

MERLEAU-PONTIAN CONCEPTS  
IN THE POSTDRAMATIC PLAYS OF SARAH KANE

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SARAH KANE**

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## ABSTRACT

### MERLEAU-PONTIAN CONCEPTS IN THE POSTDRAMATIC PLAYS OF SARAH KANE

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In this thesis, it is asserted that form and content of Sarah Kane's plays *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave* are complementary, reflecting the inner states of their characters, and that this complementarity manifests and is manifested by postdramatic elements. As evidence, and to analyze how the plays are constructed in this way, the plays are examined with reference to three essential Merleau-Pontian concepts, synesthesia, being-in-the-world, embodiment and with reference to postdramatic elements. The thesis shows the keen relationship between mind and the material world depicted in Kane's work, and reveals how these elements alienate the audiences and readers of her plays. Each chapter analyzes character portrayal in one play, with the aim of showing how the experience of mental illness is depicted from the inside out. By analyzing *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave* in relation to the Merleau-Pontian terms, the three-fold nature of Sarah Kane's theatre of integration is

revealed: intertextual integration that supposes a thematic similarity between the selected plays, on-stage integration of the audience through a shared experience of alienation, and integration of body and mind that has been depicted as fragmented and obscure in her plays. Thus, this thesis asserts that the postdramatic elements in these plays uncover the experience of perplexing mental states to reveal minds in confusion, pain or suffering from enduring violence, and it explains this through Merleau-Pontian concepts. It contributes to postdramatic studies by utilizing phenomenological terms to study stylistic elements in plays that disrupt theatrical conventions and create a rupture from conventional dramatic form, presenting an erosion of subjectivity.

**Keywords:** Synesthesia, Being-In-The-World, Embodiment, Postdramatic Theatre.

## ÖZ

### SARAH KANE'NİN POSTDRAMATİK TİYATROSUNDA MERLEAU-PONTY KAVRAMLARI

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Bu tezde, Sarah Kane nin *4.48 Psychosis* ve *Crave* oyunlarında biçim ve içeriğin birbirini tamamladığı ileri sürülmektedir, bu birlikteliğin karakterlerinin içsel yaşantılarını yansıttığı ve bu tamamlayıcılığın postdramatik öğeleri ifade ettiği ve metinlerde bu öğelerle tezahür ettiği belirtilmiştir. Oyunların bu şekilde nasıl kurgulandığını çözümlmek için bu metinler, Merleau-Ponty nin temel üç kavramı olan sinestezi, bedenlenme ve dünyada-varlık ve postdramatik unsurlar referans alınarak incelenmiştir. Tez, Kane'nin eserlerinde tasvir edilen zihin ve maddi dünya arasındaki yakın ilişkiyi göstermekte ve bu unsurların oyunların izleyicilerini ve okuyucularını nasıl yabancılaştırdığını ortaya koymaktadır. Teorik bir girişten sonra, her bölüm, akıl hastalığı deneyiminin karakterlerin iç dünyasından nasıl betimlendiğini göstermek amacıyla her bir oyundaki karakter tasvirini analiz eder. *4.48 Psychosis* ve *Crave* in Merleau-Ponty nin terimleriyle bağlantılı olarak analiz edilmesiyle, Sarah Kane nin bütünsellik arz eden tiyatrosunun üç katmanlı doğası ortaya çıkmaktadır: Seçilen oyunlar arasında tematik bir benzerliği varsayan metinler



arası bir bütünsellik vardır, seyircilerde ortak bir yabancılaşma deneyimi bulunmaktadır ve parçalanmış, belirsiz olarak tasvir edilmiş beden ve zihnin bütünlüğü varsayılmıştır. Dolayısıyla bu tez, belirtilen oyunlardaki postdramatik unsurların, karmaşık zihinsel durumların deneyimini ortaya çıkardığını iddia eder ve bunu Merleau-Ponty nin kavramlarıyla açıklar. Tiyatro geleneklerini bozan ve geleneksel dramatik biçimden bir kopuş yaratan, bir öznellik yıkımını sunan oyunlardaki biçimsel öğeleri incelemek için fenomenolojik terimleri kullanarak postdramatik çalışmalara katkıda bulunur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sinestezi, Dünyada-Varlık, Bedenlenme, Postdramatik Tiyatro

*To Mine Coral and İbrahim Bozdağ,  
My parents*

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents analyses of Kane's works from the perspective of certain phenomenological and postdramatic concepts. Based on the belief that her plays are centrally concerned with mental states and reflect the characters' inner world on stage in an experimental way with the help of intricate techniques, it uses three concepts by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "synesthesia", "embodiment" and "being-in-the-world," alongside Lehman's discussions of postdramatic theatre, to deepen and enrich our understanding of Kane's postdramatic plays, and her ways of reflecting mental phenomena on stage.

Although the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty provides both a starting point and the analytic parameters for this research, the existential and transcendental dimensions of phenomenology are not discussed in depth in this thesis, which focusses only on the external staging of characters' interior mental states. For this same reason there is no general discussion of the historical and social context of 1990s Britain. Through explaining theatrical elements with those three terms, it will be stated that the audience is put into a situation in which they feel alienated from any habitual ways they may have of seeing the extreme states of mind presented in Kane's plays. In other words, rather than perceiving mental problems and violence as ordinary, if distressing phenomena, the audience and readers come to see the unacceptable and perplexing dimension of pain through trying to understand what they see or read as stage directions, even though these experiences may appear incomprehensible within the plots of the plays; the expectation of a linear plot is not

met by these plays. As deictic<sup>1</sup> relationships on stage are constantly challenged by obscure staging, extreme violence, filth, and postdramatic methods, the audience finds it hard to understand the mental states associated with the characters. The thesis proposes that Kane's theatre uses the elements mentioned above as a method to convey the crude experience of the illogical by merging the form and content. Through this merging, spectators and readers of Kane's plays are shown and may even come to acknowledge how it is to live in a troubled state of mind, to recognize pain through massive confusion, and to endure a perplexing assortment of signs. Bringing these ideas and elements together, this thesis is a work on the postdramatic staging of subjectivity.

A phenomenological analysis that merges the distinctions between spectators and stage is used to decipher how the plays of Kane disclose the mental states of her characters, reorienting the spectator to have a glimpse of an alienating experience of madness, violence and trauma. To present insight into such intertwined relationships, terms borrowed from Merleau-Ponty will be juxtaposed with concepts of postdramatic theatre theorized by Lehmann. This thesis will contribute to postdramatic studies by merging phenomenological ideas to study stylistic elements that create a rupture from dramatic form, and erosion of subjectivity.

When the experiential narratives of the characters in *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave* are considered, a phenomenological approach can provide a holistic view of the chaotic world on which these figures are dependent. Another reason to trace Merleau-Pontian ideas in Kane's two postdramatic plays is the literature on phenomenology and Beckett. Beckett was a major influence on Kane as discussed by Graham

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<sup>1</sup> Deictic: Any term or expression which, in an utterance, refers to the context of production (addresser, addressee, time, place) of that utterance: "here," "now," "yesterday," "I," "you," etc., are deictics, and in a statement like "She saw him yesterday" the adverb helps to locate what is reported relative to the addresser (in terms of his or her present, what is reported occurred the day before. ) (See Gerald Prince's *A Dictionary of Narratology* "Deictic").



Saunders<sup>2</sup>, Laurens de Vos<sup>3</sup> and Martin Harries<sup>4</sup>. Some of the apparent Beckettian elements in Kane's drama are the use of language reflecting the mental phenomena<sup>5</sup>, spatial and temporal vagueness and repetitions in the plot, characters that can be regarded as pseudo-couples; and natural imagery pointing at the futility of life. These characteristics have been analyzed alongside the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty by many scholars. Noteworthy studies to mention here are Stanton B. Garner in "*Still Living Flesh*": *Beckett, Merleau-Ponty, and the Phenomenological Body*, Ulrike Maude's *Beckett and Phenomenology* and *Beckett, Technology and the Body*, and Amanda M. Dennis's *Beckett and Embodiment*. Beckettian themes in Kane can be scrutinized with Merleau-Pontian terms too, not only because they reflect an existential school of thought, but also because, according to Maude, Beckett shared the same intellectual environment with Merleau-Ponty as his contemporary while they were in the École Normale Supérieure during the interwar years (*Beckett and Phenomenology* 77)<sup>6 7</sup>, which can suggest a closer bond between the two figures.

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<sup>2</sup>He discusses it in "The Beckettian World of Sarah Kane", which is referred in forthcoming chapters

<sup>3</sup> See *Cruelty and Desire in the Modern Theater*

<sup>4</sup> See "Still: Sarah Kane After Beckett and Joy Division"

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Keatinge's "Beckett and Language Pathology" considers Lucky's schizophrenic speech as "formal thought disorder" and Watt's narrative as "sabotage of logical speech" which are reminiscent of the use of language that influences the plot structure in *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave*.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis in her introduction to *Beckett and Embodiment* says that Merleau-Ponty and Beckett had friends in common, though they did not meet in person. Moreover "in a letter to Lois Oppenheim, Merleau-Ponty's wife reports that Merleau-Ponty's library contained books by Beckett, though these books did not make an appearance in Merleau-Ponty's reading notes" (7-8). Dennis relates Beckettian bodies with Merleau-Pontian subjectivity, which is co-dependent to the lived world.

<sup>7</sup> In the "Translator's Introduction" of *Sense and Non-Sense*, Dreyfus relates Merleau-Pontian thought to Ionesco and Pinter's oeuvre. According to Merleau-Ponty, in the 20th century "the novel and the theatre will become thoroughly metaphysical." (qtd in *Sense and Non-Sense* xv). Dreyfus carefully applies Merleau-Ponty's ideas to theatre of the absurd. He also claims that Pinter's audience "can make sense of events only in terms of their effects; the onlookers are forced to participate in the generation of sense from non-sense" (xvi). They are obliged to stop asking "the Aristotelean questions" (xvi). Quoting Merleau-Ponty, he asserts that along with Pinteresque characters, the audience discovers that "existence is the very process whereby the hitherto meaningless takes on meaning" (xvi). I believe Kane attempted the same thing with all her plays. In an interview, she mentioned that her first play *Blasted* breaks away with the naturalistic setting and "collapses into one of Cate's fits. The form is a direct parallel to the with that of the war it portrays [...] In terms of Aristotle's Unities, the time and action are disrupted while unity of place is retained. Which caused a

This thesis suggests that *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave* are considered to be appropriate subjects for a phenomenological study due to Beckett's direct influence on Kane's writing in terms of a theatrical style that foregrounds lack of communication, disembodiment, fragmentation and subjective experience encapsulating macrocosm in microcosm.

Along with above mentioned reasons, there are correspondences between Lehmann's postdramatic theatre and Merleau-Pontian phenomenology, that both problematize the act of perceiving. Lehmann's term "synaesthesia" and Merleau-Pontian "synesthesia" seem to be closely related, as discussed in the forthcoming sections. Definitions and discussions of the theories that are referred to and used in this study are presented in the remaining paragraphs of this introductory chapter. Each of the two following analytic chapters examines a separate play with respect to the three Merleau-Pontian concepts introduced here and paying attention to each play's individual emphases on different aspects of the staging of the inner mind. The thesis does not analyze the plays in the chronological order in which they were written. Considering that the fragmented plot of Kane's last play *4.48 Psychosis* relies on a psychotic subject's inner states of mind, and that the earlier play *Crave* is regarded as a companion work to *4.48 Psychosis*, it was found that many of the issues and concepts most emphatically raised through the analysis of the later play should be explained first, before turning to their earlier treatments in *Crave* (first staged at the Royal Court Jerwood, 2000). Thus, Chapter 2 examines *4.48 Psychosis*, asserting that multiple personae on stage reflect the psychological signs of ongoing violence that is prevalent in the outside world, echoing the intertwined relationship of man and his environment. It will analyze merged speeches in the play to show the way violence is apprehended by the characters. Chapter 3 focuses on *Crave* (first

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great deal of offence" (*Rage and Reason* 130). Kane kept the unity of place to force the audience to participate in the meaning making process since this "shared space" is the arena where violence and pathological mental states are demystified. Correspondingly, for Merleau-Ponty, what protects the sane subject from madness is not his critical thought but the structure of his space (*PP* 339). Thus, Kane seems to convey the feeling of mental illness with the help of postdramatic techniques- by putting various events in the same locus without any chronological order and logical bond.

staged at the Traverse Theatre Edinburgh, 1998) and analyzes utterances in the play to show how a troubled mind understands its surrounding, namely other characters, and how the perception of time and setting are distorted on stage accordingly. In the conclusion, it will be put forth that all categories clashing on stage are merged by an idea of mind perceiving the world from various aspects and views to bring about what it is like to be living with a mind that is dismantling itself.

### 1.1. Theoretical Background

In this section, Kane's works will be positioned within Lehmann's understanding of postdramatic theatre, after which there will be a discussion on theatre studies and phenomenology in relation to the field of semiotics, establishing the relationship between seemingly different disciplines of criticism. Lastly, while defining the philosophical and dramatic terms and concepts used in the thesis, and touching upon the issue of dualities in Kane's plays, this section will explain why bringing Kane's theatre together with the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and in juxtaposition with Lehmann's ideas is fruitful and can answer questions of subjectivity and on-stage integration of audience within a shared experience.

In his book *Postdramatisches Theater* (1999), Lehmann claimed that Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* belongs to a new theatrical approach named "postdramatic theatre,"<sup>8</sup> and that this play apparently demonstrates all its characteristic elements. As defined by Karen Jürs-Munbry, postdramatic theatre can be seen as "a rupture" from dramatic form<sup>9</sup>; that is, there is no linearity in plot organization, no definite characters, and the

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<sup>8</sup> "4.48 *Psychosis* by Sarah Kane would almost have to be invented as one of the great texts in analogy to postdramatic theatre if it did not already exist" (*Postdramatic Theatre* "Preface" ix). According to Jürs-Munbry, "British and American authors whose texts could be described as postdramatic include Sarah Kane (especially *4:48 Psychosis* and *Crave*), as for her she produces "what could be called 'open' or 'writerly' texts" [in Barthes's terms] for performance, in the sense that her plays "require the spectators to become active co-writers of the (performance) text" (*Postdramatic Theatre* "Introduction" 6).

<sup>9</sup> Hans-Thies Lehmann claims that postdramatic theatre shares some common ground with dramatic theatre. He says "narrative fragmentation, heterogeneity of style, hypernaturalist, grotesque and neo-

concept of a well-made play is continuously challenged by sudden shifts in time and space where all the elements that indicate the dramatic paradigm are shattered<sup>10</sup>.

There is an estrangement of drama, and therefore it is impossible for the critic of these plays to work with the categories commonly used in dramatic theory (Lehmann 31).

According to Lehmann, what marks the difference between postdramatic and postmodern theatre<sup>11</sup>, therefore, is the radical experience of the audience and critic, who are not able to reach a synthesis or to make a synthesizing interpretation (25). On these terms it is true that especially *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* reflect certain traits of postdramatic theatre. This thesis agrees with the general concepts termed by Lehmann above, and moves from there to ask how and why the so-called effect of rupture is achieved in these plays on a textual basis. It will be claimed that the disruption of plot linearity and mishmash of theatrical signs in Kane's plays generates an idea of turmoil, pain, and mental illness, and that the plurality of theatrical signs (or in Lehmann's terms, "density of signs") that are presented in

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expressionist elements, which are all typical of postdramatic theatre, can be also found in productions which nevertheless belong to dramatic theatre" (24-25). There are some critics who claim that Postdramatic theatre is not a rupture from the dramatic form, and others who think that there is a return to the dramatic form in contemporary theatre. See Cormac Power's "The Space of Doubt The Chairs and The Aesthetics of Failure" (2012), Meisner and Mounsef's "From the Postdramatic to the Poly-dramatic: The Text/Performance Divide Reconsidered" (2011) Birgit Haas's "The Return of Dramatic Drama in Germany after 1989" (2008) and Jean Pierre Sarrazac's "Le reprise" (2007), for more information on the controversial ideas in relation to Postdramatic Theatre, see the discussion in *Postdramatik Tiyatro ve İngiliz Tiyatrosu* "Giriş" [Introduction] by A. Deniz Bozer pp:27-28. Lehmann's views on postdramatic art has been furthered in his *Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre* (2016).

<sup>10</sup> Gökhan Biçer has an article on postdramatic elements in Kane's plays. Please see his article "Sarah Kane's Postdramatic Strategies in *Blasted*, *Cleansed* and *Crave*". In this thesis, only *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* will be analyzed.

<sup>11</sup> In Lehmann's words, this experimental attitude can be named as "postdramatic" especially when the progression of a story with its internal logic no longer forms the centre, when composition is no longer experienced as an organizing quality but as an artificially imposed "manufacture" (Lehmann 26). According to Lehmann, in postdramatic theatre, all the theatrical signs are in chaos, and the audience is left in-between, as an all-time perceiver unable to reach any conclusion at all. (see *Postdramatic Theatre* p:3 and 29-30).

chaos in the plays create an idea of confusion reflected from the inside out. The experience of a psychological other can only be conveyed through a shift-in-parameters paradigm of theatre, and the “postdramatic” techniques that Kane utilizes function to merge form and content, as this thesis will show. Moreover, while interlacing form and content, Kane’s plays create in the audience strong reactions in the form of senses of repulsion, confusion, and alienation<sup>12</sup>. Merleau-Ponty’s “synesthesia”, “embodiment” and “being-in-the-world” explain how Kane’s staging and dialogue create these complicated phenomena, building a strange relationship between the audience and the performance/text. Her ruptures from dramatic form are, it is claimed, designed to create an experience of mental alienation and thereby to shed light on complicated mental states. Therefore, while generating a fissure in dramatic theatre, her plays bring a new dramatic tradition by centering mentally impaired figures and reflecting their experience through experiments in dramatic form, creating a new understanding of theatre.

In *Postdramatisches Theatre* Lehmann situates the new paradigm of postdramatic theatre with reference to avant-garde artistic practices of the early 20th century. On the postdramatic stage, he claims, the aim is to create a “concrete theatre” or a theatre

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<sup>12</sup> The term is derived from Viktor Shklovsky’s “Art as Technique”. For both Shklovsky and Merleau-Ponty, art aims at making people see things anew. In “Cézanne’s Doubt” Merleau-Ponty states that: “We live in the midst of man-made objects... We become used to thinking that all of this exists necessarily and unshakeably. Cézanne’s painting suspends these habits of thought and reveals the base of inhuman nature upon which man has installed himself... It is an *unfamiliar* world in which one is uncomfortable and which forbids all human effusiveness.” (*Sense and Non-Sense* 16, emphasis mine). In other words Merleau-Ponty finds that Cézanne’s art defamiliarizes, making his spectators depart from habitual ways of thinking. Daniel Johnston makes a parallel explanation regarding correspondences between phenomenological reduction and alienation (143-144). Chernavin and Yampolskaya similarly brought Shklovsky’s enstrangement and Husserlian epoche together. Other such correspondences and combinations have been presented in the following studies: Bleeker, Sherman and Nedelkopolou (2015, “Introduction”), who mention the “alienation effect” as a feature shared by stage performance and phenomenology (7); Panill Camp’s work on Husserl and phenomenological epoche (in “The Stage Struck Out of the World: Theatricality and Husserl’s Phenomenology of Theatre, 1905–1918” and “The Trouble with Phenomenology”); and finally there is Derrida’s metaphor, in a comment on Husserl, in his statement that “phenomenological reduction is a scene, a theatre stage” (86). This metaphor was used with reference to internal time consciousness, temporality and subjectivity, not to theatre, but Bleeker, Sherman and Nedelkopolou (2) nevertheless use this quotation in relation to the performance studies.

“without action/plot” where “the preponderance of formal structures is so radical that a reference to reality can hardly be spotted” (98)<sup>13</sup>. With this change, the action on stage comes closer to pure performativity or a happening<sup>14</sup>, where theatrical signs flow without superseding one another, not forming a meaningful whole on the part of the audience. By staging an uncontextualised experience of collision of ideas, a puzzling effect is created for the audience, who are faced with a multiplicity of signs, or sometimes an intensive monologue, but little or no evidence of any organizing structure. The complicated signs on stage interact in various ways and with various effects in postdramatic theatre, listed and defined by Lehmann as twelve terms. Seven of these terms will be referred to in discussion of Kane’s *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave*. These are “synaesthesia”<sup>15</sup>, “parataxis/nonhierarchy”<sup>16</sup>, “simultaneity”<sup>17</sup>, “play

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<sup>13</sup> Lehmann refers to Kandinsky and his understanding of concrete art: “Just as Theo van Doesburg and Kandinsky preferred the term ‘concrete painting’ or ‘concrete art’ over the commonly used term ‘abstract art’ because it positively emphasizes the immediately perceivable concreteness of colour, line and surface instead of (negatively) referring to its non-representational nature, in the same way the non-mimetic but formal structure or formalist aspects of postdramatic theatre are to be interpreted as ‘concrete theatre’” (Lehmann 98).

<sup>14</sup> A type of improvised artistic event that became popular in the 1960s. The events were spontaneous or made to appear so and usually involved a good deal of audience participation. They tended to be deliberately outrageous and confrontational in style. The form was based on ideas introduced earlier in the century by the futurists, dadaists, and surrealists (see “happening” in *Methuen Dictionary of the Theatre* p:230).

<sup>15</sup> For Lehmann, “synaesthesia” creates confusion on stage with multiplicity of elements it presents in chaos. For him, “instead of contiguity, as it presents itself in dramatic narration (A is connected to B, B in turn to C, so that they form a line or sequence), one finds disparate heterogeneity, in which any one detail seems to be able to take the place of any other.” (84). In *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, causality and continuity is totally lost. The term is discussed in relation to phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, and his understanding of synesthesia in the part “Merleau-Pontian Terms and The Postdramatic Theatre”.

<sup>16</sup> This term refers to de-hierarchization to challenge “a hypotactical way of connection [...] and subordination of elements, in order to avoid confusion and produce harmony and comprehensibility” (Lehmann 87).

<sup>17</sup> As a result of parataxis/de-hierarchization, there is an ongoing simultaneity on stage. According to Lehmann it is done “frequently with systematic intent – overstrains the perceptive apparatus. Heiner Müller declares he wants to load so much onto the readers and spectators that they cannot possibly process everything” (Lehmann 87-88).

with the density of signs"<sup>18</sup>, "physicality"<sup>19</sup>, "irruption of the real, situation/event."<sup>20</sup> and "warmness/ coldness"<sup>21</sup> (82-107).

As this thesis will try to link Merleau-Ponty's 1950s phenomenology with postdramatic theatre, it could be regarded as "perceiving the new always as only a variant of the well-known," in Lehmann's words ("Prologue" 23). The research is aimed, however, at shedding light on the postdramatic techniques that Kane employs on stage and on its phenomenological implications in relation to Merleau-Ponty's "synesthesia", "embodiment" and "being-in-the-world". The postdramatic paradigm within which these ideas will be viewed relate to erosion of dramatic structures such as plot, character formation (subjectivity), and dialogue. The thesis also utilizes the ideas of the following writers and theorists: Hans-Thies Lehmann, Stanton B. Garner, Daniel Johnston, Bruce Wilshire, Mark Fortier, Bert O. States, Erika Fischer-Lichte, Eirini Nedelkopolou, Jennifer Waldron, Maaïke Bleeker, Josephine Machon and Susan Broadhurst.

