

<https://doi.org/10.23913/ricsh.v9i17.187>

*Artículos Científicos*

## Antonin Artaud y el derecho a ser

*Antonin Artaud and the right to be*

*Antonin Artaud e o direito de ser*

**Eduardo De la Fuente Rocha**

Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Xochimilco, México

[fuentee@correo.xoc.uam.mx](mailto:fuentee@correo.xoc.uam.mx)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9803-4193>

### Resumen

En este artículo se describen los hechos fundamentales, el comportamiento y la obra del poeta, dramaturgo y escritor Antonin Artaud, lo que sirve para presentar una aproximación al entendimiento de la estructura psíquica del autor. Artaud fue parte del movimiento surrealista francés. Nació el 4 de septiembre de 1896 en Marsella (Francia) y murió el 4 de marzo de 1948 en París. Este autor dio sentido a sus imágenes internas crueles y amenazantes mediante el arte. Representó su mundo psíquico interno a través de su obra, mostrando la angustia del sujeto que se ha quedado en la representación “cosa”, que no ha podido adquirir un sentido de vida a través de lo que percibe del exterior, sino que interpreta al mundo mediante sensaciones y percepciones originales de la “cosa”, carente de afectividad, que a cada momento lo amenaza de muerte. Sus acciones y obras hacen patente su amor hacia todo ser humano que vive una patología en oposición a las instituciones. Con su vida y obra, Antonin Artaud lleva al espectador a tocar la crueldad de no poder ser. De hecho, en su legado propone el reconocimiento y el respeto a las formas de ser de cada quien, permitiendo la libertad de su expresión, experimentación y realización auténtica sustentada en el amor y en el compromiso con la realidad.

**Palabras clave:** crueldad, depresión, patología.



## Abstract

In this article the fundamental facts, the behavior and the work of the poet, playwright and writer Antonin Artaud and from them sustain an approach to the understanding of the psychic structure of the author. Artaud, was part of the French surrealist movement, He was born September, 4<sup>th</sup>, 1896 in Marseille, France and died March 4<sup>th</sup> 1948 in Paris. He gave meaning to his cruel and threatening inner images through art. He represented his inner psychic world through his work portraying the anguish of the subject who has remained in the “thing” representation and who has not been able to acquire a sense of life through what he perceives from the outside but interprets the world through original sensations and perceptions of “the thing” lacking in affectivity, which at every moment threatens him with death. His actions and work, make clear his friendship and love towards every human being, who lives a pathology in opposition to the institutions. Antonin Artaud with his life and work takes the viewer to touch the cruelty not being able to be, proposing in his legacy the recognition and respect for each other's ways of being, allowing freedom of expression, experimentation and authentic realization, sustained in love and in commitment to reality.

**Keywords:** cruelty, depression, pathology.

## Resumo

Este artigo descreve os fatos fundamentais, o comportamento e o trabalho do poeta, dramaturgo e escritor Antonin Artaud, que serve para apresentar uma abordagem ao entendimento da estrutura psíquica do autor. Artaud fazia parte do movimento surrealista francês. Ele nasceu em 4 de setembro de 1896 em Marselha (França) e morreu em 4 de março de 1948 em Paris. Este autor fez sentido de suas imagens internas cruéis e ameaçadoras através da arte. Ele representou seu mundo psíquico interno através de seu trabalho, mostrando a angústia do sujeito que permaneceu na representação "coisa", que não foi capaz de adquirir um sentido de vida através do que ele percebe de fora, mas interpreta o mundo através de sensações e percepções originais da "coisa", desprovida de afetividade, que a todo momento ameaça a morte. Suas ações e obras deixam claro seu amor por todo ser humano que vive uma patologia em oposição às instituições. Com sua vida e obra, Antonin Artaud leva o espectador a tocar na crueldade de ser incapaz de ser. De fato, em seu legado, ele



propõe reconhecimento e respeito ao modo de ser de cada pessoa, permitindo a liberdade de sua expressão, experimentação e realização autêntica, baseadas no amor e no compromisso com a realidade.

**Palavras-chave:** crueldade, depressão, patologia.

**Fecha Recepción:** Abril 2019

**Fecha Aceptación:** Diciembre 2019

---

## Introduction

Art is a way of full expression of the nature of the human being that allows the individual to explore its potentialities and limitations, as well as the sublimation of socially unacceptable impulses and desires. Some examples of this type of expression can be found in Edvard Munch and the management of anxiety, in Hans Christian Andersen and the desire to reduce the lack of social recognition or in Jonathan Swift and the expression of disagreement with social abuse. Each of these artists has had a psychological structure that has sustained their behavior, as has been the case of the artist Yayoi Kusama, whose obsessive features can be intuited in the points placed in his works or Vincent van Gogh, famous for his structure Psychotic reflected in the strokes of his paintings.

Taking as reference the previous examples, in this work we have tried to analyze the discursive struggle for the right to be embodied in the work of Antonin Artaud, who intermingles the discourse of life that allows each individual to seek their freedom with the discourse of society that tries to hide the cruel acts that it masks under the banner of progress, health justice and life.

