To do this it must create-by rules of exclusion and inclusion-a bordered space and a privileged time within which images and symbols of what has been sectioned off can be "relived," scrutinized, assessed, revalued, and, if need be, remodeled and rearranged.¹¹⁶

This 'reevaluation, remodeling and rearrangement' of which Turner speaks and which he considers theater, is precisely what Cabeza de Vaca states as his project in the prologue of his narrative, addressed to the King, as well as in the conclusion of that same account: *Pues he hecho relación de todo susodicho en el viaje, y entrada y salida de la tierra hasta volver a estos reinos, quiero asimismo hacer memoria y relación.*¹¹⁷ In the revised *Naufragios*, Cabeza de Vaca outlines multiple theatrical frames and hierarchically arranges them, first addressing Charles V, devoting later sections to *el gobernador*, Pánfilo de Navráez, and consigning the remaining chapters to the actions of an all important first person narrator, a nameless *yo*, who chronicles his enslavement by Indians and his eventual liberation, mediated through his performance as merchant and shamanic healer. Cabeza de Vaca progressively moves his writing from the prologue, which is centered in the royal court and focuses on the king's full authority to a space beyond the frontier of the empire and beyond other

¹¹⁵ Schechner, Richard, *Between Theater & Anthropology*, Foreword by Victor W. Turner, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), p. 36.

¹¹⁶ Turner, Victor, "Performing Ethnography," in *The Performance Studies Reader*, Bial, Henry, (New York: Routledge, Second Edition 2007) p. 324

¹¹⁷ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 219.

colonial authorities. In lieu of these hierarchical spaces, he discursively fashions a mobile, spectating self, a witness capable of acquiring credibility in the eyes of his reader by giving a ‘true account’ of an expedition that differs from all other *crónicas*. Although his writings are punctuated by what Michel de Certeau has called modalities of witnessing, utterative markings such as “I saw” and “I heard”¹¹⁸,” Cabeza de Vaca’s text goes beyond giving an account of the marvels *seen* and enters the realm of the performative, as survival dictates his active participation in a theater that radically differs from the theater of conquest. His shamanic transformation into *físico*¹¹⁹, reminds the reader that his performance will be inextricably tied to the body, as language becomes increasingly unstable. Even in his final iteration as an American prophet, whose suffering parallels the suffering of Christ, Cabeza de Vaca assures his followers the salvation of the body while never fully committing to the salvation of their souls. With these frames of his life scrutinized and relived, Cabeza de Vaca derives meaning and offer his interpretations of the New World as a gift in lieu of gold, *pues este todo es el que un hombre que salió desnudo pudo sacar consigo*.¹²⁰

Cabeza de Vaca’s nine year journey across the American Southwest took place in an ever changing landscape, where the quest to restore order seemed futile in a land of shifting signifiers. Unable to impose European logic on a ‘New World,’ Cabeza de Vaca reexamines and incorporates savage symbols in his performance. Objects and characteristics of perceived savagery such as nudity will be appropriated as signs of Cabeza de Vaca’s own cruel and uncompromising virtue. An arrow, which first appears in the text as a sign of war, will become evidence of friendship, its good faith crystalized in

¹¹⁸Certeau, Michel de, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, Translated by Brian Massumi, Foreword by Wlad Godzich, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1986), p. 68.

¹¹⁹ The Spanish word used by Cabeza de Vaca to describe his role as shamanic healer.

Cabeza de Vaca's final surgery where the arrowhead becomes a relic that testifies to the miraculous power of his shamanic healing. Catholicism and magic are thus woven into Cabeza de Vaca's singular gospel, where a pagan god and Christ share a single name.

These "savage symbols" will become resemanticized as they are gradually appropriated by Cabeza de Vaca into his theater of cruelty. Victor Turner's view on anthropological theater once again proves insightful in our reading of this text: "*Les symbols sauvages*," ... *have the character of dynamic semantic system, gaining and losing meanings—and meaning in a social context always has emotional and volitional dimensions—as they “travel through” a single rite or work of art.*¹²¹ Cabeza de Vaca's survival dictated a performative 'traveling through' these symbols as well as radical assimilation to a way of life imposed by an outside, foreign other.

Before entering into a detailed discussion of Cabeza de Vaca's transformation, I think it is necessary to contextualize *Naufragios* into the larger body of *crónicas* emerging from the Americas. The term "chronicles" does not point to a specific genre, although *cartas relatorias*,¹²² were first used by Colón and Vespucci, diaries and other forms of testimonials were also admissible to the royal court. Walter Mignolo explains how these texts, in spite of their various forms, served a single purpose: *[Estos] informes que son el cumplimiento de una obligación, “traer en relación.”*¹²³ These official documents written by the conquistadores, were a direct response to the detailed questionnaire that the Spanish

¹²⁰ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 76.

¹²¹ Victor Turner, *Liminal to Liminoid*, p. 22.

¹²² Mignolo, W., *Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista*, Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana / coord. por Luis Inigo Madrigal, Vol. 1, 1992 (Época colonial), ISBN 84-376-0334-X, págs. 57-116, p. 70.

¹²³ Mignolo, W., *Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista*, p.68.

Crown formulated in its desire for information.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, many chroniclers strayed from the official format in order to justify their position and obtain recognition from the Crown. Chroniclers were therefore always aware that they were addressing the Imperial power and as such, the eyewitness testimonies they offered in their writings deferred to the larger religious, cultural and political discourses that were shaping Spain:

Lo que el escritor “verá” en las Indias; parcialmente su ver estará condicionado por lo que los reyes quieren saber...En fin aparece aquí una de la primeras características de las relaciones y es que ellas no transcriben la observación “libre” de quien escribe, de lo que ve, sino que responden, de alguna manera, a los pedidos oficiales.¹²⁵

Cronicas, which were written to mediate the cultural passage of two worlds, failed to accurately describe the new culture they encountered because of the obligation to perpetuate the kind of knowledge sought by the Spanish crown. With this in mind, we may ask how Cabeza de Vaca’s *Naufragios*, relates to the many *relaciones* of this textual tradition. Unable to give an account of the successful conquest of indigenous tribes or the discovery of gold, Cabeza de Vaca is only able to offer the Crown information on the Native people of the area and their practices, hoping that this would prove of value. For this purpose, Cabeza de Vaca employs a rhetoric that blends Native American and Spanish cultural codes, indicating the degree to which survival required an apparent savagery and adaptability to the indigenous way of life, as he wandered, *perdido y en cueros*.

¹²⁴ Mignolo, W., *Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista*, p.70.

What follows is the chronicling of a series of failures and the rapid diminishing of Spaniards who succumb to death from disease, starvation or misfortune. Additionally, gunpowder, the technology that had initially given them an advantage over the Indians, and horses, which further set the Spaniards apart from the Indigenous people, proved ineffective in the marshes and everglades of Florida. The harshness of this landscape redefined Cabeza de Vaca's discourse, from a political or religious *relación*, to an account of the body and the extremities endured by pain and hunger.

Upon arriving at the island of Santo Domingo, Narváez and his men set out to acquire *bastimentos*, provisions, primarily gunpowder and horses. The etymological contiguity between *bastimento* and the verb *bastir*, whose meaning is tied to making, disposing of, constructing and fabricating, provide insight into a fundamental delusion of the colonial project. The impact of technology would suffice (*bastaría*) in assuring the disposal of new land and new people. Thus *bastimentos*, and the men who possessed them, could fabricate new and glorious histories. The description given by Columbus of the natives as powerless and consequently harmless is supported by their lack of these civilizing commodities which, according to him, reflected the inherent cowardice of their character: *They have no iron or steel or weapons, nor are they fitted to use them, not because they are not well-built men and of handsome stature, but because they are very marvelously timorous.*¹²⁶ To contrast native temerity and achieve their colonial ends, the Narváez expedition would restage key signifying patterns and tropes of earlier conquests, repeated since the time of Columbus. With these provisions once in hand, a new faith emerged: *bastimentos* would lead to the

¹²⁵ Mignolo, W., *Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista*, p. 71.

¹²⁶ Quoted in Greenblatt, Stephen, *Marvelous possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 68.

materialization of gold and this alchemical change would ensure spiritual conversions.¹²⁷

While Narváez leaves the ships in the harbor to acquire the much sought after goods, Cabeza de Vaca and his men remain in the boats but receive a number of warnings from local sailors: *Yo quedé en la mar con los pilotos, los cuales nos dijeron que con la mayor presteza que pudiésemos nos despachásemos de allí, porque aquel era muy mal puerto y se solían perder muchos navíos en él.*¹²⁸ Reluctant to heed local counsel, the men are ultimately forced to leave as a result of the weather: *comenzó el tiempo a no dar buena señal.* Deciding to abandon the ships, Cabeza de Vaca and his men seek refuge on the island.

The hastening of the action by a hurricane situates *Naufragios* in the cosmic and emotional violence of the catastrophic, in the transformational space of the storm. As Cabeza de Vaca and his men wander the island, they witness the absolute destruction of the town: *todas las casas e iglesias se cayeron, y era necesario que anduviésemos siete u ocho hombres abrazados unos con otros para podernos amparar que el viento no nos llevase.*¹²⁹ With the religious and social bastions of the Spanish empire crushed by the elements, the men must link arms and wander, *entre arboles*, inwards, towards a savage treescape for protection. Cabeza de Vaca writes of how that night was spent: *Andando en esto, oímos toda la noche...mucho estruendo grande y ruido de voces, y gran sonido de cascabeles y de flautas y tamborinos y otros instrumentos que duraron hasta la mañana que la tormenta ceso. En estas partes nunca otra cosa tan medrosa se vio; yo hice una provanza de ello cuyo testimonio envié a Vuestra Majestad.*¹³⁰ This description is offered to Carlos V as grounds for belief in an unprecedented theater, one

¹²⁷ Greenblatt, S., *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 71: *In this rhapsodic moment, from his account of the fourth voyage, the conversion of commodities into gold slides liquidly into the conversion and hence salvation of souls.*

¹²⁸ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 78.

¹²⁹ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p.79.

¹³⁰ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 80.

without royal script. This New World theater is stripped of language and charged with sound; voices accompany nature's elemental din, rattles, flutes and bells resound throughout the night-- *nunca otra cosa tan medrosa se vio*. The Indigenous ritual that seems to be taking place concurrently with the hurricane remains unseen by Cabeza de Vaca and his men, no "actors" are present, but for themselves, as they amble in darkness. In this moment an Artaudian theater emerges stripping Cabeza de Vaca and his men of the illusion of progress and civilization and instead restoring life to loss, dissolution and danger: *Ce qui me paraît devoir le mieux réaliser à la scène cette idée de danger et l'imprévu non dans les situations mais dans les choses, le passage intempestif, brusque, d'une image pensée à une image vraie.*¹³¹ The passage from the image of *bastimentos* and progress to the real of elemental chaos is a scene that goes directly against the military theater of Spain's Golden Age, which staged conquest only in victorious terms.

Richard Texler argues that the Spanish conquest was achieved through a "military theater" led by clerics and conquistadores who staged *a crafted ethnography of manners, clothes, and other customs intended by its clerical stage managers to recall past native humiliations, to create memories of present failures, both native and Iberian, and to project future images of these colonized peoples.*¹³² Where the military theater of conquest staged the humiliation of American tribes, Cabeza de Vaca's theater focuses on the abasement of the European body, the exposition of suffering and the humiliation of the *yo* transformed into *físico*, a word whose double meaning of physique and shaman should not be overlooked. Artaud too is preoccupied with a theater of the Flesh: *For me the word Flesh means above all apprehension,*

¹³¹ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et Son Double*, p. 65.

*hair standing on end, flesh laid bare with all the intellectual profundity of this spectacle of this spectacle of pure flesh and all its consequences for the senses, that is for the sentiments.*¹³³ What *Naufragios* will accomplish will be the revealing of Spanish flesh made bare and nudity, which is associated with the savagery of Indians, will be appropriated by these representatives of the Spanish Crown.

In Spain's theater of conquest, and by this I refer to the script, actors, props and stages formally recognized by the Spanish crown, the privileged position of speech frames every choreographed moment. Written as well as spoken language facilitates the resolution of ethical questions that arise in the consideration of an Other, drawn and differentiated along legal lines. The *Requerimiento* is the official document by which Columbus took possession of the New World. Like the *bastimento*, it furnishes the theater of conquest, not with the physical materials needed for the cultural transformation of a continent but with the required script that normalized the act of dispossessing a people of their land. From 1513 onward, all *conquistadores* were obliged to read the *Requerimiento* in Spanish to inform the Native American tribes of their rights and obligations as subjects of the Spanish monarchs. This performance, or speech act to borrow J.L. Austin's more performative and precise term, 'lawfully' incorporated the nations of Native American tribes. Stephen Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions*, reminds us of the assumptions behind this performance: *A strange blend of ritual, cynicism, legal fiction and perverse idealism, the Requerimiento contains at its core the conviction that there is no serious language barrier between the*

¹³² Trexler, Richard, "We Think, They Act: Clerical Readings of Missionary Theater in 16th Century New Spain" in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, Edited by Steven L. Kaplan, (Berlin: Mouton, 1984), p. 190.

¹³³ Artaud, A., *Selected Writings*, p. 111.

Indians and the Europeans.¹³⁴ In *Naufragios*, prior to any formal encounter with the natives, the boundaries forged by imperial infrastructures are demolished; voices and instruments penetrate dismantled barriers, announcing a subversion of discursive reason. This appears clearly enough by daylight: *la barquilla de un navío puesta sobre unos arboles...halláronse también una capa y una colcha hecha pedazos, y ninguna otra cosa pareció*.¹³⁵ Symbols of civilization are dislocated and by this rendered savage and meaningless. The *bastimentos* so sought after, have undergone a strange conversion, all that remains is a cloak and mattress, torn to shreds, and a small boat caught in the branches of a tree. The symbolic staging of this scene couldn't be more striking. All signs of domesticity, *habit*, *habitat* and *habitus* (clothing, dwelling, habits) are destroyed; the thought of a return by sea proves inconceivable. This first disaster momentarily situates Cabeza de Vaca at the loss of the prospects of home, and the absence of language points him towards a necessary learning of New World habits.

Marcel Mauss' work on the notion of *habitus* seems pertinent as we observe how Cabeza de Vaca's deviant theater differs from a theater of conquest. For Mauss, the term *habitus*, refers not only to the actions of an individual possessing an acquired and trained disposition to produce certain models of activity when encountering specific situations; these individual actions are reflections of larger social models and social relations that govern entire groups or societies:

J'ai donc eu pendant de nombreuses années cette notion de la nature sociale de l' «
 habi-tus ». Je vous prie de remarquer que je dis en bon latin, compris en France, «

¹³⁴ Greenblatt, S., *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 98.

habitus ». Le mot traduit, infiniment mieux qu' « habitude », l' « exis », l' « acquis » et la « faculté » d'Aristote (qui était un psychologue). Il ne désigne pas ces habitudes métaphysiques, cette « mémoire » mystérieuse, sujets de volumes ou de courtes et fameuses thèses. Ces « habitudes » varient non pas simplement avec les individus et leurs imitations, elles varient surtout avec les sociétés, les éducations, les convenances et les modes, les prestiges. Il faut y voir des techniques et l'ouvrage de la raison pratique collective et individuelle, là où on ne voit d'ordinaire que l'âme et ses facultés de répétition.¹³⁶

Mauss goes on to argue that the way in which an individual learns to use his body is the dominant purpose of an education: *L'individu emprunte la série des mouvements dont il est composé à l'acte exécuté devant lui ou avec lui par les autres.*¹³⁷ Stripped of these “borrowed behaviors,” of the proper performances dictated by the Spanish empire, Cabeza de Vaca will relearn new habitus for the body, first instrument (and object) of conquest and last instrument to endure in the New World. If habitus is understood as the ‘common sense’ in which one interprets the world, as well as the acting out of habits that dictates behaviors, then the habitus of the Spanish empire will be recurrently challenged and ultimately discredited in *Naufragios*. Noting how Cabeza de Vaca’s performance fundamentally differs from the performances of conquest, composed of these learned habits modeled to “the Indians,” a conceptually unified group homogenized in most

¹³⁵ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 80.

¹³⁶ Mauss, M., *Les Techniques du Corps*, p. 8.

¹³⁷ Mauss, M., *Les Techniques du Corps*, p. 8.

relaciones but complicated in Cabeza de Vaca's writings, is critical in our understanding of how his performance aligns with a Theater of Cruelty.

After the enormous losses of Santo Domingo, the Narváez expedition reaches the Floridian Coast with only 42 surviving men.¹³⁸ It is there that Cabeza de Vaca first mentions the sight of gold: *y hallamos allí una sonaja de oro entre las redes*. The sight of a small golden drum caught in nets prompts a sequence of 'next days' that seems to follow the narrative structure of the Genesis myth which also concludes with 'the fall.' The imperatives decreed by the Spaniards in their attempts to formalize the relations between colonizer and colonized, will also result in failure:

Otro día el gobernador levantó pendones por Vuestra Majestad y tomó la posesión de la tierra en su real nombre, presentó sus provisiones y fue obedecido por gobernador, como Vuestra Majestad lo mandaba.¹³⁹

As flags are raised in the name of Charles V, this scene seems to showcase Spanish language armed with imperial power, however, immediately after describing the ritual of the *Requerimiento*, Cabeza de Vaca goes on to describe another encounter that discredits the validity of what had taken place earlier: *Otro día los indios de aquel pueblo vinieron a nosotros, y aunque nos hablaron, como nosotros no teníamos lengua, no los entendíamos, y nos pareció que nos decían que nos fuésemos de la tierra, y con esto nos dejaron, sin que hiciesen ningún impedimento, y ellos se fueron.*¹⁴⁰ Cabeza de Vaca further complicates any attempt to

¹³⁸ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 84.

¹³⁹ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 84.

¹⁴⁰ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 85.

distinguish between the supposed supremacy of the Spaniards, by depicting himself and his men, as having no language and being, after the initial warning, they are far from obeyed but are rather ignored by the Native tribes. While the Indians speak, in an inverted scene that mirrors the *Requerimiento*, this time it is the Spaniards that are “without tongue.” Having interpreted the signs of the Indians as threatening the Spaniards leave the tribe and enter the Floridian mainland. Again, the theater of conquest is displaced by a New World Theater of Cruelty where, *le langage des mots doit céder la place au langage par signes*.¹⁴¹ With their quest for gold postponed by hunger, the Narváez expedition approaches a new tribe of Indians in search of corn. Upon following this new tribe they discover a small amount of corn, not yet ready to be harvested and large mercantile boxes:

Allí hallamos muchas cajas de mercaderes de Castilla, y en cada una de ellas estaba un cuerpo de hombre muerto y los cuerpos cubiertos con unos cueros de venado pintados. Al comisario le pareció que esto era **especia de idolatría**, y quemó la caja con los cuerpos. Hallamos también pedazos de lienzo y de paño, penachos que parecían de la Nueva España: hallamos también muestras de oro.¹⁴²

This scene, arguably one of Cabeza de Vaca’s most theatrical, will undoubtedly bring to mind Freud’s reading of the motif of the three caskets in Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* and *King Lear*. Freud explains the presence of this motif by examining how in *The Merchant of Venice*, Bassanio is forced to choose between the gold, silver and leaden caskets in order to win Portia’s hand. It is the final casket, of the most ignoble material,

¹⁴¹ Artaud, A., « Lettres sur le langage » dans *Le Théâtre et Son Double*, p. 166.

that contains her portrait and the attended treasure of her love. In *King Lear*, when Lear is given the choice of his three daughters, Cordelia *makes herself unrecognizable, inconspicuous like lead, she remains dumb, she 'loves and is silent.'*¹⁴³ Freud interprets the boxes as being representative of women, and the leaden box is the symbolic choice of death; a mistress one might never willingly choose but with whom all must reconcile.

As Cabeza de Vaca and the remaining men of the Narváez expedition encounter these *cajas de mercaderes de Castilla*, the Spaniards once again confront their obsessive fixations with *bastimentos*. Anticipating European goods, what they find in the caskets are dead bodies of Spanish soldiers transformed by their savage surroundings. Rather than finding the dead bodies of their enemies or the dead bodies of Christians, the corpses are marked by a strange hybridity, as they are covered in painted deerskins and buried with *lienzo*, linen, canvas and cloth, *penachos*, plumes, and traces of gold. Confronted with the sight of their own death, these idolatrous bodies foreshadow the Spaniards own possible transmutations. Further, all of the boxes contain the same content, a shared fate, as the men open the caskets they confront themselves, not as reproductive beings but as martyrs or idolaters—in either case they would be impotent.

Refusing to grant these men a proper burial, Narváez sets the caskets on fire, burning what he determines to be, a 'new species' of idolatry. The implicit prohibition that interdicts not only the contact with the dead but refuses these men Christian burials, points to an inherent recognition by the Spaniards that their own kind are susceptible to savage transmutations. Furthermore, any contact with the corpses could result in

¹⁴² Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 86, 87.

¹⁴³ Freud, Sigmund, "The Theme of the Three Caskets," p.71 in *Character and Culture*. Freud, Sigmund, and Philip Rieff. 1963. New York: Collier Books.

dangerous contamination, as these European bodies are now charged with what Freud described in *Totem and Taboo* as a dangerous current, *a dangerous power, which can be transferred through contact with them, almost like an infection*.¹⁴⁴ Narváez's prohibition acknowledges a series of possible temptations that the Spaniards might succumb to in the New World, a savage drive to either kill each other, to dissolve the barely tenable hierarchy that remained in place, or to commit the unimaginable crimes that might have led these painted and plumed Spaniards to their death. The burning of these corpses advances a new understanding of culture that opposes the *habitus* of the Spanish empire.

For Artaud, to be cultured *is to burn down the forms to achieve life. It is to learn to stand upright amidst the continual movement of forms which are successively destroyed. The ancient Mexicans never knew any other approach than this passing to and fro between life and death*.¹⁴⁵ Where the colonial project is first defined by the verb *bastir*,¹⁴⁶ what follows the reading of the *Requerimiento*, the formal theater that founds European culture in the New World, are not acts of submission by the Native tribes as demonstrated through gift giving or baptisms, instead what remains of Narváez's 'military theater' is the self-perpetuated enactment of their own cultural burial in this burning of their doubled effigies. If Cortez made successful advances in Mexico because he was mistaken for a god, then Cabeza de Vaca depicts a new theater of conquest that introduces for the first time Artaudian deities. In *Textes Mexicains*, Artaud gives the example of Mexican paganism as a theater that fully embodies the principles of cruelty he had outlined in earlier manifestos. For Artaud the metaphysical exchange between pagan deities and man initiates a symbolic journey into an

¹⁴⁴ Freud, Sigmund, and James Strachey. 1989. *Totem and taboo: some points of agreement between the mental lives of savages and neurotics*. New York: W.W. Norton., p. 28.

¹⁴⁵ Schumacher, C., *Artaud on Theater*, p. 149.

ancient civilization in touch with a Theater of Cruelty. This exchange between the terrestrial and the metaphysical is central to his project: *Nous ferons descendre les dieux. Nous les décrirons dans leurs attitudes familières. Nous dirons comment les Mexicains s'y prennent pour faire apparaître leurs dieux. Nous décrirons des entrées de dieux, mi-partis rouges, mi-partis noirs, avec des pieds et des mains de plumes bleues ; et nous montrerons au milieu des danses le rouge de feu...et c'est ainsi qu'à la longue et avec patience le mythe est totalement figuré.*¹⁴⁷ While earlier *crónicas* and *relaciones* inscribed the heroic and deified images of the *conquistador* into legends that became history, Cabeza de Vaca transforms these same men into savage creatures that roam an unknown world and meet unnatural, idolatrous and anonymous deaths. Unlike the traditional depictions of *conquistadores* that enter the New World riding atop horses, dressed in regalia, ordered and divided by military and religious ranks, these European bodies are covered in a blend of New and Old World *accoutrements* mangled by death and decay. Covered in plumes and painted deerskins, they bear the markings of a deformed European civilization where scraps of linen and canvas are married to scatterings of gold. Cabeza de Vaca also shows their 'dances' as the pestilent bodies are consumed by fires. *Naufragios* also liberates Artaud's writings from what has often been an important criticism, his essentialist reading of Mexican culture. For rather than discovering a new theater in autochthonous civilizations of the Americas and appealing exclusively to a "primal race," the Theater of Cruelty as represented in *Naufragios* is a theater embodied in New World hybridities of "savage" and "civilized" men transformed into totemic figures, the burning effigies of dead gods.

The discovery of the Castilian caskets marks Narváez expedition's entrance onto

¹⁴⁶ A verb inextricably tied to, "*convertir*."

the Floridian peninsula and thus the American continent; this entrance proves theatrical, idolatrous and speechless. If Cabeza de Vaca's descriptions of these "conquistador/gods" first points to the progressive erasure of European culture in the New World, he goes so far as to enact the only model for survival, achieved through the discarding of the *habitus* they intended to propagate throughout New Spain. After seeing their awaited fate in the *cajas de mercaderes*, they attempt to leave but are incapable. Spanish knowledge not only fails to correspond to the space they now inhabit, or to the circumstances they must confront, the 'civilizing' processes they purportedly brought to the New World never accurately represented anything that the men of the expedition legitimately possessed:

Y tentados muchos remedios, acordamos en uno barto difícil de poner en obra, que era hacer navíos en que nos fuésemos. A todos parecía imposible, porque nosotros no los sabíamos hacer, ni había herramienta, ni hierro, ni fragua, ni estopa, ni pez, ni jarcias, finalmente, ni cosa ninguna...ni quien supiese nada para dar industria en ello.¹⁴⁸

Spanish technology is shown at its most barbarous when Cabeza de Vaca attempts to fabricate containers for water out of horses' legs: *Desollamos también las piernas de los caballos enteras, y curtimos los cueros de ellas para hacer botas en que llevásemos el agua.*¹⁴⁹ Soon thereafter the horse 'boots' rot, contaminating the water and making it impossible to drink.¹⁵⁰ Just as most colonial writings of the 16th century insisted on the bestial and ignorant character of Indian culture and religion, a *bestiality...which is greater than that of nay beast in the world*,¹⁵¹ Cabeza de Vaca's description of himself and his men in this passage highlights their ignorance, proving that neither through knowledge nor ingenuity, were

¹⁴⁷ Artaud, *Textes Mexicains* (1935-36), p. 673.

¹⁴⁸ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 102.

¹⁴⁹ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 105.

¹⁵⁰ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 108.

¹⁵¹ Aguilar, Francisco de, *Relación Breve de la Conquista de Nueva España*, ed., F. Gomez de Orozco, p.163.

they able to resolve their problems.

During the Valladolid debate, which took place from 1550-1551, Charles V, listened to the opposing views of Bartolome de Las Casas as well as Juan Gines de Sépulveda. Sépulveda argued that Indians should be subject to slavery because natural law dictated that ‘barbarians,’ the etymological root of this word meaning ‘foreign’ and ‘ignorant,’ were bound through natural law to serve the wise: *Porque está escrito en el libro de los Proverbios: «El que es necio servirá al sabio.» Tales son las gentes bárbaras é inhumanas, ajenas á la vida civil y á las costumbres pacíficas. Y será siempre justo y conforme al derecho natural que tales gentes sometan al imperio de príncipes y naciones más cultas y humanas.*¹⁵² Cabeza de Vaca’s theater casts doubt on the idea that the Spanish expeditions were civilized. That they are technologically inept undermines their claims to cultural superiority. What his performance reveals is that on the Floridian peninsula, the knowledge and technology, of the Spanish empire, *no bastaría*. The final stage in a long process of dis-identification and distancing from Spain occurs when General Narváez commands that his barge and the barge led by Cabeza de Vaca separate:

Yo, como vi esto, le pedí que, para poderle seguir, me diese un cabo de su barca, y él me respondió que no harían ellos poco si solos aquella noche pudiesen llegar a tierra. Yo le dije que, pues vía la poca posibilidad que en nosotros había para poder seguirle y hacer lo que había mandado, que me dijese qué era lo que mandaba que yo hiciese. Él me respondió que ya no era tiempo de mandar unos a otros; que cada uno hiciese lo que mejor le pareciese que era para salvar la vida.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Sépulveda, J.G., *Tratado sobre las justas causas de la guerra contra los indios, con una Advertencia de Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo y un Estudio por Manuel García-Pelayo*.

¹⁵³ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 114.

Forced to separate himself from a final attachment to the *patria*, and to the hierarchical order embodied by Narváez, Cabeza de Vaca also frees himself from a kind of time, *[el] tiempo de mandar unos a otros*. European logic dissolves in these new waters and each must do what he deems best to assure his own survival. The dissolution of the Spanish empire and consequently civilization is achieved through the dissolution of time and the dissolution of the sequence of “otros días” –for from this point in the narrative and onwards, the days will blend into months; years and time will not be accounted with strict adherence. This loss of European society allows Cabeza de Vaca to create his own primal culture that focuses on the survival of the body mediated through new understandings of the present. This new time, is divorced from the concept of ‘time of production,’ time as a final *bastimento*, as the last commodity by which the conquistadores might assure their salvation. European time is replaced by a present consumed not with doing but with being, however to attain this *now*, it was necessary to live through the upheaval of consciousness, hierarchy and language that each of Cabeza de Vaca’s ‘moving pictures’ staged. From this point onward, Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* fully enters an Artaudian theatrical space and temporality where a nameless *yo*, freed from a civilizing consciousness and the hierarchical structures of order embodied in the paternal figure of Narváez, is forced to confront a new reality. Narváez represents a last appeal to the civilizing structures of the Spanish empire. His audible denouncement of that order in the marking of a new time, is the first and final felicitous speech act, carried by the commander’s own voice as the two barges separate, only to permanently drift away from each other at sea.

