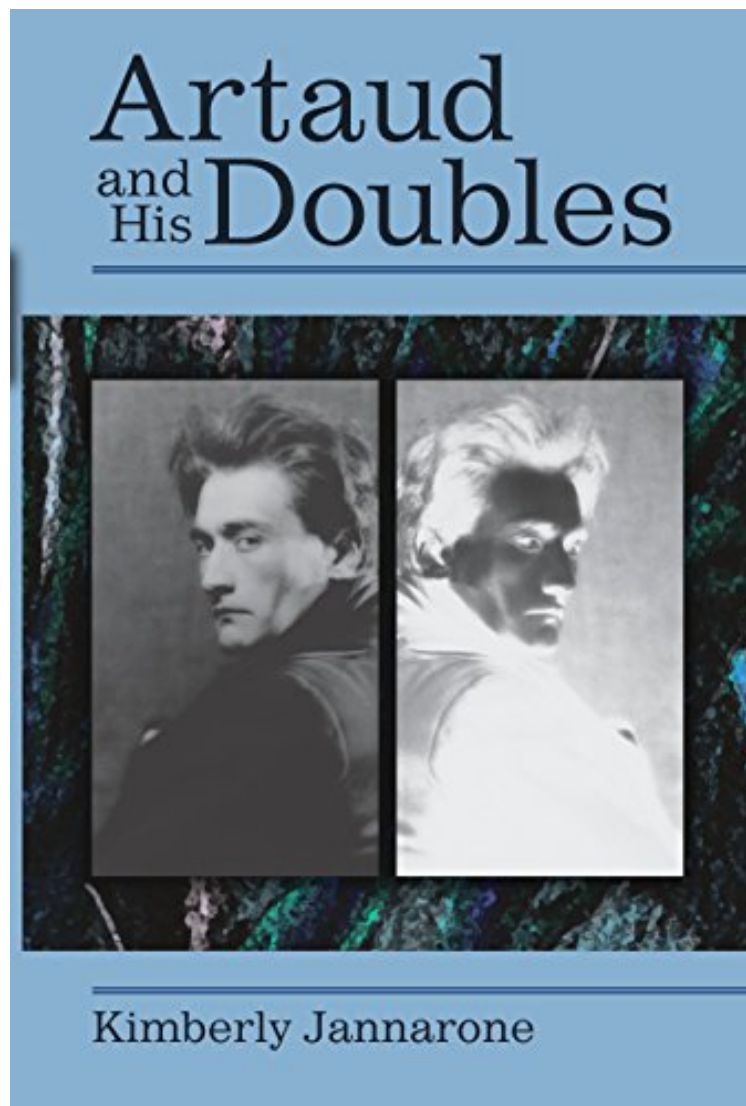


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Artaud and His Doubles (Theater: Theory/Text/Performance)

Kimberly Jannarone

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Kimberly Jannarone : Artaud and His Doubles (Theater: Theory/Text/Performance) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Artaud and His Doubles (Theater: Theory/Text/Performance):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book is long overdue. Based on highly selective ...By TacitusThis book is long overdue. Based on highly selective readings (or non-readings) that perpetuate the myth of art's humanitarian mission, generations of the theater practitioners and scholars have hailed Artaud as a friend of the grossly oppressed and neurotically alienated. That, Jannarone shows, is the 1960s talking. She corrects this myopic perspective by putting Artaud back into historical context, demonstrating that he has far more affinities with

totalitarian thinking that flourished in the early twentieth century. This confirms Artaud's importance, needless to say. A welcome antidote to the cult of genius one normally encounters — and, more generally, a well-written work of intellectual history.