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<sup>18</sup> "In postdramatic theatre it becomes a rule to violate the conventionalized rule and the more or less established norm of sign density. There is either too much or too little. In relation to the time, to the space or to the importance of the matter, the viewer perceives a repletion or conversely a noticeable dilution of signs." (Lehmann 89). It is noteworthy to add that Lehmann's term "density of signs" is first used by Roland Barthes in his work "Literature and Signification" written as a preface to an edition of Baudelaire's complete works (qtd in Aston and Savona 9). Barthes believed that all theatrical elements contribute to the intelligibility of spectacle while those "do not are branded 'parasitic' and obscure the play's deeper significance" (Scheie 37). Kowzan, whose work on semiotics of theatre is crucial, also mentions "economy of signs" in theatre. He thinks that "theatrical prodigality and parsimony are two poles in theatre" (76), where there might be a huge variety or scarcity of signs. His remarks on economy of signs are reminiscent of Lehmann's.

<sup>19</sup> In postdramatic theatre, the body(ies) on stage is a sign just like language, setting and lights. However, there cannot be a meaning-making process/signification through the actor's body. The stage is occupied with "deviant bodies"; ill, disabled, deformed presences that deviates from the norm "that causes amoral fascination, unease or fear" and "possibilities of existence that are generally repressed and excluded come to prominence" which are in the form of an enigma. (Lehmann 96). I think bodies on stage in Kane's theatre are ambiguous and deviant, leading to a never-ending confusion.

<sup>20</sup> Rather than discussing all the terms in detail, Lehmann himself says "in this *phenomenology* of postdramatic signs I will only marginally discuss language, voice and text which will be dealt with later on" (emphasis is added, 86). It is clearly indicated that his quest is a phenomenological one.

<sup>21</sup> According to Lehmann, postdramatic works create a certain coldness. They are hard to associate with for their audience, whereas so-called dramatic works create a warmth for the spectator.

### 1.1.1. Phenomenology and Theatre Studies

Phenomenological inquiry<sup>22</sup> into drama started with Bruce Wilshire's *Role Playing and Identity: The Limits of Theatre as Metaphor* (1982)<sup>23</sup>. While trying to lay bare the nature of theatre, Wilshire discusses theatre as a metaphor and works on the relationship between theatre and identity construction on-stage and off-stage, signaling their intimate relationship. He analyzes the phenomenological aspects of the spectator's involvement in theatre to describe how theatre is a life-like event revealing some dimensions of our mimetic reality as human beings (xiv)<sup>24</sup>. For Wilshire, human beings in everyday life imitate each other consciously or unconsciously, thereby establishing some norms and motifs of behavior. They perform various roles, imitating each other while undertaking personas. Similarly, actors imitate off-stage life, enacting characters and relationships in social life. Therefore, the spectator encounters their own reality in theatre, and on and off-stage action become phenomenologically interrelated and reciprocal.

Whereas some sociologists like Erving Goffman regarded acting as a "hiding behind masks and costumes" that makes the idea of an authentic self not knowable (xvi), Wilshire tried to scrutinize acting in relation to identity formation. According to his

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<sup>22</sup> According to the *Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance*, phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty is first applied to dance studies (224).

<sup>23</sup> Stanton B. Garner refers to other attempts at merging theatre studies and phenomenology. These include Husserl's student Marx Scheler's analysis of tragedy in his essay "The Tragic Phenomenon" (1915). Roman Ingarden's inclusion of drama in his *The Literary Work of Art* (1930) and also his appendix named "Functions of Language in the Theatre" (1960). (see "Theater and Phenomenology" p: B3) For Garner, Mikel Dufrenne's *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* (1953) and first generation of criticism on Theatre of the Absurd contains phenomenological discussions. Garner mentions Alain Robbe-Grillet and phenomenological dimensions in the works of Gertrude Stein, Harold Pinter, Peter Handke, Richard Foreman, Richard Foreman and includes Adolphe Appia and Etienne Decroux as well (B3).

<sup>24</sup> "Phenomenological methods will be employed to explore theatre as metaphor. They will help us see that theatre is an aesthetic detachment from daily living that reveals the ways we are involved in daily living— particularly our empathetic and imitative involvements. Theatre is the art of imitation that reveals imitation. The meaning of phenomenology, and of theatre as phenomenology, will emerge in due course" (Wilshire ix). Hereby, for Wilshire, theatrical space and life is closely knitted, which is revealed through phenomenology.



understanding of role-playing that theatre discloses, the stage is not a place of an alienated and masked selves that the audience and actors are engaged in, but an "incarnated imaginative variation on the meaning of human being and doing" (Wilshire 24), showing the embodied nature of theatre as a medium, and reflecting "being-in-the-world" of both audience and spectator. Moreover, before Philip Zarilli's works on acting and the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, Wilshire considered acting a complicated phenomenological endeavor. He believed that the actor reveals himself in certain ways only as an "artist enacting a character," and he regarded acting as a phenomenon in need of a deeper and more complicated analysis on the phenomenological ground (xvi). As postdramatic plays are closely related to performance studies, Wilshire's perspectives provide an important initial perspective from which to view phenomenology and theatre together.

Another notable critic is Bert O. States, whose book *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* (1985) opened new ground for phenomenological studies in theatre. States begins by situating his ideas in the work of Prague School semiotician Jiri Veltrusky who stated that everything on stage is a sign (18). States claims that phenomenological reduction<sup>25</sup> and Shklovsky's estrangement share common ground as they both help us see things anew, which is the function of art (20-22).<sup>26</sup> Moreover, he believes that semiotics and phenomenology should be seen as correlative disciplines when working on theatre, as they create "a binocular vision: one eye enables us to see the world phenomenally; the other enables us to see it significantly" (7-9).

The discussion regarding semiotics and phenomenology will be articulated later in this thesis. Here it should be mentioned that some critics do not find semiotic

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<sup>25</sup> For "phenomenological reduction" see *Merleau-Ponty Dictionary* "Natural Attitude": Husserl believed that phenomenology provides a suspension or epochē, reorienting the subject from natural attitude with the help phenomenological reduction. With a complicated shift in attitude, we become aware of our phenomenological experience and have an intuition regarding foundation of essences (134).

<sup>26</sup> I believe his stance is similar to Vicky Angelaki's *Martin Crimp: Making Theatre Strange* (2012), which shows that it is possible to study school of phenomenology together with postdramatic theatre.

analysis alone to be sufficient for the exploration of the field of performance. In a 2008 article Fischer-Lichte explained this in concluding that semiotics only seeks to interpret the theatrical signs on stage ("Sense and Sensation" 71). What she tries to contribute to the phenomenology of theatre is "embodiment" as an element that brings performance as an event to the fore, by using Austin's speech act theory and Butler's performativity theory in close relationship with the ideas of Merleau-Ponty. According to her, the materiality of movements on stage is self-referential and precedes interpretation of actions. Theatrical action does not dissolve into a sign but creates a feeling in its own terms not as a result of its semiotic status, but by blurring the lines between subject and object, and materiality and semioticity, realigning the interconnection between emotions, thoughts and acting (Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* 18).<sup>27</sup>

Susan Broadhurst, Josephine Machon, and Susan Kozel,<sup>28</sup> are among the critics who analyzed performance studies with phenomenology. They drew attention to performance studies and how the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty can provide an insight into the impact of technological advancements in theatre. Broadhurst analyzes the use of multimedia together with embodied cognition and sees technological tools used on stage as an extension of one's body (225-226). Her views on the use of multimedia are potentially relevant to analysis of the performances of Kane's plays. Whereas Broadhurst alludes to criticisms on phenomenology's use as an analytical method, its vague grounding, and "unprovable rhetoric" (227) and thus

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<sup>27</sup> Fischer-Lichte refers to Marina Abramovic's performances (ie *Lips of Thomas*) to give examples on what performative turn of 1960s aims (see *The Transformative Power of Performance* 11). Bouko refers to Fischer-Lichte in her study to discuss how semiotics of theatre can be analyzed together with a postdramatic work, making use of Peirce's semiology and his concept of "iconic thought" (83). Bouko claims that postdramatic works move from thirdness/meaning to firstness/iconic thought, topsy-turvy the order of semiosis and aiming at a degenerate semiosis (84-85). Though my analysis will include only Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and his three terms, I agree upon Bouko's findings. I believe that Sarah Kane introduces us a kind of perception which results in a non-intellectual point.

<sup>28</sup> See Broadhurst's 2012 article "Merleau-Ponty and Neuroaesthetics: Two Approaches to Performance and Technology." and Kozel's *Closer Performance, Technologies, Phenomenology* (2007).

refers to cognitive science, Kozel borrows much of her vocabulary from Merleau-Ponty. As their studies are concerned about performance studies and the use of technology on stage, their views can be of great value when analyzing postdramatic staging. Mark Fortier's *Theory/Theatre An Introduction* (1997), provides insight into phenomenology and performance studies, and a more recent study in this area is Daniel Johnston's *Theatre and Phenomenology, Manual Philosophy* (2017).

While having some distinguished features, there are similarities between postdramatic and performance studies. Referring to Richard Schechner,<sup>29</sup> and even though Lehmann himself first used the term "postdramatic" with the meaning it has today, Lehmann underlines the importance of performativity in theatre, emphasizing that no theatrical element is more in the foreground in postdramatic theatre; reminiscent of Schechner's understanding of performance, in postdramatic theatre the actor's body is no longer the primary sign and locus of signification. Moreover, Lehmann himself points out that Schechner used the word "postdramatic" for his happenings and also talked about Ionesco, Beckett and Genet in the framework of postdramatic theatre (Lehmann 26).

With respect to those elements that distinguish previous works of drama from postdramatic plays, Lehmann says that the dominance of speech is prevalent in the works of even Ionesco, Beckett and Genet, which distinguishes them from the truly postdramatic productions; furthermore, in their plays as in other non-postdramatic works, theatre remains as a world representation, and the hierarchical status of dramatic elements is sustained (53-54), none of which are the case in his definition of the postdramatic. In Sarah Kane's plays, as will be seen, especially in *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, characters' speeches mingle, and performance on stage is more

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Schechner is among most notable critics in performance studies. Züleyha Eşigül finds some correspondances between Merleau-Ponty's understanding of body-subject and Schechner's approach to performance. According to her, Schechner considered performance as an endeavor to recreate bodily experience on stage.

critical than the play-text. Therefore, Kane's stylistics<sup>30</sup> has postdramatic sensibilities, implying a new kind of aesthetics, which should be scrutinized with a theory distinct from postmodern criticisms.

As mentioned above, there are close resemblances between Sarah Kane's plays and the body of literature Lehmann presents under the category of postdramatic theatre. On the other hand, postdramatic studies might be lacking some crucial points that are essential to understand characterization. According to Stanton B. Garner, the unitary subjectivity in its singularity and depth is abandoned on the postdramatic stage (152). To discover new ways of thinking and representation Garner believes "one has to go beyond-and sometimes against-Lehmann's limited theorization of postdramatic subjectivity (196)<sup>31</sup>. According to him, in better conceiving the postdramatic subjectivity, phenomenological studies can be complementary (197). He believes his chapter contributes to a postdramatic understanding of subjectivity in two ways, as he writes:

On one hand, it will consider the experiential or 'lived' dimension of a performance subjectivity unmoored from its traditional grounding in personal consciousness. Whereas Lehmann claims that post-epic narration is about 'the foregrounding of the *personal*' and 'the closeness within distance', he offers little account of what the personal consists of in this new theatre [...] On the other hand, if *Postdramatic Theatre* has little to say about the experiential and perceptual dynamics of the decentered subjectivity it alludes to, it is also silent on the social and institutional structures in which subjectivity manifests itself and through which it circulates. While this contextual dimension

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<sup>30</sup> Stylistics (American Eng/adj): of or relating especially to literary or artistic style. (Merriam-Webster "stylistic"). It designates "things relating to the methods and techniques used in creating a piece of writing, music or art" (Collins Dictionary "stylistic") The term has different connotations in British English, here it is used with its American meaning.

<sup>31</sup> Stanton B. Garner is especially interested in the term "embodiment" of Merleau-Ponty and he employs the term in his *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology of Contemporary Drama*. According to him Lehmann's use of the term phenomenon "seems largely restricted to the appearances of that which discloses itself to perception without considering the subjective dimension of such appearances" (202). Garner also tries to embed Merleau-Pontian ideas in Beckett's plays to analyze the question of subjectivity. (see "Still Living Flesh: Beckett, Merleau-Ponty and the Phenomenological Body")

may seem different from the experiential givenness of subjectivity, the two are intimately related (Garner 197).

Garner's phenomenological analysis of "dementia" in his study "Elder Care: Performing Dementia- Toward a Postdramatic Subjectivity" attempts at working on the social and cultural dimensions of postdramatic theatre. Garner explicitly wants to contribute to current scholarship with "a phenomenological sensibility to the non-unitary field of consciousness that Postdramatic Theatre gestures toward but fails to theorize with nuance " (197), and his views can therefore be found helpful in exploring postdramatic subjectivity in Kane's postdramatic plays.<sup>32</sup> Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave* also center mentally ill figures, yet, their inner states of mind should be understood together with the world they are situated in. Therefore, when considering subjectivity, ideas similar to Garner's will be at the center of this thesis.

However, the underlying reasons for depicting a ruptured and solitary persona in fragmentation should also be considered. Characterization in postdramatic theatre is said to be deliberately bifurcated from dramatic theatre, which also has some phenomenological connotations. Lehmann thinks that the (Hegelian) conflict at the core of theatre fundamentally structures an idea of a self through using an intersubjective relationship with the antagonist (154). This experience is given within a homogenous time, juxtaposing enemies in conflict on the same locus (154). On the contrary, in postdramatic works, this shared time is intentionally disrupted to create a staged expression of Bergsonian experienced time (*durée*) rather than objective time (*temps*), indicating the accelerating divergence between social and subjective realms, and dissociating world time and life time as observed by Blumberg in relation to modernity (Lehmann 154). Lehmann refers to Kant to bind self-perception with the concept of time, indicating that the function of the inner sense is to assure unity of self-consciousness, which ultimately supports the unity of subject (155). Therefore

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<sup>32</sup> Merve Kansız also believes that the psychotic persona is reflected through the use of language in Kane's plays. In her analysis of mental breakdown, Kansız adopts terms from philosophy of Merleau-Ponty.

Lehmann claims that lack of depth in character formation is one of the apparent traits that postdramatic theatre exploits. According to him, postdramatic staging creates a certain "coldness" for the spectator who is used to text-based theatre and thus, "the dethroning of linguistic signs and de-psychologization" willfully reorients and imprisons the spectator/reader within an alien experience (95).

It could be claimed that the trajectory of postdramatic theatre is to create a deliberate "coldness" in Lehmann's terms, similar to what Brecht and avant-garde playwrights aimed to actualize on stage, forming characters who are hard to relate to. This thesis will add to Lehmann's view on coldness/alienation with appropriate comments from Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty uses many examples of disoriented subjects and how they perceive the world.<sup>33</sup> As the patients' orientation in the world has changed, their mental phenomena shape how they experience and express their surroundings. In Kane's plays, this overt confusion is not only evident in the speeches of characters, but it is also related to their surroundings, which are chaotic. The setting constantly changes, and stage directions are highly affected by the mental state of the characters. For instance, in *4.48 Psychosis*<sup>34</sup>, the speaker loses her ability to perceive her surrounding in unity because of her illness, and all the theatrical elements such as characterization and plot are also severely influenced by it. Herein, with the help of postdramatic staging, the audience experiences what it is like to see from another perspective, they come to realize what it is like to endure pathological states of mind. Disorganized lengthy "synesthetic" depictions of pathological grief in *4.48 Psychosis* alienate the audience from their habitual way of seeing the world. It

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<sup>33</sup> Schneider's case of psychic blindness, schizophrenia, patients enduring hallucination are some of them. Merleau-Ponty studies neurological cases to decipher the subject's relationship with the world. Please see "The Synthesis of One's Own Body and Motility" in *Phenomenology of Perception*. Merleau-Ponty claims "the analysis of bodily space has led us to results which may be generalized. We notice for the first time, with regard to our own body, what is true of all perceived things: that the perception of space and the perception of the thing, the spatiality of the thing and its being as a thing are not two distinct problems" (171).

<sup>34</sup> Also *Cleansed* is set at a university turned into a torture chamber because of irritating intersubjective relationships, and characters start to shift roles, a drug dealer becomes doctor, a hallucinating girl becomes her brother.

creates an intertwining<sup>35</sup> between the character on stage and spectator, which corresponds to a new understanding of alienation effect, bearing similarities to and some alterations of the Brechtian term.

The alienation effect in postdramatic theatre is also discussed by Vicky Angelaki as a new way to understand Shklovky's "defamiliarization", bringing it together with Brecht's "alienation effect" to create a phenomenological understanding of an intertwining between man and his society in Crimp's plays, which are considered postdramatic. Angelaki claims that we can only analyze the notion of defamiliarization and alienation together with the help of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, which brings about the questions of intersubjectivity, thus merging the political sphere and the stage (1).

In this thesis, similar references to social problems in Kane's theatre will be included while analyzing the term "embodiment". The subjective experience of social issues and their resonances will be juxtaposed with theatrical elements such as characterization, time, and place. In Kane's plays, as these elements confuse the perceiver, it is put forth that the audience does not encounter Lehmann's "de-psychologization", but an effect close to Angelaki's alienation which is staged to present what it is like to live in complete confusion and disorder. Thus, analyzing the subjective experience portrayed in the texts of Kane's plays will contribute to the issues stated above. It is hypothesized that both the textual material and performance on stage depict the mental states of characters, and the thesis will include a study of Kane's staging of mental disorder and how psychotic subjectivity is delineated, especially in *4.48 Psychosis*. I will consider her staging of subjectivity in the light of Garner's statement and according to Merleau-Ponty's terms "being-in-the-world" and "embodiment".

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<sup>35</sup> This phenomena is also related to term "embodiment" which will be mentioned later in my theoretical background.

### 1.1.2 The School of Theater Semiotics

Though semiotics of theatre will not be included directly in the scope of inquiry, there are overt similarities between the way postdramatic criticism is constructed and the concepts encountered in the field of the semiotics of theatre<sup>36</sup>. In Kane's postdramatic plays, because the retreat of synthesis comes to the fore due to disorganized stimuli (or signs) on stage, the audience's experience is brought closer to that of a person with a damaged mind<sup>37</sup>. This creates an effect reminiscent of defamiliarization<sup>38</sup> that is essential to understand how Kane is able to subvert the rules of drama, paving the way to an understanding of mental illness, shock, and the experience of violence created for the audience. Therefore, to explain the matter

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<sup>36</sup> For instance, among Lehmann's terms, "retreat of synthesis" can only be explained through the term "synthesis". All through the text, Aston and Savona in *Theatre as a Sign System* discuss theatrical elements and how they act together in the process of encoding and decoding. Synthesis refers to "systems of staging as the logical means of determining the requisite degree of difference ... where elements of staging are co-dependent" (Pirandello qtd in Aston and Savona 136). Therefore the action on stage makes sense as there are no discrepancies between theatrical elements such as stage directions (*Nebentext* in Ingarden's terms) and speech (*Haupttext*). Yet in some plays such as Beckett's *Endgame*, *Krapp's Last Tape* it is aimed to disrupt the process of synthesis as the text "quite deliberately undermines the reader's habitualised capacity to extrapolate a coherent and unified character from the two Krapps" (Aston and Savona 163). The term can be also related to "synesthesia" of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, which will be explained further on.

<sup>37</sup> Please see Drew Leder's *The Absent Body*. Without any dysfunctions, we are not really conscious about our body, while we read, we do not feel our eyes but sense with them, we see the world around. The dysfunction in body creates a bodily alienation and disorients the perceiver. I believe Leder's account on mental illness and how he analyzes it together with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy can be of some use when analyzing *4.48 Psychosis* in Chapter III. As the characters are mostly mentally disturbed in Kane's plays, all the elements in her plays lead the spectator/reader to a perplexing state. Therefore, there is a reciprocal relationship created in her theatre, and alienation/coldness is a tool for her theatre to convey some certain feelings. The audience cannot reach synthesis and cannot have synesthetic experience, as it is something avoided.

<sup>38</sup> Viktor Shklovsky in "Art as Technique" defines the function of defamiliarization in arts. Shklovsky states "if we start to examine the general laws of perception, we see that as perception becomes habitual, it becomes automatic... Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived, and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged"(3-5). Aston and Savona relate Shklovsky's term "defamiliarization" to Bertolt Brecht's alienation effect "Verfremdungseffekt"(6-7). Similarly, Vicky Angelaki worked on Martin Crimp and defamiliarizing effect of postdramatic theatre together with philosophy of Merleau-Ponty.



above, a brief overview will be given, referring to essential studies in the field of theatre semiotics.

The first to study theatre semiotics were the Prague School critics Jiri Veltrusky, Petr Bogatyrev and Jindrich Honzl. Many notable critics discuss the theory of theatre semiotics such as Tadeusz Kowzan<sup>39</sup>, Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Marvin Carlson, and Patrice Pavis. In their book *Theatre as Sign System* (1991) Aston and Savona discuss the history of semiotics from Saussure and Peirce, up to the 1970s<sup>40</sup>. They recognize the importance of performance (178) and of deconstructive attitudes in literary criticism while also considering the "plurality of signifying processes generated through the activity of reading and spectating" (15). This book provides a valuable overview on the theatrical elements<sup>41</sup> that generate linearity and organization in play texts, and thence create disruption of the process of semiosis on the part of the audience, a disruption that is expected in postdramatic works.

In Keir Elam's *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (2005), a comprehensive and helpful introduction to this topic, the school of phenomenology is shown to share a similar vein with response theories,<sup>42</sup> for they both find theatre semiotics insufficient in depicting the materiality of phenomena,<sup>43</sup> perceptual experience, and unity of

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<sup>39</sup> Kowzan lists 13 criterias to utilize semiotics in theatre. His article "The Sign in Theatre" is notable. Martin Esslin develops his own concepts by furthering Kowzan's notions, but he is found inadequate by some critics like Aston (1) and Elam (206).

<sup>40</sup> See John Stout's entry "Semiotics" in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theory* (183-189).

<sup>41</sup> Aston and Savona reflect on text and performance as two diverse fields, just like Keir Elam. They work on form, character, dialogue modes, stage directions and performance, which "hinders how the text is made" (99) (please see chapters 6-9 for detailed analyses and charts).

<sup>42</sup> Ingarden, Jauss and Iser are a few to be mentioned. Their theories are discussed in Toro's book *Theatre Semiotics: Text and Staging in Modern Theatre*. In his study, Toro articulates that it is hard to work on reception of a play, as after the performance little is left to trace how the spectator really perceived the play (104).

