



ANTONIN ARTAUD: NOAH'S ARK OUTSIDE TIME *

by

S. Giora Shoham
Tel Aviv University

ABSTRACT

Antonin Artaud – painter, poet, cineast, and philosopher – was one of the greatest innovators of all time. However, he was also badly mishandled by the psychiatric establishment. Looking like a young god, he was institutionalized in 1937 and abused by electric shocks. By 1947, he looked like an old man – toothless, shriveled, dilapidated, and demented. He committed suicide like his idol van Gogh, who had undergone a similar ordeal. In considering the case of Artaud, this article claims that deviance mates with genius but that too much deviance or too much genius is likely to encounter the savage stigma of society.

The Big Bang made God deaf.
Anonymous

Et qu'est-ce qu'un aliéné authentique? C'est un homme qui a préféré devenir fou dans le sens où socialement, on l'entend, que de forfaire á une certaine idée supérieure de l'honneur humain. ¹

Antonin Artaud (1947)

Van Gogh: Le Suicidé de la Société

INTRODUCTION

We intend to establish in the present paper the deviance, madness, and genius of Antonin Artaud as an anchor for our thesis concerning the link between insanity, deviance, and innovation. Artaud was born in 1896 and died in 1948. He was one of the founders of the surrealist movement; a poet, painter, cineast, playwright, theater director, and theoretician. His essays *The Theatre of Cruelty* and *The Theatre and its Double* had a strong impact on the French theater. He was in and out of mental institutions for the last ten years of his life. A 1937 portrait of him shows a young, glowing face, with the proud beauty of a god. In contrast, a 1947 photograph is of an old man, with a wrinkled, twisted face, his mouth gaping and his eyes opaque – compliments of electric shocks and psychiatric drugs, the side effects of which were worse than the symptoms of his disease. His

identification with Vincent van Gogh was one of brotherhood in art and misery. His [end page 203] essay on van Gogh was one of his most sensitive and profound works since his identification with his subject was complete; like van Gogh, he committed suicide.

Basically, Artaud's thesis is that society defends itself from great innovators by labeling them mad. In *The Theatre and its Double*, Artaud (1958) ingrained his dualistic, rather Gnostic, belief that the theater reflects life, yet must liberate itself by expressing the primary instincts of sex and cruelty, engaging in fetishistic rituals, wearing tribal masks, and accompanying the scenes with primitive music. As such it was supposed to have a layer of therapeutic psychodrama. Artaud used lavishly onomatopoeia and gibberish, but required the actors to concentrate on what they were saying and make their replicas with maximum force. His ideas influenced such giants as Roger Blin, Jean-Louis Barrault, Julien Beck, and Samuel Becket, and through them European and world drama. Like his idol Vincent van Gogh, he opted for maximum authenticity, for rejection of the generalized, and certainly petrifying, others. Both of them opted for the ostracism and misunderstanding suffered by the creative innovator since importance lies in the process of art, not in material and social rewards. However, since we consider art to be a communicative process, if only with a single kindred soul, at the end of his life Artaud ceased being an artist. Vincent van Gogh did not sell even one painting (maybe just one) during his lifetime, yet he never ceased to seek dialogue through his art with someone who would understand it. *Per contra*, Artaud invited all the "who's who" in cultural Paris to a theater hall and howled at them with bloodcurdling shrieks. With this non-communicative event, he labeled himself a mad, pitiful has-been.

Artaud revealed himself to be an existential phenomenologist by trying to cope with the essence of the self and to reach the core of the "pure self" by phenomenological reduction. Like his alter ego Vincent van Gogh, he saw himself as the suffering Christ, despised by the demiurgical "others," the *Wiedergeists*, the double-dealing hypocrites. Artaud (1986:191) said:

Mais il y a quelqu'un qui m'a toujours aimé pour tout ce que j'avais de bon ainsi en moi, non seulement dans mon corps mais dans mon âme (et il n'y a que quelques années que je sais que cet amour et allé à l'hystérie de la folie occulte et de la haine pour mon individu), ce quelqu'un s'appelle Dieu et Jésus-Christ. Car tous les prêtres eurent toujours la plus excessive tendresse pour ma dévotion et ma piété: je ne savais pas tout d'abord mais j'ai su il y a quelques années que toutes les messes de la terre étaient axées sur ma piété.²

Well, when Vincent van Gogh depicted himself in one of his paintings as St. Lazarus and as the savior, nobody saw his paintings. But when Artaud claimed that masses were held in churches all over the world for his piety, he was quite well-known, or rather notoriously known, in Paris, and a statement like this guaranteed him the tag of insanity.

Artaud deplored the existential loneliness of man. Artaud (1986:213) wrote: [end page 204]

Lettre du 7 Avril 1928, page 295: Ma solitude à moi est sans nom et sans bornes, et elle se double de cette horreur de penser que j'ai toujours en réalité été seul, que ma vie ne s'est pas complétée pendant cinq ans de la vie d'un être fait pour moi et qui m'avait pénétré. Je considère maintenant que to m'as toujours été étrangère.³

Man is a Tantalus who cannot be saved from his punishment: he is destined never to achieve what

he longs for. Moreover, while the fox has his lair and the bird its nest, man has no place to repose from his misery. Yet again, like van Gogh, Artaud never ceased to seek, indeed crave, a dialogue. He was always attuned to the other, any other, who might open a window into his soul. He never aimed at superficial rapport with the exterior of the other; only a deep dialogue with his inner self would satisfy him.

These Buberian "I-Thou" dialogues were rare indeed. Most of the time Artaud was frustrated and retreated expectantly into his lonely corner, or he became immersed in a catatonic stupor. Artaud understood that the theater is a means for structuring mythogenes which lend meaning to the lives both of performer and spectator, just as the paintings of van Gogh mythogenically linked the artist and his audience over time and space, and revealed some important insight, to both. Artaud was a retreatist, who courted annihilation within history. He possessed a lifelong interest in *Unio Mystica*. He studied the doctrines of Ruysbroeck, San Juan de la Cruz, and Jacob Böehme. We may guess that it was when he could no longer contain the ever-widening horizons of his being that van Gogh committed suicide. Yet for Artaud, suicide was an alternative to seeking union with the all-embracing unity in entirely unknown circumstances, the ultimate adventure in face of the unfathomable. He believed, and wrote to his friend Riviere, that in order to grasp the meaning of being, one must annihilate one's cognition, perceptions, and nervous energy ([Artaud 1986](#)).

Artaud was certainly eccentric, deviant, bizarre, and what is commonly known as "mad," yet we wish to ascertain what effect all this had on him and to what insights and creative domains it brought him. Admittedly, being mad revealed to him the meaning of the world. Hence, insanity for him delineated the limits of understanding, yet for the stigmatizing others such reaching out towards the normative boundaries of comprehension constituted madness, since the agencies of social control take deviant and antisocial behavior as a main indication of insanity. Artaud's writings are as explosive as van Gogh's paintings. Still, the work of van Gogh was structured and very communicative, whereas Artaud opted for intellectual anarchy, which in the last analysis cannot be communicative, and therefore does not amount to art.