0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. a terribly charismatic persona

By G. Wilczynski

Antonin Artaud: a terribly charismatic persona, whose real career started late, after his long journey through many avant-garde revolutions, continents and mental states, culminating in his long years suffering at hands of cruelly baffled doctors and equally mystified literary supporters. It is ironic that, in the state of physical starvation, at the climax of German dominion over Europe he should attempt to draw attention of A Young Jacques Lacan, no less, sentenced him to silence: "il n'écrit plus une ligne" (he won't write a single line anymore). Several years after his verdict Artaud's constantly flowing writings were to gain some credit (with a literary honour of Prix Sainte-Beuve in 1947, shortly after his release from asylum). The prize, awarded awkwardly in 'essay' category, rewarded his hallucinatory poem, mythology of Van Gogh as victim of collective voyeurism and consumerist perverting modern society. It was exactly the same crowds, running amok to die for nazi dystopian new order, who earlier "committed suicide" on Van Gogh with his own hands. He was to become the last one among ever recurring heroes in Artaudian pantheon: after Heliogabalus, an anarchist on the throne of Roman Empire in decadence, Lewis' Monk (from a famously dark gothic fantasy). His close contacts with German cinema makers in the most expressionist times, his passion for ecstatically physical and extreme acting, aiming at shock and terror among audience, his apocalyptic views on dying Western World, with all hopes and highest admiration for dancers from Bali, Tarahumara tricksters and shamanic initiation - all seems to make him a perfect example of 'verartete Kunst', abhorred and often burnt by the Nazis. If we are to consider the premise of this book, namely that all Artaud stands for, his prophecy, foreseeing in 1933 that Western civilisation is doomed and may bring an end to the human culture as it was known then - with all the rage of impossibility to wake the masses from orwellian nightmare, and cruelty as a means of rebellion against the bourgeois establishment - that all that might be assimilable to nazi racist Arian supremacy, killing Jews, homosexuals and other less blessed ethnical fringes, we would have to acknowledge an equally sound opinion: that 3rd reich's leaders were dealing in performance arts, and the Fuhrer was, above all, a mystic Antichrist, seeking revenge on the European culture, including the industrial revolution and liberal capitalism. He may finally have had identified himself with the Green Knight, beheaded and blindly leading his people to hell, but it was rather an excess of populist rhetoric, self-aggrandizing and sign of confusion of his penultimate day, not inspiration.

Artaud had an incandescent, flame-breathing appeal which seduced Susan Sontag, Gilles Deleuze, famous creator of laboratorium theatre Grotowski, Peter Brook and many others. Is it credible to posit, as our author, professor Kimberly seems to be doing, that no one had noticed before her this terrible political leaning of our tortured poet?

5 of 9 people found the following review helpful. The voice of reason

By Fred Lewis

Because of his fiery language and tormented life, scholars and theater people have long mistaken the wacky (and certifiably insane) Artaud for some kind of visionary. Well, he's not Jesus. In fact, as Jannarone shows in the first historicizing book on this seminal figure that I know of, he's a child of his times - which includes people like Mussolini and Hitler. Charismatic and talented, to be sure, but maybe wholly wrong about everything. With wit and charm, Jannarone takes on and overturns most of the received notions of Artaud scholarship, from French poststructuralists to Living-Theatre types in the U.S. A game-changer written in an accessible way with a minimum of the jargon that plagues so much academic writing.

Artaud and His Doubles is a radical re-thinking of one of the most influential theater figures of the twentieth century. Placing Artaud's writing within the specific context of European political, theatrical, and intellectual history, the book reveals Artaud's affinities with a disturbing array of anti-intellectual and reactionary writers and artists whose ranks swelled catastrophically between the wars in Western Europe. Kimberly Jannarone shows that Artaud's work reveals two sets of doubles: one, a body of peculiarly persistent received interpretations from the American experimental theater and French post-structuralist readings of the 1960s; and, two, a darker set of doubles---those of Artaud's contemporaries who, in the tumultuous, alienated, and pessimistic atmosphere enveloping much of Europe after World War I, denounced the degradation of civilization, yearned for cosmic purification, and called for an ecstatic loss of the self. *Artaud and His Doubles* will generate provocative new discussions about Artaud and fundamentally challenge the way we look at his work and ideas.

"Jannarone has written a remarkable book about Artaud and the Theatre of Cruelty.. This fascinating study should shake the foundations of Artaudian scholarship."

— S. W. Cole, Bridgewater College, CHOICE - Highly Recommended