Artaud describes men of civilization along the following terms: *un civilisé cultivé est un homme renseigné sur des systèmes, et qui pense en systèmes, en formes, en signes, en représentations.*¹⁵⁴

A Theater of Cruelty cannot be acted by such actors, in fact, to perform Artaud's theater the actor must have a new understanding of the body, *Le corps humain est un champ de guerre où il serait bon que nous revenions. C'est maintenant le néant, maintenant la mort, maintenant la putréfaction, maintenant la résurrection.*¹⁵⁵ As the two barges separate, Cabeza de Vaca cuts all physical ties with Narváez and the hierarchical structure that imposed its logic on the New World. The remaining sections of *Naufragios* will chronicle Cabeza de Vaca's physical transformation, his war wounds and his 'resurrection' as a New World messianic figure. In spite of the unlikely odds of survival, Cabeza de Vaca and his men, weak and sick from travel, live through this night of separation from Narváez and arrive at new shores to encounter new Indians. A first sign of the symbolic transformation of the New World, freed of the authoritarian chronology of the Narváez expedition, is seen in the repeated, reframed and restaged 'first encounter' and the exchange of objects between the remaining Spaniards and Indians:

El veedor y yo salimos a ellos y llamámosles, y ellos se llegaron a nosotros; y lo mejor que pudimos, procuramos de asegurarlos y asegurarnos, y dímosles cuentas y cascabeles, y cada uno de ellos me dio una flecha, que es señal de amistad, y por señas nos dijeron que a la mañana volverían y nos traerían de comer.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et La Culture*, p. 13.

¹⁵⁵ Artaud, A., *Autour de La Séance au Vieux-Colombier*, pp. 1181, 1182.

¹⁵⁶ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 118

The New World would be a world of signs and meanings transmitted without language. Arrows are no longer signifiers of war and are instead received as tokens of friendship. Heartened by the food brought by the Indians, the Spaniards repair their barge once more and attempt to sail home, *nos desnudásemos todos y pasásemos gran trabajo para echarla al agua.*¹⁵⁷ Naked and barefoot they set sail only to have the barge crash against the shore, killing three men. The sight of their miserable bodies, naked and destitute, move the Indians to tears:

Los indios, de ver el desastre que nos había venido...se sentaron entre nosotros, y con el gran dolor y lástima que hubieron de vernos en tanta fortuna, comenzaron todos a llorar recio, y tan de verdad que lejos de allí se podía oír. Cierto ver que estos hombres tan sin razón y tan crudos, a manera de brutos, se dolían tanto de nosotros, hizo que en mí y en otros de la compañía creciese más pasión y la consideración de nuestra desdicha¹⁵⁸

The failure to leave this new land, let alone conquer it, left Cabeza de Vaca and his men humiliated, *escapados, desnudos como nacimos y perdido todo lo que traíamos*. At the sight of such frailty the Indians weep and are frightened.¹⁵⁹ It is the tears of the Other that causes the shift in perception of the self. What Cabeza de Vaca proposes is a chiasmus; the state occupied by the colonizer is the deplorable state in which they had imagined

¹⁵⁷ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 119.

¹⁵⁸ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 121

¹⁵⁹ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 120: *mas cuando ellos nos vieron así en tan diferente hábito...y en manera tan extraña, espantáronse tanto que se volvieron atrás. Yo salí a ellos y llamélos, y vinieron muy espantados*

finding the Indians they intended to colonize. This inverted parallelism and the realizations derived from it, lead Cabeza de Vaca to make a radical petition. Going against the advice of the men who were with him, he asks the Indians for food and to be taken to their home. It was understood by the Spaniards that such a request would be met by hostility and the likelihood they would become sacrificial victims in either a pagan ritual or cannibalistic feast was great. With this threat vividly in mind, Cabeza de Vaca formulates his request. A response is offered but not through language. The Indians leave and later Cabeza de Vaca and his men discover they have built a series of fires to light and warm the path that will lead them to their village. Carrying the ailing Spaniards, the Indians stop at each fire along the way to ensure their warmth. When they arrive at the village, the Spaniards are brought inside an enormous tent containing multiple fires. The Indians begin to sing and dance throughout the night, while the Spaniards attended their own impending sacrifice. Having accepted the hospitality of the Indian host and consumed their food, Cabeza de Vaca relinquishes his body to the mercy and the appetites of the savages. The Spanish confidence in their supposed mastery over the American landscape is disproven as their survival pends on the hospitality of 'barbarous' nations. In Maggie Kilgour's study, *From Communion to Cannibalism*, she points out that, *the need for food exposes the vulnerability of the individual identity, enacted at a wider social level in the need for exchanges, communion, and commerce with others, through which the individual is absorbed into a larger corporate body.*¹⁶⁰ In this act of submission, Cabeza de Vaca crosses the cultural borderlands that have to this point contained his identity and opens himself to a discursive self-fashioning as actor, spectator, and participant in a New World theater no

¹⁶⁰ Kilgour, Maggie. 1990. *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation*. Princeton,

longer scripted by European knowledge and understanding. As the men are led by the hand in a frenzied flight of transformation, the soil of the New World barely makes contact with the feet of these would be conquistadores: *Nos tomaron, y llevándonos asidos y con mucha prisa, fuimos a sus casas...Desde que veían que habíamos tomado alguna fuerza y calor, nos llevaban hasta el otro tan aprisa, que casi con los pies no nos dejaban poner en el suelo.*¹⁶¹ Rather than experiencing any antagonistic rivalry during the Indian ceremony, ritual, theater—whose meaning is undecipherable but could very well culminate in his death—Cabeza de Vaca enters the savage enclosure of a tent as a willing participant and is absorbed, in the words of Kilgour, into a larger corporate body. The consanguinity of cruelty and theater merge here, without bloodshed. Cabeza de Vaca faces death and discovers a new reality, without language he enters the space of action and shadows: *Le théâtre dans la mesure où il cesse d'être un jeu d'art gratuit, où il redevient actif et retrouve sa liaison avec des forces, reprend son caractère dangereux et magique, et s'identifie avec cette sorte de cruauté vitale, qui es la base de la réalité.*¹⁶² It would be a mistake to think that this moment foreshadows a smooth passage and initiation into Indian society. Although this chapter marks Cabeza de Vaca's dramatic entrance into Indian culture, the Indigenous subject, as monolithic block, is also shattered in his New World theater, some tribes will prove hostile where others are hospitable.

Cabeza de Vaca will further distance himself from his European identity as he wanders from tribe to tribe, and this will once again be mediated through the theme of hunger. In another inversion of ideological tropes, Cabeza de Vaca describes the loss of civilization, as Spanish Christians he encounters in his travels are driven to cannibalism,

N.J.: Princeton University Press. p. 6.

¹⁶¹ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 121, 122.

much to the horror of the Native Americans who deemed this practice barbarous:

Cinco cristianos que estaban en el rancho en la costa llegaron a tal extremo, que se comieron los unos a los otros, hasta que quedó uno solo...De este caso se alteraron tanto los indios, y hubo entre ellos tan gran escándalo, que sin duda si al principio ellos lo vieran, los mataran, y todos nos viéramos en grande trabajo¹⁶³.

Peggy Reeves Sanday study on cannibalism explains the larger symbolic meaning of this act: *Cannibalism is never just about eating but is primarily a medium for nongustatory messages—messages having to do with the maintenance, regeneration, and in some cases the foundation of the cultural order.*¹⁶⁴ The cultural order established by these five Christians points to a regressive state that horrifies *even* the Indians. We must remember that during this period food, body and flesh demarcated firm boundaries in Europe's religious discourse. The practice of eating polluted food was punished during the Spanish inquisition and marked an essential difference between Christians and *marranos*, converted Muslims or Jews. That these five Christians would arrive *a tal extremo* and commit to sensual and bodily transgressions, aligns them with greater evil than even those of the Indian "savage." In *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, Bartolomé de Las Casas paints a portrait of Spaniards as bloodthirsty despots. The word tyrant is used countless times in the text, as well as slaughterers, but in a very specific description of the Tyrant of Panuco, De Las Casas relates a series of categories that weakens the case for Spanish civility:

¹⁶² Artaud, A., V. 158: Lettre adressé à André Rolland de Renéville le 13 septembre, 1932 qui constitue une autre version du début du Premier Manifeste.

¹⁶³ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 125.

After the perpetration of all the Cruelties rehearsed in New Spain and other places, there came another Rabid and Cruel Tyrant to Panuco who acted the part of a bloody Tragedian as well as the rest and sent away many Ships loaden with these Barbarians to be sold for Slaves, made this Province almost a Wilderness, and which was deplorable, Eight Hundred Indians, that had Rational Souls were given in Exchange for a Burthen bearing Beast, a Mule or Camel.¹⁶⁵

In the rehearsed cruelties of conquest, De Las Casas marks six important distinctions. There is the Tyrant, who is also the bloody Tragedian, the Barbarians who upon embarking the ship will be transformed into Slaves, and the rational souls of the Indians that will be exchanged for beasts of burden. The term tyrant and tragedian imply a form of agency, that although condemned as evil, is able to establish and perpetuate a flourishing and sophisticated mercantile system that transports “Barbarians” and transforms them into commodities as slaves. Although their actions are “deplorable” through these actions Spaniards are able to extract material resources from the Wilderness and dominate their surroundings. What Cabeza de Vaca’s shows is that without the enormous machinery of conquest, these five Christians left alone and in no way subjugated by the Indians transgressed moral, civil and now natural law. The Indians prove to be rational souls, just as De Las Casas argued. Cabeza de Vaca discovers in the

¹⁶⁴ Sanday, Peggy Reeves. 1986. *Divine hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., p. 3.

¹⁶⁵ De Las Casas, B., *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, p. 38.

flesh what De Las Casas supposed.

In contrast to the cannibalism of the Spaniards, Cabeza de Vaca describes the local Indians as participants in a social order that exemplifies a multiplicity of virtues. He describes the inhabitants of the Isle of Misfortune (name given in the second edition of *Naufragios*) as “tall” and “well formed.” He goes on to describe how the men of the tribe pierce their nipples and perforate their lower lip. Women in the community “do the hard work” and the children are the most beloved members of society. With regard to marriage, “each man has a woman” that he acknowledges as a wife and only the medicine man enjoys the privilege of having more than one partner. They bury their dead in religious ceremonies and burn their medicine man; during this ceremony they hold great festivities. The complete inversion of civilization in Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* seems clear. The Indians follow a structured and functioning model of society; their customs though different from those of Europeans, do not devolve into the savagery of cannibalism in spite of the harshness of the landscape.

In the proceeding chapters Cabeza de Vaca’s transformation into a New World messianic figure, performing a New World gospel of salvation, is mediated through a fear of cannibalism coupled with incessant hunger. The hostile environment of the New World wages a cruel battle on his long-suffering body: *De esto traía yo los dedos tan gastados, que una paja que me tocasse me hacía sangre de ellos, y las cañas me rompían por muchas partes, porque muchas de ellas estaban quebradas y había de entrar por medio de ellas con la ropa que he dicho que traía.*¹⁶⁶ This final sentence is written ironically to accentuate his nudity. Through his suffering, his enslavement and humiliation by Indian captors and because of the

¹⁶⁶ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 133.

determining factor of his hunger, Cabeza de Vaca is forced to situate himself between two cultures: his own primal culture which holds on to elements of Christian and Spanish identity but could not be identified as strictly adhering to either, and the cultures imposed by the Indian societies with whom he has contact.

As a merchant, Cabeza de Vaca trades goods used in Native religious rituals, the same totemic objects that would have been considered savage and idolatrous in earlier passages: *Lo principal de mi trato era pedazos de caracoles de la mar y corazones de ellos y conchas, con que ellos cortan la fruta que es como frísoles, con que se curan y hacen sus bailes y fiestas.*¹⁶⁷ In exchange, he receives animal skins, although he wanders naked, and ochre a red pigment used for painting the body. The fluidity of mercantile transactions precedes his shamanism but alludes to it by the religious items central to his trade. Procuring *bastimentos* infused with metaphysical potential, Cabeza de Vaca in these later chapters inhabits a hybrid identity that grants him liberty and access to the lands of warring tribes: *y ya con mis tratos y mercaderías entraba en la tierra adentro todo lo que quería.* Not seen as an absolute outsider given his abilities to trade with the local people, he is enslaved by a hostile tribe and forced to assume the role of shamanic healer:

En aquella isla que he contado nos quisieron hacer físicos sin examinarnos ni pedirnos títulos, porque ellos curan las enfermedades soplando al enfermo, y con aquel soplo y las manos echan de él la enfermedad, y mandáronos que hiciésemos lo mismo y sirviésemos en algo. Nosotros nos reíamos de ello, diciendo que era burla y que no sabíamos curar; y que por esto nos quitaban la comida hasta que

¹⁶⁷ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 133.

hiciésemos lo que nos decían.¹⁶⁸

Although the Spaniards laugh at this idea and refuse to perform in this Indigenous ritual, their reality is soon dictated by their need for food. Cabeza de Vaca incorporates native practices with Christian prayers, sacred indigenous gourds are used alongside crosses, blending both cultures into his healing practices. At this point he is, paradoxically, a living effigy of the dead bodies found in the caskets of Castile. Through this forced and violent transformation he fully assumes a performance of a Theater of Cruelty that undermines traditional theaters of conquest by blending the practices and objects of rituals, sacred and profane. While examining the ‘points of contact’ between theater and anthropology, Richard Schechner asks the following questions: *Either permanently as in initiation rites or temporarily as in aesthetic theater and trance dancing, performers—and sometimes spectators too—are changed by the activity of performing. How is a permanent transformation or a temporary transportation achieved?*¹⁶⁹ Although Artaud is usually interpellated through Derrida’s *La Parole Soufflée*, a magisterial study that tells the story of a thieving God who steals the word of the speaking self and underscores Artaud’s profound anti-theology, Schechner’s line of questioning anchored in performance theory, might help explain the practice of Artaud’s theater, that though speaking to poststructuralist and psychoanalytic critics, is grounded in performance. The anthropological performances that Schechner studies, examined side by side with Artaud’s Theater of Cruelty share multiple points of contact based on the liminality of the performer. Using the deer dance of the Arizona Yaqui, as a case study for the intersection of theater with anthropology,

¹⁶⁸ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 129.

Schechner describes the movements of the deer dancer thusly: At the moment when the dancer is “not himself” and yet “not not himself,” his own identity, and that of the deer is locatable only in the liminal areas of “characterization,” “representation,” “imitation,” “transportation,” and “transformation.” All these words say that performers can’t really say who they are. Unique among animals, humans carry and express multiple and ambivalent identities simultaneously.¹⁷⁰”

I find this example particularly compelling because Cabeza de Vaca’s performance relies on the bestial character of his Spanish identity. His ‘head’ face and features are European and thus monstrous, more specifically, cannibalistic as these acts are now associated with Christians. But his body, emaciated by hunger and painted red by the ochre he trades in, resembles the bodies of the local Indians. And yet, his performance was not looked upon by the Indian spectators as simply “play” or “theater;” Cabeza de Vaca’s movements, breathing and praying were infused with their metaphysical beliefs, linking him to their religion and deities. As a shaman, Cabeza de Vaca is inside and outside of the community, he mediates exchanges between the world of the living and the dead, between matter and spirits, between the sacred and profane. This fluid mediation between multiple, ambivalent and metaphysical identities is central to Artaudian drama. As an actor, Cabeza de Vaca is doubled, he plays himself, the nameless *yo* and his *físico* shadow. In, *Un Athlétisme Affectif*, Artaud situates the *jeu* of the actor in the body and muscular movements: *Les mouvements musculaires de l’effort sont comme l’effigie d’un autre effort en double, et qui dans les mouvements du jeu dramatique se localisent sur le mêmes points.*¹⁷¹ These points

¹⁶⁹ Schechner, R., *Between Theater and Anthropology*, p. 4.

¹⁷⁰ Schechner, R., *Between Theater and Anthropology*, p. 4.

¹⁷¹ Artaud, A., « Un Athlétisme Affectif, » p. 199, dans *Le Théâtre et Son Double*.

of intersection are at times perfectly superimposed and then separate. Cabeza de Vaca's healing practices are accompanied by movements and sounds that must convincingly represent a spectacle that is credible in the eyes of the Indian observer, while marking necessary distinctions to pacify his Imperial readers: *La manera con que nosotros curamos era santiguándonos y soplarlos, y rezar un "Pater Noster" y un "Ave Maria," y rogar lo mejor que podíamos a Dios nuestro Señor y su misericordia que todos aquéllos por quien suplicamos, luego que los santiguamos decían que estaban sanos y buenos.*¹⁷² This heretical script operates along Artaud's ambiguous logic, making the "double exposure" of the actor apparent and evoking a dissonance between the deeply religious Word, now appropriated by a pagan demi-god.

After some time living with this tribe, Cabeza de Vaca escapes due to the ill treatment he received but he does not renounce his newfound shamanic identity. Instead, as he continues to travel across the American Southwest, Cabeza de Vaca mediates his encounters with the Native tribes through a crafted shamanic performance that blends elements of Christianity; primarily, the holy script of the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, with a performance that would be recognized as belonging to the shamanic order of indigenous healers. Although Cabeza de Vaca abstains from participating in the festivities that follow the success of his healing, he is the center of an idolatrous and mobile stage: *Y después que se acabaron las curas comenzaron a bailar y hacer sus areitos y fiestas, hasta otro día que el Sol salió. Duró la fiesta tres días por haber nosotros venido.*¹⁷³ Following an extended period of successful practices and exchanges with a variety of tribes, Cabeza de Vaca is separated from the group and must survive alone in the wilderness. What he finds in this three day solitary journey is a series of miraculous signs: *Aquella noche me perdí, y*

¹⁷² Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 130.

*plugo a Dios que hallé un árbol ardiendo, y al fuego de él pasé aquel frío aquella noche.*¹⁷⁴ Like a wandering Moses in the wilderness, Cabeza de Vaca encounters a burning bush. However it does not speak nor does he speak to it. Language is no longer a part of his world nor of this Theater of Cruelty. As he wanders, he reminds the reader that he is constantly naked in spite of the deerskins he has been offered as gifts for his healing: *para el frío, yo no tenía otro remedio, por andar desnudo como nací.*¹⁷⁵ Stripped of language and of vestments, of *habit*, *habitat*, *habitus*, Cabeza de Vaca choreographs a theater of cruelty of which he is the sole actor and spectator thus giving an eyewitness account of what he alone ‘saw’ and staged, which, paradoxically, is the only thing he could not have seen. Intended as an invention to ward off the cold, his remedy is based on his now ritualized perception of the world: *Para la noche yo tenía este remedio, que me iba a las matas del monte, que estaban cerca de los ríos, y paraba en ellas antes que el Sol se pusiese, y en la tierra hacía un hoyo y en el echaba mucha leña...al derredor de aquel hoyo hacía cuatro fuegos en cruz y yo tenía cargo y cuidado de rehacer el fuego de rato en rato.*¹⁷⁶ Cabeza de Vaca makes four pillars in the shape of the cross and sets them on fire. Digging a hole in the midst of these cross-shaped fires, he buries himself with bushes and leaves. During this staged self-burial, he catches fire, escapes death but not without the fire burning the ends of his hair: *Y estando yo durmiendo en el hoyo, comenzó a arder muy recio, y por mucha prisa que yo me di a salir, todavía saqué señal en los cabellos del peligro que había estado. En todo este tiempo no comí bocado ni hallé cosa que pudiese comer; y como traía los pies descalzos, corrióme de ellos mucha sangre.*¹⁷⁷ Having peeled away the strata of identity fiction Cabeza de Vaca

¹⁷³ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 153.

¹⁷⁴ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 154.

¹⁷⁵ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 154.

¹⁷⁶ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 154.

¹⁷⁷ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*, p. 155.

exposes raw impulses, burnt hair and bloody feet, the nervous system of a wretched performance that embodies deranged hybridities. This ritual of transformation and purification by self-inflicted violence, allows him to perform his most miraculous deed. Under an Artaudian lens this scene fits the description given in *Theater and Science*: *Theater is rather this crucible of fire and real meat where by an anatomical trampling of bone, limbs and syllables bodies are renewed.*¹⁷⁸ And yet it also fits with Artaud's desire to stage the burial of the self, a self-enslaved by the imposition of others. In a text entitled "Antigone chez les Français" that accompanies *Révolution contre la poésie* Artaud writes, in a language that fits Cabeza de Vaca's own journey: *Ai-je assez marché au supplice moi-même pour avoir le droit d'ensevelir mon frère le moi... dont je n'ai jamais pu faire ce que je voulais parce que tous les moi autres que moi-même, insinués dans le mien propre comme je ne sais quelle insolite vermine.*¹⁷⁹ It is only after this ritual burial of the self, and the putting to death of the European self that insinuates itself as a vermin, that Cabeza de Vaca is renewed as a healer and able to perform his greatest miracle, raising a man from the dead:

Yo vi el enfermo que íbamos a curar que estaba muerto, porque estaba mucha gente al derredor de el llorando y su casa deshecha que es señal que el dueño estaba muerto... Yo le quité una estera que tenía encima, con que estaba cubierto, y lo mejor que pude apliqué a nuestro Señor fuese servido de dar salud a aquél... Después de santiguado y soplado muchas veces me trajeron un arco y me lo dieron... Y dijeron que aquel que estaba muerto y yo había curado en presencia

¹⁷⁸ Antonin Artaud, *Artaud Anthology*, p. 169.

¹⁷⁹ Artaud, IX, p. 124.

de ellos, se había levantado bueno y se había paseado, y comido, y hablado con ellos.¹⁸⁰

Following this miracle he and his companions legitimize their position among the Amerindians and are referred to as *hijos del Sol*. This would seemingly converge Cabeza de Vaca's Theater of Cruelty with Spain's military theater but his final pronouncement, is the evidence of his deviance from the good faith of the conquest. As Indians confide in him their fear of the evil shamanic healer, *Mala Cosa*, who mutilated the bodies of the Indians he pretended to heal, Cabeza de Vaca takes these confessions to weave his own foundational myth.¹⁸¹ *Naufraños* is marked by two moments of laughter, when Cabeza de Vaca is told he will become a *físico* and when he hears the legend of *Mala Cosa*. Again this is a faithless laughter, like Sara incredulous before the angel, this is a laughter of disbelief. Cabeza de Vaca is given evidence for the existence of *Mala Cosa*, and the evidence he accepts are the scarred bodies which have been subject to *Mala Cosas's* surgeries: *También nos contaron que muchas veces le dieron de comer y que jamás comió; y que le preguntaban dónde venía...y que les mostró una bendidura de la tierra...De estas cosas que ellos nos decían, nosotros nos reíamos mucho, burlando de ellas. Como ellos vieron que no lo creíamos, trajeron muchos de aquéllos que decían que él había tomado, y vimos las señales de las cuchilladas que él había dado.*¹⁸² Converted once more, not through force but persuasion, Cabeza de Vaca weaves Indian lore with his own origin myth. Having drawn out, through his miracles, the confessions of this tribe's darkest collective fears, this moment does not mark the trajectory of a Christian

¹⁸⁰ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufraños*, p. 158.

¹⁸¹ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufraños*, p. 159.

¹⁸² Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufraños*, p. 160.

faith rediscovered but rather shows how his original *bona fides* is compromised and betrayed in his final performance, the violation of the Word:

Nosotros les dijimos que aquél que ellos decían [Aguar] nosotros lo llamábamos Dios, y que así lo llamasen ellos y lo sirviesen y adorasen como mandábamos y ellos se hallarían muy bien dello. Respondieron que todo lo tenían muy bien entendido y que así lo harían¹⁸³

With this declaration, Cabeza de Vaca attacks the core of the social and religious order of the theater of conquest, offering another version of the relationships, insights and truths that can be derived from Spanish and Indigenous contact. The mimetic circulation intended by *La Conquista*, where the whole of European experience, culture and religion would be modeled through Spain's military theater, is inverted in this singular speech driven scene. The blasphemous equation, *Aguar* is our God, call him thusly and worship him as we tell you, founds an informal agreement between Cabeza de Vaca and the Native Indians that parodies the formal contract of the *Requerimiento*. Cabeza de Vaca, giving substantial evidence of his mastery of Native language and having resemanticized their savage symbols into his performative/transformative identity as a naked shaman, shows the defect and absurdity of the Word through his perversion of it. The Word of God is stolen, its unity destroyed by the blasphemous performance and his heretical conversion.

Cabeza de Vaca's attitude towards Amerindians is always paradoxical, shifting,

¹⁸³ Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufraios*, p. 160.

ambiguous. However when he finally comes in contact with the Spaniards that will bring him home, he is unrecognizable. The writing that is at the service of the Spanish crown *trae en relación* not land or gold, but practices and representations of the Indigenous Subject, which contradict the colonial histories emerging from the New World. Beyond the text, and yet within it, we find a theater that intersects with Artaud. Artaud's criticism of the Spanish Conquest lies in its destruction of myth: *La conquête Espagnole a détruit du jour au lendemain des Mythes dont les forces n'avaient pas fini de croître. Elle a éteint des dieux que ses sous-sols alimentaient encore, et elle les a éteints à la minute où ils apprêtaient à se transformer*¹⁸⁴ In light of Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios*, we see that these myths might not have been completely extinguished. Their ashes, dispersed over Europe, are seen in the margins of lesser-known histories, as we discover traces of a theater performed by a self and its double.

¹⁸⁴ Artaud, *Textes Mexicains*, p. 679.

CHAPTER III

THE THEATER OF NEPTUNE AND ITS DOUBLE

Introduction: A Modern Controversy

A new production of *Le Théâtre de Neptune en la Nouvelle France*, [A] play written by Marc Lescarbot in 1606, was set to be staged in Canada on November 14, 2006. The production would commemorate the 400th anniversary of this first play ever written or performed on North American soil. Ken Pinto, director of the Atlantic Fringe Festival in Nova Scotia, a festival that showcased non-mainstream theater, stated the following in a press release: *It's a simple play, but it's a good play and it started theater in this country.*¹⁸⁵ From such a modest endorsement, it would be difficult to imagine the level of controversy that would arise. Donovan King, a Canadian performance artist, took issue with the inherent racism of this play and wrote a manifesto entitled *The Sinking of Neptune*, as a statement against the racist structure and imperialist motives hailed as “the supposed foundation of Canadian Theater.” The Canadian Council for the Arts backed away from the polemical project and the play was never staged.

In this chapter, I will argue that *The Theater of Neptune*, though clearly part of a

¹⁸⁵ Canada's first play to be revived: CBC Arts (Dec. 08, 2004)

troubling colonial tradition of spectacle, deviates from more traditional colonial ceremonies, to reveal its author's own ambivalent position towards France and its colonial projects. Lescarbot and his men participate in staging this performance as a civilizing ritual intended first and I believe foremost, for themselves, so as to re-appropriate a cultural essence that was lost at sea, where, on the liminal platform of the Atlantic, between Europe and the New World where hunger defeats civility. Further, I believe this performance has more at stake as a private ritual negotiating the innate savagery of French identity than with a secondary desire to represent colonial meaning to the Micmac Indians. The unique staging of this play, on water with the Indian spectators on shore, ensures that what would be a public *entrée*, modeled after Renaissance entrances of French kings, also bears traces of a private ceremony that does not follow the prescriptive models of most colonial ceremonies of possession.

In the first section of the chapter, I would like to begin by considering what constituted a traditional ceremony of possession and examine the historical example of Henri II's entrance to Rouen, as this was the model for Lescarbot's own *entrée*. By situating Lescarbot's 1606 play as part of a lineage of Renaissance entrances and comparing it to Henri II's royal entrance to the city of Rouen in 1550, I hope to show how the use of myth and more specifically, the appropriation of the figure of Hercules in a Renaissance processional entrance, marks a passage from Gallic savagery to civility that shares much in common with colonial ceremonies of possession in the New World. Lescarbot will also employ myth in his processional entrance, yet his representation of Neptune will suggest a more troubling reflection of France, its colonies and Henri IV, its king.

The second section of the chapter will offer a close reading of the *Theater of Neptune* alongside some passages in Lescarbot's *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, which will contrast the reality of colonization with the carefully constructed work of literary propaganda that is Lescarbot's play. Finding it useful to read Lescarbot, the poet alongside his historical works, I would also like to consider the similarities between the processional entrance of *The Theater of Neptune* and the funeral rites of the Armouchiquois and Souriquois Indians as described in *La Defaite des Sauvages Armouchiquois par le Sagamos Membertou et ses allies sauvages en La Nouvelle France* (1607). Upon closer inspection the *Theater of Neptune* unravels, allowing the colonial intentions of the play to be usurped by a savage discourse that arises not from the New World Other but from the symbolic representatives of France. Throughout this second section of the chapter I would like to see how the *Theater of Neptune*, which I propose is an inverted New World ceremony, disorders and destabilizes traditional colonial discourses, and through its theatrical destruction of these narratives, aligns itself, with Artaud's Theater of Cruelty.

Part I: Ceremonies, Possession, Worlds, New and Old

Ceremonies of possession were crucial moments to all colonial beginnings. Regardless of which five European powers planted their flag on New World soil the ritual ceremonies performed would establish the first contact and relations with indigenous people. Through highly charged, performative speech acts and choreographed movements, commonly acted out by Europeans who would perform proper modes of Indigenous submission, these ceremonies enacted the terms by which Europeans and

Native peoples would interact. Patricia Seed's book, *Ceremonies of Possession In Europe's Conquest of the New World 1492-1640*, explains the importance of religious and political symbols in ceremonies and processions of conquest, popular not only in the New World but also performed in France. Seed delves into the particularities of these ceremonies in French culture and her explanations are a useful foundation for understanding the nature of processional ceremonies in the French Renaissance:

In French the word ceremony had four unique meanings in contrast to other European languages. The first such significance was a procession... A second distinctly French meaning of ceremony referred to clothes used in carrying out the event. The careful attention to special vestment blue dresses with gold fleur-de-lis, blue shirts with white crosses-confirmed the true formality of the occasion. A third uniquely French meaning of ceremony was complicated. While the opposite of ceremonial in English and Dutch was informal, the opposite [sic] of ceremonial in French was simple, uncomplicated. Finally, beyond complexity, a procession, a specified form of dress, ceremony in French alone signified order. To do something ceremoniously meant to do it according to the rules.¹⁸⁶

With these four categories by which to define a French ceremony: procession, clothing, complexity, and order, we will see that though the *Theater of Neptune* attempts to mimic these same categories, it is unable to reproduce the intended results of these spectacular and deeply political ceremonies. Cultural mimicry, when considered within a

colonial discourse, is usually understood as the cultural performance acted out by the colonized in their approximations of colonizer's behaviors and attitudes. However, the cultural mimicry performed by Lescarbot and his men, focuses on the colonizers' approximations and attempts to perform an artistic representation of French power in its colonial extremities. Homi K. Bhaba, describes the unwieldy nature of this tool of cultural production "as an erratic and eccentric strategy of authority in colonial discourse" prone to "a repetitious slippage of difference and desire."¹⁸⁷ These points of contention raised by Bhaba remain true for the colonizer's vision of himself. Theater as the metonymy of presence of culture, civilization and royal power, proves unwieldy. Instead of establishing royal authority in the New World, *The Theater of Neptune* conjures savage reflections on France, and, conversely, Lescarbot's play-text casts, on the utopic space of Acadia, dark continental shadows. It is widely agreed by scholars that Lescarbot's play was influenced by Henri II's *entrée* to Rouen in 1550. However whether Lescarbot witnessed the entrance himself or became acquainted with it through the popular engravings that chronicled the event, remains unknown.¹⁸⁸ What is known is that Henri II's entrance shared many of the civilizing attributes of Lescarbot's own theater. As Michael Winthroub writes in *A Savage Mirror*: "Henri as king, like Hercules of ancient myth, had embarked on a civilizing journey, converting not only his rude and uncivil enemies, but his rude, uncivil and divided people into citizens of a common land."¹⁸⁹ Given these circumstances, the entrance at Rouen was not simply a spectacle but was in fact crucial to addressing Henri's

¹⁸⁶ Seed, Patricia. 1995. *Ceremonies of possession in Europe's conquest of the New World, 1492-1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 49.