## Method

A qualitative research design was used, specifically, narrative-biographical that was based on historical data that could be collected on the biography of Antonin Artaud. As we go through history, we seek to unravel psychological issues that were not clear to provide a microanalysis in the case of this artist. In the investigation, the contextualized study subject is understood, which is why the psychic conformation, the creative development of the author, his multiple internments and the development of his depression were analyzed having



as an axis of reflection his anxiety of annihilation established in a struggle for his right to live.

## Developing

Antoine Marie Joseph Artaud, better known as Antonin Artaud, he was a poet, playwright and writer who was part of the French surrealist movement. He was born on September 4, 1896 in Marseille (France), the result of the marriage between Antoine Roi Artaud and Euphrasei Marie Luise Nalpas (of Greek descent), a very significant figure in the playwright's childhood due to his attention. Antonin Artaud grew up in the middle of a wealthy middle class family dedicated to commerce. He attended his first school years in his hometown, although he was later taken to Paris to continue his studies (Derrida and Kristeva, 1975).

In 1901, Artaud suffered from meningitis allegedly caused by a neurosyphilis transmitted by one of his parents (Roudinesco, 1998), although this version was denied by the author himself in his letters since Rodez (1981), where he particularly spoke of the psychiatrist Edouard Toulouse, who believed him syphilitic, and referred to that disease as a mark of evil and decay (Roudinesco, 1998).

Although Artaud survived meningitis, he had to suffer several sequels throughout his life, such as neuralgia, stuttering, irritability and depressive episodes (Cuevas, 2006). Antonin was a student of the Sacred Heart school run by Marists (Bosch, 2007). In this place he learned religious dogmas and had an approach to poetry.

At age 9, his sister Germaine died of meningitis (Carrilho, 2015). Before the loss, Antonin hardened his taciturn character, since he was very attached to her. The closeness he experienced at this stage with illness and death influenced his character, generated confusion, fear and uncertainty.

According to what was reported by Carrilho (2015), Antonin was educated with care and recognition from his parents, mainly from his grandmother Neneka, who spoiled and pampered him. An example of this is described below:



Perhaps due to the tragedy and disease always hanging around the house of the Artaud, Antonin would have been a very dear child, perhaps too spoiled for his taste (...). Life next to his grandmother Neneka (...) would surely have tasted like honey and fig jam. The jams I prepared (Carrilho, 2015, p. 31).

Until that moment it seems that Artaud's life was surrounded by care; however, there are certain inconsistencies that are reflected in the serious illnesses contracted by some of the eight children of the Artaud-Nalpas marriage, of which only Antonin and two of his brothers survived: Marie-Ange (1899-1978) and Fernand (1907 -?). “The loss of these babies, spontaneous abortions, dead births and victims of sudden death would be such a tremendously painful break that they would surely have conditioned the parents' behavior” (Carrilho, 2015, p. 31).

At fourteen, Artaud composed his first poems, which were published under the pseudonym of Louis de Attides. A couple of years later, in 1912, he suffered a depressive transit that became nervous. In fact, his shyness reflects a *self*<sup>1</sup> or a perception of the weak self. In the midst of these adverse circumstances, he increased his beliefs and his faith in religion, which led him to seek comfort by studying in a Catholic seminary.

In this period, Artaud began to have delusions, temperament problems and constant physical discomforts (Derrida and Kristeva, 1975), hence he was held in the La Rougiere sanitarium. Despite this, his depressive state remained in his puberty and adolescence. Authors such as Painuly, Sharan and Mattoo (2005) point out that from the psychoanalytic reference point, permanent states of depression in a subject are interpreted as follows:

[They are the] result of the return of direct aggression into the original object on the incorporated object loved or hated while there was a denial, suppression or repression of hostile feelings towards other important ones (Freud, 1917; Abraham 1927). Some studies have shown a relationship between inward-facing hostility and depression (Kennedy 1970; Schless et al. 1974; Biaggio

---

<sup>1</sup> Taken from the Gestalt theory of Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951), it can be said that the self is the so-called self of other theories, although it is worth noting that for the Gestalt the self is not a fixed entity, but a set of functions.



and Godwin 1987). Sainth and Taylor (1985) 37% of hospitalized depressed patients had moderate or severe outwardly irritable (p. 14).

Artaud caused physical injuries and was constantly depressed, it follows that this due to the anger he felt for the world, the constant deaths of his family and his psyche did not work well. At age 18, he got rid of his manuscripts, was increasingly withdrawn, thoughtful, sorry and sad. However, he continued his Catholic devotion and made the decision to become a priest to give his life to the faith (Grossman, 2006). In this way, he focused on serving while being loved and protected by God, who was seen by the author as a protective and magnanimous father.

Even so, in 1915 Artaud's psychological problems persisted, so his parents took him to Montpellier for a consultation with Dr. Joseph Grasset, known for treating nervous diseases. He diagnosed him as acute neurasthenic and advised him to go to the Rougrière Sanatorium, a nursing home in Marseille where stressors that afflicted him would decrease (Shafer, 2016).

