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BEYKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ ve EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
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**VIOLENCE IN SARAH KANE’S THREE PLAYS: *CLEANSED*,
CRAVE, AND *4.48 PSYCHOSIS***

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Tezi Hazırlayan:
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Enstitümüz *İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı* Anabilim Dalı *İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı* Programı yüksek lisans öğrencilerinden 150769013 numaralı *Esma Biroğlu'nun* "*Beykent Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim – Öğretim Yönetmeliği*"nin ilgili maddesine göre hazırlayarak, Enstitümüze teslim ettiği "*Violence In Sarah Kane's Three Plays: Cleansed, Crave, and 4.48 Psychosis*" konulu tezini, Yönetim Kurulumuzun 18/07/2017 tarih ve 2017/27 sayılı toplantısında seçilen ve Taksim Yerleşkesinde toplanan biz jüri üyeleri huzurunda, Beykent Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim ve Öğretim Yönetmeliğinin 29. maddesinin 3. fıkrası gereğince (60.) dakika süre ile aday tarafından savunulmuş ve sonuçta adayın tezi hakkında *oyçokluğu/oybirliği* ile *Kabul/Red veya Düzeltme* kararı verilmiştir.

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ÖZ

VIOLENCE IN SARAH KANE’S THREE PLAYS: *CLEANSED*, *CRAVE*, AND *4.48* *PSYCHOSIS*

Bu çalışma, 1990’ların en önemli oyun yazarı ve toplamda beş oyun yazmış olan Sarah Marie Kane’in yaşamı ve eserlerini ele almaktadır. Bu tez çalışmasında, Kane’in son üç eseri olan *Cleansed*, *Crave* ve *4.48 Psychosis* şiddetle ilgili içerikleri açısından eleştirel açıdan incelenmektedir. Tezin ilk bölümü şiddetin ne olduğunu ve şiddetin neden yaşam ile dramda ortaya çıktığını sorusunun peşine düşmektedir. Derin bilgi sahibi filozof, düşünür ve eleştirmenlerin aydın fikirleri ışığında şiddetin değişik tanımları yapılmaktadır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda Kane’nin rehberlik yaptığı yüze vurumcu tiyatroyu da tanımlamaktadır. Sarah Kane’in çocukluğu, Bristol ve Birmingham Üniversitelerindeki Eğitimi, Jeremy Weller’in *Mad* isimli oyunu ve Bosna’da yaşanan soykırım onun yaşamını ve yazı kariyerini etkileyen bazı faktörler olmuştur. Sevgi tüm eserlerindeki en önemli kavramdır, eserlerindeki şiddet içeriği seyircinin sevgiyi tam olarak algılamalarını engellese bile. Şiddet, Sarah Kane’nin oyunlarında öne çıkan bir faktördür çünkü izleyicilerin şok geçirerek oyuna daha dikkatli bir şekilde dahil olmalarını, oyunların daha etkili olmalarını ve seyircilerin kendilerini tekrar değerlendirmelerini sağlamaktadır.

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ABSTRACT

VIOLENCE IN SARAH KANE'S THREE PLAYS: *CLEANSED*, *CRAVE*, AND *4.48* *PSYCHOSIS*

This study evaluates the life and works of Sarah Marie Kane, the most outstanding playwright of the 1990s who in total wrote five plays. In this thesis, Kane's last three works - *Cleansed*, *Crave*, and *4.48 Psychosis*- are critically examined for the elements of violence. The first part of the thesis traces what violence is and why it emerged in life and drama. Various definitions of violence are introduced under the bright thoughts of the profound philosophers, thinkers and critics. The study also defines in-her-face theatre which Kane has been credited with pioneering. Sarah Kane's childhood, her education at the University of Bristol and Birmingham, Jeremy Weller's play *Mad*, and the Bosnia genocide were some of the factors that affected her life and writing. In all her works, love stands out as the most superior concept, even though the violence in which it was cloaked often blocked the audiences' grasp of it. Violence, however, is the stand-out factor of Sarah Kane's plays as it enabled her to shock the audience into paying greater attention, giving the plays a greater impact and prompting the audience to re-evaluate themselves.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Violence has been, through the ages, a persistent feature in the world both on a personal basis and in the society in day to day activities and specially manifested in and during wars (Purnavel 237). History, religions, civilizations, and remarkable world events are often marked by the greatest violence expressed in the form of battles. While in a normal case violence is considered to be wrong, war normalizes it and gives those engaging in war a chance to vent out. Apart from wars, aggression is experienced by people in a variety of ways as discussed below.

1.1. The Definition of Violence

Violence has been studied widely by renowned scholars, including Aristotle, Plato, Freud, and many who came after them. The scholars indicate a practice of borrowing from each other the concepts and meanings attributed to acts of brutality. The longest established belief system for violence is the hypothesis of catharsis which was introduced by Aristotle. He attributed feelings of aggression with “the internal existence of things” which are impossible for man to fully comprehend, but which affect the behaviour of people in remarkable ways (Drake 50). He further elucidates on aggression being an internal struggle in which dominant emotions seek to topple logical conduct and cause the subject to act in abnormal ways. Catharsis, or venting out, is the widest studied principle of Aristotle’s views on violence which puts forward the idea that individuals can get rid of their feelings of aggression by watching the dramatizations of violent behaviour (Gentile 491).

Mental activity and common sense contribute in a big way to the feelings of increased tension in the body, which may ultimately manifest in anger and forcefulness if not expressed out. To Aristotle, the link between aggression and the individual’s state of mind is inseparable. Awareness is important for the individual to control their rational state of mind both in the acquisition and the venting out of aggression, an immoral emotion.

Socially, the concept of suprematism expressed by Aristotle argues for the complete knocking down of the traditional thought process of the Western nations. The violence required of the person in the concept is targeted at the mind, redefining meanings, norms, and possibilities in the pursuit of fluidity, enlightenment from the inside out, and a higher state of reality (Drake 61). New modes of organization and meaning are developed by opening up new parts of human consciousness.

Aristotle's philosophy created the template on which majority of the future thinkers would develop their theories although he lacked the pinpoint precision of their concepts. For example, as a tool for social change, violence was best expressed by Georges Sorel at the onset of the twentieth century. At a time of social unrests in Europe and especially France, Sorel defines violence as a quest for freedom in performing one's tasks. The views of Sorel on violence as an emotion manifested as an indication of social conflict, and one that is an efficient weapon to bring about change (Geuss and Skinner 284). Social constructs that establish a perking order in mankind leads to build-up of resistance among the common people, and finally manifests in unrests.

Sorel's definition of violence as the expression of built up emotions which are released through venting adheres to Aristotle's catharsis, only in this case, the anger is removed when the society revolts. Participation is thus an important aspect of Sorel's definition for dealing with violent emotions, a release that allows the individual to be free of turmoil.

Freud also expresses wartime violence in the correspondence exchanged between him and Albert Einstein and subsequent articles during the World War I. Freud views violence, in this case being decidedly the bloodiest warfare in the course of history of world at that time, as a mental state that destroys valued conceptions, confounds the intelligent, and debases highly regarded principles (Sampson 83). Disillusionment to the effectiveness of established norms to solve

human problems is attributed to the blinding nature of hostilities. Freud also advances that violence is a direct outcome of embitterment and implacability that yields cruelty when not sufficiently mitigated.

At this time when violence was rife globally, the views of Freud were highly militarized and political, but also highly relevant to philosophy (Sampson 79). Freud also held the view that violence is born out of cruel and selfish inclinations of man which are most primitive and hard to overcome. Outward expression of internal ravages is what indicates the presence of them and what society judges of an individual. Barring their expression, feelings of violence are neutral and unlikely to harm the person.

Carl Marx identifies violence as a tool to achieve the political will of the people (Cohen-Almagor 4). A subtle form of violence where indirect engagement with the enemy was employed at minimal harm to the instigator is believed to be the precursor to terrorism activities currently plaguing the world. The political definition of violence receives its meaning from Marx, stated explicitly as the combined attacks directed towards a political entity which occur within its boundaries and are aimed towards the policies of or actors in the government.

Apart from the philosophical definitions given by scholar and social activists, a practical definition is given by the World Health Organisation for practical use as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or a community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation. (Krug et al. 4)

This succinct definition covers the rather diverse topic of violence, creating meaning that is used as a standard in law enforcement, the justice system, social services, and community health among others.

Physical harm to one's body, or the threat to hurt oneself, qualifies as violence. Even though the definition does not explicitly state psychological force as a cause for violence, the premise that violence can either be real or implied qualifies emotional force in which a victim is dominated by the perpetrator as violent. Psychological self-torture, self-harming acts like slicing, and suicide are some of the outcomes of violent behaviour by individuals to themselves.

Violence towards other people is defined as the aggressive acts or threats to harm other individuals. When directed towards people other than the self, violence can either trigger psychological harm that leads to subjugation of people by a real or implied superior person or people. Physical injuries may also be brought about by violent encounter such as abuse at home or in school. Death resulting from forceful acts of other people is defined as murder or homicide, the latter of which is not pre-meditated.

Generally, any malevolent acts of power that are exerted on an individual that threaten their well-being qualify as violence, regardless of from whom they originate and to whom they are directed. Due to the complexity of cultures, backgrounds, and personality diversities, it is hard to pin down violence to one definition, cause, or qualification. In most cases, opinions, not established criteria, determines whether or not violence was perpetrated.

1.2. Types and Causes of Violence

As stated above, violence is identified in the society from the effects it has on individuals who experience it. Manifestation occurs in three ways: psychological harm, physical injury, and death- which may come in form of murder or suicide. The World Health Organisation (WHO) gives the typology of violence in terms of personal, interpersonal, and collective violence (4).

Self-harm can also occur in two ways: suicidal and abuse. Psychological disturbances are rife in self-harm, causing much of the violence recorded in oneself like mutilation, self-starvation, neglect, and irresponsible physical behaviour. Suicidal violence is the more serious of

the two as it causes the individual to desire or try to end their life. Stages of seriousness in suicidal harm are: imagining, contemplating the prospect, actively pursuing the means to kill oneself, making an effort to achieve it, and once successful, ending one's life (Krug et al. 5).

Frustrations are cited as the most common triggers of violent behaviour among individuals, but as much as they directly lead to violence, irritations are the manifestations of other, more serious underlying causes. There are four causes for violence that do not affect people independently but work together. They are biological, social perceptions, cognitive and environmental factors (Corwin 272).

Biological factors that may cause individuals to self-harm include drug use which most often brings about feelings of dependency. A mother's behaviour during pregnancy such as alcohol and drug use can also cause children to be born with inclinations to harm themselves, especially when the poor biological conditions are compounded by other factors. Brain damage can also lead to aggressive behaviour towards the self, especially among patients who are highly affected but are kept in seclusion (Yakeley and Meloy 237).

Social perceptions are those causes that come from other people that are not biological in nature. Some of these are those social norms that are accepted in society such as parenting, peer pressure, and values that are taught to children during growth. The media has emerged as a huge influence on the definitions of "normal behaviour", changing in a big way the views of consumers' perceptions of normal and in some cases, triggering the violence in people (Berkowitz 314). The conceptions of impact of filmed or dramatized violence is in contrast to philosopher Aristotle's view of violence in drama being a source of catharsis as it encourages rather than discourages people to engage in violent behaviour. Actually the observed trend is for violent representations to cause consumers more aggressive, desiring to achieve the kind of satisfaction actors are portrayed as getting from violent actions.

Cognitive factors are those notions, views, and thought patterns brought about by a person's interactions with the world (Corwin 273). "Hostile attribution bias" is a situation caused by cognition in individuals where they can perceive hostility in people around them even when there is no hostility. It has also been proven that people who are used to getting solutions to problems by violent means are less effective in coming up with non-violent solutions to conflicts. Upbringing also affects cognition as children brought up in hostile environments exhibit more rebellious and aggressive opinions than those who grew up in nurturing and safe environments.

Environmental causes of violence include stressful situations, being among highly depressive circumstances, and violence by other people (Corwin 273). Stress may be caused by different internal and external factors, including biological and social ones. Environmental factors generally normalize violence and its causes, causing people to become less inclined to seek solutions. Self-destructive people may also put themselves in environments that aggravate their psychological and physical harm, further putting them at risk.

Interpersonal violence is more diverse than personal harm, encompassing family and community causes such as child, partner, and elder in the home environment and acquaintances or strangers at the community level (Krug et al. 5). Some forms of violence based on the family may be perceptive and highly dependent on personal views (Corwin 273). For example, biblical teachings advise that parents should correct their children by caning, yet to other people, the prospect of causing pain to others is violence, regardless of the circumstances.

Sibling rivalry can also be another way in which children at home are exposed to violence, and it has been indicated to negatively affect perceptions of family and personal behaviour later in life (Moylan, Herrenkohl, Sousa, Tajima, Herrenkohl, and Jean 2). Violence among partners not only affects the intimate couple, it also creates apprehension and tensions in the family, a leading cause of aggressive tendencies. At the mildest form, family violence may

cause tension, uneasiness, and alienation while homicides may result from family violence in adverse circumstances.

Outside the family unit, security threats, upheavals, and divisions among communities cause people to turn against each other. Forms of violence in the community include rape and sexual harassment at school, workplaces, or in the streets. Women are the most commonly targeted by interpersonal violence, especially in institutional settings. Physically violent confrontations between non-family members of the society are considered as part of interpersonal violence. Unsafe neighbourhoods are more likely to experience interpersonal violence.

Collective violence comes from organizations such as governments, rebel groups, and terrorist organisations. Due to the high stakes nature of collective groups, personal casualties may be ignored during confrontation or used as a weapon in propaganda wars, negotiation objects, or mere statistics. War, a major feature of collective violence, has many, far-reaching effects. In battlegrounds, sexual violence is one of the greatest obscenities that are perpetrated by soldiers (Skjelsbaek 212). It is used both as a weapon of war and results from the general societal breakdown that accompanies many wars, in which justice systems may not always be available to ensure that law and order is adhered to. Consequently, effects of war may remain with victims and perpetrators of violent behaviour long after the wars, not only from the physical injuries sustained during battles, but also the emotional effects of loss, and traumas that are subjected by oppressors.

Afterwards, many soldiers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorders, a situation that can lead to other forms of personal and interpersonal violence and greatly affect their lives afterwards (Weierstall, Huth, Knecht, Nandi, and Elbert 1). War is both the greatest manifestation of violence and the theatre on which violence is propagated at the highest level, being an aggressive solution- or attempt at- to social problems in a higher scale.