¹⁸⁷ Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*, p. 90.

¹⁸⁸ Strong, Roy C., 1984. *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450-1650*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 47.

political challenges. By presenting multiple opportunities to witness valiant and victorious resolutions, the monarchy could present the many faces of France's newly appointed king. The entrance at Rouen staged a mock sea battle between French and Portuguese ships, a procession of fifty Tupinamba Indians were brought before the king, accompanied by Norman sailors, who, pretending to be Indians, paraded themselves in costume, claiming to speak the language of the Tupinamba. This first processional scene showed the King's ability to tame foreign enemies and savage peoples abroad, intending, amidst exotic displays and *tableaux vivants*, to establish Henri's authority as a warrior king, ennobled by Roman traditions, myths and protocols observed throughout the procession.

Whether in Rouen or in Port-Royal, the configurations of French identity remained unclear and the need for the clarification of the self in relation to the other drove the spectacles and entrances that were so popular during the period. During these processional entries, French Kings also acted out the part of French colonizers and as such counted on the imagery diffused during these spectacles as a political tool by which they might harness the power of the emerging modern state. In her book, *Colonizer or Colonized: The Hidden Stories of Early Modern France*, Sara Melzer recounts France's own barbaric history and argues that literary quarrels of the 17th Century were directly related to France's colonial memory. Invaded by the Romans, the Gauls were regarded as barbarians and forced to undergo a painful civilizing process. The Romans not only subjugated the Gauls militarily, they also effaced all traces of their written history. This illiterate Gallic ancestry proved especially problematic to the *lettré* of the neo-classical period in their construction of France's national identity/myth. Savagery ever present in

¹⁸⁹ Wintroub, Michael. 2006. *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France*. Stanford,

their ancestral roots and in the French psyche, was precisely what needed to be eradicated from France's literary lineage. With the construction of a singular national identity needing to be formed, this aim would be achieved through the creation of literary, iconographic and philosophical mirrors that would project to the reader/spectator, such splendor that subjects would conform to the sovereign will of their King and perform proper modes of French nationalism. As a French national identity was crafted in France, allusions to antiquity and the use of mythology become central to this endeavor, in *Le Prince et Les Arts: Stratégies Figuratives de La Monarchie Française*, George Sabatier writes the following:

En ce temps de bouleversements sociaux, d'avènement de nouveaux dirigeants, de modification des processus de gouvernement, la mythologie fournissait aux pouvoirs princiers le langage spécifique qui leur manquait pour exprimer l'absolu de force auquel ils aspiraient et prétendaient. Elle permettait contrairement au discours historique, de les arracher à la contingence, de les situer au-delà de la condition humaine, d'exprimer leur essence et donc de leur fournir, outre des possibilités encomiastiques infinies, un outil de légitimation absolu.¹⁹⁰

References to mythological characters in paintings and literature establish a rhetoric enriched by a pictorial and symbolic language capable of expressing monarchical power directly through a shorthand of images that were easily understood by all subjects,

Calif: Stanford University Press, p. 60.

¹⁹⁰ G. Sabatier, *Le Prince et Les Arts: Stratégies Figuratives de La Monarchie Française de La Renaissance Aux Lumières*, p. 34.

Protestant and Catholic alike. Thus the use of art, and more specifically, the use of theatrical performances as an effective means of displaying sovereign power, bridges sovereign political intentions for the taming of unruly bodies—both at home and abroad. Henri II's entrance to Rouen models this foundational exchange. Michael Wintroub's argues that France's charges of barbarism were resolved through a cultural reinterpretation and reappropriation of the mythic hero, Hercules, who underwent a transformation "from the image of a barbarian to an avatar of humanist ideals of civilization."¹⁹¹ During Henri II's entrance to Rouen, Wintroub continues, "It was precisely these same themes of social and linguistic reform which structured the narrative of Henri's entry into Rouen."¹⁹² As a poem in *La Deduction du sumptueux ordre, plaisantz spectacles et théâtres ... exhibes par les citoyens de Rouen a la Maeste du roy de France, Henri II*, gives testimony, it is through his strength and wisdom, qualities now embodied by the mythic hero of Hercules, that Henri is able to conquer his enemies:

Your royal majesty, O very Christian King,
 You are, for the good of all, a Hercules on earth,
 Who puts the cruel Adder of Mars into disarray,
 Who honorably establishes, peace in place of war.¹⁹³

Henri II, the very Christian King, sets out to conquer the adder of Mars and similarly the unruly people of his kingdom. He does so by becoming Hercules on earth

¹⁹¹ Wintroub, Michael. 2006. *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France*, p. 47

¹⁹²Ibidem.

and it is through this transformation that he can restore peace. The insistence on the theme of arts and letters mixed with war games and allusions to military prowess show how this blending of qualities refine the art of kingship and tame the savagery of the French who were, through these politically charged and spectacular processions, subject to a form of colonization not unlike the colonization enacted in the New World.

Part II: The Theater of Neptune, a History of New France

If Hercules, in Rouen, represents a passage from savagery to civility, then what is the role of Neptune in Acadia? In 1606, Marc Lescarbot, a lawyer and also a travel writer and a poet frustrated with Parisian life, accepts the offer of his then client Jean de Biencourt de Poutrincourt's to be a part of a joint expedition to Acadia with a Monsieur de Monts, a merchant who had been granted by Henri IV monopoly of the fur trading industry on the condition that he colonize and forge military outposts in the name of France. Poutrincourt would be in charge of this second project of colonization and he recruited Lescarbot for the endeavor. They leave La Rochelle in May of 1606 and, after a difficult journey, Lescarbot and the men aboard the *Jonas*, a 150-ton galleon loaded with provisions, they reach the colony of Port-Royal in July of 1606.

In November, of that same year, Lescarbot, traveler, poet, former lawyer, writes and stages what is believed to be the first original work of theater in Nouvelle France. *Le Théâtre de Neptune*, is performed in honor of Port Royal's founders, Samuel de Champlain and Jean de Poutrincourt, who after a 3 month journey, exploring the Southern coasts of Canada return to Acadia and are greeted by this ceremonial entrance. Lescarbot reveals in

¹⁹³Ibid, p. 51

Histoire de la Nouvelle France, that the staging of *Neptune* was a ritual spectacle intending to reaffirm dwindling morale among the colonizers who had been on the verge of mutiny.

Lescarbot's play takes place on water and all the characters remain on canoes in the harbor of Port-Royal. Neptune, dressed in a blue veil, calls to mind Patricia Seed's four categories of ceremony (procession, clothing, complexity, and order) and the symbolic importance of the color blue ties Neptune, even before he speaks, to France. He holds a trident and is seated on an adorned chariot, greeting the distinguished spectators.¹⁹⁴ The Sea God is accompanied by six Tritons and five "local" Indians played by French sailors. The play consists of a series of speeches given by the *dramatis personae*. Neptune begins, followed by the tritons, who speaking in a decreasingly formal register, interpret the meaning and importance of Neptune's sworn allegiance to France. Lescarbot incorporates Souriquois words from the play's opening; Poutrincourt and Champlain are referred to by Neptune as *Sagamos* (chiefs) they will be offered *matachiez*, traditional ornamental bracelets by the actors playing local Indians, and, the play will conclude with actors and spectators alike drinking wine and eating *caracona*, bread, in a ritual that reflects a unique moment of liturgical hybridity. Few stage directions are given in the text, the most important appearing at the play's conclusion when Lescarbot asks the distinguished spectator, Poutrincourt to give a speech to close the ceremony.

Although the *Theater of Neptune* mimics a royal entrance, there is no movement, neither by land nor sea. With the very first word of the play, spoken by Neptune, the placeholders of French monarchical order are asked to stop. The procession thus halted Champlain and Poutrincourt are unable to disembark without facing the sea god: *Halt*,

*Sagamos, Stop here/ And behold a God who has care for you.*¹⁹⁵ From this suspended beginning, Neptune goes on to explain his own royal lineage and confirms his influential role in France's history: *Without me the French King would not have received/ The triumphant gift of a superb elephant from Persia; And, furthermore, without me the French soldiers/ Would not have planted their arms in the countries of the Orient*¹⁹⁶ Neptune's favor is the basis for the successes of French conquest, conversely, he might also be responsible for its failures which Lescarbot had chronicled in the three tomes of his travel journal entitled *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* and published concurrently with *The Theater of Neptune*.

In *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, Lescarbot historicizes New France, and its principle actors while simultaneously experiencing her founding. After writing the histories of French expeditions in Brazil and Florida, and drawing lessons from these colonies' failures, he sets out to establish the legacy of Poutrincourt and Champlain, always attributing the successes of Port-Royal's founders to the gentle relations between the French and the local Indians of Acadia. *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, the larger work that contains Lescarbot's play-text, offers a more complicated vision of French colonization than that given in *Neptune's Theater* but for now Neptune is, nonproblematically the mythological narrator of France's glorious history. By declaring his devotion to the French cause, Neptune also testifies to the power of the absent monarch, whose decree and patronage tames the seas and finances Lescarbot's expedition. Henri IV is thus upholding a tradition of conquest, and, like Neptune, he

¹⁹⁴ Lescarbot, Marc, Eugene Benson, Renate Benson, Jerry Wasserman, Harriette Taber Richardson, and Ben Jonson, *Spectacle of empire: Marc Lescarbot's Theatre of Neptune in New France*, p. 20.

¹⁹⁵ Lescarbot, Marc, Eugene Benson, Renate Benson, Jerry Wasserman, Harriette Taber Richardson, and Ben Jonson, *Spectacle of empire: Marc Lescarbot's Theatre of Neptune in New France*, p. 49.

¹⁹⁶ Lescarbot, Marc, Eugene Benson, Renate Benson, Jerry Wasserman, Harriette Taber Richardson, and Ben Jonson, *Spectacle of empire: Marc Lescarbot's Theatre of Neptune in New France*, p. 50.

honors France's legacy of military triumphs and expansion by supporting the expedition to Port-Royal. Although Henri's kingship was contested in France, this was not the case in Nouvelle France. As the most powerful patron of the French cause in the New World, Lescarbot's initial allegorical portrait is a flattering one. Reading from David Brumble's dictionary of allegorical meanings we find that during the Renaissance, *Neptune could be interpreted as "the Angelic Intellect, who contains in himself the Forms of all things engendered"*.¹⁹⁷ These obsequious beginnings will gradually shift as Neptune's identity is systematically unpacked through the remainder of the play.

After Neptune addresses Poutrincourt, the Tritons that accompany him take turns interpreting the meaning of his discourse. The first Triton commends the superior fortune of the French, having been favored by Neptune.¹⁹⁸ The second and third both reveal how through Neptune's power and French toil, France could have its legacy eternalized in history:

France, with fairest reason/
 Your praises are in season/
 For sons whose love and loyal courage/
 Appear more grandly in our age/
 Than in the centuries of old...
 Neptune himself, gives godlike power/
 To you and yours in this great hour./

¹⁹⁷ Brumble, H. David. 1998. *Classical myths and legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: a dictionary of allegorical meanings*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press., p. 242.

¹⁹⁸ Lescarbot, Marc, Eugene Benson, Renate Benson, Jerry Wasserman, Harriette Taber Richardson, and Ben Jonson, *Spectacle of empire: Marc Lescarbot's Theatre of Neptune in New France* p. 51. *Tu peux (grand Sagamos*) ... te dire heureux/ Puisqu'un Dieu te promet favorable assistance/ En l'affaire important que d'un coeur vigoureux/ Hardi tu entreprends, forçant la violence/ D'Aeole, qui toujours inconstant & léger.*

No human force can bring you harm/

Whatever threat may bring alarm.¹⁹⁹

Here we see Lescarbot's political interest appear in the text as he addresses France, and the continental reader, directly. With France undergoing perpetual civil wars, the French colonial project lagged in comparison to the efforts of the Spanish and Portuguese. Lescarbot's frustrations with France's wavering interest in its colonies are made clear when he writes in *Histoire de Nouvelle France: rien ne sert de qualifier une NOUVELLE-FRANCE, pour estre un nom en l'air & en peinture seulement*.²⁰⁰ The lively encouragement in the opening speeches of *The Theater of Neptune*, gradually assumes a more critical form. The fourth Triton associates France's disinterest in its colonial outposts as a reflection of deficiencies in French character: *The man who dares not to a chance/Is called a coward at a glance*.²⁰¹ The fifth Triton is a Gascon. As a representative of a southern region in France associated with an Occitan barbarity the Gascon speaks in broken and barely comprehensible French, shattering the rhyming couplets that had been written and performed in perfect Alexandrians and causing the formal structure of the piece to collapse:

Sabets aquo que volio diro

¹⁹⁹Lescarbot, Marc, Eugene Benson, Renate Benson, Jerry Wasserman, Harriette Taber Richardson, and Ben Jonson, *Spectacle of empire: Marc Lescarbot's Theatre of Neptune in New France* p. 52: *tu as occasion/ De louer la devotion/ De tes enfants dont le courage/ Se montre plus grand en cet âge*

²⁰⁰ [it is of no avail to give the name of new France, if it remains a name alone, and solely in a painted show]. Lescarbot, *Histoire*, v. 1, p. 214

²⁰¹ Lescarbot, Marc, Eugene Benson, Renate Benson, Jerry Wasserman, Harriette Taber Richardson, and Ben Jonson, *Spectacle of empire: Marc Lescarbot's Theatre of Neptune in New France* p. 52. *Celui qui point ne se*

Aqueste Neptune bieillart
 L'autre jou faisio del braggart,
 Et comme un bergalant se miro.
 N'agaires que fasio l'amou,
 Et baisavo une jeune hillo
 Qu'ero plan polide & gentillo,
 Et la cerquavo quandejou.
 Bezets, ne vous fizets pas trop
 En aquels gens de barbos grisos,
 Car en aqueles entreprisos
 Els ban lou trot & lou galop²⁰²

Through this unflattering portrait painted in a barely comprehensible language, Lescarbot calls into question the integrity of Neptune's character and the worth of his patronage as the Gascon reports that, prior to the play, Neptune had cavorted with a "young wench." The Gascon's criticism alludes to a suspicious duplicity in Neptune's character and perhaps, also to Henri IV's widely known philandering. Rather than being the god of the sea and intelligence he becomes the mutable Proteus who could assume any shape he pleased. This seems especially relevant when thinking of the King's abjuration of his Calvinist faith and conversion to Catholicism. Henri IV, who as

*bazarde/Montre qu'il a l'ame **coüarde**...Ainsi ton nom (grand Sagamos)/ Retentira dessus les flots/D'or-en avant, quand dessus l'onde/Tu découvres ce nouveau monde, Et y plantes le nom François/Et la Majesté de tes Rois*

²⁰² Lescarbot, Marc, Eugene Benson, Renate Benson, Jerry Wasserman, Harriette Taber Richardson, and Ben Jonson, *Spectacle of empire: Marc Lescarbot's Theatre of Neptune in New France* p.53, transl: *Hear ye what I wish to say/That old fellow Neptune,/Bragged loudly the other day/Admiring himself like a real ladies' man./—Once I made*

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie writes, “laid the foundation for a peaceable contiguity between those of different religious beliefs”²⁰³ through the Edict of Nantes, also forged, “solid alliance with the Protestant powers to the north and east, such as the Netherlands, England and the Protestant Swiss cantons.”²⁰⁴ These ‘unholy’ alliances with known enemies, along with his willingness to appoint a *noblesse de robe* that bought their titles, may explain the presence of the Gascon whose language of defilement, pollution and depictions of sexual transgression subverts the intention of the play which was to galvanize morale for the French cause in Acadia.

Instead, in this passage, the ritualized representations of the French through a phantasmic encounter with antiquity, are unmasked. The idealized image of Neptune reverts to a former barbarity, assuming the guise of a lecherous degenerate. In turn, the French have failed to assume the fullness of their legacy and the word “coward” lingers, without direct assignation, Lescarbot’s choreographed staging of France’s ideological fantasy of empire is confronted by its own hideous double: the Gascon and Proteus highlight the barbarity present still in French character. By reworking abjection into his commentary on French identity, what had been a ritual defined by its formality, order and routine becomes a more open-ended process, pointing to the indeterminacy of French identification. Identification, in Lescarbot’s text is used as the imitative activity by which the author consciously models his work on an idealized concept of “Frenchness.” However this idealized identity is destabilized throughout the progression of the play. The abject never assumes the shape of the New World Indian. Instead of being, as

love/ And kissed a young wench/ Who was very polite and gentle;/ I frequented her company every day—/ Young lovers don’t trust too much those who have grey beards/ Because in these adventures/ They trot slowly, then off they gallop! p. 73.

²⁰³ Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel. 1991. *L’Ancien Régime*. Paris: Hachette, p. 1.

Kristeva argues, the radically excluded Other that is not “I”,²⁰⁵ the abject is contained within the self. In his attempt to define New France in the eyes of the continental reader, Lescarbot lines his theater with allegory and myth yet the results are not the same as Henri II’s identification with Hercules. If one of the intended outcomes of processional rituals in the Renaissance was to establish the holy nature of the King, Lescarbot’s play fails absolutely. Mary Douglas writes that in Levitical law perversion means mixing or confusion, meanwhile:

Holiness is exemplified by completeness. Holiness requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong. And holiness requires that different classes of things shall not be confused...it therefore involves correct definition, discrimination and order.²⁰⁶

The figure of Neptune, though powerful, is depraved and corrupt, polluted by both sexual and political misalliances. In *Les Muses de la Nouvelle France*, a series of poems included in the three tomes of his *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, Lescarbot writes an apology to the muses, acknowledging that by turning to Neptune he is turning away from a higher law: *Muses pourtant pardonnez-moy/ Si pour cette heure je m’adresse/ Ailleurs qu’à vous, et si la loy/ De vous invoquer je transgresse.../ Neptune commande en ce lieu.*¹ By turning away from the muses and putting himself at the mercy of Neptune, Lescarbot places his verses at the

²⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 3.

²⁰⁵ Kristeva, Julia, and Leon S. Roudiez. 1982. Powers of horror: an essay on abjection. New York: Columbia University Press., p. 1.

²⁰⁶ Douglas, Mary. 1966. Purity and danger; an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo. New York: Praeger, p. 53.

feet of a savage god.

If we compare the image of the Gallic Hercules with the Gascon we see Lescarbot's work of art, as it was intended, destroyed by elements of its own composition. In France, the figure of Hercules, with a chain fastened to his tongue symbolized the power to seduce and subjugate others through language. Sara Mezler explains this image thusly, "The chain was attached at the other end to his listeners' ears, enticing a mass of people to follow him voluntarily. This image represented France's eloquence; Hercules' words had the persuasive force of chains."²⁰⁷ The iconoclastic figure of the Gascon revolts against this subjugation and against the foundations of colonial myth. The Gascon language deforms the play and usurps its intended meaning as a piece of pro-colonial political propaganda, telling the spectator not to believe: *Bezets, ne vous fizets pas trop/ En aqueles gens de barbos grisos,/ Car en aqueles entreprisos/ Els ban lou trot & lou gallop.*²⁰⁸ For Artaud, the fixity of language is one of the central reasons why theater is stagnate, *les mots ne veulent pas tout dire et que par nature et à cause de leur caractère déterminé, ils arrêtent et paralysent la pensée.*²⁰⁹ Lescarbot's insertion of the Gascon tongue in an otherwise formal French text ruptures the solemnity of the play's language and infuses the text with a new vigor and a real danger. The Gascon is both the object of ridicule and clairvoyant spectator, the only one able to see the real. In the first half of the play the figure of Neptune/Henri IV is raised only to be defaced by the Gascon and devalued by Lescarbot himself in his poetic writings. The piece thus sabotaged by its own author,

²⁰⁷ Mezler, S., *Colonizer and Colonized*, p.148

²⁰⁸ Lescarbot, Marc, Eugene Benson, Renate Benson, Jerry Wasserman, Harriette Taber Richardson, and Ben Jonson, *Spectacle of empire: Marc Lescarbot's Theatre of Neptune in New France* p.53, transl: *Hear ye what I wish to say/ That old fellow Neptune,/ Bragged loudly the other day/ Admiring himself like a real ladies' man./—Once I made love/ And kissed a young wench/ Who was very polite and gentle;/ I frequented her company every day—/ Young lovers don't trust too much those who have grey beards/ Because in these adventures/ They trot slowly, then off they gallop!* p. 73.

becomes, as Artaud would claim, *une vraie pièce de théâtre [qui] bouscule le repos des sens, libère l'inconscient comprimé, pousse à une sorte de révolte virtuelle*.²¹⁰ Through his depictions of the abject, the nautical stage is conceived as a space where the unsayable and yet true nature of things is realized. Central to Artaud's writing is the understanding that a theater of cruelty will contaminate that with which it comes into contact. A theater of cruelty will restore man to the abject within himself and will make visible the suppressed images of his disease: *tous les conflits qui dorment en nous, il nous les restitue avec leurs forces et il donne à ces forces de noms que nous saluons comme des symboles*.²¹¹ Lescarbot creates, even if only momentarily, a theater that refuses hierarchical order and instead shows the base nature of a monarch and the savagery and cowardice of a people constructing new foundational myths.

Part III: A Theater at Sea

France's empire in the New World would be built by a new group of French heroes, the fearless and sea-faring mariners, whose patriotism and courage would be tested by the cruelest of rigors. In *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, Lescarbot writes for their encouragement: *Allez doncques... ô troupe genereuse, Qui avez surmonté d'une ame courageuse, Et des vents et des flots les horribles fureurs, Et de maintes saisons les cruelles rigueurs*.²¹² The *Theater of Neptune* is therefore a theater performed by and also for sailors, with encoded meanings intended for this newly initiated troupe of actors who had survived the recent cruelties aboard their ship the *Jonas*. The *Jonas* left France in 1606, without a priest and when it

²⁰⁹ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et son Double*, pp. 171, 172.

²¹⁰ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et son Double*, pp. 40, 41.

²¹¹ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et son Double*, p. 40.

arrived in Acadia, it was learned that the only priest in the colony had died.²¹³ Throughout the duration of the voyage across the Atlantic and during the winter of 1606-1607 no priest was present at the colony. Lescarbot as historian and poet was charged with inspiring the sailors with his words.

For every bucolic depiction of Nouvelle France, Lescarbot presents, in his *Histoire*, a vivid and more poignant description of the heroic savagery of the sailor. After devoting the first tome and a half of his *History* to the French expeditions in Brazil and Florida, Lescarbot begins his account of his own journey on the *Jonas* to Port-Royal by including Henri IV's commission to Monsieur de Monts, which called for, 'the colonization of the lands of La Cadie.' Henri's proclamation stated that the French should colonize the native's of the New World, cultivate and settle their lands and seek out metals and minerals that might help finance the expedition.²¹⁴ However, as he insists on the importance of settling and securing the outposts that they would inhabit, the French monarch also points to the fact that the men sent to settle New France, were the very vagrants and idlers that had previously languished in French prisons:

For which purposes you are permitted to make use of and to impress all vagabonds, idlers, and masterless men, both in town and country, and all criminals condemned to perpetual banishment, or to exile from the kingdom for at least three years, provided always that the said impressment be with the

²¹² Lescarbot, Marc, and Edwin Tross. 1866. *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, Tome III, p. 14.

²¹³ Trudel, Marcel. 1973. *The beginnings of New France, 1524-1663*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, p. 90.

²¹⁴ Lescarbot, Marc, Henry Percival Biggar, and W. L. Grant. 1907. *History of New France*. Toronto: Champlain Society, Vol. II, p. 214.

knowledge and consent and on the authority of our officers.²¹⁵

To perform the *Theater of Neptune* one must never forget the criminal acts of savagery committed in the homeland and later acted out on the Atlantic. Buried in the darker passages of his *History*, Lescarbot describes the cruel rigors he so poetically historicized. In his account of what took place in Villegagnon's returning voyage from Brazil, Lescarbot describes the conditions undergone by many of these sailors. These former criminals, would be colonizers resorted to the eating of rats, rotten meat and scraps of leather:

Il se fallut mettre à balayer et nettoyer la Soute (qui est le lieu où se met la provision du biscuit) en laquelle ayans trouvé plus de vers et de crottes de rats la bouillie...deux mariniers moururent de mal-rage de faim, et furent ensevelis dans les eaux...Or estans ja si maigres et affoiblis qu'à peine se pouvoient-ils tenir debout pour faire les manoeuvres du navire, quelques uns s'aviserent de couper en pieces certaines rondelles faites de peaux, lesquelles ils firent bouillir pour les manger...apres ces rondelles succederont les colets de cuir, souliers, et cornes de lanternes...Tant qu'on eut des cuirs on ne s'avisa point de faire la guerre aux rats...ils donnerent avis qu'ils pourroient bien servir de viande à quie en pourroit avoir...Que se cetui-ci estoit tellement pressé, il faut estimer que la misere estoit venuë au dessus de tout ce que la langue et la plume peuvent exprimer.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Marc, Henry Percival Biggar, and W. L. Grant. 1907. *History of New France*. Toronto: Champlain Society, Vol. II, 215.

²¹⁶ Lescarbot, Marc, and Edwin Tross. 1866. *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, Tome II, pp. 194, 195.

The association of sailors with lawlessness now becomes part of a darker drama, a drama that though seemingly unspeakable is nevertheless present in New France's history. The fantasy of the animal-man appears, when men are reduced to their hunger. Although there are no sailors present in *Neptune's Theater* there are tritons, creatures of the sea that are partially man and beast who narrate France's history while interpreting the meaning of the king's decree to the New World. In another example of the horrors met at sea, Lescarbot gives a detailed account of what occurred in Laudonnière's expedition to Florida. In this expedition due to scarcity of provisions the men were forced to drink sea water, urine, and finally, in an act of desperation they would resort to cannibalism:

Finally, in their last despair, some of them proposed that it was expedient that one man should die rather than that so great a company should perish; in pursuance of which they agreed that one should die to sustain the others. This was carried out in the person of Lachere, the same who had been sent into exile by Captain Albert, whose flesh was divided equally among them all, a deed so horrible to relate that my pen falls from my hand.²¹⁷

In these sections the realism of Lescarbot's tableaux account for a Theater of Cruelty in the way that Artaud has envisioned it. This succession of historical images, create a gallery, an exhibition, and ultimately an oceanic stage where the clearly delineated portrait of French civility is marred. French colonizers, Lescarbot avows, despite himself,

²¹⁷ Lescarbot, Marc, Henry Percival Biggar, and W. L. Grant. 1907. History of New France. Toronto: Champlain Society, Vol. I, p. 75.

are the same sailors that were once convicts, mutineers and cannibals; and their evolution is chronicled in detail throughout his extensive history. *Neptune's Theater* is enveloped in this culture and thus these New World actors are bound to their own barbaric histories. These passages, of the *Histoire* which evoke a danger of the unforeseeable and the unknown hidden in man, are aesthetically in line with Artaud's vision which calls for theater to be soaked in hidden and remote poetry that calls upon a primal myth:

En outre cette nécessité pour le théâtre de se retremper aux sources d'une poésie éternellement passionnante et sensible pour les parties les plus reculées et les plus distraites du public, étant réalisée par le retour aux vieux Mythes primitifs.²¹⁸

As Lescarbot stages Poutrincourt's arrival to Port-Royal the creation myths of New France, haunt the spectators. These primitive myths remind the French of, as Sara Melzer writes, their own suppressed savagery, their own Gallic primitive histories. And yet, when read on the surface, it would seem that *The Theater of Neptune*, is inspired only from *Histoire de Nouvelle France* in its idyllic passages. Poutrincourt is at times compared to Noah—occupying his time with the planting of new vines and thus through the miraculous properties of wine, bridging two worlds that seem impossibly distant. At other moments Lescarbot describes Poutrincourt as Abraham, founder of a new tribe and a new race of people. Above all else, Lescarbot wants to give an image of New France as a cultivated landscape.

²¹⁸ Artaud, *Oeuvres*, p. 581.

Nonetheless, the accounts that frame *The Theater of Neptune* are accounts of aggression and mutiny. Returning to Port-Royal, after a brief exploratory journey to the southern regions of Canada, Poutrincourt, sensing that the natives “were planning some ill,”²¹⁹ asks his men to keep watch. In what could be read as a New World allegory for the Garden of Gethsemane, the watchmen fall asleep and the savages, “whether angry therat or from their evil nature, came noiselessly at dawn...[and] attacked them with arrows and clubs.”²²⁰ With two men dead and knowing it would be useless to chase the attackers into an unknown wilderness, Poutrincourt refuses to pursue the aggressors and instead orders that those killed be buried underneath a wooden cross. The Natives, coming back to the place of the murderous deed, “uprooted the Cross, dug up one of the dead, took his shirt and put it on, holding up the spoils which they had carried off.”²²¹ If the *Theater of Neptune*, was staged with cannons and gunfire, then the rampageous nature of this section of *Histoire de La Nouvelle France*, is Neptune’s double. The apparition of savage monsters and their attack, is charged with an anarchic principle that refuses what ceremonies of possession seek to establish from a beginning, a sense of hierarchy, power and order. With an uprooted cross and real Indians cross-dressed in the clothes of a dead Frenchmen there is no language or script in this performance but rather a series of visceral moving images that quite violently refuse the ceremonial burial and the call to order that was attempted even after the first act of aggression. This performance fuses memory and forgetting— what will be remembered is not the fallen or the funeral rites

²¹⁹ Lescarbot, Marc, Henry Percival Biggar, and W. L. Grant. 1907. *History of New France*. Toronto: Champlain Society, Vol. II, p. 332.