Artaud identified with van Gogh and felt an inner affinity with him. Yet essentially he wrote about himself since his experience with insanity was very similar to van Gogh's, and both regarded psychiatry and mental asylums as tools of social control, and not of therapy. In his essay *Van Gogh: Le Suicidé de la Société*, Artaud ([1947](#)) projected his own experiences and longings – as well as his structured mythogenes – onto **[end page 205]** van Gogh and his art so that the mythogenes were Artaud's while they also related to van Gogh and their common *Weltauschauungen*. Like van Gogh, Artaud saw himself as a martyr of his art and its lack of appreciation by the gross, coarse, and non-refined vulgarians and their artistic institutions. Artaud ([1986](#)) called van Gogh an organist of an enclosed storm. This poetic metaphor is apt and forceful, but describes Artaud himself and his contained non-communication more than the expressive torrent of van Gogh's work. Artaud was also convinced that his suffering was sublimated into art, as a theurgic means to transcendence. In his surrealistic, poetic style, Artaud ([1947:50-51](#)) denoted van Gogh's paintings as "old sins, which have not yet been absolved." Their absolution would seemingly be effected by their extasis from history onto the synchronic Authentic Domain in transcendence. Artaud projected on van Gogh his own experiences of stigma, ostracism, and the stifling of his excellence during the nine years of his incarceration in mental institutions. It is as if the authorities told him, like they might have told van Gogh, as follows:

Ceux qui un jour lui ont dit:
Et maintenant, assez, van Gogh, à la tombe, nous en avons assez de ton
génie, quant à l'infini, c'est pour nour l'infini. ⁴

It brings to mind the ostracizers in the Agora of Athens, who were in the process of voting to expel Aristides, who was wandering amongst them *incognito* in the marketplace, from the polis, being fed up with hearing all the time how clever, good, righteous, and talented Aristides was. Hence, both van Gogh and Artaud "preferred" to become mad rather than forfeit their superior conception of human dignity ([Artaud 1947](#)). They did not want to conform to the slavish rules of the asylum so they could be declared "cured" and released. They preferred to stay inside the institution rather than feign acceptance of the draconian, petrifying, humiliating routines of the mental hospital. The danger afforded by "madmen" like van Gogh and Artaud to the vulgarians of mediocrity and "total institutions" was their greater lucidity, their ability to see farther, to feel deeper than the average run-of-the-mill.

Artaud ([1947](#)), however, used the explosive metaphor that van Gogh's art was like an artistic atomic bomb, uncontainable by the power elites; consequently, their way of defending themselves was to declare van Gogh mad. This is in line with the anti-psychiatric claim that the stigma of madness is a means of social control. Like van Gogh, Artaud's love affairs were total, absolute, and hence impossible. He also regarded art as a goal in itself and not as a means to any material aim. Art is communication through an epistemic wall, which only the creative energy of a van Gogh can effect ([Artaud 1947](#)).

Another painter with whom Artaud identified was Paolo Uccello (1397-1475), the Florentine painter of the early fifteenth century. He was a marginal figure of Renaissance art. He was more Gothic than Renaissance, and his personality was split between intellectualism and art ([Borsi and Borsi 1994](#)). He was a genius alienated from the main current of the Renaissance art of his time, which was dominated by Brunelleschi, **[end page 206]** Masaccio, and Donatello – so much so, that Alberti did not include him in his directory of artists, *De Pictura*. Precisely this alienation attracted Artaud. One of his alter egos was Paul des Oiseaux, Paul of the Birds (Uccello in Italian is a bird). He had birds in his soul, that ever longed to be liberated. Like Uccello, Artaud had a psychosomatic, rather Gnostic, dualism in his personality. He actually recognized in himself two entities: one dominated by the Gnostic demiurgos, and therefore suspended in an unbearable temporality, and the other in the mystical realm of the spirits envisaged by Christian mystics like Jacob Böehme, Ruysbroeck, and San Juan de la Cruz. He saw himself ever vacillating between these dualities, always within the intersection of phenomena and not within them. Hence, he is mostly marginal to both dualities and alienated from human groups and institutions, like his two role models. Yet, the very suffering, the ostracism by the generalized others, and the clashes with the stigmatizing and depriving groups may be sublimated into profound creativity.

The relationship, however, between pain and creativity is not linear but curvilinear. Some suffering may be enriching, but too much may break the artist, which it actually did both to van Gogh and Artaud. Not only the bourgeoisie rejects the "mad" outsiders, but society itself, aided by its controlling agents, fights the "insane," creative innovators, and the deviants which expand man's limits of awareness and which widen their own, and others', normative being and conception of aesthetics. The bourgeois begrudges the creative individuals for being creative, which he is not. Hence, he ever pushes them in line and if they dare not comply, they pay dearly, with their wellbeing, freedom, and sometimes with their very lives. Such agencies of social control are the crows in van Gogh's last painting, pumping dark lead into the clouds and blood into the earth. Artaud's main concern was his crusade against the psychiatric establishment and its total institutions. He realized that madness is culture-bound, yet he demanded to know what justified declaring van Gogh insane and committing him to a mental institution – this in a world where one eats vaginas cooked in green sauce, where around most of the globe anarchy reigns supreme, and in the so-called orderly western world, government corruption is rife, white-collar crime is the rule, and the bourgeoisie is as dishonest and hypocritical as ever ([Artaud \[1976\] 1982](#)).

Per contra, all van Gogh did was to put his hand in the fire, as the most ardent, indeed ultimate, manifestation of love for Kee Vos, his widowed cousin. She, of course, interpreted it in her bourgeois fashion as violent madness. The cutting of his ear lobe was a sacrificial offering to an estranged would-be interlocutor who proved to be a traitor: Paul Gauguin. Van Gogh longed for an "I-Thou" Buberian dialogue with him, whereas Gauguin intended it to be an "I-It" manipulation. Van Gogh intended the sacrificial self mutilation, like all sacrifices, to magically reverse the dire course of events and induce Gauguin to stay in Arles in order to organize an artists' commune, with him as prophet, absolute ruler, and aesthetic pace-setter. The xenophobic mob of Arles could never have surmised the mythogenic significance of van Gogh's act and demanded his commitment to a "mad house" where his brain would be numbed with electroshocks. To "cure" a "madman" by psychiatric drugs often means to stifle him into submission by conditioning [end page 207] him like a Pavlovian dog or to singe his psyche into a zombie-like stupor, like Orwell's Winston in 1984, who was tortured into agreeing that two plus two were five.

A society engaged in this kind of atrocity should be regarded as an instrument of organized crime (Artaud [1976] 1982). Hence, Artaud preferred to remain "sick" and not forfeit his superior lucidity, yet the "total institution" and its repressive "treatment" exerted its toll. Artaud entered the mental hospital with radiant eyes, glowing skin, and the countenance of a god. After nine years he became a wrinkled old man with hollow cheeks, a toothless mouth, and blank, opaque eyes. Artaud was the authentic anti-psychiatric writer since he experienced the atrocities of the mental asylum on himself, unlike Michel Foucault, R. D. Laing, and Thomas Szasz who just wrote about them. Psychiatrists are the Orwellian "thought police" curbing rebellious creativity (Artaud [1976] 1982). In order to cache their impotence, psychiatrists invent ridiculous terminology, which explains nothing and serves to further stigmatize, segregate, and alienate their patients (Artaud [1976] 1982). Hence, the hospitals for the insane perpetuate their inmates' affliction, with the side effects of the "treatments" being much worse than the original symptoms. The psychiatrists are the enemies of their patients' ingenuity, and their claim that their charges renounce their unique individuality, which might well be the basis of their creative innovation, is the most frequent cause of their suicidal despair (Artaud [1976] 1982). Artaud realized what more and more modern researchers and scholars have been discovering: that mental illness is a concept of sickness generated by the "poisoned tongues" of psychiatrists (Artaud 1986).

