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DEPICTION OF VIOLENCE ONSTAGE: PHYSICAL, SEXUAL AND VERBAL DIMENSIONS OF VIOLENCE IN SARAH KANE'S EXPERIENTIAL THEATRE

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Abstract

Throughout her career Sarah Kane forces people to see the logic of public and private violence in a world of atrocities. Through a combination of form and content her theatre offers a radical theatrical experience of extreme violence. Kane's plays often depict dimensions of violence, and organised cruelty. Physical, sexual, and verbal dimensions of violence depicted in Sarah Kane's experiential theatre are real accounts of world brutality in general. In *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* Kane depicts the physical dimensions of violence which contain scenes of rape, abuse, cannibalism, eye-gouging, torture, mutilation, annihilation, castration, addiction, madness, trauma, depression, and horror. Kane's next plays deal specifically with the problem of violence which makes change impossible. In her last two plays, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, Kane portrays the offstage representation of cruelty. She represents violence through language. Taking Sarah Kane's experiential theatre as a main case this paper explores physical, sexual, and verbal dimensions of violence inherent in her plays.

Key Words: British Theatre, Sarah Kane, Experiential Theatre, Violence, Cruelty.

*We live in a world of rampant cruelty, waste and injustice; we see it in every place, at every level.***

Sarah Kane (1971-1999) is one of the most important playwrights of British theatre in the 1990s whose experiential theatre often depicts the scenes of violence and cruelty. She "is considered to be the most important British playwright of the 1990s, definitely the most radical" (Saunders, 2002: 134) and stands out as an excellent prototypical figure of In-Yer-Face theatre. In the short period of time between 1995 and 1999 she wrote five plays and a short film (*Skin*). In her first three plays *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* she shocks her audiences with excessive scenes of sexualised, verbalized violence and violated bodies with the images of war, torture, rape, abuse, obsessive love, sexual craving, betrayal, humiliation, massacre, repression, atrocity, cannibalism, pain and death. Besides these physically and sexually violent plays, in her last two texts *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, violence is verbalized.

Presenting a vast number of matters fundamental to many aspects of postmodern life and holding up a mirror to the question of violence which characterizes the postmodern condition, Sarah Kane's theatre confronts people with its experimental theatrics that focuses on physical and sexual pain. Thus the defining feature of Sarah Kane's theatre is its experiential quality. "Experiential is the reference point Kane herself used for the theatre she wanted to make... It is a theatre that must be lived through" (Wallace, 2010: 89). Her theatre puts people "in direct physical contact with thought and feeling" (Kane, 1998) and forces them to experience the graphic violence depicted on stage. According to Sierz experiential theatre:

Describes the kind of drama, usually put on in studio spaces, that aims to give audiences the experience of actually having lived through the actions depicted on stage. (But not literally!) Instead of allowing spectators to just sit

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** Sarah Kane, in, Nils Tabert, "Gesprach mit Sarah Kane", *Playspotting: Die Londoner Theaterszene der 90er*, Reinbeck, 1998.

back and contemplate the play, experiential theatre grabs its audiences and forces them to confront the reality of the feelings shown to them. (Sierz, 2010)

Sarah Kane uses the term 'experiential' to describe her works which often explore violence and sexuality. In this process Jeremy Weller's Grassmarket Project *Mad* (1992) in Edinburgh has a big effect on Kane. On many occasions she emphasises the need for experiential theatre which should completely deal with the roots of evils and injustices that exist in an inhuman world. After watching Weller's *Mad* she makes this ideal clear as follows:

It was a very unusual piece of theatre because it was totally experiential as opposed to speculative. As an audience member, I was taken to a place of extreme mental discomfort and distress and then popped out the other end. *Mad* took me to the hell, and the night I saw it I made a decision about the kind of theatre I wanted to make- experiential. (Sierz, 1999, in, Saunders, 2009: 47)