²²⁰ Lescarbot, Marc, Henry Percival Biggar, and W. L. Grant. 1907. *History of New France*. Toronto: Champlain Society, Vol. II, p. 333.

²²¹ Lescarbot, Marc, Henry Percival Biggar, and W. L. Grant. 1907. *History of New France*. Toronto: Champlain Society, Vol. II, p. 336, 37.

performed in their honor, not the cross, symbol of the faith that assures their salvation but rather the hostile and desecrating violence that goes against the narrative that has been constructed around New France's colonial project. This scene could be read as a metaphor for the theater and its double. Artaud writes that the pest, his metaphor for a Theater of Cruelty, takes images that sleep and pushes them to their extremes.²²² Similarly, Lescarbot's writing receives a rather violent jolt from the idyllic accounts of the second volume and is awakened to by the violent performance and savagery of the Native Indians who refused friendship. Following the desecrating spectacle of Port Fortuné, Lescarbot stages *The Theater of Neptune*, to mark the safe arrival of Poutrincourt and the remaining men:

For about the time we were expecting his return, whereof we had great desire, the more so that if evil had come upon him we had been in danger of mutiny, I bethought me to go out to meet him with some jovial spectacle...And since it was written in French rhymes, made hastily, I have place it among the Muses of New France, under the title of "Neptune's Theater."²²³

After a month and a half of exploration for an ideal location to colonize, Poutrincourt returns to Port-Royal with precious little: he had gained the temporary alliance of the Almouchiquois, Etchemins and Souriquois but had lost the friendship of the Indians to the south. In a month and a half journey they had traveled from Port-

²²² Artaud, *Oeuvres*, p. 518.

²²³ Lescarbot, Marc, Henry Percival Biggar, and W. L. Grant. 1907. *History of New France*. Toronto: Champlain Society, Vol. II, p 341.

Royal (Nova Scotia) to Cape Cod and returned with nothing.²²⁴ Lescarbot's second half of *The Theater of Neptune* takes on new significance given the recent failures of the French and the performances by local Indians. Though the first half of the play exposes the savagery inherent of the French the second half stages a fantasy of colonial submission as local Indians, played by French sailors, offer Poutrincourt, bows and arrows, elk meat, and beaver skins. The first two "Indians," surrender themselves, and their arms to the French colonizers. The third Indian gives further proof of Native devotion and consent to the colonial project in his love offering of *Matachiaz*, sashes and bracelets made by the hand of his mistress: "My mistress, when she heard the news/That you were to arrive, told me that for love of her/I must come seeking you/And that I must make you gifts/of this little work/Which her skilled hand wrought."²²⁵ Because there are few instances where foreign words are incorporated into the play, I'd like to examine another moment where *Matachiaz* make an appearance in Lescarbot's writing. By studying this ritual courtship enacted in Lescarbot's phantasmatic theater of colonial consent, we find a concomitant drama that mirrors this processional entrance but concludes in death and severed alliances.

In a short poem entitled *LA DEFAITE DES SAUVAGES ARMOUCHIQUOIS PAR LE SAGAMOS* (1607), Lescarbot tells the story of an ancient discord that existed between the Souriquois and the Armouchiquois. In spite of the

²²⁴ Trudel, Marcel. 1973. *The beginnings of New France, 1524-1663*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart. p. 90.

²²⁵The Project Gutenberg EBook of *La Defaite des Sauvages Armouchiquois par le Sagamos Membertou et ses alliez Sauvages, en la Nouvelle France, au mois de Juillet*, by Marc Lescarbot.

apparent peace between these two tribes, the momentary pause in their warfare was a ruse intended to trick the opponent. In the poem, Lescarbot tells the story of Panoniac, a Souriquois Indian, who believing to have made an alliance with the Armouchiquois, visits the tribe only to be killed and have his goods pillaged.²²⁶ Panoniac's companions escape his fate, by swimming to distant rocks at sea and spending the night clinging to them for safety. Panoniac's body is not buried but returned to Port-Royal, in a canoe. As his tribe mourns him each member offers the embalmed Panoniac a series of gifts that follow the order of the gifts intended for Poutrincourt: "Masse, arc, fleches, carquois, petun, couteaux & chiens Matachiaz aussi, & la pelleterie."²²⁷ That this uncanny ritual features the same gifts offered to Poutrincourt, bows and arrows, meats, skins and Matachiaz, creates a further reminder that Lescarbot's theater draws from ritual elements of both princely entrances and Indian rituals of processional mourning as if unsure if the colonial subject is being greeted or standing on the brink of failure and defeat. Although Lescarbot's position is apparently procolonial the similarities between the processional ceremony marking the arrival of Port-Royal's governor and the funeral rites of the Armouchiquois, point once more to his ambivalence.

The third Indian's gift also says much about where and how Lescarbot perceives savagery. Civility, it seems, is perfectly expressed in the hospitality of the Native Indians, in the love of the absent Indian mistress, who has woven with her hand the only other ornament that is mentioned aside from Neptune's blue veil. Indians, as portrayed by Lescarbot not only offer their food and weapons whole-heartedly but express a refinement of sentiment that is not exclusive to the French:

²²⁶Ibid.

Ce n'est seulement en France
Que commande Cupidon,
Mais en la Nouvelle-France,
Comme entre vous, son brandon
Il allume, & de ses flammes
Il rotit noz pauvres ames,
Et fait planter le bourdon.²²⁸

If New World “Savages” have been conquered, only the merciless [c Cupid has performed the planting of the ceremonial lance. It is the third Indian’s mistress that sends her gifts and thus creates a New World chivalric code that structures exchanges outside of the recent massacres. Rather than being repudiated by her lover, Lescarbot casts her avowal as a virtuous form of innocence. These new models of civility as expressed by the Third Indian and his mistress seem by all accounts preferable to the lecherous Neptune who had recently cavorted with a young wench. Undoubtedly this is also a fantasy of consent which are, as Patricia Seed indicates, central to ceremonial traditions of possession:

In several of their journeys to the New World, Frenchmen claimed the region for the crown by planting a cross, a pillar, or a royal standard. In all of these cases

²²⁷Ibid.

²²⁸ Lescarbot, Marc, Eugene Benson, Renate Benson, Jerry Wasserman, Harriette Taber Richardson, and Ben Jonson, *Spectacle of empire: Marc Lescarbot's Theatre of Neptune in New France* p.55.

however, Frenchmen were careful to secure by means of physical gesture, an indication that the natives consented to the planting of the sign of possession.²²⁹

The *Theater of Neptune* has no definitive sign of possession. The only cross that is planted in both Lescarbot's *Histoire* and in *Neptune's Theater* is the desecrated cross of Port-Fortuné. As French models of identities are gradually repudiated Lescarbot's vision of civility is idealized in the literary figure of the Indian. The idealized Indian mistress and the new language she weaves replace the Gallic Hercules who seduces with his speech. *The Theater of Neptune* concludes with Lescarbot's stage directions, calling for an improvised speech from Poutrincourt. Rather than settling this unsettled world with order by making any claims on behalf of France or on behest of a royal power, Poutrincourt thanks Neptune for his mercy²³⁰ and orders the grillers, cooks and waiters to start their preparations for a festive meal naming the dishes that will be consumed. For Bakhtin, "The feast was a temporary suspension of the entire official system with all its prohibitions and hierarchic barriers".²³¹ Poutrincourt never closes this liminal parenthesis, his last command is that all should sneeze loudly, in order to discharge cold humors and fill the brain with "sweeter vapours." As the play ends nothing in New France is assured. Lescarbot stages a moment of suspended wars and only a suspicious truce is held, momentarily, around a shared table.

²²⁹ Seed, P., *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World 1492-1640*, p. 56.

²³⁰ *After having wished a long time (Sagamos)/ for your return to this place, finally the angry sky/ Now had pity on us and, showing us your face/ Bestows on us an incredible favor*, p. 81

²³¹ Bakhtin, M., *Rabelais and His World*, transl. H Iswolsky, p. 89

Conclusion: Neptune, Tritons and Playing Indian.

Leonard E. Doucette qualifies this piece, the first to be analyzed in the book, *Theater in French Canada*, thusly: “[It is] a communal celebration, an act of participation that a modern theorist like Antonin Artaud would have approved, a sort of ‘total theater’ with cannons, trumpets, costumes...all in a natural setting as spectacular as the Annapolis River basin.”²³² Artaud is present not only in the spectacle of Neptune but in the many ruptures of intended meaning, in the performances of cruelty that surround the play, as well as in the subversion of Lescarbot’s planned application of myth. Although upon first glance *Neptune’s Theater* would appear to adhere to Renaissance structures of formal entrances, it in fact disrupts the intended meanings of these ceremonies and the text clashes against les chef-d’oeuvres of Royal processions. In Roy Strong’s book *Art and Power: Renaissance festivals, 1450-1650*, we are reminded of what these royal processions intended to do:

...They added imperial mysticism to the already complex aura of sanctity that surrounded *les rois thaumaturges*, who, in the case of both France and England, could by dint of holy unction at their coronation, actually heal their subjects by the royal touch. Not even the Reformation was to diminish belief in this power which continued unabated in its attraction...In the case of France, this was to revive with force in the figure of Henri IV in the aftermath of the wars of religion. There every effort was made to re-emphasize the sacred nature of

²³² Doucette, Leonard E. 1984. *Theatre in French Canada: laying the foundations, 1606-1867*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press p. 7.

kingship.²³³

Lescarbot, far from showing the sacred nature of the King, derogates his character through the figure of Neptune. After reading *Neptune's Theater* next to the dramatic retelling of the death of Panoniac we can see the similarities it holds with Native funeral processions. There are two reflections of Henri IV in the *Theater of Neptune*. The first is that of Neptune, who is responsible for the fate of France's colonial projects. The second reflection of the King is in the figure of Poutrincourt who has been sent by the King to colonize the New World. The King's "two bodies" seem defiled in Lescarbot's text, either by his licentious associations, actual as well as metaphorical, or through the processional rituals similarities with Indigenous funeral rites.

The *Theater of Neptune* is part of a longer genealogy of cruelty established by Lescarbot in his *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*. When we read *The Theater of Neptune* alongside *L'Histoire de Nouvelle France*, we discover that this longer text of which the *Theater of Neptune* is inextricably a part, resists the symbolization of the political performative and in fact critiques the colonial discourse seemingly at the center of the spectacle. Although Lescarbot attempts to fully promote the colonies of New France, his writing at times escapes his intent and he transmits a parasitic doubt that deconstructs the assumed stability of European identity. Like Artaud's metaphor of the pest, Lescarbot's theater exposes an assured separation from France, *Le théâtre comme la peste, est à l'image de ce carnage, de cette essentielle séparation*.²³⁴ This essential separation is first achieved by calling into question the paternal symbolic as embodied by Neptune/Proteus, allegorical figure

²³³ Strong, Roy C., 1984. *Art and power: Renaissance festivals, 1450-1650*. p. 68

for Henri IV. Thus separated from the notion of a Father/King just as the *Jonas* and the colony of Port-Royal are bereft of a priest, an Artaudien carnage makes its gradual appearance. First in the accounts of Lescarbot's *Histoire* of what other expeditions suffered at sea, and later in the account of Port Fortuné which contain the same level of carnage and violence. Ultimately, in *The Theater of Neptune* the New World is never ordered, Poutrincourt makes no declaration in the name of France and the play dissolves into a complex assortment of gustatory tastes and proclivities. In spite of the formality of Lescarbot's text, there are no prescriptive actions given to how the French will perform colonization. The procession onto land, into the New World is left open-ended. This play and the cultural platitudes on the surface of the text, when read in context, is brimming over with a savage constellation of voices and identities that are never reconstituted in a traditional hierarchical order. The *Theater of Neptune*, when read alongside the myriad of less circumscribed writings in *Histoire de Nouvelle France* becomes a part of a larger, unfolding process, unfolding before and after the processional ritual.

²³⁴ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et son Double*, p. 45.

CHAPTER IV
PERFORMING FEMININITY AS A THEATER OF CRUELTY:
JEANNE DES ANGES

*An idea of theater was lost... [and] It is certain that we need before anything a theater that awakens us: nerves and heart. The misdeeds of psychological theater descended from Racine have defamiliarized us from that immediate and violent action that theater should possess.*²³⁵

Antonin Artaud

In order to understand all parts of Artaud's theater we must, at one point take a look at the role of women. Although most of the examples of Artaud's theater of cruelty have been drawn from the men of the New World, one of the most important outbreaks of Artaud's theater, if we are to consider his theater to be like the plague, as he insisted, takes place in in a small convent in Loudun. This savage theater, is performed by a woman, Jeanne des Anges the mother superior of an Ursuline order. Jeanne's possession by 9 demons and the subsequent exorcisms she participated in for nearly ten years is marked by traces of Artaud's theater but we must first reconcile the anachronistic distance put by Artaud with the 17th century.

Artaud's *Theater of Cruelty* begins with a reproach: An idea of theater has been lost, one among many but it was perhaps the most important. The misdeeds of Racine are at

the heart of this loss; they replaced the immediacy of action and violence with an impoverished substitute, psychological drama. « Artaud wanted to destroy history »²³⁶ Derrida tells us, a history that begins in Early Greece and is replicated in Classical Theater of the 17th century, when France gives birth to the modern subject and the body disappears from the stage. But this disappearance is a slight of hand, a *trompe l'oeil* and bit-by-bit we will find it reconstituted elsewhere: the body is not absent, it has only been displaced. Writing against Racine, and in defense of his Theater of Cruelty, Artaud states the following:

Imbued with the idea that the crowd thinks first of all with its senses, and that it is absurd to address oneself first of all to its understanding, as does the psychological theater, the Theater of Cruelty proposes to resort to mass spectacle; to seek in the agitation of huge masses, convulsed and hurled one against the other, a bit of that poetry found in festivals and Crowds on those days, all too rare now days, when people pour out into the streets²³⁷

If the predecessors of Artaud's theater are at work, they are not immured in a theater. As spatial metaphor, the "interior theater" which will be epitomized in Versailles offers an illusion of stability. Classical theater, like all other art forms of the period, follow the movement set into motion by Richelieu and Louis XIII and turn away from the miscellaneous chaos of the unruly body of the 16th Century. If a theater of cruelty in the

²³⁵Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et La Cruauté*, p.131. *Une idée du théâtre s'est perdue...[et] il est certain que nous avons besoin avant tout d'un théâtre qui nous réveille : nerfs et cœur. Les méfaits du théâtre psychologique venu de Racine nous ont déshabitués de cette action immédiate et violente que le théâtre doit posséder*

²³⁶Derrida, J., *La Parole Soufflée*, p. 261 : celle de la métaphysique dualiste...

²³⁷Artaud, A., *Oeuvres Complètes*, IV p.2

17th century can be found, it will set out to directly unmask the myth of a stable and unifying whole which proves so crucial to France's national identity. Artaud speaks of a *théâtre grave* where all that is "in love and in crime, in war or in madness"²³⁸ will be given. Although these ideas seem in direct opposition with those of Classical theater, I believe that if we turn once again to the 17th century, in spite of Artaud's angry dismissal of this period, we will find a theater of cruelty, scripted on the body of Jeanne des Anges, a possessed nun, and staged in Loudun. Looking then, at theater in the 17th century we might do well to recognize the possibility of two types, of two tribes: D'Aubignac's theater of *vraisemblance* and *bienséances* and a fatherless theater of *le vrai* and its subsequent *violence*: French classical theater and its double. To locate this double we would need to mark its parameters. If a defining quality of this *other* theater is that it stages "le Vrai," then it seems fitting to turn to history, as D'Aubignac does, to furnish us examples. What I believe keeps an Artaudian reading of a 17th century *théâtre historique* from being anachronistic is the "organizing" structure of possession. Possession, as theme, boasts the body, refuses order and is crucial to an understanding of both Artaud's dramaturgy and 17th century France. While the body and work of Jeanne des Anges have been perpetually showcased as emblems of female hysteria, to read her autobiography alongside Artaud and consider her theater as a predecessor in a "genealogy of cruelty," might allow us to displace her work from the somewhat exclusive psychoanalytic and confessional readings, to which it has been confined.

How can we extract a sense of theater from possession? If we cannot extract

²³⁸ Artaud, A. *Le Théâtre et La Cruauté* p.132: *tout ce qui est dans l'amour, dans le crime, dans la guerre, ou dans la folie, il faut que le théâtre nous le rende, s'il veut trouver sa nécessité.*

from “the senses” an absolute *savoir* then can we still find an intuitive, physical and immediate knowledge of what makes possession inherently-- and Jeanne’s writings, specifically-- theatrical? As I propose the senses to guide our reading, with them I emphasize the visual. The connection between theater and theory is already made through the body, as the etymology of both words share in Greek an all-seeing “eye.” Both the theoretical and the theatrical call us to be spectators, therefore if we make the connection between theater and theory through “seeing” we can read passages that are strong on “visual” images—or scenes—and use the concept of theatricality for writings that would otherwise not be read as “theatrical.” Focusing on what Mitchell Greenberg calls “the spectacular theatricalization of the female body²³⁹” so vivid in Jeanne’s writing and relevant to the Early Modern period, I will continue to pursue this inquiry of a the female body as site/sight²⁴⁰ of theater in the 17th century and comment on its unexpected alliance with Artaud. What is the nature of the drama incessantly produced by a writer like Jeanne des Anges and what are its dynamics? In order to answer these questions I will read closely eye-witness accounts of her exorcisms as documented in Michel de Certeau’s *Possessions at Loudun* as well as scenes from Jeanne’s *Autobiography* alongside Artaud’s writings on theater; surveying the strange umbilical cord that unites them.

In 1657 L’Abbé d’Aubignac writes, *La pratique du théâtre*. D’Aubignac’s treatise summarizes Aristotle’s views on theater as found in the *Poetics*. In *La Pratique*, just as in

²³⁹ Greenberg, M., *Subjectivity and Subjugation in Seventeenth-Century Drama and Prose*, p. 67.

²⁴⁰ Greenberg, M., *Subjectivity and Subjugation in Seventeenth-Century Drama and Prose*, p.66. Greenberg uses this term in his discussion of the Renaissance’s concept of the female body as the sight/site of evil. Having located this visual/physical space, I use his term to establish the parameters surrounding my own “champs de travail.”

Aristotle, the essence of *le poème dramatique*, is given in one word: “Vraisemblance”²⁴¹. Without this, D’Aubignac insists, nothing reasonable can be said or done. If the essence of theater is *Vraisemblance*, D’Aubignac is quick to warn us of its double: *Le Vrai*.

It is a general maxim that “the true” should not be the subject of theater... It is true that Nero had his mother strangled and opened her breast in order to see the place where he had been carried for more than nine months before having been born, but this barbarity even though agreeable to those that execute them, will be not only horrible to those who see it, but even incredible due to the fact that this ought not occur.²⁴²

In D’Aubignac’s text the “Vrai” is bound to the impossible and sentenced to permanent exclusion from the theater. Of the True itself he does not speak, but he will address things belonging to it. These *choses véritables* are refused on two counts: first and simply, they ought not be seen. This restriction is immediate and given without further explanation. Still, were one to attempt transgression, such actions would be doomed to failure as “Le Vrai” exists beyond representation. D’Aubignac offers the example of Nero whose history, whose “horrible truth,” defies belief. What exceeds the believable transgresses, not only the theatrical aesthetic outlined first by Aristotle and now revived by D’Aubignac—but also the appeal to rationalism that is taking hold in 17th century France. In other words, what is incredible to believe becomes impossible before the law. What we witness in the staging of “the truth” in a historical theater is not only horrible,

²⁴¹ D’Aubignac, A. *La Pratique du Théâtre*, pp. 123: *En un mot la Vraisemblance est, s’il le faut ainsi dire, l’essence du Poème Dramatique, et sans laquelle il ne se peut rien faire ni rien dire de raisonnable sur la Scène.*

²⁴² D’Aubignac, A., *La Pratique du Théâtre*, pp. 123, 124.

but even (and here D'Aubignac marks an increase in degree) incredible. A theater of "le Vrai" is not dismissed, on the contrary, it is seen as a threat to the limits demarcated by the period, which required the rigid stratification of political and religious convictions based on a pure uniformity of "belief."

As Michel de Certeau and Foucault have so carefully shown in their study of the 17th century, the counter-Reformation saw the establishment of various religious orders in France, and confession became an even greater instrument of social control as a means of regulating egregious religious or political alliances. Possessions and their subsequent public exorcisms, took the private nature of confession and rendered it visible to a community taken by doubt. A priest's ability to "cast out demons" in a public square would prove crucial to a nation torn apart by the question of belief, a question violently contested during the Wars of Religion.²⁴³ What is unique to Loudun is not the exorcisms themselves but rather how this religious theater is publicly derailed for six years by Jeanne des Anges (née de Bélcier), and privately borne by members of the Church and the State for nearly a decade. Strikingly, the resolution of this matter required not only religious but political intervention, and even Richelieu, remarks on « Le grand scandale de l'époque » in his *Mémoires*:

His majesty having, in his justice, given some remedy to the disorder that the malice of men had caused in his State, was obliged to again use his authority to strengthen the Church and help with remedies it was necessary to apply to the trouble the Evil One had for some time stirred up in the Church in the person of

some Ursuline religious in the town of Loudun.²⁴⁴

Weaving the political into a religious myth, Richelieu casts “his majesty” as both healer and warrior. The King is called to cure a religious disorder, as well as combat the actions of an “Evil One,” who is decidedly feminine and attacks not only the church but also the State. That this “Evil One” manifests itself in the body of “some Ursuline nun,” casts Jeanne’s obsession, possession, and unreason in direct conflict with the church and more importantly, in opposition to the *raison d’État*²⁴⁵. We see then, how from 1632 to 1644, the events at Loudun haunt the imagination of statesmen, clerics and all of France. The story itself is strangely appealing. As mother superior of the Ursuline convent in Loudun, Jeanne des Anges aged 24, accuses Urbain Grandier, a local priest, of having bewitched her and several of her religious sisters. A mysterious bouquet of roses is thrown over the convent wall, presumably by the diabolical Grandier, and its scent is said to have permeated the space, filling the nuns with a sensual madness. The categories of this madness are made clear. Some nuns are merely obsessed with Grandier and claim to see his shadow within the walls of the convent late at night. Others are possessed by demons, who prompt them towards licentious behavior. These nuns especially hurl themselves against floors and walls, torture their faces with grimaces, desecrate hosts and refuse all calls to order-- none more so than Jeanne. In 1644 Jeanne des Anges’ autobiography is commissioned by her confessor to chronicle her nearly decade long revolt. Her manuscript circulated throughout France and became the primary account of

²⁴³ De Certeau, M., *The Possessions at Loudun*, Chapters 5 and 6 offer a detailed discussion on the political and religious context of these possessions.

²⁴⁴ De Certeau, M., *The Possessions at Loudun*, p. 72.

the possessions at Loudun.

Now, Artaud; Artaud's concept of the "vrai" is expansive. It extends to reality and requires much like D'Aubignac's own theater, its own kind of belief: *Nous voulons faire du théâtre une réalité à laquelle on puisse croire, et qui contienne pour le cœur et les sens cette espèce de morsure concrète que comporte toute sensation vraie.*²⁴⁶ Artaud's theater of cruelty is a theater of and for the senses; and the truth of this theater is aligned with sensation and suffering. But there is now the insertion of "reality," another crucial term in Artaud's lexicon and inseparable from his discussion regarding "le vrai." This reality is what theater should strive to become. If theater is "real" and "true" we should not assume that a theater of cruelty engages in a doubling of a quotidian, however violent or cruel we might imagine it. What Artaud's theater reflects is a non-human and dangerous reality.²⁴⁷ The theater of cruelty requires alchemy and metaphysics, as we see in the titles of his primary essays: *Le Théâtre Alchimique*, *La Métaphysique et la Mise-en scène*. Burning and possessions are themes that reappear in these essays and throughout the whole of his writing. Jeanne's theater is as congruent with these principals as Artaud's ideas are with her language. They speak to each other, naturally. Having touched on reality we must probe further and return to "Le vrai" (this term allows Artaud to speak not only to Jeanne but to D'Aubignac). Truth, though alluded to countless times in Artaud's writings, is never fixed upon a single definition. At this juncture, Derrida's reading of Artaud in *La Parole Soufflée* proves crucial:

²⁴⁵ Elle entreprit de guérir une pauvre pensionnaire toute couverte "de teigne, de gale et de vermine" avec des onguents qu'elle avait la pretention de fabriquer elle-même (22 Intro JDA)

²⁴⁶ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et la Cruauté* p. 133.

²⁴⁷ Artaud, A. *Le Théâtre Alchimique*, pp. 73, 74: *Le théâtre aussi doit être considéré comme le Double non pas de cette réalité quotidienne et directe dont il s'est peu à peu réduit à n'être que l'inerte copie, aussi vaine qu'édulcorée, mais une autre réalité dangereuse...or cette réalité n'est pas humaine mais inhumaine.*

la vérité qu'il indique désespérément, writes the philosopher as he distills Artaud's truth to three points: *le néant au cœur de la parole, le « manque de l'être » le « scandale d'une pensée séparée de la vie »*²⁴⁸. For the remainder of this paper I will focus specifically on "le manque de l'être" as essence of a theater of cruelty.

Le manque de l'être :

Jeanne and Artaud's truth is founded on a painful labor of separation that constructs the subject of desire as essentially hollowed and emptied from itself. Her autobiographical pact, which promises the recounting of the "moi-même", is inherently deceiving. At the center of a text so bloated with subjectivities there is essentially, no one and nothing. As for the body, swollen as it is, the theater of cruelty can and does make use of it, but only as a raw material: *L'homme avec ses mœurs et avec son caractère y compte, il faut le dire, pour fort peu...c'est à peine si de l'homme il pourrait encore rester la tête absolument dénudée, malléable et organique, où il demeurerait juste assez de matière formelle pour que les principes y puissent déployer leurs conséquences d'une manière sensible et achevée*²⁴⁹. Artaud is not concerned, and as Derrida states it, does not believe in the subject: « les mœurs et caractère » don't count for much. As for the body, it is not a metaphor; the body is thought transformed into sense. Jeanne opens her discussion of possession only after a detailed autobiographical portrait. The discussion of possession begins with these words: « Je brûlais d'amour pour lui »²⁵⁰.

As the passage continues it is precisely this « je » of which she has written so

²⁴⁸ Derrida, J., *La Parole Soufflée*, p. 255.

²⁴⁹ Artaud, A, *Le theater Alchimique*, p. 76.

²⁵⁰ Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, p. 76.

extensively (her humors, caprices, and tastes) that she sets ablaze, creating a perfect symmetry with the very real burning of Grandier at the stake. To efface the subject, the *moi-même* she summons « talking heads », bodiless subjectivities, to take hold of her: Asmodée, Léviathan, Béhémet, Isacaaron, Balaam, Grésil, and Aman. As she becomes hostess to seven demons, the *je* burns under their touch. For Artaud, actors must be like, "victims burnt at the stake, signaling through the flames".²⁵¹ Fire replaces the actor/subject in the theater of cruelty and possession. Jeanne, the actor, is no longer guided by a text instead, she subverts the archi-text of a religious and political discourse of the period and subverts the ways in which the female body was being traditionally read.

Freud linked hysteria to “la chose sexuelle” and certainly Jeanne’s story can also be relegated to that place, but what a reading of Jeanne alongside Artaud allows us to see is that this “chose sexuelle” can also be linked to “une chose pensée.” Artaud does not empty the body from its sex or its thought; rather, he conflates the two. Jeanne’s theater is invested in the collapse of this same distinction. Bachlard tells us that *The Prometheus complex is the Oedipus complex of the life of the intellect*.²⁵² As we witness the transformation of “Jeanne” into “La possédée” we see that she is putting, and I’ll push here the medical terminology that surrounds her, both these «complexes,» thought and sex, on stage. In this very powerful theater of cruelty, Jeanne burns the effigies of both the female and the male body. Her movements are contagious and Joseph Surin, Jeanne’s primary confessor,

²⁵¹ Artaud, A. *Oeuvres Complètes*, IV, p.18.

²⁵² Bachlard, G., *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, p. 12.

takes her actions, her movements and language as his own²⁵³. What's staged is the hollow "je" and it's burning brightly.

Using archival, eye-witness accounts of Jeanne's public exorcisms, Michel de Certeau shares how the theater of possession appears to its spectators:

What was sensibly admirable was that [the devil] commanded in Latin to her [Jeanne des Anges] ... [and] one could observe a forced obedience... the Holy Sacrament having been received in her mouth, he wanted, by puffing and roaring like a lion to expel it... [the possessed woman] writhed more vigorously, bearing down with her head, sticking out her tongue with indecent movements, blowing and spitting and rising up very high.²⁵⁴

Through "the admirable senses" the spectator interprets the "scene" but we are given only a confusion of pronouns and imagery. Jeanne's indiscernible performance overwhelms language. "He" presumably the devil, instructs her "the possessed," as "one" spectator observes her forced obedience. The host, which stands for a body and Christ is put in her mouth, but somehow "he" (and here we might ask who? Christ? The devil? The spectator's own body in response?) roars like a lion. Jeanne, at once devil, woman and animal, spits out the host. Amidst the confusion of actions and actors there is, nevertheless, an insatiable appetite for her performance in its masculine retelling. Within Catholic rituals the incorporation of the paternal body is among the most important.

²⁵³ For More on Joseph Surin, See Michel de Certeau, *La Fable Mystique* and *Correspondance de Jean-Joseph Surin*.

²⁵⁴ De Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, pp. 45, 46

What Jeanne stages is an incomplete act of incorporation into a religious fold, intensified only by the spectators gaze, who in his retelling, experiences his own failure in establishing a clear relationship vis-à-vis the now ordered political and religious space of 17th Century France. The France of Richelieu and Louis XIII presents itself as radically different from the France of the 16th century and would obliterate the memory of that period's weakened body politic by removing, all bodies from sight.