<sup>43</sup> Poststructuralism and New Historicism filled that gap extensively according to Keir Elam (213-218). Elam's work in 1980s is criticized on the ground of using semiotics extensively to scrutinize every element on stage as a sign and failing to grasp the poststructuralist tendencies of his time. On this particular issue, Féral says "the fact is that theatre is more than just language" (183-184). Though performative turn of the 60s created Performance Arts as a separate study field especially in America, Elam is also criticized on the ground of "creating a dichotomy between theatre and drama", while also

performance (212-213). These criticisms are made on the grounds that semiotic studies render spectator experience and the materiality of play on stage as mere signs to be deciphered. Among the critics who found semiotics insufficient to the task, the book cites Bert O States, who thought that the necessity for semiotics to regard its material, including theatre, purely as a system of signs to be dissected, reduced the perceptual impression that theatre conveys to the audience. By referring to Merleau-Ponty, he claimed that it is not feasible to put restrictions on the perceptual experience, as it is a concrete and unified phenomenon rather than a whole consisting of disparate elements (7). Contributing to that view, Fischer-Lichte also states that semiotics does not consider the materiality of theatrical signs, for what is happening on stage is seen "as a text made up of theatrical signs that are to be interpreted" ("Sense and Sensation" 71). According to her, the fields of semiotics and phenomenology should be used together as two elements interacting and complementary to each other, in analyzing performance and its various layers. By referring to the shift in academic interest from semiotics to performance studies, Fischer-Lichte also asserts that performance studies often require some approach other than semiotics alone, an approach which might appraise the peculiar traits of a performance such as, for instance, a phenomenological method might do (70). According to her, phenomenology is a useful tool for studying the materiality of a play, and she tries to merge semiotics and phenomenology with the term "embodiment", that she uses to depict the relationship of spectator and actor during the performance (77). Referring to Merleau-Pontian terms, Fischer-Lichte considers theatrical perception as a pre-predicative phenomenon, indicating that the spectator does not interpret signs on stage but perceives them as meaningful phenomena from the start. In other words, from the spectator's point of view:

The objects appear in their particular phenomenality—the iron bed as an iron bed or the toilet bowl as a toilet bowl. These objects signify that which they appear to be. Their self-referentiality,

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not presenting psychoanalytical, sociocritical and deconstructionist theories solidly. (Alter 265-266). What Aston and Savona succeed in doing is referring to those schools of criticism in their book *Theatre as Sign System: A Semiotics of Text and Performance*.

accordingly, is not to be described as the mediation of a given meaning or as a desemantization of a sign but as a process of a very particular kind of production of meaning ("Sense and Sensation" 77).

Thus, meaning is created or lost right at that moment and in the act of perceiving. The spectator enters into a reciprocal relationship with the action on stage in a performance that juxtaposes various elements. The act of perceiving and being present in theatre merges binaries such as actor/spectator, art/social reality, presence/representation, and "the so-called oppositions collapse, the dichotomies dissolve... and one category can be taken for another" (79). For this reason, and to abolish Cartesian dualism, Fischer-Lichte continues, a phenomenological method is required. However, with the shattering of these dichotomies the spectator is disoriented, for these concepts secure the cognition of the world around. This destabilization "upsets our [the spectator's] perception...shatters the rules and norms" and "the performance transfers the spectators into a state which alienates them from their everyday life" leading to an experience that could be either tormenting or joyful (80). Similar to Fischer-Lichte's elaboration on intertwined relationships built on perceiving, a reciprocal bond between stage and audience will be assumed in this thesis.

### **1.1.2.1 Postdramatic Studies, The Semiotics of Theatre and The Body**

Lehmann asserts that everything on stage is a sign: "The term 'theatrical signs' [...] is meant to include all dimensions of signification, not merely signs that carry determinable information, i.e. signifiers which denote (or unmistakably connote) an identifiable signified, but virtually all elements of the theatre" (82). In this Lehmann seems to be borrowing some ideas from previous literature on theatre

semiotics<sup>44</sup>, yet he does not solely rely on semiotics, his work also expresses an engagement with phenomenology. In *Postdramatic Theatre*, he tries to draw attention that with the new advancements in technology “the mode of perception is shifting: a simultaneous and multi-perspectival form of perceiving is replacing the linear-successive” (16). Emphasizing such a change in the act of perceiving, Lehmann is concerned with “phenomenology of postdramatic signs” (86), which necessitates an analysis of both the semiotics of theatre and together with phenomenology. For Lehmann, postdramatic theatre is “a theatre of perceptibility” (99), hereby sense data refers to “answers that are sensed as possible but not yet (graspable)” so postdramatic theatre has a close affinity with phenomenology:

It [postdramatic theatre] emphasizes what is incomplete and incompletable about it, so much so that it realizes its own ‘*phenomenology of perception*’ marked by an overcoming of the principles of mimesis and fiction. The play(ing) as a concrete event produced in the moment fundamentally changes the logic of perception and the status of the subject of perception, who can no longer find support in a representative order (99; emphasis added).

Thus referring to magnum opus of Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (hereinafter *PP*), Lehmann seems to find the work helpful in analyzing postdramatic theatre and perception. Evidently, postdramatic theatre works on subverting habitual perception, a pre-predicative phenomenon, a fundamental element that is aimed to be shattered. According to Lehmann “dramatic theatre” offers an illusion in which the audience can take part, through lights, music, costume and setting, which are all subordinated to the text itself, whereas postdramatic theatre emphasizes the need to free performance from the dominance of the text. Lehmann defines “dramatic theatre” as a locus creating a fictional realm where all the stage stands for an illusion of a world waiting for the audience

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<sup>44</sup> Please see Kowzan’s article (1968) “The Sign in the Theatre”. Kowzan asserts “Everything is sign in a theatrical presentation” (57). Before that, Petr Bogatyrev (from Russian Formalist circle) in his essay on folk theatre (1938) put forth that “on the stage things that play the part of theatrical signs... acquire special features, qualities and attributes that they do not have in real life” (qtd. in Elam 7). Jiri Veltrusky (Prague School) also famously claimed (1940) “All that is on the stage is a sign” (7).

to complete. Yet, this dramatic illusion necessitates “neither completeness nor even continuity of the representation” (22). What makes dramatic theatre illusionary is that the audience perceives a world representation, a totality, a wholeness which is presented as a regulating form of the real the spectator is expected to contribute through their imagination and empathy.

In postdramatic plays, in contrast, causal relationships, unity of action and time, and plot linearity cannot be found. For Lehmann, the use of all the elements including “chorus, narrators, interludes [...] even the Brechtian repertoire of epic ways of playing – may all be incorporated and added to the drama without destroying the specific experience of dramatic theatre” (22). The loss of progression of the plot brings with it a loss of a sense of an inherent logic and allows for the perception of composition as an “an artificially imposed ‘manufacture’, a mere sham of a logic of action that only serves clichés” (26). However, “postdramatic” theatre does not denote a negation of drama, but a possibility to go beyond the dramatic paradigm (27), it does not exclude the existence of, or continued working on, previous forms of art for Lehmann.

While analyzing the semiotics of theatre as it functions or manifests itself in *Hedda Gabler*, Aston and Savona believe that elements such as characterization, space and action are formed in dramatic texts through dialogue (52). Dialogue is mostly created as an exchange—a figure talks with another who listens and then replies, thus becoming the speaker. This reciprocity is structured by deictic<sup>45</sup> relationships on stage, presenting and defining the context. Keir Elam underlines the function of deixis to form meaningful action on stage:

Deixis is immensely important to the drama, however, being the primary means whereby language gears itself to the speaker and receiver (through the personal pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’) and to the time and place of the action (through the adverbs ‘here’ and ‘now’, etc.),

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<sup>45</sup> Please see the definition in the introduction

as well as to the supposed physical environment at large and the objects that fill it (through the demonstratives ‘this’, ‘that’, etc.). It has been suggested, indeed, that deixis is the most significant linguistic feature—both statistically and functionally—in the drama (24).

However, as these relationships are all denoted with respect to the speaker(s) subjective position and by their situatedness in the dramatic world, deixis is necessarily highly “egocentric” (128). In line with that, Merleau-Ponty believes that we are primordially oriented in the world and our situatedness and our body in the world disclose spatiality, time and being(s) which are pre-given in perception<sup>46</sup>. As deixis is the fundamental element in dramatic representation which is related to being situated-or how a subject perceives the world-phenomenological studies can be utilized when analyzing disorganized signs/stimuli on stage.<sup>47</sup> In this way a study of postdramatic theatrical signs brought together with the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty should present insights into the apparently “disorganized” characterizations and theatrical signs in Kane’s plays. It might be claimed, for instance, that proximate deictic pronouns such as “I”, “You” and “They” can confuse the action on stage due to an erosion of subjectivity.<sup>48</sup> By fragmenting the dramatic personae of the play, Kane’s plays seem to shatter the deictic elements that might otherwise render their plots comprehensible, as the subject pronouns cannot easily be assigned to characters, and this is one cause of created confusion on stage. To investigate postdramatic elements in Kane’s plays further, Lehmann’s terms “retreat of synthesis”, “density

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<sup>46</sup> In his words “perceptual experience shows that they [the relationship between subject and object] are presupposed in our primordial encounter with being”, and for him “being is synonymous with being situated” (PP 294).

<sup>47</sup> For a similar analysis on phenomenology and semiotics, please see Cormac Power’s “The Space of Doubt: *The Chairs* and the aesthetics of failure”.

<sup>48</sup> Correspondingly, Bert O States also asserts that phenomenology and semiotics of theatre should be analyzed together: “it seems to me that semiotics is a useful, if incomplete discipline. It has become evident to me [...]that semiotics and phenomenology are best seen as complementary perspectives on the world and on art” (7-9).

of signs”, “synesthesia”, and “physicality”<sup>49</sup> will be utilized together with aforementioned concepts by Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

According to Lehmann, theatrical signs refer to all layers of signification, and all elements on stage. For Lehmann, a “retreat of synthesis” happens as theatre “articulates through the mode of its semiosis an implicit thesis concerning perception” (82). Lehmann claims that the experience of life cannot be conveyed through artistic tendencies that impose coherence. For instance, to present the chaotic experience of everyday life, postdramatic theatre demands fragments of perception, instead of a unified and coalescing one. An attempt to reflect the chaotic aspects of life results in a de-hierarchization of theatrical signs, along with “ambiguity, polyvalence and simultaneity” whereby theatre becomes “deconstructive artistic practice of momentary event”(83). Evidently, Lehmann is analyzing postdramatic works through the nature of perception and how it is constituted. He claims that “perception always already functions dialogically, in such a way that the senses respond to the offers and demands of the environment, but at the same time also show a disposition first to construct the manifold into a texture of perception, i.e. to constitute a unity” (85). He is here working on what forms unity in perception, which can explain the fragmentation observed in postdramatic plays.

Though Lehmann’s attempt is to present postdramatic theatre as a deconstructive practice, the phenomenological explanation of lived world proposed by Merleau-Ponty is also useful in considering and analyzing the reasons behind the characteristic fragmentation in Kane’s theatre. With a similar view, Garner also utilizes the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty in studying fragmentation-related elements of Beckett’s drama. He believes that terms such as “de-centering” and “absence” are utilized in the poststructuralist approach to language, because “these

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<sup>49</sup> Please see my introduction for a definition. Hans-Thies Lehmann provides a definition of these terms through pp: 82-107 in *Postdramatic Theatre*.

concepts [...] have equally powerful roots in the phenomenological tradition, especially as this tradition has sought to move beyond the originary, transcendental ego and the notion of presence as pure self-givenness” (“Still Living Flesh” 459). What marks the Merleau-Pontian understanding of body is not pure self-givenness but an ambiguity regarding our situatedness in the world, rather than transcendental ego isolated from the body.<sup>50</sup> The “retreat of synthesis” might therefore be analyzed together with Merleau-Pontian concepts, especially as postdramatic theatre necessitates an understanding of reality shaped by unstable layers rather than “closed circuits” (Lehmann 83). Merleau-Pontian “synthesis” does not comply with a totalizing idea of unity, as for Merleau-Ponty, the subject’s ability to reach synthesis from multiplicity is also paradoxical:

Belief in the thing and the world must entail the presumption of a completed synthesis—and yet this completion is made impossible by the very nature of the perspectives which have to be inter-related, since each one of them, by virtue of its horizons, refers to other perspectives, and so on indefinitely. There is, indeed, a contradiction, as long as we operate within being, but the contradiction disappears, or rather is generalized, being linked up with the ultimate conditions of our experience and becoming one with the possibility of living and thinking, if we operate in time, and if we manage to understand time as the measure of being (*PP* 385).

Therefore, the incompleteness that postdramatic studies aim at can be achieved through centering such an understanding of perception. Moreover, as the body is what gears the subject to the world, Merleau-Ponty claims that it also originates the idea of space. He believes that “like space, causality, before being a relation between objects, is based on my relation to things” (*PP* 334). The spatiality of being is thus defined through body while such a bond also establishes causal relationships for the perceiving subject. In this way, the “retreat of synthesis” in postdramatic theatre can be related to the perception of the characters having ill or “deviant” bodies on stage. In postdramatic theatre, “deviant bodies” deviate from

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<sup>50</sup> His views on body and its relationship with the world will be articulated through terms “synesthesia”, “embodiment” and “being-in-the-world”.



the norm as they are ill, disabled or deformed and cause “‘amoral’ fascination” (Lehmann 95). Because the staged world in these plays is distanced from a comprehensible structure, “the body is absolutized” and becomes “the only subject matter” in the postdramatic works (96)<sup>51</sup>. The actor’s body does not serve for the signification process, it remains as a center of attention not because it channels any meaning but only for its presence and gesticulation. Therefore the loss of causality, unity of action and space in postdramatic theatre might be a result of ill bodies and their perception(s) presented on stage.

Vicky Angelaki also uses Merleau-Pontian terms in *Martin Crimp: Making Theatre Strange* (2012), which draws attention to the emphasis phenomenology puts on corporeal and intellectual perception interconnecting in performance analysis (9). In this thesis, this interconnection will be uncovered with the concepts "embodiment" and "synesthesia" as defined by Merleau-Ponty. This attempt on stage blurs the lines between dualities such as patient/doctor, victim/perpetrator, public/private by erosion of theatrical elements such as plot, character, and setting. Thus, this thesis is concerned with the perceptual experience of a certain "coldness"<sup>52</sup> or alienation in postdramatic works of Kane, distinct from the "warmth" that realistic drama had provided. Hence, the thesis will include analysis of Kane's plays through the resonances of this coldness and alienation in the text and, in order to further understand why it occurs, it examines the dismantled theatrical elements in relation to each other. It will be claimed that the use of theatrical signs in chaos generates “de-hierarchization” between theatrical elements, which results in “density of signs” and “retreat of synthesis” that are closely related to phenomenological experiences presented for the audience. They destabilize spectators' perception, and they can be characterized by Lehmann’s terms, Fischer-Lichte’s phenomenological deductions on theatre that make use of Merleau-Pontian concepts.

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<sup>51</sup> “Physicality” and deviant bodies on stage will be emphasized later in this thesis.

<sup>52</sup> The term belongs to Hans-Thies Lehmann. See the introduction for the relevant definition.

To conclude, although it won't be referred directly, the school of semiotics can be an appropriate and helpful parameter through which to study the experience that is created on stage in Kane's plays and other plays that fall into Lehmann's definition of postdramatic theatre. Lehmann himself endorses such an approach, since he started his own investigation "with insights of theatre semiotics ... but going beyond that", alluding to previous literature and tradition to show how the signification process is said to have retreated, resulting in the retreat of synthesis (82-83). Lehmann believes that one needs to create a system of discourse to render "retreat of synthesis" occurring on stage, or in his words, "enclosed within postdramatic theatre is obviously the demand for an open and fragmenting perception in place of a unifying and closed perception" (82). He also states that the abundance of multiple signs on stage creates a state of another reality that resembles the chaotic atmosphere of the contemporary world. As mentioned before, he asserts that this state of confusion and chaos cannot occur on stage by implementing elements that cause coherence. That is why the synthesis "is sacrificed in order to gain, in its place, the density of intensive moments" (82-83). Therefore, in postdramatic works, such intensive moments are always created to reach cancellation of synthesis, leading to confusion on the part of the audience, which can be also explained through phenomenological concepts such as "synesthesia", "embodiment", and "being-in-the-world". Because Lehmann mentions distortion, it should be considered how it emerges in psychotic or mentally ill figures, which can be explored with Merleau-Pontian concepts.

## 1.2 Merleau-Pontian Terms and Postdramatic Theatre

### 1.2.1 Synesthesia

Cézanne said that one could see the velvetiness, the hardness, the softness, and even the odor of objects. My perception is therefore not a sum of visual, tactile, and audible givens: I perceive in a total way with my whole being; I grasp a unique structure of the thing, a unique way of being, which speaks to my senses at once (Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense* 50).

In this thesis *synesthesia* is used to indicate the merging of tactile experience with visual representation as expressed figuratively in verbal expressions, and through extraordinary stage directions and on-stage action in the plays of Sarah Kane. She evokes such “synesthesia” to convey violence, pain, and turmoil to the audience/perceiver as they are experienced by the characters. In her postdramatic works *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* Kane appears to be trying to merge the various sensory data experienced by the characters in order to create confusion and convey to the audience what it is like to be in troubled minds in tormenting states. Through creating "a non-hierarchical use of signs"<sup>53</sup> (Lehmann 86), Kane presents a new form of “synesthesia” experienced by the speaker in the plays. Pushing the limits of staging with the help of confusing stage directions, the plays present multiple sensory data simultaneously without any overt or easily perceptible organizing structure, which is reminiscent of the “retreat of synthesis”.

Synesthesia is generally defined as a neurological phenomenon where multiple sensory data crisscross, and it is understood to be experienced by very few people (Cytowic 1). In spite of this, Cytowic's first set of examples of “synesthesia”, where he refers to daily expressions such as a "warm color", “a sweet person”, and "a hot

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<sup>53</sup> Lehmann refers to “syneasthetic” experience. It bears similarity to Merleau-Pontian “synesthesia” and it will be discussed extensively. Lehmann himself says that he can “repeatedly note a non-hierarchical use of signs that aims at a synaesthetic perception and contradicts the established hierarchy, at the top of which we find language, diction and gesture and in which visual qualities such as the experience of an architectonic space – if they come into play at all – figure as subordinated aspects” (Lehmann 86-87).

argument" (1) provide strikingly good evidence similar to Merleau-Ponty's claim that "synesthetic perception is the rule" (*PP* 266).<sup>54</sup> For Merleau-Ponty, all our senses work together to perceive the world, and "the senses interact in perception as the two eyes collaborate in vision" (266). This "synesthesia" is a pre-predicative phenomenon, which does not occur after a thought process; it is how we perceive the world of objects, in his view: we do not separate color from the form; we merge tactile experiences with visual ones.

Consequently, Maurice Merleau-Ponty uses the term "synesthesia" for our mundane experiences where one can speak of "hot, cold, shrill, or hard colors of sounds that are clear, sharp, brilliant or mellow, of soft noises and penetrating fragrances" (*Sense and Non-Sense* 49-50). He emphasizes that all our senses work together to perceive without a hierarchical order. The primacy is given to perception<sup>55</sup>, which is a pre-reflective ("pre-predicative") phenomenon. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty states that "we are unaware of [synesthetic experience] only because scientific knowledge shifts the center of gravity of experience, so that we have unlearned how to see, hear, and generally speaking, feel, in order to deduce from our bodily organization and the world as the physicist conceives it, what we are to see, hear and feel. [...]. He continues, "if, then, taken as incomparable qualities, the 'data of the different senses' belong to so many separate worlds, each one in its particular essence being a manner of modulating the thing, they all communicate through their significant core." (266-267). Merleau-Ponty concludes that what perception is, therefore, is "not [just] a sum of visual, tactile, and audible givens" but a crisscross of

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<sup>54</sup> Similar to Cytowic's first set of examples, according to Merleau-Ponty "one sees the hardness and brittleness of glass, and when, with a tinkling sound, it breaks, this sound is conveyed by the visible glass. [...]The form of objects is not their geometrical shape: it stands in a certain relation to their specific nature, and appeals to all our other senses as well as sight" (*PP* 266-267)

<sup>55</sup> Merleau-Ponty opposes Idealism and Empiricism all together. He prioritizes "flesh"- an ontological being, "a new element" for to perceive, rather than mind. We share a common ground with the living world that we inhabit, we are seen and seeing, being touched and touching. This interrelated status of human condition will be discussed extensively together with notion of "embodiment" further on.

sensory data that is present to all humanity in a unique way, which speaks to one's senses all together<sup>56</sup>. (*Sense and Non-Sense* 49-50).

According to Lehmann, "synaesthesia"[sic] in postdramatic theatre "continually lead[s] to the intensified perception of the individual phenomenon and simultaneously to the discovery of surprising correspondences" (84). Likewise, "synaesthesia" as an enriching experience works to unite a variety of sensory data in the pre-reflective sense in postdramatic theatre, where the performance on stage continuously confuses the audience as there are no cohering elements (linear storytelling, definite characters), sometimes not even a text. The audience is pushed away, alienated from the ongoing performance as "the human sensory apparatus does not easily tolerate disconnectedness. When deprived of connections, it seeks out its own, becomes 'active', its imagination going 'wild' – and what then 'occurs to it' are similarities, correlations, and correspondences, however far-fetched these may be" (85). Lehmann states that "synaesthesia" is employed as a strategy on stage, and he finds it "tempting" to discuss "different models offered by phenomenology and perception theory to understand the process of global perception (synesthesia) which, without being homogeneous, communicates across the senses" showing a tendency to construct a unity which calls attention to act of perceiving "as a quest, disappointment, retreat and rediscovery" (85).

Although Lehmann does not refer to Merleau-Ponty in the passage mentioned above<sup>57</sup>, but says that he finds it tempting to discuss "the different models offered by

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<sup>56</sup> Similarly, John Locke in his *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* gives example regarding a blind man who is presumably conveyed the idea of red by its resemblance to the sound of trumpet, which might be crucial to know that one perceives the distinguishing elements of various sensory data without confusing them but by associating them to each other. ("On Solidity Depend Impulse, Resistance and Protrusion" please see "An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding" *Volume I.*, by John Locke (gutenberg.org)

<sup>57</sup> Lehmann only refers to Merleau-Ponty for once, to describe theatrical "event/situation". In his words, with the concept, "it is intended to bring into play the context of the thematization of the situation in Existential philosophy (Jaspers, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty). Here the term 'situation' designates an unstable sphere of simultaneously possible and imposed choice, as well as the virtual

*phenomenology and perception theory* to understand the process of global perception (synaesthesia) which, without being homogeneous, communicates across the senses” (85). I believe as Merleau-Ponty uses “synesthesia” as an umbrella term that Hans-Thies Lehmann implicitly refers to, the term can be adopted to extend our understanding of postdramatic theatre and is especially useful in examining Kane’s postdramatic plays with respect to the apparently random or non-organised presence of various sensory data on stage. It allows the thesis to show how, through the bombardment of images, sounds and by uniting the speeches of characters through the use of language and curious stage directions, the plays under analysis reflect the traumatizing and tantalizing experience of what it is like to be a perpetrator/bystander/victim of violence. It might further be claimed that textual confusion is a necessary trait of Kane's theatre, as pre-predicative experience and blended sensory data are staged in order to confuse the audience and create an assortment of views, which conforms to Lehmann's explanations of how postdramatic theatre creates a retreat of synthesis.

### **1.2.2 Being-in-the-World**

The term is taken from Heidegger’s “In-der-Welt-Sein,” from *Being and Time*. (Landes 29). As mentioned before, Maurice Merleau-Ponty presents all his ideas in a close relationship, eroding dualities such as subject/object, private/public, body/mind. Since all his terms are interrelated, “synesthesia”, “being-in-the-world”, and “embodiment” cannot be seen as disparate concepts while investigating a phenomenon. Instead, they imply how everything is akin within existence. It is thus possible to regard “being-in-the-world” as an existential concept implying “the ambiguity of all human experience and phenomena,”<sup>58</sup> and it is not used merely to

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transformability of the situation.” (106). His ideas of theatrical situation, which asks for the spectator’s contribution to the play is discussed together with the term alienation in this thesis.

<sup>58</sup> I believe this term is closely related to “embodiment” and the notion of “chiasm”.

depict the relationship between an "objective body and a consciousness; rather, it is a 'pre-objective perspective' that undermines the very distinctions between first-person and third-person perspectives, and thus represents a genuine intertwining between consciousness and nature" (Landes 81).

