

After Artaud: Daughters of the Heart, Unborn

*Born gradually this unconscious that I had like the hardest of the hard
before the coffin of my six daughters of the heart to be born:*

*Yvonne,
Caterine,
Neneka,
Cécile,
Ana,
and
Little Anie.*

Artaud (in Eshleman, p.67)

If not the most famous, then the most anomalous and striking of Artaud's late textual and pictorial inventions, are his "daughters of the heart unborn." The biographers describe the idea better than I:

[Artaud] bore, out of his heart, a new progeny of warrior-daughters who became his assaulted messengers and saviors. (Eshleman, p.39)

Both of [Artaud's] grandmothers became daughters, as did Cécile Schramme, Yvonne Allendy and Anie Besnard. The daughters fought for him, and suffered terrible tortures in their efforts to reach him at Rodez and free him. Artaud was always certain of their imminent arrival. Barber (in *Blows and Bombs*, p.116)

[Artaud] was deeply affected by the death of his seven-month-old sister, Germaine, when he was nine. Because the baby would not obey the commands of her nanny to stop crawling away from her, the nanny slammed Germaine down on her lap with such force that she perforated the baby's intestine, causing an internal hemorrhage from which she died the following day. Germaine haunted Artaud to the extent that much later he would induct her into his set of "daughters of the heart, to be born." Such "daughters," based on family members and friends, represented a repudiation of his own birth and seeing of himself as the sole progenitor of a new family "tree." (Eshleman, p.2)

The daughters, other than his infant sister Germaine, are as follows:

Yvonne Allendy was an old friend from the late 1920s. ... Yvonne Allendy died in 1935. Marie Chili (1831-1911) and Catherine Chili (1831-1894), born in Tinos (Cyclades) and Smyrna (Turkey), became Artaud's two grandmothers. Cécile Schramme is the young Belgian who Artaud became infatuated with in the mid-1930s. She died in a sanatorium in Belgium in 1950. Ana Corbin is only identifiable as someone, according to Artaud, who worked in the Dreyer film, *la Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*. Anie Besnard, from Luxembourg, was a young friend of Artaud's, whom he met in Paris in the early 30s. (Eshleman, p.332-333)

To which may be added:

Colette Thomas met Antonin Artaud on the 10th March 1946 when she went with her then-husband, the writer Henri Thomas, to Rodez in the south of France, where Artaud had been incarcerated in an asylum for two years... Buck (in Thomas, p.147)

Whilst in Rodez, Artaud had been planning an opposition to his real family. He explained it later to Sade's biographer, Gilbert Lély: "I thought a lot about love at the asylum of Rodez, and it was there that I dreamed about some daughters of the soul, who would love me like daughters, and not as lovers – me, their pre-pubescent, lustful, salacious, erotic and incestuous father; and chaste, so chaste that it makes him dangerous." They were called his 'daughters of the heart to be born.' These warrior-children who would help him in his flight included his real grandmothers, and other women he had met in his life, the most recent being Marthe Robert, with Colette added once she arrived in his life, and then Paule Thévenin. Buck (in Thomas, p.151)

To which may also be added several more members of the daughter harem:

...I am in an insane asylum I do not want to be restrained, confined, and prevented from seeing my five first-born daughters: Neneka Chilé, Catherine Chilé, Cécile Schramme, Anie Besnard, Yvonne Nel-Dumouchel, plus several others beginning with Sonia Mossé, Yvonne Gamelin, Josette Lusson, Colette Prou (hacked to death with an ax in a cell of the hospital in Le Havre...) Artaud, from a 1945 letter to Henri Parisot (in Sontag, p.445)

Yvonne Nel-Dumouchel was the maiden name of Yvonne Allendy ... Sonia Mossé, who had been killed in a concentration camp, was a friend of Cécile Schramme. Yvonne Gamelin has not been identified. Josette Lusson was the actress who had posed for the photomontages that Artaud devised with the photographer Eli Lotar in 1930. ... Colette Prou was an actress and friend of Artaud. The anecdote is fictitious: she was not murdered. Sontag/Levine (in Sontag, p.646)

The Chimeras of Nerval

With regard to the idea of these eroticized sister-daughter soul mates, I would like to propose the influence on Artaud of Nerval. In May 1946, Artaud was allowed to leave the constraints of Rodez asylum into the relative freedom of the Ivry clinic. Soon after, following a walk of discovery on the grounds of the clinic, he asked to be moved to an abandoned pavilion he found there:

"The pavilion consisted of two rooms, one of which was very large and gave him space for his drawing dancing and gestural movements. After so many constrictive hotel room and asylum cells, Artaud became attached to his new accommodation; he soon elaborated a story that it was a pavilion in which the poet Gerard de Nerval had once stayed. Artaud would live there until his death." (Barber, p.133)

And to further Nerval, one of the earliest and most complex drawings within this body of Artaud's work, completed in the highly productive period around January 1945, is a drawing customarily known as "Being and its fetuses..." Its complete title, written in cursive around its outside edges, is "Being and its fetuses uterine entrails, the anal crime of beings, the Chimeras of Gerard de Nerval ... in me my daughter Catherine lama." Its Pompidou archive dossier is below.