In 1916, during World War I, Artaud enlisted in the army and was in this institution for nine months. However, he had sleepwalking episodes and constantly showed signs of his psychic weakness, which is why his early discharge was advised. Sleepwalking, as well as other unspecified parasomnias, represented the continuation of their daily childhood problems, variables that sharpen in patients their psychopathological, stress and distress states (Gutiérrez, Torres and Pérez, 2013). Therefore, it can be inferred that Artaud was in a situation of constant disturbance and anguish that led him to be admitted to different hospitals in France (Saint-Dizier, Lafoux-les-Bains and Divonne-les-Bains) and Switzerland (Neufchâtel).

In 1918 he experienced some improvements that allowed him to leave those places of treatment. However, the decline of his psychological state was manifested again years later, during his midlife, when he returned to present delusions and psychotic states (on these he will return later).



In 1919, Artaud continued with pain, which is why laudanum was prescribed, highly addictive tincture of opium. This substance was the starting drug that preceded its life-long dependence on drugs, increased its psychic fragility and was one of the causes for re-entering it in psychiatric institutions that, in this case, served as a surrogate and protective mother.

In 1920, Artaud's parents continued to take care of him. In fact, when he was approximately 24 years old he was taken to Paris to seek psychiatric support. In this year, the playwright met the psychiatrist Edouard Toulouse, founder of the scientific-literary magazine *Demain*, who believed that psychiatric patients could be treated with medications and through occupations or interests that allowed them to leave that critical state (Roudinesco, 1998). Soon, once Artaud was stabilized, the doctor introduced the poet in activities focused on literary creation. In this way Antonin began to develop intense intellectual activity, and later he ended up contributing a couple of articles for the magazine chaired by Toulouse. In continuing with his progress, Artaud was appointed as the editorial secretary of the publication.

It is interesting to note that it was a male doctor who stabilized him from the psychotic outbreak, gave him containment and support and made him recognize himself as a valuable being; we can see that the manly figure of the doctor is doing the mother function, I take care of him, he helped him heal. The treatment continued with the support of Mrs. Toulouse, who served as a surrogate father, introduced him to culture, to social norms (Roudinesco, 1998). She took him to museums and literary halls, and encouraged him to join art, creation and, above all, a different world from the one he inhabited. With this, his psyche temporarily had space for less distressing situations. The closeness with art invited him to life. In a nutshell, the doctor's wife — symbolically — served as a father who presented the culture and other aspects of life.

At the end of this therapeutic process, Artaud continued to see Dr. Toulouse until he turned thirty. Toulouse was later recognized as a representative holder in charge of some psychiatric patients who were not in detention, which made it clear that in some cases reinstatement was possible. After this period, the opioid treatment was withdrawn from Artaud, a drug that in this case made the replacement of the maternal breast consoling it through orality.



At that time Artaud was 24 years old and was in better health, so he began to look for job opportunities in the theater as an actor and stage designer; In addition, he wrote and served as a stage director. Each of these activities constituted a positive stimulus, which contrasted with the stimuli he received in the sanitariums he had known.

This year he set foot on the stage of the Théâtre de L'oeuvre. Each of the people with whom Artaud worked recognized that the young man had great stage skills and a great acting presence, which led him to interact with Charles Dullin, founder of the aforementioned theater. In that place Artaud met a woman who became her lover: the beautiful Romanian actress Génica Athanasiou (1897-1966). From this relationship emerged multiple letters in which Artaud manifested his need for love. However, there were also many discussions about the playwright's lifestyle, which begged Génica to accept him as he was, as he was not willing, as she asked, to stop drugs that allowed him to stabilize. The torment of this itinerant relationship lasted approximately five years. Below is part of a letter that Artaud (1973) wrote to Genica on October 22, 1923:

When someone is truly loved, they accept it whole, with their vices, their defects, their miseries, without getting tired. I will never consent to separate from you EVER (...). Every second is an eternity of hell, WITHOUT EXIT, without hope. It is strange that you do not regret my illness and that you persist, in spite of everything, in complaining about the means I use to alleviate that disease. As for the deductions you make about the consequences of that relief, I have long since given up discussing them (...). All your letter is crazy. I will not answer your questions. I do not accept that NOTHING, but nothing, absolutely nothing changes between us (...). I will kill myself immediately if you write to me once more in those terms. Think of the horrible anguish in which you just sank (Artaud, citado por Carrilho, 2015, p. 44).

The reproach "you do not love me as I am" in the letter is addressed to Génica, it shows the degree of manipulation that Artaud exerts since victimization, that is, he uses the anguish of death to influence others. In addition, it can be seen that anguish and despair had returned in Artaud. All this can be just a displacement of the feelings that Antonin could have had towards his mother, and that he projected them in Gene, who, like Dr. Toulouse,





represented maternal forms of protection, while the drug was listed as maternal food. This letter also shows that Artaud feared rejection and expressed a lack of desire to stop addictions.

On the other hand, as for his work for the theater, Artaud felt motivated, so that in 1923, once integrated into the intellectual and artistic circles of Paris, he constantly joined the theater company directed by Georges Pitoëff ( 1884-1939), who recognized in the young Antonin a great talent, ideal for his theater company oriented towards the avant-garde and innovation. In this place, Artaud became an essential protagonist, although it is worth noting that this creative assembly did not last long.