To illustrate such an interconnected experience, Merleau-Ponty explains our orientation in the world through examining illnesses and extreme cases. After observing how one loses sensitivity to color and touch, he claims that "injuries to the centres and even to conductors [...]" do not "destroy, one after another, ready-made sensory contents, but make the active *differentiation* of stimuli, which appears to be the essential function of the nervous system, increasingly *unreliable*" (PP 85; emphases added). Therefore, such illnesses<sup>59</sup> do not terminate the ability to obtain sensory data, but rather they affect patients' ability to distinguish between stimuli around and change their orientation in the world. Yet, in many cases, the complaints of the patients and their neurological peculiarities can neither be fully explained by physiological elements nor be addressed in solely psychological terms.

To specify such interaction between body and psychology, Merleau-Ponty uses the extreme case of a veteran amputee who experiences the phantom limb<sup>60</sup> phenomenon. According to him, this phenomenon cannot be explained only through the veteran's physical qualities or psychological states but rather needs to be seen through an understanding of their complicated relationship. Thus, neither materialistic views that reduce the mind to a mere physical entity nor the

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<sup>59</sup> In that part, he mainly discusses phantom limb and anosognosia (failure or refusal on the patient's part to recognize the existence of a disease or disability phenomena. See the translator's note on PP p: 88).

<sup>60</sup> Phantom limb: It is a medical phenomenon. After an amputation process, some patients are reported to feel pain, itch and to have maladapted sensations as if the amputated limb is still attached. "In the case of the phantom limb the subject appears to be unaware of the mutilation and relies on his imaginary limb as he would on a real one, since he tries to walk with his phantom leg and is not discouraged even by a fall" (PP 93). Yet, those sensations cannot be explained only through psychological terms, as it is known that some of the nerves connected to dismembered limb stay active after the amputation.

perspectives concerned with the individual's inner states can form the ground for a satisfactory explanation of phantom limb syndrome. As the patient's spatial orientation of data and perception of objects are modified (*PP* 85), Merleau-Ponty finds that the phenomenon "is understood in the perspective of 'being-in-the-world'" (94). What it is in us which refuses mutilation and disablement is an I committed to a certain physical and inter-human world, who continues to tend towards his world despite handicaps and amputations and who, to this extent, does not recognize them *de jure*" (94). He further explains the psychological act of repression together with the phantom limb phenomenon, forming an intricate relationship between psychology and physiology while relating two seemingly far-fetched issues. He claims that repression of a past trauma resembles the phantom limb phenomenon, as he believes there is similarity between what happens to traumatic memory and to the phantom limb: they are not memories of the past, nor are they invoked deliberately or recalled for a moment, but they occupy our present while annihilating our possible actual moment(s) in the present. As the repressor of a past trauma never accepts what happened in the past, but is also aware of the loss of the thing s/he desires through enduring a change in their current position, so is a person with a phantom limb who continues to feel the amputated part of the body, trying to use that phantom limb involuntarily.

Like the phantom limb phenomenon, memories and feelings are present in the way they exist regarding our "being-in-the-world" and change our orientation within the world. Merleau-Ponty asserts that in all of these mental states "psychological motives and bodily occasions may overlap because there is not a single impulse in a living body which is entirely fortuitous in relation to psychic intentions, not a single mental act which has not found at least its germ or its general outline in physiological tendencies" (101). He associates this curious phenomenon with having lost somebody we hold dear:

The man with one leg feels the missing limb in the same way as I feel keenly the existence of a friend who is, nevertheless, not before my



eyes; he has not lost it because he continues to allow for it, just as Proust can recognize the death of his grandmother, yet without losing her, as long as he can keep her on the horizon of his life. The phantom arm is not a representation of the arm, but the ambivalent presence of an arm<sup>61</sup> (94).

This thesis hypothesizes that in *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave*, the ambiguity of staging, character erosion, and dismantling of the play-text always goes hand in hand with the chaotic incidents that torture the characters. These elements damage the intersubjective relations in the play-text while also reflecting the tormented mental states of the dramatis personae. The traumatic loss of a loved one lurks behind the reason why characters lose their grasp on time and place. On a metaphorical level, bodies presented under torture on stage project what it is like to endure a severely troubled state of mind. As the physically impaired characters on stage also have troubled mental states -to reflect this psychological condition inside out- Kane generates new associations that cannot be conveyed through causal relationships of a well-made play. Hence, the plot does not have linearity; the ability to comprehend the world in unity is lost on the part of the audience to alienate them, and the blurred line between reality and trauma is actualized through mixed stimuli on stage (noises, bright colors, blatantly cruel actions, lack of chronological order together with meaningless flock of events, broken order of speech) that can be found perplexing by the audience. As the “being-in-the-world” of a mentally impaired person is staged, the postdramatic techniques in use serve to create a feeling of rupture by working on dramatic elements such as plot, character, and setting. The storyline is disrupted to

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<sup>61</sup> His ideas in relation to “phantom limb” phenomenon will be discussed together with characterization in Kane’s *Cleansed*, in relation to Grace and Graham, siblings separated because of death. In the play, Grace cannot accept Graham’s absence, continuously recalling her past memories of him and speaking to him. Throughout the play, Graham is present on stage and at very end, Grace becomes Graham [They merge at first by cross-dressing, and eventually through a sex reaffirming surgery] The concept of time, space and bodily interactions are drastically shaped by Grace’s problematic vision of her past and present. Also, with the arrival of Soldier in *Blasted*, there is a sudden shift in the setting and the time. The theatrical space starts to change abruptly. The Soldier endures a past trauma as a result of losing his wife, which haunts him. He triggers the extreme violence on stage and the idea of psychological depravity causes a great change in the way the play proceeds stylistically.

merge form with the content, and the audience is invited to a new way of perceiving the world- the experience of being sick/tortured- which is not pleasant at all.

### 1.2.3 Embodiment

The term *embodiment* is a hot topic in cognitive science and philosophy of mind<sup>62</sup> since the 1980s. What Merleau-Ponty contributed to the current discussion is that in his philosophy, the body as the perceiver is the locus of perception (rather than mind) that shapes our relationship with the world. As the body is always situated in the world, our body and our bodily schema shape our perception. We understand the world around us in relation to our "flesh," as it has a reciprocal relationship with the world as the perceiver and one that is being perceived. Thus, the body has an ontological status rather than being a mere object. While Western philosophy has always regarded the body as inferior to mind, Cartesian duality is what Merleau-Ponty tries to overcome, because for him Intellectualism and Empiricism cannot explain certain illnesses which reveal how we perceive the world. As the body is a fabric that is woven into the world,<sup>63</sup> our relationship with the outside world is a complicated one.<sup>64</sup> Individuals (the Other) are not perceived as passive objects, but as conscious agents and perceivers themselves. Merleau-Ponty provides a metaphor for this complicated association, resembling the subject's relationship with the Other to one person's two hands touching each other, perceiving one another, and thus

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<sup>62</sup> According to Benjamin Bergen, "since 1980s, the idea that the body matters to mind has been known as *embodiment*" (11; emphasis in original), he refers to Merleau-Ponty as an "early precursor" (11).

<sup>63</sup> In Merleau-Ponty's words "My body is the fabric into which all objects are woven, and it is, at least in relation to the perceived world, the general instrument of my 'comprehension'" (*Phenomenology of Perception* 273).

<sup>64</sup> Anna Ovaska discusses the term "embodiment" together with 4.48 Psychosis in her article "Sarah Kane's World of Depression: The Emergence of Mental Illness in 4.48 Psychosis". However, she does not refer to Merleau-Ponty in her research.

forming a "chiasm."<sup>65</sup> He claims that philosophy and the sciences have dissected the world which was, actually, always and already revealed in unity in perception.

Hence, he claims that dualism that separate seemingly opposite concepts such as body/mind are artificial constructs of analytical thought.

Merleau-Ponty also contributed to the school of phenomenology by giving primacy to perception. For him, perception happened in the body, and again all at once -- rather than being a product of reflective thought or a sum of our experiences where the mind as a thinking thing constructs our understanding of the world. As he prioritized the body when perceiving, learning, and obtaining a new skill that necessitates complicated psychomotor behaviors, how we come to understand the world and how we situate ourselves within the world became for him the product of sensory perception(s).<sup>66</sup> To hold an object and to touch emphasizes our incarnated being within the world, and Merleau-Ponty stresses the importance of perception with the term and concept of "embodiment", with which he addresses the problem of duality between body and mind while also focusing on politics, linguistics, nature and history; through "embodiment" he explains human interactions with all matter through reversibility of touch, and "being-in-the-world". In his lectures, he claims that "in psychology as in geometry, the notion of a single unified space entirely open to a disembodied intellect has been replaced by the idea of a space which consists of different regions and has certain privileged directions; these are closely related to our

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<sup>65</sup> "The term is derived from the Greek letter *chi* ("x") and indicates an intertwining or crossing-over relation or arrangement." (Landes "Chiasm" pp:37-38). In *The Visible and Invisible*, chapter "Intertwining/ Chiasm", Merleau-Ponty tries to explain our relationship in the world through our carnal and incarnated relationship with(in) the world through his metaphor of two hands. Intertwining [*entrelacs*] here translates Husserl's *Verflechtung*, entanglement or interweaving, like the woof and warp of a fabric. (see also the article on Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy "Maurice Merleau-Ponty" by Ted Toadvine). When we touch our one hand with the other, they never perceive one another without being strangers to each other, and when perceiving they never caught without being either the "perceiver" or "perceived". The touching hand has the intentional attitude while our other hand is being touched thus, perceived. Yet, this sense is illusionary, as our flesh plays the part of being both. Merleau-Ponty believes that this reversibility is crucial to explain our being in the world for we are not only the perceivers but also the ones who are perceived at the very same moment.

<sup>66</sup> As an example, Merleau-Ponty depicts our interwoven relationship with the world of objects through how we use scissors, given the fact that our hand takes the shape of scissors when entering the world of objects to grasp it (*PP* 121-122).

distinctive bodily features and our situation as beings thrown into the world" (*The World of Perception* 55)<sup>67</sup>.

Correspondingly, Lehmann investigates "the theatre, in as much as it problematizes the constitution of a dramatic fiction and world in general and with it also an immediate reference to social reality" (ix). Though Lehmann relies on some phenomenological concepts, his notion of postdramatic has been criticized for paying little attention to the "dimension of the personal, the fragmentary and dispersed subjectivity" that lends "itself to materialistic and sociological forms of analysis" (Garner "Elderly Care: Performing Dementia" 153). According to Garner, the contextual dimension and the experiential givenness of subjectivity are closely related and can be better understood within the context of "embodiment". Hence, Merleau-Ponty's "embodiment" can be studied together with "physicality" (Lehmann 95) in postdramatic works. Such analysis could pay attention to ill, disabled, and grotesque (or so-called "deviant") bodies and their function to depict a marginalized mental state or ongoing depravity in intersubjective relationships. As this thesis's analyses of two Kane plays will show, it is possible to see that marginal characters on stage confuse their audience not only by terminating the process of signification through their actions but also by leading them to an alienating experience of what it is like to be in that body by exposing them to a mishmash of signs, crucially experienced and expressed through the form being inseparable from the content in Kane's oeuvre. Hence, the audience's world is intertwined with the action on stage, where war, trauma, and violence are presented. The audience experiences a chiasm, which creates fear, repulsion, and further confusion.

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<sup>67</sup> Also in his preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*, he explains phenomenological world as "not a pure being" but "the sense which is revealed where the paths of my various experiences intersect, and also where my own and other people's intersect and engage each other like gears. It is thus inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity, which find their unity when I either take up my past experiences in those of the present, or other people's in my own" (xxii).

In brief, as postdramatic theatre binds the theatrical sphere with the social reality that it tries to encompass, one may understand that, when juxtaposed with the phenomenology of perception, the postdramatic stage is a new locus that reflects the contemporary world through presenting bodies that are tormented and isolated within the scope of their experience and this can be analysed and better understood through the concept of “embodiment”. Finding that violence in the world outside is reflected in the violent actions of Kane’s characters in her postdramatic theatre, the thesis will also consider how Merleau-Ponty’s concept of “embodiment” is used to show how the world outside and the world we live in are interlaced<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>68</sup>Similar to my view, Malgorzata Sugiera states that “ nowadays the basic structural principle of texts written for the theatre increasingly often turns out to be their immanent theatricality, which is, however, no longer understood as a reflection upon theatre as a domain of artistic activity or as an extensive metaphor of human life, but rather as a means of inducing the audience to watch themselves as subjects which perceive, acquire knowledge and partly create the objects of their cognition.” (qtd by Karen Jüns-Munbry in “Introduction”p: 6).

## CHAPTER 2

### 4.48 PSYCHOSIS

“I’m writing a play called 4.48 Psychosis. It’s about a psychotic breakdown and what happens to a person’s mind when the barriers which distinguish between reality and different forms of imagination completely disappear. So you no longer know where you stop and the world starts. So for example, if I was psychotic I would literally not know the difference between myself, this table, and Dan [Rebellato]. Various boundaries begin to collapse. Formally I’m trying to collapse a few boundaries as well, to carry on with making form and content one.[...] And for me there is a very clear line from *Blasted* to *Phaedra’s Love* to *Cleansed to Crave* and this one [4.48 *Psychosis*] is going on though where it goes after that I’m not quite sure.

*Kane, Blasted: The Life and Death of Sarah Kane*

*4.48 Psychosis* is Kane’s last play. In it she further experimented radically with the concept of plot, character and time. The text gives no indications as to any of these elements, no setting, no dramatis personae, no indications of who (if anyone) speaks, and no stage directions beyond the occasionally indicated ‘*silence*’. The text does not look like a play. Reading the words on the pages, readers generally interpret the play as being set in, or a reflection of, the mind of a patient going through a mental breakdown<sup>69</sup>, and the words allow the reader to witness many aspects of this breakdown including how the patient’s illness alters in the face of rehabilitation and medication procedures. The patient steadily worsens and interventions from an implied and equally unidentified psychiatrist or doctor do not help her<sup>70</sup>, as these

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<sup>69</sup> Kane indicated that there is a thematic integrity in her plays in an interview: “I’m writing a play called *4.48 Psychosis* and it’s got similarities with *Crave* but it’s different”(Kane qtd in Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 111).

<sup>70</sup> In the play, there are no clear indications of gender except for certain lines. For a few times the persona is referred as “she”. In one of the psychiatric descriptions it is said that she had an “argument with junior doctor whom *she* accused of treachery after which *she* shaved *her* head and cut *her* arms with a razor blade”( Kane 224). Or when the speaker mourns about her lost lover, she says “when I’m an old *lady* living on the street forgetting my name she’ll still be dead...It’s just fucking over and I

implied characters do not understand, maybe are not even willing to understand, the patient's overt expression of pain. The play therefore is taken to present an ill subject's inner thoughts in lengthy monologues. Some lines are formatted to resemble something similar to dialogues, although speakers are never indicated and these dialogues appear also to be reflected from within the consciousness of the patient. It is generally understood, then, that *4.48 Psychosis* presents a mind questioning its traumatizing past while pondering on a bleak and hopeless present. The text provides no clear indication as to how many characters there are or how or who speaks at any time. Identification is made possible for the audience only through the words, and in the minds of the reader who has to interpret the text in order to construct the idea of separate characters lying behind different parts of the text. In performance, given that the first performance had a cast of three actors (with unspecified roles) one assumes that most of the text is spoken by the voice of the assumed patient, who will therefore be referred to as the patient or the speaker, interchangeably, in the following analysis of the play. Where other voices appear to be introduced, they will be identified with the roles they are apparently given in the patient's reconstructed presentations of dialogues, and they are therefore referred to as the psychiatrist and the doctor, although whether or not these are meant to be separate voices/figures in the patient's mind, and whether they are always the same psychiatrist or doctor or different ones, is not revealed by the text.

In the play there are 24 non-consecutive episodes separated from each other with five dashes, which are accepted as "scenes" to ease analysis in this chapter. There is no plot, no characters, and no stage directions except for dashes that seem to indicate turn-taking in dialogues, and silences; time is circular and dialogue-like passages merge, forming a long monologue. The concepts of time, space and narrative form an intricate relationship with the perceived world in the play, and the erosion of

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have to stand alone" (218; emphases added). Thus when necessary, pronouns "she/her" will be used throughout the chapter. However, it is important to indicate that here is a gender ambiguity in the play for the speaker says "the broken hermaphrodite who trusted herself alone finds the room in reality teeming and begs never to wake from the nightmare" (205).

characterization as a result of trauma is shown also to cause loss in the ideas of time and place. When the speaker is further tormented physically, through medical treatment, not only her physical body but also her “phenomenal body” (Merleau-Ponty *PP* 270)<sup>71</sup> is affected, in a way that relates to Merleau-Ponty’s explanations of how subject and world are interrelated, forming an indivisible unity. This play’s exploration of the erosion of subjectivity through characterization can therefore be studied together with Merleau-Pontian terms and postdramatic theatrical elements.

In this chapter Kane’s techniques will be analyzed by working on textual matter to study how she presents mental breakdown and reflects the experience of desolation in a sophisticated way. The speaker in the play illuminates how mental deterioration is apprehended and to what extent other people are able to comprehend it.

“Synesthesia” and synesthetic experience will be discussed along with the chaotic staging style and concept of time in the play, which are shaped through the impaired perception of the speaker. The figurative language used by the speaker will be analyzed to show how the disruption of “synesthesia” affects one’s natural bond with the world. As explained earlier, according to Merleau-Ponty “synesthesia” is innate, therefore the patient cannot alter the way she perceives her surroundings while experiencing mental breakdown; she lives through the lens of trauma by grasping time as circular and she cannot distinguish between various stimuli around her. The plot organization and use of theatrical signs in the play depend heavily on the experience of loss of synesthesia, which will be analyzed together with Lehmann’s

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<sup>71</sup> “Phenomenal body” can be defined as “the body as lived or as experienced in perception, as opposed to the objective body as an object in the world or as viewed by science.” (Landes 147). The synthesis is not achieved by the “epistemological subject” but through phenomenal body. As stated by Merleau-Ponty, phenomenal body “projects a certain ‘setting’ round itself, in so far as its ‘parts’ are dynamically acquainted with each other, and its receptors are so arranged as to make possible, through their synergy, the perception of the object. What is meant by saying that this intentionality is not a thought is that it does not come into being through the transparency of any consciousness, but takes for granted all the latent knowledge of itself that my body possesses” (*PP* 270). Merleau-Ponty brings an existentialist perspective to Husserl’s idea of intentionality here, and his idea of intentionality cannot be related to transcendental idealism. (see Kenan Gürsoy’s *Merleau-Ponty’de Algı Problemi’ne Giriş* p:14).



concepts of retreat of synthesis, density of signs, and de-hierarchization, as previously defined and explained.

Use of the Merleau-Pontian concepts will show how all the theatrical and stylistic elements are part of a chaotic whole, which is how the troubling experience of mental breakdown is communicated in this play, and the postdramatic techniques employed will be shown to be meaningful under the light of a phenomenological analysis. Thus, this chapter will add to the thesis' claim that use of density of signs, metaphorical language and erosion of plot and character are all functional as they disclose how mental pain and trauma is experienced. They alienate the audience/reader and transfer them into a realm of chaotic associations without aligning them with any ideas, diverting them from seeing the world in a habitual way. The pre-reflective form of perceiving mental illness is staged, embodying all the world within a chaotic expression of a call for witness.

## **2.1 4.48 *Psychosis* and Synesthetic Expressions**

In *4.48 Psychosis* abrupt changes in setting, mingled speeches, long silences and sudden sparks of light are impressionistic elements potentially providing the audience and readers with insights into how pain and sorrow are perceived by a person who experiences a bifurcation of her body and mind. Whereas “synesthesia” presents the world in unity, the play cleverly subverts the elements that organize plot linearity to present what psychosis is. This attempt presents the synesthetic confusion of an unwell mind to the audience. The speeches merge, and the setting is depicted through a long monologue full of synesthetic metaphors that present the thoughts or feelings of the character. To strategy of disturbing the audience through unusual staging and use of speech starts immediately, as *4.48 Psychosis* begins with a long silence and a distant voice asking unanswered

questions. Long silences are found on many occasions<sup>72</sup> in the play, and they seem to indicate that the patient is reluctant to respond. It is also plausible that she is ruminating on a previous conversation with her psychiatrist, or questioning herself. The opening lines read as follows:

(A very long silence.)  
– But you have friends.  
(A long silence.)  
You have a lot of friends.  
What do you offer your friends to make them so supportive?  
(A long silence.)  
What do you offer your friends to make them so supportive?  
(A long silence.)  
What do you offer?  
(Silence.) (Kane 205).

Following this, there is a sudden shift to a passage of unpunctuated and apparently incoherent metaphorical language, which apparently reveals the thoughts of the patient and shows that everything on stage is set within a tormented mind. She says: “a consolidated consciousness resides in a darkened banqueting hall near the ceiling of a mind whose floor shifts as ten thousand cockroaches when a shaft of light enters as all thoughts unite in an instant of accord body no longer expellent as the cockroaches comprise a truth which no one ever utters” (Kane 205). As the play progresses the speaker’s utterances are seen to become more poetic during psychotic relapses, and, perhaps naturally enough, more dialogic when the patient ponders on and recounts her exchanges with other people.

To indicate the experience of psychosis, the world around the speaker is also presented within a turbulence of various sensory stimuli. According to Merleau-Ponty, the world is “there before any possible analysis of mine, and it would be artificial to make it the outcome of a series of syntheses which link, in the first

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<sup>72</sup> There are 45 “long/ very long” silences in the play, which (presumably) replace the doctor or patient’s responses to the questions they address to each other. 32 of them belong to the patient.

place sensations, then aspects of the object corresponding to different perspectives, when both are nothing but products of analysis, with no sort of prior reality” (*PP* x-xi). The psychosis witnessed by the audience apparently disrupts this primordial perception of the world, and the inner feelings of the patient are conveyed through a metaphorical language that produces new expressions connoting her agony. The speaker’s long narrative, apparently used to channel her inner pain, is interwoven with her awareness of a multiplicity of sensory data. To illustrate, by sensing a medical smell together with that of tobacco while drinking her coffee, the speaker remembers a certain moment when all her pain started at the beginning of the play, and then she brings in references to other senses, saying “something touches me in that still place and a wound form (sic) two years ago opens like a cadaver and a long buried shame roars its foul decaying grief” (Kane 209). The speaker seems to be trying to express her traumatic pain and grief with her experience of confusion by juxtaposing far-fetched sensory stimuli such as touch and the odor of decaying matter. Throughout the narrative, synesthetic disclosures of this nature present the world not as a meaningful whole but to convey how one feels when severely depressed. Further describing her grief, she states an awareness of the self against some sort of disunity when she says “I need to become who I already am and will bellow forever at this incongruity which has committed me to hell” (Kane 212). The impossibility of reaching a harmonious integration within the self, which confines her in a psychic hell, is another synesthetic metaphor for her entrapment. Her desolation isolates her while she cannot show improvement and she does not feel that she communicates her thoughts. She says “despair propels me to suicide/ anguish for which doctors find no cure/ Nor care to understand/ I hope you never understand/ Because I like you” (239) at the end of the play, addressing these lines to a third persona other than her doctor presumably<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>73</sup> This lack of communication will be analyzed further in relation to interpersonal relationships in the play, together with the term “embodiment”.