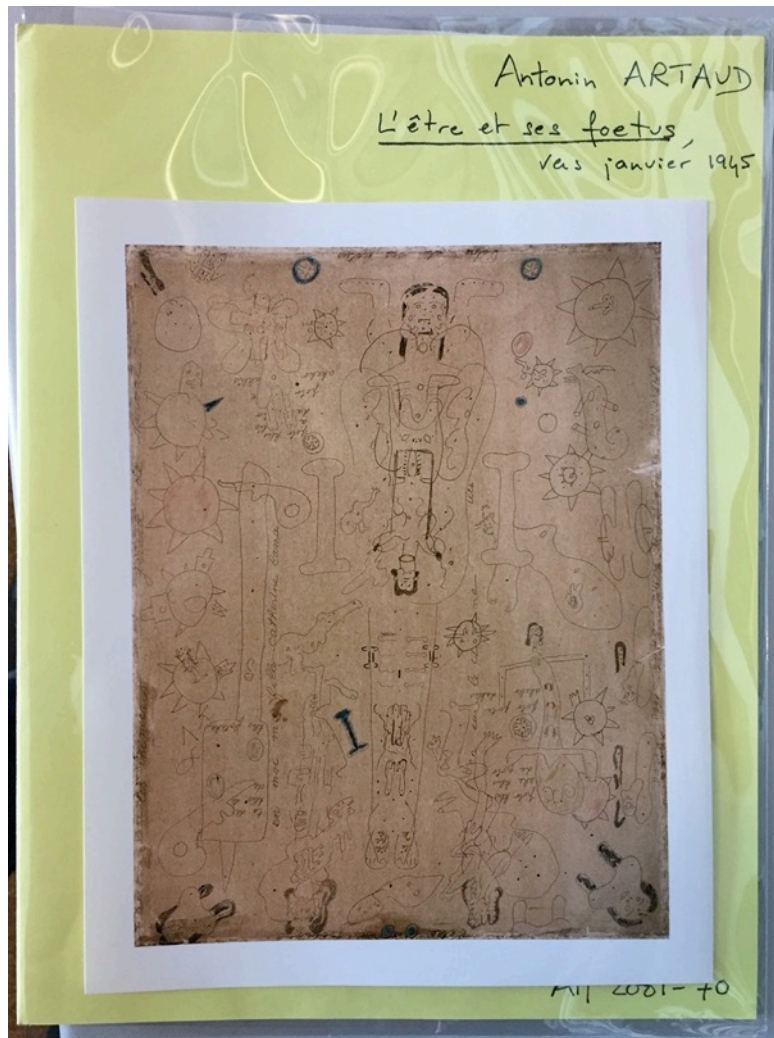


Photo credit: Paul Levack

Nerval seems, definitely, to be on Artaud's mind during this period as he banters with Breton about Nerval after he arrives at Ivry, mentions his death and work in several letters, writes a rebuttal to a critic of Nerval and casts Nerval with, to a lesser extent, Lautréamont as precedents to his writings. Following are a few related quotes:

I have already admitted how I surrounded my love with weird superstitions. In a little casket that had once belonged to her I kept her last letter. Dare I confess that I had made out of this casket a kind of reliquary which had brought back to me long travels in which the thought of her had followed me – a rose gathered in the gardens of Schoubrah, a strip of mummy-cloth brought back from Egypt, some laurel leaves from the river at Beirut,

two little gilded crystals, mosaics from Saint Sophia, a rosary bead, and other things I have forgotten... Nerval (in *Aurélia*, p.40)

I want to explain how, after having been far from the true path for so long, I felt myself led back to it by the cherished memory of a dead person, and how my need to believe that she was still alive brought back into my mind a precise feeling for the various truths which I had not gathered firmly enough into my soul. (*Aurélia*, p.46)

Pale and torn the crescent moon thinned each evening and soon perhaps we should never see her again in the sky! Yet it seemed that this celestial body was the refuge of all my sister souls, and I saw it peopled with plaintive shades, destined to be born again one day on earth... (*Aurélia*, p.59)

‘... I shall reveal to you something I haven’t even dared fully acknowledge myself. You have an impossible passion, let us say, while I have a monstrous one, you love a *peri* [fairy-like creature], while I love ... you will shudder ... my sister! Strange, though it be, however, I cannot feel any remorse for this unlawful inclination; although I often condemn myself I am always absolved by a mysterious power which I feel within me. There is no earthly impurity in my love, sensuality doesn’t drive me towards my sister, even though she is as beautiful as the phantom of my recent visions. I am moved, rather by an attraction I cannot divine, by an affection as deep as the depths of the sea and as vast as the vaults of the heavens ... the kind of affection a god might experience. The idea of my sister uniting with a man fills me with horror and disgust; it would be a sacrilege, for through the veils of her flesh I perceive something celestial about her. Despite the name by which she is known on earth she is the bride of my divine soul, the virgin who was reserved for me when the universe was created. Nerval (in *Journey to the Orient*, p.89-90)

“I (Maldoror) crown you (the madman Aghone) king of intellects,” he exclaims with premeditated emphasis. “At your slightest summons I shall come running. Draw lavishly on my resources; body and soul I belong to you. At night you will return the alabaster crown (a chamberpot) to its usual place, with permission to make use of it; but during the day, as soon as dawn illumines the cities, replace it on your brow as the symbol of your sway. (Your three dead sisters) shall live again in me, not to mention that I’ll be your mother.” Then the madman fell back a few paces as if he were prey to an offensive nightmare; lines of happiness were written on his face wrinkled by sorrows; he knelt, full of humiliation, at his protector’s feet. Gratitude like a poison had entered the crowned madman’s heart! Lautréamont (in *Maldoror* p.208)

Paraphrenically Inclined

Though it would be a mistake to reduce an artist’s creativity to his mental disease, Lotringer, in *Mad Like Artaud*, confirms the clinical diagnosis of “paraphrenic delirium.” Following is a short excerpt from Lotringer’s interview with Dr. Ferdière, director of the Rodez asylum:

Ferdière: ...The delusions of paraphrenics are extremely rich, fantastical and fabricated, but unlike what happens with the paranoid, in no way do their delusions distort their fundamental personality, memory, judgment, or reason.

Lotringer: So then how is it a delusion?

Ferdière: Well, because they spout monumental rubbish.

(Lotringer, p.161-162)

After having immersed myself in Artaud's writings for almost 2 years now, I admit that I would sometimes toss Sontag's fat *Selected*... across the room in total agreement with Dr. Ferdière: rubbish! Artaud can oftentimes be frustratingly haphazard and in need of several more good hard edits. It's extremely aggravating—especially if, like me, you're looking for a crunchy quote that sums up an idea without it being contradicted two paragraphs later.