Kane's plays often explore the acts of physical, sexual and verbal dimensions of violence. But violence is only a tool for Kane through which she criticizes the injustices of the world. She is not interested in violence for the sake of violence. "The ferocity images within Kane's texts suck both the performers and audience into a catastrophic cycle of life and death. Kane invites their participation not to shock them with the rawness of violence for violence's sake, but rather to break open a deep exploration of the lack of compassion in the human experience" (Moshy, 2008: 30). Her aim by depicting violence on stage is to show the real sources and harm effects of it upon the human body and spirit. Her attitude to violence is very clear as she declared in her interview with Rodolfo di Giammarco:

[...] Violence is the most urgent problem we have as species, and the most urgent thing we need to confront. Personally, I say there is nothing better to write about. I don't like violent films, that's true, and I don't like violent scenes; and the reason I don't like violence is when I happen to see *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction* or the other films of that type I feel like using violence. When I wrote *Blasted* I tried to discuss what it means to be violent and to suffer violence, and it's like the music that's played when you're cutting off an ear. You are in a state of extreme suffering; it's not possible you can like it for the music. (Giammarco, 1997)

In scrutinizing the corrupted history of human being, Sarah Kane's plays focus on violence as the single most significant aspect of history. Most of her characters are the victims of cruelty and aggression which characterizes the postmodern life. Thus Sarah Kane always has a specific purpose for using violence in her plays. She uses violence as a shock tactic to inspire her audiences not to sit idly by and to take action against the atrocities of life. According to Sarah Kane there is no reason for human violence against human in the world. She doesn't believe in the idea that violence is a natural phenomenon for human as species in the same way as animals. In the light of this idea she uses theatre as a think tank arena where she criticizes and discusses the cycle of meaningless violence and the crimes of humanity.

Kane's plays are filled with the explicit scenes of ceaseless violence, cruelty, torture and endless cycle of cannibalism. These visceral images flourish in her most discussed play *Blasted* (1995), a woman (Cate) is raped by a man (Ian) and then Ian is raped by a Soldier on stage. Besides the male and homosexual rape again in *Blasted* she shows blatant acts of cruelty with the bombing of the hotel room which symbolizes the war in Bosnia, the sucking scene of Ian's eyes, Ian's eating the death body of a baby and Soldier's shooting himself through the head. Kane's depiction of onstage violence in her groundbreaking play *Blasted* is severely criticized by scholars, critics and audiences. The critical reaction to the play's overtone of violence was negative. One of the most quoted reviews was Jack Tinker's. Tinker, writing in the *Daily Mail* called the play "this disgusting feast of filth" (Tinker, 1995) which is accepted as the slogan of Sarah Kane's bad fame. Accused of showing the extreme aspects and endemic depictions of violence on stage, Kane defends herself with the following comment:

The violence in this play is completely de-glamorized. It's just presented... Take the glamour of violence and it becomes utterly repulsive. Would people seriously prefer it if the violence were appealing? You'd think people would

be able to tell the difference between something that's about violence and something that's violent. I don't think it's violent at all. It's quite a peaceful play. (Nightingale, 1995)

The playwright's statement denies the reviewers reactions because she writes *Blasted* in direct response to the physical, spiritual and sexual dimensions of violence of Bosnian war in former Yugoslavia after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism in the 1990s. In this regard in the play violence is not an aberration but a concrete reality of the war. In *Blasted* she draws parallels between one couple's violated relationship in a hotel room in Leeds and ethnic cleansing and rape camps of a civil war at the centre of Europe. As Sarah Kane points out:

I think with *Blasted* that it was a direct response to material as it began to happen... I knew that I wanted to write a play about a man and a woman in a hotel room, and that there was a complete power imbalance which resulted in a rape. I'd been doing it for a few days and I switched on the news one night while I was having a break from writing, and there was a very old woman's face in Srebrenica just weeping and looking into the camera and saying- 'please, please, somebody help us, because we need the UN to come here and help us'. I thought this is absolutely terrible and I'm writing this ridiculous play about two people in a hotel room. What's the point of carrying on? So this is what I wanted to write about, yet somehow this story about the man and the woman is still attracting me. So I thought what could possibly be the connection between a common rape in a Leeds hotel room and what's happening in Bosnia? And suddenly the penny dropped and I thought of course it's obvious, one is the seed and the other is the tree. I do think that the seeds of full-scale war can be found in peace-time civilisation. (Rebellato, 1998)