One must be desperately honest in one's quest to examine one's ontological boundaries. Then madness could be instrumental. Insanity could widen and deepen our consciousness, yet many times the mad pay the price of their inner enlightenment by religious condemnation. The church, the rabbinate, and the ulema do not intend to relinquish their monopoly of revelation through their institutions; the madman's "private" revelation is hence shunned and condemned. Also, the psychiatrists wish to show their proficiency in "curing" the insane by burning their brains in the process. However, the only way to fight insanity is to be authentic and refuse to curb one's insights for the price of complacent well-being.

Artaud (1986:7, 30) goes a step farther than the Cartesian "*je pense, donc je suis*" by postulating: "*Je suis dans mon corps.*"⁵ He thus expresses one of the most mind-boggling paradoxes of human existence: why has my body been chosen to be the channel of cosmic awareness, and does every human being feel the same, and how can this paradox be solved? Artaud was most susceptible to solipsism since his eccentricity and deviance set him apart, and the psychiatric drugs and electroshocks reduced his ability and desire to communicate with his surroundings, an ability and desire which were meager to begin with. [end page 208]

THE SELF BY HIMSELF

Solipsism was reinforced from time immemorial by the fact that man felt himself to be the direct and immediate channel of cosmic awareness. The fact that other men also feel themselves to be the cognitive center of the universe can only be inferred through hearsay, vicariously. There is no logical way to disprove the patently megalomaniac claims of the solipsist. Descartes and Leibnitz did not find a logical way out of solipsism and had to recruit God to extricate them from their quandary. Schopenhauer admitted his inability to refute the arguments of the solipsist and in desperation suggested that he be committed to a lunatic asylum. On one level, the trap of solipsism may be avoided by postulating that all life forms have an inner awareness of the holistic transcendence. On a deeper level, however, there is the question of why the body – the interactive *Atzmi* and the regulating *Iti* – was chosen to serve as a sole perceptive channel of the universe. This meta-dilemma, the insoluble paradox of man's relationship to transcendence, is a metaphysical projection of man's Sisyphean and Tantallic developmental prime movers, which likewise drew their continuity from the inherent impossibility of their fulfillment. This paradox supplies the transcendental push for the developmental quest of a Sisyphus to control the object and of a Tantalus to reach towards it. The core dialectics of Sisyphean quests and Tantallic longings are thus cathected towards transcendence in the form of an insoluble paradox. The logical "law of contradiction" does not seem to apply to this paradox. The "I" who has been chosen to perceive the whole universe is both a totality and a specific unity. Hence the paradox constitutes both an "I" and a "not I," and yet is our metaphysical prime mover. A possible solution to this dilemma may be in the fact that the law of contradiction applies only to the separant vector and to its either/or, computer-like binary application. The paradox, on the other hand, takes in both the separant and participant vectors, which together constitute a system-in-balance between the separant quest for being and the participant longing for nothingness as wholeness. Thus, the law of contradiction in logic becomes a special case of this paradox. The latter is more comprehensive once it is based on the dialectics of the vectors inherent in the actual development of personality (see [Shoham 1979](#)).

The relationship between the prime movers of the self and the transcendental paradox is presented graphically in [Figure One](#) . The self-object relationship is fueled by the dialectics of the Tantallic longing and the Sisyphean quests, which generate the core energy and prime movers of the self-object dyad and hence form the thing-in-itself or the elusive, Kantian *ding-an-sich*. The self-transcendence dyad is sustained by the search for the solution to the insoluble paradox of a cosmic awareness that flows to a specific body. Both these relationships are close to the participant pole of the self interaction (transcendence and object), whereas the transcendence-object relationship is located on the separant pole of this interaction. The latter is also extraneous to the self and thus constitutes its infernal other, its *Weidergeist* or *demiurgos*. As the self and *demiurgos* are separated and alienated from each other, the separant, least-interest principle governs their relationship. Hence, if the self's quests are too apparent, the demiurgal least-interest principle is liable to frustrate them. Man's quest should not be overt but rather clandestine and secret. This is ordained by the appearance of the light within the mind, evading the hostile demiurgal archons. The whole of the Kabala constitutes *Kochma Nisteret*, **[end page 209]** the secret doctrine, while the Mishna says that "abundance (plenty) be found only in things which the eye cannot perceive," ⁶ implying that the *demiurgos* will strive to control those things that are physically apparent and deprive man of them. Kierkegaard also postulated that the apparent outside is falsehood, and truth is clandestine. Conversely, the *demiurgos* will try to make man's fears and apprehensions come true. Therefore, Rabbi Nachman of Brazlav's principle counsel to his followers was: "All of life is a narrow bridge but above all one should not be afraid." ⁷ This could be interpreted as a warning against divulging one's fears to the *demiurgos* in case he causes them to come true as a macabre, self-fulfilling prophecy.

In Gnosis, solipsism is an attribute of the *demiurgos*. In the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, Samael

the chief archon (a synonym for the *demiurgos*) declares: "I am God, there is none [except] me." When he said this, he sinned against the All, and reprimanded him, "you err Samael" (quoted in Foerster 1969). Ialdabaoth, who in Gnosis represents the Creator-God, declares his solipsism as follows: "I am Father and God and there is none above me," to which his mother Sophia Prunikos replies: "Do not lie, Ialdabaoth; there is above thee the father of all, the first Man and Man the Son of Man" (quoted in Jonas 2001). The efforts of the *demiurgos* to present exclusivity are frustrated by the messengers of the light and even by his own mother, attesting to the existence of the Godhead and his creatures. The internalization of the suffering of the other, so that it is felt within our inner self, is not only a basis for an existentialist system of morals but also constitutes a direct inner-consciousness "proof" of the existence of the other.

Solipsism in Judaism can be traced to Ecclesiastes (2:25), which says: "For who can eat and who can feel except for me?" (The faulty and erroneous King James translation is misleading). Here is the claim that only ego can feel the world through his senses. The Talmus goes on to say: "Every man should say that the world was created for Him"⁸ Another solipsistic statement is made in the Talmud about one of its sages, Hanina Ben Dossa: "Each day a divine voice proclaims that all the world feeds itself for my son Hanina."⁹ This tradition is continued by Rabbi Ezra, the thirteenth-century Spanish Kabbalist, who says: "Man is comprised of all the spiritual entities... Man is comprised of all things and his soul is linked to the Supernal Soul" (quoted in Idel 1988). A more solipsistic view is expressed by the Kabbalist Menachem Recanati who says: "Since man is comprised of all the essences, his power is great and so is his perfection; when he directs his intention and knowledge to draw downwards and cause the emanation out of the 'Nought of Thought'" (quoted in Idel 1988). Kordovero, the sixteenth-century Safedean Kabbalist, states: "Wherever thou standest there are all the worlds" (quoted in Scholem 1987). This solipsism was further developed by Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav, the Hasidic sage whose doctrines were largely based on Lurianic Kabala, who claimed that his self and the world were one; hence, he could influence the decision making of the Russian Czar (Green 1981). The way out of this solipsism, as envisaged both by Kierkegaard and Rabbi Nachman, lies in the internalization of an other's pain and suffering within ego's inner self. This dynamic serves as a basis for a **[end page 210]** new existentialist morality and, as I shall later elaborate, makes for a partial way out of solipsism.