In conclusion, violence is manifested in three ways: psychological suffering, physical harm, and death. The three indicators are also interdependent, such that psychosomatic trauma may be manifested in personal physical harm and death, either homicide or suicide. Physical harm may also bring about psychological trauma, an example of which is children exposed to physical domestic violence at a young age who may end up developing personal issues. Death is the indication of the highest level of violence in the psychological and physical level, as well as being a cause for the other two especially in mourning.

Psychological aggression is the lowest level of violence, but one with the greatest effects as it brings out the rest more than they cause it. Moreover, physical harm and death require psychological triggers to manifest at some point, be it in rage, passion, hate, among others. In these three manifestations, violence can either be directed towards the self, another person or other people, or groups of people.

1.3. Violence in Drama

Violence has been used extensively from early times of staged plays to the current Internet age. Violence in drama is often affiliated with tragedy that puts into perspective human suffering in addition to terrible impediments and emanates from issues such as jealousy, love and revenge (Standford 36). Most of the tragic events in drama involve the death of the protagonists, while some characters who are exposed to violence become victims due to circumstances and not evil intentions. Violence tends to be among the most prominent themes in the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Greek plays.

Most of tragic dramas in Greek were done to honour Dionysus, the Greek god who was the god of wine, fertility and revelry. Some forms of violence are very prominent in Greek dramas, such as the killing of a person “near or dear”, torture, revenge, suicide, stabbing and rape. One of the best classical dramas in Greek Literature is *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles. The story

involves a cursed family who try to get rid of their fate but in vain. Other tragic plays include: *Medea* and *Alcestis* by Euripides, *Antigone* by Sophocles, *Prometheus Bound* and *Oresteia* by Aeschylus.

The first Elizabethan drama involving violence or tragedy was written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton. Staged in 1561, *The Tragedie of Gorboduc* exhibited strong similarities with Seneca. The play is centred on the sufferings of a king who causes the death of his whole family, including his two crown princes. Christopher Marlowe is known for his works that exhibited features that were similar to Greek tragedies such as *Tamburlaine*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Doctor Faustus*, and *Edward II*. In *Tamburlaine*, the main character Tamburlaine exhibits violence by stabbing his own son because of refusing to go to war. Bloodshed is used to demonstrate honour. He also kills six virgins by stabbing them and beats a man who was caged to death in addition to hanging the Governor of Babylon. The main form of violence exhibited in Marlowe's plays was physical maiming through stabbings and beatings.

In most violent dramas, the protagonists are men of power who become victims to their own doings, a concept popularized by William Shakespeare in most of his plays. For example in the play *Hamlet*, Hamlet is driven to kill by vengeance as an outcome of the death of his father, who was also the king. Polonius, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Laertes, Claudius, Gertrude, and Ophelia are some of the characters who die in *Hamlet*. Ophelia and Gertrude become victims of circumstances and die because of emotional torture due of her father's death and accidental poisoning respectively. *Othello* is also another tragic drama whereby a man faces frequent discrimination because of his race and later results in the death of his wife and suicide because of the lies presented to him by people he perceived to be friends. The common aspects between *Othello* and *Hamlet* are that the lives of the innocent are taken due to the mistakes made by the

protagonist. Other examples of tragic plays by Shakespeare include *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Troilus and Cressida*.

The drama during the Jacobean era rose after the completion of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Audiences were used to aspects of tragedy, love and remorse in plays prior to the Jacobean era, so much so that exaggerations were being necessitated to spruce up interest. New plays incorporated stabbings and killings, with most of the violence marking an end to the plays. The common themes among the plays were disguises and hidden identities. Thomas Middleton is known for his piece *The Revenger's tragedy* and Cyril Tourneur for *the Atheist's tragedy*. Other playwrights during the Jacobean era include John Webster, Ben Johnson, John Ford and John Marston. "Violence in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama is concerned not only with murder and physical horrors but also with suffering and mental cruelty" (Power 89).

In the 1950s, the Theatre of the Absurd was conceived by Samuel Beckett. It differs from conventional drama in the sense that it uses unconventional concepts to explain the nature of people's interactions. Major forms of violence included mental torture, cruelty, oppression, and isolation, best illustrated in *Waiting for Godot*, one of Beckett's most popular works. John Osborne in *Look Back in Anger* describes the working men who, after the Second World War, turned into anarchist and leftists. They were driven by violence fuelled by anger at post-Victorian Britain that fails to recognize their social alienation. The story includes mostly psychological violence where Jimmy, the main character, lashes at his wife and friends. Edward bond in *Lear* also portrays the aggression of the post war era by conceptualising the play as a political theatre that showcases the views of the people towards the government. Political violence, Psychological torture, hatred, aggression and killings by being shot are the main forms of violence exhibited in the play, such as Junior Officer killing Lear by a single shot.

Violence persists in modern plays where murder and suicide are the leading types of aggression. Aleks Sierz in his book, *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today* states:

Controversy may often be sought, but usually often take off by chance. For a play to be controversial, it needs to touch raw nerves. Although the discomfort and outrage among members of the audience is very real, the form that controversy takes is a performance in itself. (12)

The view is that any action that invokes feelings among the audience is essential in plays and hence explains why violence thrives in most plays. Some of the plays that Sierz highlights include: *Ghost from a perfect place* by Philip Ridley, *Butterfly Kiss* by Phyllis Nagy and *The Censor* by Anthony Neilson.

It is perceived that the use of violence in drama especially in the ancient Greek plays have a significant impact in the current world. The tragedy in the dramas illustrates the pretence in man regarding power and certainty. Just as it was in the 5th century BC, the modern day is characterized by tension when it comes to the rhetoric nature of politicians and the harsh environments presented by war. The drama also contains conflict between helplessness and self-control, private and public obligations and between genders, gender based violence, and roles of the genders in violence (Standford 48).

1.4. Violence in Yer-Face-Theatres

The emergence of in-yer-face was preceded in terms of shock factor by the theatre of the absurd, the 1950s movement of playwrights such as Beckett with his renowned play: *Waiting for Godot*. The works of dramatists of this age greatly influenced the creators of in-yer-face such as Sarah Kane, and they possess certain similarities that set them apart. For the current study, however, attention will be turned to in-yer-face, especially the clearly defined themes of violence it incorporated.

In-yer-face is a term that was coined from the English phrase ‘in your face’ which is used to indicate to a condition where a person gets aggressively invasive of another’s personal space. “It suggests the crossing of normal boundaries” (Sierz 4). Acts staged by in-yer-face dramatists employ unconventional methods to bring the audience’s attention to issues of interest to them by the use of unprecedented shock. The plays are meant to challenge the views of the audience on their identities, seeking to jolt them into serious debate about issues that may not be considered as important in the mainstream, such as sexual abuse, mental illness, and violence.

Sarah Kane, a celebrated playwright and drama radical, was the first dramatist to use what has now been defined as in-yer-face. Debuting with *Blasted* in 1993, Kane immediately gained notoriety from the non-conformist style used. The rebellious nature of rejecting established norms in staging plays became the standard marker of in-yer-face theatrical showcases that dominated the 1990s. Aleks Sierz, the most authoritative in-yer-face scholar, defines the concept thus:

In-yer-face theatre is any drama that takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message. It is a theatre of sensation: it jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses, touching nerves, provoking alarm . . . [I]t affronts the ruling ideas of what can or should be shown onstage; it also taps into more primitive feelings, smashing taboos, mentioning the forbidden, creating discomfort. (Sierz 4)

Unlike typical plays where the action does not involve the audience in presentation and that is meant to entertain, in-yer-face provokes the audience into reacting, gets under their skins, and causes them to react in some way. Due to the confrontational style of presentation, reactions are often walk-outs and condemning editorials. The shock factor improves the interest in the play being staged, which subsequently raises awareness of the topic being addressed. Characters in the

plays are made to represent the lowest social classes such as “prostitutes, thieves, drug addicts, rapists, child abusers, tormentors, murderers and other psychological malfunctioning or simply [the] mad” (Kitzler 7) to further jolt the audience. Violence takes centre-stage in both the writing and presentation of plays to the audience, a transcending feature that is inseparable from in-er-face style plays.

The main characteristics of in-er-face are discussed below.

Filthy Language

Due to the urgency of the subject addressed in plays, the cast does not have time to mince words, and they require the immediate attention of the audience. Shocking the oft passive audiences with profane conversations, in-er-face does not give audiences the chance to settle in, constantly provoking the audience to:

react either they feel like fleeing the building or they are suddenly convinced that it the best thing they have ever seen, and want all their friends to see it too. It is a kind of theatre that inspires us to use superlatives, whether in praise or condemnation. (Sierz 5)

Socially frowned upon words such as *fuck* and *cunt* are not filtered, giving an extra punch to an already confrontational style of play.

Unmentionable Discussions by Characters

“In-er- face theatre always forces us to look at ideas and feelings we would normally avoid because they are too painful, too frightening, too unpleasant or too acute”(Sierz 6). An example of unmentionable discourse between characters on stage is that indicated by *Snatch*, 1998 where two male performers brag about their encounter of raping a defenceless girl. Discussions are also not conducted in the normal staged play format of long, styled conversations, choosing instead to have shorter speeches by actors, and an observed economy of words, a concept that had earlier been applied in plays by dramatists Pinter and Beckett.

Nudity

Another way in which in-er-face gets the audience to consider normal things and day to day acts in a different way, stripping is used as a communicational tool. It challenges the audience's perceptions of what is socially normal, tries to "push the boundaries of what is acceptable" (Sierz 5), makes them squirm in their seats, and definitely gets their attention in a huge way.

Humiliation of Characters

Shame is brought upon characters by each other, often in evil and sadistic ways. For example, in Sarah Kane's play *Cleansed*, Tinker penetrates Rod with a pole as punishment for lying about loving his gay partner Carl. The scenes of these types of acts force the audience to consider their own behaviours and in the case of *Cleansed*, raised awareness on true love, tolerance, and the fragility of man's existence. Tinker, who plays God in the drama, indicates the absolute lack of control of man to the things that happen in their lives with his constant interference with the other characters' lives (Kitzler 14).

Sex

A thriving theme in many of the plays, especially those staged by Sarah Kane, sex scenes are quite common in in-er-face drama. Being an intimate act that is kept private, dramatists employ it also as a tactic to discomfiture audiences and as a violation to those norms of society, the main aim of er-face theatre in challenging distinctions in society. "When sex is coupled with emotions such as neediness or loneliness, the effect can be immensely disturbing" (Sierz 4).

Sudden Violence

Violence in in-er-face theatres is a common feature of acting, conflict dominates the themes of the plays. It is used in a diverse number of ways, and may be sprung at the audience without warning. Sarah Kane in *Crave* portrays the gender roles played in perpetrating violent

acts towards other people, demonstrating that men are more likely than females to both mete out and receive violence (Gutscher 72).

In-yer-face plays are also identifiable by the challenge of distinctions in humanity. Good and bad, clean and dirty, good and evil, love and hatred: they are all seamlessly incorporated into plays, often without clearly demarcated boundaries. Ideas and emotions that are considered too painful or unpleasant were also magnified on stage, forcing the audience to think critically about their views of those things. Emotional torture pours out from the characters on stage and into the audience members, questioning their very existence.

Unpredictable ways of violence happening unexpectedly keeps the audiences on alert and makes in-yer-face a visceral form that achieves beyond other established styles. Violence is represented by pain, caused by the actor but mostly by others, humiliation of characters considered by others as being ‘below them’ and degradation.

Generally, in-yer-face plays are transformational tools that force people to evaluate themselves and their prejudices to certain issues. Violence has been a central role in in-yer-face forcing audiences to deal with personal issues even as extremes on stage and rattling their composure a huge deal. “Profound questions about social mores and moral norms” (Sierz 9) are raised through in-yer-face dramaturgic styles, as well as appealing to that which is most hidden in most people and yet is so basal to their existence as human beings.

2. VIOLENCE IN SARAH KANE’S WORKS

Before embarking on a full-scale evaluation of Sarah Kane’s literature it is important to define the writer. Understanding her life story and influences goes a long way in creating an enabling background to which her three works *Cleansed*, *Crave*, and *4.48 Psychosis* will be discussed. Being the last three she ever wrote, and all premiering in the last year of her life, the assumption can be made that this was Kane at the peak of her career, her life’s work.

2.1. The Life Story of Sarah Kane

Sarah Marie Kane was born on the 3 February 1971 in at Brentwood, Essex, in Britain. She was born into a family of journalists and growing up in Kelvedon Hatch, demonstrated talent in stage acting from a very young age. While attending Shenfield Comprehensive for her high school education, Kane joined the Basildon Youth Theatre group and featured in a number of locally showcased drama acts. In 1989, Kane was admitted to Bristol University pursuing a course in drama. It was at Bristol that Kane started writing alongside the performances with Sore Throats Theatre Company, a drama group comprised of students from the institution.

Her break into the national drama scene occurred in the Edinburgh Festival in 1991 where she wrote and performed *Comic Monologue*. A year later, she graduated from the university with first-class honours and immersed herself into writing, developing an early version of what later became *Blasted*. Between the time of her graduating and joining a Masters course in playwriting from the Birmingham University, Kane performed in numerous dramas. She also attended *Mad*, a showcase of mental illness organised by the Grassmarket Project of Jeremy Weller. Her ideas about theatre were shaped in a huge way by the play: her works would later have madness featuring prominently.

Blasted was completed in March 1993 and performed by a cast comprising of students later in July. The boldly unusual style of the play left the audience bewildered, with mixed reactions of horror and amazement. The Royal Court, however, was impressed by the bold style, and immediately offered to take it up. For her first job, Sarah was employed at the Bush Theatre in London as the literary associate in March 1994. Five months later, she quit the job and concentrated on drafting scripts for the film *Skin*.

The year 1995 was the most productive for Sarah Kane: her career gained much traction in just that year than it had since she graduated from Bristol. The year set off with the premier of

Blasted 12 January 1995 at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs. Six days later, the infamous press night happened and launched the play and its youthful creator into the limelight. However, apart from an interview for the *Independent*, Kane remained out of sight during the airing of the play. *Skin* was also completed in the summer of 1995 while she was attending an exchange program with the Royal Court in New York.

Filming was also done in 1995 and in October 1995, Kane premiered her second production of the year with the screening of *Skin* during the London Film Festival. The Gate Theatre, Notting Hill, London, also commissioned a play from her, and thus the writing of *Phaedra's Love* commenced.

In May 1996, *Phaedra's Love* was performed for the first time, with Kane directing. For the next one and a half years starting in August, Kane took up the position of the writer-in-residence for Paines Plough. During this time, she wrote the scripts for *Crave*, was part of the Royal Courts exchange programme with a production of *Phaedra's Love* in Berlin, and was admitted to the Royal Maudsley Hospital with severe depression. She also directed the show *Woyzeck* by Georg Buchner which was performed at Gate Theatre.