In 1923 Artaud continued to write and once he finished his first collection of works he sought to publish them, but was rejected by the Nouvelle Revue Francaise, which affected him considerably. In the theatrical work he was only offered roles that he judged as insignificant, so he looked for better opportunities in the cinema. He asked for help from his cousin Louis Nalpas, who was artistic director of the Société des Cinéromans, although he only achieved some minor roles.

In the midst of these circumstances, an Artaud is appreciated that did not have an important place in life, so that his self did not feel integrated or recognized, such lack of recognition or sense of belonging strengthened his anxiety of abandonment. As a child, he had experienced some lack of emotional support for not having taken place or enough recognition; now, in his adulthood, he did not have a comprehensive recognition: he perceived the world as an area that gave him little attention and every time he felt he was not appreciated he moved to another task. Thus he went from theater to cinema and to literary creation.

After this time of transitions, Artaud found a new circle in which he believed he could manifest his disdain for conventionalism: the movement of the surrealists, known as a group of subversive artists. In 1923, Artaud came into contact with Robert Desnos and André Breton. In this year, he gathered his first verses under the name Trictrac del ciel, whose publication was made the following year.



In 1924, Artaud became one of the most distinguished participants in the surrealist avant-garde group. The writer headed the Surrealist Research Center and participated in the magazine *The Surreal Revolution*. In surrealism he found a space to project the distaste he had towards life and society for not having estimated the place he believed he deserved. It is likely that the lack of recognition of parents masked in a history of overprotection was the psychic element that devised the perception of himself of not being fully accepted.

This period was helpful for Artaud's work. In 1926 he founded the Alfred Jarry theater, and the following year his performances began, including his first play: *Le ventre brûlé ou La mère folle* (*The Burned Belly or The Mad Mother*, 1927). In this they tested their ability to improvise, their creativity and the enormous desire to cause a strong and permanent impression on the public. Kimberly Jannarone - in her book *Artaud, and His Doubles* (2012) - describes the aforementioned work as follows:

Artaud staging *The Mad Mother* for the Alfred Jarry Theater, created another version of an apocalypse, in short, in theatrical terms. It was developed from the minimalist scenario created by Artaud, which barely included any type of writing (the sound designer said he didn't remember ever having a text in his hands). Memories collected from spectators and participants paint the image of a "brief hallucination, without any dialogue (or hardly any)", in which a king swung back and forth in a chair, pronouncing strange songs, until he was killed by a stream of violet light. More memorable, including the orchestrated use of light and sound. Benjamín Crémieux described the piece as "Condensation ... A synthesis of life and death..." (p. 149).

In this work, Artaud recreates his vision of the figure "mad mother" in a manner similar to the concept of mother described by Julia Kristeva, that is, not constituted, threatening and destructive to the infant. For Artaud it was not possible to return to the mother's womb looking for shelter, since this had been symbolically burned within the work. The figure of the father who can rescue him from the "crazy mother" is an unstable subject, since he sways and his song shows the lack of coherence. The process in the work advances

until the death of the character, after being possessed by a crazy mother and not having the support of a father.

From the perspective of André Green (2006), the child experiences the mother as dead, in Artaud's psyche the mother is a spectrum and her inert condition means that the child cannot transform the libidinal cathexis of a transitional object at first of life. The transitional object cannot be constructed, since the play and emotional zone shared by the child and mother is deformed by the affective disconnection that dominates the scene in early development; This causes the spectra to emerge as a form of emerging survival.

In his text, Kimberly Jannarone expresses Artaud's desire for control and organization of each of the elements that make up his work: the artists, the texts, the stage, the sounds, the incorporation of the public. All these factors generate the impact of a play that recreates itself and transforms itself into a universe of new minds in each function. In this way, Artaud creates a living work, like a rebirth that after the burned belly symbolizes a new life to be able to be reborn from his own work and thus be saved.

However, the stay in the surrealist group, led by Breton, was short. In 1927 Artaud publicly declared his disagreement with the political-ideological tendency assumed by the majority of surrealists. Not only did he turn away from those who followed the movement, but he wrote a document where he spoke roughly against those who, in his opinion, were staining the original ideology of that movement. The reaction was repudiation and was expelled by Breton and Philippe Soupault (1897-1990), French writer and politician.

It is inferred by Artaud's behavior that he tended to reject and be rejected, for the anger and aggression he expressed returned to him; In his psyche, what had apparently been a good enough childhood had actually been a cruel stage based on the rejection of the mother and the tragedies of life, since five of her seven brothers had died very small. In fact, their death laid the foundation for fear of rejection, which materialized when he was separated from the surrealist group that had previously sheltered him.

Amid these contradictions, Artaud emerges as a disruptive and oppositional agent to the established. At this time the first sightings of his theater of cruelty begin to be constituted,



which led him to suffer a series of failures. Between 1926 and 1930 he continued in the production of productions and participated in the cinema as an actor in the films *Napoleon* (1927), by Abel Gance, and *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), by Carl T. Dreyer. In 1931, Artaud published several essays, among which was a novel called *Le momo*.