Indeed, solipsism, and the extrication from it, is a focal concern of existentialism. Sartre succeeded partially in extricating his philosophy from the solipsistic impasse by postulating a transcendental ego common to all beings (Sartre [1957] 1972). In his metaphysical novelette *La Femme Adultere*, Camus (1962) describes with incomparable virtuosity how a young, dejected wife discovers through an ecstatic revelation that her inner self and the spiritual core of all life form and objects partake in a universal unity. Yet this solves only part of the problem. Neither Sartre nor Camus dealt with the question of why ego's specific bio-psycho-social configuration was chosen to be the unique channel of cosmic awareness. Kierkegaard, who was aware of the utility and force of the problem, posited that this paradox of the choice of a given body serves as the conduit for universal consciousness. This paradox is insoluble precisely because, by interpolation, every individual has the same or a similar sense of uniqueness and choice. Thus, this insoluble paradox becomes the basic motivation for man's metaphysical quests, supplementing his Tantalus longings and Sisyphean searches, which interact dialectically as prime movers of his core self. This may serve as a pragmatic experiential solution for solipsism, which is at least more feasible than any *a priori* search for a solution, which invariably would end in a *cul-de-sac*.

My solution for the dilemma of solipsism necessitates a unity of transcendence. In fact, it constitutes a "proof" of a metaphysical holism. Otherwise, we should be confronted with a "scandal" of the multiplicity of consciousness and the absurdity of multiple solipsisms (Merleau-

Ponty [1962] 1994). Indeed, how could one account for the feeling of each psyche that it has been chosen as the sole duct for the awareness of the universe, without assuming that all life forms are hooked kaleidoscopically to a single consciousness? As for the paradox of my bio-psycho-social configuration having been chosen as the unique channel for cosmic awareness, it serves as our prime motivation to search for a transcendental meaning to our existence. Moreover, having extrapolated the existence of a unique transcendence from this paradox, it might well be that each individual has been programmed to feel unique *vis-à-vis* the other. This is a simulation of the situation of a unique Godhead faced with a *demiurgos*. Whatever the purpose of the creation of an infinity of different life forms and objects, our metaphysical programmer maximizes his returns by ensuring an infinity of unique creatures faced by demiurgical others, who thus become multiple images of their creator.

PAIN

Figure Two recapitulates the triangle of prime movers. The dialectical core quests are motivated by a lack – an insatiable Sisyphean hunger for domination of the object and an unquenchable Tantallic thirst for a merger with it. The metaphysical prime mover is man's unattainable quest to solve the solipsistic paradox. Finally, the relationship between the man-God-object triad and the God-object dyad is one of self-other [end page 211] conflict and Godhead- *demiurgos* strife. If these three relationships are abstracted, there is lack, strife, and frustration, which are perceived by the individual as varying in dosages and kinds of pains. Hence, the universal emotive principle is pain. This was expounded by Freud in his pleasure principle, according to which pleasure is the reduction of frustration, irritation, and pain. Freud confined the pleasure principle to intrapsychic dynamics, whereas here pain is regarded as governing both the temporal and transcendental relationship of man. Moreover, our programming in its remarkable ability to utilize a very limited number of parameters – the four nucleotides of genetics, the two core personality vectors – to control and activate creation, utilizes pain not only to activate man but also to preserve him and regulate his relationships. Thus, pain guards the organism against injury, it serves as a communicative medium, it prods man to seek creativity and revelation, and, when internalized by ego, it forms a basis for an existentialist system of ethics. In existentialism, this is marked by the Heidegger's *angst und sorge* and by Kierkegaard's description of human existence as characterized by "fear and trembling." Life is visited by varying degrees of deprivational interaction, yet its motivating efficiency is curvilinear. A moderate dosage of deprivational interaction prods us to act and create, but too much of it crushes us under the Sisyphean stone or the Tantallic rock, in the earlier version of the myth. One cannot create if afflicted by unbearable agony. For revelation, one should "let pain flower," as Kierkegaard counseled, but a crushing blow damns the flow of grace and prevents it from reaching the victim.

Lack, pain, and frustration are ordained by the developmental phases of the human child and adolescent. The fetus is accustomed to a soft, self-sufficient coziness in the womb, only to be expelled into a world of changing temperatures, hard surfaces, and erratic feeding and care by the breast-mother. In early orality we feel an Edenic pantheistic togetherness with our surroundings, only to be confined into the scar tissue of the ego boundary and the loneliness of later orality. Within the family fold, the adolescent usually enjoys an unconditional forgiveness for almost everything he says or does, until the sacrificial rites of passage of the Isaac syndrome thrust him into the cruel "rat race" of socioeconomic competition and full normative and legal responsibility. The openness of the infant and the adolescent expectations of an I-Thou encounter with his surroundings are usually frustrated and meet with an I-It response. Hence, man's relationship with his surroundings is characterized by a deprivational interaction, interspersed with occasional spells of grace. Mytho-empirically, this is represented by Acheron, the Greek river of woe, surrounding hell. Man's communication with his infernal others, to extend Sartre's metaphor, takes place

through a flow of agony. Moreover, man does not initially know that "hell is other people." On the contrary! He is conditioned by previous developmental phases to expect a welcoming and comforting other, only to have his innocence bruised, scarred, raped by the I-It other. According to Lurianic Kabala, God also created the world in order to give and to share his flowing grace. However, the breaking of the vessels caused him to lose control over it and since then he has been confronted by the *Sitra Achara* – the *Weidergeist*. Man in his struggle with his infernal other thus reflects an image of God in his conflict with the *demiurgos*. **[end page 212]** The message here is unequivocal: man in pain reflects a suffering God (Christ). Perfect theistic gods do not suffer. They make their creatures suffer, either to entertain themselves like Roman Caesars watching the throes of man and beast in the arena, or to partake vicariously in the joys and sorrows of their creatures and thus extricate themselves from solitude in eternity. The God of Gnosis, Kabala, as well as existentialism is a suffering God, and hence imperfect and blemished. The Kabalist sphere of Keter, which is an integral part of the Godhead, is denoted by the *Partzuf of Arich Anpin* – literally "the long suffering" – while Kierkegaard's existentialist God is effectively involved in his creation through his suffering son.