Blasted presents depictions of graphic cruelty deeply embedded in daily life but just offers extreme examples of the violence. It focuses on different ways of violence on a larger scale and represents the violent history of posthumous society. Kane's purpose is "to be absolutely truthful about abuse and violence" (Aston, 2003: 85), to analyze the anatomy of violence, dramatize the logic of cruelty and change it. She thinks that "if we can experience something through art then we might be able to change our future...If theatre can change lives, then by implication it can change society, since we're all part of it" (Stephenson and Langridge, 1997: 134). She strongly believes that theatre by itself cannot change the world but can change people. This stance is obvious in Kane's other words:

For me the function of the theatre is to allow experimentation through art in a way that we are not able to experiment effectively in real life. If we experiment in the theatre, such as an act of extreme violence, then maybe we can repulse it as such, to prevent the act of extreme violence out on the street. I believe that people can change and that it is possible for us as a species to change our future. It's for this that I write what I write. (Giammarco, 1997)

According to Kane "there isn't anything you can't represent on stage. If you are saying that you can't represent something, you are saying you can't talk about it, you are denying its existence" (Stephenson and Langridge, 1997: 134). Viewed from this perspective Sarah Kane's representation of violence "attempts to occupy a position in theatrical representation that is potentially impossible" (Carney, 2005: 288). In this regard depicting various types of violence onstage, *Blasted* aims at making people become conscious of different kinds of brutality. Addressing the issue of rape *Blasted* demonstrates the dimensions of sexual and physical violence. With the explicit four different scenes of rape Sarah Kane represents the unrepresentable onstage. Two of these violent acts are clear and two of them are hidden. The first rape is a male one against female. In Part One Ian rapes Cate. Staging the experience of male rape against woman, which becomes a symbol of a domestic rape in Britain, Sarah Kane demonstrates the sexualised violence and links it with the horrific images of war and rape camps in Bosnia. The second rape in the play is a male to male one. In the second part of *Blasted*, paradoxically, Soldier rapes Ian. Here Soldier's homosexual rape stands for as a weapon of war and proves Kane's 'poetic justice'. The third rape is hidden in the words of Soldier's war memories. He remembers that in the war, enemy soldiers raped his girlfriend. The fourth rape is hidden in spectators' imagination. It is about Cate's possible rape by the enemy when she is offstage in order to find some food.

Sarah Kane uses violence to provoke spectators to the brutality and mutilation prevalent in the world. In this regard *Blasted* acknowledges the traumatizing events of contemporary societies. It is just a depiction of a brutal reality which explores violent images and violated bodies all around the world. Kane shows blatant acts of violence onstage in *Blasted* that is very disturbing and hard to watch. Besides the vivid representation of rape scenes, in the play, physical violence is shown with Soldier's sucking out of Ian's eyes with the example of Gloucester in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, shooting his brain out, Ian's eating of his own eyes and cannibalistic eating of the death baby in order to survive. Staging a catalogue of inhumanity and violence in *Blasted*, Sarah Kane asserts the chaotic atmosphere of the war, ethnic cleansing and barbarism of Western civilisation in general. As she remarks: "War is confused and illogical...Acts of violence simply happen in life, they don't have a dramatic build-up and they are horrible. That's how it is in the play" (Bayley, 1995: 20).