Artaud did not agree with the authoritarian guidelines because he had suffered the effects of cruelty; however, his approach to that feeling, paradoxically, was a way of confronting him to overcome the pain it produced. In 1932, at 36, he wrote the *Cruelty Theater*, a manifesto that shows the need to transgress the established and break the stage. He defended first of all cruelty in existence as a manifestation of love of life. In 1935 he staged his masterpiece: *Los Cenci*, the last representative of the theatrical guidelines written for the *Cruelty Theater*. Faced with the disproportionate theatrical proposal, the public reaction was disapproving. The failure pushed the author to leave the theater definitively. Once again Artaud was rejected by society; trying to make people aware of this reality he believed was giving an opportunity to reshape life, so that the public transformed the rejection of the cruelty of life into a proposal of acceptance of life as it is.

In the cover-up of the cruelty of life, the responsibility of the institutions to act for the preservation of a purer and fuller life was diluted. Defending cruelty was to protect the life forms that represent a non-protective mother, since through her scenic creations she wanted to prove that life was cruel and that she had to be accepted, seeking to reconcile with her tragedy and finding her beauty.

Fed up with Western culture, in 1936 (at age forty) he decided to embark on America in search of a more real world, according to his way of understanding. He arrived in Mexico (Jarque, March 28, 2009), where on February 26, 27 and 29 he gave a series of lectures, specifically at the National Preparatory School (Flores, 2005). Later he went to Chihuahua to live for a while with the Tarahumara Indians. This experience generated the narration of a trip in which an original town was sought, “a pure town” (Jarque, March 28, 2009). Artaud was behind a magical experience, full of primitivism, free from the bonds of conservatism and the cultural impositions he suffered in Europe, where he had felt the rejection and the impossibility of freely raising his views. With his trip he tried to unmask the social hypocrisy



that tried to idealize everyday events that did not know the cruelty of life. Simply put, and due to his own experience, Artaud couldn't look at life that way.

In the middle of the mountains of the Sierra Tarahumara, he turned away from his past life and embarked on a path to himself. In this place were not the institutions, friends, parents and those who served as support. The mountains and its landscape presented a different kind of mother, one that offered a new opportunity for life. In this area he could feel light. This feeling of freedom allowed him to embark on his desired spiritual journey with the support of a guide. There he began to consume peyote and other drugs, a symbol of his psychic world that represents the nutritious chest of life.

From these experiences emanated a series of articles and notes that gave rise to his book Journey to the country of the Tarahumara. Artaud thought he found a path to connect with the essence of life on his trip to the Tarahumara mountain range. Therefore, in 1936 he returned to his homeland full of renewed experiences. A year later, he wanted to share his experience with other people, so he assimilated as a preacher and decided to travel to Ireland.

After some time in Dublin, his health was depleted. In addition, its economic situation was not good, so the permanence in this place became unsustainable. Artaud embarked back to France. On the high seas, he suffered an episode of madness that worsened, hence he was arrested and locked in a straitjacket. This fact led him to a new internment at the Le Havre asylum. From the moment Artaud descended from the ship, the intervention was made to board him; From that moment he was hospitalized in different institutions until he arrived in Rodez, where he spent a prolonged period. The inability to communicate his experiences to others frustrated him, so he disconnected psychologically. Artaud rejected reality and rejected it by taking him to confinement again.

The mental institutions seized him. The treatments were experiences that made him feel again the cruelty of life, which produced a vicious circle, because the more he felt mistreated in them, the more he increased his rejection of reality, fueling his psychotic state more and more.



In 1938, the collection of his essays on the theater, entitled *The Theater and its double*, began to succeed, although this was unknown by the author due to his loss of sanity and hospitalization. In Rodez's asylum he lived until 1946. There, Dr. Gastón Ferdiere took his case, who supported the use of “art therapy” (Granados, 2010); However, he was also in favor of the use of electroconvulsive therapy, which caused cerebral deterioration in the artist, since during his stay in some mental institutions he was subject to excessive use of said therapeutic technique (Medellín, 2016).

The stay of Artaud in these places increased his repudiation towards them, because on the one hand he channeled his psychosis in a positive way through art, and on the other he increased his aggressive tendencies when receiving the electric shocks. Years later, he opined about the place occupied by psychology and psychiatry in the treatment of those who have a different or opposite criteria to society. He said that these disciplines were not focused on restoring or supporting the originality and freedom of patients, but on distorting and alienating them. For the author, the psychological clinic was an organism that did not understand the nature of the creative soul. Artaud wrote the following:

Psychiatry has been born from the plebeian tuba of beings who have wanted to keep evil at the source of the disease, and who have thus removed from their own nothing a kind of Swiss guard to liquidate at its base the impulse of protest rebellion that is at the origin of all genius (Artaud, 1998a, p. 89).