I left Artaud for a few months and had been long overdue for a road back in when I picked up Hanz Prinzhorn's *The Art of Insanity* and found, perhaps, a better re-entry, one that focused more on description than diagnosis and could enjoy a good delusional rant for the intricacy of its outlandishness rather than the need for it to be verified as a symptom of the world outside of its own imaginative one. Prinzhorn has this to say about the hallucinations of "schizophrenic" artist August Neter; many aspects resonate quite well with Artaud's phantom daughters:

[August Neter] invents fantastic erotic relationships and integrates his delusions with his immediate environment. A whole succession of wives appears in the course of time, and he finally becomes used to recognizing disguised wives in all the women he sees, including the nursing sisters. He treats them with exquisite respect while at the same time speculating about them erotically. (Prinzhorn, p.88-89)

It is impossible to discover ... the role eroticism played in [Neter's] life. We know few facts, and those are rather rude: he habitually associated with prostitutes while a partner in a very affectionate marriage, and showed the most extreme remorse because of a minor perverted act (only in the psychosis, however). More recently he has given a compulsively strong sexual interpretation to all the words and actions by women in his presence, including nuns. The women are, however, integrated into his delusional system as wives, though he does not draw the practical consequences. (Prinzhorn, p.91)

Following are sketches of my own which attempt to rearrange elements of Artaud's drawings toward the end of flushing out/isolating/making evident aspects of his daughter-wife fantasies. It became my belief, at some point, that with greater study of these drawings as a single body of work – like a selection of inter-related short stories – it becomes clear that, like Prinzhorn's Neter, that an active imagination is at work combining what an artist sees in his surroundings with the delusions and fantasies he lays over them.



Egyptian Ka

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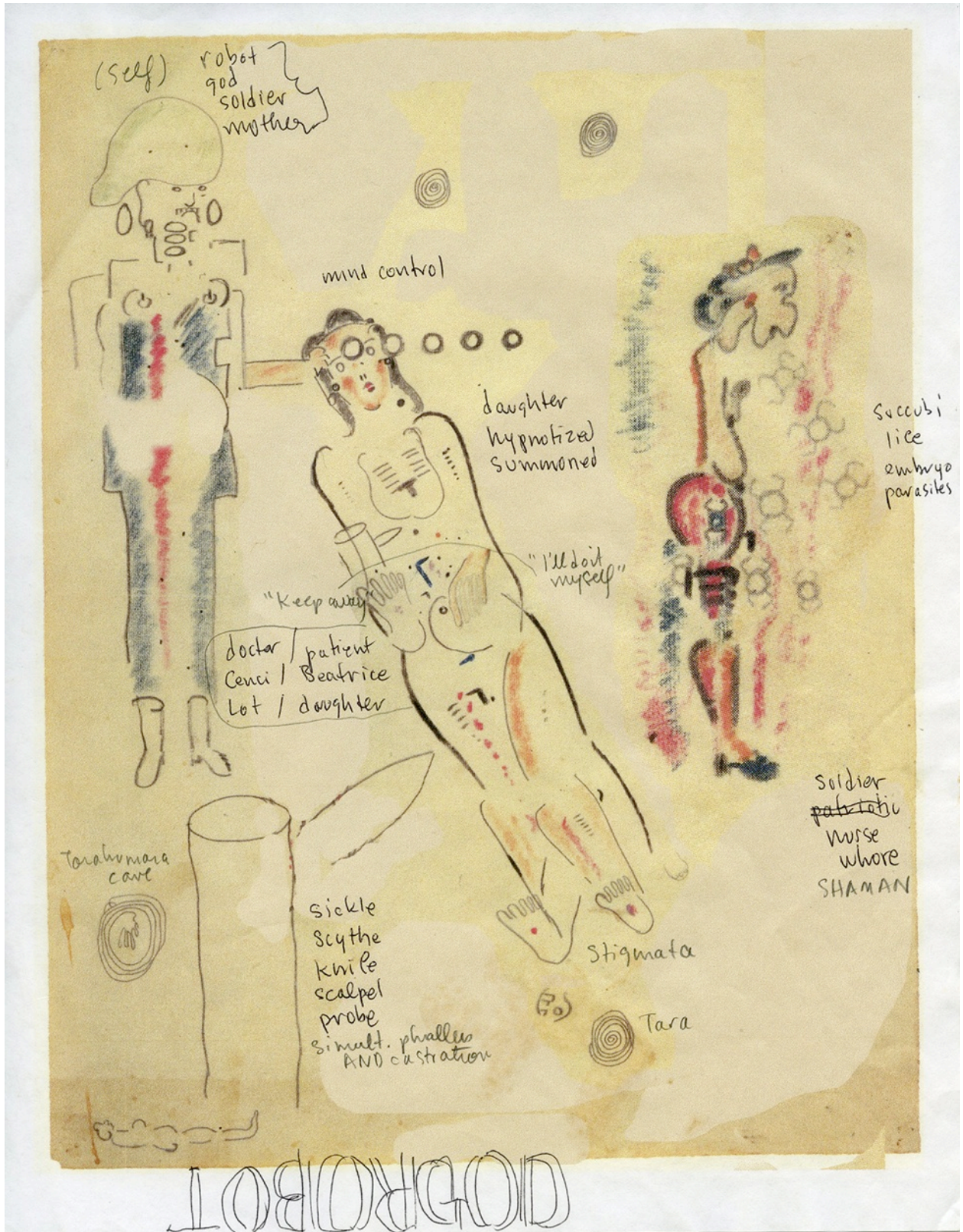
Richard Hawkins, 2016



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Of the six preceding sketches, four use figures pulled from “The Theater of Cruelty” (c. March 1946), one from “The Revolt of the angels exited from limbo” (c. Jan-Feb 1946) and one from “The illusions of the soul” (c. Jan 1946).

(Note: I’m left wondering why, by the way, Anatole France’s *The Revolt of the Angels* (1914) is never mentioned in the context of discussions of “daughters of the heart.” In the book, an angel leaves heaven, comes to earth, uses his invisibility to steal books from a library to study science and philosophy, after which he joins a host of fallen brethren with plans to overthrow God whom he views as not understanding the true nature of the universe and thus being incapable of creating it in the first place. So, if you’ve read Artaud’s late works, with all the invisible controlling forces and treacheries of a malevolent and fumbling God, it totally fits. It also expands the notion of the purposes and methods of Artaud’s dead daughters.)