In April 1998, *Cleansed* was premiered at the Royal Court Theatre in London, directed by James Macdonald. *Crave* followed just four months later in August, with Paines Plough coming back as the producing company and the showcase happening at the Traverse Theatre. The year was also characterized by numerous performances of her works worldwide, including *Cleansed* in Italy and Germany, *Phaedra's Love* in America, and *Crave* in Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, and Italy.

During the early part of 1999, Sarah Kane slipped into severe depression once again, and was admitted at Maudsley Hospital in London. She was at this time working on her latest play, *4.48 Psychosis*, which detailed the struggle between self, other, and the light beyond. Shortly

after completing the work on her latest play, Kane attempted to end her life by overdosing on prescription medication. Two days after the unsuccessful attempt, she hanged herself in her hospital bathroom in the early morning hours of 20th February 1999 (Saunders 11).

2.2. Influences: Personal and Historical

Sarah Kane was influenced by a number of factors to get into playwriting. The upbringing in a journalistic background exposed her to forms of media from an early age, with her talent in acting leading to her early life of performing with the Basildon Youth Theatre group. University education exposed her to works of absurdist writers, which are cited by Aleks Sierz as having greatly influenced the in-her-face theatres which she was associated with.

The early performances of *Dreams/Screams and Silences* series works such as *Comic Monologue* at the Edinburgh Festival indicated influences of the works such as John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger* (Buchler 12). As she also dealt with stress related issues, Sarah became increasingly jaded, and after watching *Mad*, in 1992 after graduating, her future works became increasingly reflective of unconventional styles of drama:

[Mad] changed my life because it changed me, the way I think, and the way I behave. If theatre can change lives, then it can change society. . . . [T]heatre is not an external force acting on the society, but a part of it. It's a reflection of the way people within that society view the world. (Kane qtd. in Sierz 93)

Graham Saunders, A lecturer in Theatre Studies and the writer of the first study of all Kane's works and productions, suggests that Kane took to Ibsenite and Chekovian structures of drama which are more concerned with the characters rather than painting an image of the setting as is the norm (6). Further discrepancies with norms included the number of scenes, from the normative three to twenty in *Cleansed*.

The global political environment after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, affected the plot of Kane's plays. As her first major work, *Blasted* indicated a strong relationship with war trauma and the sufferings of the people affected by the civil wars in Bosnia. According to Sierz, the in-between generation whose drama style was pioneered by Kane was influenced as much by international events like the reunification of Germany as national movements such as the New Labour political movement (12).

These events can be indicated as influencing her use of violence in her works, meant to communicate with the audiences her perspective on social issues as she states: "With *Blasted* I think that was a direct response to material as it began to happen. I knew that I wanted to write a play about... a complete imbalance which resulted in rape" (Saunders 3).

Saunders concurs with the account of events in her life and around her shaping the content of her works, her style of writing, and the purposes for which she wrote. Refusing to accept the labels of a media-intended clique of 'new brutalism', Kane continued pursuing a decidedly different style of addressing issues, and in those acts which she directed, an indication of turning from realism into the world of surrealism, experimenting with form and style, and rebelling against the established norms in drama (6).

On her last three works, her personal life also played a huge part. Having been in voluntary mental asylum twice before, her pre-existing condition of severe depression influenced her last plays: *Cleansed*, *Crave*, and in an even bigger way, *4.48 Psychosis*. It is also significant to point out that the three plays come at the later part of Sarah Kane's career, with all being written and showcased in her last one year. This was the time at which her career was at its peak, having produced five plays over the course of seven years and directed quite a few.

The concept of light transcended many of Kane's plays: *Cleansed*, *Crave*, and *4.48 Psychosis* in which characters sought to enter into the light, and the light was the end of life, a

chance to see what lay beyond. The suicide that was shortly preceded by the completion of *4.48 Psychosis* was the suicide note that explained, albeit in disjointed text, her life. The performance in 2001 of the play was perceived by some critics as “a 75 minutes long suicide note”. The lack of separation between her life and her work, reflected in earlier works through the forceful opinions on her beliefs, became personal, deeper, and more desperate at this threshold to death as she knew she would die, indicated by previous attempts and references to the same in the run-up to the hospitalisation.

3. VIOLENCE IN *CLEANSED*

3.1. *Cleansed*

Cleansed was the third major play composed by Sarah Kane after *Blasted* and *Phaedra's Love*. It was completed and staged in April 1998 at Royal Court Theatre under the direction of Macdonald, the man who also later directed *4.48 Psychosis*.

It is set in a campus institution where inmates are held in a prison-like environment, controlled by the main character that holds the power of God over them. His wishes are executed without question: he metes out punishment to the wrongdoers, and being very particular about true love, especially those who betray their love.

The play follows the lives of a gay couple- Carl and Rod, the incestuous relationship between brother and sister - Grace and Graham, Robin's unrequited love for Grace, the dysfunctional love life of Tinker- who tries unsuccessfully to masturbate to a woman in a booth, and heterosexuality as seen in Grace's sex change.

The main theme of the theatrical production is love, harbouring a great principle that “love is the one basis of hope in an evil world. It presents a vision of a tough love that can survive not only physical torture but also the need to tell the truth about ourselves” (Sierz 114). Elements of love addressed include sexual relations that are perceived to be wrong in the society,

including homosexuality, incest, masturbation, and heterosexuality. Violence also plays a huge part in the play, with the main character, Tinker, being the perpetrator of all violence, and in some cases such as the attempted suicide of Robin which is finally enabled by Tinker as punishment for his unrequited love towards Grace. These forms of violence constitute psychological, emotional, and physical- by far the most common one.

At the beginning of the play Tinker- a doctor- euthanizes Graham- a drug addict to whom he had been supplying drugs- by injecting him with an overdose of heroine. The gay relationship of Carl and Rod is then highlighted with the proposition by Carl, who promises undying love to Rod- his lover. Their relationship is indicated as being highly dysfunctional, as Carl betrays Rod.

The hero-worship relationship of Graham-dead- and Robin is indicated in the next scene when Grace comes into the picture with a visit to the hospital, the setting of the play. Robin is indicated to be illiterate when he cannot write to Grace's father for her to inform him of the incidence- the yet-to-be-reported death of Graham and her mental breakdown brought about by the haunting smell of her brother, with whom she was in an incestuous relationship.

Tinker then starts picking on Carl for his false claims of love for Rod, which progresses throughout the play, with his body getting gradually mutilated as punishment. Grace attempts to teach Robin how to read to distract herself from the haunting memories of her brother, but he grows to love her, even without her returning any of his feelings. Overcome with her lack of interest in him, Robin later commits suicide, but not before Tinker forces him to eat the chocolate he had bought in an attempt to win over Grace's love. Moments before, he is also caused to burn all the books he had been studying in an attempt to clean up a mess he made during the confrontation over the chocolates.

Rod promises to continue loving Carl "moment by moment" even in his mutilated condition- his tongue, hands, and feet cut off. As a continuity of Carl's punishment, Rod's throat

is slit by Tinker. Moments before, he is asked to choose between Carl and his life, he opts to lose it and preserve Carl's. Subsequently, Carl's penis is cut off, and Grace ends up getting stitched up with it.

The play indicates influences from numerous other plays, including "Franz Kafka's *The Trial* (1925), George Büchner's *Woyzeck* (1837), George Orwell's *Nineteen eighty Four* (1949), Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1601), and August Strinberg's *The Ghost Sonata* (1907)" (Saunders 87). The plays possess varying levels of aspects of love, the elements of an enclosed environment where the play takes place, and the element of sister (Grace) searching for brother (Graham), which is found in Shakespeare's play, *The Twelfth Night*. Other influential plays that appear to have influenced Kane's style in *Cleansed* includes Kafka's *Penal Colony*, Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, Pinter's *Hothouse*, and Bond's *Early Morning* (Sierz 113).

Cleansed "was regarded as the bleakest and most difficult of Kane's plays to date and it is certainly a punishing theatrical experience" (Greig xii). The audiences who attended the first screenings were left traumatised by the endless violence that took place on stage, with many critics expressing bewilderment at the unprecedented showcase of violence. Writing a critical article about the play, John Peter states that:

Cleansed is a nightmare of a play, it unreels somewhere between the back of your eyes and the centre of your brain with an unpredictable but remorseless logic. As with a nightmare, you cannot shut it out because nightmares are experienced with your whole body. As with a nightmare you feel that somebody else is dreaming it for you, spinning the images out of some need that you don't want to think of as your own. (qtd. in Saunders 90)

It was certainly a tasking play, one that defined Sarah Kane, probably more than she had intended, and caused her to try and take on a lower profile in her next plays.

In writing the play, Kane had intended to generate that sort of reaction, an irreproducible experience of theatre that continued to define her career as a playwright. The reception was a nod to her identity as a writer, as she is quoted by Graham Saunders:

I wanted to write a play that could never be turned into a film, or shot for television, or turned into a novel. The only thing that could ever be done with it was that it could be staged. Believe it or not, that play was *Cleansed*. (Saunders 74)

The use of violence is also explained by Sierz as a central element of her writing about extreme love: “if you want to write about extreme love you can only write about it in an extreme way” (116). The fact that people survive the ordeal- Grace and Carl- indicates that love is indeed the most powerful thing.

Later on, after her death and after audiences had acclimatised to her unique style, the dramatic quality of her work has been praised by numerous critiques. *Cleansed* is also one of the most reproduced plays, being staged in the United States, Japan, South America, Germany and other European Countries. *Cleansed* is also used as a reference text in numerous drama courses:

Cleansed is a play that has intensity. The result of the author’s blending of various theatrical effects, such as the interplay of realistic detail and surrealism, is a play with strong and powerful images that attacks our senses and susceptibilities. (Gutscher 100)

3.2. Elements of Violence in *Cleansed*

The ingenious use of abject violence in *Cleansed* to portray love’s immense power to make things right, to right the wrongs of humanity and the world is extremely inspiring. With such a high level of violence and suffering, it becomes quite challenging to imagine that the play actually depicts hope for love: “echoes the sentiments of love... in *Cleansed*” (Saunders 113). The forms of violence that takes place in the play are classified into torture, mutilation, homicide, and oppression as discussed below.

3.2.1. Torture

Kofi Anan, the former United Nations secretary general, defines torture as “an atrocious violation of human dignity that dehumanizes both the victim and the perpetrator” (Miller 5). The purpose of torture is normally to inflict pain on another person or other people with the aim of punishing them or to get them to act in a particular way. In physically inflicted harm, the aim is to leave lasting scars as a deterrent to the victim possible refusal to obey the demands of the offender. The dignified form of torture is directed towards people who do not necessarily deserve it and it does not serve any particular purpose apart from the fulfilment of the perpetrator. Undeserved torture is often not deserved, born out of the offender’s malevolence. The innocence of the victim causes the scarring of both themselves and their torturers.

In other cases, “torture could simply be physical harm to the victim’s body that surpasses that which is necessary and causes the victim physical suffering in form of pain and does not serve any purpose inherent to the interrogation” (Miller 3). This is torture defined by the Israeli Supreme Court in a case between the government security agencies and the Public Committee against Torture in Israel. The definition serves the purpose of defining torture that is considered deserved by the victim in cases of national security and such legal matters.

The distinction between torture for the sake of torture and torture during interrogation is important to note. The Kantian theory was developed by Immanuel Kant, a great German of the 18th century. It states that: “human beings have an intrinsic worth or dignity which makes them very valuable ‘above all price.’ They may never be used as means to an end” (Rachels 1). This is sometimes referred to as Kant’s definition of the ultimate law of morality.

In one case, the victim is a suspected wrongdoer who has information that is perhaps critical to the government preventing a terror attack. Information to be extracted from the victim can be said to be intended for good use and in some cases, failure to get the information may lead

to homicide or mass murder. For dignified torture, the perpetrator is often doing it for their own means, without the necessity or legality of the actions. The premise of dehumanisation indicates malevolence, sadism, and undue violence. For the purposes of clarification, all tortures apart from lawful constitutionally sanctioned ones in which specialist torturers are involved falls under the category of an invasion of dignity.

Physical torture is the most persevering form of violence in *Cleansed*. Tinker is the main and sole perpetrator of the torture, directing his sadistic ploys on characters at his pleasure. Crimes that deserve punishment, the kind of torture to be given, and ways in which the pain is to be instilled are all decided by him. As a self-styled love authority, Tinker focuses on love crimes, which many of the characters are guilty of. Lee J. Gutscher captures the situation perfectly in her book, *Revelation or Damnation? Depictions of Violence in Sarah Kane's Theatre*:

Whereas the excessive representation of all sorts of brutality may at first glance appear irrational, the cruelties, which are committed in the course of the play, are by no means random but follow a certain pattern and fulfil a clear function. (73)

The theme of imperfect love is addressed in all three instances of love: between Carl and Rod- homosexual love and traitorous love by Carl, between Grace and her brother Graham- incestuous love, and the attempt of Robin to win Grace's love by material things (chocolate)- venal love. Tinker, as the authority figure, becomes the executioner, the supreme or god figure who reserves the right to punish according to his discretion. The influence of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* views of love "as an act of defiance-a counteraction against repressive forces – and also how those very forces police and crush through torture any attempt at expression of love" (Saunders 92) on Kane is clear in this concept of a supreme being policing the inmates of the institution.

Tinker is made the embodiment of love's effects on inmates, indicating the strength of emotional love and its disadvantages when used as a social force.

Torture in *Cleansed* is used mainly on Grace in punishment for her incestuous relationship with her brother, with whom she continues to have sexual fantasies with even after his death earlier in the play at the hands of Tinker. Her first incident of torture comes in the form of confronting the death of her brother when she enters the hospital. Adamant on seeing the clothes her brother had worn before his death, she has Tinker demand that Robin- who had taken to wearing them to imitate Graham- removes them and hands them to her:

When fully dressed, she stands for a few moments, completely still.

She begins to shake.

She breaks down and wails uncontrollably.

She collapses. (113)

This represents the effects of the great shock she suffers upon learning about the death of her brother-lover, which also causes her to refuse to leave the institution to be closer to her brother. This is despite the attempts by Tinker to get her to leave because it is not right that she remains there as she needs help. To this she asks to be treated as any other inmates and he agrees. Confinement gives Tinker the opportunity to exercise his power of god over her in the course of the next scenes. He warns her of what is to take place later and foreshadows the horrors awaiting her: "I am not responsible, Grace" (114). This indicates her entering into his realm of control, placing her fate in his hands to do with her as he pleases. After this she becomes subject to the puritan lordship of Tinker, who is especially particular about love.