Encouraged by Dr. Ferdiere, he began to draw and design drawings in small pocket notebooks. The doctor believed in the existence of a primary connection between writing and image. This “art therapy” allowed him to express his feeling and after its application seemed to improve, since it favored the representation of the thing in the psyche, that is, the therapy of writing contributed to the representation of the word, which improved the functioning Psychic in patients. From these methods, Artaud could begin to make sense of his cruel and threatening internal images. He represented in his plays of the theater of cruelty the anguish of the subject who has remained in the representation "thing" and who has not been able to acquire a sense of life through what he perceives abroad, but represents the world through of original sensations and perceptions of the "thing" devoid of affectivity.



In 1946, a group of friends from the Parisian intellectual circle pleaded with Dr. Gastón Ferdière to "release him". This solidarity is seen in the following fragment (Jarque, 28 de marzo de 2009):

Upon leaving Rodez hospital, a committee of friends of Artaud is formed, chaired by the writer and editor Jean Paulhan, with the artist Jean Dubuffet as secretary, and whose members include Picasso, Balthus and André Gide, to guarantee their subsistence. Some of the artists donate works for an auction also in their favor (párr. 7).

These friends formed a group that valued his work and understood the point he made about cruelty, these actions made an opposite aspect to that of the institutions, his friends showed him an authentic support based on friendship and love. These two attitudes exemplify the two facets that society can present as a mother: the cruel and the loving. His relatives considered that the Parisian bustle would be favorable for Artaud to recover and be able to return to reality. As expected, the artist soon returned to the gala capital.

In the spring of 1946 he was received in Ivry's walking asylum, which favored his autonomy. He went almost daily to the French capital and was closer to his friends. Psychologically, the improvement of Artaud was sustained in that he had the protection and shelter of his friends, which helped him to integrate his self giving him support and basic confidence in life, work that in childhood should have performed the person who made the mother's function. In this case, it can be observed that it was the social group that provided support to the subject, so it is argued that it can be therapeutic for the reduction of the problems posed by psychosis.

Colette Renée Giber - better known as Colette Thomas and wife of novelist Henry Thomas - was important to him in Ivry's time. This woman, who led multiple initiatives for the poet's liberation (Marenzi, 2009), was seen by Artaud as a fragile young woman similar to her deceased sister. Colette, 23, soon became one of her "daughters of the heart." It was one of the new theater actresses: a young promise. Despite its closeness, however, Colette was not the heiress of the writer due to her psychic instability; in the words of Marenzi (2009), the fate of Colette Thomas would be oblivion and madness, unstable to safeguard the legacy of Artaud. Marenzi describes it as follows:



Colette Thomas disappeared from the world (...). Who does not believe in his death, describes her as crazy, unable to remember the past, to remember Artaud. And yet, probably in 1995 he went to Marseille, to the Musée Cantini, for the inauguration of the exhibition dedicated to the works of Artaud. Among the faces that appear in his drawings, in two great portraits of 1947. [There is that of] Colette Gibert dies, under the name of her girl, in La Nartelle. The face we know is frozen in the photographs that portray it in the 30s and 40s, or in Artaud's drawings, the face, intact, as well as the name, of an eternal "girl" (p. 332).

Colette, due to her apparent madness, forgot her relationship with Artaud (Marenzi, 2009). It is thought that both the playwright's death and his divorce from Henry Thomas worsened his psychiatric condition, to the point of disappearing from the art scene.

The time between Rodez and Ivry was very creative for Artaud. In that period, the French gallery owner Pierre Loeb (1892-1964) proposed to write something about van Gogh, whose order came Van Gogh: the suicide of society (1947), where he criticizes society that constrains and urges the automatism.

Even when van Gogh and Artaud did not know each other, their text reflects the identification and affinity that the playwright felt for the painter. He not only reflected him as a misunderstanding, but as a brave subversive, and described the rejection of talents who dare to describe reality as they see it, characteristics that could easily be used to define Antonin Artaud. In advancing the text, Artaud narrates his suffering in the same way. Thus the painter spoke: "He is a man who prefers to go crazy - in the social sense of the word - before betraying a superior idea of human honor" (Artaud, 1998b, p. 77).

In 1947 Artaud was already recognized as the father of the new theater scene (Derrida and Kristeva, 1975), so he managed to obtain the recognition he so longed for through his work. Finally, a path of his own could be opened, which became not so much the father of the emerging theater, but the father of himself, giving himself the place that no one else gave him.





Among the writer's close friends, Paulette Thévenin stood out, who served as the author's secretary and to whom he gave his manuscripts (Bradú, 2008). This generated an accumulation of slander and legal problems by Antonin's family. He, however, ignored them and prevented them from having the rights to their works. Artaud baptized Paulette with the name Ofelia, title of a drawing he made of her. It is interesting to observe in this rejection of the family a contrast between the history of overprotection previously narrated and Artaud's reaction to ignoring them.

Thévenin was chosen by the playwright to be the posthumous editor of his work. In addition, he commissioned, in the words of Artaud himself, to transcribe and receive the money generated from the sale of his books (Braudu, 2008; Martí, July 29, 1991). Paulette, without understanding such an assignment, mentioned that it was a great sample of faith in her (Bradú, 2008) and although she had little knowledge of editing, she was entrusted to this task. The controversy, however, continued because the letter Thévenin possessed with that legend had no legal validity. In the words of Martí (29 de julio de 1991):

[It had] a symbolic value: Artaud wanted his papers not to be in danger and that his family had nothing to do with them. And we must not forget that Antonin had presented his brother Fernand [1907-1989] to Paulette saying: "I want my friends to know my enemies (párr. 3).