The “Theater...” and “Revolt ...” drawings, as stated by the few authors who’ve taken on the subject, can be perceived as the closest to being portraits – a tumble of coffins falling, all entombing presumably attractive women. “Theater ...”, in fact, includes the handwritten inscription “catherine,” one of the daughters, as either dedication or designation.

Following, a photo of the Pompidou archive dossier for “The Theater of Cruelty.”

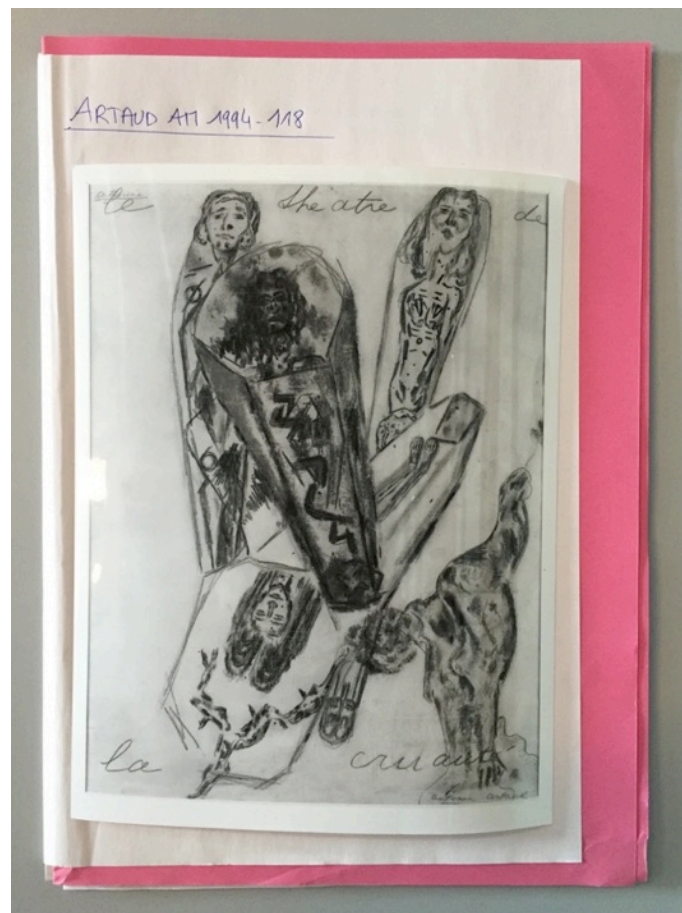


Photo credit: Paul Levack

An Awful Lot of Trouble

An existing precedent for Artaud's daughters of the heart within his own writings is a chapter called "Mise en Scène" in *The Theater and Its Double* (1931-36). Don't read it – it's one of Artaud's worst in my opinion; it's badly constructed and ill-conceived and shows clearly that the author is in over his head. He attempts to force representational paintings out of the field of representation just to prove a minor point about – one can't really tell – theater sets, I guess.

The piece deals with a Van Leyden painting in the Louvre of Biblical Lot and his daughters as Sodom is being destroyed. The story from Genesis will be well-remembered as it's been used over and over again by the religious right and is, literally, the point at which fire and brimstone destroy the iniquitous faggots of "the cities of the plain." Lot invites two gorgeous angels into his room, horny queers surround the place and demand to sodomize the little angel cakes. Silly God decides "o hell no." Lot hauls ass with the admonition to not look back at the burning sulfur, flaming queens, raging God farting down brimstone shits yadda yadda yadda. Lot's foolish wife decides she just has to have one last peek at, basically, the destruction of LGBTQ heaven and is turned to a pillar of salt. Genesis 19, a total of 29 verses.



Lucas van Leyden. *Lot and His Daughters*, c. 1521

But Lot and his daughters survived the conflagration. And then THIS happens:

Lot and his two daughters left Zoar and settled in the mountains, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar. He and his two daughters lived in a cave. One day the older daughter said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man around here to give us children—as is the custom all over the earth. Let's get our father to drink wine and then sleep with him and preserve our family line through our father." That night they got their father to drink wine, and the older daughter went in and slept with him. He was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up. The next day the older daughter said to the younger, "Last night I slept with my father. Let's get him to drink wine again tonight, and you go in and sleep with him so we can preserve our family line through our father." So they got their father to drink wine that night also, and the younger daughter went in and slept with him. Again he was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up. So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. God (in Genesis 19: 30-39)

So basically a biblical roofy rape with a daddy-issues incest-porn twist. Totally weird that the old man gets released from culpability: boy was Lot sure drunk last night. Not to mention the two predatory gerontophile sluts: "It IS customary – everybody else gets to do it." Like, that's OK, but cruising a couple of new guys in the back alleys of Sodom is worthy of divine wrath and total annihilation. Ug, Bible people...

Anyway, here are the only two decent/indecent quotes from Artaud's "Mise en Scène" I can stomach. They're actually kind of funny:

A tent has been pitched at the edge of the sea, and before it Lot sits wearing a breastplate and a red beard, watching his daughters parade before him as if he were attending a banquet of whores. Artaud (in Sontag, p.228)

It would be false to pretend that the ideas that are conveyed [in the Van der Leyden painting] are clear. But they are of a grandeur to which we have become unaccustomed as a result of that kind of painting which only knows how to apply paint, that is, all the painting of the last few centuries. There is also an idea about sexuality and reproduction, with Lot seemingly placed there to live off his daughters, like a pimp. This is almost the only social idea that the painting contains. Artaud (in Sontag, p.230)

I'll conclude with several quotations pertaining to the daughters from Artaud's final poems, letters and essays (1946-48):

I saw the corpse of my daughter Anie reduced to ashes and her sex organ dilapidated and divided after her death. ... I saw the meningeal syphilis of my daughter Catherine's legs, and the two hideous potatoes of her swollen kneecaps, I saw the onions of her toes blistered like her sex organ which she has no longer been able to wash for a year after she began her march. I saw it burst from her skull like Anie of the "Holy" Throat, and I saw the intestinal crown of thorns of her blood flowing from her on non-menstrual days.