She continues to be non-repentant about the incestuous feelings she has for her brother, fantasies of which are featured in scene 5. After his appearance then, he accompanies her everywhere she goes including in scene 10 when a beating is delivered to her "by an unseen

group of men whose voices we hear”(130) using a baseball bat. Her body contorts from the pain of the force of the beating and she calls out to Graham to save her. The punishment is sustained over a few minutes as Graham watches and tries to comfort her to be strong with childhood anecdotes.

The forms of tortures are increased to include sexual violence where Grace is raped by one of the voices (132). She remains steadfast throughout the ordeal, staring into her brother’s eyes all through. Awhile later, the two share in her pain, with the blood seeping through her clothes and turning them red as Graham touches her.

The firing squad is then unleashed on her, with a lengthy torrent of gunfire directed at her. Graham joins her to share in the suffering and tries to shield her, with their love connecting them in their pain. Her torture culminates in the transformation into her brother with a stitched on penis at the end of the play.

Sarah Kane used torture to indicate punishment of sin as a form of cleansing. The different forms of sin are defined by the society’s interpretations of people who are different. In this case, Grace and Graham are in an incestuous relationship. The punishment meted out on Grace is meant to change her to have a “normal” relationship with Tinker, who is secretly in love with her. His love tortures him and probably is the cause for his sadistic treatment of the inmates. It definitely makes him demand that the woman at the live peep-hole porn show answer to the name Grace while he masturbates. In the case of Grace’s torture in the hands of Tinker, both of them undergo pain, Grace in the physical sense and Tinker emotionally and psychologically.

Torture is also used on Robin who is introduced to the readers and the audience as a mentally retarded teenager who does not know how to read and write before Grace offers to teach him how to read and write. Ignorance is indeed bliss: for “after learning how to read and use an

abacus, he realizes how long his sentence is and hangs himself' (Sierz 112). The situation bares similarities with the black man who is said to have been on:

Robben Island with Nelson Mandela. He was eighteen years old. He was put on Robben Island and told he was going to be there for forty-five years. It didn't mean anything to him- he was illiterate. Nelson Mandela and some of the other prisoners taught him how to read and write. He learnt to count, realized what forty -five years was and hung himself. (Robellato qtd. in Saunders 76-77)

Following the shock of losing his love, his innocence, and his tools of enlightenment- the books- Robin vows to commit suicide. His condition of mental retardation contributes to his arbitrary decision to commit suicide, a direct result of insufficiency in conscious and unconscious soundness of mind (Freud quoted in Sousa 210). Mentally retarded people are therefore more likely to commit suicide or entertain suicidal thoughts because they are not sufficiently able to judge their environment from a correct perspective.

Robin is a greatly tortured person, suffering under the burden of his immense love for Grace, which is unfortunately not reciprocated: "I love you too. But in a very particular- You're a lovely boy-" (127). She laughs the expressions of love off as a sort of a joke and doesn't pay him any attention. Undeterred, Robin procures a box of chocolate, intending to present them to Grace in another attempt to gain her favour. However, before he has the opportunity to do this, Tinker forces him to eat the chocolate, tossing the pieces out to him one by one.

Being a symbol of his love for Grace, being forced to eat the chocolate indicates the destruction of his love. Tinker does not allow Robin to express his love: he tortures him just like Carl and Rod. The only difference between the two cases is that in this event, Tinker applies psychological rather than physical torture on Robin. Psychological torture is defined as "the

exertion of non-physical methods of torture on an individual to get them to do as the executor desires” (108) by Pau Pérez-Sales, a highly decorated modern psychologist.

The aggravated levels of threats on Robin’s life causes him to wet the floor during the ordeal, an act that further angers Tinker and causes an unceremonious burning of all books he had been reading from. The burning of books is defined as “an act of censorship by an authority figure to stop scholarly activities that are considered to be a threat to them” (Chan 101). Tinker is threatened by the progress of Robin in getting closer to Grace, a feat he would like to achieve but is kept off by her obsessive love for her brother. By denying Robin the chance to become more knowledgeable, he diminishes the chances of Grace developing a romantic interest in him. The burning of the books in the course of the play therefore signifies Tinker’s domineering and sadistic nature to oppress the inmates and hamper any progress they attempt to make.

This is also an indication of the attempts of the powers-that-be to suppress the progress of the downtrodden, to keep them down and domineer over them. World superpower countries, for example, will do anything to suppress smaller countries that do not conform to the status quo or those who are different. Grace’s lack of concern for her tools of enlightenment going up in flames (actually remarking “Lovely”) indicates society’s lack of concern or other people’s suffering, which only aggravates their anguish.

The burning of books is an additional rebuke of Kane towards her tutor at Birmingham University, a demonstration of her dissatisfaction with the Masters course she studied for at the institution which did not impress her quite much (Sierz 91).

In *Cleansed*, the unforgiving nature of judgement indicates the surety of consequences of one’s doings. Despite the cruelty- and in some cases the partiality- with which Tinker administered torture on his victims, there was always an underlying guilty conviction for all inmates to whom punishment was meted out:

Even with the cruelties inflicted on Carl: the cutting off of tongue, hands, feet, and his penis, a sense of justice is brought about by the realisation that these punishing acts were only perpetrated in response to the unforgivable sin of betrayal he had committed. (Gutscher 74)

This was in keeping in line with the overriding theme in *Cleansed*, which was stated as “written by someone who believed utterly in the power of love” (Sierz 117). All victims suffered for the impurity of their love as judged by a self-righteous, egoistic, and sadistic Tinker. Carl was especially picked out for punishment, suffering untold torture over the course of the play. Starting as a test of his overzealous confession of love, it turns to betrayal during a torture session and spirals wildly into mutilation as he tries fruitlessly to atone for his sins. To deal with the fate of Carl, his suffering is best addressed under mutilation going by the unprecedented levels of physical injury sustained.

3.2.2. Mutilation

Mutilation is another form of violence that is perpetrated in *Cleansed*. Mutilation is defined as aggravated torture in which the victim loses the total use of their body (Weissbrodt and Heilman 364). This definition involves all forms of punishment that cause organs not to function well, even when they remain attached to the body.

The World Health Organisation, on the other hand, defines mutilation as: “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external (body parts)...or other injury to the . . . organs for non-medical reasons” (1).

The WHO defined meaning involves the separation of part of body from the rest of the body for reasons other than those of maintaining the healthy wellbeing of the individual. Mutilation has been used as a mean for punishment since ancient times, on the basis of “an eye for an eye” being the dominant feature, though in a convoluted manner. For example the sin of

stealing may have the hand cut off to avoid further sinning. Mutilation as a form of punishment instills the fear of the punishment on the individual to prevent them from perpetrating the sin. Mutilation is no longer an applicable mode of punishment for crimes in democratic countries.

Other prominent uses of mutilation in drama include *Titus Andronicus* (1594) where Lavinia is raped and mutilated. This corresponds to incidences within the play such as the penetration of Carl using the pole, the rape of Grace by the voices. In the recent past, *The American Dream* by Edward Albee (1961) featured common features as the severance of the tongue, chopping of hands, and scratching out of eyes (Albee 61). The fact that these things are done by trust figures is not escapable, it indicates the fickle nature of love and life.

In Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*, mutilation is perpetuated on Carl for his betrayal of his manically confessed love for Rod. The greatest crime is committed by Carl when he speaks lightly about matters of love, promising unconditional love to Rod, even though they are not very well acquainted:

Rod: You'd die for me?

Carl: Yes. (109)

Carl: That I will never betray you.

Rod: (Laughs more). (110)

This exchange represents Rod's interrogation of the phrase "I love you" in accordance to Roland Berthas and the book *A Lover Discourse* which advances the notion that love is a "socially irresponsible word"(148). Rod opts to promise nothing that he would not be able to fulfil, instead choosing later in the play the ultimate sacrifice of dying for love. Carl, on the other hand, pledges undying love, never to betray Rod, and a myriad of other empty promises.

When Tinker tests this commitment of love a scene later, Carl is quick to betray his friend and begs to be let off and for Rod to take his place: "ROD NOT ME ROD NOT ME" (117).

Given, he speaks the words under inhuman torture as Tinker inserts a pole into his anus, with the pain being obviously unbearable. His readiness to betray the vows he'd made earlier on indicates great weakness, and in the eyes of Tinker, an unforgivable act for which he would suffer greatly.

This torture by penetration is reminiscent of *Edward II* in Christopher Marlowe's play. Yet the use of this form of torture by Kane highlighted the crucifixion with the pole through the anus to the shoulder was used by Serbians on Muslims. Offenders thus punished then die over a period of five days to the pleasure of the perpetrators (Saunders 90).

Moments later, Rod materializes and Carl immediately embarks on another lie about being contrite. Probably having considered him a helpless case, Tinker appears with a huge pair of scissors and chops off his tongue to prevent him from sinning anymore (Gutscher 74).

From the representation of love as the greatest good in the play, doing wrong against it is a forbidden act that cannot be forgiven. Therefore, any attempts made by Carl in the rest of the play to make amends to Rod are thwarted by Tinker, whose mission it is to keep him under condemnation and prevent his cleansing.

In scene 8, Carl writes in the mud begging Rod to forgive him. After a hawkish Tinker intrudes into the lovers' privacy and denies Carl further chances on writing his repentance by chopping off his hands, Rod takes his ring from the severed hand. He then reads the message written on the ground:

Rod: Say you forgive me.

(He puts on the ring.)

I won't lie to you, Carl. (129-30)

Not to be deterred Carl attempts yet again to ask for forgiveness by dancing to "a dance for the love of Rod" which then turns into a dance of distressed regret (Gutscher 74). At this point, Tinker yet again swoops in and chops off his feet, completely incapacitating him. His

abilities to perform mundane acts are continually denied him, his initial sin apparently having condemned him to purgatory.

This indicates the permanence of actions committed by people, which are permanent and irreversible, especially when they involve heartbreak. Kane's idea was to caution lovers on the consequences of spoken vows, and how important it is for humanity to realize the consequences of neglecting loved ones. Failure to follow through on international community commitments, for example, brings untold suffering to the victims of violence, which ends up affecting the whole world, one way or another. The cruelty of the world is indicated in the monologue by Rod just before Carl's legs are chopped off for his "spasmodic dance of desperate regret" (136).

"Death is not the worst thing they can do to you. Tinker made a man bite off another man's testicles. Can take away your life but not give you death instead" (30). The cruelty of Tinker stands for the harshness of the world, which ostracizes those who are different and yet leaves them to suffer without the mercy of death. Psychological torture is indicated by the inference that death is not the most terrible thing that might occur to a person. It would have to be a bleak existence indeed if the prospect of death would be welcome over life, a situation insinuated by Kane in this excerpt.

Another act of mutilation against Carl in scene 16 involves the slitting off of Rod's throat after the later promises to continue loving him, and that he would actually die for him. After making love to him, Tinker appears in the scene and makes Rod choose between his life and Carl's. Without hesitation, Rod chooses "Me. Not Carl. Me" (136). Tinker proceeds to cut his throat as Carl watches and tries desperately to get to him. Rod's body is then ordered burned.

This non-physical act of mutilation of Carl involves a deeper reach of the loss, which is Rod, whom he really loves, after all. In choosing to kill Rod- the one who had practiced perfect love throughout, Kane indicates that true love requires much personal sacrifice, often calling for

the person to lose themselves for another. From Carl losing his lover, it means that appreciation for endowments and opportunities should be done when they are there, for they may end up being taken away. Rod made the ultimate sacrifice in dying to save Carl's life, and Carl got the ultimate mutilation when his love was taken away from him. No longer would there be a possibility of righting his wrong. This indicates that the opportunity to love perfectly should be taken while it exists, for it might not be possible to continue having it in the future.

In the white room, alongside Grace, the final act of mutilation occurs for Carl. His penis is chopped off and stitched on Grace: "Carl lies unconscious next to her. He is naked apart from a bloodied bandage strapped around his groin" (145). The swapping of his genitals with Grace's indicates retribution of his homosexual ways, whereby he is made to convert into a woman and possibly enjoy reproductive sexual relations. At this point, Carl has lost his power of speech, his power to work or touch, his mobility, and the love of his life. The final removal of his penis, his apparent transformation into a woman, indicates the final loss of his identity. Here Sarah Kane is trying to sound a warning to people to remain true to their values, especially pure love, or risk getting lost to the emptiness that is left.

The mutilation of Grace, on the other hand, is the conclusion of events in which she indicated a great desire to convert into her brother.

Grace: I look like him. Say you thought I was a man. (114)

From the moment of learning about his death, Grace changes into his clothes and starts behaving like him as well. Another incidence appears in scene 5 when the two dances the dance of love for Grace. "She mirrors him perfectly as they dance exactly in time" (119). The denial of her own body in favour of her brother's body is an indication of mental self-mutilation, which develops through the scenes until finally, the penis from Carl is stitched onto her groin and her breasts ironed out. Her desire of turning into her brother is thus fulfilled. The phenomenon

represents the trauma experienced by people with gender identity issues, who are unable to fit into one sex or the other, go through serious social segregation, and suffer the psychological torment associated with condition.

Overall, Kane explains that: it is “not about the actual chop; it’s about that person who can no longer express love with his hands, [legs, and tongue]” (Saunders 89). Ultimately, the play ends in massive transformation, where:

Under the relentless pressure of Tinker’s sadistic acts, the characters’ bodies begin to break apart. Limbs are removed, skins removed, genitals removed, and identities forcibly changed until, in the play’s final scenes, each inhabitant carries the fragments of someone else’s identity. The woman says she is Grace; Grace looks like Graham, Carl wears Robin’s clothes . . . the characters find refuge in mutability, transcending their own limits. (Greig xii)

This event demonstrates the ability of people in stressful conditions rallying and finding ways to make their lives function by incorporating change rather than resisting it. The eventual conversion into her brother is part of the ending for the play in which everyone is left with the features of other characters as well as the achievement of her dream to turn into her brother. The sun that comes out and her smiling at the end of the play represent this satisfaction she derives from the voluntary mutilation.

3.2.3. Homicide

Cleansed features the death of three characters in the course of the performance. This entails the acts of homicide, which is defined as the voluntary or involuntary ending of another person’s life. There are numerous types of descriptions for ending human life such as voluntary manslaughter:

While under the influence of sudden passion or in a sudden fit of rage brought on by serious provocation that is reasonably sufficient to incite the person into using deadly force, bringing to an end the life of a person. (Giannelli 1)

The definitions of the death of people in the hands of other people has evolved over time with the development of justice systems, as well as the prioritising of law as a protection for property rather than protecting human life. Lack of premeditation, incitement, and self-defence are some of the justifications on which people who are guilty of ending other people's lives may be go unpunished by law.