The suffering Christ on the Cross broadcasts an appeal for communication and help on behalf of the blemished Godhead, and a maieutic message to man to seek revelation. Thence, man has the choice whether to open or close himself to the man-God's cry of anguish. When this call of distress is felt within the inner self, it represents the universal awareness of the Godhead. In Gnosis, the soul was initially a part of the Godhead, but afterwards "she fell into a body and came into this life, then she fell into the hands of the robbers." The Gnosis "Exegesis on the Soul" continues like this:

And the insolent tossed her to one another and [defiled] her. Some used her violently, other persuaded her by a deceitful gift. In brief, they dishonored her. She [lost] her virginity, and played the harlot with her body and gave herself to everyone. And the one to whom she adheres, she thinks he is her husband. Whenever she gave herself to the insolent, faithless adulterers that they might misuse her, then she sighed heavily and repented. Again, when she turns her face away from these paramours she runs to others, and they compel her to be with them and to serve them like the lords on their couches. But from shame she no longer dares to forsake them. But they deceive her for a long time [by behaving] in the manner of true and genuine husbands, as if they honored her greatly, and at the end of all these things they abandon her and go. But she becomes a poor deserted widow who has no help – nor does she gain a hearing in her suffering; for she has no benefit at all from them, except the defilements which they gave her when they consorted with her. And those whom she bore by the adulterers are deaf and blind and sickly, their heart is bemused. But when the Father who is above in heaven visits her, and looks down upon her and sees her sighing, with her passion and unseemliness, and repenting over her harlotry which she has committed, and she begins to call upon his [na]me that he may help her, [sighing] with all her heart and saying: "Deliver me, my father, for behold, I will give account to [you], because I have forsaken my house and have fled from my maiden chamber. Once again I turn to you" – when he sees that she is of such a character, then will he resolve to make her worthy that he take pity on her, for much pain has come upon her because she abandoned her house (quoted in [Foerster 1969](#)). **[end page 213]**

The soul – the particle of Divinity – after falling into its demiurgical body, was exploited, assaulted,

raped, battered, manipulated, and manhandled; yet the soul's cry of anguish pierced the boundaries of history and reached the Godhead.

In a like manner Isaac Yehuda Safrin, the nineteenth-century Hasid and Kabbalist, recounts his revelatory experiences. Because of their importance, I shall quote them at length:

In 1845, on the 21st day of the Omer, I was in the town of Dukla. I arrived there late at night, and it was dark and there was no one to take me home, except for a tanner who came and took me into his house. I wanted to pray *Ma'ariv* and to count the Omer, but I was unable to do it there, so I went to the Beit Midrash alone, and there I prayed until midnight had passed. And I understood from this situation the plight of the Shekhinah in exile, and Her suffering when She is standing in the market of tanners. And I wept many times before the Lord of the world, out of the depth of my heart, for the suffering of the Shekhinah. And through my suffering and weeping, I fainted and I fell asleep for a while, and I saw a vision of light, splendor and great brightness, in the image of a virgin adorned with twenty-four ornaments... And she said: "Be Strong, my son," etc. And I was suffering that I could not see but the vision of her back and I was not worthy to receive her face. And I was told that [this was because] I am alive, and it is written, "for no man shall see me, and live...."

It was his [R. Zevi Hirsch's] custom regarding the matter of holiness, to pray in order to bring upon himself a state of suffering, uneasiness and affliction once every eve of Sabbath. This was done in order to efface himself completely before the Sabbath, so as to be able to receive His light, be He blessed, during the prayer and the meal of the Sabbath [eve] with a pure, holy and clear heart. This was his custom regarding the matter of holiness, due to his constant fear lest *arrogan* and *alien thoughts* would enter his heart. Once, on the Feast of Shavuot, hundreds of people crowded around him. Before the [morning] prayer, with the [first] light of dawn, I entered one of his rooms, but he did not see me, for he was pacing about the room to and fro, weeping and causing heaven and earth to weep with him before God. And it is impossible to write it down. And he humbled himself before God with a mighty weeping, supplicating that he not be rejected from the light of His face... then I was overcome by a great trembling, because of the awe of the Shekhinah, and I opened the door and ran away ([Idel 1988:198](#)).

His weeping and suffering coincides with the crying and pain of the divine presence – the *Schechina* – and this brings about the revelatory encounter between them. The pain Safrin radiated and the pain of the *Schechina* received by him made him a "flowing stream," a communicative current of pain ([Idel 1988:85](#)). In his revelatory experiences [**end page 214**] and his search for the roots of his soul, Safrin was convinced that he was the Messiah, the son of Joseph.¹⁰ Indeed, his being a messiah was necessary for synchronizing between the *Ani*, the inner self, and the *Ayin*, infinity, which contains the same letters but in different order. The message here is that only a messiah, a son of God, can serve as the mediator between the infinity (*Ayin*) of the Godhead and the historical self (*Ani*). Only the man-God, who is simultaneously both in history and outside it, can effect a union between the Godhead and its particle (soul). Finally, Kierkegaard discusses the man-God's paradoxical "offense" of declaring himself to God ([Kierkegaard 1941](#)). Yet through

the common suffering of man and God, which coincides in the man-God, the revelatory communion between man and God is made possible. Man suffering in history cries from his inner self "out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." (Psalms 130:1). This is reciprocated by the man-God's shriek of anguish: "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" Both cries of pain are synchronized in Christ on the Cross. With him the suffering is historical. The suffering of God and man integrates both history and eternity. This is the feat accomplished by the revelatory leap of faith through the communicative force of pain. A blemished, suffering God and man, in "fear and trembling" in history can communicate within an ever-suffering Christ. The savior's kiss continuously seared the forehead of Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor, as a painful communicative reminder of God's presence in the here and now. Camus's judge-penitent's refusal to heed the drowning girl's cry for help in *The Fall* was the existentialist original sin because it blocked the communication between man and transcendence. It prevented the judge-penitent from feeling the suffering of the girl within his inner self and communing with her by saving her. Her unanswered cry of anguish became a free-floating scar that encapsulated both protagonists in their solipsistic solitude.

An answered cry for help, on the other hand, extricates both man and God from their impending solipsism. Indeed, Kierkegaard demonstrates how the crucifixion in an eternal present crosses timelessness and history. The Gnostic messenger, the Kabalist *Shechina*, and Kierkegaard's Christ, who differs radically from the Son of God of institutionalized Christianity, pierce the walls of the demiurgical tornado with their cries of anguish and reach the covert flow of grace within the eye of the storm. Brel's *Ne-me quitte pas*, which is a variation on the theme of separation anxieties, is absorbed into the innermost selves of the audience, thus effecting a direct communication with the artist. Bosch's Christ transmits his suffering to St. Veronica, as symbolized by the image of his face that was imprinted on the handkerchief with which she wiped his face. Christ's suffering radiates from his agonized yet graceful face – stoically calm within the gaggle of vile, ugly, cruel, stupid, covetous, violent, and debauched faces surrounding him – until it seems to reach the innermost serenity of St. Veronica who contemplates Christ's image on the handkerchief. This seems to be visible only to her since she is attuned to the pain emanating from the man-God. The poet Nelli Sacks imagined her pain emanating from one of the stones of the Wailing Wall. Pierre Legendre, a world renowned legal anthropologist, confessed to this author that "*sans le malheur je me sentirais seul*" (without suffering, I feel solitude). In Greek, sympathy is literally **[end page 215]** "common suffering." Indeed, pain extricates both man and transcendence from their ontological loneliness.

The communicative effect of pain was recognized by the sixteenth-century Safedean Kabalists. Abraham Halevi Baruchim woke up every midnight and wandered in the streets shrieking in a bitter voice: "Wake up to honor God – the *Shechina* is in exile, our temple is burnt down and the people of Israel are in great trouble" ([Scholem 1987:144](#)). He saw in a vision the holy presence, dressed in black and mourning near the Wailing Wall ([Scholem 1987:144](#)). The circle of Lurianic Kabalists in Safed practiced the *Tikkun Rachel*, which involved the following behavior: "They took off their shoes, dressed their heads in mourning and cried with all their might" ([Scholem 1987:144](#)). In this way they partook in the suffering of the *Shechina*. The suffering of man and the pains of God coincide within the exiled holy presence. As for the effect of tears as a communicative medium between man and God, Haim Vital says the following:

When a person weeps and sheds tears for [the death of] a righteous man, he also causes tears to be shed on high, and as we find it said, as it were, of God [Himself]: "The Lord God of Hosts will call to weeping and mourning" etc., [or] "my soul shall weep in secret" etc., or as it is written: "Oh, that my head were waters [and my eyes a fountain of tears]" – namely, that I long for the act of the lower [entities], as by their weeping below, they cause "my head to be as waters and my eyes a fountain of

tears." May they do so, and thereby I may also weep for my dead ([Idel 1988:198](#)).