Within such an isolation, the speaker verbalizes her feelings of shame and mental pain also through synesthetic expressions throughout the play. The patient gives her senses of desolation and confinement in the psychiatric clinic through tactile and auditory sensations by saying: “I am *deadlocked* by that *smooth psychiatric voice of reason*” (209), where *deadlocked* refers to a mental state through a metaphor related to being physically trapped, and the psychiatrist’s voice is likewise resembled to the physical, tactile quality of smoothness. However, she cannot experience the wholeness that a healthy person is granted. The long narration continues with more synesthetic expressions : “Watching me, judging me, *smelling* the *crippling* failure *oozing* from my skin, my desperation *clawing* and all-consuming panic *drenching* me as I gape in horror at the world and wonder why everyone is smiling and looking at me with secret knowledge of my aching shame” (209). In this way the play utilizes synesthetic expressions to amalgamate physical pain to mental one. The speaker uses synesthetic expressions like this throughout the play, and as further examples: “discordant anxiety which *roars* in [my] soul”(218), “a *corrosive* doubt” (219) “a *dismal whistle* that is the *cry of heartbreak* around the *hellish bowl* of at the ceiling of [my]mind” (227). The speaker also utilizes synesthetic expressions when she refers to the impact of religion on her “a *scall*<sup>74</sup> on my skin, a *seethe* in my heart a *blanket of roaches* on which we dance this *infernal state of siege*” (228). Similarly, for her, “sanity is found at the centre of *convulsion*, where madness is scorched from the bisected soul” (229; emphases added)

Before her certain death, the patient uses many unaccustomed synesthetic expressions to describe her path leading to suicide, which depicts a feeling of utter rupture and disembodiment. The speaker moans: “like a bird on the wing in a swollen sky my mind is torn by lightning as it flies from the thunder behind” (Kane 239). The language employed becomes even more poetic to draw the

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<sup>74</sup> Scall(n): a former term for any of various diseases of the scalp characterized by itching and scab formation (*Collins Dictionary* “scall”).

audience closer to feeling of despair. Fragmentation of mind and ultimate death is expressed by “stark light”, “still black water...as still as [my]heart” (239), “an ineffectual mortal spasm”, “warm darkness which soaks [my] eyes” (242) and “black snow”(244) which are some to indicate. Among them, consistent reference to “light” or “stark light”<sup>75</sup> referred during the times of psychosis or right before the speaker’s death is found significant by critics. Her words “Hatch opens/ Stark light/and Nothing/see Nothing” (Kane 239) seems to indicate that she cannot describe her experience of her marginal feelings. To convey such an inexpressible ordeal, the speaker might be using “light” as a replacement. The image of light might also be considered as “a pure sensation” which is free from all the other qualities, and has no relationship with any object in the world. According to Merleau-Ponty, a pure sensation is “the experience of an undifferentiated, instantaneous, dotlike impact.[...]This notion corresponds to nothing in our experience [...] The pure impression is, therefore, not only undiscoverable, but also imperceptible and so inconceivable as an instant of perception” (*PP* 3-4). The return to such a state might be another indicator of the speaker’s separation from the world, her utter disembodiment, thus her mind is weakened and her sight narrowed.

The stark light might also be associated with “passive vision” that occurs when no gaze is particularly directed at an object, “as in the case of a dazzling light, which does not unfold an objective space before us, and in which the light ceases to be light and becomes something painful which invades cur eye itself” (*PP* 367).

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<sup>75</sup> Merleau-Ponty provides insight on the nature of hallucinations, which do not have layers but are impermanent phenomena such as “ pricking sensations, jolts, explosions, draughts, waves of cold or heat, sparks, points of bright light, glowing lights or silhouetted shapes”( *PP* 397; emphases added). Therefore, at times of psychosis, the speaker might be hallucinating. Merleau-Ponty asserts that the real objects around the hallucinating patient are not in causal links but “Their sole mutual relationship is one of co-existence [...] which always has a significance for the patient, since awareness of contingency presupposes definite and distinct causal sequences, and since we are here among old remnants of a world in ruins” (397-398). The description here meets with Sarah Kane’s theatrical methods to evoke psychosis by shattering the plot structure. By arranging the plot around the speaker, Kane depicts psychosis at the moment it occurs for the patient. The connection between numerous narratives and events are generated accordingly, reflecting content with the form.

Thus, the patient can neither relate herself with the world nor comprehend the objects around her in relation to each other as a result of psychosis.

Correspondingly for Merleau-Ponty, “an isolated datum of perception is inconceivable, at least if we do the mental experiment of attempting to perceive such a thing” (PP 30-31)<sup>76</sup>. Hence, her perception of psychosis and suicide causes “a pure sensation”(PP 3-4) or “a passive touch/feeling” (PP 367) that cannot be pictured with any phenomena or sense data collected from the outer world, presenting utter disembodiment.

Due to psychosis, the speaker forms new relationships between disparate concepts to show her experience of discordance- an outcome of disruption in synesthetic apprehension- and she juxtaposes far-fetched elements as a means to express her mental pain. Painful impressions of the patient are given mostly through synesthetic utterances, as she merges all her painful thoughts and perceptions to indicate the state of confusion and chaos in psychosis. The play being formed around her narrative, this means that the patient’s “synesthesia” also affects the theatrical elements employed, which will be discussed below in the postdramatic terms selected for this thesis.

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<sup>76</sup> Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty have contrasting views with Husserl on the thought experiment he mentioned in section 49 in his first book *Ideas*. It acknowledged “the possibility of a consciousness for which no actual world appears—that is, for which the world is annihilated (*vernichtet*)” and which Husserl “imagined case in which we are confronted with an unorganized chaos of appearances” (see Jacobs’s chapter “Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty on the World of Experience” in *Oxford Handbook of Phenomenology* pp:650-675). As stated by Jacobs, such an experiment “seems to describe a case of mental disintegration or death” (650-75). For Merleau-Ponty, the subject can only be understood by “being-in-the-world”, whereby an experience of self and the world is disclosed simultaneously and in reciprocal relationship. He believes that “normal” experience is the ground by which all those extreme cases can be explained: “Leaving aside those morbid, dream-like or delirious states which endeavour to build a private domain out of fragments of the macrocosm, we can say that the most advanced states of melancholia, in which the patient settles in the realm of death and, so to speak, takes up his abode there, still make use of the structures of being in the world, and borrow from it an element of being indispensable to its own denial. This link between subjectivity and objectivity, which already exists in mythical or childlike consciousness, and which still survives in sleep or insanity, is to be found, a fortiori, in normal experience” (PP 342). It might be claimed that Kane’s theatre might not resemble what Merleau-Ponty explains. Still, Kane seems to do a similar thought experiment through staging psychosis as an isolated datum, which results in erosion of subjectivity.

## 2.2 Being-in-the World and 4.48 Psychosis

Kane mapped the darkest and most unforgiving internal landscapes: landscapes of violation, of loneliness, of power, of mental collapse and most consistently, the landscape of love.

David Grieg “Introduction” (ix)

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty defines “being-in-the-world” through our relationship with the world, and how our reflexes and senses function together. He regards the body not as a “a collection of adjacent organs, but a synergic system, all the functions of which are exercised and linked together in the general action of being in the world, in so far as it is the congealed face of existence” (PP 271-272). In *4.48 Psychosis*, this synergy is lost to the speaker, who cannot relate with her body because of her mental state. By presenting mental illness<sup>77</sup> as it is experienced through revealing the “being-in-the-world” of a patient, Kane’s theatre attempts to present how trauma is apprehended from two different views, by the patient and by the psychiatrists. The patient is isolated in her thoughts and cannot relate to her own body while she undergoes fragmentation. These seemingly disparate entities are also the categorical constructs of the “objective thought”<sup>78</sup>, and this separation is what causes problems in the patient’s treatment process. The psychologists in the play approach the patient according to “objective thought” (PP 77-83) which is

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<sup>77</sup> In the play, “psychosis” is never used as a word. The patient has “nervous breakdown(s)” and “madness” is used 3 times. The speaker says “I beg you to save me from this madness that eats me a sub-intentional death” (226), “Nothing to say/and this is the rhythm of madness” (227), “Sanity is found in the convulsion, where madness is scorched from the bisected soul” (233). She also mentions “congenital anguish” (209), “depression (207 and 212) and “pathological grief” (223).

<sup>78</sup> Merleau-Ponty defines it in his chapter “Experience and Objective Thought” to underline dissecting and categorizing thought which damages unity. For Merleau-Ponty, the subject detaches from his/her experience and “pass to the *idea*”(82; emphasis in original). In Merleau-Ponty’s words: “I now refer to my body only as an idea, to the universe as idea, to the idea of space and the idea of time [...]which finally causes us to lose contact with perceptual experience” (PP 82). As also mentioned in the introduction, Merleau-Ponty wanted to go beyond “narrow empiricist, psychological assumptions about human existence, broadening the scope of philosophy to be about everything, to capture life as it is lived” (Moran 5).

inadequate to study mental phenomena, as they do not care about the patient's experience of pathological grief that reorients her in a new way. To bind the two realms of perception, one belonging to the patient and other to the psychiatrist, Kane's theatre juxtaposes subjective experience of the speaker and "objective" approach of the doctor. The world of the patient cannot be understood and healed by objective thought or by the speaker's attempt to establish a relationship with her doctors, as the play reveals. The play presents a multiplicity of theatrical signs that impacts on plot linearity, causal relationships, characterization to present how dissociation affects the patient's perception.

In *4.48 Psychosis*, the language used by the speaker and her doctor indicate the difference between their approaches. The speaker tries to convey the experience of psychosis, whereas the psychiatrist reduces the illness to diagnostic criteria. Whereas the speaker's narrative is highly metaphorical, the discourse of her doctors reflects objective thought<sup>79</sup>. To indicate such disparity and explicitly implying her doctor(s), the speaker refers to a "psychiatric voice of reason" which tells her that "there is an objective reality" in which her "body and mind are one" (Kane 209). In many parts of the play the reductive approach of her doctors troubles her<sup>80</sup>. She feels abased, saying that she is mentally "not here and ha[s] never been"(209). To stress the indifference and uniformity of attitude of her doctors she continues: "Dr This writes it [her answers] down and Dr That attempts a sympathetic murmur [...] as I gape in horror at the world and wonder why

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<sup>79</sup> Please see Anna Ovaska's work on "Sarah Kane's World of Depression" which gives insight on how phenomenology together with psychology is helpful in analyzing *4.48 Psychosis*. Ovaska seems to borrow terms from Thomas Fuchs who merges Merleau-Pontian ideas with the practice of psychology. Some of Fuchs' notable articles possibly useful in analyzing Kane are "Depression, Intercorporeality and Interaffectivity", "A Phenomenological View of the Body in Melancholia and Schizophrenia" and "Psychopathology of Depression and Mania: Symptoms, Phenomena and Syndromes".

<sup>80</sup> The speaker says that the only person who looked her in the eye voluntarily is her previous lover in scene 5 (Kane 209). In scene 10, after rejecting several times, the speaker involuntarily consents when the psychiatrist wants to have a look at her arm to see if the cut she made is infected. When the doctor sees it, the patient is only asked "And you don't think you're ill?" (216). The speaker refuses to be looked at four times later on (see scenes 16, 18 and 24).



everyone is smiling and looking at me with secret knowledge of my aching shame” (209). As the patient cannot relate to her surroundings, she feels horrified and she cannot relate with the perspective of her doctors. She just experiences dissociation, and perceives her body and mind as two disparate entities, which cannot be explained by the “objective” approach of her doctors. As explained by Merleau-Ponty, “before being an objective fact, the union of soul and body had to be [...] a possibility of consciousness itself and the question arose as to what the perceiving subject is if he is to be able to experience a body as his own” (*PP* 110). This union between body and mind is incomprehensible for the speaker, as it is a primordial phenomenon and she cannot experience it.

Throughout the play, the patient’s pathological mindset and her personality are analyzed according to a causal pattern that the treatment process provides, which again reveals the reductive approach of the mental institution. The play stresses the inadequacy of this approach through showing conflict between the patient and the doctor, and the content of their narratives. For instance in scene 6, after the speaker says she “feels like eighty years old” the doctor replies “That's a metaphor, not reality” (211). To affirm the reality of her feelings, the speaker replies “It's not a metaphor, it's a simile, but even if it were, the defining feature of a metaphor is that it's real.”(211). Evidently, the speaker wants her synesthetic expressions to be taken as valid and appropriate, which also emphasizes how her approach differs from that of her psychiatrist, who only considers her metaphorical associations as false beliefs and does not pay attention to their implications for her illness. This brings the patient’s approach in line with Merleau-Ponty’s criticism of attitudes stemming from objective thought, claiming that an objective stance spurns “the alleged phenomena of dreams, myths and of existence generally, because it finds that it cannot think clearly about them, and that they mean nothing that can be thematized. It rejects the fact or the real in the name of the possible and the self-evident” (*PP* 337). For Merleau-Ponty, one should not “level all the

experiences down to a single world, all modalities of existence down to a single consciousness” (*PP* 338), which is done by the psychiatrist(s) in the play.

To further stress the contrast between the objective reality that is the only reality acknowledged by the doctors in the play, and the experience of psychosis endured by the speaker, a scene consisting solely of a psychiatrist’s medical report is given. Rather than the synesthetic expressions of the speaker, the reader encounters a verbally and grammatically stripped clinical narrative describing the speaker’s body; through removal of all grammatical subjects, the patient is both grammatically and referentially represented as completely deprived of agency in scene 14:

Symptoms: Not eating, not sleeping, not speaking, no sex drive, in despair, wants to die.

Diagnosis: Pathological grief. Sertraline, 50mg. Insomnia worsened, severe anxiety, anorexia, (weight loss 17kgs,) increase in suicidal thoughts, plans and intention. Discontinued following hospitalisation. (Kane 223).

Whereas the patient’s condition is shown to be deteriorating severely, the medical report only lists the symptoms and prescribed medication, without considering causes or wider effects of the symptoms and medication, and without considering any alternative courses of treatment. Despite intense medication and hospitalization, the speaker continues to deteriorate, and begins to have paranoia and delusional ideas. To regain her voice, the speaker presents a subversive medical narrative of her own, even ridiculing her suicide attempt, as she reports “Refused all further treatment. 100 aspirin and one bottle of Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon, 1986. Patient woke up in a pool of vomit and said 'Sleep with a dog and rise full of fleas.' Severe stomach pain. No other reaction” (225).

The medical treatment further causes serious drawbacks on the speaker’s health, while the traumatic nature of the experience and the speaker’s recurring thoughts

are reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty's claims related to phantom limb phenomena and repression. For Merleau-Ponty, the phantom limb continues to exist within the amputee subject's practical field because "what it is in us which refuses mutilation and disablement is an I committed to a certain physical and inter-human world, who continues to tend towards his world despite handicaps and amputations and who, to this extent, does not recognize them de jure"(PP 94) For Merleau-Ponty, then, the phantom limb phenomenon is neither an entirely physical nor an entirely psychological phenomenon but can only be understood through the state of "being-in-the-world" of the patient; a patient with the phantom limb phenomenon is similar to a person repressing trauma, as both will continue to experience their past as if it is continuously played out in their present. For them, time neither exterminates past hopes and projects, or does it alleviate traumatic pain because "the impersonal time flows but personal time is arrested" (PP 96), so the traumatic experience continues to torment the grieving patient. Thereupon, the experience of pain is draining and becomes more abstract:

I forgo my constant power of providing myself with 'worlds' in the interest of one of them, and for that very reason this privileged world loses its substance and eventually becomes no more than a certain dread. All repression is, then, the transition from first person existence to a sort of abstraction of that existence, which lives on a former experience, or rather on the memory of having had the memory, and so on, until finally only the essential form remains. Now as an advent of the impersonal, repression is a universal phenomenon, revealing our condition as incarnate beings by relating it to the temporal structure of being in the world (PP 96).

In 4.48 *Psychosis*, traumatic repression is shown to cause a shift in time and place.

As she is mostly incapable of admitting her past traumas<sup>81</sup>, the speaker

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<sup>81</sup> On the matter, Alicia Tycer refers to *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub as they assert that traumatic experience is grounded on refusal to "linear narrative" and the trauma is "an event that has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during and no after ... an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present." (qtd in Tycer 27). This lack of organization alienates the audience, generating a vantage point for them to understand the speaker.

occasionally remembers them and feels outraged. She is dissatisfied with her life, family and a past relationship;<sup>82</sup> she seems to have problems in overcoming the emotional frustration caused by her last love affair. The play reveals this in the following apostrophizing, ruminating monologue. The silences indicate unanswered questions that trouble the speaker in scene 9:

Sometimes I turn around and catch the smell of you and I cannot go on. [...] And I cannot believe that I can feel this for you and you feel nothing. Do you feel nothing?

*(Silence)*

[...]

You know, I really feel like I'm being manipulated.

*(Silence.)* (Kane 214-215).<sup>83</sup>

In the play, the patient's partial self-awareness due to psychotic depression is given through the disarranged narrative(s), and her confusion due to her own pattern of synesthetic apprehension is reflected on stage. The plot heavily depends on the speaker and her decontextualized flashbacks convey the idea of dissociation. As it can be traced in the fragment below, traumatic moments from the speaker's past occupy and claim her present, while she loses not only her ability to form a unified sense of time but of place as well. Her speech is at times mingled with that of the psychiatrist, whose repetitive question "What do you offer your friends to make them so supportive?" (236-237) is presented also in the beginning, as the very first lines of the play (205). Since the play is set in the

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<sup>82</sup> She curses her lover, father and mother in scene 9: "Fuck you. Fuck you for rejecting me by never being there, fuck you for making me feel shit about myself, fuck you for bleeding the fucking love and life out of me, fuck my father for fucking up my life for good and fuck my mother for not leaving him" (Kane 215).

<sup>83</sup> In line with that, for Merleau-Ponty, how the subject perceives the world shapes the intersubjective relationships: "when I say that I know and like someone, I aim, beyond his qualities, at an inexhaustible ground which may one day shatter the image that I have formed of him. This is the price for there being things and 'other people' for us, not as the result of some illusion, but as the result of a violent act which is perception itself" (*PP* 421). Thus, the speaker's ruminations and disappointment are correlated to her recurrent psychotic episodes, the speaker's illness should be understood as an existential phenomena which cannot be thought separately from the subject's "being-in-the-world".

mindscape of a psychotic patient, this repetition in the fragment below might indicate that her exchanges with the psychiatrist causes distress and she ruminates on them. Moreover, at the end of the fragment, there might be a third voice speaking which belongs to the speaker's ex-lover . If the last lines of the fragment belong to the doctor, it implies that the patient has feelings for her psychiatrist. However, it is unlikely that there are only two voices speaking, for the speaker's attempt of friendship seems to be rejected for two times, by two different personas in scene 23<sup>84</sup>:

– You've seen the worst of me.  
– Yes.  
– I know nothing of you  
– No.  
– But I like you.  
– I like you  
(Silence)  
– You are my last hope  
(A long silence).  
– *You don't need a friend you need a doctor.*  
( A long silence).  
– You are so wrong.  
(A very long silence.)  
– But you have friends.  
(A long silence.)  
You have a lot of friends. What do you offer your friends to make them so supportive?  
What do you offer?  
(Silence.)

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<sup>84</sup> Although there are no indicators on the identity of the speaker(s), I assumed a third voice. If the play solely relies on the dialogue(s) shared with a psychiatrist, the doctor is highly unprofessional. Glenn D' Cruz in her *Sarah Kane's 4.48 Psychosis* identified two voices, indicating the latter. He says "The only glimmer of positivity in all this [psychiatric establishment] takes the form of an empathetic doctor who treats the 'I' as a singular human being [...] The play suggests that 'I' has perhaps fallen in love with this distinctive figure" (23-25) D'Cruz proposes it for the speaker says "I trusted you, I loved you, and it's not losing you that hurts me, but your bare-faced fucking falsehoods that masquerade as medical notes" (Kane 209-210). Yet, the end of the fragment I quoted above indicates that it is unlikely. There seems to be different voices speaking, bringing disparate memories of the patient together. Therefore there might be a third voice in the play, which haunts the patient.

*We have a professional relationship. I think we have a good relationship. But it's professional.*

(Silence.)

I feel your pain but I cannot hold your life in my hands.

(Silence.)

You'll be all right. You're strong. I know you'll be okay because I like you and you can't like someone who doesn't like themselves. The people I fear for are the ones I don't like because they hate themselves so much they won't let anyone else like them either. But I do like you. I'll miss you. And I know you'll be ok.

(Silence.) (Kane 236-237; emphases added ).

As the context is totally lost and the patient is probably musing on her past, the “deictic” relationship is also lost. In the beginning of the fragment above, there are dashes before the lines, for Kane seems to utilize punctuation marks as stage directions. These cannot be found in the second half of the dialogue, which presents a traumatized mind merging disparate incidents together. As a result of repetitive thoughts of the patient, perception of time and space on stage is severely affected while the reader has to juxtapose speeches and events in her mind. These decontextualized speeches are assembled around the motif of loneliness, which is one of the causes of the patient’s pathological grief. The natural wholeness with which the world presents itself to a subject’s perception according to Merleau-Ponty is radically absent in the speaker’s mind, as far as her speech indicates, for she cannot relate even to her own body because the primordial synesthetic experience is changed. Her depersonalization compels her to find the world incomprehensible, and her “being-in-the-world”, how she relates to her surroundings, is drastically influenced by her distorted perception. She gives a long list of her inner feelings to communicate this situation in scene 3:

I am sad

[...]

I am bored and dissatisfied with everything

I am a complete failure as a person

I am guilty, I am being punished

I would like to kill myself

[...]  
I have lost interest in other people  
I can't eat  
I can't sleep  
I can't think  
I cannot overcome my loneliness, my fear, my disgust (Kane 207)<sup>85</sup>.

Her expressions regarding what she cannot do show her incompetency to live. For Merleau-Ponty, my presence in the world is not described through “I think”, but as an “I can”<sup>86</sup> (*PP* 159), which is a pre-predicative phenomenon. My body reacts to the world and the world of objects as “I experience the other not through analogy, but through encroachment; I speak in order to accomplish my thought- such disruptions in classical categories require a new philosophy of ‘my involvement in a pre-constituted world’ thus a philosophy of an embodied, lived and situated Cogito” (Landes 140-141). However, I never perceive myself perceiving or my body perceiving- the subject perceives the world without sensing itself (204). Therefore, a phenomenological explanation renders the speaker’s feeling of disembodiment and fragmentation clearly, especially when she is concerned about the experienced duality between body and mind in many parts of the play<sup>87</sup>. She

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<sup>85</sup> Kane adapts possible answers from Beck Depression Inventory used in measuring the severity of depression. She plays with psychological discourse and presents the speech in the form of a medical recount. (Marsh 197). Marsh draws attention to Kane’s use of a book named *The Suicidal Mind* (1996) by American suicidologist Edwin Shneidman’s (199). Marsh finds those helpful as they provide terminology which enables the patient to understand the world, while they can be also problematic (199). In his chapter “The suicidal subject: Sarah Kane and 4.48 Psychosis” he analyzes the play according to Foucauldian ideas to show the power relationship between the doctor and the speaker.

<sup>86</sup> Merleau-Ponty claims “I have only to see something to know how to reach it and deal with it, even if I do not know how this happens in the nervous system. My moving body makes a difference in the visible world, being a part of it; that is why I can steer it through the visible. (“Eye and Mind” 2) The perceived world is organized through what a subject can do, their everyday motor actions [motricity], like driving or writing. The body acts accordingly for each activity without considering the action itself, the subject has no problems in appropriating themselves with the world around. Though at this stage the patient does not endure a massive problem, in the continuation of the play, she says “I am seeing things/ I am hearing things/ I don’t know who I am” (Kane 225).