Expressed generally and in non-legal terms, murder defines the pre-meditated killing where a person plans extensively means by which they will end another person's life, and having sought the means to do so, accomplish the deed. Manslaughter, on the other hand, is the taking of life by accidental means brought about by accidents, serious provocations, or where the situation was dangerous to the life of the perpetrator and the need was done as a means of self-preservation.

In *Cleansed*, the first character to die, right in the opening scene, is Graham. Tinker administers to him a deadly dose of heroine by injection which instantly kills him. According to the 17th century French sociologist Emile Durkheim, suicide is "every case of death which results directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act, carried out by the victim himself, knowing that it will produce this result" (3). The fact that Tinker participated in the death makes him an accomplice and converts the death to that of mercy killing. Having judged Graham to be tired of life: "Graham: I want out" (107). Tinker has no qualms about giving the fatal injection.

Tinker: Life is sweet. (108)

This is an ironical thing to say while taking away human life, but as the lord of the institution, his wish is law and he suffers no retribution for the act. When Grace comes six

months later demanding to see his clothes, she is informed that he was incinerated. The symbolism of the act can be perceived as an act of purging Graham of his sins of incest and drugs dependency as he had approached Tinker's office in an attempt to receive a fix. Though dead, he continues featuring prominently in the play, appearing alongside his sister in various scenes, violent and passive.

The continued featuring of his character even when pronounced dead indicates Sarah Kane's view of the "light", a theme that also features in *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* later on. The afterlife was to Kane a continuity of life, with the boundaries of beyond the light and the physical realm being transcended to bring the two lovers together in their sinful love.

In *Cleansed*, the second character to die is Robin. After trying unsuccessfully to win the love of Grace over, Robin decides to treat her to a box of chocolates after she discloses that she loved it when her previous boyfriend would buy them for her. Before he can deliver the treat to her he encounters Tinker who force-feeds them all to him, thwarting his initial intentions. This indicates the displeasure of the "god" figure at the attempts to buy her affections. Later, when Grace continues to ignore him in another trance of fantasy, he takes out his tights and threatens to end his life while standing on a chair. With Grace unresponsive, Tinker approaches from behind and pushes him off, aiding to his suicide. The death of Robin therefore does not fit completely into any one descriptions of homicide.

With Robin intending to use the chocolates to gain her affections, a threat to Tinkers own intentions, his assistants, "the voices", are indicated to have planted the idea of suicide in his head (Gutscher 81). The clear demarcation of his death as a suicide is marred by the fact that he does not kick the chair from under his feet. Instead, a disjointed, undefined entity is responsible for that action as Tinker watches passively. Once again, Tinker is portrayed as the lord of death, aiding in the suicide of yet another character.

Sarah Kate attempts here to indicate that the well-being of a person is their own responsibility: they can either lose it or keep it depending on their wishes on the matter. As the force that keeps the place running and rules over it with an iron hand, Tinker represents the ruthless society that would rather aid or abet evil deeds rather than attempt to help the suffering. For example, crimes against humanity such as the case of ethnic cleansings in Bosnia were possible because international community did not pay attention to the suffering in time to stop the carnage.

3.2.4. Oppression

Another form of violence that is showcased in *Cleansed* is oppression. This is defined as “a complex reality of abuse, mistreatment, or manipulation by an individual or a group of people” (Abberley 8).

Minority groups are most affected by oppression, often at the hands of an authority figure or higher entry. Oppression and exploitation occurs in numerous ways, including financial, political, and social. While the oppressing entity may benefit from the relationship, a certain kind of loss is brought upon the oppressed. Reversing the effects of oppression calls for either the oppressed to grow stronger and shrug off the power exerted upon them, or for the oppressor to withdraw their force. Carl Marx attributes oppression to the accepted norms and societal standards which are warped against certain section of the community such as women and certain races (D’amato 30).

Kane uses the nameless woman to shed light on the fate of women prostitute and in some way, women in general. Just as with the nameless woman, the society oppresses those who are considered weaker. One form of oppression is the confinement inside the booth as well as objectification which is seen with Tinker’s masturbation to her erotic dancing. His broken promises to help her break free from her confinement represents the people’s continued silence in

the face of other people's suffering as well as ill-treating those considered to be below their level. For example, "the police and the society do not take . . . crimes seriously, and often blame the prostitutes/crime victims" (Ditmore 215). Women often become subjects of oppression, abuse, and victimisation, assault crimes are also often blamed on the victims who are accused of aiding the perpetrators.

However, this relationship is one which has a happy ending, more so when coming in a play where almost all characters end with deep scars and broken love. The love acquired by the woman empowers her, gives her an identity, and redeems her from her captivity. Even though the identity assumed is that of Grace, Tinker's other love interest, the woman is definitely better off after the event. The intended meaning of this scenario enforces the definition of oppression victim go through great suffering at the hands of their oppressors.

Just as in other dramas such as the play *Ghost Sonata* which features the figure of Mummy which "lives in the closet mostly, both to avoid seeing and being seen . . . a pitiful monster of some kind, waiting to be released from the terrible spell placed on her by some wicked magicians" (Saunders 99). The institution in which *Cleansed* takes place is an oppressive environment for all characters, and they undergo various forms of abuse in the hands of Tinker. Being an all-knowing, ever-present, and all-powerful entity in the midst of all other five characters that are sinful and weak, engaging in acts of immoral love. Other forces, such as Grace's incestuous love for his brother, Robin's unrequited love for Grace, and Rod's unwavering love for his faltering partner Carl all hold the characters prisoners.

Grace is also under the oppressive hold of her love for Graham, and on getting to the hospital, she wears his clothes and "breaks down and wails uncontrollably" (113). She ends up being confined like the rest, albeit at her request (Gutscher 75). Her reason for choosing to remain in the institution was keeping close to her brother whom she immediately impersonates.

Wearing his clothes and learning to walk, talk, and dance like him, she ends up being converted into a real-life version of him with the gender swap at the end of the play. Due to this obsessive love, Grace mutilates herself mentally by deserting her persona and inhibiting his. Even with his death having been confirmed, she states that: “I don’t think of Graham as dead. That’s not how I think of him” (125). Grace is under a process of mourning, which is defined by Freud as:

The reaction to the loss of a beloved person or an abstraction taking the place of the person . . . It is also most remarkable that it never occurs to us to consider mourning as a pathological condition and present it to the doctor for treatment, despite the fact that it produces severe deviations from normal behaviour. We rely on it being overcome after a certain period of time, and consider interfering with it to be pointless, or even damaging. (310-11)

This process of mourning completely wrecks in Grace’s brain, causing her to gradually lose herself into the emptiness left behind by her brother’s departure. The attempt to change into Graham represents the resistance to the idea that he is dead by becoming him. Resistance to moving on is a problem that is faced by numerous people who lose, which is the subject Kane highlights with the idea.

Robin, on the other hand, is besotted with Grace. During their study sessions where she attempts to teach him counting and reading, he gradually grows to love her, but his advances are unsuccessful in creating a relationship between them.

Grace remains committed to her brother despite getting seriously tortured by Tinker. The oppression by this unrequited love finally causes him to commit the sin of attempting to buy love for which Tinker punishes him with the burning of the books. He reaches the peak of his oppression with the decision to hang himself, which he does right next to an uncaring Grace.

Despite numerous incidences where Carl betrays him, Rod continues to love him to the very end, every as his body becomes increasingly dismembered. Carl also suffers oppression from his betrayal of Rod, the attempts at the reversal of which causes him terrible suffering inflicted by the unforgiving Tinker. Their relationship is thus oppression of and in itself, bringing them both untold suffering which ends with Rod getting killed as punishment to Carl for experiencing love:

Carl kisses him.

He makes love to Rod

Tinker: You or him, Rod, what's it to be? (142)

Tinker continues being the oppressor to their happiness, purposively picks on them throughout the play, and destroys them both in the end. As the only gay relationship in the play, Sarah Kane was addressing the oppression of the LGBT community in society, who continues being met with undue pressure and resistance in the community. As an enduring theme, their suffering is also an indication of how people who are different are misunderstood and ill-treated by others.

Sarah Kane's rather contradictory style of playwriting is best manifested best by the discrepancy in the critical acclaim of *Cleansed* and her own views. The most violent, with the greatest shock factor, and most widely critiqued, yet talking about *Cleansed*, Sarah Kane says that the play is: "My most hopeful play . . . written by someone who believed utterly in the power of love" (Sierz 117). Rather than being an indication of miserableness and depression, the enduring violence is simply used as a mean to attract the attention of the audience. The burning power of love is indicated literary and figuratively throughout the book, yet a deeper analysis still turns up innumerable new insights on the topic.

The interpretation of events such as Tinker's burning of Graham and Rod's bodies indicates that the ultimate end of true love is destruction. She advances the idea that giving unconditional love requires much personal sacrifice as indicated by the death of Rod as part of Carl's punishment. According to Kane, the concept of conditional subversion exists not only for love but also in art and in other areas of life, as she states in an interview with Stephenson: "All good art is subversive, either in form or content, the best art is subversive in form and content and form and content attempt to be one- the form is the meaning" (Stephenson and Langridge 291).

As the agent of torture, mutilation, and oppression in the play, Tinker occupies a remarkably separate universe from the other characters. He is the coldblooded killer who injects Graham with a deadly dose of heroine to end his life and declares gleefully: "life is sweet" (108) as he watches the life drain out him. He also sadistically tortures Carl into denouncing his love for Rod, and having succeeded, proceeds to mercilessly and methodically mutilate him over the course of the play. He also encourages Robin to commit suicide as indicated in the first conversation he has with Grace: "Robin: Voice told me to kill myself" (115). Being an instrument of psychological torture used egoistically by Tinker, the suicide later on in the play can be traced back to the voices. In the incidence of the suicide, Tinker watches passively as he hangs himself. These are the same assistants to Tinker who are unleashed on Carl to beat him up before penetration with a pole and who beat up and rape Grace.

Tinker represents the powers that be who exercise controlling power over smaller, weaker subjects. A doctor in a psychological institution, he uses the power to further his sadistic campaign of cleansing the inmates of their 'sins' rather than using the supremacy for the common good. With everyone possessing this "Tinker" power, Kane indicates that people need to take charge of their lives and not submit too much to established norms and that the fragile cannot make it in the world.

As a play in its entirety, *Cleansed* draws powerfully from events taking place in former Yugoslavia. The civil war that broke out in Bosnia along ethnic lines caused by political intolerance was directly implied in the play. In what was termed as a case of “ethnic cleansing”, Serbian forces killed thousands of innocent citizens because of their ancestral difference. In the worst of these attacks, more than 8,000 men and boys were shot to death in 1995. The aim was to ensure that the ethnic groups from which the victims came would be suppressed with such a heavy toll on their reproductive male population (Bildt 115).

In response to this, Sarah Kane, just like many other creative around the world, created the play to address the issue. The concept was that after Tinker punishes the characters and tortures them as he did, the end product was a “Cleansed” person, delivered from their sins by figurative fire. Of course the end result was that the “clean” characters, representative of the diverse members of the society, were either dead or they had lost their identity. This indicates how futile it is to try to force people to be the same: the differences are what make the world function properly.

For Kane, she decides to retain the savagery of violence as a disgusting reminder of what has been done in concentration camps all around the world. She fuses the familiar with the unfamiliar to reproduce the terrifying shock of the instantaneous use of social areas like the deployment of gymnasiums in Bosnia as torment chambers. However, due to the complacency of audiences to expect humorous shows in theatre, the current atmosphere was not receptive to the kind of reception she required to deliver with the gravity the current issue required. She thus uses savage torture, physical and sexual assault, and bloody amputations to confront us with things that no one dares to face. As direct or indirect players in the barbarism, Kane endeavours to instil even though the history is a shameful testament to man’s humanitarianism, addressing the issues is much better than hiding behind selfish cares and comforts of our blissful existence.

Escapisms and denial are also featured in the play, indicated by Grace's continued denial of the fact of her brother's death and the need for her to move on:

Grace: I look like him. Say you thought I was a man. (114)

Grace: No. no.

I don't think of Graham as dead.

That's not how I think of him. (125)

This indicates the blinding prejudices with which people view injustices around them, choosing to believe what is convenient to them and ignoring any problems that do not directly affect them. The suffering experienced by Grace, and her final conversion to inhabit a male body signifies the loss of humane values brought about by continued obliviousness to realities around the world. To withstand future brutalities, we should face our history with its all severity, accept the wrongdoings and seek to redress the evils.

4. VIOLENCE IN *CRAVE*

4.1. *Crave*

In the run up to her writing *Crave*, Sarah Kane took up residency at the Royal Court in New York as part of an exchange program with the Paines Plough. It was during this time that she expresses a shift in her writing style to favour a more “deliberate . . . experiment with form, and language and rhythm and music” (Saunders 101). She became less culturally articulate, reducing the number of words she was using and writing more strangely, albeit less violently.

The form in *Crave* was different than any of her other plays in many ways: it shows no existence of traditional sense of dialogue, has no physical action, no linear plot, no stage directions, no time and no setting. It is more of a poetic writing which just happened to be presented on stage than a play which was written for performance.

It only appears to take to the form of *The Wasteland* by T. S. Eliot, which followed an “outline for the poem . . . similar to many of Kane’s intentions for *Crave*” (Saunders 102). They also shared the same belief of theatre being the ideal medium for poetry and both strived to use the medium in new and previously unexperimented ways.

The experimentation with rhythm indicates influences from Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*. The other common feature in both plays is the use of a character sustaining an interrupted and prolonged speech lasting several pages. Such outpouring of words is delivered by Lucky in *Waiting for Godot* and by character A in *Crave* (Saunders 106).

It was an experiment of Kane’s dramatic poetry writing abilities, shifting from the usual theatrical form in favour of something more noticeably different, radical in every way. Kane admits to utilizing musical notations in several places when she wrote *Crave*, choosing some words over others because of their sound more than their meaning. However, she kept to the themes of violence and anguish addressed in earlier works, choosing to just keep the action to a bare minimum. The characters in the play are just as profoundly distressful as in other of her creative works. However she chooses to present the pain verbally.

Crave moves away from the physical demonstrations of violence towards more delineated psychological fields, unlike her three earlier plays, it showed no physical and sexual abuse on stage. Critics mistook the fact to mean that Kane was born again as a dramatist, moving away from the gore and violent to a more mainstream style. Reviewers only take her seriously after the play, believing her to have turned her back on scenes of abuse and pain. *Crave* is thus viewed as the most optimistic and appealing of her works.