And I saw the notched knife of my other daughter Neneka who I felt moving in the opium of the earth ...and there were also Yvonne, Catherine, Cécile, Anie and Ana with Neneka. Artaud (in Eshleman, p.67)

...they made my daughter Ana come out of the charnel house of donkey piss beings...
Artaud (in Eshleman, p.254)

I say that my soul is one with me
and if I want to make a daughter who one day wants to sleep with me,
shit and piss on me,
I will make her through and against god the turd spirit of self-restraint
he whose farts I'm forced to choke on,
resounding like bombs in the paradise along the inside of my skull,
where he has squat down and shit a filthy nest. Artaud, from the author's own
commentary for the drawing "The Sexual Awkwardness of God," Feb. 1946 (in
Ouvres sur Papier, p.137)

As an appendix, I'm adding every mention of Artaud in Laurence Rickel's "Aberrations of Mourning" (9 pgs). Though ostensibly a psycho-theoretical work on the role of death in German literature, it wanders several times into Artaud with specific reference to the little dead infant sister, Germaine.

In the above quotations, all underlining and parenthetical notes are my own.

-- Richard Hawkins, Sept 2016

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Here is every reference to Artaud in *Aberrations of Mourning*, by Laurence A. Rickels:

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By the end of his career, Antonin Artaud's sensory shield was so dispersed that he had become the burial site for all toxic waste, including military emissions of America's sperm banks, just as his body, which, like every body, had been mapped out by the displacements of states of bodily tension from zone to zone, and from orifice to orifice, itself was made to conduct the products and byproducts of technology. His bodily apertures were connected, according to Artaud, by *canalisations nerveuses* (1 supp.: 111) to vaster battle zones of erotic impulse and discharge, to the masturbation rituals of Tibetan monks, for example, indeed to every expulsion or excretion of matter such that, in order to save his "soul" from the drain and pull of this worldwide conspiracy to deposit all loss within him, he would send, for example to Tibet, an as always invisible commando unit to wipe out the offending orifice.

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MODERN HIEROGLYPHICS

For Artaud, the point of departure of the whole magical and philosophical system of ancient Egypt, on which he bases his conception of a new, hieroglyphic theater of cruelty, was that niche in which the pharaoh's corpse rested, just as the very condition for this entire system was the corpse itself (4:127). In his "Correspondence de la momie," one of the number of pieces he addressed to mummies, Artaud identifies with the corpse maintained through preservation: "Neither is my life complete nor is my death absolutely aborted" (1:241). The global circulatory system of waste products to which Artaud succumbed was for him a vast hieroglyphic system in which he was the cornerstone corpse whose antechamber was the asylum:

Those who are alive are living off the dead.
So death must live
and there is nothing like a lunatic asylum for hatching death gently
and keeping corpses in an incubator.

(12:57)

Pg. 133-135

Taking the plague as inspiration and model for the new—hieroglyphic—theater of cruelty he would establish, Artaud first recast the plague as a psychic entity which, through a sort of telepathic communication, announced itself in dreams (4:20). As evidenced by Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, the plague was, according to Artaud, the physical incarnation of unspecified powers at large which, like incest, have the appearance of destiny (4:90). What Artaud finds most striking about the plague is that those internal organs whose function is regulated involuntarily manifest no lesions, even though they are clearly the site of the worst disorders during the course of the affliction. While these yet intact organs appear to have been mummified, engorged with a black substance which has brought about petrification, those two organs most

subject to voluntary intervention, the brain and the lungs, have escaped mummification and yet, covered with lesions, are the most severely injured organs (4:25-26). While preserving the entrails as its memorial, the plague annihilates the organs that separated man from the anus of the other: the lungs withdrew man from the sea, whereupon the development of the brain came to stand in direct relation to the move to upright posture.

The communication of the plague, a communication which traverses the seas and is forecast in dream visions, emanates from corpses. The source of the plague lies in Egypt where, Artaud maintains, it rises from the cemeteries when the Nile recedes (4:22). The new theater of cruelty, which would take as its model the Egyptian plague, reflects the ancient Egyptian doctrine of Kah, the belief that a shadow soul or breath accompanies the deceased into the afterlife. The actor in this new theater “has to see the human being as a Double, like the Kah of the Egyptian mummies, like a perpetual specter from which the affective powers radiate” (4:156). The new theater must, like the plague, grow, through mummification, new organs no longer genitally organized around the upright body: “We must insist upon the idea of culture-in-action, of culture growing within us like a new organ, a sort of second breath” (4:12). Among organless bodies language remains restricted to “something of the importance it has in dreams” (4:112) where it exercises a certain “magnetic fascination” (2:30). The largely gestural language of the theater of cruelty would project “animated hieroglyphics” (4:65), as when actors use their bodies as screens (4:160) or when, as is the case in Balinese theater, ghosts and phantoms enter onto the stage, effecting an “exorcism to make our demons FLOW,” which results in turn in an “intense liberation of signs, restrained at first and then suddenly thrown into the air” (4:73-74).

Artaud hoped to bring back into the theater a cruel, that is, as Derrida has clarified, a necessary and determined application of the “elementary magic idea, taken up by modern psychoanalysis” (4:96), the idea of the hieroglyphic arrangement of dreams. With these dream hieroglyphs, which comprise a “language of space”—a “language of sounds, cries, lights, onomatopoeia”—Artaud imagined he would control thought, and even be able to link up his theater hieroglyphically to all organs (4:107). While admitting to having been inspired by psychoanalysis, Artaud describes the concrete language he would release on stage as a language of gestures, arbitrary attitudes, pounding sounds which would in turn be doubled by reflections “of the gestures and attitudes consisting of the mass of all the impulsive gestures, all the abortive attitudes, all the lapses of mind and tongue, by which are revealed what might be called the impotence of speech” (4:113). To dislodge the stage from the dictation-dictatorship of phonic linearity, the theater of cruelty for the psychoanalysts are of the greatest significance, including the lapses, the stutter, and, as Ferenczi discovered, even the rumbling of the stomach and other bodily sounds. In his new theater, Artaud elucidates, “words will be construed in an incantational...magical sense—for their shape and their sensuous emanations, not only for their meaning,” just as the theater space itself “will be used not only in its dimensions and volume but, so to speak, *in its undersides*” (4:149).