<sup>87</sup> Garner mentions studies by “recent phenomenologists of body” like Herbert Plügge, who asserts that “in illness and other forms of bodily duress, the “thing body” (*Körper*) intrudes within the experience of live bodiliness as a quasi-alien facticity -a husk, burden, or weight that no longer

declares “body and soul can never be married”(212), questioning whether she “was born in the wrong body”(215)<sup>88</sup>. Her alienation from her body worsens later in the play as she regards herself as “a fragmented puppet,” and “a grotesque fool”(231). Furthermore, during one of her moments of psychosis, she regards herself and her body as two different entities, saying “here I am and here is my body” - after a gap, she continues- “dancing on glass” (231)<sup>89</sup>. Towards the end of play in scene 24, she says her body “decompensates” and “flies apart” (238), so there is, she feels, nothing left of it. The speaker’s descriptions of her condition throughout the play correspond closely to the descriptions provided by a schizophrenic patient and reported by Merleau-Ponty:

Once I was a man, with a soul and a living body and now I am no more than a being . . . . Now there remains merely the organism and the soul is dead. . . . I hear and see, but no longer know anything, and

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“belongs” to the experiencing subject. Although this emergence of a corporeality no longer felt as one’s own becomes acute in pathological situations” which is related to “subjectivity itself” (Plügge qtd in Garner 452).

<sup>88</sup> Merve Kansız analyzes sexual self-perception in *4.48 Psychosis* through Merleau-Ponty and Cixous. She thinks that the ambiguity of the body (as the subject/perceiver and the object/being perceived ) creates “a conflict between the way a character perceives his/her own body and how s/he is perceived by the other figures in the play (278).

<sup>89</sup> Her description is also reminiscent of “heautoscopy”, which is “ a multimodal illusory reduplication of one's own body and self” (Brugger 666).It is a psychological phenomenon in which the subject hallucinates and perceives themselves from a distance. It can also occur in “healthy population, especially in the framework of a preoccupation with one’s self and its place in the world or as a pathological grief reaction” (666), which can be linked to the speaker’s self-perception in the play. I believe Sarah Kane might also be referring to this psychological phenomena when she depicts twin siblings Graham and Grace [*Cleansed*] as doppelgängers in their incest relationship. Though Graham is dead, Grace hallucinates and sees his body occasionally, and eventually becomes him. Brugger defines it by saying “a person is confronted with his or her double, or doppelgänger, which may or may not mirror the person’s appearance. Regardless of its visual features, the hallucinatory figure is felt to be a double of one’s self” (666). These mirror images sometimes form pairs and Kane utilizes these couples just like Beckett and Pinter do, to form mutually interdependent relationships (ie between the doctor and the speaker, Graham and Grace, Carl and Rod, Ian and Cate). Even in *Crave*, where no character can be distinguished from the other figures on stage clearly, the four characters A,B,C and M can still be related through the tormenting bond between them (Saunders “Beckettian World of Sarah Kane” 3-4). Being doppelgängers, the pairs might be functioning like mirror image(s) of the same persona. It might be said that the characters in Kane’s plays are interrelated, as Sarah Kane herself also said “I needed to find out if I could write a full length play with more than one person in it” (qtd in Saunders “The Beckettian World of Sarah Kane” 9) in an interview with Aleks Sierz.



living is now a problem for me. . . . I now live on in eternity. . . . Thinking has changed, and there is no longer any style. . . . What is the future? It can no longer be reached. . . . Everything is in suspense. . . . Everything is monotonous, morning, noon, evening, past, present and future. Everything is constantly beginning all over again (*PP* 330).

Though the speaker of *4.48 Psychosis* does not have schizophrenia, towards the end of the play she starts to hallucinate. The decline in her mental condition is strongly related to the medication process, which seriously harms her body too. Merleau-Ponty believes that the idea of space and time are constituted according to the body (*PP* 235), so for him, space is constituted by the embodied subject, perceiving the world successively from various angles. From this understanding of space we can understand why and how it is that when the speaker cannot relate to her own body<sup>90</sup> she becomes disoriented, for her body ceases to be “a knowing body”, resulting in a “collapse of time”, which “no longer rises towards a future but falls back on itself” (*PP* 329).

Once the speaker loses Merleau-Pontian integration with her body the play’s loose structure diminishes further. Words are scattered on the page in scene 15,<sup>91</sup> and there are repetitions which also have an impact on stage:

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<sup>90</sup> 4.48 is the time she is having psychosis. The integrity between her body and soul diminishes, which results in a change in the plot structure. I believe the time she is having psychosis and disembodiment is also important. Merleau-Ponty asserts that having no outlines, “night is not an object before me; it enwraps me and infiltrates through all my senses, stifling my recollections and almost destroying my personal identity [...] All space for the reflecting mind is sustained by thinking which relates its parts to each other, but in this case the thinking starts from nowhere” (*PP* 330). He believes that neuropathic patients have more trouble at night, for night “brings home to us our contingency, the uncaused and tireless impulse which drives us to seek an anchorage and to surmount ourselves in things, without any guarantee that we shall always find them” (331). Hence, the sleepless nights the patient spends pondering and her feeling of disembodiment might be closely related, which is staged through decontextualized and interlaced narratives.

<sup>91</sup> The structure of the play changes as the patient’s mental health is severely deteriorated.

How do I stop?	
How do I stop?	
How do I stop?	
How do I stop?	
How do I stop?	
How do I stop?	A tab of pain
How do I stop?	Stabbing my lungs
How do I stop?	A tab of death
How do I stop?	Squeezing my heart

I'll die  
                   not yet  
                           but it's here

Please...  
 Money...  
 Wife...

Figure 1.1 from *Complete Plays* (Kane 2006)

Thus, the patient's faulty hold on bodily synthesis, which normally helps one to comprehend the world in immanence, is "directly translated into the external world" (*PP* 238). Her depersonalization is significant here too, for the subject's distortion in the understanding of body schema shapes not only the speaker's self-perception but also constitutes the world around her. In other words, "external perception and the perception of one's own body [...] are the two facets of one and the same act" (*PP* 237) in the play, which communicates the feeling of psychosis through the postdramatic theatrical elements to be discussed later.

Without pathological phenomena, the experience of the world and self-perception are, according to Merleau-Ponty, simultaneous and unified. Therefore, to convey the self-perception of a speaker whose psychosis has led to a breakdown of this unity within a single mind, *4.48 Psychosis* expresses the disunity not just through words, but through its complicated structure. In this, it is constructed in a way that echoes the advice of Edward Bond, who drew attention to the importance of directors paying attention to "the structure" of his play, because it "has to become

a window through which you see the play” (qtd in Saunders *Love Me or Kill Me*, 112). Through the structure of Kane’s play, the “being-in-the-world” of a patient going through psychosis and her own synesthetic understanding is shown to complicate the grasp of setting not only for the character on stage, but for the audience as well since it is used as a theatrical technique.

Close to the end of the play, the speaker says “it is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the underside of my mind” (Kane 245)<sup>92</sup> which is related to the pursuit of selfhood (Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 113). The speaker is in pain because she does not know herself, is not able to “touch her essential self” (Kane 229) and because of the overall ambiguity she experiences regarding her “being-in-the-world”<sup>93</sup>. Here again, the play is in line with Merleau-Ponty’s assertion that one can never fully comprehend one’s identity, for it is never a completed given. It is created and sustained moment by moment in our relationship with the world:

the experience of absurdity and that of absolute self-evidence are mutually implicative, and even indistinguishable. The world appears absurd, only if a demand for absolute consciousness ceaselessly dissociates from each other the meanings with which it swarms, and conversely this demand is motivated by the conflict between those meanings. Absolute self-evidence and the absurd are equivalent, not merely as philosophical affirmations, but also as experiences.  
(*PP* 345)

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<sup>92</sup> In the working notes (June, 1960) added to his last work *The Visible and The Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty renders the relationship between the body and mind according to chiasm: Define the mind as the other side of the body [...] The “other side” means that the body, inasmuch as it has this other side, is not describable in *objective* terms, in terms of the in itself— that this other side is really the other side *of the body*, *overflows* into it (Ueberschreiten), encroaches upon it, is hidden in it— and at the same time needs it, terminates in it, is *anchored* in it. There is a body of the mind, and a mind of the body and a chiasm between them (259; emphases in original). When the speaker says that she could not meet herself, she indicates not being able to form an integrity between body and mind, which seem to be of two different essences while always being co-existent.

<sup>93</sup> Please see Drew Leder “The Absent Body” . Normally, one is unaware of their body when it functions in harmony. However with pain “we are ceaselessly reminded of the here-and-now body [...] I no longer simply “am” my body [...] Now, I have a body, a perceived object in the world” (77).

Hence, the world and self can only be experienced and known within the intricate bond they share,<sup>94</sup> and Kane, in an interview, also related sanity to being attached “physically with who you are emotionally, spiritually and mentally (qtd in Saunders 113). Her plays often explore what happens when the connections between these entities are lost, with characters such as the Soldier (*Blasted*), Hippolytus and Phaedra (*Phaedra’s Love*), and the voices in *Crave* attaining a connection between body and mind only when approaching death (Saunders 113). As their bond with the world is severed while living, these characters can only perceive themselves in a fragmented way, and they reach an understanding of completeness only when their lives are at an end.

### 2.3 Intersubjectivity and (Dis)embodiment in 4.48 *Psychosis*

Are you not mov’d when all the sway of earth  
Shakes like a thing unfirm?

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* 1,3.

As discussed in the previous section, to disclose our situation as embodied subjects, Merleau-Ponty mentions how the subject perceives the world according to the way it is situated in it. The world and the subject have a reciprocal relationship, and thus neither the world nor the subject can be considered without such a close bond. When other subjects are considered, our body is both seeing and seen, we are touching and

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<sup>94</sup> Stanton B. Garner evaluates Beckett’s characters in the light of this ambiguity. According to him, late drama of Beckett “explores the instability between a profound material inherence in the physical body and a corresponding alienation, and it dramatizes the subject’s futile pursuit of any means for overcoming its own non-coincidence. The diminished figures of late Beckett (like Mouth), seemingly abstracted from the conditions of materiality and embodiment, continue to play out this fearful ambiguity of corporeal self-presence, the urgent flight from a subjectivity that represents the impossibility of its own” (451). Sarah Kane herself mentioned Beckett’s impact on her: “I think my influences are quite obvious. Yes, Beckett, of course but not particularly consciously, because I’m practically unconscious when I write...But I was steeped in Beckett so it’s not surprising that *Blasted* ends with an image of a man with his head poking out of the floor with the rain pouring through the ceiling onto his head” (qtd in Saunders “The Beckettian World” 1)

being touched, sentient and sensed by other subjects, so Merleau-Ponty to some extent dissolves the conceptual duality between subject and the object.<sup>95</sup> He stresses this reciprocity by saying “ The perceived world is not only my world, but the one in which I see the behaviour of other people take shape, for their behaviour equally aims at this world, which is the correlative not only of my consciousness, but of any consciousness *which I can possibly encounter*” (394; emphasis in original).

In *4.48 Psychosis*, this alliance with the intersubjective world is disrupted and the patient is isolated in her thoughts in a solipsistic way. The patient interacts only with her doctors and from time to time she recalls her past memories about her previous lover. When the interwoven relationship between the subject and the world is considered, the lack of an intimate bond results in disorientation. As already suggested, erosion of embodied subjectivity might be the cause of the problematic

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<sup>95</sup>*Visible and Invisible* is the last and unfinished work of Merleau-Ponty. In the working notes that he wrote in November 1960, a few months before his death, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the necessity of transforming the question of “The Other”. He says that one needs to start from “the visible and the vision, the sensible and sensing” which results in a totally new understanding of subjectivity. For him, the other is no longer related to freedom seen *from without* as destiny and fatality [...], a rival subject for a subject, but he is caught up in a circuit that connects him to the world, as we ourselves are, and consequently also in a circuit that connects him to us—And this world is *common* to us, is mundane space” (*Visible and Invisible*, 269). He also adds that all concepts of psychology including “perception, idea, affection, Eros, desire, love, pleasure are made clear when they are seen as “*differentiations* of [...] flesh [...] for there is no hierarchy of orders or layers or planes[...]. There is dimensionality of every fact and facticity of every dimension” (270). Thus revealing the world as an intersubjective and intracorporal locus, his later writings are illuminating on how embodiment should be understood. During his late period, Merleau-Ponty is concerned about overcoming dualities between subject and object, and discusses it in *Visible and Invisible* through the term “chiasm”(please also see page 36-37). Again in his working notes (November 1, 1959) chiasm is given as “not only a me-other rivalry, but a co-functioning. We function as one unique body [...] It is also an exchange between me and the world, between phenomenal body and the ‘objective body’ between perceiving and perceived” (*Visible and Invisible* 215). When one touches to his/her own hand, the reversibility of that act-being touched and touching- creates a chiasmic and paradoxical relationship. I can never catch myself both as the subject and object at that moment as their attention shifts from one role to another. (I feel my touching hand as a sentient subject, while my other hand takes the role of the object. Therefore, I am never aware of the reversible role that I hold in the world as both subject and object.) Merleau-Ponty uses this as a metaphor to show our relationship with the Other and how every element on earth is knitted. It might also be said that Kane creates “chiasm” on stage among her characters. When harmed, the character(s) on stage damage their environment and the whole structure of the play is affected. In *4.48 Psychosis*, the psychiatrist(s) inflict pain on their patient, yet in return the reader learns that s/he is not totally aware of the consequences of their actions. When Cate is raped by Ian (*Blasted*), the mortar bomb explodes and the Soldier takes over the scene demolishing the realistic setting. A similar pattern can be observed in all plays of Kane because of interdependence of the pairs.

relationship between the speaker and the world around in the play. Though she is willing to have a meaningful bond, the speaker cannot make any progress not just because of her dissociation from her body and the outside world, but because the world around her is ignorant of her pain. The patient says “I’m dying for one who doesn’t care/I’m dying for one who doesn’t know/ you’re breaking me” (243), and she continues to suffer in this way up to the end of the play at which point she kills herself.

In the play, the psychiatrist/doctor’s voice rarely addresses the demands of the patient, but dominates the reported/remembered dialogue during their exchanges, leading the speaker to express her wish to be listened to and understood rather than “being straightened out” (220). When she does not want her doctor to mention that she is hated –“at least not verbally”-what follows is silence (220). As the patient is already disoriented, and, being incarcerated in an institution and apparently having no contact with the outside world, the psychiatrist’s actions have a heightened impact upon her; the play shows that the psychiatrist’s attitude harms the speaker and her perception of the world deeply. Rather than responding to the speaker’s demand for sympathy, the psychiatrist’s speech shows no understanding of the patient’s needs, and is excessively unsympathetic throughout the play, blaming the speaker for her current despair. As the doctor continuously uses them, in return, the patient is upset by the fact of being repeatedly exposed to similar negative phrases. Having heard that “it is *not* her fault” many times over, she says she begins to think it actually “*is*” her fault (220; emphases in original). Along with these textual emphases and verbal cues indicating the doctor’s adverse influence on the patient, she is openly accused of “allowing” her illness three times in the same scene:

- Please. Don't switch off my mind by attempting to straighten me out. Listen and understand, and when you feel contempt don't express it, at least not verbally, at least not to me.  
(Silence.)
- I don't feel contempt.
- No?

– No. It's not your fault.  
 – It's not your fault, that's all I ever hear, it's not your fault, it's an illness, it's not your fault, I know it's not my fault. You've told me that so often I'm beginning to think it *is* my fault.  
 – It's *not* your fault.  
 – I KNOW.  
 – But you allow it.  
 (Silence.)  
 Don't you?  
 – There's not a drug on earth can make life meaningful.  
 – You allow this state of desperate absurdity.  
 (Silence.)  
 You allow it.  
 (Silence.)  
 – I won't be able to think. I won't be able to work.  
 – Nothing will interfere with your work like suicide.  
 (Silence.)  
 – I dreamt I went to the doctor's and she gave me eight minutes to live. I'd been sitting in the fucking waiting room half an hour.  
 (A long silence.)  
 Okay, let's do it, let's do the drugs, let's do the chemical lobotomy, let's shut down the higher functions of my brain and perhaps I'll be a bit more fucking capable of living. (Kane 220-221; emphases in original)

The unexplained nature of the discourse in the text, means that the reader cannot tell whether the words are reports of words actually spoken in the implied story, or whether they are entirely made up by the speaking and reporting voice. Repetitions may not relate to any actual dialogue, and may instead show the preoccupation of the speaker, returning to words that were spoken only once, for her mind is “the subject of these bewildered fragments”(210) throughout the play, and we only know her mind through her narrative.

The relationship between the subject and the world around her is further problematized when the doctor seems to lose himself/herself while talking to the patient. When the doctor says that “most of his clients want to kill him” and s/he needs his/her “friends to be sane” (237), the reader understands that the doctor is aware of their lack of connection with the patient. This admission comes from the doctor in response to the patient’s second attempt at friendship in scene 23, when the

speaker wants to know more about his/her doctor but is reminded that they have “a professional relationship”<sup>96</sup>. The doctor apologizes for his crude response that he needs “sane people” around, which reduces him/her to somebody who lacks empathy. After this exchange, the patient uses the doctor’s phrase “It’s not my fault” to comfort herself, showing that she has internalized the doctor’s approach:

We have a professional relationship. I think we have a good relationship. But it's professional.

(Silence.)

[...]

Most of my clients want to kill me. When I walk out of here at the end of the day I need to go home to my lover and relax. I need to be with my friends and relax. I need my friends to be really together

(Silence.)

I fucking hate this job and I need my friends to be sane.

(Silence.)

I'm sorry.

– It's not my fault.

– I'm sorry, that was a mistake.

– It's not my fault.

– No. It's not your fault. I'm sorry.

(Silence.)

I was trying to explain –

– I know. I'm angry because I understand, not because I don't. (236-238)

The patient probably feels more isolated after this exchange. As the quote above indicates, after receiving a second apology from the psychiatrist, the speaker is left alone in her initiative to form a meaningful and humane relationship. However, for Merleau-Ponty, in any psychological care of any kind: “the coming to awareness would remain purely cognitive, the patient would not accept the meaning of his disturbances as revealed to him without the personal relationship formed with the doctor, or without the confidence and friendship felt towards him, and the change of existence resulting from this friendship”(PP 233). On the other hand, in *4.48 Psychosis*, the speaker cannot trust her doctors and her condition steadily

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<sup>96</sup> Please see the previous discussion in this thesis p:55. The patient wants to befriend her doctor.



deteriorates. In the beginning of scene 5, for example, when the speaker uses the word “illness” it is presented in quotation marks which shows that she does not relate the concept with herself: “Burning in a hot tunnel of dismay, my humiliation complete as I [...] have nothing to say about my 'illness' which anyway amounts only to knowing that there's no point in anything because I'm going to die” (209). The speaker’s utterance shows that she is only using the word “ill” while not knowing how to approach it, and she feels debased. Later in scene 6, she also rejects being ill while speaking to her doctor who, she thinks, hates “unhappy people”:

- Do you despise all unhappy people or is it me specifically?
- I don't despise you. It's not your fault. You're ill.
- I don't think so.
- No?
- No. I'm depressed. Depression is anger. It's what you did, who was there and who you're blaming.
- And who are you blaming?
- Myself. (Kane 212)

This anger turned to the speaker’s own being remains unresolved. As it is presented in medical notes in scene 14, ultimately, she becomes deranged: “Patient threatening and uncooperative. Paranoid thoughts – believes hospital staff are attempting to poison her” (223-224). Though the narrative has no consistent or explicable structure, the use of monologue, especially since it appears to reflect the innermost thoughts of a suffering speaker allows the reader or audience a painfully intimate view of the speaker and her feelings of disorientation. For the reader, the disorderly scattering of these words/thoughts on the page indicate that she shows no improvement. She becomes totally disoriented, and seems to lose her ability to comprehend differences between:

True Right Correct  
Anyone or anybody  
Each every all

drowning in a sea of logic  
this monstrous state of palsy

still ill

Figure 1.2 see from *Complete Plays* (Kane 223)

When the character's "being-in-the-world" and her "intentional arc"-which "brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility" (PP 157)<sup>97</sup> - are affected, the distinction between sanity and derangement also blur within the monologue. However, reflections of the words or implied actions of the other characters also take part in that loss of meaning, which destroys any sense of normality. In the play, the speaker regards sanity/normality as a beautiful lie, "the chronic insanity of the sane" (Kane 229)<sup>98</sup>.

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<sup>97</sup> The entire question of embodiment, must be understood through reversibility (Landes 76). In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty explains that our "intentional arc" "projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation, or rather which results in our being situated in all these respects" (157). He continues our intentional arc "brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility. And it is this which 'goes limp' in illness" (157). Merleau-Ponty believes that consideration of our "intentional arc" allows us to reach an "existential" form of analysis which surpasses traditional empiricism and rationalism (157). Thereby, it might be claimed that the speaker's perception not only creates a shift in the idea of spatiality, time and arrangement of events in the play, but also questions the moral and ideological stance of the events happening.

<sup>98</sup> In the beginning of the play the speaker introduces her doctors by saying "Inscrutable doctors, sensible doctors, way-out doctors, doctors you'd think were fucking patients if you weren't shown proof otherwise"(209) to show implausibility of the mental institution and the concept of normativity it frames.

The issue of the outside world showing indifference towards the experience of the patient is also raised through the representation of psychiatrists and mental health institutions. Other than the speaker, the only other characters represented in the play (through her speech, in her mind) are doctors and a former lover, and these characters appear indifferent to her, or ignore her.<sup>99</sup> The speaker/patient's near-isolation has become her natural bond with the world but the world appears to have severed itself from her. Her isolation is constructed by- as well as reinforced by-the play's monologic structure and narrative stance, since the speaker/patient is the only character directly presented in the text/play, and the mind of the speaker provides the only perspective from which readers and audience can experience. The speaker's perspective reveals that the world around her is unstable and that the doctors in the play are also ill: "Inscrutable doctors, way-out doctors, doctor's you'd think fucking patients if you weren't shown proof otherwise" are the words describe them (209). The embodied relationship between the subject and the world is disrupted further when the speaker indicates that the doctors' treatments are painful, and when the speaker's perspective reveals their indifference. She criticizes the doctors for the complete lack of desire to communicate with her and even to acknowledge her presence by talking of "a room of expressionless faces staring blankly at my pain, so devoid of meaning there must be an evil intent" (209). The psychiatrists in the play show no desire to relate to the patient as a human, limiting their interactions with her to asking the same set of questions, putting words in her mouth, and offering chemical cures for her anguish, after watching and judging her (209). The patient feels ashamed and she believes that she is despised. Lack of inter and intra personal communication is acute in this play: Doing what they themselves prohibit, the doctors do not even reflect upon the relations between their behavior and their words. A telling illustration of this occurs in one of the reported dialogues in scene 12, in

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<sup>99</sup> The speaker forms an inner dialogue where she talks with her previous lover. She says: "while I was believing that you were different and that you maybe even felt the distress that sometimes flickered across your face and threatened to erupt, you were covering your arse [...]To my mind that's betrayal [...]Nothing can extinguish my anger and nothing can restore my faith/ This is not a world in which I wish to live" (210). Hence, the betrayal she encountered influences how she understands the world, she loses her faith in life.

which the psychiatrist imperatively forbids the use of negative prefixes and modals of obligation:

- No ifs or buts.
- I didn't say if or but, I said no.
- Can't must never have-to always won't should shan't. The unnegotiables *Not* today.  
(Silence.) (Kane 220; emphasis added)

Thus, the speaker seems to be forced to “negotiate” with her psychiatrist, as the doctor attempts to intervene with the way she uses the language. The speaker in return says she did not use those negative phrases. On the contrary, the doctor utters one of the “unnegotiables” s/he forbids by saying “*not* today”, which is ironical. Because of this lack of communication and his/her misleading interventions, the doctor’s attempt to treat the speaker proves futile, on the contrary, s/he adversely influences her. In scene 13, the speaker’s thoughts seem to be further affected by the doctor’s approach. The speaker starts to experience disorientation and disembodiment as the dialogue structure cannot be observed and there are even no sentences. The dashes before the lines in the previous fragment are also absent, an indication of ruminative state. Her thought patterns become full of “unnegotiables” that were forbidden to her, and this turns, overtly, to abstractions, a kind of verbal disembodiment, as the text presents a series of abstract and mostly negative words in scene 13:

*Abstraction*  
to the point of  
unpleasant  
unacceptable  
irrelevant  
dislike  
*dislocate*  
*disembody*  
*deconstruct*  
[...]  
irrational  
irreducible  
[...]

derailed  
deranged  
*deform*  
*free form* (Kane 221- 223; emphases added)

Hence, the speaker and her “embodiment” in the world does not refer only to the speaker’s experience of her body in the play but also to the “process whereby collective behaviors and beliefs, acquired through acculturation, are rendered individual and ‘lived’ at the level of the body” (Noland qtd in Dennis 3). The speaker’s psyche reflects the peculiarities of the world around her, from which she feels ruptured while still being influenced by all the elements she perceives. She agrees with her doctor(s) to start the treatment in scene 14, while she doesn’t believe that the medication and her doctor’s “disbelief” (223) will cure her. Feeling that she is controlled by their discourse, she says “my life is caught in a web of reason spun by a doctor to argument the sane” (Kane 233). A concept that cannot be apprehended, sanity becomes a religion, a grand narrative<sup>100</sup> for the speaker in the play, which can be understood from the way her inner thoughts are presented: “You are my doctor, my saviour, my omnipotent judge, my priest, my god, the surgeon of my soul. And I am your proselyte to sanity” (233). Similarly in scene 17, she depicts her mental illness by alluding to *The Book of Deuteronomy*:

Grid yourselves:  
for ye shall be broken in pieces  
it shall come to pass  
[...]  
Come now, let us reason together  
Sanity is found in the mountain of the Lord's house on the  
horizon of the soul that eternally recedes. (229)<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Grand narratives are legitimized metadiscourses producing knowledge on truth systems, or “the various narrative systems by which human society orders and gives meaning, unity, and ‘universality’ to its experience” (Hutcheon 186). The term is used by Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*.