Few modern dramatists create landscape quite as vividly as Sarah Kane. According to David Greig Sarah Kane, in her plays, "mapped the darkest and most unforgiving internal landscapes: landscapes of violation, of loneliness, of power, of mental collapse, and most consistently, the landscape of love" (Greig, 2001: p. ix). In this manner she "depicts sex and violence as manifestations of deplorable social structures" (Sellar, 1996: 34). Kane's lust for experiential theatre in order to shake her audiences with the images of violated bodies and sexualised violence finds solid ground in her second play *Phaedra's Love* (1996). Like *Blasted* the play convincingly demonstrates extremely violent acts onstage. This time she challenges audiences by using brutal, incest and rape scenes in the light of the issues such as obsessive love, depression, revenge, trauma, suicide, murder and death.

Phaedra's Love is the contemporized version of Seneca's classical tragedy *Phaedra*. Based on Seneca's tale, Sarah Kane turns her interest of depicting violence onstage from a civil war in *Blasted* into a sexually corrupt Royal family. She "wanted to keep the classical concerns of Greek theatre-love, hate, death, revenge, suicide- but use a completely contemporary urban poetry" (Benedict, 1996). The play is about Phaedra's sexual obsession and obsessive love to her step son Hippolytus; Strophe's (Phaedra's daughter) incest relationship with the king and his son, Phaedra's suicide with a note accusing Hippolytus of raping her, king Theseus's long for revenge, his brutal acts, violent destruction and at last all of the major characters' horrible death.

In the course of the play Hippolytus is always in his room. He watches violent films unemotionally, plays with electronic games, eats hamburger, examines his socks, masturbates and have sex with women that he does not know. Phaedra loves him and wants give her body as a present. She performs fellatio on Hippolytus obsessively in order to show her romantic love. But Hippolytus does not believe and rejects Phaedra's love. After coming in her mouth he brutally "releases her head" (Kane, 2001: 81). Phaedra learns Strophe's sexual contact with Hippolytus and hangs herself leaving a note accusing Hippolytus of raping her. King Theseus turns back in anger; he looks Phaedra's dead body, "tears at his clothes, then skin, then hair, more and more frantically until he is exhausted, but he does not cry" (Kane, 2001: 97). In prison, Hippolytus doesn't accept Priest's "offer of forgiveness and asserts a philosophy of living by a creed of absolute honesty" (Saunders, 2009: 22). Priest undoes his trousers and performs oral sex on Hippolytus. In the final scene Theseus inflames a mob of citizens to eviscerate and kill Hippolytus and then cuts him from groin to chest. Strophe knows Phaedra lied. For this reason she comes to defend Hippolytus. But Theseus first rapes Strophe unconsciously while the crowd "watch and cheer" (Kane, 2001: 97). When Theseus has finished he cuts her throat. "Man 1 pulls down Hippolytus' trousers. Woman 2 cuts of his genitals. They are thrown onto the barbecue. A child takes them off the barbecue and throws them at another child" (Kane, 2001: 101). After realizing that he has raped and killed Strophe Theseus commits suicide. "The play ends with Hippolytus being castrated and disembowelled by his former subjects" (Saunders, 2009: 22) and an impracticable final stage direction "a vulture descends and begins to eat his body" (Kane, 2001: 103).

In *Phaedra's Love* Sarah Kane uses unbelievable brutal acts to confront audiences with devastating results of violence of the contemporary world. With all these shocking, brutal and incest scenes in the play, Sarah Kane conveys the moments of violated bodies and sexualised violence by staging the impossible. As Sean Carney maintains, Kane's "work attempts to occupy a position in theatrical representation that is potentially impossible" (Carney, 2005: 288).

Phaedra's Love serves as a decisive turning point for Kane's experiential theatre. She examines different theatrical styles in each of her plays. She creates a "hybrid staging aesthetic" that intermingles "the known techniques of cinematically influenced stage realism with the yet unknown (for Kane) yet

more suggestive, theatricalised representation that she exploits in her third play, *Cleansed*” (Campbell, 2010: 174). In *Cleansed* (1998) Sarah Kane’s concern about theatricalised representation of violence and depicting its apocalyptic form goes even further. Using the image of love in an extreme way as a major topic in *Cleansed*, Sarah Kane depicts violated bodies and sexualised violence onstage.