THE TWO ORIFICES OF FILM

The theater of cruelty and psychoanalysis are the two twentieth-century programs put forth for the analysis of hieroglyphic projections as found in dreams, much as in that analogue to or mechanism of dreaming, the cinema, which, though ultimately rejected by both Artaud and Freud, had offered these cryptographers a seductive shortcut to realization and circulation of their aims.

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Unable to disengage cinema from the linearity of its printing press pedigree, Artaud turned to yet another media outlet—the radio—when it came time to turn on his new theater of cruelty. According to McLuhan, radio represents the first step away from the entire direction and meaning of literate culture, of which film had been the last projection, in that the radio reinstated those gestural qualities which the printed page effaces. Radio first irrupted in the midst of literate society as a kind of tribal drum. According to McLuhan, the drummer summoned by radio’s broadcast out of the primal past was, in the case of Germany, Hitler: “The subliminal depths of radio are charged with the resonating echoes of tribal horns and antique drums. This is inherent in the very nature of this medium, with its power to turn the psyche and society into a single echo chamber.”

Artaud’s conception of the way in which poetry is to be read always called forth the sputtering of radio broadcasts: “. . .it is only outside the printed or written page that an authentic line of poetry can take on meaning and there it requires the space of the breath between the flight of all the words” (11:187). To reanimate the words of the poet, the syllables of his lines would, Artaud emphasizes, have to be “*expectorated*—For, it is in this way that their hieroglyphs become clear” (11:187). Though “the printed page puts them to sleep,” “pronounced between lips of blood,” Artaud again intones, “their hieroglyphs awaken” (11:198). Indeed, Artaud’s own late poetry is inscribed within a syllabic sign system he identifies as hieroglyphic. Artaud pushed this dissolution through novel syllabification of words or names to the point of introducing a language of sheer stammer, a language of invented words, which, though he thought it would be intelligible to all, was actually recognizable only as the product of glossolalia. In his “Revolt against Poetry,” Artaud declared that he would separate this language of his own creation from the words belonging to “some astral libido, quite conscious of the formations of desire” inside him (9:144).

Of those poems Artaud wrote and recorded for a radio broadcast which was, however, never aired, “The Search for Fecality” presents the necrospective of that career or corpus which came to an end a few weeks after the aborted broadcast:

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

The fact is that in order not to make caca
he would have had to consent
not to be,
but he could resolve to lose being,
in other words to die alive.

There is in being

something particularly tempting for man
and that something is precisely

CACA

(roarings here)

.
Two roads were open to him:
that of the infinite outside,
that of the infinitesimal inside.
And he chose the infinitesimal inside.
Where it is only a question of squeezing
the rat,
the tongue,
the anus
or the glans.
(13:83,85)

LOCATING THE CRYPT

Shortly after the death of his three-day-old brother Robert, Artaud was afflicted with what was diagnosed as meningitis, a diagnosis, however, left open to question. Artaud retained this inflammation of the brain in the form of symptoms that kept him henceforth a heavily sedated patient. His first symptoms, headaches and vomiting, coincided with the death of Robert, the first of six infant mortalities conceived after Artaud, one of three children to survive the Papa-Mama copulating machine which came, in turn to be subsumed by warfare.

The only one of the dead siblings to survive long enough to establish her place in the family, such that her death at seven months left a place unoccupied, was Germaine. Artaud dates his first speculations on origins—specifically the issue of his own existence—to his age at the time of her departure. Germaine serves, then as the name for all the infant mortalities whose unmourned remains received secret burial when their mother deposited them in Artaud. Such a secret transmission has far graver consequences than the scenario acted out, for example, by Rilke and his mother in which Rilke had to play the role, for a limited period of time, of his deceased sister and be a little girl for his mother. To be a little girl or boy, a little anything for mother to her delight is the fantasy of a perfect childhood.

With Robert's death Artaud's mother first entrusted Artaud, and not her daughter Marie-Ange, with the task of keeping to himself the unmarked graves of her dead children. One consequence of her secret action destined Marie-Ange to be one of those uncomprehending sisters later found tampering with her brother's legacy. At the time of Robert's death, Artaud was given a new name by his mother, Nanaqui or Naki, allegedly to keep his name apart from that of his father, Antoine Roi. She changed her son from name bearer also by giving him her own mother's name, Neneka, and thus investing him with the powers of life and death she relinquished.

The attacks of stuttering which would afflict Artaud throughout his life first invaded Artaud's vocal apparatus as the baby talk Robert, as a two-year-old, would have been babbling. Artaud's overriding interest in incest, which, from age nineteen on, ruled his every effort as a writer, actor, and philosopher, commemorates the continuing existence of Germaine's seven-month-old-corpse. Not until Artaud turned nineteen was Germaine old enough to serve as object

of incestuous fantasies. As though his own identity were at stake, Artaud begged Gance to assist him in obtaining the role of Roderick Usher in the film version of *The Fall of the House of the Usher*. At the end of Poe's tale, Roderick witnesses his dead sister, who had been his incestuous partner in life, break out of the crypt.

In his 1946 "Preamble" composed for the edition of his collected works, Artaud pledged that out of the "black pocket" (*poche noire*) would emerge those he called his daughters, including Germaine, his maternal and paternal grandmothers, as well as, in this case, a certain Yvonne Allendy, who, according to Artaud, was found to have drowned under mysterious circumstances. At the time Artaud writes this preamble all his daughters were deceased, though they had subsequently been preserved by Artaud, who confined them to the black pouch along with his magic dagger and cane, which he had also lost yet retained.