Pain thus almost automatically effects a dialogue between man and God.

According to Kierkegaard, the crucified Jesus effects an *extasis*, in the Greek sense, from the sequences of time, and hence his pain is continuously manifest in the perpetuity of the present ([Kierkegaard 1968:18-19](#)). The suffering of Christ is also introjected by man as pertaining to his own daily crucifixion. Thus, Christ pierces the imminent solipsism of man by partaking in his suffering self-image. The shriek of a normatively sacrificed Isaac meets God's laments, sent to the innermost being of man through the tribulations of his son on the Cross. The suffering of God as felt by man may break his heart, yet as Nachman of Bratzlav taught: "There is nothing so whole as a broken heart." The calvary of Christ radiates *Lacrimae Rerum* into man, but it also fills him with the *enthousiasmos* (again in the Greek sense) of grace.

Physical pain is the tool of the *demiurgos* for guarding "his property" – the body. Without the pain incidental to bodily injury, disease, and death, most human beings and many other creatures would probably take their own lives. The *demiurgos* thus controls a built-in safety mechanism to keep the inmates – exiled particles of divinity – incarcerated in their temporal prison (i.e. the body). Without pain the souls would easily destroy their prison body and revert back to their origin in the Godhead. The demiurgical *ananke*, the coercive cosmic forces, as well as evolution, also avail themselves of pain in order to **[end page 216]** implement their aims. If one exceeds one's *moira*, one's fate in life, the Furies strike with a vengeance in order to push the deviants back into line. Those who do not fit the designs of evolution are wiped painfully yet unceremoniously out of history. Suffering and history are true phenomena, yet pain is also instrumental in jostling man out of his complacency in his demiurgical body and his fear of eternity (death). Man's revolt against his demiurgical *ananke* and *moira* is thus prompted by pain, and some suffering (though not too much) is also necessary for revelation and creativity.

Dostoyevsky says that one should be worthy of one's suffering. In our model this would mean that one must first experience an impasse, a fall, a breaking of the vessels, an exile, in order to embark subsequently on the rebellious road of creativity and revelation. This is expressed by Kierkegaard as "letting the pain flower" and represented by Rabbi Nachman's seeking of hardship and suffering in order to reach a higher rung of grace.

In existentialism, suffering, if it does not crush the protagonist, leads him to a deeper insight into himself and into his relationships with his surroundings and with transcendence. This is the professed reason for Rabbi Nachman's search for *Machloikess* with his surroundings, a disagreement or quarrel, in order to experience the cathartic pain and the suffering leading to spiritual relation. "We begin to live," said Yeats in his autobiography, "when we have conceived life as tragedy." As for creativity, there is Damocles who never danced so well as under the sword hanging over his head. A Celtic myth tells of a bird that thrusts itself on a thorn in order to sing its most beautiful song. Ezra Pound wrote his most powerful cantos after the "braves" of Pisa imprisoned him in a cage in the marketplace to be laughed at and spat upon by the passers by.

The conception of Kierkegaard and Rabbi Nachman as to the cleansing value of pain was shared by Kordovero who said: "Those who suffer willingly will be cleansed and purified... until they become as clean and pure as silver (quoted in [Scholem 1965:45](#)). Suffering is thus a precedent condition ordained by the holy presence prior to salvation ([Scholem 1965](#)). In Mandaean Gnosis, suffering and exposure to "destructive lions" and to the carnivorous dragon that surrounds the world preceded the healing and deliverance of the human soul from its demiurgical tribulations

(Foerster 1969:224).

The suffering of the other, as internalized by the self, brings one first to recognize his existence as a separate entity, and enables one to sympathize and empathize with him. This nonverbal communication, which has to be reached through dialogue, generates with the self a flow of grace that is shared (as inferred epistemologically by the self) with the other. This is the essence of Dr. Rieux's feeling of grace when he treats the sick and tries to ease their pain, although he knows that he can never vanquish the plague. In order for the treatment of physical and mental ills to be authentic and hence effective, the healer must empathize with a concrete sufferer and not with an abstract or imaginary one. Many times people "identify" with the suffering of actors in films or characters in novels, thus avoiding the need to identify with real sufferers or help an actual person in pain. In a like manner, the Magid Abraham Ben Eliezer preached that "a person cannot be aroused [end page 217] (morally and authentically) by a book as he may be waken and aroused by actual crying and bitter shrieks" (Scholem 1987:243).

Opening up to the suffering other is a prime communication dynamic that extricates man from solipsism. It posits both healer and sufferer in the grace of an authentic encounter within a present that becomes continuous, in that it lends meaning outside sequential time both to the life of the helper and to that of the person helped. Thus, Mother Theresa, treating the lepers of Calcutta, saw in them the image of the suffering Son of God. This might lend a new interpretation to St. John's dictum: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God needed communication with man about his predicament and he needed man to effect a mending, a Kabbalist *Tikkun*, through creativity and theurgic revelation. The *causa causans* for the sacrifice was, therefore, the crossing between time and eternity effected by the crucifixion, so that the Godhead's anguish outside of time would be heard and heeded by man within history. As each human being or, for that matter, each creature is epistemologically transcendental to ego, the feeling of the suffering of the other and a readiness to respond to it is a dialogue with both the transcendental and temporal Son of God. The covenant between the man-God and God-man represented by any authentic dialogue is wrought by common suffering.

THE SOLIPSISM OF ARTAUD

The solipsism of Artaud was reinforced by his body-centered *Weltanschauung*, his belief that the human body, or rather his body, was the only ontological reality. His inability and lack of desire to solve, at least for himself, the paradox of solipsism led him to anoint himself the Bishop of Rodez; later as the savior, he finally held the megalomaniac view that he was the center of the universe and that all Creation and its creatures were just marionettes playing for him in a command performance.