Jeanne's theater, like Artaud's, deals then with the question of contagion. The nuns of Loudun who witnessed her exorcisms with most frequency, lost consciousness of reality and were seized by erotic thoughts. In their delirium they reached for a new language, "le langage de leur supérieure."²⁵⁵ To begin a comparison of Jeanne's language with language as understood in a Theater of Cruelty, we should keep in mind Jeanne's claim of having read, "all kinds of books" and think of mystic writers such as Teresa de Avila, Francisco de Osuna and others who might have influenced her performance. Michel de Certeau explains the geographical and linguistic circulations in mystic speech, for him, "Mystic speech was fundamentally 'translational.' It crossed the lines. It created a whole by unceasing operations upon foreign words. With this hodgepodge of material, it organized an orchestral suite of misalignments as well as cover-ups and lexical quotations."²⁵⁶ Jeanne's consumption of books, her use of a vulgar language, in all senses of the word, and her attachment to the metaphysical significance of her movements and her speech create a unique, unstandardized discourse that is nevertheless inspired by the descriptive external and internal worlds, the metaphysical worlds of mystic writers. And

²⁵⁵ Legue, Gabriel et Gilles de la Tourette, *Autobiographie de Jeanne des Anges*, p. 32.

²⁵⁶ De Certeau, Michel, *The Mystic Fable*, p. 118.

yet the language of the possessed is not the language of the mystic, if anything it is the misalignment of this language, looking to provoke God and those that work for him. Jeanne's speech is therefore a language inspired by mystic speech and aimed against the word of God, love and communion sought after. For Artaud, communicative power should be at the center of a Theater of Cruelty: "Il importe avant tout d'admettre que comme la peste, le jeu théâtral soit un délire et qu'il soit communicatif."²⁵⁷ Jeanne's theater, which is her language, held the power to transmit delirious notions, movements and a new speech to the women that surrounded her. What is beheld by the many and contracted through the senses, is an ideological struggle that resists the religious, political and aesthetic imposition of the unitary order of classicism, which would, as Mitchell Greenberg writes "impose, as an ideal, the order of the One."²⁵⁸

Jeanne gives this performance life (it is after all, her body, her fluids, her suffering that is set on fire, on stage) as well as meaning: *When he [Béhémot] occupied my head, I tore my veils, those of my sisters, I ate them and damned the day I entered the religious order.*²⁵⁹ From the first pages of her autobiography, Jeanne insists on her hatred of religion; to soften the blow and let this striking admission pass she insists that she is not as God wanted her: *J'avais une forte pensée que je n'étais pas comme Dieu me voulait.*²⁶⁰ She tells us, without sparing detail, the many ways in which she attempted to subvert order throughout the years: *I spent three years in great libertinage. I applied myself to the reading of all kinds of books, I studied myself as much as possible, and since I have a certain natural ease to do what I like, I used my*

²⁵⁷ Artaud, Antonin, *Le Théâtre et son Double*, p. 39.

²⁵⁸ Greenberg, M., *Racine*, p. 17: *This ideology would impose, as an ideal, the order of the One—the unitary order of classicism.*

²⁵⁹ Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, pp. 71, 72.

*mind to gain the affections of creatures, particularly those who had authority over me in order to gain more freedoms.*²⁶¹ These attempts to subvert the authority in place are numerous, and yet prove unsuccessful as she is forced to participate in the many ceremonies that she hates, chief among these, the very act of confession. Although she performs accordingly in religious ceremonies, she admits: *I distanced myself from the practices of good nuns who allowed themselves to be guided without choice.*²⁶² Jeanne's account changes from confessional to a testimony of Grandier's crimes as she writes of how he bewitched her by giving her desires, to see him or to speak to him. It is this desire that encourages her to undertake a theater of possession, a theater that begins with the words that rightly mark her passage into a theater of cruelty: *I burned.*²⁶³ Returning to Artaud, it is precisely this moment of transformation that is the crux (the cross) of a Theater of Cruelty. Theater should be, Artaud writes:

The brusque and impetuous passage of a thought image to a true image, for example a man that blasphemes sees his blasphemy brusquely materialized before him with real traits and that that these images give birth in turn to others of the same spiritual vein.²⁶⁴

The « tableau vivant » that Artaud sets out to describe in his example could be drawn directly from the public exorcisms of Loudun, where the “image,” pure and heavy

²⁶⁰ Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie* 86: J'avais une forte pensée que je n'étais pas comme Dieu me voulait.

²⁶¹ Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, p. 65, 66

²⁶² Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, p. 67: Car au lieu de travailler à la mortification de mes passions et à la pratique de mes règles, je m'appliquai à reconnaître les humeurs des personnes du pays, à faire des habitudes avec plusieurs...je pris soin de me rendre nécessaire auprès de mes supérieures.

²⁶³ Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, p.76: Je brûlais d'amour pour lui.

²⁶⁴ Artaud, A. *La Mise en Scène et la Métaphysique*, p. 65.

as the habits of nuns, is transformed into a tableau of the monstrous «vrai». What the spectator sees in a Theater of Cruelty is his own blasphemy materialized. And she (the pronoun in Artaud's citation refers to the feminine gendered image, but it could also fit a woman on the verge of her effacement, at the brink of her own fatalité) « elle », will give birth to other images of the same blasphemous vein.

Her public exorcisms are not the only performances that align Jeanne with Artaud. Jeanne's theater privately manifests itself in her body through a false pregnancy, mirroring a tribal ritual in which Artaud "gives birth" to a series of letters while living with the Tarahumara. In both instances, the idea of *Le Vrai* is born of the self and is self-sustaining. A genealogy of cruelty is a process of asexual reproduction, with the individual being the sole progenitor of his or her truth. Jeanne's pregnancy is a delusion inspired by Iscaaron. Although Jeanne is possessed by seven demons, Iscaaron, haunts her the most and it is "he" that convinces her she is pregnant:

« Iscaaron qui était celui qui opérait le plus en moi, et qui ne me donnait quasi point de relâche...il me persuada vivement que j'étais grosse d'enfant en sorte que je le croyais fermement , et j'en avais tous les signes²⁶⁵ »

Showing all signs of pregnancy, Jeanne sets forth and performs her own private ritual in which she mimics the act of childbirth. This theater, especially cruel to the self, is the way by which she will disabuse herself of this gripping delusion:

« Je pris un autre dessein tout à fait diabolique qui fut de me faire une ouverture

au côté pour me tirer cet enfant du corps...Je portai avec moi un grand couteau et de l'eau pour baptiser cette petite créature...Je fis un grand ouverture à ma chemise avec des ciseaux, après quoi je pris le couteau que j'avais apporté avec moi, et je commençai de me le fourrer entre les deux côtes proches de l'estomac. »

266

Overtaken by a voice, presumably of God, Jeanne is thrown to the ground and her birthing/suicide is interrupted. Because Jeanne was physically deformed and cloistered at a young age, the fantasy of maternal production is always denied to her, as are all subsequent phases of a woman's life. Instead of a child, a belief in the words of Iscaaron impregnates her body, and she bears the evidence: "j'en avais tous les signes." This false knowledge must be expelled and thus she gives birth, to nothing—a nothing, which is itself *le vrai*. What her delusion creates for her is not an object of desire but a process of desire one that is never culminated, she never pierces her skin, there is no blood or fluids, certainly no child—no interior world is revealed. And yet she births a new clarity, as she is ultimately healed of her delusion by this prolonged play. This performance is perverse, in a Freudian sense, and I believe it's a new quality by which we might understand Artaud's Theater of Cruelty, which in all its metaphysical vigour and violence, remains sexless. Freud defines perversion as a deviation from the 'normal' sex act, which is a rather limited definition and leads us to turn to other sources. Lucie Cantin, using Lacanian terminology reinterprets Freud's definition thus so:

Freud defines perversion in terms of the signifier's diversion of goal and object

²⁶⁵ Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, p. 86.

from the logic of the organism, a diversion which forms and produces the erogenous body by electing and parceling it out in a series of pieces. In perversion, this process is not only recognized, but also overinvested, exploited, and even pushed to its limit.²⁶⁷

The object of desire for Jeanne, is the fluid and violent movement of the body, the growth and pains of the body, that exist without purpose. The processes of perversion, which for Jeanne is achieved through her false pregnancy, is linked proportionally to time, psychic energy, the promptings of a demon, but never matter, in a performance cruel and convincing first and foremost to the self. This process is overinvested in exploring its limits and refuses all constraints to morality. Jeanne and her false birth would be the theatrical progenitor of Artaud's theater when he writes: Je veux essayer un féminin terrible. Le cri de la révolte qu'on piétine, de l'angoisse armée en guerre, et de la revendication.²⁶⁸

While living with the Tarahumara, Artaud documents one of many theatrical rituals performed by a Tutuguri priest. Like Jeanne's false birth, these moments seem to lead to an awakened state of consciousness. The priest pierces Artaud's side with a sword and draws a single drop of blood. This ritual awakens in him a consciousness that the Indian priest explains in these terms:

To sew you back together in your wholeness, without God who assimilates you

²⁶⁶ Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, pp. 94, 95.

²⁶⁷ Lucie Cantin, "Perversion and Hysteria," in *After Lacan: Clinical Practice and the Subject of the Unconscious*, p. 156.

²⁶⁸ Artaud, Antonin, *Le Théâtre et Son Double*, p. 223.

and creates you, as if you were creating yourself, and as you yourself create yourself out of Nothingness and in spite of Him at every moment.²⁶⁹

In another section of the same text, Artaud hallucinates the emergence from his spleen of “letters of a very ancient and mysterious alphabet chewed by an enormous mouth.”²⁷⁰ For Artaud the importance of giving birth through his body to a new knowledge of the self or, as in the second instance, an ancient language is continually repeated trope in the theatrical tableaux of the Tarahumara. This knowledge cannot come about by any other means. The metaphysical truths born of the body offer clarity of perspective. Both Artaud and Jeanne give birth to a new identity but the project of creating the new self is achieved through a dynamic form of writing, a writing on the body and through the body. Artaud writes, «Je ne veux pas me reproduire dans les choses, mais je veux que les choses se produisent par moi»²⁷¹

Turning once again to Jeanne we find that this moment, terrifying as it was given the multiplicity of voices she heard was, in fact, transformative, *Je dois dire avec vérité à la gloire de Notre-Seigneur que mon intérieur fut entièrement changé dans ce même instant.*²⁷² This point marks the moment in which Jeanne embraces in earnest her conversion. As she narrates her exorcisms she accounts now for a new eroticism based on the apparition of religious figures. Saint Joseph comes to her at night filling her room with a delicious odor. Later it is the apparition of her guardian angel that came to her while she was sick and used a

²⁶⁹ Artaud, Antonin. 1976. The peyote dance. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, p. 20.

²⁷⁰ Artaud, Antonin. The peyote dance, p. 36.

²⁷¹ Artaud, IX, *Œuvres*, p. 123.

²⁷² Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, p. 96.

heavenly unction to heal her; drops of this “divine baume” remained on her shirt.²⁷³ Jeanne’s Theater of Cruelty does not stop with possession and exorcisms. Artaud reminds us of the purpose of his theater: “it is not to the minds or the senses of the spectators that we address ourselves but to their whole existence.” Jeanne threatens her community by declaring a truth that defies religious truth and performing a theater that contaminates the order. Finally with her hands bearing the stigmata of the names of saints she tours France and meets Richelieu. *Je lui demandai s’il voulait faire faire des épreuves pour reconnaître la vérité de l’impression des noms. Il m’a répondu qu’il n’avait pas jugé cela nécessaire et qu’il ne doutait en aucune manière d’une chose si évidente*²⁷⁴

In writing her autobiography, Jeanne revolts against the servitude of confessional writing. Although she is ordered to give an account of her conversion, she has inscribed, in her own language and through her own words, a protestation against the structures she claims to uphold. The instances of her revolt are so many, her performances in this Theater of Cruelty restored theater “to the level of pure and autonomous creation, under the sign of hallucination and of fear”²⁷⁵ Jeanne interrogates the conditions under which she is systematically bound from her childhood and through the primal utterances and cries of hysteria

In conclusion Jeanne’s performance points out on the site and at the sight of her body, that *Vrai* and the *Vraisemblance* are terms are fraught with sexual and ideological tensions that awaken its spectators. What is *vrai* to the emerging Absolutist State is for

²⁷³ Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, p. 185.

²⁷⁴ Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, p.224.

Jeanne's theater, pure vraisemblance. They call to order, she calls to question the mythic unity of Classicism as she stages *l'envers de l'endroit*.

²⁷⁵ Artaud, Antonin. 1976. Antonin Artaud, selected writings. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, On The Balinese Theater, p. 215,

CHAPTER V THE SAVAGE IN FRENCH CLASSICAL THEATER

French Classical theater is regarded by many as the height of French expression but it is seldom associated with France's colonial past and yet from the late 16th century throughout the 17th century, France invests a considerable amount of its resources on its colonial settlements in Brazil and Canada. Nevertheless, this effort is rarely reflected in the country's literature, less still in the theatrical works of the period. Unlike Spain, where the saga of American conquest takes center stage and the conversions of Native Indians are dramatized by writers such as Calderón, Lope de Vega, Zarate and others, the great playwrights of France never took interest in this popular trope. In fact, American "savages," as they were referred to in the travel narratives that gave the first account of this New World Other, do not appear on stage until the 18th century, and even then, they do so only sparingly.

What does the notable absence of the New World in French theater tell us about France's Early Modern relation to its American colonies? Is this topic not fit for cultural consumption given the public's taste for Classical themes? Are dramatizations of conquest further hindered by the rules of *bienséances*? Are there no traces of the American "savage," or American savagery on the classical stage? Although this assumption has often been made by scholars of the period, limiting the study of France's colonial discourse to travel narratives alone and not recognizing its influence on literature and theater, only reinforces a historical fracture that has been perpetuated in the study of

France's Early Modern history. In this chapter I would like to explore a series of moments, historical as well as theatrical, that would link French colonialism and its particular definition of savagery, to the classical stage. I believe that these transatlantic relations influence the political and ideological development of France's national identity serving as a screen that reflects aversion, fascination and ambivalence in relation to a patriarchal order; themes which are also central in the works of Corneille, Molière and others. In this chapter I propose a close reading of Corneille's *Cid* (1637), alongside Molière's *Dom Juan* (1665). By pursuing the notion of savagery in these classical plays and then comparing them, in the second half of the dissertation with an Artaudian theater where savagery is present and vital in the new theatrical space of the Americas, I hope to move persuasively between literary analysis and colonial history establishing the parallels and differences between classical theater and what I argue is the anthropological and Artaudian theater of cruelty present in the New World.

Before beginning a close reading of these plays it is necessary to explain that these plays, as well as the entire theatrical canon, are framed by a literary quarrel that spanned three centuries. During this period, French literature and in particular, French theater, was divided along two sides: that of the Ancients, who bowed to the greatness of the Classical period and sought to reproduce this greatness through imitation, and the side of the Moderns, who sought to elevate the French language to new heights by removing it from the shadow of the Classics and encouraging innovation. Chief among the defenders of the Ancients was Racine, who inspired by Greek and Roman myths reinterpreted these plays in French, and developed France's own cultural mythology of absolutism. On the side of the Moderns, perhaps too simply but for the sake of marking a comparable

opposition is Corneille, whose innovation caused outrage in spite of popular appeal.

In her book, *Colonizer or Colonized: The Hidden Stories of Early Modern France*, Sara Melzer argues that the famous, literary *Querelle* between Moderns and Ancients is a reaction to France's own colonial memory. Invaded by the Romans, the Gauls were regarded as barbarians and forced to undergo their own transformation. Their "conversion" was so effective, that the Romans not only subjugated the Gauls militarily, they also effaced all traces of their written history²⁷⁶. This illiterate Gallic ancestry proved especially problematic to the *lettré* of the neo-classical period in their construction of France's national identity/myth. Savagery, ever present in their ancestral roots and in the French psyche, was precisely what needed to be eradicated from France's literary lineage. Melzer considers the quarrel a "colonial battle," and I strongly agree; it is a quarrel, sublimated through language, which deals with the incessant fears of a return to a savage and illiterate past.

Colonial definitions of the savage:

In spite of the association of the Savage Other to the abject, as defined by Kristeva--the radically excluded other that is not "I"²⁷⁷-- there is nevertheless an ambivalence, a European desire of cannibalistic proportions that longs for the civilizing incorporation of the excluded other. France's colonial practices are founded on attraction and fear of the spectacular body that emerges from the New World. This New World body is a source of fascination due to its sexual liberties and repeatedly censored

²⁷⁶ Melzer, S., *Colonizer or Colonized: The Hidden Stories of Early Modern French Culture*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, p. 45.

for the same reasons. Unlike Portugal and Spain, France acts out its colonial fantasies through assimilation and not extermination. Interracial marriages between French settlers and Native Indians were strongly encouraged and a discussion of “savagery” quickly becomes a discussion of marriage. Questions of marriage, purity and defilement allows us to see how France’s colonial agenda intersects with Classical theater; both of which sought to contain all expressions of excess.

Sauvage is a word that originates in the 12th century and is associated with animals, plants and landscapes that exist outside of human interference. From the 15th century onwards, the term was applied to the inhabitants of the New World. *Le Trésor de La Langue Française*, gives the following definition of “sauvage:” *Conforme à l'état de nature, qui n'a pas subi l'action de l'homme. Qui vit en liberté dans la nature, à l'écart des influences humaines*. Its association with ferocity and woodlands quickly attributes a moral and aesthetic value to the term as: *une chose mauvaise et imparfaite*. (Dictionnaire Ancien Français). In the 15th century, the definition evolves further, marking an indissociable link with *inculte*²⁷⁸ and illiterate, permanently excluding the Native American Indian from participating in or possessing any form of intellectual culture. Identified with nudity and dancing, the Native Indians were defined by their useless expenditure of energy: *être sauvage c'est dépenser son énergie de manière improductive*.²⁷⁹

Some of the essential differences between the societies associated with savagery and the European world were based on economic practices, religion, familial structures,

²⁷⁷ Kristeva, J., *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, translated by Leon S. Roudiez, Columbia University Press, 1982, p. 1.

²⁷⁸ *Inculte : qui ne fait pas preuve de culture intellectuelle (Trésor de la Langue Française)*.

²⁷⁹ Gomez-Geraud, M., « La perception du geste sauvage et de ses enjeux: Regards sur l'Indien de la Nouvelle France » dans *Les Figures de L'Indien*, Edité par Gilles Thérien, Université de Québec à Montréal, 1988, p. 185.

social hierarchies, and forms of communication. Commerce and profit did not exist in Indian societies, religious beliefs situated man as a part of nature and did not define him in relation to a monotheistic and intolerant God. Because of their itinerant lifestyle, the Native Indians did not possess “proper” dwellings, consequently their habitats, habits and *habits* or lack thereof, challenged the patriarchal order of the nuclear family. The stories passed down from generations, were encoded in an oral tradition and never appeared in writing.

In spite of these clear differences, as the term “Savage” evolves, it becomes increasingly difficult for the European observer to fix its meaning in language. Jean de Léry, a Protestant missionary who lived and observed the Tupinamba Indians for nearly a year, writes the following to his French readers: *Their gestures and countenances are so different from ours that I confess to my difficulty in representing them in words, or even in pictures. So to enjoy the real pleasures of them, you will have to go and visit their country.*²⁸⁰ Less generous writers would accept the definition of the Savage simply as a sub-human classification of beings who were “brutish” and “bestial.” The term “cannibal” also becomes shorthand for the Native Indian, regardless of actual anthropophagic practices.

French New World writers, (Thévet, Léry, D’Abbeville, to name only a few) reinterpret the strangeness of these foreign bodies, their gestures as well as their practices, from their own distinctive perspectives, which were heavily marked by their religious influences, making it difficult to give a definitive account of the descriptive topos of the American savage. However, if a single threat consistently emerges in their writings, it is the threat of the wantonness of the savage character, the “sexual liberties enjoyed by the

youth, [their] revolt against authority and rejection of the civilized code and [their] experience of sinful joy”²⁸¹. Léry writes that to “enjoy the real pleasure of them” one must see them in person. The repression of sexual instincts, often present in the narrations of these French writers, is sublimated by an overriding religious discourse. And still, the act of love is never far from religious language, in an exaltation of emotion the following entreaty appears in *The Jesuit Relations* :

If you love the French people as you say you do, then love them, and they will teach you the way to heaven. This is what makes them leave their country, their friends and their comforts to instruct you and especially to teach your children a knowledge so great and so very necessary.²⁸²

Having spoken love, the Native Indians are now asked to perform it, to accept the teachings and the covered bodies of French missionaries and to shun their own nakedness. In so doing, they would enter a sacrificial logic that renounces the body and exchanges desire for a greater sense of meaning. If, as Mitchell Greenberg writes, *sacrifices is always seen as an originary act, an act that establishes a before and after*²⁸³, then this new linguistic and performative definition of love as a sacrifice mirrored in the bodies of French

²⁸⁰ Léry, J., *History of A Voyage To The Land of Brazil*, translation and introduction by Janet Whatley, University of California Press, 1990, p.

²⁸¹ Jaenen, C., *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Columbia University Press, 1976, p. 31.

²⁸² *The Jesuit Relations: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in North America (1610-1791)*, Thwaites, The Vanguard Press, New York, Vol. V, p. 251.

²⁸³ Greenberg, M., *Baroque Bodies: Psychoanalysis and the Culture of French Absolutism*, Cornell University Press, 2001, p. 214.

missionaries, marks the inaugural of monotheism²⁸⁴ in the New World which allows for only one naked and passionate body, that of Christ. A love of the French people and a love of their God, demanded the transformation of all Native corporal practices.

Turning, for a moment, from the body, some European writers look to the spirit and insist on the Christian potential of these primitive people, idealizing the Native Indians as *Tabulae rasae*, possessing an essential malleability on which a French identity might take form. Colonial settlements in Canada, known as *Nouvelle France*, reflected a promising relation to its European double. The Jesuit missionary Pierre Biard, enthusiastically describes Canada as France's twin: *C'est la nouvelle France, ceste nouvelle terre dy-je decouverte premierement au dernier siècle par nos François, terre jumelle avec la nostre sujete à mesmes influences range en mesme parallele, située en mesme climat.*²⁸⁵ This idealization of Canada is based on identification and an inherent ambivalence towards the American colonies. The geographic distance of the "New World" projected a Savage other that allowed France to move past its own brutal history and interior differences and define its territorial and cultural boundaries against an exterior matrix.

Foucault reminds us that society affirms its future and fortune not only through the number and virtue of its citizens, their rules of marriages and the organization of their family but also *à la manière dont chacun fait usage de son sexe.*²⁸⁶ New France and the savage sex of its inhabitants staged the licentious desires of French society leaving Classical theater to reflect the ego ideal, which dealt with *self-observation, the moral conscience, the*

²⁸⁴ Rosolato, G., *Le Sacrifice: Repères psychanalytiques*, Presse Universitaires de France, 1987, p. 87.

²⁸⁵ Thwaites, (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, Vol. V, pp. 32, 33.

²⁸⁶ Foucault, M., *Histoire de la Sexualité I*, Éditions Gallimard, 1976, p. 37.

*censorship of dreams and the chief influence in repression.*²⁸⁷ In a further attempt to legitimize New World sex, Louis XIV institutionalized state-financed dowries and Colbert insisted on the importance of these marriages stating they were necessary to attract the savages towards the French, *ce qui peut se faire par les mariages et par l'éducation de leurs enfants.*²⁸⁸ Whether through marriage and assimilation as we see with the Canadian colonies or through education, the intimate contact between “Savages” and the French posed the risk of contamination, an *énsauvagement* of the French, not only of their blood and faith, but also of their language: *I have noticed in the study of their language that there is a certain jargon between the French and the savages, which is neither French nor Savage; and yet when the French use it, they think they are speaking the Savage Tongue, and the Savages, in using it, think they are speaking good French*²⁸⁹ With eroding linguistic boundaries, the production of travel literature emerging from Brazil and Canada was critical to the proper “telling” of these relationships. Similarly in France, the rules of classical composition imposed on literature, reflected a shift in the art of governing which progressively transferred sovereign power from God to the body of the King. Regarding this gradual evolution of the monarchy, Kantorowicz explains that the King shares a liminal space outside of the law because of his partially divine nature: *The king appeared as a persona mixta, because a certain spiritual capacity was attributed to him as an effluence of his consecration and unction.*²⁹⁰ The supernatural liberty enjoyed by the King was threatened by the natural liberty enjoyed by the savage, who also resided outside the law and exercised his own sovereignty. In order to discern among these

²⁸⁷ Freud, S., *Group Psychology and The Analysis of the Ego*, The International Psycho-Analytical Library, Edited by Ernest Jones, Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York, 1949, p. 68, 69.

²⁸⁸ Colbert cited in Sara E. Melzer. "Myths of Mixture in *Phèdre* and the Sun King's Assimilation Policy in the New World." *L'Esprit Créateur* 38.2 (1998): 72-81. *Project MUSE*. Web. 2 Apr. 2012. p. 2.

²⁸⁹ *The Jesuit Relations*, V:113. p. 231

personas mixtas of varying value, a constant appeal to authority was needed. Richelieu's *Académie* founded that very authority and in so doing established a balance between virtue, *Arete* and Art; this was to be achieved in literature but also throughout all of France. Corneille's inability to attain this proper balance in *Le Cid* will be the first example of an objectified savage "other" presented on the classical stage.

Le Cid:

Corneille's *Cid* (1636) inspired by *Las Mocedades de Cid* (1605) of Guillén de Castro, marks Spain's historical transition in governance, from a feudal system based on bloodlines to the emergence of Fernand, the first king of Castille. The uncertainty of Fernand's reign gave the political context to the Spanish drama and mirrored France's own recent history. The quarrel famously associated with the play, erupted for a number of reasons. Primarily, however, *Le Cid*'s inherent danger was founded on its production of pleasure, and its lack of adherence to the strict rules of composition imposed by Richelieu's newly formed French Academy.

In the anonymous manuscript known as *Observations Sur Les Sentiments de L'Académie Française*, the author, thought to be a member of *les Anciens*, outlines a series of observations criticizing Corneille's play²⁹⁰. This text summarizes a variety of perspectives from different members of the Academy regarding Corneille's work; ranging from accusations of plagiarism, to the questioning of his legitimacy to speak on behalf of an aristocracy that as a bourgeois writer he could not understand. Although the author does

²⁹⁰ Kantorowicz, E., *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton University Press, 1981, p.44

question the legitimacy of *Le Cid* within the French canon, he also questions the assumed legitimacy of the French language, and comments on its lack of structure:

Car en nos contentions Verbales qui regardent La diction La construction, la liason en toute L'Economie du Langage François, nous n'avons point de Loy certaine ny aucunes Regles prescrites qui en puissant expressement decider, et nostre Langue n'estant point borne ny enclose comme sont les autres Langues...chacun s'est donné la liberté d'en user a sa fantasie.²⁹²

Foucault reminds us that the 17th century attempted to control the free circulation of all that would name sex: *nommer le sexe serait, de ce moment, devenu plus difficile et plus coûteux*.²⁹³ To do this it would be necessary to control “the entire economy” of the French language. Although this was Richelieu’s endeavor, the linguistic jurisdiction of the Academy was not yet recognized nor accepted.²⁹⁴ The inherent freedom and underlying savagery of French posed dangerous possibilities. Through the “looseness” of language, a writer could project his fantasy on the public stage. A variety of phantasmatical representations presented on stage could allow the “Savage” to leave its imprint in language and obstruct the development of a larger cultural myth that was evolving, that of the Absolutist state.

Language, according to this anonymous representative of the Ancients, should

²⁹¹ Civardi, J.M., « Observations Sur Les Sentiments de L'Académie Française » dans *La Querelle du Cid (1637-1638) Édition Critique Intégrale*, Honoré Champion, Paris 2204, pp. 1037-1038.

²⁹² Civardi, J.M., « Observations Sur Les Sentiments de L'Académie Française » dans *La Querelle du Cid (1637-1638)*, p.1063.

²⁹³ Foucault, M., *Histoire de la Sexualité*, I, p. 25.

develop from a structured system of thought and repression and not be sourced in the savage body, in fundamental drives, desires, aggression and pleasure: *De la est venu que pour regler nostre Langage, et decider le different survenu entre nos Ecrivains, ils on convenu que L'Autorité des bons Auteurs et L'usage commun en seroient les Juges*²⁹⁵. The anonymous writer defends the construction of the classical subject through language, but language itself must be expunged of “looseness” and impurities. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva explains how through the laws of language humans can experience, an authority *[which] through frustrations and prohibitions, shapes the body into a territory*.²⁹⁶ Although Kristeva is not addressing the specifics of French Classicism, the conceptual understanding of the body, from the Renaissance to the Classical Age, experiences similar linguistic prohibitions that redefine its relation to authority. Through these linguistic prohibitions, and an imposed mutism concerning sex, the body would become one of the many spaces of confinement produced in the Classical Age²⁹⁷. In what is clearly the height of the attack, the author likens Corneille’s language, which appeals to no higher authority than the artist’s genius and the public’s pleasure, to that of the Indian: *Comme si l’auteur du Cid eust introduit sur le theatre le parler Taupinamboux*²⁹⁸.

How does *Le Cid* threaten the order of *L’Académie Française* and to a larger degree reflect some of the greatest fears in France’s colonial discourse? I believe that Corneille’s major transgression is based on Chimène’s *usage de son sexe*; the liberty with which she

²⁹⁴ Civardi, J.M., « Observations Sur Les Sentiments de L’Académie Française » *La Querelle du Cid* (1637-1638), p. 1038.

²⁹⁵ Civardi, J.M., « Observations Sur Les Sentiments de L’Académie Française » *La Querelle du Cid* (1637-1638), p. 1063.

²⁹⁶ Kristeva, J., *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, p. 72.