From *Blasted* onwards Kane’s predilection for violence takes critical outrage. She is accused of making an investment in cruelty and violence. For this reason she doesn’t receive a widespread support. Like *Blasted* and *Phaedra’s Love*, *Cleansed* serves disturbing scenes extremely difficult to watch. In *Cleansed* depicting graphic violence onstage goes even further. For this reason it is regarded as Sarah Kane’s most violent play. Like her earlier plays, Kane depicts acts of physical and sexual brutality lively in *Cleansed*. Tinker seems to be the source of evil in the play and most of the brutal acts come from his hand. Tinker tests the endurance and love borders of inmates, punishes their betrayal with torture. “Tinker either carries out or inaugurates a series of punishments that range from the ritualised dismemberment of Carl and murder of his lover Rod, to the torture of Grace under the guise of helping her to surgically resemble her dead brother Graham” (Saunders, 2009: 29).

Cleansed is set in a former university campus or a concentration camp where its inmates all love each other and suffer from this issue. These people “try to save themselves through love” (Sierz, 2000: 112) and are cleansed from the world through torture, pain and death by Tinker who is the Big Brother-like character and sadistic torturer of the institution. As a boss Tinker has a great power to control them as he watches them everywhere. He violates people not only physically but also sexually. Throughout the play Tinker tests the limits of people, their love and punishes them through acts of cruelty. In the course of the play Tinker first heats up then injects heroin to Graham’s eyes and finally pushes him into death; he slices Carl’s tongue, cuts off his hands and feet, mutilates him, pushes his anus a broomstick, transplants his penis onto Grace’s body and slices Grace’s breasts; kills Rod by cutting his throat; holds a knife to Robin’s throat, forces him to feed with a box of chocolate, psychologically tortures, threatens him and causes his suicide. While unseen men beat and then a Voice rapes Carl, Tinker directs them. In the scene with the erotic dancer Tinker first masturbates and then rapes her. Besides these extreme acts of violence in *Cleansed* people are beaten, rats eat their amputated organs, have sex and masturbate.

In the light of Tinker’s sadistic actions it should be noted that *Cleansed* is itself a powerful symbol of violated bodies and sexualised violence onstage. Most of the violent punishments in the play are performed on the stage not offstage. In *Cleansed* Sarah Kane portrays the dark side of human nature. She creates a hell and makes Tinker its owner. In the play Tinker represents devil and he becomes the source of evil. Through his brutal acts Sarah Kane pictures the hellish world which she always wants to escape but cannot achieve:

I’ve only ever written to escape from hell- and it’s never worked- but at the other end of it when you sit there and watch something and think that’s the most perfect expression of the hell that I felt then maybe it was worth it.
(Rebellato, 1998)

Representation of violence, cruelty and list of terrible acts operate all of Kane’s plays. “Each of her plays explores, consistently and fiercely, similar content: the difficulty of responding to immeasurable experiences, like love, violence, suffering; and the challenge of making a claim about one’s needs and desires that does not do violence to others” (Fordyce, 2010: 103). According to Annette Pankratz, “Sarah Kane’s plays pull the rug out from under our feet. They confront us with disconcerting worlds full of suffering, existential despair and violence” (Pankratz, 2010: 149). Kane’s focus on the physical, sexual and verbal dimensions of violence has a basic purpose: “to force others to think through the ethical paradoxes of their lives” (Singer, 2004: 141). To achieve her goal as a dramatist she writes her last two plays *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* in which verbal dimensions of violence takes place instead of graphic depiction of the issue.

Sarah Kane’s fourth play *Crave* premiered at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh in August of 1998. Kane portrays experimental use of verbal violence in *Crave* as a metaphor to depict the separated self and “the disintegration of a human mind under the pressures of love, loss and desire” (Cohn, 2001: 44) on stage. In the text all of the characters heighten the verbal dimensions of violence. *Crave* is a disturbing poetic text. It is also experimental in style with its musical and poetic language. With the text Sarah Kane searches “how a poem could still be dramatic” (Thielemans, 1999). Additionally it has no specified characters, no stage directions, no reason and cause relationship, no time, place, plot and action, no traditional sense of dialogue. For these reasons it resembles the play poetry more than a play.