<sup>101</sup> Please note the similarities between *the Book of Detronomy* and *4.48 Psychosis* while they both render damnation: “*But it shall come to pass*/if thou wilt not ahearken unto the voice of the Lord thy

Since the speaker quotes from the Bible, it is clear that she is influenced by all the narratives around her. Such a stance is taken by Merleau-Ponty as well, as he writes: “our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system” (*PP* 235). To have that bond, the speaker seems to be willing to cooperate. She accepts the treatment to take her part in the world while she also thinks it is unlikely that the medical procedure will help. To indicate her explicit willingness, a whole part/scene is dedicated to a long list of the speaker’s expectations which is reminiscent of her previous list rendered in negations in scene 13. While she cannot relate with her atmosphere, the speaker obviously wants to be accepted and loved:

to draw close and enjoyably reciprocate with *another*  
to converse in a friendly manner, to tell stories, exchange sentiments,  
ideas, secrets  
[...]  
to win affection of desired *Other*  
to form mutually enjoyable, enduring, cooperating and  
*reciprocating* relationship with *Other*, with an equal  
(Kane 25; emphases added)<sup>102</sup>

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God [...]all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee (28.15-16; emphasis added).” *The Book of Deuteronomy* narrates how God will help the believers in the days of torment, if one turns to God and is “obedient” (4.21-31). Then God tests the people of Israel for forty days in the wilderness, and they understand that “one lives by the word of God” (8.1-18). It is interesting that Kane uses words “omnipotent judge”, “savior” and “god” in this context. Thereby, it might be said that the speaker relates her medical condition and the treatment she receives to damnation by God. *The Book of Deuteronomy* also mentions the punishment that people of Israel will receive if they do not keep the commandments of God, or have false gods. Curiously, one of the retributions given for infamy is insanity in *The Book*: “The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart” (28.28). The verse numbers here (28.28) might be found meaningful when Sarah Kane’s self-inflicted death at the age of 28 is considered, after writing *4.48 Psychosis*.

<sup>102</sup> The Book also refers to how the ardent believers will be rewarded: “Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments and [...] Thou shalt be blessed above all people: Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt” (7.14-15). The psychological torment of the speaker finds a place in religion as well, which could be indicating another layer of embodiment showing the intricate relationship between the subject and the world around her, given through intertextual elements.

Evidently, the speaker expects a “reciprocal” relationship with the world as described by Merleau-Ponty, a bond that is harmonious, already given in perception which presents the world in a meaningful union. This bond seems to be severed as the patient’s experience is not understood as her exchange with her doctor reveals:

- Oh dear, what's happened to your arm?
- I cut it.
- That's a very immature, attention seeking thing to do. Did it give you relief?
- No.
- [...]
- I don't understand why you did that.
- Then ask.
- Did it relieve the tension?
- (A long silence.)
- Can I look?
- No.
- [...]
- I thought you might do this. Lots of people do. It relieves the tension.
- Have you ever done it?
- ...
- No. Far too fucking sane and sensible. I don't know where you read that, but it does not relieve the tension.
- (Silence.)
- Why don't you ask me *why*?
- Why* did I cut my arm?
- Would you like to tell me?
- Yes.
- Then tell me.
- ASK
- ME
- WHY
- (A long silence)
- Why did you cut your arm?
- Because it feels fucking great. It feels fucking amazing.
- Can I look?
- You can look. But don't touch.
- (Looks) And you don't think you're ill?
- No.

– I do. It's not your fault. But you have to take responsibility for your own actions. Please don't do it again. (Kane 216-218)

In the exchange above, the doctor's approach seems to be superficial, as s/he disregards the subjective experience of the patient by directly labeling the behavior as "an attention seeking thing to do". S/he does not ask questions, but assumes a reason behind the speaker's actions. While the doctor only labels the speaker as "ill", for Merleau-Ponty, psychology should return to experience of the patient: "To concern oneself with psychology is necessarily to encounter, beneath objective thought which moves among ready-made things, a first opening upon things without which there would be no objective knowledge" (*PP* 111). Hence, because "objective" phenomena are much distanced from the perceptions, one needs to consider the pre-reflective state of thought to apprehend the speaker's motives, her embodied subjectivity that is (self-) harmed.

In the play, the vicious circle of guilt and anger the speaker feels is correlated with the chaotic and ignorant world she is situated in. The outer world is presented as a violent and repulsive place, and the psyche of the speaker reflects it in tandem with her feeling of irresolvable guilt as microcosm conceives macrocosm in the play. This turbulent relationship that the subject has with the world is also manifested by the apparent lack of hope in scene 11, where the speaker seems to believe that all her toil is futile when confronted with time:

Everything passes  
Everything perishes  
Everything palls  
[...]  
No hope No hope No hope No hope No hope No hope No hope  
(218)

The absence of hope presented through the decay in nature also shows the (dis)embodied relationship between the subject and her world in the play. The psyche of the patient is influenced by the world around her, yet, she has an



inconsistent relationship with it due to having psychotic breakdowns. Such a bond generates a new understanding of “embodiment” between the speaker and the corrupted world around her. In scene 16, the speaker seems to associate herself with all the crime she perceives in the world:

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 REFUSE I REFUSE I REFUSE LOOK AWAY FROM ME (Kane 227).

While the speaker “look away” for 5 times, at the end of the play she also says: “Validate me/ Witness me/See me/Love me” (243). It might be thought that the speaker’s inconsistent desire to be both looked at and looked away is considerably logical if her erratic relationship with the world is noted. The speaker does not know to whom this feeling of guilt should belong. Because of the psychosis, the line between self and the world seems to be blurred while her feeling of self is totally dissolved. This prevalent guilt of hers is also reflected in the deteriorated connection with her friends and family since she believes her brother and her lover are dying, she is “killing them both”(207)<sup>103</sup>. Accordingly, by believing and manifesting that she shall “freeze in hell”(239), she might be referring to the ninth (and the deepest) circle of Dante’s Hell where traitors to their kindred, country, friends, Lords and Benefactors are punished and Satan is kept soaked in ice<sup>104</sup>.

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<sup>103</sup> She also indicates she is extremely lonely in another part of the play. Conversing with her former lover, most probably in her head, she says : “I’ve never in my life had a problem giving another person what they want. But no one’s ever been able to do that for me. No one touches me, no one gets near me. [...]I can’t believe and I can’t be that for you.” (Kane 215). After this, silence follows once more. In scene 11, the patient mourns “My love, my love, why have you forsaken me? [...]there’s no meaning to life in the light of my loss” (Kane 219), quoting the words of Christ on cross [Matt.27.46], indicating how forlorn she feels though she (probably) did everything to form a lasting relationship. Left alone by her lover, she feels she is totally deserted by everybody. I believe her words further indicate the severed bonds between the world and the speaker.

<sup>104</sup> In the ninth circle of Hell, the treacherous are kept in frozen water, and when they cry their crystallized teardrops cut their eyes. The ninth circle has four rings separated as such: first division for the traitors to their kindred (“Caina” derived from Cain), second division (“Antenora”) is for the ones who betrayed their country, third ring is for the traitors betrayed their friends (“Ptolomaea”) and fourth for traitors to their Lords and Benefactors (“Judecca” Judas, Brutus and Satan are kept there.) Dante describes the place as “a lake, that from the frost/ The semblance had of glass, and not of

Considering Dante's attempt to include a variety of crimes in the same circle, the speaker's immersion in her own feeling of guilt can be seen as an "embodiment" of depravity observed, employed, and endured. In line with that, the speaker utters "Victim. Perpetrator. Bystander" (231) while cutting herself in scene 19. She becomes the "embodiment" of all these three roles that could be reckoned in crime, while inviting the audience to partake in the action as a witness. It might be suggested that by addressing her thoughts not only to her doctor, but also to the audience, the speaker generates an embodied relationship with the spectator on stage.<sup>105</sup> According to Wilshire: "theatre is a mode of discovery that explores the threads of what is implicit and buried in the world, and pulls them into a compressed and acknowledgeable pattern before us in its 'world'" (xiv). Hence, the audience or reader can comprehend the psychotic experience of the patient, and "embodiment" becomes a metatheatrical element in Kane's theatre: it reveals the chaotic world the speaker is in while the structure of the play is formed accordingly. For Edward Bond, similar to any other play, *4.48 Psychosis* does not only depict a private matter but it "involves a world... She [Kane] forces us in a sense to live with our own annihilation - by having to live with hers. The sacrificed victim always returns to haunt the sacrificers" (Saunders "The Beckettian World of Sarah Kane" 11). This bond will be further analyzed in the forthcoming section on postdramatic elements and alienation in the play.

After presenting the speaker's severe feeling of guilt in scene 16, the first part of the play is presented again-"What do you offer your friends to make them so supportive?" in scene 23 with a blend of the doctor and the speaker's narratives. The circularity of plot reminds the reader of a never-ending gulf of thought as a

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water." (*Inferno*, XXXII:24). The speaker's narration has some correspondence with Dante's description: "still black water/ as deep as forever/ as cold as the sky/ as still as my heart when your voice is gone/I shall freeze in hell" (Kane 239).

<sup>105</sup> In fact, during the time when her inner thoughts are presented most of her questions are asked to her audience. There is no one else who can have access to her thoughts and despair. It will be further analyzed through alienation.

result of overwhelming regret. The speaker's recurring traumatic thoughts beget a new form of analogies, juxtaposing disparate events and speeches in a non-linear way, creating a circular plot. Therefore, the recurring feeling of guilt is used as a motif that unites past and present experiences of the patient, generating huge time lapses between each dialogue while achieving to merge these speeches. The indifference of the (lost) lover, speech of the doctor and elaborate depictions of illness is united by the patient that generates the motif of hopelessness, paving the way of suicide.

## 2.4 Postdramatic Elements and Alienation

4.48 *Psychosis* reorients its audience and introduces them to the experience of psychosis. The deterioration of the dialogue structure, absence of a clear characterization, vagueness of setting, synesthetic expressions, scenes with long self-accusations, the two scenes with only numerals, decontextualized medical reports, repetitions, intertextuality, loss of cause and effect relationship can be regarded as postdramatic signs<sup>106</sup> in the play. The erosion of subjectivity is presented with a multiplicity of disorganized stimuli, which can be accepted, as it is suggested previously, as a mark of change in the speaker's synesthetic apprehension due to psychosis. As a consequence of the chaos created by the "density of signs", Kane's theatre allows the audience to come to understand the mental breakdown, horror, and alienation that the patient is expressing. The use of theatrical signs in a confusing pattern helps one to decipher a feeling of mental suffering and isolation, which alienates and dislocates the spectators of the play.<sup>107</sup> In this subsection, the terms "synaesthesia" (Lehmann 84) "retreat of

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<sup>106</sup> For an analysis of postdramatic signs in Sarah Kane's theatre, please see David Barnett's "When is a Play not a Drama? Two Examples of Postdramatic Theatre Texts" and Catherine Rees's chapter on Sarah Kane in *Modern British Playwriting: 1990s*

<sup>107</sup> This intricate relationship between audience and the stage will be analyzed further through the term "alienation".

synthesis”(89), and “physicality” (95) from Lehmann’s *Postdramatic Theatre* will be scrutinized according to erosion of subjectivity. The idea of time and place in the play will be analyzed together with postdramatic terms briefly. The concept of alienation will be studied within the context of postdramatic theatre.

According to Lehmann, “perception[...] functions dialogically [...] the senses respond to the offers and demands of the environment, but at the same time also show a disposition first to construct the manifold into a texture of perception, i.e. to constitute a unity”(85). In postdramatic theatre, by intensifying this process of synthesis by means of heterogeneity, continuity in narration is superseded by disorganized stimuli. The dialogic relationship present in the previous forms of drama and the text cannot be found. Accordingly, in *4.48 Psychosis*, when the speaker feels that her mind is fragmenting and her body cannot comply with such a state, “synaesthesia” and “retreat of synthesis” results in loss of causality and repetition on stage<sup>108</sup>. Lines “Hatch opens/ Stark Light” are repeated in scenes 15, 19, and 24, at times of the speaker’s psychotic episodes. The dialogic structure is lost as well, which creates disunity of a fragmented monologue:

you saved my life  
I wish you hadn't  
I wish you hadn't  
I wish you'd left me alone

a black and white film of yes or no yes or no yes or no yes or no yes  
or no yes or no (240).

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<sup>108</sup> Helen Iball considers Kane’s first play *Blasted* (1995) as “radical disruption of the received theatrical semiotic” and “phenomenological vandalism” (327). *4.48 Psychosis* seems to deserve such a commentary.

I've always loved you  
even when I hated you

What am I like?  
just like my father

oh no oh no oh no

Hatch opens  
Stark light

the rupture begins

I don't know where to look anymore

Tired of crowd searching  
Telepathy  
and hope

Figure 1.3 from *Complete Plays* (Kane 240).

The disruption in narrative structure is more obvious especially when the patient is about to commit suicide as the fragment above taken from scene 24 also presents. To indicate the hopelessness she is enduring, which also reveals the understanding of contingency in the play, the speaker says: “Watch the stars/ predict the past/ and change the world with a silver eclipse/ the only thing that's permanent is destruction/ we're all going to disappear/ trying to leave a mark more permanent than myself” (240). For the speaker, the stars only gleam to reflect a bygone era, and as though already extinguished all the future possibilities, the speaker has no choice left apart from pondering on her past. Her narrative indicates that the correspondence between the events in time is lost, the present, future, and past are

merged, as they only exist as empty concepts. Accordingly, for Lehmann “postdramatic theatre is a *theatre of the present*. Reformulating presence as present, [...] it can be neither object, nor substance, nor the object of cognition in the sense of a synthesis affected by the imagination and the understanding” (143). Such presence is enacted on stage in the play, where the audience cannot perceive linearity of time, and they experience confusion.

In *4.48 Psychosis*, the poetic language and metaphorical descriptions of pathological grief referred to before deliver the feeling of pain to the audience or reader, creating an embodied relationship in shared experience of alienation. It might be because the synesthetic expressions stand for the chaotic multiplicity of sensory data, helping the reader or audience to envisage the speaker’s mindscape. Josephine Machon believes that “(Syn)aesthetic writing can cross boundaries and cross fertilise itself with other disciplines and discourses, interweaving these within the substance of the text, and juxtaposing various linguistic registers, in order to produce a defamiliarised, visceral impact which disturbs ‘reading’ and activates the senses” (*(Syn)aesthetics and Disturbance* 37). This feeling is conveyed in *4.48 Psychosis*, as the stage becomes a locus of confusion (227). Machon’s views on theatre partly rely on Merleau-Pontian understanding of language<sup>109</sup>, and his understanding of “synesthesia”. According to Merleau-Ponty, when such a word as “warm” is shown to a subject, it induces an “experience of warmth which surrounds him with something in the nature of a meaningful halo” (*PP* 273). For him, the language cannot be separated from the attitude it arises, and “it is only when its presence is prolonged that it appears in the guise of an

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<sup>109</sup> Merleau-Ponty is referred to in the notes of her dissertation (*(Syn)aesthetics and Disturbance: Tracing a Transgressive Style in Contemporary Practice Theory* p:55 Josephine Machon states that synesthesia in contemporary theatre creates confusion, by mixing a multiplicity of mediums and sensory data and making the body the primary locus of signification. A slippage between the instinctual and intellectual, (syn)aesthetic theatre generates disturbance since “the corporeal memory that resides within human experience, an entirely physiological mode of appreciation that challenges linguistic expression, is integral to the appreciation of (syn)aesthetic work” (*(Syn)aesthetics and Disturbance* 5-6). She claims Kane’s *4.48 Psychosis* is an exemplar of “(Syn)aesthetic writing” which “crystallises and concentrates the intensity of personal, lived experience and themes, revealing the invisible (experiences, emotions, states, concepts) through the words” (115).

external image, and its meaning as a thought[...]What is particularly brought out by the word's behavior here is its indissoluble identity with something said, heard and seen" (*PP* 273-274).

In postmodern and postdramatic plays, language is an element the writers playfully experiment with. Similarly, Kane seems to find a way to actualize psychotic experiences on stage with far-fetched synesthetic metaphors. Machon also claims that Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* works on limits of verbal articulation "by reve(al)ling in its corporeality" (171). Thus, the patient's mental impairment and disembodiment match with her use of language, and her overt experience of duality between body and mind<sup>110</sup> find a possible way of expression. Hence, along with all the postdramatic elements, synesthetic expressions in Kane's text are also significant in analyzing alienation in the play. They aim to reflect on what it is like to experience clinical depression by scrutinizing the understanding of time and place by portraying the erosion of subjectivity. By saying "mental illness is so often sentimentalised, or portrayed as madness – I hate that word. Sarah wanted to convey that while it may be pathological, it isn't necessarily illogical."<sup>111</sup> the playwright's brother, Simon Kane identifies such an endeavor in the play. Disrupting the natural synesthetic apprehension and creating new associations, therefore, Kane's theatre points at how the mind functions and how we apprehend the world. The spectators are made aware of the fact that they are active perceivers. Accordingly, for Merleau-Ponty, "in perception we do not think the object and we do not think ourselves thinking it, we are given over to the object and we merge into this body which is better informed than we are about the world, and about the motives we have and the means at our disposal for synthesizing it" (*PP* 277). This primordial and comforting experience is thoughtfully abandoned in

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<sup>110</sup> This duality can be also observed in Beckett's later drama which also reveals "the image of a mind, alienated from its body" (Saunders in his "The Beckettian World of Sarah Kane" 12).

<sup>111</sup> See Andrew Dickson's article "The Strange thing is we howled with laughter: Sarah Kane's enigmatic last play (11 May 2016) on *Guardian*

4.48 *Psychosis*, and one is faced with the governing rules of a mind and body enduring fragmentation, which alienates the audience<sup>112</sup>.

Binding disparate elements together, Heller-Roazen draws attention to the possible use of “synesthesia” with its multiplicity of meanings<sup>113</sup>. Considering Heller-Roazen’s use of “synesthesia” as “joint perception” or “perceiving-with”, whereby each perception is joined to the other one without coinciding, Jennifer Waldron applies it to theatre.<sup>114</sup> She believes that the spectator and actor(s) form an

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<sup>112</sup> Machon uses the term “(syn)aesthetics” for “certain quintessential features of the physiological condition of synaesthesia to clarify the impulse in performance and appreciation which affects a ‘disturbance’ within audience interpretation”(1). Thus, she forms new associations communicating her pain in synesthetic metaphors which creates alienation. I believe synesthetic apprehension as a fundamental element to understand the world is disrupted in *4.48 Psychosis*, and the patient feels disconnected from the world. Therefore, it is not a synesthetic collision of sensory data, but disruption in synesthetic apprehension causes the confusing patterns in the plot structure.

<sup>113</sup> Reminiscent to Merleau-Pontian use of synesthesia, this complicated relationship concerning the bond between staged world and the audience in *4.48 Psychosis* can be also articulated through Daniel Heller-Roazen’s studies, elucidating the link between “synesthesia” and “common sense” or “inner touch”. As explained by him, Aristotle uses the words “common,” “master,” or “total” sense through various texts to work on three issues: “The first is the “common sensible qualities” (koina aestheta): motion, rest, figure, magnitude, number and unity. Since one can experience the movement of an object through any number of the senses, movement cannot be tied to one sense. The second is perception of complex sensations, as when a single object is experienced as both sweet and hot. The third problem that the “common sense” addresses is the most interesting: How does one become aware, when seeing something, that one sees by sight?” (qtd in Waldron 407)<sup>113</sup>.

<sup>114</sup> Jennifer Waldron relates synesthetic perception to embodiment. She analyzes Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* through the theories of “syn-aesthesia” or “sensing with” and shows the reciprocal relationship between the audience and actors. According to her, Shakespeare utilizes synesthesia for a variety of purposes and among them is creating dramatic irony and intersubjectivity. To illustrate, with his ass head Bottom “lacks not only the vision but also the ‘common sense’ to put together the various sensations he’s feeling” (408). Bottom cannot understand that he is turned into an ass, unable to form a unified picture of himself, though relying on the narratives around he could guess it. The audience observes Bottom’s utter ignorance of his metamorphosis and also how other characters such as Titania or Snout see him. Functioning as “common sense” after “sensing an absence in Bottom’s self-sensations, onlookers inhabit the “joint” between what they see and what he feels. In Heller-Roazen’s terms, “they join the perceptual qualities that are visible and audible on stage to other perceptions with which these qualities do not altogether coincide” (409). As another example, Waldron presents Titania’s loss of “self-awareness” creating humour. Titania introduces her sense of taste and calls Bottom “sweet” several times. She reveals her own way of synesthetic appropriation of being entwined to Bottom: “The female ivy so / Enrings the *barky* fingers of the Elm” (qtd in 409). According to Waldron, the audience members can perceive how it is like to touch Bottom (or the mask he has), which creates a chiasmic relationship on stage, also creating sophistication necessary for the comedy. Partial awareness of characters generates more layers in the plot, and the audience can act as common sense, perceiving the play from various angles. Therefore, similar to Shakespeare’s other plays, “*Midsummer* generates these effects with deliberate artifice: the senses are



intersubjective relationship, as theatre is a “multisensory medium ...where many people sense or feel a similar event at the same time” (408). Owing to this new definition, she considers “synesthesia” as a metatheatrical awareness of an embodied and collective process (408). In *4.48 Psychosis*, synesthetic expressions revealing the inner thoughts and experiences of the persona can be important when “synesthesia” is interpreted as “common sense” or as an embodied process. The spectator perceives fragmented memories through the decontextualized dialogues gathered in the speaker’s utterances. They try to comprehend what it is like to endure severe depression. In the play, the synesthetic associations of the speaker create disintegration, an unsettling effect revealed in the aftermath of psychosis, presenting the futility of commonsense to understand the current pathological mindset. In tandem with the attempt to communicate the feeling of psychosis, the stage becomes the center of confusion, there are no stage directions except for the silences and dashes, and the audience cannot comprehend the action having only partial understanding. While being alienated from the habitual way of seeing the world in harmony, the audience has an embodied experience as they start to relate themselves to the onstage action.