²⁹⁷ Foucault, M., *History of Madness*, translated by Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa, Routledge, 2006, “The Great Confinement” p. 47. Also, Foucault, *Histoire de La Sexualité* I, p. 25.

speaks of her desires marks her as inherently savage. Chimène, is described by Georges Scudéry, one of the most vociferous critics of Corneille's play as an "unnatural daughter" and "monstrous." As such she represents one of the play's greatest defects: *L'on y voit une fille desaturée ne parler que de son Malheur, pleindre la perte de son Amant, lors qu'elle ne doit songer qu'à celle de son père.* Rather than being consumed by a dutiful sorrow and retreating in silence, Chimène speaks and what she asserts on the Classical stage is irreconcilable with the rules of *bienséances*, for she voices a desire to avenge her father while continuing to love his murderer. Chimène embodies divided loyalties and in so doing she situates the play on the brink of savage and cupidinous urges.

From her first appearance on stage, Chimène awaits the word of her father, hoping to match his will to her passion.²⁹⁹ As the play begins there seems to be perfect agreement between these two desires, the Count has approved of her engagement to Rodrigue and asks that she respond to his feelings. In this feudal economy, Chimène is clearly an object of exchange and her marriage to Rodrigue strengthens the political alliances formed between two great warriors, Don Diegue and The Count. It is only through the body of Chimène that these two men can merge their bloodlines. Although the engagement is undisputed and even sanctioned by all members of the patriarchal order, Chimène is, if not resistant to the discourse, then doubtful of its possible realization, and questions what had been determined a paternal order:

Chimène: Et bien, Elvire, en fin, que faut-il que j'espere?
Que dois-je devenir, et que t'a dit mon pere?

²⁹⁸ Civardi, J.M., « Observations Sur Les Sentiments de L'Académie Française » *La Querelle du Cid* (1637-1638), p. 1064.

²⁹⁹ *Que dois je devenir* she asks Elvire *et que t'a dit mon père?*

Elvire: Deux mots don't tous vos sens doivent estre charmez
Il estime Rodrigue autant que vous l'aimez.

Chimène: L'excez de ce bonheur me met en defiance,
Puis je à de tels discours donner quelque croyance?

(I.ii.35-40)

Chimène openly states her defiance, and lacks « croyance » in the will of her father. After Rodrigue murders the Count, Chimène, an object of exchange becomes a speaking subject. Her language, until now has been confessional and intimate bearing the mark of a feminine malleability, *Que dois je devenir?* Publicly, she awaited the word of her father as final pronouncement to what she would become. After his death, her speech and her innermost desires are made public, staged without measure of restraint. As she attempts to exact justice through her appeals to the King, Don Diègue is silenced by Fernand, *Vous parlerez après; ne troublez pas sa plainte* (II, 8, 658), and Chimène is able to participate in what had been until this point a strictly masculine discourse. Having witnessed the scene of the Counts death, she is changed, *mes yeux on vu son sang/ Couler à gros bouillons de son généreux flanc* (II, 8, 659, 660). Her cry for vengeance is accompanied by a feminine retelling of history, for in denouncing Rodrigue's crime, Chimène reminds the King that the story of Spain was written in her father's blood: *Ce sang qui tant de fois garantit vos murailles, Ce sang qui tant de fois vous gagna des batailles* (II, 8, 661, 662). With no brothers to avenge this crime and her father dead, she alone defends a feudal system wherein sovereignty is not determined by the King but rather by her bloodline. Chimène, possessed by the spirit of her father, claims to read an inscribed message in his blood.

In ne me parle point, mais pour mieu m'émouvoir
Son sang sur la poussiere escrivoit mon devoir,
Ou plutost sa valeur en cet estat reduite

Me parloit par sa playe, et hastoit ma poursuite,
Et pour se faire entendre au plus juste des Rois
Par cette triste bouche elle empruntoit ma voix

(II.iii. 685-90)

With this reading, she partially recovers her dead father's authority and "borrowing" his voice, she is able to participate in the patriarchal system that would otherwise exclude her. Chimène becomes a reader of signs, initiated in a savage literacy (the reading of her own father's blood). In Kristeva's *Power of Horror*, all bodily fluids are associated with the abject. Urine, semen, tears and blood flow and seep, corrupting an outer ordered space, refusing the existence of a body's boundaries, disproving the achievements of the solid, rigid and the unambiguous. Chimène positions herself between this abject world and the law, representing the intractability of fluids. Kristeva writes that corpses, associated with the excremental, *stand for the danger to identity that comes from without; the ego threatened by the non-ego, society threatened by its outside, life by death. Menstrual blood, on the contrary, stands for the danger issuing from within the identity (social or sexual)*.³⁰⁰ Chimène is at the crossroads of these two forms of abjection, both externally threatening Fernand's Kingdom as she calls for the death of Rodrigue and internally troubling the understanding of sexual identity and sexual difference. Where she was once an object of exchange she is now a speaking subject who interprets her familial legacy and defines the father, who returns to the text as an object, a silenced corpse.

In her (t)reason she should share the fate of her father, who has, through Rodrigue's own hand, been expunged from society, as he represents a part of a dangerous

³⁰⁰ Kristeva, J., *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, p. 71.

lineage. We must keep in mind that the Count's death is brought about by his treacherous refusal to accept the King's word, that appointed Don Diegue as the formal tutor of the young prince. This is a dispute over the education and "literacy" of Spain's future monarch determining whether the Prince would become a reader of history or an actor in war. The Count's lawless adherence to action and violence, insulted not only the honor of Don Diegue but also threaten the sovereignty of the King: *Il offense don Diègue, et méprise son roi! Au milieu de ma cour il me donna la loi!* (II, 6, 554, 555). After the death of her father and the break in her engagement, Chimène is "masterless," subject only to the will of the King (which she perpetually defies). The Infante goes so far as to remind Chimène that her demands for justice are now disrupting the political order.

L'Infante: C'est générosité quand pour venger un père
 Notre devoir attaque une tête si chère;
 Mais c'en est une encore d'un plus illustre rang,
 Quand on donne au public les intérêts du sang
 Que le bien du pays t'impose cette loi:
 Aussi bien que crois-tu que t'accorde le roi?

Chimène: Il peut me refuser, mais je ne puis me taire.

(IV, ii, 1197-1205)

In spite of this warning, Chimène insists on defying the sovereign will. Though public opinion now celebrates Rodrigue, and his actions prove of such merit that they ennobled his blood (The Infante considers marrying him), Chimène refuses to be silenced. Although she often complains that her actions are "muted" and "impotent" her war cry, which Scudéry describes as tireless, is no longer part of a private discourse, it is now being heard on a national stage. Moreover, the influence she has over the man who has become the nation's greatest hero, further unbalances the structures of power.

Rodrigue, le Cid, the greatest warrior in Spanish history, seeks to be dominated physically by Chimène, granting her power and deference, referring to her three times as his judge: *mon juge est mon amour, mon juge est ma Chimène* (III, I, 753). He gives her his sword so that she will kill him and exact her vengeance. Rodrigue's blood offering, *C'est pour t'offrir mon sang qu'en ce lieu tu me vois* (III, iv, 899) takes on a transgressive and erotic tone. The Count's blood stains the sword that Rodrigue offers her, she sees Rodrigue *du sang de mon père encor toute trempée*. This scene with its mixture of fluids, tears and blood, is culminated by Chimène's avowal, *je ne te bais point!*— a final recognition of her conflicting (transgressive) desires. As Luce de Irigaray writes regarding female sexuality, Chimène's desire “would not be expected to speak the same language as man's; woman's desire has doubtless been submerged by the logic that has dominated the West since the time of the Greeks”³⁰¹. And yet Chimène speaks, subverting masculine logic, by recognizing the incongruity between her duty and the eroticism of her own body: *Sachant que je t'adore et que je te poursuis*.

Chimène, in the context of a colonial discourse, proves to be a dangerous and regressive figure. Resisting the power structure of the monarchy while defending the memory of her father, she insists on the trope of loss and threatens the evolving construction of a Spain's national identity. Her savagery represent an excess that refuses definitive integration into the discursive and social structures imposed by the King. “The savage” imposes its own account of history, primarily through Chimène but also leaving a linguistic imprint through the Moors, who in spite of defeat, name Rodrigue *Le Cid*—yet another sign of the menacing linguistic presence and possible contamination by the

³⁰¹ Irigaray, L., *This Sex Which Is Not One*, Translated by Catherine Porter, Cornell University Press, 1985, p.25.

Other. This savagery, having once infused the play, is never silenced and never fully contained.

In her final stance against social norms, Chimène refuses to marry Rodrigue by never explicitly accepting his proposal, thus the King is forced to defer the marriage to some future time. The marriage that should have taken place at the end of this *tragie-comédie*, would have restored the moral and political unity that was disturbed by the public and private expression of Chimène's dueling desires. Although she is promised as prize to Rodrigue, the King is unable to accomplish what he most desires: a marriage ceremony. A wife to no one, Chimène is never fully assimilated into the larger body politic, the ultimate transgression in the cultural myth of Absolutism. The fantasies to which the public submits are not those that are carefully constructed by the *Académie* with its adherence to the *bienséances*, but rather the illogical and savage impulses of desire which leave the text unsettled (uncolonized) and unresolved. Corneille's incorporation in the text of a feminine voice, the presence of fluids and transgressive desires, unleash the latent power of the exploited object onto the Classical stage. *Le Cid's* inconclusive ending stages a dangerous possibility: to change the conceptual terms by which an objectified, Savage, Other might be defined.

The Sovereign and the Savage in *Dom Juan*

Molière's *Dom Juan*, written in 1665 is one of the most impure pieces in classical theater. Licentious, deceitful and unapologetic, this retelling of Tirso de Molina's *Burlador de Sevilla*, blends elements of farce and satire to tell the story of the unrepentant lover who refuses spiritual conversion even under penalty of death. In this chapter, I would like to propose a reading of this play which functions as an allegorical telling of France's relation to the New World and its inhabitants. Sara E. Melzer's article, "Myths of Mixture in *Phèdre* and the Sun King's Assimilation Policy in the New World," explains how assimilation and more specifically marriage was the means by which to incorporate the savage other: *Assimilation is one possible response to the problems inherent in all nation building. Nations expand to increase their strength. But expansion brings in alien elements, thus jeopardizing its unity and purity. How does a nation, then, deal with these aliens? One solution is to expel or expunge them; another to enslave or proclaim them non-persons; and yet another is to integrate them into the political order. Historically, the French have adopted all three approaches according to the differences in the various groups at different times. However, in the seventeenth century, the French, partly in an effort to*

*imitate the universalism of the Roman Imperium, adopted a policy of assimilation*³⁰² The idea that savagery could be assimilated through love, or at the very least marriage, was popular with French philosophers, politicians, traders and missionaries. However, Molière's *Dom Juan* presents a troubling example of a savagery that refuses assimilation into a social order. Savagery exists and will not be reconciled with any patriarchal figure be it human or divine. In this chapter I will argue that the savagery of Dom Juan is linked to his need to live in the present, his nomadic lifestyle and his desire, all qualities that have been attributed to the savagery of the American Indian. Dom Juan is not the only character in the play who desires. Each one of his opponents pursues a specific goal: Elvire wants a husband, her brothers seek retribution for her honor, Pierrot, his wife, the poor man his reward and Sganarelle his wages but the essential difference between these characters and Dom Juan is that their desire is limited and specific, while Dom Juan's desire is indiscriminate and inextinguishable. His desire exists in opposition to a system of traditions and faith. He is savage and this term opposes itself to the sovereign of both a religious and secular order. The savage presence of Dom Juan interrupts the sovereign will and this is problematic for the socially constructed narrative of the play, which should tell the story of a redeemable rogue. In like manner, early Jesuit missionaries and traders needed to construct a narrative in which the New World Savage was, in spite of initial resistance, redeemable. In her article, "The Noble Eloquent Savage," Edna C. Sorber writes the following: *The early Jesuits were interested in proving that the Indian was redeemable under their terms, of course, and they were doing a good job redeeming him...the traders were interested in*

³⁰² Melzer, Sara E. "Myths of Mixture in *Phèdre* and the Sun King's Assimilation Policy in the New World" p. 2.

*showing how well they were getting along with the source of their supplies of valuable skins.*³⁰³ Yet, in spite of the need to tell stories of Native Indian redemptions, accounts of the colonial project in New France are filled with descriptions of struggles, impasses and absolute refusals on the part of many Indians to accept the religious faith of their European colonizers. When it came to matters of religion, communication would break down completely, and not only because of linguistic differences. According to the Jesuit missionary Biard, « *ces sauvages n'ont point de religion formée et point de magistrature ou police, point d'arts, point de commerce ou vie civile...ilz ont toutes leurs conceptions attachées aux sens et à la matière.* »³⁰⁴ Savagery, thus linked to the material world, in both accounts of the New World Other and Molière's play, emerges defiant if not triumphant.

In 1662, three years before the first performance of *Dom Juan* was staged, France and New France were in political turmoil. What had begun with an idealization of the New World and the noble savage that occupied these spaces proved to be a different reality. Explorers such as Marc Lescarbot had insisted on the possibilities available in New France: *Whoever finds himself oppressed over here will be able to pass over there and there pass his days at rest and without poverty.*³⁰⁵ Instead France, Old and New, were torn by dissension from within and assault from without: *The development of the colony had been entrusted to a private company, the Company of New France, which had blithely agreed to fulfill obligations that were beyond its resources...Those who had remained had had to withstand the almost continual assaults of the Iroquois confederacy, which for fifty years, had been striving to drive the French out of the St. Lawrence*

³⁰³ The Noble Eloquent Savage, Edna C. Sorber *Ethnohistory* Vol. 19, No. 3 (Summer, 1972), pp. 227-236
Published by: Duke University Press

³⁰⁴ "Comment peut un muet prescher l'évangile?" Jesuit Missionaries and the Native Languages of New France Margaret J. Leahey *French Historical Studies*
Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring, 1995) , pp. 105-131 Published by: Duke University Press

Valley.³⁰⁶ In 1663 Canada was made a royal province and taken out of the hands of the Company of New France. New France would be governed directly by the King and the *intendant de finance*, Jean-Baptiste Colbert.³⁰⁷ What Colbert intended to do was to bring order out of chaos and transform France into a leading world power by restoring its economic strength. This secured a role of central importance for New France in the eyes of Louis XIV.

In *Dom Juan*, Moliere not only situates the action of his comedy in Spain, one could argue that he brings us closer to the Americas, with his introductory homage to tobacco: *Quoi que puisse dire Aristote et toute la Philosophie, il n'est rien d'égal au tabac: c'est la passion des honnêtes gens, et qui vit sans tabac n'est pas digne de vivre* (I, i, 1-4) For Sganarelle, despite the sayings of Aristotle and the ancients, nothing is finer than snuff. Snuff purges, stimulates, instructs and bequeaths upon its user graciousness. This six sense, this snuff sense anticipates the unspoken desires of others, and the user, converted by this essence, becomes a generous and ready giver, offering the content of his snuff-box, “right and left.” Tobacco, which entered Europe as a result of Renaissance voyages to the New World, is at the center of Sganarelle’s skewed logic, and first premise: *All the best people are devoted to it, and anyone who lives without snuff doesn’t deserve to live*. With this American good so firmly ensconced in the play, Sganarelle subverts the order of virtue and vice by going directly against the orders of *la Compagnie du Saint Sacrement*, which strongly condemned the use of tobacco, and elevating sensual pleasure to the level of virtue.

Sganarelle’s soliloquy changes matters leaves the space of paradisiacal enjoyment

³⁰⁵ Lescarbot, M., *La Conversion des Sauvages qui ont esté baptisez en la nouvelle France, cette année 1610*, (Paris:1610), pp. 33-34

³⁰⁶ Eccles, W. J. 1978. *Canada under Louis XIV, 1663-1701*. Toronto [Ont.]: McClelland and Stewart., p. 3.

and moves on from this article of pleasure to describe the fear he feels towards Done Elivre's misfortune: *J'ai peur qu'elle ne soit mal payée de son amour, que son voyage en cette ville produise peu de fruit et que vous eussiez autant gagné à ne bouger de là* (I, i, 19-21). Elvire intends to travel in order to reach Dom Juan, but he fears that her voyage will be poorly rewarded. After having been seduced with the promises made by her beloved, she abandons the convent to become Dom Juan's wife. Despite her sacrifice, Dom Juan will not return and Sganarelle continues by giving his reasons, namely, by offering a colorful description of his master's character: *Dom Juan, mon maître, le plus grand scélérat que la terre ait jamais porté, un enragé, un chien, un diable, un Turc, un hérétique qui ne croit ni Ciel (ni saint, ni Dieu) ni loup-garou, qui passe cette vie en véritable bête brute, en porceau d'Epicure* ³⁰⁸ Dom Juan is accused by his servant of a multitude of things, designating a state of "otherness," but what remains unsaid and seems most obvious is that he is a faithless savage, a sexual cannibal, feasting off the flesh of young maidens. This description, omitted from the text, seems inferred by its very absence. Since Freud, cannibalism has been associated with cruelty and sexual drive that requires satiation:

The history of human civilization shows beyond any doubt that there is an intimate connection between cruelty and the sexual instinct; but nothing has been done towards explaining the connection apart from laying emphasis on the aggressive factor in the libido. According to some authorities, this aggressive element of the sexual instinct is in reality a relic of cannibalistic desires--that is, it

³⁰⁷ Ibid p. 6.

³⁰⁸ *the greatest scoundrel who ever walked the earth, a mad dog, a demon, a Turk, a heretic who doesn't believe in Heaven or Hell*, Moliere, and Richard Wilbur. 2001. *Don Juan: comedy in five acts, 1665*. San Diego: Harcourt. p. 9.

is a contribution derived from the apparatus for obtaining mastery, which is concerned with the satisfaction of the other and, ontologically, the older of the great instinctual needs.³⁰⁹

Dom Juan's savagery is difficult to track and filled with crossed metaphors. When interrogated by Sganarelle, he insists that he is like a conqueror, *Il n'est rien qui puisse arrêter l'impétuosité de mes désirs: je me sens un cœur à aimer toute la terre; et comme Alexandre, je souhaiterais qu'il y eût d'autres mondes, pour y pouvoir étendre mes conquêtes amoureuses* (I, 2,77-81). According to Henri Lancelot-Voisin, Sieur de La Popelinière, a Huguenot and one of France's leading historians during the 16th century, France shared Spain's insatiable desire for conquest, as articulated by Dom Juan:

The French above all were spurred by a desire to do likewise in areas that had not been reached by them [Spaniards], for they did not esteem themselves less than they, neither in navigation, in feats of arms, nor in any other calling. They persuaded themselves that they had not discovered all, and that the world was large enough to reveal even stranger things than those already known.³¹⁰

Dom Juan's own journey seems destined to reveal "even stranger things" about

³⁰⁹ Freud, S., Volume VII of the Standard Edition, p.159, (1905).

³¹⁰ Dickason, Olive Patricia. 1984. *The myth of the savage: and the beginnings of French colonialism in the Americas*. Edmonton, Alta., Canada: University of Alberta Press.

the nature of conquest and desire. Dom Juan and Sganaralle are so intertwined that at times they represent different aspects of savagery. This interdependence and the multiple links between the two characters, who are constantly together, make them unable to escape cross-contamination with each other. While Dom Juan speaks about conquest, *comme un livre*, Sganaralle laments: *une autre fois je mettrai mes raisonnements par écrit, pour disputer avec vous*. These two registers of speech, one that seems intended for books and one that is colloquial, highlight a kind of savagery and go against the authority of Cicero who was invoked in Pope Alexander VI's decree to convert all people, "all the people of the world are men; and there is only one definition for each and every man, that he is rational."³¹¹ In Molière's *Dom Juan*, it would seem that all men are savage and some are incapable of being Christianized.

The question of marriage is at the center of this debate on savagery. Dom Juan is comfortable playing with this *mystère sacré* and Sganarelle, criticizes this behavior. The strongest indictment Dom Juan sought to bring against the established order was perhaps his incorporation of pagan, pre-Christian or New World elements in his thinking about love. Amerindian savagery, for many European writers was based on their sexual practices: *The maidens of Brazil have the same liberty as those of Canada to prostitute themselves as soon as they are able. Indeed, the fathers act as their pandars, and think it an honour to give them to men of these parts, in order to have children of their blood*³¹² Dom Juan's character inhabits both of these aspects of savagery the liberty to do what he will with his sex and the ability to

p. 125.

³¹¹ Dickason, Olive Patricia. 1984. *The myth of the savage: and the beginnings of French colonialism in the Americas*. Edmonton, Alta., Canada: University of Alberta Press.

p. 29.

³¹² Jaenen, Cornelius J. 1976. *Friend and foe: aspects of French-Amerindian cultural contact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 108.

redefine terms such as honor. He seeks to redefine the terms of marriage, refusing to be tied to his word, and refusing to have his sexual drive controlled by the dictates of society. And yet when confronted by Done Elvire he uses a Christian argument for having left her: *J'ai fait réflexion que, pour vous épouser, je vous ai dérobée à la clôture d'un couvent, que vous avez rompu des vœux qui vous engageaient autre part et que le Ciel est fort jaloux de ces sortes de choses.* (I,3,78-80) Dom Juan profanes the good word just as he resists his own insertion into an order that he nevertheless chooses to impose on Done Elvire. In her book, *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with J.L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*, Shoshana Felman describes the scene between Done Elvira and Dom Juan as inherently cruel, in an Artuadian sense: *Molière's Don Juan is thus attached to the theater of cruelty to the extent that the play dramatizes the very cruelty of the performative: the cruelty of the speech act—the quintessential act of the speaking body—inasmuch as it comprises an ineluctable necessity of rupture or break*³¹³ After having used her body as a means of satiating his transgressive desires he ruptures whatever link might have existed between them, whatever bond, societal, religious or emotional might bind them all while pretending to restore the religious, sexual and familial structure circumscribed by society. The savagery of Dom Juan is therefore not simply a deviant sexual identity to contrast with European civility but is rather an identity like Derrida's *Voyou*, that goes against the legitimate structures of society and aspires to its own sovereignty, its own spoken agency:

The voyou who aspires to sovereignty is not just a sexual delinquent but someone
Whose language and ways of speaking, whose offenses against proper speech and

³¹³ *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with J.L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*, p. 44.

against the “good word” are to be condemned. One begins acting like a voyou as soon as one begins uttering “profanities.” The voyou can also be one of those “great criminals” who, as Benjamin tells us in “Critique of Violence,” fascinates because he defies the state, that is, the institution that, in representing the law, secures and maintains for itself a monopoly on violence. The “great criminal” voyou thus rises up, in an insurrection of countersovereignty, to the level or height of the sovereign state. He becomes a counterstate to rival the sovereignty of the legal or putatively legitimate state.³¹⁴

In this passage Derrida explains that the *voyou*’s transgression is not simply sexual in its nature but linguistic, the *voyou*’s language is raised against the good word, alluding to the gospel but also to the currency of one’s verbal contracts. It seems that the *voyou* shares much in common with how the New World Other is described in passages dating from the 17th century: *America is inhabited by marvellously strange and savage people without faith, without laws, without religion.*³¹⁵ Faith, religion and laws are functions and expressions of language. The Savage, like the Sovereign, like the rogue exists outside of any limits imposed by the structures of the state founded on the contracts entered into by speech. The Savage of the New World and the continental savage that is Dom Juan possess a sovereignty over their sex and over their sexual discourse, however it might choose to reveal itself, and it is the revelation of whichever truth may arise from this kind of knowledge that must be converted.

³¹⁴ Derrida, Jacques. 2005. *Rogues: two essays on reason*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press. p. 68.

³¹⁵ Jaenen, Cornelius J. 1976. *Friend and foe: aspects of French-Amerindian cultural contact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 42.

In the context of Amerindian history, whatever claim to sovereignty non-Christian Amerindians might have, it was secondary to the duty of Christian Europeans to evangelize them. Nevertheless, doubts about the quality of conversions persisted. Amerindian converts seemed unreliable practitioners, sometimes demonstrating excessive zeal and at times relapsing into former habits.³¹⁶ Molière's *Dom Juan* stages a direct affront to societal strictures and recounts a series of provocations—sexual, larcenous and blasphemous in nature— between the savage/rogue, and the sovereign that force God himself to appear. These provocations are brought on by language as well as actions as Dom Juan constantly evokes sacrilege in his performances. In the New World, the failure of assimilation policies was a phenomena widely reported by in travel accounts of the 17th century:

It was believed for a very long time that domiciling the savages near our habitations was a very great means of teaching these people to live like us and to become instructed in our religion. I notice, Monseigneur, that the very opposite has taken place because instead of familiarizing them with our laws, I assure you that they communicate very much to us all they have that is the worst, and take on likewise, all that is bad and vicious in us.³¹⁷

It was often believed that French moral fibre had been weakened by contact with the Native cultures. This cross-contamination is precisely what *Dom Juan* explores and articulates in a reverse conquest of the European continent, as he makes his way through

³¹⁶ Jaenen, Cornelius J. 1976. *Friend and foe: aspects of French-Amerindian cultural contact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 67.

a series of first encounters with peasants, merchants, nobles or the poor. As he travels he teaches and performs his own fork-tongued gospel. In the exchange between Mathurine and Charlotte, the two peasants to whom he has declared his love, he professes an adherence to his senses, not his words, to his body, not the mind: *Tous les discours n'avancent point les choses; il faut faire et non pas dire, et les effets décident mieux que les paroles. Aussi n'est-ce rien que par-là que je vous veux mettre d'accord, et l'on verra, quand je me marierai, laquelle des deux a mon cœur* (II, 4, 88-92). Proficiency in language, Dom Juan warns, does not suffice. One must have evidence for the things that are to be believed as discourse (and the faith tied to the word) fails to advance things. The Jesuits, as they gained mastery of the languages of the New World, soon discovered that the word did little to compel Indians to action. The New World "Savage" like the continental Savage of Dom Juan, demanded evidence instead of faith: *L'Apostat, continuant ici ses blasphèmes, me demandoit devant ses frères pour les animer contre Dieu pourquoi je prioris celui qui n'entendoit ni ne voyoit rien. Je le repris fort vertement et lui imposai silence.*³¹⁷ This compulsion to silence the apostat in *Dom Juan* will only gain intensity as a series of perils evolve as the play unfolds.

When Dom Juan and Sganarelle encounter the poor man, it has already been established that Dom Juan has no faith in God. While interrogated by Sganarelle on whether he believes in heaven, he responds: *Je crois que deux et deux sont quatre, Sganarelle, et que quatre et quatre sont huit.* Cross-dressed as a peasant, even his attire lies. As he meets the poor man, he asks him to blaspheme in exchange for money. He (the beggar) refuses, in spite of Dom Juan's mockery and Dom Juan gives him the alms "for the love of

³¹⁷ Jaenen, Cornelius J. 1976. *Friend and foe: aspects of French-Amerindian cultural contact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.*, p. 183.

humanity.” Encounters with the poor always imply an encounter with the limits of society; with a person that has no place within the social system, either precaution against this particular kind of danger must be taken or particular attention and respect must be observed. Dom Juan shares with the poor man this liminal space, having once been on the ‘inside’ of society they both find themselves outside in the woods; *semblables* (Dom Juan is in disguise as a poor man himself), as noncitizens, they are both savage. In the 17th century poverty had a spiritual significance that is outlined in Boussuet’s *Sermon sur l’éminente dignité des pauvres dans L’Église : Entrez en commerce avec les pauvres ; donnez et vous recevrez ; donnez les biens temporels, et recueillez les bénédictions spirituelles ; prenez part aux misères des affligés et Dieu vous donnera part à leurs privilèges*.³¹⁹ The poor, in 17th century France, are seen as passive vessels to a divine external agent. The poor man’s profession is to pray for the good of those that help him. As Dom Juan attempts to make the poor man blaspheme, he is talking to a man touched by God, according to the beliefs of the time. Dom Juan’s actions attempt to elaborate the reality of a profane world not subjugated to sovereign spirits or god.

Shoshana Felman writes in her book, *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with J.L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*, that with the exception of the supernatural conclusion of the play, *Dom Juan is made up of entirely performative events: language acts of which the forces of utterance could be appropriately described in terms of the five illocutionary classes Austin distinguishes*.³²⁰ The speech act performed by Dom Juan as he attempts to convince the poor man to

³¹⁸ Le Jeune, Paul, and Guy Lafleche. 1973. *Le missionnaire, l’apostat, le sorcier*. Montréal: Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal., p. 170.

³¹⁹ Molière, and Gérard Ferreyrolles. 1991. *Dom Juan, ou, Le Festin de Pierre: comédie*. [Paris]: Librairie Larousse., p. 79.

³²⁰ Felman, Shoshana. 1983. *The literary speech act: Don Juan with J.L. Austin, or seduction in two languages*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, p. 25.

blaspheme connects the reality of a profane world, a world of the body and material things, a world that the poor man knows not with a saintly and mythic world: *Je vous assure, Monsieur, que le plus souvent je n'ai pas un morceau de pain à mettre sous les dents*. Dom Juan, and the primitive, savage world he has spoken into existence, attempts to elicit a ritual pollution of the language of a saintly Other driven by the needs of his body. By getting the poor man to blaspheme, that is, perform a reverse prayer, he will attempt to perform his own profane miracle, and construct a godless simulacrum of how the scene should be read, by giving him the Louis of which he is in need.

Dom Juan's primitivism is shifting away from a "psychological" primitivism, whose field of inquiry is the individual, his own sexual drives and desires, towards an "ethnological" primitivism, oriented towards the communal, oriented towards questions of sovereignty and religion. According to Derrida, in the idea of the roué, *there is an allusion to debauchery and perversity, to the subversive disrespect for principles, norms, and good manners, for the rules and laws that govern the circle of decent, self-respecting people, of respectable, right thinking society. Roué characterizes a leading astray [dévoisement] that calls for exclusion or punishment.*³²¹ Molière's *Dom Juan* notes the porous and relative nature of these frontiers between the civil and the savage, the rogue and the good citizen and offers, in its parabolic warning against savagery, multiple opportunities for the main character to reform his ways. Instead, we see that the hero solicits this egregious behavior from those that surround him. Savagery is never assimilated but is rather a demonstrable weapon wielded against the structures of civility.