The positive views of *Crave* by critics however bewilder Kane because she does not consider *Crave* as a hope-inspiring play. She believes that *Crave* is the most despairing drama she has ever 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'. (Saunders 108)

And actually, far from being a play free of violence, *Crave* is just another extension of Kane's style of a violent theatrical portrayal of the world. All the characters intensify the verbal scope of violence indicating a disjointed sense of self and the dissolution of a human mind under intense pressures of craving for affection, the loss of trust and faith, and hopelessness.

There are four speakers with the letters A, C, M and B T who all crave for different things. A is the father , paedophile and a abuser, C is the most abused character, M is a woman whose greatest desire is to have a child, and B is a young man who fancies to be tempted by an older woman. Sarah Kane clarifies the general feature of the 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 always a young woman . . . A, B, C and M do have specific meanings which I am prepared to tell you . . . A is many things which is the Author, the Abuser . . . M was simply the 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 nothing would ever change. (Saunders 104)

The four speakers crave to possess desires of a time long past when they were still happy. Their cravings are centred on the lost gladness. A cries for the missing love, C hungers for purchasing "a new tape recorder and blank tapes to start new life" (174), M thirsts for sincere love and a child, and B lusts for being seduced by M.

The plot in *Crave* centres on the violent images in the memory of four characters that have previously gone through unbearable experiences of violence and stocked the severe experiences in the memory as it continues consuming their sanity and peace of mind. The figures A, B, C and M in *Crave* tell different and progressively fragmented and incompatible stories which are later denied or brought into doubt. The issue of pathological identification with suffering and hurtful trauma is placed at the heart of *Crave*, being an issue of great personal concern for the writer.

With the suffering being described on stage, trauma plays a paramount role in describing the torturous world of the victims. Victims and perpetrators cooperate to give a testimony of trauma whose impacts on both parties' psychological wellbeing are profound and extensive. This review will demonstrate how the characters in *Crave* suffer psychological trauma resulting from past violence and how this trauma supplies the condition of victimization.

4.2. Elements of Violence in *Crave*

Crave is set apart from other Sarah Kane's plays in that it does not involve violence being acted out at stage. The writer confined the violence to the past lives of the characters, and has them re-live them by recitation on stage. The presentation itself, with no sense of stage direction, character definition, or clear indication of who talks to whom about what also underlies the complications that accompany trauma. Psychological trauma is the main type of suffering featuring in the play, brought about by brutal physical events the characters had undergone.

4.2.1. Psychological Trauma

In less than twenty years the concept of Psychological trauma has forced itself on the community and it has become the dominant reality of violence. In trauma-theoretical approaches to literature, a differentiation is frequently made between "acting out" and "working out". These two terms are based on the Freudian Psychoanalysis, and later enhanced by critics like Dominick

LaCapra. The traumatized person who acts out frequently re-experiences the incident, e.g. in flashbacks, hallucinations or dreams, and sometimes victims possessing these dreams do not have the desire of getting rid of them. They welcome the dreams as a sort of commemoration for people they have lost, a behaviour pattern defined by Dominick LaCapra as a loyalty to trauma (144-48).

According to the American Psychiatric Association trauma is brought about by victims' responses to strong one-time events like accidents, natural disasters, dissolution, crimes and other violent incidents. It also includes reactions to incessant or repetitive experimentations like child abuse, indifference, abandonment, domestic violence, concentration camps, denial, constant destitutions, battle and battering relationship. All these experiences and circumstances cause emotional agony and torment, overwhelming the victim's ability to cope and leaving them incapable of helping themselves (3).

Psychological trauma is developed to a great extent in *Crave*: each character has their own traumatising events that dog them. These traumas play out in the course of the play, indicated by crossing conversations, disunity in stage directions and the storyline, and the line of thoughts expressed by characters however disjointed.

People who have a traumatic experience like character C find themselves in an unsafe world that normalises the desire to isolate themselves from others. They therefore feel detached, disconnected, and are unable to re-establish connections with others. Nothing excites or triggers joy in them, which makes trauma victims more likely to be moody, antisocial, and cynical.

The only shred of hope that is expressed by character C: "I need a miracle to save me" (172) is indicated to be a mirage later when she expresses: "Cured my body can't cure my soul" (199) as the play comes to an end. The complications related to the soul and the lack of control of the physical world by people makes it impossible to achieve the feat of self-healing. At the end,

character C states that ever shall she be “happy and free” (200) after falling into the “bright white light” (200).

Character M, a victim of an abusive domestic relationship, also suffers traumatic effects of her past. She engages in irresponsible behaviour to deal with the trauma: “I say I drank a bottle of port, smoked some fags and fucked a stranger” (155). She is also driven to these acts by her enduring craving to have a child, which she wants to do before she gets too old. Her trauma causes her to have false memories, where she used to believe that she saw her grandparents romping in the kitchen, but when she tells her mother “she stared at me oddly and said that didn’t happen to you. It happened to me” (159).

Freud explains the phenomenon with his theory that traumatic experience can sometimes create an unpalatable impact on the human psyche which can alter the disposition of individual’s memory, self-identification, and related system, and can change people’s psychological, biological, and collective balance to an extent that the memory of one specific incident turns up to corrupts all other experiences, devastating acknowledgment of the present (Mollon 8).

The sentiments of C on the haphazard nature of events affecting her life is reflected in most other characters, but more importantly, underlies the central premise of *Crave* that there are no real answers for the desires of people and no solution can fulfil their cravings, their existence is not under their control, and life happens unpredictably and with no design perceptible to the characters.

For us, the play seems to indicate that submitting to the higher power and rising beyond past atrocities is both a responsibility and an impediment. The representation of light in Sarah Kane plays indicate the passing on to a higher level, perhaps meaning that the tortures of our lives last till death for as long we keep recalling them and living under the influence of our life events, there is no chance of getting out from underneath the spell. The indication of the inability

of love to conquer the troubles experienced by character C specifically illustrates the weakness of imperfect love and its inability to keep us safe, conquer all, or bring us together. The bleakness of the play is heavily influenced by the intentions of the writer in creating it as a play where characters have given up on love. The desperation is supposed to lead the audience in a journey of the character's lives to the point where they say, "fuck this, I'm out of here" (Saunders 108).

4.2.2. Rape

J.H. Bogart, an expert in the field of sexual crimes, defines rape "as forced or otherwise coerced penetration— even if slight – of the vulva or anus using a penis, other body parts or an object" (Cowling 3). Rape is considered an act of sexual violence, a collective definition of sexual criminal acts which violates the autonomy of the victim.

In the definition of rape and sexual violence, any sexual relations with minors are regarded as statutory rape as the minors are considered legally incapable of consenting. The delineation of boundaries has grown in the recent past to include non-consent in marriage as a convictable act of sexual violence. The setting of a sexual crime, such as the home or the office, also affects the description of rape: a measure of domestic violence is included in cases of sexual violence directed towards a member of the family.

In *Crave*, C experiences traumatising flashbacks and confesses to being on the brink of breaking down caused by her harrowing past:

A: a small dark girl sits in the passenger seat of a parked car.

Her elderly grandfather undoes his trousers and it pops out of his pants, big and purple.

A: And when she cries, her father in the back seat says

I'm sorry: she's not normally like this. (157-58)

Children who are sexually abused by a member of family will have the feelings and memories of shame, deception, and abuse which lead to losing the ability to create basic trust and

cause them to develop safe attachments in future to shield them from external intrusion (Balter 559).

The incident causes her to suffer serious mental trauma which is demonstrated in her self-denigration: “C: And has been hurtling away from that moment ever since” (158) .The sexual violation by an authority figure completely erodes her trust and the affectionate connection to the rest of her family. The relationship becomes cold and distant instead of being supportive and protective, and she feels vulnerable and exposed: “C: No one to help me, not my fucking mother neither” (179).

Further effects of the sexual violence lead to her memory lapses, a natural function of the traumatised mind of self-protection which involves compartment. Here the brain locks away some of the more harmful recollections to protect the victim from their traumatising effects, the incidence of which ends up harming the person more as they try to fill the gaps left behind. She claims, “Listen. I am here to remember. I need to . . . remember. I have this grief and I don’t know why” (171). The helplessness is also emphasised character states: “And though she cannot remember she cannot forget” (4). She is thus condemned to live under the spell of these traumatising events, held back in an intrinsically way that causes her to develop serious disillusionments with events around her. “C: A stream of haphazard events like any other” (196).

Appalling past events and suffering have made her “heart go out of” (156) her, her “mind’s a blank” (168), and she is “broken” (191). She considers herself “evil” (173). The confession of being evil is forced out of her by the guilt of the incidences: she blames herself for the trauma that haunts her. Her spirit is thus destroyed by the traumatisation and the surety of the events. The fact that they are irredeemable and that her purported protectors were responsible for the heinous acts informs her view that she cannot be saved- a common occurrence in trauma victims.

She has lost faith in the usefulness of everything and everyone and lashes out at the closest thing that is in her path- her family:

C: I hate the smell of my own family. (160)

C: I see no good in anyone any more. (163)

C: No one to help . . . not fucking my mother neither. (179)

With the loss of her most important support and trust group brought about by grave violation of her innocence perpetrated by her father and grandfather early in her life, C becomes the most psychologically disturbed character in the play.

4.2.3. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is explained by the Object relations theory postulated by Sigmund Freud that states that “humans are motivated from their earliest childhood by the need” for significant relationships with others, (Hyde-Nolan and Juliao 6). Developing in an abusive, neglectful, or inconsistent environment creates a situation where dependency needs are not met, a situation that translates into the future with anxiety issues in later life. Domestic violence involves acts such as: threatening to or actually causing harm physically and mentally, causing or trying to cause family members to have involuntary sexual activity under duress, and engaging in acts that cause terror, fright, harassment, or molestation towards a member of the family.

Close family members are the only parties who can engage in domestic violence, most often being confined to the nuclear family. As the closest trust unit and the first social support group a child is born into, betrayal of trust through domestic violence has far-reaching effects and impacts on the victims’ life long after the incidences pass.

Crave is a play centred on the family unit which has had deeply traumatising experiences dealing with fellow members of the family. C remembers her childhood which was fraught with numerous events where she was forced to witness domestic violence:

A: A small girl became increasingly paralyzed by her parent's frequently violent rows. Sometimes she would spend hours standing completely still in the toilet, simply because that was where she happened to be when the fight began. She thus takes bottles of milk from the fridge or the doorstep and puts them in rooms where she may get stuck when her parents start fighting. Her parents cannot understand why there is sour milk in rooms. (185)

The continued witnessing of quarrels between her parents deeply troubles C, who makes shelters to hide in when the disputes start. The effects of domestically caused trauma can also be seen in M who has imbalanced speech and craves for love: "If love would come" (160). The longing for love transcends throughout the play, but in the end, the jadedness sets in and M states: "Couldn't love you less" (194). M suffers from selective, false memories, and nurses a great desire to get a child, which causes her to have sex with a stranger after she "drank a bottle of port, smoked some fags" (175). According to World Health Organization, abused women endure enormous psychological pain because of domestic violence. Many suffer depression and anxiety and may turn to alcohol and drugs to numb their suffering: or become isolated and withdrawn (16).

M goes through a state of disorientation, as explained by Sarah Kane in comparing the similarities of the plays *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*: "The barriers which distinguish between reality and different forms of imagination completely disappear" (Saunders 111). M is disoriented and confuses past and the present, thus her mind comes up with stories to compensate for the gaps in her memory. The highly unpredictable mood swings, frustrations, and hopelessness can also be attributed to the trauma of her past, represented by an image of her grandparents having sex in the kitchen- a defensive false memory to an obviously worse memory.

B also experiences debilitating confusion and division of consciousness which demonstrates “a speechless void, unrepresentable, inherently pathologic, timeless, and repetitious” (Balaev 3). B is inherently confused in speech and in thought, indicated by the line: “okay, I was, okay, I was, okay okay. I was, okay, two people, right?”(163). He is however mean and disloyal, refusing the offer of M to help her mother a child. He is however a character to whom a chance of delivery is indicated, as at the end of the plays he feels uneasy “Something inside me that kicks like a bastard” (172). He eventually confesses his self-disgust, requests that he is raped and later killed for his past inequities.

The traumatized character B who struggles to formulate cohesive narratives is inclined to display fragmentation which is a response of an extremely annoying sense of self. He is trapped in a range of roles. He has difficulty in integrating his memory and putting his conscious into a perpetual whole. He wants to inflict a physical damage on his body, pain and humiliation. One moment he is fine but the next moment he is aggressive due to his dramatic events in his past life, which is indicated to have contained scenes of domestic violence too.

Freud talks about memory repression in his psychoanalysis; “when a person has a very hurtful experience, they try to remove it from their conscious” (Mollon 3). B suffers from repressed memories caused by horrible past experiences that he has had. B has also developed a false memory; having sustained a broken nose in a domestic altercation with his father, he created an alternate memory that was safer and more palatable. He remembers a car crash instead of the abuse in an attempt to shield himself from the severe trauma. The memories remain buried in the subconscious for long periods, but the impacts of the trauma can be seen on the sufferer. B suffers from:

B: no emotions. (181)

B: my back aches. (166)

B: addicted to sickness. (168)

4.2.4. Colonisation in Love

Colonization in love is also described as possessiveness or domineering love and it is characterised by “a person loving another person in their selfish terms driven by ego and the need to have power and controls other them. This need to control others is caused by insecurities and an uncaring attitude towards others” (Schroeder 84). The intentions with which people exercise control over others, specifically those they claim to love, are to experience the sensations of power and being in charge, even when these expressions oppress their subjects.

Insecurities are the leading causes of possessiveness: the oppressors express their self-doubts by controlling those in their grasp. As a form of oppressive loving relationships, colonisation gives one partner in a relationship- father/children, husband/wife, and siblings- more say in the lives of their partners in the relationship. This includes interfering in the personal space of the companion and overriding them. Colonisation often results in powerlessness and inadequacy in the victim, giving the oppressor even more power over them in a bid to win their approval.

Among the imperfect love relationships highlighted in *Crave*, colonisation ranks high as a leading source of trauma for the characters. Love is presented as a “source of obsession, corruption, ownership, and breakdown . . . [Kane] seems to say that [for] any two people who form a relationship some kind of colonisation is bound to take place – someone will be abused, power structures will come into play” (Michael Billington quoted in Saunders 107). The two major types of possessiveness represented in the play include obsession and debasement.

People in obsessive love relationships portray: “feelings of defencelessness, loss of control over their lives, an intense sense of rejection and humiliation, and abject emptiness” (Mitchell 1). These feelings are the fodder upon which oppressive partners feed on to achieve

their means of controlling their prey, sending out a confusing array of signals of approval and disapproval that further confuses their subjects. Obsessive love can either be expressed or fantasized, with the obsessing party playing characteristically different roles in both. Obsessive love expressed towards people with whom an obsessed party is acquainted to such as a partner, relative, or friend it indicates trauma in both parties, especially when the victim sustains it. This indicates in them a fear of being unloved, lonely or single, fears the obsessive lover feeds off of. Another kind of obsessive love involves a person who longs for another without expressing the feelings. Rejected lovers often express this type of love, which grows to become a sort of an addiction where the object of obsession receives undue attention and often unrequited love.