Of these daughters the first had always been Germaine, who had been observing him from her grave in Marseille, though in 1931, Artaud reports in the "Preamble," she suddenly began to watch him in close-up. Germaine served as the name bearer for Artaud's heritage, which, like that of an ancient Egyptian royal house, was thoroughly incestuous. Germaine was, accordingly, the sole or original occupant of the crypt; her usual companions within this pouch—and at the time he wrote the "Preamble" Artaud was obsessively compiling lists of the pouch's contents—her paternal and maternal grandmothers, must be viewed as close-range reincarnations of Germaine. Since their two grandmothers were in fact sisters, and their mother and father first cousins, they and their siblings were all literally german cousins (*cousins germains*)—where german (*germain*) means, etymologically, "of the same parents" and is related to germ (*germe*), which bears a root meaning of "fetus." Thus Artaud's obsessive themes—incest, the German destiny, and the organless body—are among Germaine's effects. Artaud sounds out, in cosmogenic scale, the secret location of the black pocket by turning to and tuning in the ancient Mexican deities who, "like holes of shadows" "where life grows," controlled human consciousness from its four corners—sound, gesture, the word, and the life-engendering breath (8:204). Artaud's rethinking of what he names with the child's stutter *caca* is accordingly broadcast through the growling holes found at both ends of divinization and doubling. This the Kah—or Kah Kah—which accompanies the deceased down the corridors of the underworld remains at once excremental double and "second breath." Indeed, as Artaud makes explicit: "*caca* is the matter of the soul" (9:192), while, to express what he means by the soul itself, Artaud makes use of the verb "*rémaner*," which he defines as follows: "to remain in order to re-emanate, to emanate while keeping all of its remainder, to be the remainder which will reascend" (11:194). The dark growling holes of the Mexican cosmogony, like the black pocket itself, would, then, appear superimposable onto what Artaud calls, in "The Search for Fecality," the "anal pocket," which, for Artaud, is further superimposable onto stuttering "lips of blood."

In discussing Lewis Carroll's constipated nondelivery of stillbirth of fecality in "Jabberwocky," which Artaud was deciphering at the time as part of his translation of the Humpty Dumpty chapter of *Through the Looking Glass*, Artaud speaks of the anus as site of terror. The anus is a site of loss, certainly, the site/sight of the body dropping away from itself, but also of production and reproduction and even articulation along what Artaud called the "anal larynx of putrefaction" (11:200). Addressing "the corpse of Madame Death, madame uterine fecal, madame anus," Artaud writes: "The breath of the dead bones has a center and this center is the abyss Kah-Kah, Kah the corporeal breath of shit, which is the opium of eternal afterlife" (9:191, 192). Even Coleridge's treatment against poetry consists, according to Artaud, in misreading of the anus: "Coleridge is not one of the poètes maudits, reprobates capable of oozing

through at a given moment, of ejecting this little black mucus, this waxy fart of frightful pain at the end of a tourniquet of blood, released at the ultimate extreme of their horror by Baudelaire or his real ghost, by Edgar Allan Poe, Gérard de Nerval, Villon, perhaps. If the anus is a locus of horror it yet commends itself for the theater of cruelty, which would have been realized at last, Artaud was convinced, in that held-back radio blast of fecality.

As amplified by Artaud's translation, "Jabberwocky" already approximates the stuttering, farting incantation which would characterize Artaud's final poetry, just as it characterized the way he read poetry so as to make the hieroglyphs audible once again. In "Jabberwocky," the spurting articulation or "hieroglyph of a breath" emanating from two interchangeable orifices always announces Humpty Dumpty, at once sheer head and egg or fetus (*germe*). Though according to the nursery rhyme he cannot be put back together again, Humpty Dumpty discusses with Alice only the guarantees that he will be reconstituted. The dissolution of Humpty Dumpty's organless body is in fact never confirmed.

Already in Artaud's first film, *The Sea Shell and the Clergyman*, we witness the strangling of an invisible woman—Germaine, Artaud claimed in his preamble, was strangled—followed by her decapitation; this severed head is placed into a fish bowl where the water seems to preserve or pickle it while at the same time it surrounds but does not drown, as if cushioning, a suspended fetal head. For Artaud, who could not accept the idea of a natural death—when defining what he meant by cruelty, for example, he pointed out that every life was another's death (4:121)—those who died had either been drowned or strangled, while those who had been born, as he knew from the circumstances of his own birth, had in fact been invaded and kidnapped by a thieving god and placed inside the "shiny membrane" where, splashing about, they had endured, for nine months, masturbation by the membrane which "devours without teeth" (9:64-65). Immersed in water, deep inside the womb, one is drowned, strangled, devoured, though once the waters recede, the corpse, which the water has embalmed, releases hieroglyphic messages and emanations. From that Book of the Dead he had found inscribed within the membranous shell of the womb and of his own intestines. Artaud had drawn his knowledge that life consisted of an eternal recycling of corpses aimed at creation of the organless body. The ring of recurrence was the anus.

Hieroglyphic ventriloquism always dominated—to the point of surviving—Artaud's rapport with cinema. The identifying mark *germain* (German), yet another mute double of Germaine, resonates at this end of Artaud's screen memories. Artaud participated, in Berlin, in French language versions of German films, performing, for example, in the French double of Pabst's *Three Penny Opera*. This practice of producing a film in two versions in different languages was eventually superseded by the American innovation of dubbing, a procedure Artaud addressed in his brief essay "Les souffrances du 'dubbing.'" Though Artaud expresses concern for the actors displaced by dubbing—dubbing replaces the souls of genuine actors with artificial personalities—he makes clear that dubbing is not an isolated or new event in talking cinema, which had always reached completion through the delayed synchronization of sound and picture.

Doubling and dubbing, being in doubles and speaking another's voice, characterized Artaud's efforts for "germanic" cinema in Berlin, where even the shop-window dummies behind their glittering membranes held a certain erotic fascination for Artaud. And Germaine teleguided Artaud from her own traveling observation post not only to Berlin, that site of dubbing and doubling, but also through the cane of St. Patrick, to Dublin. This cane, like its partner, the Toledo sword, which had earlier been bestowed on him by a black sorcerer, was received by

Artaud as magical instrument, the significance of which he sought by consulting Tarot cards. This turn to Tarot inaugurated Artaud's career as prophet and bringer of salvation through destruction—it was the Tarot card of the Tortured Man which had given Artaud his instructions—just as this reading of the ancient Egyptian cards or pages of the book of Thoth marked the beginning of the destabilization of his name. From this point onward he would declare only anonymous publication to be suited for his works, since soon he would either die or be in a situation where he would no longer need his name.