The roué, or the voyou, assumed many different shapes in New France. Unlike

³²¹ Derrida, Jacques. 2005. *Rogues: two essays on reason*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press. p. 20.

the converted, the rogue of the New World could be either French, Amerindian, man or a woman. The number of licentious liaisons these sexual "deviants" performed threatened French population in Canada. While a stable, Catholic peasant family unit needed to be encouraged and miscegenation could solve the problems posed by the marked preponderance of men in New France and women in Amerindian society,³²² the exchanges were far from what the Jesuits expected:

Savages thought they be they do not fail to attract the Youth of both sexes in Quebec who are inclined by their evil impulses toward wrong doing; the Boys become worse than the Iroquois themselves that is the reason they are so well-received: otherwise they would not be worth having. Their kindred appeal to them in vain, these Renegades will not return to them; they prefer the Iroquois. The wanton Maidens, they appear Shapely and tall, and fit for their delight, so unafrightened (sic) by their horrid mien. They go with them to gratify their lust.³²³

The children of these unions were illegitimate thus perpetuating a mixed race of people. In her book *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of concept of pollution and taboo*, Mary Douglass writes: *Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is undefinable. The person who must pass from one to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others.*³²⁴ Bicultural backgrounds enable the individual to exploit both existing

³²² Jaenen, Cornelius J. 1976. *Friend and foe: aspects of French-Amerindian cultural contact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.*, p 162.

³²³ Jaenen, Cornelius J. 1976. *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.*, p 162.

³²⁴ Douglas, Mary. 2005. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge.p. 119.

commercial and governing networks, at the expense of both sovereign states, be it tribal or European. Dom Juan's heritage, is also questionable and dangerous because of its transitional state. When Dom Luis confronts his son, the audience is given an account of Dom Juan's sullied lineage. Coming from a noble family and being of noble blood, he has nevertheless tainted his name by his actions, by his speech acts that have destroyed everything that would be properly his according to his birthright:

Dom Luis: J'ai souhaité un fils avec des ardeurs nonpareilles ; je l'ai demandé sans relâche avec des transports incroyables ; et ce fils, que j'obtiens en fatiguant le Ciel de vœux...De quel œil, à votre avis, pensez-vous que je puisse voir cet amas d'actions indignes, dont on a peine, aux yeux du monde, d'adoucir le mauvais visage, cette suite continuelle de méchantes affaires, qui nous réduisent à toutes heures, à lasser les bontés du Souverain...Ne rougissez-vous point de mériter si peu votre naissance ? ...la naissance n'est rien où la vertu n'est pas. Aussi nous n'avons part à la gloire de nos ancêtres qu'autant que nous nous nous efforçons de leur ressembler.

(IV, 4, 12-31)

In this long tirade by Dom Luis, several elements are highlighted. With Dom Luis, a world of order, of hierarchy, and succession is presented. A world that is not, however, impervious to the chaos that Dom Juan has brought about by his actions. In his speech, Dom Luis underlines the precarious nature of the situation that he now occupies because of Dom Juan's own wrongdoings, while stressing the tension that the play has been slowly revealing through its progression. Through each exploit, Dom Juan leaves of

a trail of indeterminacy as he fails to take his place in the progression of the generations. If Dom Juan's gaze is constantly fixed forward, pointing towards the next conquest, Dom Luis' presence asks that the spectator look back. Dom Luis traces a genealogy of values and morals that contrasts with Dom Juan's own genealogy of cruelty. A genealogy that defies an ancestral lineage but rather insists on the expression of a sovereign self that refuses to adhere to the demands of the Father. Dom Juan's response to the words of the Father, are telling in and of themselves: *Eh ! mourez le plus tôt que vous pourrez, c'est le mieux, que vous puissiez faire. Il faut que chacun ait son tour, et j'enrage de voir des pères qui vivent autant que leurs fils.* (V, 1, 1-4).

The Father in *Dom Juan* traces multiple incarnations. In the first part of the play Dom Juan lives in a fraternal world where Sgnaralle, Pierrot, Dom Carlos, Dom Alonso and even the poor man chastise him for his actions but the conflicts that separate these characters, who defend the system of the patriarchy, are disordered, and hierarchical only with regards to questions of class. The presence of Dom Luis, ushers in the presence of an ideal Patriarch to whom all much show allegiance and pay tribute to: God, the sovereign. The decadence, the savagery, the barbarity of Dom Juan, are contrasted to the good, the sovereign and the civil of God. What *Dom Juan* shows is that the word "savagery" is no longer a word situated in the exterior of Dom Luis' lineage, in a profound past, but it is in fact ready to erupt and to reveal the foundations of a fracturable society. It is through savagery that we access in *Dom Juan* what Bataille calls the sovereign world:

The sovereign world is the world in which the limit of death is done away with. Death is present in it, its presence defines that world of violence, but while death is present it is

always there only to be negated, never for anything but that. The sovereign is he who is, as if death were not. Indeed he is the one who does not die, for he dies only to be reborn. He is not a man in the individual sense but rather a god...he is the same as the one he replaces: the one who replaces him is the same as he. He has no more regard for the limits of identity than he does for the limits of death, or rather these limits are the same; he is the transgression of such limits.³²⁵

What the French found upon their first encounters with the peoples of the New World was an understanding of history, of the present and future that defied the chronology imposed by a European, patriarchal figure. What is read as chaos, in the allegorical retelling of New World encounters found in *Dom Juan*, can be ascribed to a specific system of sovereignty that finds its roots in the philosophical beliefs that structured the life of certain Amerindian tribes of the same period. Through the practice of cannibalism we find that the New World Other had an understanding of his genealogy that was based on the anthropophagic practice that ordered his world: *J'ay mangé de ton pere, à l'autre, J'ay assommé et boucané tes freres ; bref, J'ay en general tant mangé d'hommes et de femmes, voir des enfans de vous autres Toupionibauoults lesquels j'ay prins en guerre que ie n'e sçaurois dire le nombre : et au reste ne doutez pas que pour venger ma mort les Margajas de la nation dont je suis, n'en mangent encores cy apres autant qu'ils en pourrront attrapper.*³²⁶

Underneath the mythic unity and harmony embodied by Dom Luis, the European conqueror, and classical thought there lies an uneasy relation between inside and outside. Christianity, that which ordered conquests and that with which Dom Luis attempted to order Dom Juan's world, depends on the existence of a transcendental deity, the Father,

³²⁵ Bataille, Georges, (trans. Robert Hurley), Georges Bataille, Georges Bataille, and Georges Bataille. 1988. *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*. New York: Zone Books. p. 222.

³²⁶ Léry, Jean de, Frank Lestringant, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. 1994. *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil (1578)*. [Paris]: Libr. Générale française p. 356.

the Sovereign, who assures meaning. That deity must remain outside the world while still interacting with the world and yet not identifying fully with it. For many Amerindian tribes the distinction between inside and outside did not exist. The good, which took the place of a single God, was determined by how many enemies were eaten; the Margajas warrior in Léry's citation claims to have eaten countless of his enemies. As an example of a sovereign, savage, rogue he accepts that he will be eaten and so this genealogy of cruelty continues without hierarchy, without a paternal line to mark its beginning in life but rather with a fraternal exchange that assures rebirth in death. The savage of the New World proves dangerous because he shares the boundaries with the Sovereign. Unafraid of death he is ready to consume and be consumed extending the notion of personhood with the dis-memberment of an implicit if not overtly mentioned body politic; thus effacing hierarchies between fathers, brothers and sons.

The link between sex and hunger has been written about extensively. In the fifth century, writing for monks, John Cassian wrote: *It is impossible to extinguish the fires of concupiscence without restraining the desires of the stomach.*³²⁷ The good for Dom Juan comes not from consuming like the Tupinamba but from consummating, "perfecting," "completing," "accomplishing," countless illicit sexual encounters. Consummating, like consuming is associated with straying away from God. Where a woman or wife, as "property" could contribute to Dom Juan's personification and personal identity, personal identity being grounded historically in an understanding of personal property, he undermines this illusion perpetuated by the Father and instead goes on extinguishing

³²⁷ Bynum, Caroline Walker. 1987. *Holy feast and Holy Fast: the Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p. 37

himself in his “fruitless” exploits, failing to contribute to and refusing to be incorporated into the paternal line. In essence, Dom Juan’s refusal of the Father’s logic is a refusal of civilization. Freud puts it in the following terms:

If civilization imposes such great sacrifices, not only on man’s sexuality but on his aggressivity, we can understand better why it is hard for him to be happy in that civilization. In fact, primitive man was better off in knowing no restrictions of instinct. To counterbalance this, his prospects of enjoying this happiness for any length of time were very slender. Civilized man has exchanged a portion of his possibilities of happiness for a portion of security. We must not forget, however, that in the primal family only the head of it enjoyed this instinctual freedom; the rest lived in slavish suppression.³²⁸

Dom Juan, like the savage or rogue, makes no such compromise. Nor do they enter into a contract with the Father for the sake of security. They neither believe in a Judeo-Christian God, nor do they believe in the promises of civilization. The tenuous situation of the main character is evident; what goes unsaid in Molière’s play however is that as Dom Juan remains in rebellion against the father he is also in revolt against the State.

The play continues and a veiled Done Elvire returns to convince Dom Juan that he needs to amend the error of his ways. She is changed now, no longer the spurned lover she appears as a saintly figure, mother-like, ready to offer unconditional love, forgiveness, eager to have Dom Juan mend the error of his ways.

Dona Evire: C’est ce parfait et pur amour qui me conduit ici pour votre bien, pour vous faire part d’un avis du Ciel, et tâcher de vous retirer du précipice où vous courez. Oui, Dom Juan, je sais tous les dérèglements de votre vie, et ce même Ciel qui m’a touché le cœur et fait jeter les yeux sur les égarements de ma conduite, m’a inspiré de vous venir trouver, et de vous

³²⁸ Freud, Sigmund, and James Strachey. 2005. *Civilization and its discontents*. New York: Norton., p. 73.

dire, de sa part que vos offenses ont épuisé sa miséricorde, que sa colère redoutable est prête de tomber sur vous.

(IV, 6, 24-31)

The play nears its ends as it began, with Done Elvire tracking Dom Juan, proving to be his most ardent pursuer. In this second encounter, Done Elvire becomes the path that leads back, by a process of repetition, (a repetition of the same scene, a repetition of the same speech only this time changed by religious discourse) to the recognition of his sin. As a mystic, she is no longer susceptible to the *jouissance* of the body, when Dom Juan asks her to stay longer she immediately leaves, claiming that there is no time for superfluous speech. Done Elvire's discourse serves as an uncanny mirror, reflecting a perfect and pure love purified by God's anger. The intention of her discourse is to convert Dom Juan, once and for all, to the ideals of love, not matrimonial love but to the love of God a task that will prove impossible because Dom Juan will remain faithless. Shoshana Felman writes the following: *Dom Juan does not believe, because he makes (others) believe. He knows perfectly well that belief is only the effect of the reflection, the reflexivity that he exploits...The act of seduction is above all the inducer or belief.*³²⁹ Done Elvire cannot direct pure hatred toward her seducer, so she employs the same strategy as he to make him believe: she attempts to seduce him with the religious discourse of a mystic. In her attempt to "induce belief" she recognizes her past. Done Elvire's femininity is, like Dom Juan, in excess of the marriage bond. Her femininity serves as a reminder that there will always be an excess and imbalance, within them both— *je sais tous les dérèglements de votre vie, et ce même Ciel qui m'a touché le cœur et fait jeter les yeux sur les égarements de ma conduite*— but that God can

proffer a gift of spiritual agency that obliges the recipient to fulfill his or her responsibilities on pain of death. Touched by God it is she who bears news from the heavens. The actions of Dom Juan have nearly exhausted mercy; the anger of the Sovereign/Father is ready to befall upon him. Adherence to the laws of God are not only requested but required in order for Dom Juan to continue living. The contested and uncertain boundaries between Dom Juan's nomadism and a monotheistic identity represented by all of the male characters in the play but embodied primarily in the figure of Dom Luis are at tense oppositions. Once Done Elvire leaves Dom Juan continues to talk to Sganarelle:

Dom Juan: Sais-tu bien que j'ai encore senti quelque peu d'émotion pour elle, que j'ai trouvé de l'agrément dans cette nouveauté bizarre, et que son habit négligé, son air languissant et ses larmes ont réveillé en moi quelquespetits restes d'un feu éteint ?

Sganarelle : C'est à dire que ses paroles n'ont fait aucun effet sur vous.

(IV, 7, 1-7)

Even after his exchange with Done Elvire, Dom Juan continues to believe that he can live exclusively in the present moment; fidelity, to God or a woman is worse than slavery, it is a living death. Sganarelle is right, her words have no effect upon him, Done Elvire proves unable to induce belief. The past, even the recent past with Done Elvire, has no power over Dom Juan and the future holds no terror. He surrenders only to each successive attraction of his choosing. As the play progresses, the central conflict of Molière's play, the struggle between Dom Juan and God, a struggle that has been extraordinarily visible and yet simultaneously veiled, will come to full view. But who is

³²⁹ Felman, Shoshana. 1983. *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with J.L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*, p. 32.

Dom Juan's God? And to what genre will this irreverent work of Molière succumb to at long last?

In his work, *Le Dieu Caché*, Lucien Goldman cites Georg Lukàcs numerous times, in this citation Lukàc offers his definition of the God of tragedy: *La tragédie est un jeu, un jeu de l'homme et de sa destinée, un jeu dont Dieu est le spectateur. Mais il n'est que spectateur, et jamais ni ses paroles ni ses gestes ne se mêlent aux paroles et aux gestes des acteurs. Seuls ses yeux reposent sur eux*³³⁰ The God of *Dom Juan* is far from this tragic God, far from a silent spectator that fails to intervene or interact with man. In contrast with this God of tragedy, the God in *Dom Juan* is manifest everywhere. Goldman will contrast this definition of God and his actions towards men with the definition of the rationalists, Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza who conceive of God in opposing terms: *Dieu signifie avant tout ordre, vérités éternelles...Il n'est plus pour l'homme un guide, le partenaire d'un dialogue; il est une loi générale et universelle qui lui garantit son droit à s'affranchir de tout contrôle extérieur, à se guider par sa propre raison et ses propres forces, mais que le laisse seul en face 'un monde réifié et muet d'hommes et de choses.*³³¹ Even these conciliatory terms of the rationalists of a distant impersonal god, are too restrictive for Dom Juan. The God of tragedy and the God of rationalists alike is an enemy of Dom Juan, libertine of the flesh and of the spirit, who refuses all calls to order, refuses to sacrifice his nomadic lifestyle. In an ironic tone, after his meeting with Done Elvire, Dom Juan confesses to Sganarelle: *Oui, ma foi ! Il faut s'amender ; encore vingt ou trente ans de cette vie-ci, et puis nous songerons à nous* (IV,7, 13-14)

The notion of “stopping” the nomadic lifestyle of Native Americans in the New

³³⁰ Goldmann, Lucien. 1955. *Le dieu caché; étude sur la vision tragique dans les Pensées de Pascal et dans le théâtre de Racine*. Paris: Gallimard. p. 47.

World was central to their conversion. The following instructions appear in the *Jesuit Relations* of 1634: *Je m'en rapporte, mais si je puis tirer quelque conclusion des choses que je vois, il me semble qu'on ne doit pas espérer grande chose des Sauvages tant qu'ils seront errans : vous les instruisez aujourd'hui, demain la faim vous enlèvera vos auditeurs, les contraignant d'aller chercher leur vie dans les fleuves et dans les bois.*³³² In order to have true believers, the believer must stand still, long enough to be instructed and for his behavior to be contained. From this principal the notions of Reductions in Latin America and Canada were invented, closed of spaces where Indians were forced to live. Dom Juan, an errant nomad, refuses to stand still. He remains impervious to the Statue's warning or Elvire's appeals. Submission is precisely what Dom Juan refuses until the very end. The hero does not wait passively for his punishment, he provokes the statue. Whereas the opponents of Dom Juan submit themselves to a higher order Dom Juan measures himself against the divinity and treats the statue as his equal. Dom Juan lives and acts out what other characters define for themselves as impossible or forbidden. What prevents the savage heroes' violent expulsion from society is the form his transgression takes. Dom Juan manipulates the language of the law, using the language of the promise but destroying its meaning through his actions. Dom Juan threatens the community because he questions the very foundation of the law, his profanation of the promise disrupts social order and it disrupts the relationship between the sacred world and the profane. In this way, *Dom Juan* outlines some of the main themes in France's colonization of the New World in the 17th century,

³³¹ Goldmann, Lucien. 1955. *Le dieu caché; étude sur la vision tragique dans les Pensées de Pascal et dans le théâtre de Racine*. Paris: Gallimard. p. 47.

³³² Le Jeune, Paul, and Guy Lafleche. 1973. *Le missionnaire, l'apostat, le sorcier*. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal. p. 25.

wherein the word, just as the actions, of the Indian could not be trusted and where the Savage must be converted not only to a new faith but to a new language.

As we see in the fourth act the theme of Dom Juan's conversion replaces the theme of seduction. Though colonization begins as an exploit of desire it will soon become an exploit of conversion and it will be pertinent to note how the two worlds of the profane and the sacred are distinct but interrelated. Any actions on the social level (profane), have repercussion in the divine world (sacred). In the first scene of the last act Dom Juan announces his conversion. Dom Luis' readiness to accept Dom Juan's words attests to his need to see his son reintegrate himself into the community. As Dom Juan declares his conversion, he performs the ultimate profanation: he ridicules the beliefs that are the foundations for the law. Heaven's vengeance arrives in the form of the Commanders statue._

La Statue : Dom Juan, l'endurcissement au péché traîne une mort funeste, et les grâces du Ciel que l'on renvoie ouvrent un chemin à sa foudre.

Dom Juan : O Ciel ! Que sens-je ? Un feu invisible me brûle, je n'en puis plus et tout mon corps devient un brasier ardent. Ah !

What is unique in the play is the Dom Juan's attitude towards the sacred. Until the very end, when the Statue's supernatural dimension can no longer be questioned, Dom Juan refuses to be afraid. In the face of death, Dom Juan acts as a conqueror. He draws his sword: "rien n'est capable de m'imprimer de la terreur, et je veux éprouver avec mon épée si c'est un corps ou un esprit" (5.5) Submission is precisely what Dom Juan refuses. Dom Juan, the savage rogue, does not wait passively for his punishment, instead

he provokes the statue. Dom Juan treats the statue as an equal responding fearlessly to its invitation. In *Dom Juan*, the hero directly faces the sacred and affirms his identity through a series of actions, which questions the system of references by which other characters abide. The hero sees the law as an obstacle to his desire and rejects the law. Through the excessiveness of his actions Dom Juan destroys the meaning of social laws because meaning rests on a strict relationship between action and language. Dom Juan defines himself in terms of action but his actions bring about a breakdown of language. This same method of resistance is employed in several accounts of Native Indians who refused conversion and who according to the French, *sont misérables de n'avoir point d'autres désirs que pour la vie présente*.³³³ Like Dom Juan, the Native apostate is also punished, and in Lejeune's account from the 1635 *Jesuit Relations*, he shares an anecdote that replicates Dom Juan's fate. After having endured ongoing blasphemy by a particular Indian who, for an extended period of time, mocked his robe, practices and faith, Lejeune goes on to warn him stating that: *Dieu estant assez puissant pour le brusler et le jeter dans les enfers s'il continuoît ses blasphèmes*. Not heeding this advice, the Indian – like Dom Juan – continued to defy Lejeune through his actions and words (unfortunately, Lejeune does not give a detailed account of what was said). The account ends much like Molière's play, *Dieu n'a pas manqué de l'attraper, car l'année n'estoit pas encore expirée que le feu s'estant mis en sa cabane...il a esté tout grille, rosti, et misérablement bruslé, à ce que m'ont rapporté les Sauvages, non sans estonnement*.³³⁴ The element of the supernatural is clear throughout this account as the astonished Indian spectators retell the event. Lejeune had pronounced his warning and,

³³³ Le Jeune, Paul, and Guy Lafleche. 1973. *Le missionnaire, l'apostat, le sorcier*. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal. p. 50.

not heeding the word of the Father, the young Indian is punished by the divine. But we could also read the ending of these dramatic texts differently. Fire, as Gaston Bachelard reminds us, consumes itself: *It is the idea that fire feeds itself like a living creature which is foremost in the opinions developed about fire by our unconscious...The Egyptians said that it was a ravening, insatiable animal which devours everything that experiences birth and growth; and, after it has eaten well and gorged itself, it finally devours itself when there is nothing left to eat and feast upon.*³³⁵ As Molière and Lejeune write, there is no other alternative for the two men; they must either convert and accept the enclosure of their fathers or they must die. In both theaters, that end like dreams, the idea that life can be violently and perpetually cut short takes hold of the spectator. Both heroes return, through their sacrifices to their own convictions, to the primordial chaos of fire.

³³⁴ Le Jeune, Paul, and Guy Lafleche. 1973. *Le missionnaire, l'apostat, le sorcier*. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal. p. 192.

³³⁵ Bachelard, Gaston. 1964. *The psychoanalysis of fire*. Boston: Beacon Press., pp. 64, 65.

CONCLUSION

To a certain extent the Theater of Cruelty that I have been tracing extends itself from the savagery of the New World and its representation of the discovery of the Other as seen in the texts of Jean de Léry, Cabeza de Vaca, Marc Lescarbot, and, creeps eerily upon the hexagon in the performances of Jeanne des Anges to makes itself known, in spite of all attempts at suppression, on the Classical stage. Artaud's Theater of Cruelty, which situates itself in direct opposition to the Early Modern period would find that this time frame offers a rich and fertile context for an analysis of a Theater of Cruelty as he conceived it. These savage and barbarous performances, these accurately albeit anachronistically named Theaters of Cruelty that could be found occurring in the New World, or convents in Loudun, influenced the dominant cultural discourse of purity with its poetics of contraction and would cause multiple fractures in the theory and theater of Absolutism. So much so that the Classical stage is ultimately shaped by it and we find Corneille and Molière writing plays that rebel in as much as one could rebel at the time, to the constraints of *L'Académie Française*, refuting the notion of the sovereign will (*Le Cid*) defying the will of God (*Dom Juan*).

Although Artaud writes from the 20th century his theory points to the existence of an aesthetic and critical current that not only existed in spite of constant attempts at suppression but went so far as to question concepts of theatricality that had long appeared in disuse or dormant. Artaud conceived of theater as the place for the reincarnation of fundamental rituals instead of a medium that recounted historical or

individual dramas. Artaud's Theater of Cruelty offers us a new reflection on the theater, one that allows us to decenter the Renaissance and the Early Modern stage from the principal actors to which we have become accustomed. The travel narratives I examined describe European attitudes towards non-European peoples, showing them to be projections of European anxieties or elaborations from European categories of hierarchy. In texts such as *Histoire d'un Voyage Fait en la Terre du Brésil* or *Naufragios*, a historian or literary scholar might study the European regard or gaze. However what I've argued in my dissertation is that through the cultural theaters of non-European peoples, European texts were disrupted and consequently decentered. Indigenous peoples were no longer simply characters and fantasies in European plots, Amerindians and Europeans both become actors and reactors, constructing their relations primarily in terms of the polarity of domination and resistance, but always within spaces that attempted to come in contact with the supernatural vis-à-vis a metaphysical communion with a higher power that was not a European deity. Artaud writes the following, in his *Textes Mexicains*:

*Nous rechercherons dans quelle mesure la civilisation qui naît compte prendre conscience de l'esprit métaphysique qui est derrière les mythes et les formes des conscience de l'esprit métaphysique qui est derrière les formes des dieux antiques et quelles formes vivantes elle pense pouvoir lui donner actuellement.*³³⁶

If for Artaud, one of the primary purposes of a Theater of Cruelty concerns itself with a culture's understanding of its' metaphysical foundation, how do the examples cited in this study perform this task? In Jean de Léry's writings, contact with the metaphysical is established through the ritual and theatrical communion and practice of cannibalism.

³³⁶ Artaud, A., *Artaud Œuvres*, Édition Établie par Évelyne Grossman, Quatro Gallimard 2004, p. 675.

The Protestant rebellion against the materialism of the Catholic establishment brought on the dissolution of all external religious structures and invested all religious authority in the individual. These customs were later brought to Brazil and influenced the way in which Léry wrote about the New World Savage. Having recently broken off from the Catholic Church, the Protestants were anxious about turning back into it and needed to articulate a strict division between their practices and the Catholic ones, while the fear of becoming like the savages of the New World could be related to the fear of losing the notion of individual identity. Although in many texts of the period, the definition of the other as cannibal justified the oppression, extermination and the cultural cannibalism of indigenous people, Léry's text is different. He witnessed and documented a theater that stages prohibitive desire, phantasies of oral merging, in a line of men, (and women who participate in the act of consuming the flesh in spite of them not being the sacrifice) and fulfill one of Artaud's cryptic statements found in "Ci-gît:" *Moi, Antonin Artaud, je suis mon fils, mon père, ma mère et moi*. Through the fulfillment of this wish, the partaking of human flesh, there is a willful binding of the subject through a new, literal consanguinity to the object of his desire. There is a new lineage, a new genealogy that disrupts bourgeois order against which Artaud revolts: *père, patron, patrie*. In these phantasies the rule of exogamous genital sexuality is overthrown and what Léry discovers is a theater that multiplies itself through a line of men who sacrifice their bodies and consume each other expecting a reward in an afterlife that exists in a godless simulacrum of heaven.

In Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios*, the ritual performance of shamanism stages what Artaud considers to be the essence of his Theater of Cruelty:

The theater has always seemed to me the exercise of a dangerous and terrible act
Where the idea of theater and spectacle is done away with
As well as the idea of all science, all religion, and all art.
act I'm talking about aims for a true organic and physical transformation of the
human body.
Why?
Because theater is not that scenic parade where one develops
Virtually and symbolically –a myth: theater is rather
This crucible of fire and real meat where
By an anatomical trampling of bone, limbs and syllables
Bodies are renewed.³³⁷

In his account of the failed expedition to the mainland of “La Florida,” Álar
Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca will personify the theater that Artaud describes in the above
citation. A theater where the “real meat” and through the “trampling of bone” the body
is renewed. As we read in the second chapter of this thesis, Cabeza de Vaca is forced to
participate in the ritual/theater of shamanism in order to obtain food from the Indians
that protected him. More than this however, he redefines through his own body, notions
of good and evil in European thought:

European notions of good and evil, personified in the concepts of god and devil,

³³⁷ Artaud, Antonin, and Jack Hirschman. 1965. *Antonin Artaud anthology*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.,
p., 169.

implied a degree of benevolence and malevolence that was totally alien to the Mesoamerican deities. The notion of a totally good god was an absurdity in Mesoamerican thought. Such a being would have lacked the essential power to disrupt in order to create. Likewise, an evil devil would have lacked the power to create that would enable it to disrupt. Moreover, a god who threatened to take his place not just as a further god in the native pantheon but as the only god, to the exclusion of all others, was an explosive liability which put the whole cosmic order in extreme peril.³³⁸

As Cabeza de Vaca participates in this redefinition of good and evil through the shamanic performances that ensure his own survival, more fundamentally, he challenges the very principles upon which religious doctrine in Spain is built. The danger of this Artaudian theater becomes more immediate and compelling when we realize that he is offering this poisoned gift, in lieu of gold as he writes in the introduction, to Charles V, the King of Spain. The significance of the passages wherein Cabeza de Vaca describes his shamanic performances rests on two points: First Cabeza de Vaca's apparent conviction that the Indians and their practices were normal, gives a positive view of human nature, wherever it might be found, and argues for the humane treatment of Amerindian people. Secondly, the sections in which Cabeza de Vaca delves into what could be considered a starvation-induced madness frames his most Artaudian moment. Having fully accepted his role as a shaman, he goes on to perform private a ritual/theater in which, lost in the

³³⁸ Cervantes, Fernando. 1994. *The Devil in the New World: the impact of diabolism in New Spain*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

wilderness, he burns four piers and buries himself in the ground, later he catches on fire and emerges, purified. After this moment he is able to perform his greatest miracle, which is to raise a man from the dead. If something characterizes the examples of Cabeza de Vaca's Theater of Cruelty it is the premeditation and forethought of his actions. Although at first one could argue that his actions are driven by the circumstances in which he finds himself, as the story develops we discover that Cabeza de Vaca is physically transformed by the New World and its inhabitants, he refuses to wear any clothing, turning down even the skins that he is offered as gifts for his healings, and he establishes a hybrid of good and evil that espouses elements of paganism with traces of Christianity. Where Spaniards would usually proceed to enter the New World to "enforce" the Act of Possession, alone and destitute Cabeza de Vaca is left with nothing but his theater to define him. The founding and making of new Spain, with its complicated mix of metaphoric and literal empire building performative gestures found in the theater of the *Requerimiento* is countered by Cabeza de Vaca's Theater of Cruelty.

Marc Lescarbot's 1609 play, *The Theater of Neptune*, deals more directly with Artaud's injunction mentioned earlier in this conclusion:

Nous rechercherons dans quelle mesure la civilisation qui naît compte prendre conscience de l'esprit métaphysique qui est derrière les mythes et les formes des consciences de l'esprit métaphysique qui est derrière les formes des dieux antiques et quelles formes vivantes elle pense pouvoir lui donner actuellement.³³⁹

³³⁹ Artaud, A., *Artaud Œuvres*, Édition Établie par Évelyne Grossman, Quatro Gallimard 2004, p. 675.