Giving up the rights of his creations before his death allowed him to perpetuate his authority over his work. In addition, he made sure to transcend his way and remain true to his ideas until the end while affirming the imposition of his decisions. Indeed, granting the rights of his works to a person outside his family nucleus allowed him to have freedom that he would not have achieved if he had chosen his relatives due to the tense relationship he had with them. For him it was important that his work not be edited by his family, which calmed his anguish of annihilation.

Artaud's freedom and tranquility outside the last institution was short-lived, since in 1948 he fell for his drug addiction, some of which, it was said, were provided by his friends. Shortly after his hospitalization, at dawn on March 4, 1948, Artaud was found sitting in front of his bed, killed by overdose of the chloral drug (Jarque, March 28, 2009).



The last written words of the creator of the theater of cruelty were the following: “De continuer à faire de moi cet envoûté éternel etc. etc. ”, which in Spanish means:“ To continue becoming that eternal spell, etc. etc.". After his death, some relatives reported that his death was due to terminal cancer. Artaud's remains were buried in the civil cemetery of Ivry-sur-Seine, on March 8, 1948.

## Conclusions

Based on the above, it can be said that the life of Antonin Artaud exemplifies the double discourse to which human beings are subject. The first is the discourse of life, whereby each being seeks his freedom and the possibility of expressing himself and experiencing himself with authenticity, which is based on love and commitment to reality. The second speech corresponds to that of society, which tries to hide and simulate with its proposal the cruel acts that it masks under the banner of progress, health justice and life.

Antonin is an example of this discursive struggle, in which on the one hand he is described as a beloved and caring son, but through his life, his work and his words, such claims are dismissed. After the romantic narration of a protected childhood, various symptoms begin to manifest as meningitis, physical pain, sleepwalking, irritability and nervous instability, which flooded with anguish throughout his life and was a stimulus to take refuge in drugs, under whose influences he experienced paranoid sensations. The anguish of not being increased with the death of his sister Germaine, which is why he sought refuge in religion, although he did not find the peace he longed for.

Antonin lacked a deep support, which led him to live in the unconscious world of "thing-bodies", devoid of spirituality. He began his life in an area far from the symbolism of which things must be covered: the theater of cruelty is a testament to this experience. In his work *The Burned Belly or Mad Mother*, expresses the death of his being in the womb at the time of coming to light. In this work, when the king dies the life of the dead begins.



From the age of 16 he knew the depression and delusions that constituted in him the self-aggression as a way of not harming the external mother and the life that denied her right to be, reducing it to “sick thing” that must be interned again and again. Once in institutions that appear to seek their health, but try to suppress the symptoms in a mechanical way.

His work seeks to show the inner cruelty that he felt from the outside, and that he also declared against the sanitariums. In addition to the cruelty of death, the falsehood of institutional life was even worse. In the cover-up of the cruelty of life, the responsibility of the institutions to act for the preservation of a purer and fuller life was diluted. Defending social cruelty was for Artaud to protect the life forms that represent a non-protective mother.

The institutions he rejected seized him. The treatments were experiences that made him feel again the cruelty of life. This constituted a vicious circle, because feeling mistreated in them increased the perception of abuse towards the patient; This led him once again to reject reality, which increased his psychotic state more and more, thereby becoming more constrained by a negative social maternal embrace that did not allow him to be.

Thus, he affirmed that life was cruel and that one had to accept it, seeking to reconcile with his tragedy and finding beauty. From his own experience, Artaud could not look at reality superficially. To unmask the social hypocrisy that tried to idealize everyday events ignoring the cruelty of life, he sought an encounter with himself in the Tarahumara mountain range. Drug dependence was also a refuge from his sense of lack of protection. Antonin sought in the peyote the symbolism of his psychic world, and in him the nourishing chest of life that would feed his freedom and connect him with the essence of his life.

It was in art that Artaud could begin to make sense of his cruel and threatening internal images. He represented in his works the anguish of the subject who has remained in the representation "thing" and who has not been able to acquire a sense of life through what he perceives from outside, but represents the world through original sensations and perceptions of the "thing", devoid of affectivity, that at every moment threatens death. His action showed an opposite aspect to that of the institutions and showed an authentic support towards the human being, who lives a pathology, based on friendship and love. These two attitudes exemplify the two facets that society can present as a mother: the cruel and the loving.



At fifty, Artaud was in Ivry's asylum, where Dr. Achille Delmas encouraged his autonomy and allowed him to be close to his friends. Psychologically the improvement was sustained in that he had the protection and shelter of his friends, who helped him integrate his self and gave him basic support and confidence in life. It was his social group that gave the subject such support, which makes it clear that this affectionate and respectful element of the other's way of being can also be therapeutic for the reduction of the problems posed by psychosis.