For a period of about one year he would adopt his mother's maiden name Nalpas, declaring "Artaud" to have perished. Indeed, the destruction of "Artaud" turned out to be the catastrophe which, scheduled for 1937, was prophesied with the aid of Tarot, itself an anagram, phonetically seen, of Artaud. This catastrophe, which commenced in Dublin, was fulfilled when, upon his return to France, Artaud was interred in an asylum. Artaud fulfilled his prophecy of destruction with his own name, and at the same time identified that part of himself which did not sign with the patronymic with a certain "German" destiny, as when he dedicated his own copy of his book of Tarot prophecies of doom, *The New Revelation of Being*, to Adolf Hitler.

THE FINAL DESTINATION

That Artaud destined his haunted writing in this way touches on a secret that needs to be deciphered. Hitler was the unspeakable final destination of so many phantom transmissions. Hitler was conceived in the wake of a triple loss: all three of his mother's young children, who had been born in close succession, died within a few weeks of the third child's birth. Having commenced conceiving her brood with her employer, whom she called her uncle though he was her legal cousin, while his wife lay dying in bed, Hitler's mother Klara received this triple loss as testimony to the guilt of her near-incestuous, if not murderous, relation. The birth of Hitler, by contrast, seemed a counter to this testimony. To secure this testimony she gave Hitler her breast and retained one of his testicles, thus establishing that they would in effect share one body and one crypt (cryptorchism).

Klara remained infertile for the four years she kept Hitler feeding at her breast. At once still nursing the offspring she had lost, Klara in effect protected Hitler from the sort of contagion that had deprived her of her first three children by killing off the three children who might have been born in the interim. Following Hitler's departure Klara's breast was accordingly removed; it was surgically removed by a certain Dr. Bloch, though too late to arrest the cancer that afflicted it. Hitler returned to the scene of his departure to press Dr. Bloch to apply painful, costly, yet pointless iodoform treatments to the open wound, treatments so toxic that Klara died in seven weeks time. Dr. Bloch, who was Jewish, was so revered by Hitler that even as late as 1940 Bloch's emigration to the United States was not part of the problem. Only his preservation could protect against the threat his continued existence provoked: the treatments which saved Hitler's mother from cancerous contagion only by killing her were so costly that Bloch remained the recipient of all *Schuld*. Here we find the master plan that Hitler would carry out within an ever-expanding Germany.

Once Germany comes to carry his mother's unmourned corpse, Hitler again urges the expedient excision of the now Jewish cancer which threatens her well-being, no matter what such radical intervention and extended treatments might cost. And this systematic cure through poisoning once again achieved the murder of the mother, while again billing the Jews. In the final recess of his bunker or crypt, Hitler, cornered, railed against the Germans whom he

condemned to death, and thereby, perhaps, began to undertake the work of mourning, though indeed he was too late.

BREAKING INTO THE CRYPT

In the wake of the destruction of his patronymic, Artaud commences profusely stammering messages about and from the crypt, messages which conceal or mislead at the same time that they indicate that there is inside “Artaud” a recess to be exhumed. The remains of the patronymic were inscribed within that syllabic sign system, that hieroglyphic expectoration of sounds which culminated in the radio broadcast. But this concealment and dispersal of the name could not repair the already existing cracks in the crypt. Alongside the stammering of the name, itself a desperate attempt to create a diversion, the crypt continues to crack open.

As early as in Artaud’s play “The Spurt of Blood,” the crypt shows fissures, knicks in Germaine’s protective pocket which, however, permit Artaud to spurt out sounds, as Artaud always did when reading aloud his poetry. The crack permits the hieroglyphic reading, just as it makes the word spurt and stutter. “The Spurt of Blood” was, then, the first stutter of what Artaud called an inner language, a language he equated with hieroglyphics. Having conceived of the hieroglyphic origin of language out of writing as having been first rehearsed as engraving on flesh, whether tattoo or acupuncture, the stammerer Artaud turned to the hieroglyphics of his intestines to read his entrails, just as he picked up and transmitted a literal ventriloquism. “The Spurt of Blood” is the first opening of the protective surround, of the black pocket. And yet what is eaten away by the cancer that kills Artaud is the inner writing, the writing on the outer crypt walls, eaten away towards the anal pocket, thus marking the beginning of a decrypting that never made it, the opening of the vault that allows mourning to begin, though too late.

To the corpse of Yvonne, Artaud ascribed the mysterious symptoms of drowning, though, according to Artaud, at the time of her death she was nowhere near the water; before Yvonne could be included within his crypt she first had to be embalmed through drowning. And Yvonne’s corpse was offered no other refuge; upon her death she had been replaced as Mrs. Allendy by her sister Colette, who even sought to replace Yvonne as Artaud’s close friend. By introducing the embalmed Yvonne into his black pocket, he for the first time consummated a relation with the other woman, one of many other women who competed with Germaine, who, before Yvonne, alone had penetrated Artaud. Yvonne is, then, the illegitimate intruder; Artaud’s endless list-taking of the daughters within this black pocket no doubt attests to his sense that something was not quite right. And indeed the incorporation of Yvonne is followed by the introduction into the membranous pocket of the sharp sword and cane.

Did the rats Artaud claimed were devouring his anus—the cancer and its attendant pains were approaching from a different direction—in fact come to the rescue of the pocket? Artaud himself was something of a rat, having been kept underground for over eight years, just as there is an homage to the rat within the remains of his name. And to read this hieroglyph, one might consult the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* where we find that it is Ra who is entreated by the soul of the deceased to give it a place in the “bark of millions of years.” Certainly rats are always found scurrying about whenever tombs are opened, the tombs of mummies or of vampires, and in the case of Dracula rats come to the count’s rescue. But well-meaning friends guarded against Artaud’s corpse for three days to keep the rats from penetrating, and Germaine had to perish with her brother.