Although its traditional theatrical form would seemingly exclude *The Theater of Neptune*, from consideration as an Artaudian text, Lescarbot's foundational play reveals much about how the French perceived themselves, as well as their fears vis-à-vis the new colony they were founding in Port Royal. That General Poutrincourt, the leader of the Canadian expedition, was greeted by six tritons and the god Neptune and was welcomed in the same way as a French monarch would have been received in Europe but with some unsettling imperfections in the script, renders the play an unintentional parody of the formal *entrées* that were so popular in France during the Renaissance. In his text on French Canadian theater, Leonard E. Doucette talks about Lescarbot's play thusly:

Had theater then gone on to flourish in New France, we might have claimed it was well begun with this piece. For the function it served on this occasion was faithful to the most ancient origins of the craft: a communal celebration, an act of participation that a modern theorist like Antonin Artaud would have approved, a sort of "total theatre" with cannons, trumpets, costumes; with the fifty or so Frenchmen and a couple of dozen Micmacs all assembled in what splendor they could muster.³⁴⁰

I believe Doucette accurately points out that Lescarbot's play could be a part of Artaud's theater of Cruelty or what he calls, Artaud's "total theater," however he thinks this only for superficial reasons, mainly the presence of "cannons," "trumpets," and "costumes." Aside from the fact that the *mis-en-scène* of Lescarbot is novel and exciting, (the entire action takes place on water and the actors perform from canoes) what I believe renders this play Artaudian is the slight deformities in the perfectly scripted play

³⁴⁰ Doucette, Leonard E. 1984. *Theatre in French Canada: laying the foundations, 1606-1867*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press., p. 7.

that aims to mimic almost scene by scene a royal entrance into a city in France. This fantasy proves impossible to fulfill for a number of reasons, first the Annapolis River basin is an “unnatural” setting for a “civilized” procession, and second, after crossing the Atlantic French national identity as once conceived has been permanently altered. If nationalism was an “act” that was repeated and enforced through a series of rites and rituals that ensured “Frenchness,” then *The Theater of Neptune* was necessarily staged for the French men that performed this private ritual, not intended for the Micmac Indians, who observed the action from on shore. Although scholars such as Patricia Seed have conducted valuable research on the ceremonies and theater rituals of French political possession in the New World she does not cite Lescarbot’s *Theater of Neptune*, the first play ever to be written and performed in the Americas, as one of these ceremonies. What I believe aligns Lescarbot’s *Neptune* with Artaud’s Theater of Cruelty is first, the return to the origin of myth and second, the *débordement*, and excess that consumes his writing.

Artaud’s relationship to myth was wrought with tension throughout his career. In his earlier works he endows myths with positive qualities and maintained that the true purpose of theater was to:

*Créer des Mythes voilà le véritable objet du théâtre, traduire la vie sous son aspect universel immense... Qu’elle nous libère nous dans un Mythe ayant sacrifié notre petite individualité humaine, tels des Personnages venus du Passé avec des forces retrouvées dans le Passé.*³⁴¹

In these earlier writings, the purpose of myth is to allow the individual to transcend personal identity; theater will become the catalyst which will allow the individual to access a liberation in which, having sacrificed traditional concepts of

³⁴¹Artaud, A., *Artaud Œuvres*, Édition Établie par Évelyne Grossman, Quatro Gallimard 2004, p. 576.

personhood, one will draw from greater, universal forces and access an archetypal past. Later, myth seems a less privileged space. Artaud becomes interested in and perhaps terrified by the power that myths have over communities. During a later period, after his interment in Rodez he asserted that it was necessary to: *construire une scène de planches pour y danser les mythes qui nous martyrisent*.³⁴² Artaud's ambiguous position now seems to infuse myth with negative qualities associated with a "petty ossification" from which the individual must break free. If myth is by the same turn liberating and binding it lends itself as fertile ground for a theater of cruelty.

The use of myth in Renaissance theater rituals or royal processions shares more with Artaud's views on myth than might be expected. The processional entrance after which Lescarbot modeled his play was Henri II's entrance to the city of Rouen in 1550. Lescarbot incorporated the use of Neptune because it was traditional for France's nobility to closely identify with chivalrous ideals and part of the process of "making a King" involved the performative social/mythical narrative he must participate in before his subjects, as he entered each city he visited:

The narrative of the Rouen entry was structured through a series of tableaux vivants, such as Hercules fighting a hydra, Orpheus playing his harp...Like the stations of the cross, or the succession of beads on a rosary, the living pictures of Henri's entry served not only as mnemonic devices that evinced a range of topical rubrics (e.g. classical texts, scriptures, genealogical myths), but as foci of image-assisted mediation that directed Henri's (and his entourage's) attention beyond the singularity of each individual display to the more profound emotional and spiritual essence informing the entry as a whole. It was the king's role, in traveling from one tableau vivant to the next, to link them all together—to activate them through the connecting thread of his experience—into a coherent narrative program. Thus, the entry's

³⁴²Artaud, A., *Artaud Œuvres*, Édition Établie par Évelyne Grossman, Quatro Gallimard 2004, p.1073.

*tableaux vivants were more than simply discrete elements in a theatrical event meant to entertain; they were essential components in a didactic program meant to teach, and a ritual act meant to transform.*³⁴³

If the precondition for a successful enactment of the Artaudian aesthetic is a discovery of a magical and all-saying artistic form, than the use of myth during the Renaissance procession, which embodied pictorial hieroglyphics in each tableau vivant intended for the King and with which the King would be asked to interact, staged the core of Artaud's ideas. Artaud's idea regarding the incommunicable power of myth and the ritual theater's magical ability to transform the individual, align with Renaissance thought which believed that these processional rituals transformed, in this case the monarch and bestowed upon him supernatural powers.

Lescarbot's simulacrum of the Rouen processional theater is an uncanny double that aligns itself closer still to Artaud's Theater of Cruelty. The stage is conceived as a space for a supernatural enactment of the dynamics of rupture that has unconsciously taken place after the voyage across the Atlantic. Behind the rigid images that Lescarbot seeks to reproduce and its precise narratives structuring, *Neptune's Theater* gives voice to the unsayable nature of things, it momentarily reveals the hidden and raises more questions than it answers. Lescarbot's use of myth remains as ambiguous in nature as Artaud's. For although his use of Neptune attempts to legitimize Poutrincourt's presence in the New World, Neptune's character comes under attack by the Gascon and what would have been a formal ritual becomes a comic farce. *The Theater of Neptune* is a ritual

³⁴³ Wintroub, Michael. 2006. *A savage mirror: power, identity, and knowledge in early modern France*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press. p. 41.

theater in the Artaudian sense for more reasons than it being a “total theater.” It puts on display the porous array of cultural influences of the Renaissance where distinct processes shaping Europe and the Americas crisscross from within and beyond borders.

Jeanne des Anges’ theater of possession stages what Artaud announces in *Le Théâtre De Séraphin as le féminin terrible: Je veux essayer un féminin terrible. Le cri de la révolte qu’on piétine, de l’angoisse armée en guerre, et de la revendication*.³⁴⁴ In the chapter dedicated to Jeanne’s public exorcisms I discuss the rising importance given to these public theaters, due to the gradual increase in prominence of the spectators who became aware of what was taking place in Loudon, which included political figures of such importance as Cardinal Richelieu. Jeanne’s Theater of Cruelty transcended religious and political boundaries and drew the attention of leaders of the State that felt threatened by her “cry of revolt.” Jeanne’s performance was physical; she offered her body as a means by which to represent figures of the Other, the monstrous and the diabolical. An iconoclast she followed, as I delineated in detail in the chapter, Artaud’s understanding of theater. As Michel de Certeau points out, Jeanne’s possession has no “true” historical explanation since it can never be possible to know who is possessed and by whom. I think we might do well to free our readings of her autobiography from a strictly historical, anthropological, or psychoanalytical context to which it has been confined and consider her public exorcisms as very successful representations of Artaud’s Theater of Cruelty. A Theater of Cruelty in which feminine desire takes center stage and in which those in power, the exorcists, are deprived of the discourse of which they claimed to be the inventors and owners. If Artaud’s theater aims to be revolutionary it is perhaps most

³⁴⁴ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et Son Double*, p. 223.

successfully during Jeanne des Anges feminine Theater of Cruelty.

After having devoted the majority of my dissertation to the Theaters of Cruelty emerging from the New World and seeing how these New World theaters, in which the depiction of savage society is externalized from the written text through theatrical rituals that efface all distance between the “savage” that has been “discovered” and the European narrator, who upon constructing a discourse on the Other discovers his own barbarism through the theater/rituals performed in the New World, it is helpful to ask if this New World, Artaudian theater travels back to the European continent. In my dissertation I argue that it does and I believe that the link between Jeanne des Anges and the Savagery of the New World is made explicitly clear through several reoccurring themes in both Artaudian theaters. I see this link first through the incarnation of evil in the body, where the difference being that upon returning to the hexagon, evil is incarnated by the feminine. This theme is essential to an understanding of Artaud, who although a proponent of a physical theater never fails to underscore the fact the body is the site of constant suffering and like the mind it can never be fully trusted. Always in search of a new theatrical idiom, Artaud’s Theater of Cruelty as incarnated by Jeanne des Anges finds new force in the discourse of demonology, which provides a unique language that draws on religious iconography, myth and demonology all areas of interest that fascinated Artaud throughout his life. Furthermore, possession has much in common with rituals of shamanism and cannibalism which seek to efface Western dualism through the incorporation of an Other; whether this is done literally in the case of cannibalism, metaphorically in the case of shamanic practices which channeled spirits in order to facilitate healing or, when the contrary occurred and through a relinquishing of one’s will,

one would become possessed by a demonic spirit. In all of these instances, in both of these New World and European Artaudian theaters, we witness the momentary disappearance of the self into an impersonal alterity that would otherwise be classified as an aberration.

In my dissertation I wished to probe further to see then how these Theaters of Cruelty emerging from the New World and making their way back to Europe would affect the Classical stage. Artaud's opposition to Classical French theater is made clear in his essay entitled, *En Finir avec les Chefs d'Œuvres*, written in 1936, wherein Artaud announces that, *les chefs-d'œuvre du passé sont bons pour le passé: ils ne sont pas bons pour nous*.³⁴⁵ What Artaud reproaches from Shakespeare and Racine is that the theater of the Renaissance and French Classicism (a vast and diverse period that he hastily combines) is no longer accessible to the masses, and further its only aim is to provide an escape from every day life rather than to lead the individual to a direct confrontation with the terrors and mysteries of humanity. With this reproach, the idea of a Theater of Cruelty is further clarified, as we can now understand the word cruelty in an Artaudian lexicon as meaning a realization, a consciousness or a knowledge come to by a spectacular ritual. What is implied in Artaud's understanding of theater is a new lucidity that discovers new values and gives new perspectives to the human condition. Therefore aside from the obvious structural differences in Classical French plays I decided to see if we could find traces of an Artaudian/Savage/New World influence on the Classical stage. I believe that in spite of constant attempts at suppressing subversive and dissident views by royal authorities of the period, writers such as Corneille and Molière belong to this genealogy of cruelty and

³⁴⁵ Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et Son Double*, p. 115.

that examining Artaud side by side with these dramaturges will show more than simply a casual connection to these writers.

First, I would like to begin by citing Artaud's multiple criticisms of Classical Theater:

C'est qu'on nous a habitués depuis la Renaissance, à un théâtre purement descriptif et qui raconte, qui raconte la psychologie. C'est qu'on s'est ingénié à faire vivre sur la scène des êtres plausibles mais détachés, avec le spectacle d'un Côté, le public de l'autre—et qu'on n'a plus montré à la foule que le miroir de ce qu'elle est. Shakespeare lui-même est responsable de cette aberration et de cette déchéance, de cette idée désintéressée du théâtre qui veut qu'une représentation théâtrale laisse le public intact, sans qu'une image lancée provoque son ébranlement dans l'organisme, pose sur lui une empreinte qui ne s'effacera plus.³⁴⁶

Artaud's first criticism of Classical Theater is its use of descriptive language to recount "psychology." Further he criticizes the static nature of the mise-en-scene and associates the distance between the public and the spectacle with a detachment on the part of a playwright who refuses to engage with the audience and leave an indelible mark on the organism that will not be effaced. Artaud's theater is more visceral, more immediate, where, according to his summary of Classical Theater, the Classical stage leads to nothing more than catharsis that empties man of his vital energies and refuses an encounter with more troubling truths. After reading this citation the first steps that a

³⁴⁶Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et Son Double*, p. 119.

Theater of Cruelty seems to take then is destruction of these masterpieces, and yet what I believe Artaud does, in his all too hasty dismissal of these works, is overlook the fact that these plays are embedded with a “cruelty,” in an Artaudian sense, that renounces inherited literary forms which would replicate the dialectic of the Law and desire in traditional plays of the period. Instead, plays such as *Le Cid* and *Dom Juan*, uphold the structure of Classicism (at times, just barely) while in fact subverting the main tropes popular in Classical plays as they were elaborated during the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV.

Artaud’s resentment of the “psychology” of theater is perhaps limited by his understanding of the term. Reading Mitchell Greenberg’s discussion of the reintegration of psychoanalysis in theater studies could point out more parallels with Artaud’s Theater of Cruelty than expected. According to Greenberg’s reading of Freud, the theatrical scene can function much like the dream scene and the dream scene that develops before the eyes of the spectator imbricates the public in a plot that “figures the dangerous intrusion of the passions into the universe of the Law.”³⁴⁷ For Artaud, theater corresponds to an essential need to reach beyond consciousness, this overreaching that Artaud aims for cannot be achieved by reason or logic and therefore he uses the metaphor and structure of the plague to explain his Theater of Cruelty. And yet what is often overlooked in an analysis of Artaud’s plague, is that the metaphor is structured on the dream, the very essence of what would be considered psychology, or psychological theater:

³⁴⁷Greenberg, Mitchell. 1986. *Corneille, classicism, and the ruses of symmetry*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press., p. 8.

Une nuit de fin avril ou du début de mai 1720, vingt jours environ avant l'arrivée à Marseille du vaisseau le Grand-Saint Antoine, dont le débarquement coïncida avec la plus merveilleuse explosion de peste qui ait fait bourgeonner les mémoires de la cité, Saint-Rémys, vice-roi de Sardaigne, que ses responsabilités réduites de monarque avaient peut-être sensibilisé aux virus le plus pernicieux un rêve particulièrement affligeant : il se vit pesteux et il vit la peste ravager son minuscule État.³⁴⁸

Artaud's theater is founded on a patriarchal representation rooted in a never-resolved fear where the monarch sees himself as pestilent and his miniscule state devoured by the plague. If this dream is the locus of Artaud's theater, its inverse is also the locus of Classical drama, which stages the desire towards an absolute integrity while suppressing the constant dread of chaos ready to threaten the Paternal order. The images of the sovereign in both Artaud's Theater of Cruelty and Classical Theater break and link to form a whole that is mutually repressed in both theaters. Artaud will refuse to acknowledge the Paternal order in his theater and Classical drama will suppress at all cost images of the plague. And yet the influence and tension between these two theaters are mutually felt.

Further evidence that Artaud's theater is not as removed from Classical drama as he would like to believe comes from a close reading of what the stage and mise-en-scène of Classical plays looked like during the 17th century:

More so than any other form of art the theater, the theatrical space, is most

³⁴⁸Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et Son Double*, p. 21.

obviously dialectical in the ambivalent structuring of the dichotomy separating spectacle and spectator. Despite the ever-present ramp (real or imaginary) that divides stage from audience, actor from spectator, the space of illusion from the reality of the parterre, the theater's essential mystery recognizes and denies these separations. Audience and actors are embraced within the theatrical space: each is potentially capable of assuming the role of the other. Although the classic dictum 'all the world's a stage' became a cultural topos at the end of the sixteenth and at the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, its acuity was not dampened. In a world given to the spectacular imbrication of symbols of power, Corneille's epoch certainly viewed the world as a stage. It also knew that the stage reflected a perfect coherent world. Actors and spectators held up mirrors to each other. Caught in a *mise-en-abîme* of representation the theater in its illusoriness the spectators within its own frame of reference, within its own desires and pleasures them.³⁴⁹

Here we can see that despite the separation between the audience and the stage, between the actor and the spectator, "each is potentially capable of assuming the role of the other." In a Theater of Cruelty, the action of the drama is intended to rattle the spectator physically and spiritually, and through a kind of magic, transcend reason and access a deep, primitive and universal understanding of life. In this theater the spasm of the actor on stage becomes instantaneously the spasm of the spectator. Although we will

³⁴⁹ Greenberg, Mitchell. 1986. *Corneille, classicism, and the ruses of symmetry*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press., p. 7.

not form false equivalencies with Classical Theater, Classical drama was highly regulated and imposed Classicism's Law upon the chaos of the Baroque because theater was understood to be a medium that was charged with powers that could destabilize even the most powerful myths, that of the Paternal Order as reflected by the state. Due to this perception of the influence of theater, images of excess and decomposition were banished and just as the New World was being discovered and accounts of a New World Other were gaining popularity with the masses all signs of "savagery" were effaced from the stage.

In the fifth and final chapter of my dissertation I tried to analyze whether elements of New World Savagery could be traced in Classical Theater and I examined specifically Corneille's *Le Cid* and Molière's *Dom Juan*. I came to the conclusion that both these plays were, in an Artaudian sense, contaminated by a New World savagery, and this accounted for the controversy with which they were received. Thematically both these plays deal with two characters, Chimène in *Le Cid* and Dom Juan in Molière's play, who act out, *un théâtre difficile et cruel d'abord pour moi-même*. The public performances that the characters of Chimène and Dom Juan carry out leads to an uncompromising excess of desire that tears them away from their communities and threatens the Paternal Order to which they are a part. The result is a newfound lucidity, the discovery of new values that give new insights and new perspectives into the human condition, the realization that, *Nous ne sommes pas libres. Et le ciel peut encore nous tomber sur la tête. Et le théâtre est fait pour nous apprendre d'abord cela.*³⁵⁰

My tendency to read these plays closely with travel narratives of the same period

³⁵⁰Artaud, A., *Le Théâtre et Son Double*, p. 123.

was an attempt to find some acceptable balance with regards to the possibility of the New World influencing the Classical stage and decentering traditional spaces of power; rather than showing the New World as being shaped by European forces I wanted to give evidence of a New World presence in Classical texts. Though I am now skeptical about ever achieving a kind of blended reading that does justice to both cultural traditions, and although I believe it was worthwhile endeavor, it seems to me that the fifth chapter of my dissertation could have been a dissertation project onto itself without the element of Artaud or the Theater of Cruelty added to it. Nevertheless, the resonances with Artaud are present, and the parallels with the travel narratives that I found are uncanny. Although it can never be proven that writers such as Corneille or Molière were influenced by the writings coming from the New World, I believe it is interesting to read these texts side by side, and scholars such as Sara Melzer do.

In conclusion, my dissertation sought out historical moments, primarily in travel narratives and autobiographies that are representative of Artaud's Theater of Cruelty, a theater that according to many failed or has yet to exist. Throughout this dissertation I have interspersed references to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and perhaps to some, have anachronistically attempted an analysis of Artaud's theories without accounting for temporal differences. I believe that a genealogy of cruelty has always been present if we look outside of traditional forms of Western theater, in spite of attempts at suppression. These illicit representations, performed by the marginalized of history, steadily followed the dictates of Artaud's theories until they were crystalized in his poetic language and in his labyrinthine works. Further, I am convinced that upon closer inspection, certain plays from the Classical period bear traces of a Savagery or "Cruelty"

that although “psychological” in many respects, hold much in common with Artaud’s aims of rebellion against a patriarchal order. Artaud conceived of his theater as a place for the reincarnation of fundamental rituals, where man could discover metaphysical truths about his existence. Perhaps at the end of this long itinerary, we may see that in Artaud’s apparent failure to develop an intelligible theory of theater in the narrative of human history, those who history tended to deny a voice subverted scenarios of repression and performed their own theaters that can be read through new understandings of theatricality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aguilar, Francisco de *Relación Breve de la Conquista de Nueva España*, ed., F. Gomez de Orozco, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1980.
- Aristotle, *La Poétique*, Paris: Collection Poétique, Editions Seuil, 1980.
- Artaud, Antonin, *Le Theatre et Son Double*. Paris: Folio/Essais Gallimard, 1985.
- Artaud, Antonin, *Œuvres*, Paris: Gallimard, 1984.
- Artaud, Antonin, *Pour en Finir avec Le Jugement de Dieu*, Venissieux : Les Editions de la Mauvaise Graine, 1998.
- Artaud, Antonin. *Antonin Artaud, Selected Writings*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, On The Balinese Theater, 1976.
- Artaud, Antonin. *Oeuvres*, Paris: Quatro, Gallimard, 2004.
- Artaud, Antonin. *Selected Writings*, edited, and with an introduction, by Susan Sontag ; translated from the French by Helen Weaver ; notes by Susan Sontag and Don Eric Levine. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1988, c1976.
- Artaud, Antonin. *The Peyote Dance*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976.
- Bachlard, Gaston. *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*. New York. Beacon Press; Édition : New Ed, 1987.
- Bakhtin, M., *Rabelais and His World* , transl. H Iswolsky, Cambridge, Mass. M.I.T. Press, 1968.
- Barthes, Roland, and Stephen Heath. *Image, Music, Text*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- Bataille, Georges, (trans. Robert Hurley.) *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*. New York: Zone Books, 1988. .

- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London ; New York : Routledge, 2004.
- Biet, Christian. *Les Théâtres de la Cruauté : Hommage à Antonin Artaud*, Sous la direction de Camille Dumoulié, Éditions Desjonquères, Paris : Actes du colloque organisé à l'Université de Paris X—Nanterre, 2000.
- Brumble, H. David. *Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: a Dictionary of Allegorical Meanings*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1998.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: the Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Calvin, Jean. *Institute of the Christian Religion in Classics of Protestantism*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1959.
- CBC. *Arts*, Dec. 08, 2004.
- Certeau, Michel de, and Luce Giard. *Le Lieu de L'Autre: Histoire Religieuse et Mystique*. Paris: Gallimard, 2005.
- Certeau, Michel de, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, Translated by Brian Massumi, Foreword by Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1986.
- Certeau, Michel de. *La Fable Mystique*. Paris : Gallimard, 1982.
- Certeau, Michel, *The Writing of History*. Trans. by Tom Conley, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
- Civardi, J.M., « Observations Sur Les Sentiments de L'Académie Française » dans *La Querelle du Cid (1637-1638) Édition Critique Intégrale*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2004.
- Colbert cited in Sara E. Melzer. "Myths of Mixture in *Phèdre* and the Sun King's Assimilation Policy in the New World." *L'Esprit Créateur* 38.2 (1998): 72-81. *Project MUSE*. Web. 2 Apr. 2012.
- Combès, Isabelle. *La Tragédie Cannibale Chez Les Anciens Tupi-Guarani*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992.

- D'Aubignac, A. *La Pratique du Théâtre*. Paris: H. Champion, 2001.
- De Certeau, Michel. *The Possessions at Loudun*, University of Chicago Press; Édition: 2nd 2000.
- De Las Casas, B., *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. Tecnos; Édition : 2000.
- Deleuze, Gilles, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press; 1 edition, 1987.
- Dening, Greg. *Performances*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Derrida, Jacques. "La Parole Soufflée," *L'Écriture et La Différence*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1979.
- Derrida, Jacques. *L'Écriture et La Différence*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- Dickason, Olive Patricia. *The Myth of the Savage: and The Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas*. Edmonton, Alta., Canada: University of Alberta Press, 1984.
- Doucette, Leonard E. *Theatre in French Canada: Laying the Foundations, 1606-1867*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.
- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Eccles, W. J. *Canada Under Louis XIV, 1663-1701*. Toronto [Ont.]: McClelland and Stewart 1978.
- Felman, Shoshana. *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with J.L Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- Foucault, Michel. *History of Madness*, translated by Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa. New York: Routledge, 2006.

- Foucault, Michel. *Dits et Ecrits: 1954-1975*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1994.
- Foucault, Michel. *Histoire de la Sexualité I*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1976.
- Freud, Sigmund, “The Theme of the Three Caskets,” in *Character and Culture*.
Freud, Sigmund, and Philip Rieff. New York: Collier Books, 1963.
- Freud, Sigmund, and James Strache, *Civilization and its Discontents*. New York:
Norton, 2005.
- Freud, Sigmund, and James Strachey. *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement
Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1989.
- Freud, Sigmund, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Translated from the German and
edited by James Strachey. New York: Basic Books, 1955.
- Freud, Sigmund, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of
Sigmund Freud. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. VII, Vol. XVII, London: 1955.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Group Psychology and The Analysis of the Ego*. The International
Psycho-Analytical Library, Edited by Ernest Jones, Liveright Publishing
Corporation, New York, 1949.
- Goldmann, Lucien. *Le Dieu Caché; Etude Sur la Vision Tragique dans les Pensées de
Pascal et dans le Théâtre de Racine*. Paris: Gallimard, 1955.
- Gomez-Geraud. « La perception du geste sauvage et de ses enjeux: Regards sur
l’Indien de la Nouvelle France » dans *Les Figures de L’Indien*, Edité par Gilles
Thérien, Université de Québec à Montréal, 1988.
- Greenberg, Mitchell, *Baroque Bodies : Psychoanalysis and The Culture of French
Absolutism*, Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University, 2001.
- Greenberg, Mitchell. *Baroque Bodies: Psychoanalysis and the Culture of French
Absolutism*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Greenberg, Mitchell. *Racine: From Ancient Myth to Tragic Modernity*. Minneapolis:
University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

- Greenberg, Mitchell. *Corneille, Classicism, and The Ruses of Symmetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Greenberg, Mitchell. *Subjectivity and Subjugation in Seventeenth-Century Drama and Prose*. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Jaenen, Corneilius. *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.
- Kantorowicz, Ernst. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Kaplan, Steven L. *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*. Berlin: Mouton, 1984.
- Kilgour, Maggie. *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Krieger, Alex D., Krieger, Margery H., Cabeza de Vaca Nuñez, Alvar, and Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés, *We Came Naked and Barefoot: The Journey of Cabeza de Vaca Across North America*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.
- Kristeva, Julia, and Leon S. Roudiez. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Le Jeune, Paul, and Guy Laflèche. *Le Missionnaire, l'Apostat, le Sorcier*. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1973.
- Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel. *L'Ancien Régime*. Paris: Hachette, 1991.
- Leahey, Margaret. "Comment peut un muet prescher l'évangile?" Jesuit Missionaries and the Native Languages of New France. *French Historical Studies* Vol. 19, No. 1 Spring, 1995.
- Legue, Gabriel et Gilles de la Tourette, *Autobiographie de Jeanne des Anges*

- Jérôme Millon; Édition : 2e éd. corr, 1990.
- Lery, Jean. *Histoire d'un Voyage Faict en la Terre du Brésil*, Genève: A Chuppin, 1578, éd. critique, Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Bibliothèque classique, 1994.
- Lery, Jean. *Histoire Méorable du Siège de Sancerre*. Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1975.
- Lescarbot, Marc, and Edwin Tross. *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France: contenant les navigations, découverts et habitations faites par les Francois des indes occidentales et nouvelle France avec les muses de la Nouvelle France / par Marc Lescarbot, suivie des Muses de la Nouvelle-France* Tome I, II, III, Paris : Librairie Tross, 1866.
- Lescarbot, Marc, Eugene Benson, Renate Benson, Jerry Wasserman, Harriette Taber Richardson, and Ben Jonson, *Spectacle of empire: Marc Lescarbot's Theatre of Neptune in New France*. Vancouver : Talonbooks, 2006.
- Lescarbot, Marc, Henry Percival Biggar, and W. L. Grant. *History of New France*. Toronto: Champlain Society, Vol. II, 1907.
- Lescarbot, Marc. *La Defaite des Sauvages Armouchiquois par le Sagamos Memberton et ses alliez Sauvages, en la Nouvelle France, au mois de Juillet*, The Project Gutenberg, 1607.
- Lestringant, Frank. *Une Sainte Horreur: Ou Le Voyage En Euchariste XVIe-XVIIIe Siecle*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996.
- Lucie Cantin, "Perversion and Hysteria," in *After Lacan: Clinical Practice and the Subject of the Unconscious*. SUNY Press, 2012.
- Mauss, Marcel. *Les Techniques du Corps*, Article originalement publié Journal de Psychologie, XXXII, ne, 3-4, 15 mars - 15 avril 1936. Communication présentée à la Société de Psychologie le 17 mai 1934.
- Melzer, Sara E. "Myths of Mixture in *Phèdre* and the Sun King's Assimilation Policy in the New World." *L'Esprit Créateur* Volume 38, Number 2, Summer 1998.
- Metraux, Alfred. *Religions et Magies Indiennes d'Amérique du Sud*. Paris: Gallimard Bibliothèque des Sciences Humaines, 1967.

- Mezler, Sara. *Colonizer and Colonized: The Hidden Stories of Early Modern French Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
- Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays of Montaigne*. New York: Heritage Press, 1946.
- Mignolo, Walter. *Cartas, Crónicas y Relaciones del Descubrimiento y la Conquista. Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana* / coord. por Luis Inigo Madrigal, Vol. 1, 1992.
- Molière, and Gérard Ferreyrolles. *Dom Juan, ou, Le Festin de Pierre: comédie*. Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1991.
- Molière, and Richard Wilbur. *Don Juan: Comedy in Five Acts, 1665*. San Diego: Harcourt. 2001.
- Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Alvar, and Cyclone Covey. *Cabeza de Vaca's Adventures in the unknown interior of America*. Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1983.
- Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Alvar, and Juan Francisco Maura. *Naufragios*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1998.
- Pagden, Anthony, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Rosolato, Guy. *Le Sacrifice: Repères Psychanalytiques*, Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 1987.
- Royle, Nicholas, *The Uncanny*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Sabatier, Gerard. *Le Prince et Les Arts: Stratégies Figuratives de La Monarchie Française de La Renaissance Aux Lumières*, Paris: Editions Champ Vallon, 2014.
- Sanday, Peggy Reeves. *Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Schechner, Richard, *Between Theater & Anthropology*, Foreword by Victor W. Turner. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

- Schumacher, Claude. *Artaud on Theater*, London : Methuen Drama, 1989.
- Seed, Patricia. *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Sépulveda, J.G., *Tratado Sobre Las Justas Causas de la Guerra Contra los Indios, con una Advertencia de Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo y un Estudio por Manuel García-Pelayo*. Acta Academica. Issue 35, 2004.
- Strong, Roy C., *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450-1650*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Sober, Edna, C., "The Noble Eloquent Savage," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 19, No. pp. 227-236 Published by: Duke University Press, 1972.
- Thevet, André. *Les Singularités de La France Antarctique 1557*. Chandeigne: Paris, 1998.
- Thwaites. *The Jesuit Relations: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in North America (1610-1791)*, New York: The Vanguard Press, Vol. V, 1896.
- Trexler, Richard. "We Think, They Act: Clerical Readings of Missionary Theater in 16th Century New Spain" in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, Edited by Steven L. Kaplan, Berlin: Mouton, 1984.
- Trudel, Marcel. *The Beginnings of New France, 1524-1663*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973.
- Turner, Victor, "Performing Ethnography," in *The Performance Studies Reader*, Bial, Henry. New York: Routledge, Second Edition, 2007.
- Turner, Victor. "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology." *Rice Institute Pamphlet - Rice University Studies*, 60, no. 3, 1974.
- Wintroub, Michael. *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2006.