Artaud's most ambitious goal was to reunite by somatic alchemy Man and Woman into a self-sufficient hermaphrodite (Artaud [1976] 1982). Thence, the solipsistic Artaud would not need to pursue the pain bearing love of another person and the conflict-ridden sex between male and female, but would be a self-satisfying Ouroboros. As for transcendence, Artaud professed a one-upmanship on the dialectical concept of the Christian triunity and the *coincidentia oppositorum* of alchemy. His unity was completed by the annihilation of multiplicity and the "big-crunch" like compression of all Creation into the potential of timeless, spaceless singularity (Artaud [1976] 1982:69-105). Artaud was certainly an existentialist in his conception of life, of being thrown unto death with fear and anxiety. This anxiety was both somatic and spiritual. He could remember it, since he was sick with meningitis at the age of five. He writes:

Je me souviens depuis l'âge de huit ans et même avant, m'être toujours demandé qui j'étais, ce que j'étais et pourquoi vivre... Je me demandais [end page 218] pourquoi j'étais là – et ce que c'était d'être là et en quoi la question se pose et pourquoi se poser la question d'être ou de n'être pas, lorsqu'on vit et qu'on est là... Je me demande ce qui est Moi, non pas moi au milieu de mon corps... mais en quoi peut consister ce moi qu'on appelle être, être un être parce que j'ai un corps? M. habitude, M. nausé, M. manie, M. dégoût, M. crampe, M. vertige, M. fessée, M. calottes vont de pair avec M. insurgé, M. réponse, M. larmes, M. suffoqué dans une âme scandalisée – pour composer un moi d'enfant, une conscience petite enfant, la conscience d'un petit enfant (Artaud 1986:187). ¹¹

He did, however, carry out a phenomenological reduction of both life and death, and psychoanalyzed himself out of his fear of them. He followed his alter-ego – Paolo Uccello, or as he called him in his writings, Paul of the Birds – in what he imagined the master to have had done: He traced all the paths of his thoughts within his body. Thence, he lived towards his death without pain, with a slow disintegration parallel to the entropy of his body (Artaud 1986:31). His choice manner, however, of rebelling against death was creativity. Like van Gogh's painting, Artaud's writing was an affront to death. Art and life were synonymous. For him authentic art was not for entertainment; rather, it must lend meaning to the life of the artist and, through him, to others who open up to his creativity. Above all, art is not an ego-trip for applause and recognition, but a means for dialogue, for fusion with other human beings, for feeling their body and soul, for permitting them to breath and tremble in unison with the artist (Artaud 1986:190). One also lifts oneself by authentic art onto synchronicity, to partake of the authentic domain, where all authentic art is stored forever, for exposure to kindred souls attuned to the artist. "Madness" for Artaud was a means to widen and deepen his consciousness until it soared to the Authentic Domain in transcendence (Artaud 1986:186).

" *Il n'y a pas d'autre issue a la pensée pure que la mort,*" ¹² said Artaud (1986:38), and he thus revealed himself as an existentialist: a companion to Heidegger, who saw being as a *Geworfenheit zum Tod mit Angst und Sorge*, and to Camus, who regarded the dilemma whether to commit suicide or not as the most important issue in philosophy. He was not afraid of death since love and its sublimation into creativity confronts and thwarts the apprehension of death (Artaud 1986).

A revelation induced "madness" can lead to conflict between the artist's new consciousness and its previous state. Yet, this changed consciousness may be the basis for innovative creativity, and the triggered revelation may well be the foundation of a deeper and richer art. Hence, revelation is an energizing dialectic for creativity. Still, the relationship between madness and creativity, as we have stated, is not linear but rather curvilinear. Some madness may induce the widening of consciousness and fuel revelations, which would feed creativity, but an excessive madness could be an alternative to creativity, leading to autism, solipsism, and self-destruction; this actually happened to both van Gogh and Artaud. Van Gogh went mad only when he could not paint any more, but Artaud chose to renounce creativity for madness, which he believed [end page 219] would expand his realm of consciousness and inner awareness. However, he paid a price. He swallowed his tongue, so to speak (Artaud 1986:163). He forfeited reason and logic, and when he tried to communicate again in the catastrophic theater hall encounter with his friends, all he could emit were blood-curdling shrieks, which were incomprehensible, embarrassing, and harassing to his audience. As for van Gogh, Artaud described his last painting, *Wheat Field and Crows*, in the most heartbreaking of metaphors. Since van Gogh knew already that he would commit suicide shortly, the crows were carrying away the evil that could not touch him anymore. Indeed, the crows were

running away since down there, on the bloodstained earth, is death, and the low skies are equally ominous. The blood that flows from van Gogh's gunshot wound lent the bloody tonus to the earth, and the dim light was already leaving the field dirty with a mixture of putrid wine and blood.

Artaud's most interesting innovation is mytho-empirical, surrealist and ideational; it is related to his identification with Paolo Uccello, whose fresco of Noah's Ark depicts it as a refuge for the mad, the deviant, and the pariah. A *stultifera navis* in the synchronic Authentic Domain outside history. This Noah's Ark contains the authentic reservoir by mythogenes of creativity stored in synchronicity, and waiting for the "right conditions and opportunities" to land back into history and fructify the wastelands. Mytho-empirically, this Noah's Ark is a structured limbo between the hell of history and timeless paradise. The raven belongs to the powers of demiurgical evil. When released, it did not come back. The dove came back with an olive branch – a creative mythogenic symbol of an I-Thou dialogue with history. Also, the Midrash points out that Noah, before coming out of the ark, forced the hand of God and squeezed out of him a promise that he would not be molested when emerging from the ark to resettle within history. Hence, the creative innovators, shunned and persecuted in their lifetimes, would bequeath their creations back into history only when the artistic power cliques and establishments did not interfere.

The process of relegating authentic creativity onto the Authentic Domain within the mytho-empirical Noah's Ark starts with the mythogenes of longing and experience, which "lift" the work of art onto timeless synchronicity. This is the artistic mythification of reality, lending metaphysical significance to history. This is very much like the Hassidic "worship in the concrete," which sanctifies profane reality. Artaud understood that life can gain meaning, if at all, through *coincidentia oppositorum* by means of art. The "philosophers's stone" of alchemy is the artistic achievement which transforms the commonplace into an artistic triumph. Indeed, Artaud himself longs to partake of the transcendental Noah's Ark by a "*denudation epidermique*" and an emergence from his ego boundary, which is clinically known as one of the manifestations of autistic schizophrenia.

The ontology in Noah's Ark does not need verbal communication. It is the mytho-empirical projection of pantheistic early orality, or rather the metaphysical womb of the structured Authentic Domain. It stores the seeds of art and culture to disseminate again [end page 220] the atrophied, degenerate, or corrupt cultures, wiped out as dysfunctional by the pitiless decree of evolution. Artaud existed in the spiritual ark, away from and beyond his historical body. He escaped the drudgery of daily life and exchanged it for the moratorium of madness. His Noah's Ark was a place of deliverance from infernal history. It was a delving into the "mystical orchard" from which one may not reemerge. Artaud remained in Noah's Ark, never returning, until his suicide.

Noah's Ark was believed by some church fathers, notably Origen, Tertulian, and Augustine, to be a permanent haven designated by divine wisdom to save humanity from periodic disasters, which could not have been prevented by the good God. This rather Manichean and Gnostic approach may have influenced Uccello, who depicts Noah's Ark as filled – contrary to the Scriptures – mostly with sick, mutilated, and dejected humans, and led by an authoritarian, majestic figure standing as if at the helm of a ship, who was in all probability the image of Augustine himself ([Borsi and Borsi 1994:185-187](#)). Noah's Ark, as a cosmic place of refuge encapsuled outside of time, was adopted and elaborated by Artaud, replete with a psychotic identification with Uccello. Uccello, the bird, felt himself transformed into synchronicity outside reality. He became a Noah saved from temporality ([Artaud 1986:39](#)).