In *Crave*, A expresses an obsessive love for C, which is portrayed as a form of infatuation:

A: Don't say no to me you can't say no to me because it's such a relief to have love again and to lie in bed and be held and touched and kissed and adored and your heart will leap when you hear my voice and see my smile and feel my breath on your neck and your heart will race when I want to see you . . . (178)

A is also the father of C, who is indicated to have engaged his daughter in a forced incestuous act of love, even inviting the grandfather to share in his indulgence. The effects of the actions on C are greatly profound, a case of debasement experienced by C. Freud says that “debasement guarantees that the lover alone possesses the soul and body of their partner, and they decide their use according to their desires” (Miles 66). Relationships that are started in passion often end in debasement when the craving dissipates, leading to cases of abuse, jealousy, and often murder.

The debasement of C leads to the psychological trauma Kane talks about in the play, where she loses her sense of self and is left in a state of confusion and trauma. Explaining further

about the loss of love, Kane states: “the pain of love . . . is about a loss of self. And when you lose yourself where do you go? There’s nowhere to go: it’s a kind of madness” (Saunders 93). It is this lack of direction caused by a childhood of debasement and possession that makes C the most traumatically disturbed character in the play. She has experienced the worst of what both have to offer and sadly for her, does not understand real love either as she has never experienced it.

4.2.5. Isolation and Loneliness

Freud linked isolation to a defensive mechanism of the psychologically disturbed mind in which the subject disassociates with their environment to protect themselves from unpleasantness (Erwin 284). “Loneliness refers to the subjective emotional state of an individual while isolation refers to the objective state of deprivation of social contact” (Larsen and Lubkin 88). This definition indicates that while loneliness can be self-imposed or done with the volition of the person, isolation involves a sense of force being exerted on a person to avoid their freedom of social interaction.

Traumatic experiences generate in their victims a profound feeling of isolation and separation which challenges people’s self-control, giving a rise to a sense of helplessness, affliction and a fragmented sense of self. Kane underscores this feeling of separation in her play:

C: Alone. (160)

A: I am so lonely, so fucking lonely. (174)

A: My hollow heart is full of darkness. (171)

Self-imposed isolation is a means of coping used by characters in the play to a great extent. It is common for “victims to separate or dissociate themselves from physical and emotional self-awareness to avoid pain. Splitting off from one’s body or awareness can reduce the victim’s immediate sense of violation and help them to endure and survive the situation”

(Herman 13). But the characters express no willing to cope with the painful past, reaching the conclusion that everything has changed and made it pointless to continue living. All the characters in the play express a craving for death and being in a place which has no life:

C: Why did I not die at birth? (193)

A: What do you want?

C: To die. (158)

C: I'm having a breakdown because I'm going to die. (182).

C: I'm not ill: I just know that life is not worth living. (191)

A: Death is my lover and he wants to move in. (180)

A: I'm going to die. (173)

M: I would have to get on a plane which seemed destined to crash. (176)

M: Someone somewhere is crying for me, crying for my death. (159)

Their unanimous decision to end their lives was “a conscious act of self-induced annihilation. It is best understood as a multidimensional malaise in needful people who describe an issue for which suicide is perceived as the best solution” (Shneidman 203). If a positive event does not occur to provide new balance and to supply fuel for reinterpreting the self and life events, then the “ultimate escape then is suicide which has the “main appeal . . . that it offers oblivion” (Baumeister 90).

The four characters need a new beginning, “a real life” and “a real love” which “is rooted and grows upwards in daylight” (190). Thus, the most excellent thing for starting a new life is to be free of memory because their destructive past means death. In order to have the infinite happiness and the complete satisfaction the characters need to get into the light.

The light reveals itself in the darkness. It is a journey leading the characters to a higher reality, the dawn of morning in which characters reach a release through death and self-

annihilation. All four characters are shaped by unfulfilled longings caused by the destruction of love in everyday life that feature throughout *Crave*. Kane urges us to take care of not only the victim but also of the perpetrator who shows even no remorse. The reasoning behind this view is that the perpetrator's humanity might be ruined as an outcome of the social violence they have propagated, further putting their victims at risk. It would be much better to attempt to understand rather than judging them. But can we forgive the father who raped his own daughter or the father who beat his children and can we take care of the grandfather who raped his own granddaughter?

Kane invites us to care for the abuser's feelings instead of focusing entirely on the abused feelings of sadness, betrayal, and shame caused by the abuser. However, for the victims, eradicating the traces of childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse and psychological abuse is an impossible feat for these incidents become dyed into their characters, defining their personalities, behaviours and mannerisms.

By writing about the grandfather who rapes the small black girl with the permission of her father- who is also said to have committed the heinous act too. Kane alludes to the blatant violation of civil rights for blacks in various parts of the world. Having been written after the internationally publicized apartheid struggle in South Africa, the representation speaks of lingering abuse and violations. Even in countries that claim to be democratic such as America, American Blacks were struggling with racial oppression around the time *Crave* was written, more so than today. The presence of father and grandfather indicates that the violation is passed on from generation to generation, a vicious cycle that requires concerted efforts to end.

Kane depicts the images of the most distasteful pain to create a process of profound social changes. She hopes the extreme images of traumatic violence in her plays will force the readers and audience to respond to her demands for meaningful change in the society. Violence depicted

in the plays is a response to the quiet maintained by people in light of offense and wrongdoings in our immediate community and elsewhere.

5. VIOLENCE IN *4.48 PSYCHOSIS*

5.1. *4.48 Psychosis*

4.48 Psychosis was the last play written by Sarah Kane before she committed suicide in the morning of February 20, 1999. Completed just days before she hung herself with her shoestrings in her hospital lavatory, the play is widely regarded as a suicide note owing to the generous lacing of suicidal tendencies it carries. The title of the play is inspired by events in the last year of her life when she battled acute depression and madness, getting admitted to a mental facility twice. Apparently, 4:48 AM was the time at which she was most sane, after which the coming of the first light would throw her off kilter.

Following in the wake of *Crave*, *4.48 Psychosis* adheres, by and large, to the alternative style of drama, without character indications or stage directions. Aleks Sierz points out that the play was a formal attempt at breaking up a performance text to describe the state of psychosis where the borders between self and the outside world have disintegrated, rather than the personal account of a psychological condition (Saunders 36). It therefore talks about “the light”, more than any other of her plays but building on the theme from ideas introduced in *Crave*.

The theme in *4.48 Psychosis* is clearly identifiable as madness-inspired suicide, following a long process of self-evaluation. It is Sarah Kane’s best illustration of the blurring separation between self and other. She clearly talks about her impending death where she shall “hang [herself] at 4.48 to the sound of her lover’s breathing” (225). Her concept of light as the representation of hope in death appears strongly in the play, especially in the last parts where “hatch opens, stark light: the rapture begins” (240). She addresses the finality of death, how the physical entity ceases to existence when an individual goes into the light, and how death would

be a reprieve to the suffering and the depression. Love is once again featured prominently in the play, indicated in the unrequited love she expresses for her doctor. The quote from *Cleansed* “love me or kill me” (120) is hinted at during the dialogue with the doctor where she expresses her love for him, even as he continues to express his commitment to his “lover”.

The setting of the play is in a mental facility where various locations are used to deliver the drama. Scenes take place in the doctor’s office, in her room, and inside her head- the majority of the scenes take place here. For the first time in her writing career, Kane writes in a very personal manner and also expresses very personal convictions, the thoughts that run through her mind during the time.

Influences that can be identified in the writing of *4.48 Psychosis* includes fellow in-her-face playwright Martin Crimp whose play *Attempts on her Life* in 1997 followed similar structure and form with both *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*. Saunders sums up the influence of Crimp on Kane as:

Kane is recorded voicing her belief that Crimp was ‘one of the few genuine formal innovators writing for the stage’ and ideas from the structure and dramatic form of *Attempts on her Life* find its way into both *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*-not only through its rejection of stage directions relating to specifics such as scenography or the actors ‘appearance or movement- but in the move away from formal methods of characterization. In *Attempts on her Life* we are given no indication of how many actors are required for the play, or who is speaking at any given moment . . . *4.48 Psychosis* is far closer to Crimp’s play in bringing together a myriad of unidentified and unnumbered voices to the drama. (111)

The lack of structure and form works very well for *4.48 Psychosis*, as it further illustrates the break from reality represented by madness. Unstructured and undirected words further stress

the mental state of the main character, so Kane can be said to have taken the ideas of Crimp into the very content of her work.

The context, of course, is the discussion of death, suicide, and the afterlife from the view of a depressed mind and one that suffers from numerous traumas. It is set in a background of a mental patient (Kane) who has been dealing with mental illness for quite some time, one who has been admitted and discharged from hospital a few times. Past deeds in her deranged state included attempting to kill some of her doctors and anorexic behaviour. A foreshadowing of the future is made in numerous incidents, indicating the exact time and manner in which she would end her life:

At 4.48

when depression visits

I shall hang myself

to the sound of my lover's breathing. (207)

After 4.48 I shall not speak again. (213)

At 4.48

I shall sleep. (233)

These foreshadowing of the impending death put into context the whole play, explaining the contended belief of its being a suicide note. It is quite possible that, understanding the future which awaited her, and of course with the full knowledge of her intentions, the play was tool with which Kane would open up her life to the audience. The depth of personal conflicts, desires, fears, beliefs, and her state of mind goes a long way in establishing better understanding of psychological deficiencies in patients. Her awareness about her condition and the insightful manner in which her motives to end her life are stated all raise more awareness about mental illness and indicate that mental insanity can still be used as a mode of artistic communication.

4.48 Psychosis was released on 23 June 2000 at the Royal Court's Jerwood Theatre Upstairs. Former director of *Cleansed* James Macdonald retained his role and retained the directionless style of the script and previous play *Crave*. The reception of *4.48 Psychosis* was, to a great extent, hampered by the preceding suicide of the writer. *Blasted* and *Cleansed* received a decidedly cynical and somewhat harsh reviews from bewildered critics- a phenomenon that seemed to distract the audience from the intended message. A more serious look into her life and less disparaging views about her style, which can be said to have toned down quite a lot in *Crave*, generated more sympathy and understanding and afforded all her works a fresh bout of media attention.

5.2. Elements of Violence in *4.48 Psychosis*

Examined alongside *Crave* and *Cleansed* -two plays that had astoundingly high levels of denotations of physical violence, *4.48 Psychosis* contains a different form of violence, one that is a result of madness and even more dangerous as it leads to self-mutilation and suicide. The concept that was developed to hitherto unprecedented levels was suicide, mental illness, and to some extent life after death (the light). This review shall look into the three areas and how the play was a culmination of Kane's life and playwriting career.

5.2.1. Madness

Wilhelm F. Hegel, a German philosopher of the idealism movement, defines madness as: "the flight of consciousness from painful encounters" (Berthold-Bond 236). Freud explained the phenomenon in terms of repression whereby instincts are forced back along the "path of regression to archaic psychic formations of the unconscious or are fixed in the unconscious, drifting away without any influence from realism" (236).

Madness, therefore, indicates a reaction to psychological stressors that causes the individual to "coil into themselves", for protection from realities that are not favourable to them.

Insanity often results from highly traumatic incidences when the mind closes itself off from further damage. The soul is very closely related to the whole topic of psychosis, being a part of the conscious and being the instinctual part of humans that informs their behaviour and reaction to their environment.

Madness may also result from the severe effects of Major Depressive Disorder. The prolonged state of separation from the world around a person with depression may lead to a final exertion from which the mind periodically snaps and separates completely from reality. The resulting madness may take the forms of sadness, gladness, or violence in manifestations.

Madness has been a lasting theme on the stage of European drama, tracing its roots back to the days of Shakespeare, in whose work madness “takes its place with death at the extreme of life and is never restored to health, truth or reason” (Krasner 37).

For Kane, the inspiration for *4.48 Psychosis* could have been influenced by her experience viewing the production of Jeremy Weller’s *Mad* in 1992. Writing to Aleks Sierz on her experience of watching the play, she says that his style of drama was for her “an unusual piece of theatre . . . As an audience member I was taken to place of extreme mental discomfort and distress and then popped on the other end . . . Mad took me to hell”(Sierz 92). Her purpose for following the style in *4.48 Psychosis* was most probably an attempt to take her readers and audience into the convoluted world of blurred sense of self and other, mental illness, and suicidal thinking and suicide. The work of Martin Crimp in *Attempts on her Life* also influences her portrayal of “intense human despair” (Saunders 109) that dominates the play.

Kane illustrates her belief that, “the only way back to any kind of sanity is to connect physically with who you are emotionally, spiritually and mentally” (Nil Tabert quoted in Saunders 113). One way to achieve this, she believes, is to come face to face with death, which can be achieved at the moment of suicide:

I just met someone who has taken God knows how many overdoses and has attempted suicide in almost every imaginable way . . . But actually she's more connected with herself than most people I know . . . Her life is an ongoing stream of suicide attempts which she then revokes. And yes, there's something really awful about that but I can understand it very well. It makes sense to me. (Saunders 114)

This point is further clarified with her other views that: "to a certain degree you have to deaden our ability to feel and perceive . . . otherwise you'd be chronically sane in a society which is chronically insane . . . 'Go mad and die, or function but be insane' is the choice" (Saunders 114). It is therefore not surprising to observe that she had a commendable grasp of her predicament, saying herself: "At 4.48 when sanity visits . . . when it has passed I shall be gone again" (229). She also explains her conversion into "a grotesque fool" during the spells of insanity when she is unable to "touch [her] essential self" (219).

The madness causes a sense of separation from the self and other, as she says: "here I am, and there is my body" (230). *4.48 Psychosis* can therefore be said to be the closest thing to the diary of a mentally ill person, indicating in sharp focus the goings on of a mind under the spell of madness, and clearly, it is a debilitating experience.

4.48 Psychosis indicates three supreme values that Kane retains even in her befuddled state of mind: her belief in the supremacy of love, her fear of God, and her social activism. On love, she expresses various forms of love, including unrequited love, craving, and oppressive love. According to Socrates, unrequited love is defined as unreciprocated love that causes yearning for more complete love (Pangle 21). Longing is usually directed at a past lover, a stranger, or an acquaintance. It becomes unrequited when the subject of love does not respond to the signals of the lover and may become stressful over time.