Crave has just four speakers with the letters A, B, C, and M speaking in front of the audiences and craving for something. There is no conventional dialogue in the text and the speech is interrupted by long noises. In this regard A as s/he says a paedophile and an abuser, C is an abused, M is a woman who craves for a child, and B is a man who wants to be seduced by an older woman. Sarah Kane makes clear the general characteristics of voices in her interview with Dan Rebellato:

To me A was always an older man, M was always an older woman, B was always a younger man and C was a woman... A, B, C and M do have specific meanings which I am prepared to tell you. A is many things: the author and abuser, because they're the same thing; Aleister as in Aleister Crowley, who wrote some interesting books that you might like to read, and the Anti-Christ. My brother came up with arse-hole, which I thought was good. There was also the actor who I originally wrote it for, who was called Andrew, so that was how A came to life. M was simply mother, B was boy and C was child. But I didn't want to write these things down, because then I thought they'll get fixed in those things forever and they'll never change. (Rebellato, 1998)

Crave foregrounds violent images in the memory of four speakers who crave for their desires and cry for their past happiness. 'A' craves and cries for his lost love, 'B' craves for 'M' to seduce him, 'C' craves to "buy a new tape recorder and blank tapes" (Kane, 2001: 174) to start a new life and 'M' craves for a true love and a child. The voices in the text all crave but their cravings have no real solutions. Nothing fulfils their desires, nothing changes their situation, they cannot control their existence and they just have to wait like Vladimir and Estragon in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. For them the best solution to start a new life, "be free of memory" (Kane, 2001: 198) and their violent past is death. They all want to die because it is the only way of absolute happiness. This violent solution which seems to be the only act that voices can control is evident in their speeches:

C: Let the day perish in which I was born

Let the blackness of the night terrify it

Let the stars of its dawn be dark

May it not see the eyelids of the morning

Because it did not shut the door of my mother's womb. (Kane, 2001: 189)...What have they done to me? What have they done to me? (Kane, 2001: 191)... I feel nothing, nothing. (Kane, 2001: 199)

B: Kill me.

A: Free-falling

B: Into the light

C: Bright white light

A: World without end

C: You're dead to me

M: Glorious. Glorious.

B: And ever shall be

A: Happy

B: So happy

C: Happy and free. (Kane, 2001: 200)

As is now widely acknowledged, "*Crave* marks a move away from the physicality of the earlier plays towards explicitly interior, psychological spaces" (Wallace, 2010: 96). Unlike *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* in *Crave* there is no graphic physical and sexual violence. For this reason it receives positive reactions from the critics. For instance Nicholas De Jongh, writing in the *Evening Standard* states that "Sarah Kane has been born again as a playwright. She has turned her back on those scenes of violence and suffering with which *Blasted* and *Cleansed*, her first two headline seizing plays, were so

lavishly studied” (De Jongh, 1998). After writing *Crave* Sarah Kane is regarded as a real writer and the text as her most beautiful and hopeful piece. But these positive reactions surprises Kane. She doesn't believe that *Crave* is a hopeful play, instead for her; it is the most pessimistic text she has written:

I actually think *Crave*- where there is no physical violence whatsoever, it's a very silent play- is the most despairing of things I've written so far. At some point somebody says in it 'something has lifted', and from that moment on it becomes apparently more and more hopeful. But actually the characters have all given up. It s the first one of my plays in which people go, 'fuck this, I'm out of here'. (Kane, in, Tabert, 1998)

Sarah Kane's dramatic world is full of violence. Kane's texts “completely replace the visual impact that her cruelty had provoked with language. They not only depict the body on the verge of disintegration... but the body of the text is under attack as well” (De Vos, 2010: 131). Following on the theatrical experimentations in *Crave* Sarah Kane's posthumously staged last text *4.48 Psychosis* (June 2000) searches the darkest regions of human psyche and questions the possibility “for a person to be born in the wrong body” (Kane, 2001: 215) and “to be born in the wrong era” (Kane, 2001: 215).