With his life and work, Antonin Artaud leads the viewer to touch the cruelty of being unable to be. In fact, in his legacy he proposes recognition and respect for each person's ways of being, allowing the freedom of his expression, experimentation and authentic realization based on love and commitment to reality.



## References

- Artaud, A. (1981). *Cartas desde Rodez (1, 2, 3)*. Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos.
- Artaud, A. (1998a). *Los tarahumara*. Barcelona: Editorial Tusquets editores.
- Artaud, A. (1998b). *Van Gogh: el suicidado por la sociedad*. Buenos Aires (Argentina): Editorial Argonauta.
- Artaud, A. (1999). El teatro de la crueldad: primer manifiesto (1932). En Sánchez, J. (coord.), *La escena moderna: manifiestos y textos sobre teatro de la época de vanguardias* (pp. 199-208). Editorial Akal.
- Bosch, L. (2007). *Hecho en México*. Barcelona, España: Editorial Random House Mondadori.
- Braudu, F. (2008). *André Breton en México*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Carrilho, C. (2015). *La crueldad creadora de Antonin Artaud y sus implicaciones para la formación de profesorado* (tesis doctoral). Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid. Recuperado de [https://repositorio.uam.es/bitstream/handle/10486/665888/carrilho\\_carlos.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repositorio.uam.es/bitstream/handle/10486/665888/carrilho_carlos.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).
- Cuevas, J. (2006). *La imposible escritura de Antonin Artaud*. México: Editorial FUNDA.
- Derrida, J. y Kristeva, J. (1975). *El pensamiento de Antonin Artaud*. Argentina: Editorial Caldén.
- Flores, E. (2005). ¿A qué vino Artaud a México? *Revista de la Universidad de México*, (14), 34-40. Recuperado de [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Enrique\\_Flores8/publication/28261178\\_A\\_que\\_vino\\_Artaud\\_a\\_Mexico/links/54d226da0cf28959aa7c2507/A-que-vino-Artaud-a-Mexico.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Enrique_Flores8/publication/28261178_A_que_vino_Artaud_a_Mexico/links/54d226da0cf28959aa7c2507/A-que-vino-Artaud-a-Mexico.pdf).



- Granados, I. M. (2010). Eficacia de la implementación de un programa de terapia artística en un grupo de adolescentes en el barrio de “Las Tres Mil Viviendas” de Sevilla. *Revista Escuela Abierta*, (13), 69-95.
- Green, A. (2012). *Narcisismo de vida, narcisismo de muerte*. Buenos Aires (Argentina): Editorial Amorrortu.
- Grossman, E. (2006). *Antonin Artaud, un insurgé du corps* (vol. 499). Editorial Gallimard.
- Gutiérrez, C. T., Torres, F. D. y Pérez, I. (2013). Sueño: características generales. Patrones fisiológicos y fisiopatológicos en la adolescencia. *Ciencias de la Salud*, 11(3), 333-348. Recuperado de <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=56229183008>.
- Jannarone, K. (2012). *Artaud and his Doubles*. University of Michigan Press.
- Jarque, F. (28 de marzo de 2009). Artaud, el torturado. *El País*. Recuperado de [https://elpais.com/diario/2009/03/28/babelia/1238198767\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/diario/2009/03/28/babelia/1238198767_850215.html).
- Marenzi, S. (2009). Antonin Artaud: follia, paesaggi del corpo e teatro (tesis doctoral) Universidad de Roma Tres, Roma, Italia. Recuperado de <http://dspace-roma3.caspur.it/bitstream/2307/549/1/AntoninArtaud.pdf>.
- Martí, O. (29 de julio de 1991). Bloqueada la publicación de las obras completas de Antonin Artaud. *El País*. Recuperado de [https://elpais.com/diario/1991/07/29/cultura/680738403\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/diario/1991/07/29/cultura/680738403_850215.html).
- Medellín, A. (2016). Artaud, el exiliado. *Revista La Casa del tiempo*, (34). 8-10. Recuperado de [http://www.uam.mx/difusion/casadeltiempo/34\\_nov\\_2016/casa\\_del\\_tiempo\\_eV\\_numero\\_34\\_07\\_10.pdf](http://www.uam.mx/difusion/casadeltiempo/34_nov_2016/casa_del_tiempo_eV_numero_34_07_10.pdf).
- Painuly, N., Sharan, P. y Mattoo, S. K. (2005). Relación de la ira y los ataques de ira con la depresión. *RET: Revista de Toxicomanías*, 45, 11-18. Recuperado de [http://www.cat-barcelona.com/pdfret/ret\\_45-2.pdf](http://www.cat-barcelona.com/pdfret/ret_45-2.pdf).

Rojo, A. (productor) y Álvarez, A. (director). (1995). *Artaud, imaginario* [documental].  
México: Filmoteca UNAM. Recuperado de  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yduqMJvFI\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yduqMJvFI_0).

Roudinesco, E. (1988). *La batalla de cien años: historia del psicoanálisis en Francia* (vol.  
1). Editorial Fundamentos.

Shafer, D. A. (2016). *Antonin Artaud*. Londres, Inglaterra: Editorial Reaktion Books Edits.