The doctor is the subject of her unrequited love, the only person with whom she interacts, and who touches her and shows her tenderness. She asks: “Do you feel nothing?” (214). The doctor, who has a lover waiting for him at home, replies: “You know, I really feel like I’m being manipulated” (215). He suggests that they keep the relationship professional, a suggestion that irks the patient and makes her wish death upon the lover: “She’ll die, she’ll die, she’ll only fucking die” (214). The love she longs to experience “keeps [her] a slave in a cage of tears” (218). The distressed lover also states: “I go out at six o’clock in the morning and start my search for you. If I’ve dreamt a message of a street or a pub or a station I go there and wait for you” (214). Thus the relationship is a source of emotional as well as physical exertions that are not appreciated by the loved party, further aggravating the condition for her.

Kane talks about unrequited love after reading Roland Bertha’s *A lover Discourse*:

The situation of a rejected lover is not unlike the situation of a prisoner in Dachau. And when I read it I was just appalled and thought how can he possibly suggest the pain of love is as bad as that. But then the more I thought about it I thought actually I do know what he is saying. It’s about the loss of self. And when you lose yourself where do you go? There’s nowhere to go, it’s actually a kind of madness. (Saunders 93)

Frustrations in love as one of the leading causes of suicide (Marchand, Saravane and Gaumond 186). According to the WHO, violence and psychological trauma are caused by persistent frustrations and may be expressed through aggressive behaviour towards the person, other people, or the community (20). 4.48 *Psychosis* features personal mutilation as articulated in the conversation with the doctor:

-Oh dear, what’s happened to your arm?

-I cut it (216).

The self-mutilation indicates a pathological separation of self and other, the answer to which attempting suicide is quoted as bringing Kane's friend: "I think in that moment when she slashes herself, when she takes an overdose suddenly she's connected and then wants to live" (Saunders 114). But when there is no connection with the lover, even after the attempt at suicide, sure death becomes the only solution to end the suffering.

Francesco A. Zaccaria, an Italian theologian and historian, advances the theory that people's appraisal of their suffering may be influenced by belief in a punishing God (121). The general view of suffering and ideas of God influence how people react to circumstances that are punishing or tasking to them. Kane expresses a mixed view of God in *4.48 Psychosis*, one based on her present frustrations with love: "fuck you God for making me love a person who does not exist" (215).

Another expression of belief in God is expressed as a supplication: "I beg you to save me from this madness that eats me, a sub-intentional death" (226). While pointing to her unwavering belief in a higher power that is supposed to deliver her from her predicament, this statement also indicates a bigger idea of subjugation. The sub-intentional death she foreshadows indicates that while she recognised her state, she wished to continue living, retaining her sanity, but the continued state of insanity would definitely lead her to her death. She also expresses: "Why am I stricken? I saw visions of God" (228). This is a remarkable indication of self-awareness, as well as a case of soulful evolution, as she wonders about her fate in getting stricken with lunacy. Seeing visions of God could be a symbolism of her life's work promoting love in her plays, creating awareness on crimes against humanity from around the world, and imploring people to care more- the work of God. She retains her steadfast belief, however, even with the sorry state of her mental faculties: "Fear God and his wicked convocation" (228). Her Christianity upbringing and evangelical maturity comes to greater bearing at this time when she recognises that her time

is running out. 4.48 *Psychosis* can be said to be Kane's way of putting her house in order, tying up all the loose ends before she is no more:

I gassed the Jews, I killed the Kurds, I bombed the Arabs, I fucked small children while they begged for mercy, the killing fields are mine, everyone left the party because of me, I'll suck your fucking eyes out sent them to your mother in a box and when I die I'm going to be reincarnated as your child only fifty times worse and as mad as all fuck I'm going to make your life a living fucking hell I REFUSE I REFUSE I REFUSE LOOK AWAY FROM ME. (227)

This excerpt just goes to show that despite the madness she suffers, Kane retains the sharp wit and birds-eye focus on international events, especially those of mass destruction and crimes against humanity. These were the same sentiments that informed her radical style in *Cleansed* that generated spirited protests from conservative theatre lovers, as well as in the play *Blasted* years earlier. The monologue serves as a warning against continued quiet and tolerance to collective violence, especially that which targets the vulnerable in society such as the children and women.

5.2.2. Suicide

As discussed in Section (3.2.3.) of this paper, suicide is "every case of death which results directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act, carried out by the victim himself, knowing that it will produce this result" (Durkheim 3). Among the greatest causes of violence is insanity or madness, which affects people and causes them to have no clear definitions of themselves. The separation from reality might also cause an individual to be insufficient in deciding on the value of their lives.

The subject of suicide appears so frequently in literature, being addressed in numerous texts and affecting several writers. In many instances, writers have committed suicide after spells

of depression. Ernest Hemmingway and Sylvia Plath are some of the most popular writers who have committed suicide after suffering from varying severity of depression. Hemmingway in *The Old Man and the Sea* portrays the issue of psychological suffering. The main character Santiago suffers great misfortune at sea, is liberated with his catch of a big fish, and then suffers a shark attack. Hemmingway wrote his masterpiece before his suicide in 1961 as a “personal need for resolving psychological issues related to his situation in that age” (Benzitouni 8). His death was caused by a self-inflicted gunshot after he had undergone treatment for depression at Mayo Clinic. The treatments administered to him were attributed to having contributed to the deterioration of his mental state, culminating in his suicide.

Sylvia Plath wrote her only novel, *The Bell Jar* in 1963 and it was a semi-autobiography whose main character follows the timeline of Plath’s own struggle with clinical depression. In *The Bell Jar*, Esther Greenwood, the main character, goes through a myriad of personal travesties that set her on the path of depression and attempted suicide.

In Sarah Kane’s *Blasted*, she states in numerous cases during her hour of sanity that she will indeed take her life. The decision to commit suicide is therefore not caused directly by the madness, but is a reaction to the madness, her way of coping by getting away from it all, going into the light. It is in her hour of sanity that she observes: “it shall come to pass. Behold the light of despair, the glare of anguish, and ye shall be driven to darkness” (228). The play of light and darkness- getting to the light to reach the darkness- unknown, death- juxtaposes the state of mind she was in for the one hour twelve minutes of sanity with the comatose state after- the razor sharp focus against a darkness of mind until the appointed hour.

Frustration with the condition, boosted by other factors such as her longing for love created a situation in which Kane had no way out other than taking her own life. The interesting fact is, however, that the decision to commit suicide as well as the failed attempt and

subsequent success, happened: “At 4.48 when sanity visits” (229) not when she was out of her mind. The suicide was therefore driven as much by her desire to escape the life of insanity:

to defy convention

to avoid pain.

to avoid shame

to obliterate past humiliation by resumed action. (234)

The decision was made in response to the exhaustion of the experience of being constantly under mental pressure, rather than being caused directly by it in a state of insanity.

Emile Durkheim illustrates four types of suicides classified according to the motives and frustrations that inform the decision to put end to one’s life. In the course of *4.48 Psychosis*, two types come into play in informing the choice of suicide, namely egoistic and fatalistic suicides. Egoistic suicide “occurs when an individual has non-existent, little, or poor social integration at home, religiously, or in the society” (322).

The patient in *4.48 Psychosis* desires to have a non-professional relationship with her doctor. If the doctor accepts the offer, the patient will have the chance of integrating into the society, having hope to carry on life and getting rid of the depressing loneliness:

I cannot eat.

I cannot sleep. (206)

I am fat

I cannot love

I cannot be alone

I cannot be with others. (207)

The rejection by the doctor, coming in the wake of other problems such as “loneliness”, “fear” and “disgust” becomes the last straw that finally makes her snap.

Fatalistic suicide “is caused by a total blockade of an individual’s future and choking of their passion by oppressive regulations, leaving the person with no desire to live” (322). The character in *4.48 Psychosis* is hopeless about her future. Her life entails only seeing doctors and taking pills. There appears to be no possible solution for her mental disorder at the present and the future is a bleak prospect of insanity and darkness:

I am sad

I feel that the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve

I would like to kill myself

I am bored and dissatisfied with everything. (206)

The sadness, hopelessness, boredom, and abject dissatisfaction bring about the suicidal thoughts which the character entertains above. It is utilized as a reference to the person suffering from depression desiring to have an end to it and yet seeing no other way out apart from death.

5.2.3. The Light

The light is a concept that was introduced to Sarah Kane’s playwriting from early on, appearing in *Blasted*, *Cleansed*, and *Crave*. In all three plays, the light appears at the end of the plays as the characters are facing their destinies, yet plays quite a diverse range of purposes.

In *Cleansed*, the light that is brought by the sun shines on Grace and makes her smile at the end of the play. It illustrates hope for Grace and Carl, the two characters who evolved the most during the play- resulting in a gender swap. As it grows brighter and brighter though, her smile falters, indicating that the light may be more sinister than it appears at face value.

Later on in *Crave*, it appears to indicate the decision of the characters to commit suicide too, to move away from the pain, and enjoy the afterlife. Kane states that:

A: Free-falling.

B: Into the light.

C: Bright white light.

A: World without end. (200)

In this case, the light is utilized to refer to the end characters' lives as they decide to end their lives. It also indicates that the eternal has been reached, a world without end which symbolises the final rest so much sought by most characters in Sarah Kane's plays.

In *4.48 Psychosis*, the light is introduced much earlier in the play: "Remember the light and believe the light. An instant of clarity before eternal night, don't let me forget" (228). The fusion of the light with death, the afterlife, and the soul are however much better indicated, with the concept of eternity being visited yet again. The light is the solution to her predicament: "all I know is snow and black despair" (195). The moment of the entry into the light is also reminiscent of the book of *Revelations of the Bible*, verses of which featured prominently in the dramatized play when it started showcasing, (Earnest 153). The finality of light is very much evident *4.48 Psychosis* when she says: "Hatch opens. Stark light. The rapture begins" (240).

The ending of the play indicates Kane's desire to continue living: "I have no desire for death, no suicide ever had" (244). It also indicates her resigning to the fate awaiting her, as she ends the play with the declaration, "It is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the underside of my mind" (245). The voice searches for self-hood to compensate for the split between one's consciousness and one's physical being, which is what madness is all about (Saunders 113).

The blurring of the self and other is also reconciled with her finally meeting the other which is in the light, and the promise of peace and calm after getting to the other side. This is quite a positive ending to an apparent suicide note which also has crucial lessons to the audience on the fear of death. There could be worse ways to live- as indicated by Kane's account of her

own life. The light is a chance to rest from the exhaustions of life to unwind and bask in “the capture, the rapture, the rupture of a soul” (242).

6. CONCLUSION

Violence is defined as the intentional use of threatened or actual physical force against oneself, another person, or against a group or community. Violence leads to injury, death, or physiological harm (Krug et al. 4). It also impairs the development of the victims and deprives them of their joys and happiness. The earliest philosopher to define violence was Aristotle: he came up with the concept of catharsis, through which people are able to dispel tensions and dispel the desires to engage in violence. This concept of venting out has however been vented by modern day scholars, indicating that being exposed to aggression or violent behaviour causes the individual to develop a greater desire for violent actions themselves, rather than receiving relief (Berkowitz 313).

In drama, violence has been used quite extensively, starting with the ancient staged shows of savage fights where combatants were supposed to fight and maim each other- sometimes to kill each other too- for the entertainment of the audience. In staged plays, the use of violence started gaining prominence during the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Greek plays era. One of the greatest dramatists of the era -and a colossus in literature history- was Shakespeare. With his plays such as *Hamlet* and *Othello*, Shakespeare established a culture of violence including psychological trauma, murder and suicide, and vengeance-driven physical injury. Violence was thus made into an enduring theme of plays, a means through which, just as Aristotle posits, the audience vents out on violent feelings by watching others perpetuate it. However, the surest and most unquestionable role played by theatre in terms of violence is enlightening viewers to the effects of violence. This is especially so in those creations which adhere to the villain-hero style of presentation.

Sarah Kane was a 1990s playwright who pioneered the theatrical movement that has come to be identified as the in-her-face theatres. The works of this breed of writers is characterised as involving grabbing the audience by the scruff of their necks and shaking them till the message sinks in (Sierz 4). Violence is the most prominent tool used by in-her-face theatres, effectively shocking the audiences and creating a more conducive environment for the dissemination of the intended message of the play.

The first play from Kane was *Blasted*, a violent and shocking showcase that disgusted most of the audiences and drove the critics to bewilderment, but was very effective in highlighting the effects of wars and sexual violence. *Cleansed* broke the ceiling for violent deeds performed on stage, featuring completely liberated style that rejected conventions and established a notorious identity for Sarah Kane's plays. At the time of showcasing the play, it is quite correct to say that the message of the supremacy of love was missed by a majority of the viewers who were, quite unfortunately, unable to look beyond the sadistic torture, mutilation, and sexual violence to the real message. The message is that love conquers all, penance for sins is often paid swiftly in kind or not, and that more light must be shed on the victims of military action abroad, exemplified by the Bosnia massacre from which the play derived its name.

Following shortly afterwards, *Crave* was a blatant revolt by Sarah Kane, whereby she changed completely the style and form of theatrical performance. The play, featuring four characters with deeply traumatised pasts who all seek satisfaction to no avail, was more of a staged poem than it was a play. Psychological torture caused by rape and domestic violence was addressed in the play, creating great awareness to the relationship between trauma of the mind and society, beginning with the family unit which acts as a unit of trust for an individual. The play also denotes the futility of pursuing some of the desires we experience, specially highlighting the failings of man to control their destiny- an impossibility and the responsibility of

the higher being that controls life. The concept of light was greatly developed during *Crave*, indicating an area of refuge where the troubled could go to and find reprieve.

4.48 Psychosis was the last play written by Kane and by all indications, a foreshadowing of her impending suicide. It brings to light the mental condition she was in at the time of her suicide- experiencing life only through the window of the hour between 4.48- 6.00. The concept of light is also developed in *4.48 Psychosis* to indicate its being the gateway to the eternity that remains in the darkness till the point when we die. At this time of insanity, the play illustrates that the character exists in more than just the mind, as she continues valuing the same three supreme principles- God, love, and social consciousness, especially for the suffering of others.

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ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Kerkuk İli Sahat Tayran ilçesi doğumluyum. İlk, Orta ve Liseyi yine aynı ilçede tamamladıktan sonra, Musul Üniversitesi, Edebiyatı Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümüne kaydoldum. Bu bölümden mezun olduktan beri, farklı ülkelerde farklı özel okullarda İngilizce öğretmenlik görevini sürdürmekteyim. 2015 yılında da, Beykent Üniversitesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalında yüksek lisans eğitimine başladım. Özel ilgi alanım İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı özellikle drama ile ilgili her şey okumak ve analiz etmek.

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