Artaud was not alone in Noah's Ark, but was flanked by the luminaries of the Italian Baroque: Donatello and Brunelleschi ([Artaud 1986:26](#)). These creative innovators, together with many

others, indeed countless others since the capacity of a timeless and spaceless capsule is infinite, cruise eternally outside history, seeking the proper recipients of the endless varieties of creative mythogenes stored in the Authentic Domain of Noah's Ark. The landing of the mythogenic dove onto a historical time and place depends on background factors hospitable to the seedling mythogenes, enabling them to take root on their new host. Of special importance was Uccello's portrayal of Noah's Ark as a haven for deviants, contrary to the Darwinian conception of the evolutionary selection of the fittest. This is in line with the hypothesis hinted at by Artaud, and developed by us in the present paper, about the link between deviance and creative innovation. If indeed the outcasts, the pariahs, have a greater chance to see things differently, both materially and aesthetically, and hence to innovate, the admittance of the socially divergent into Noah's Ark is evolutionarily functional for creativity and innovation. Hence, the historical *stultifera navis*, which was the total institutional solution for the incarceration, indeed the elimination, of deviants, sinners, and insane people of medieval communities, was mytho-empirically transformed into Noah's Ark, the ahistorical refuge of the mythogenic structures of creative innovations.

Madness for Artaud was a means of extricating himself out of history and onto synchronicity, the atemporal refuge of Noah's Ark. There, with the mythogenic innovations of the nonconformist, stigmatized, and inspired madman, he would be stored in cultural limbo, outside history, until the olive branch in the beak of the dove signified it was time for his innovations to land back into history, where they would be welcome and accepted, not rejected and ignored as before. Noah's Ark is the mytho-empirical [end page 221] storage of the great innovations in art and science, which were liable to "rock the boat," to upset the cultural system in their time. Hence, Noah's Ark is the mytho-empirical projection of the Authentic Domain and serves as a storage for extreme innovations; when the time comes for the acceptance of these innovations, they will enter the more favorable atmosphere and be readily accepted by the artistic and cultural institutions.

ENDNOTES

* Direct correspondence to Professor Shlomo Shoham, Tel Aviv University, Faculty of Law, Rmat Aviv, Tel Aviv, Israel 69978 (email: shoham@post.tau.ac.il).

1 . "What is an authentic deviant? It's a person who preferred becoming mad in the social sense in order not to forfeit a certain superior idea of human dignity" [Translation prepared by the author].

2 . "But there is somebody who always loved me for the good that was in me. Not only in my body but also in my soul. This somebody is called God and Jesus Christ. All the priests had always had great tenderness for my devotion and my piety. I didn't know this but it dawned on me that all the masses in the world have been performed for my piety" [Translation prepared by the author].

3 . "A letter from the 7th of April 1928. My solitude has no name and no sense and it doubles from the horror of thinking that I have always been by myself and that my life has never been complete and I have always been a stranger to myself" [Translation prepared by the author].

4 . "Those who told him one day: and now, enough with you van Gogh, to the grave, we have had enough of your genius, as for eternity, it's for us eternity" [Translation prepared by the author].

5 . "I am in my body" [Translation prepared by the author].

6. Talmud Ta'anit, 17.

7. The core of Rabi Nachman's doctrine is based on Lurianic Kabala and hence is relevant to this contest.

8. Talmud Sanhedrin, 37, side A.

9 . Talmud Ta'anit, 24, side A.

10. .J.I. Safrin, Megillat Setarim (1994). Zohair Hai; p.1; Side B. **[end page 222]**

11 . "I remember from the age of eight, and even before that, asking myself always who I was, what I was I and why go on living. . . I asked myself why I was there – why being there and what was it being there and on what one poses the question and why pose the question of being or not being since one lives and one is there. . . I am asking myself who is me and what is not me within my body. . . But what consists this me, what does it feel what one calls being, to be a being because one one has a body? Me habit, me nausea, me manic, me disgusting, me cramps, me vertigo, me shitty, me docile which goes together with me rebellious, me answering, me tears, me stifled in a scandalized soul – to compose a me of a child, a conscience of a small child, a small conscience of a child" [Translation prepared by the author].

12 . "There is no other issue to the purity of thought beside death" [Translation prepared by the author].

REFERENCES

Artaud, Antonin. 1947 . *Van Gogh: Le Suicidé de la Société*. Paris: K éditeur.

----- . 1958 . *The Theater and Its Double*. Translated by M. C. Richards. New York: Grove Press.

----- . [1976] 1982 . *OEuvres Complètes*. Paris: Gallimard.

----- . 1986. *Revue Oblique consacrée a Antonin Artaud*, edited by R. Borderie and I. Pauvert. Paris: Editions Har Po.

Borsi , Franco and Stefano Borsi. 1994. *Paolo Uccello*. Translated by E. Powell. New York: H. N. Abrams.

Camus , Albert. 1962 . *La Femme Adultère*. Paris: Gallinard, Bibliothèque de la Plaiade.

Foerster , Werner. 1969. *Die Gnosis*. Zürich: Artemis Verlag.

Jonas , Hans. 2001. *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (3rd edition). Boston: Beacon Press.

Green , Arthur. 1981. *Tormented Master: A Life of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav*. New York: Schocken Books.

Idel, Moshe. 1988. *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kierkegaard, Søren. 1941 . *Training in Christianity, and the Edifying Discourse which "Accompanied" It*. Translated by W. Lowrie. London: Oxford University Press. **[end page 223]**

----- . 1968 . *Kierkegaard's Attack upon "Christendom," 1854-1855*. Translated by W. Lowrie. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Merleau-Ponty , Maurice. [1962] 1994. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by C. Smith. London: Routledge.

Sartre , Jean Paul. [1957] 1972. *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness*. Translated by F. Williams and R. Kirkpatrick. New York: Octagon Books.

Scholem, Gershom G. 1965 . *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*. Translated by R. Mannheim. New York: Schocken Books.

----- . 1973 . *Sabbatai Sevi; The Mystical Messiah, 1626-1676*. London: Routledge and K. Paul.

----- . 1974 . *Kabbalah*. New York: Quadrangle.

----- . 1987 . *Origins of the Kabbalah*. Translated by A. Arkush. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Shoham , S. Giora. 1979. *The Myth of Tantalus: A Scaffolding for an Ontological Personality Theory*. St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press. **[end page 224]**

FIGURE ONE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRIME MOVERS OF THE SELF AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL PARADOX

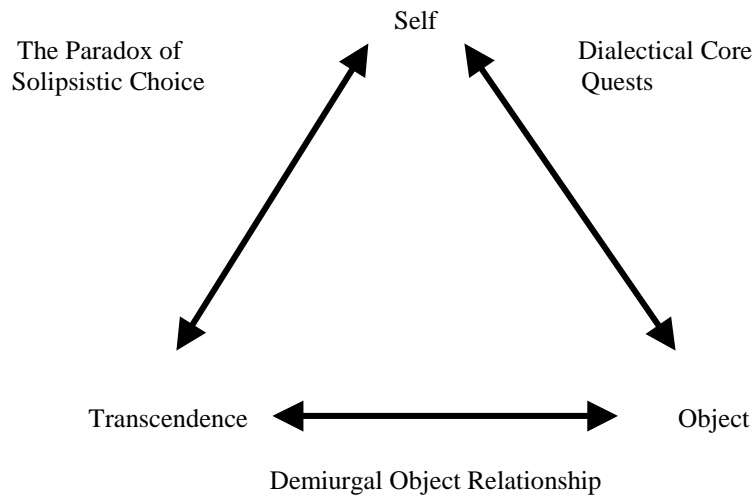


FIGURE TWO: A RECAPITULATION OF THE TRIANGLE OF PRIME MOVERS