As a poetic text *4.48 Psychosis* is beyond the traditional dramatic conventions. It has no explicitly defined character(s), no dramatic dialogue, no time and action, no plot, no setting, no stage directions and a linear plot. The text is about love, despair, trauma, psychoses, and dissolution of a mind, depression, psychological destruction, mental illness and suicide. According to David Greig it “is a report from a region of the mind that most of us hope never to visit but from which many people cannot escape” (Greig, 2001: xvii). In *4.48 Psychosis* Kane explores these issues using monologues and dialogues that resemble doctor/patient conversation. Through the text verbal violence is hidden in language and “all the images are within language rather than visualised” (Kane, in, Tabert, 1998). The violent language of the play signifies alienation of the lost character. “This is not a world in which I wish to live” (Kane, 2001: 210) and “I have resigned myself to death this year” (Kane, 2001: 208) says the voice of the text who is charging towards death.

The patient in the text prepares her/his death as a result of madness and despair which pushes the insane mind to suicide with the declaration “it is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the underside of my mind/please open the curtains” (Kane, 2001: 245). In the course of the play Sarah Kane uses a violent language that portrays hopelessness, death wish and asks ontological questions:

“I feel that the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve/I am bored and dissatisfied with everything/I am a complete failure as a person/I am guilty, I am being punished/I would like to kill myself (Kane, 2001: 206); I am charging towards my death... At 4.48/ when desperation visits/ I shall hang myself/ to the sound of my lover's breathing... I have become so depressed by the fact of my mortality that I/ have decided to commit suicide/I do not want to live (Kane, 2001: 207); I have resigned myself to death this year (Kane, 2001: 208); I feel like I'm eighty years old. I'm tired of life and my minds want to die (Kane, 2001: 211); I write for the dead the unborn/ After 4.48 I shall never speak again (Kane, 2001: 213); I miss a woman who was never born (Kane, 2001: 218); We are anathema/ the pariahs of reason (Kane, 2001: 228); Despair propels me suicide (Kane, 2001: 239); the only thing that's permanent is destruction/ we're all going to disappear/ trying to leave a mark more permanent than myself (Kane, 2001: 241); watch me vanish/ watch me/vanish/ watch me/ watch me/ watch”. (Kane, 2001: 244)

In conclusion, it is evident that, Sarah Kane's *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* create a critical indignation for their graphic use of onstage violence. In *Crave* violence is hidden in the memories of the voices. This time Kane stance on violence shows itself in the use of a violent language that expresses a violent individual past. In Kane's last text *4.48 Psychosis*, language of the texts are violent and some critics read the text as Sarah Kane's suicide note because many of the responses centre on Kane's act of suicide on 20 February 1999. So her suicide obscures the importance of the text and its innovative experiential form. Of these reviewers Michael Coveney writing in *Daily Mail* stated that *4.48 Psychosis* is “not really a play, more an extended suicide note, this is the disturbing last work of the late Sarah Kane, who killed herself in February last year” (Coveney, 2000). Sarah Hemming suggested in the *Financial Times* that “*4.48 Psychosis* is a difficult play to review, because the writer, Sarah Kane, killed

herself not long after it was written....So you find yourself reacting to the piece...a 75 minute suicide note...a disturbing experience in many ways” (Hemming, 2000). Michael Billington of the *Guardian* declared that “I cannot speak for others, but what it taught me was the frustration of the potential suicide at the way the rest of the world marches to a different, rational rhythm, and assumes there are cures and answers for a state of raging alienation” (Billington, 2000). In this manner *4.48 Psychosis* forces people to experience and witness the traumatic suicide process and dissolution of a character as victims, perpetrators, and bystanders.

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