As a result of chaos generated through the “density of signs” in Lehmann’s terms, the audience comes to understand the very feeling of mental breakdown in Sarah

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first de-naturalized and unsettled before they can be re-joined in new ways, both through verbal cues and through stage actions” (408). By being onlookers, and also the ones who are contributing to action by perceiving action in its unity unlike the characters of the play, stage and the audience have a reciprocal relationship in the play (Waldron 409). Moreover, Shakespeare creates a cognizance of “joint and (and disjointed) sensation through not only actor-audience interaction but also through other characters who interact with Bottom” (409). Referring to his ass-head, Snout directly says "O Bottom, thou art changed. What do I see on thee?"(qtd in 409) and Bottom answers “What do you see? You see an ass-head of your own, do you?” (qtd in 409) I believe Bottom’s reply is a verbal cue which mocks the audience, who are gazing at Bottom’s ass-head. Correspondingly for Waldron, stage becomes a locus of unified perception(s), and synesthesia has a ludicrous impact creating a call for commonsense to comment on the on-stage action, unlike synesthesia’s opposite influence to render the tragic experience in Sarah Kane’s theatre, which creates a confusion that the audience takes part in and cannot clarify. When the patient wants her doctor to “look away” she also asks the audience not to gaze at her, which can be discussed further with the term “embodiment” and “synesthesia” with their expanded meanings suggested by critics such as Waldron and Machon.

Kane's theatre. The use of theatrical signs in a "low density"<sup>115</sup> and in confusing pattern might be helpful in deciphering the feeling of mental suffering and isolation.<sup>116</sup> Thereby, with the speaker's disorganized utterances, the audience or reader's synesthetic ability to form a whole is also disrupted. In line with that, Lehmann believes that "synaesthesia"<sup>117</sup> as a postdramatic element is a search for "traces of connection" which is "accompanied by a helpless focusing of perception on the things offered [...] This term stems from poetry, and it aptly describes the new perception of theatre beyond drama as 'scenic poetry'" (Lehmann 84). In Kane's plays, as demonstrated before, synesthetic expressions create a poetic dimension depicting grief and trauma. Thereby, in Lehmann's terms, "synesthesia" distorts the act of perception in postdramatic theatre leading to "the discovery of surprising *correspondences*" (84; emphasis in original), and it shapes the form according to the content in *4.48 Psychosis*.

In the play, the speaker creates a "scenic poem" with her synesthetic expressions to convey the experience of psychosis. To reorient herself in the world, the speaker creates new associations to communicate her pain because she cannot have a natural synesthetic experience as described by Merleau-Ponty within the moment of perception. By her novel connotations peculiar to her own illness, the speaker "sets out in search of these explicit perceptions only in order to provide a substitute for a certain mutual presence of body and object which is a datum of normal experience and which we still have to reconstitute" (*PP* 124).

Correspondingly, in scene 7, the speaker acknowledges the futility of appropriating herself to her surroundings and says: "How can I return to form/

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<sup>115</sup> Lehmann believes "the play with the low density of signs aims to provoke the spectator's own imagination to become active on the basis of little raw material to work with" (90).

<sup>116</sup> The relationship between the audience and the stage will be analyzed further through the term "alienation". As a matter of fact, such use of "absence, reduction, emptiness" can create an urge on the part of the audience to use their own imagination for Lehmann (90).

<sup>117</sup> The term is utilized to show how de-hierarchization and simultaneity is created on stage. Merleau-Pontian "synesthesia" is an innate capability which unites various stimuli within the act of perception.

now my formal thought has gone?” (Kane 213). Accordingly, the plot is shaped according to the content as the play expresses the need for a new form, a metatheatrical element in the play. Hence, the confusing mental states are conveyed through “synesthesia” that translates a perplexing feeling into tactile, auditory, or olfactory data. They generate postdramatic theatrical elements helping the audience or reader to grasp the very feeling of psychosis. Therefore, after a long narrative of self-accusation with “I” language<sup>118</sup>-self-inflicted violence that the speaker employs on herself-the reader encounters a disorganized constellation of numbers occupying half of the page without any order in scene 4. The numbers signify how one fails The Serial Sevens Test, in which one tries to count from 100.<sup>119</sup> The reader is introduced to the idea of disorientation and pain that psychosis creates<sup>120</sup> for the play cleverly displays how the patient perceives the Serial Seven Test whilst unable to count down from one hundred by sevens:

100  
 84 91  
 72 81  
 69 58  
 44 37 38  
 42 21 28  
 12 7

Figure 1.4 from *Complete Plays* (Kane 208) <sup>121</sup>.

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<sup>118</sup>These lines are in scene 3 and they are evaluated with the Merleau-Pontian term “being-in-the-world”. The speaker says “I am a complete failure as a person/I am guilty, I am being punished/ I would like to kill myself /I used to be able to cry but now I am beyond tears” (206-208).

<sup>119</sup> Serial subtraction by seven (Serial Seven Test, SST) is occasionally utilized in mental status evaluation for dementia as a measure of concentration (Karzma 677).

<sup>121</sup> This is scene 4, which consists of these numbers only. Philip Venables’ award-winning opera version (2016) made use of multimedia and projected these numbers on the wall to ease staging and comprehension as presented in the pictures in the website of The Royal Opera (4.48 Psychosis —

Yet, after the medical treatment, having another bad attack and cutting herself, the speaker shows improvement and achieves passing the test, there is a scene only consisting of ordered numbers<sup>122</sup> Therefore, the synesthetic expressions in the play form a new understanding of unity reflecting content with the form, to reveal mental state of the speaker. The reader or audience comprehends what it is like to be in such a state, by having the immediate experience of psychosis. Thereby, “physicality” (Lehmann 95) and how (the deviant or ill) body is situated might be significant in analyzing language, plot linearity and characterization in *4.48 Psychosis*.

In the play, there are no clear divisions between the scenes, and the speakers are hard to identify which has a direct correspondence with postdramatic theatre as described by Lehmann. After that paragraph of numbers in scene 4, the start of a new scene is indicated in the text by five dashes. The new scene starts with the doctors roaming around near the patient; the frustration that her psychosis creates is transmitted through synesthetic expressions. She uses, for example, the sense of touch to communicate the traumatizing experience of shame by saying: “*burning in a hot tunnel of dismay, my humiliation complete as I shake without reason and*

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Productions — Royal Opera House (roh.org.uk)). New Diorama Theatre (2018) also staged the play in a similar way as it can be deduced from the trailers that they released on their website (<https://newdiorama.com/whats-on/448-psychosis>). Please also see two relatively recent reviews indicating the use of multimedia, one by Mandell “An Operatic Version of Sarah Kane’s Final Play” who watched the play in New York (2019) and the other by Groover (2021) “A Woman Over the Precipice in 4.48 Psychosis”

100  
93  
86  
79  
72  
65  
58  
51  
44  
37  
30  
23  
16  
9  
2

122

ordered numbers can be seen in scene 20.

Figure 1.5 from *Complete Plays* (Kane 232). These

stumble over words and have nothing to say about my 'illness' which anyway amounts only to knowing that there's no point in anything because I'm going to die" (209). As mentioned before, each lengthy inner monologue of the patient is followed by a decontextualized dialogue shared with the doctor. With no indication of who is speaking in any part of these dialogues, the deixis<sup>123</sup> is lost so it is hard to follow the play. All the speeches are narratives that take place in a fragmenting mind. In other words, "the time of intersubjectivity" is lost, there is nothing "unifying the enemies in conflict", thus, "agonist and antagonist" (Lehmann 154) or the doctor and the patient cannot meet in *4.48 Psychosis*.<sup>124</sup> From the start Kane designed this play as one that "doesn't even have characters, all there is language and images. But all the images are within language rather than visualized. I do not even know how many people there are" (interview with Nils Tabert qtd in Saunders 111), and she apparently decided to keep these ambiguities as integral parts of the final version.

It is possible to stage *4.48 Psychosis* with just one actor/voice, which can be regarded as a postdramatic element. Lehmann gives a list of directors who turned "classical dramas or classical dramas or narrative texts into monologies" (ie Klaus-Michael Grüber's *Faust*) and he also mentions solo performances or "a theater form constructed like a monologue" (125). *4.48 Psychosis*, then, has postdramatic sensibilities since Kane centers all the theatrical elements around a

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<sup>123</sup> Please see pp:17-22 for the relevant discussion. Dialogue is one of the main elements that create drama and the loss of dialogic structure is one of the essential characteristics of postdramatic theatre.

<sup>124</sup> These are the terms used by Lehmann to describe dramatic conflict. He claims that the idea of conflict is at the center of drama. The intersubjectivity necessitates a homogeneity in understanding of time. According to Lehmann "this essentially constituted the self through an intersubjective relationship with the antagonist. [...] Dramatic theatre requires one time in which the opponents, agonist and antagonist, can meet at all. The temporal perspective of the individual, isolated subject (as in lyricism or monology) does not suffice here" (154). By presenting a single subject immersed in conflict, Kane achieves to subvert dramatic form. The speaker endures a major internal conflict (man vs man) which also indicates issues regarding the atmosphere she is in (man vs society-the external conflict).

single speaker<sup>125</sup> whose mental fragmentation shatters every intelligible element on stage, creating a chaotic “simultaneity”. Due to the “retreat of synthesis”<sup>126</sup>, there is a loose bond between the events, narratives and “a figuratively ‘silent’ and dense presence of bodies” in Kane’s theatre, and thus, “the [theatrical] sign merely communicates itself, or more precisely: its presence. Perception finds itself thrown back onto the perception of structures” (Lehmann 98). It can be concluded that the audience perceives the founding structures of the mind and experience how it is torn apart in *4.48 Psychosis*.

The repetitive narratives reconstruct the idea of time in the play which can be also regarded as a postdramatic element. In habitual perception, “the linear continuum [of discontinuous experiences] ultimately supports the unity of subject” (Lehmann 155) whereas in postdramatic theatre such an integration cannot be found.

According to Lehmann, at the end of 1950s the artists broke away from the unity of time with beginning and end as a limiting frame of the theatre “in order to gain the dimension of the time ‘shared’”(155). Similarly in postdramatic theatre,

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<sup>125</sup> With so little organized on page, Kane creates a plot. The play self-reflexively refers to this attempt: “A glut of exclamation marks spells impending nervous breakdown/ Just a word on a page, and there is the drama” (213). Her style does not comply with traditional understanding of tragedy as tragedy should be “arranged not on the simple, but on the complex plan” for Aristotle (14). Moreover, she works on a single character and uses her mind as setting to depict incidents from within, making action subsidiary to character. However, as stated by Aristotle: “without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character”(9). Moreover, a story built around a character does not create a unified plot for him: “infinitely various are the incidents in one man’s life which cannot be reduced to unity, so too, there are many actions of one man out of which we cannot make one action. Hence, the error, as it appears, of all poets who have composed a Heracleid, a Theseid, or other poems of the kind. They imagine that as Heracles was one man, the story of Heracles must also be a unity” (11). Kane achieves to create her drama with a single character weaving the plot erratically unified but complete, making a psychotic speaker the subject matter and the mouthpiece of her play. Thereby, there is organic form in *4.48 Psychosis* as it reflects its content thanks to the synesthetic expressions that channel the patient’s thoughts. All theatrical elements—such as plot, characterization, time and place—are under fragmentation in accordance with chaos the patient experiences. Thus linearity is broken, creating new associations and possibilities to reflect the state of mind of the patient.

<sup>126</sup> Lehmann claimed “through the montage of juxtaposed [...] spaces which [...] remain independent from one another so that no synthesis is offered, [and] a poetic sphere of *connotations* comes into being” (79; emphasis in original). As indicated before, the patient recollects all the events that happened before around the feeling of guilt.

techniques prioritized distortion of a unified time comes to the fore. This distortion is necessary for “time that deviates from habit provokes its explicit perception, permitting it to move from something taken for granted as a mere accompaniment to the rank of a theme” (Lehmann 156). One of the methods that allowed one to break away from such habitualization is the use of repetition, which turned one’s attention to the act of perception itself (157). This self-reflexivity as a postdramatic element is created by means of repetition of the same structures along with the exchanges between the psychiatrist and the patient in *4.48 Psychosis*<sup>127</sup> It reorients the audience, demanding them to bear witness and introduce them with the experience of pathological grief. The repetitive movement during self-harm is presented with a scene consisting of a few words “flash flicker slash burn” which are put into paragraphs. Recurrent use of the same words show repetitive movement practiced on the body without any feeling, consideration and pity. The sentences “it will never pass” and “Nothing is forever” are posited in a contradictory way, indicating the absence of rationality in the patient’s thinking while it can be also considered as a postdramatic element:

it will never pass

dab flicker punch slash wring slash punch slash float flicker flash punch  
wring press flash press dab flicker wring burn flicker dab flash dab float burn  
press burn flicker burn flash

Nothing's forever  
(but Nothing)

slash wring punch burn flicker dab float dab flicker burn punch burn flash  
dab press dab wring flicker float slash burn slash punch slash press slash  
float slash flicker burn dab

Victim. Perpetrator. Bystander

(Kane 231)

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<sup>127</sup> Along with the repetition(s) between the doctor and the patient mentioned before, the doctor tries to comfort the patient by saying “It’s all right” (see pp:227-228 and 230).

While the speaker inflicts pain on her own body, members of the audience are situated as voyeurs. Because the speaker is both the victim, perpetrator and bystander of her own violent act, the audience is alienated from their role as mere theatre-goers. Apart from this scene, the importance of bearing witness is emphasized repetitively for various times throughout the play. To illustrate, the speaker says “Validate me/Witness me/See me/Love me/my final submission/my final defeat” (243) stressing the act of seeing. Towards the end of the play, she seems to be addressing all her thoughts to the audience for her speech is totally in the form of an interior monologue. The speaker says “Please don’t cut me to find out how I died/I’ll tell you how I died” (241) as if seeking help from the audience. She moans “DON’T LET THIS KILL ME/THIS WILL KILL ME/ [...] I beg you to save me from this madness that eats me a subintentional death [...] cease this war” (226-227). Yet, the audience is obliged to watch her silently whereas their passive gaze ironically evinces the necessity to take action, which is stressed by the repetitions in the play. In other words, the audience’s impatience, “their paying attention or their reluctance to delve deeper into time [...] their inclination or disinclination to do justice or make space for differences [...] by immersing themselves into the self-alienating act of seeing” (Lehmann 157) gives meaning to repetition. Therefore, time does not flow unnoticed during the performance, but it is felt and shared by the audience, who is made aware of its own presence.<sup>128</sup> In Lehmann’s terms, “coldness” towards the action on stage [rather than the illusion of a well-made play] generates a strange proximity to depict mental illness in *4.48 Psychosis*. As the patient’s orientation in the world is severely disrupted because of her mental state, such an experience can only be conveyed by experimental staging. An example for that can be also scene 8 consisting only with the letters

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<sup>128</sup> For Lehmann “in this way, a physical, sensual reality of the experience of time is inseparably interwoven with a mental reality, namely the aesthetic ‘concretization’ of what is indented in the performance (as Pavis says following Ingarden)”(154). Similarly, Vicki Angelaki supposes an amalgamation of social arena and stage situating the performance not in visually experienced but in mentally constructed, which creates a feeling of unpredictability (5).



“RSVP ASAP”-“please respond as soon as possible” (214), which makes up the shortest fragment.

Through various theatrical techniques, the audience of *4.48 Psychosis* is alienated as they comprehend fragmentation of mind, without reaching rational conclusions, but by experiencing it in a pre-reflective state. To actualize such a feeling, synesthetic expressions and alienation function in multiple levels both for the reader and audience in the play. The speaker’s demand for a witness and her insistent call “look away” during her suicide are juxtaposed, then her words “watch me vanish” appear on page. Reminiscent of snowflakes, they create a visuality one can observe in pattern poetry<sup>129</sup>:

I have no desire for death  
no suicide ever had

watch me vanish  
watch me

vanish

watch me

watch me

watch

Figure 1.6 from *Complete Plays* (Kane 214).

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<sup>129</sup> In pattern poetry, the shape of the poem indicates the content. She refers to “black snow” before these lines (244). As this part is like snow falling from the sky and vanishing immediately when it touches the ground, they bring form close to content. Later, Kane leaves an empty page which indicates the act of suicide.

Therefore, form and content ultimately merge again when Kane leaves an empty page after the fragment above and continues “it is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the underside of my mind” (Kane 245). To reflect the last moments of the speaker, after another huge gap, the play ends with her words “please open the curtains” (245). When the speaker utters this, the boundary between the staged world and that of the real one shatters once more, since the play alludes to the curtain call. By knitting two realms, the text also manages to point at itself, creating self-reflexivity. These lines reveal the intricate bond between the audience and the play’s author within the metaphor of witnessing, as Kane herself committed suicide after writing the play.

In the first performance, having these lines are uttered, windows of the theatre building were opened. It created a “strangely uplifting feeling” as a critic recounts, for him the performance was “like watching the final release of a turbulent spirit” (Taylor qtd in Saunders 117)<sup>130</sup>. Correspondingly, Hemming told that “words such as ‘shame’, ‘betrayal’ and ‘anger’ echo through the writing, and it is driven by merciless self-scrutiny. You start out feeling alienated by the savage bitterness of the state of mind revealed here and end up deeply saddened by it” (qtd in Knowles 177-178). Therefore, Sarah Kane’s own experience on clinical depression is also important to mention, as it knits the staged world and the realm of the audience<sup>131</sup>.

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<sup>130</sup> Paul Taylor, “A Suicide Note that is Extraordinarily Vital”, *Independent*, 30 June 2000, p.11 (qtd in Saunders *Love Me or Kill Me*, p: 117) There was no curtain call in some of the performances, juxtaposing the staged and the real world, leaving the audience “stunned [...] for a few minutes” (see Alexander’s review on *ARTSATL* <https://www.artsatl.org/review-vernal-seres-4-48-psychosis-is-as-deeply-striking-as-it-is-deeply-flawed/> and Clair’s on *The Herald* [https://www.heraldscotland.com/default\\_content/12390714.4-48-psychosis-kings-theatre/](https://www.heraldscotland.com/default_content/12390714.4-48-psychosis-kings-theatre/)).

<sup>131</sup> Alicia Tyce mentions how the first performance was affected by Kane’s own death quoting Billington’s observations “the audience watches in near silence: lovers clutch each other for comfort, someone quietly weeps, and, at the end, one person incongruously rises to applaud the cast.” (23) Director of the first performance, James Macdonald also considered this possible effect. According to one of the performers, Jo McInnes, “there was one awful night, it was so quiet you could hear a pin drop, and afterwards [...] James[Mcdonald] put us right, he told us that we didn’t let them in, we were so dark that no one was allowed into it. [...] We were moaned at the other way [in another performance] as well, that we’d made it too light, too easy, too accessible” (Machon 156-157). Though the play is reminiscent of Kane’s own suicide, one should be careful when analyzing it accordingly. Billington’s review mentioned above considers the patient in the play as Kane herself.

Such a tendency to bind the fiction with the realm of reality is aimed by postdramatic theatre. For Lehmann, it is possible to see that the body is moribund on stage, which “does not allow for a clear separation of art and reality” (166).<sup>132</sup>. Blurring the mentioned distinction, in *4.48 Psychosis*, the speaker says “They will love me for that which destroys me” (213) as if she is communicating with her audience. Self-aware of the gaze upon her, she also says “I think that you think of me/the way I’d have you think of me” (243). However, it must be kept in mind that the play should not be analyzed by mainly relying to Kane’s own death due to suicide. On this controversial matter, Sarah Kane’s brother Simon told that Kane’s own death is an essential component for her work:

At the time [after her suicide], the last thing I would have wanted to say is that it’s [*4.48 Psychosis*] a suicide note – I knew it wasn’t *just* that, that was the point. But Sarah did kill herself, and she was writing a play about what it feels like to be suicidally depressed. In practically every way you look at *4.48*, she’s blurring boundaries. That kind of uncertainty is part of what it’s about (Dickson).<sup>133</sup>

On the contrary, James MacDonald, the director of the 2000 production regarded the play “really rather disappointing as a biography. It’s more of an expressionistic

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Billington asks “But does the play, which *takes us inside Kane’s head*, have any general application?” He also recites a few lines from the play as if Kane herself is the speaker: “‘I am deadlocked’,” *says Kane*, “‘by that smooth psychiatric voice of reason which tells me there is an objective reality in which my body and mind are one. But I am not here and never have been’.” (emphases added). His initial question “How on earth do you award aesthetic points to a 75-minute suicide note?” can be found problematic as well, as it seems to underestimate the play’s aesthetic value. (See Michael Billington, “How Do You Judge a 75-Minute Suicide Note?” *Guardian*, 30 June 2000.)

<sup>132</sup>In postdramatic performances, some of the cast members might be ill and (un)willingly disclose it on stage during the performance. Lehmann recounts “when the actor Ron Vawter shortly before his death (he died of AIDS) played two homosexuals in a double portrait, it was impossible to determine whether the sudden pauses in his performance were due to moments of ‘acted’ or real exhaustion” (166). Thereby in postdramatic works “possibilities of existence that are generally repressed and excluded come to prominence in the highly physical forms ... and repudiate all perception that has established itself in the world at the expense of knowing how narrow the sphere is in which life can happen in some ‘normality’” (Lehmann 96) Having a character on stage having psychosis might be significant in that sense.

<sup>133</sup> See Andrew Dickson’s article (11 May 2016) “‘The Strange Thing Is We Howled with Laughter’: Sarah Kane’s Enigmatic Last Play.” on *Guardian*

display of what that state of mind is like”<sup>134</sup>. Nevertheless, as the mental state of a patient was aimed to be presented, a reciprocal bond between the speaker and auditorium had to be established. In the London premiere, thus, “the setting was deceptively simple” Graham Saunders recounts, “but in its design attempted to stage other states of consciousness that Kane was attempting to explore” (*Love Me or Kill Me* 115). Jeremy Herbert put a mirror on stage at a 45 degree angle, where the audience could watch the play from the mirror above their heads, and also see themselves as if they were “animals under experimentation”<sup>135</sup> (115-116). The audience was defamiliarized from their habitual way of seeing the outside world. Saunders regards the mirror as a vehicle that draws attention to separation between mind and body. Similarly, the use of multimedia in the performance functioned as a reminder that “the speakers in the play, and indeed the audience themselves were trapped in this vista, unable to participate in the outside world” (116).

Mirror is also important to reveal the relationship with one’s self and others for Merleau-Ponty. He regards the mirror as an example which can refer to one’s incarnated being in the world. For him, mirror blurs the line between subject and the world. Merleau-Ponty, the mirror image (McKinley)<sup>136</sup> exists in Dutch paintings, because “I am a visible see-er” and “there is a reflexivity of the sensible; the mirror translates and reproduces that reflexivity” (“Eye and Mind” 6). The use of mirror in a painting functions the way it does on stage, it reflects being seen and the act of seeing, revealing the intersubjective and reciprocal relationship, uniting subject and the world. We are caught in the act of gazing while being gazed at. Merleau-Ponty concludes that “man is a mirror for man.

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<sup>134</sup> See Jesse McKinley’s article “Sarah Kane’s Second Life” (24 Oct 2004) in *New York Times*

<sup>135</sup> Saunders quotes from Georgina Brown’s review on *Cleansed* (*Mail on Sunday*, 24 May 1998). Like *4.48 Psychosis*, it was also designed by Herbert who again made use of a mirror.

<sup>136</sup> He mentions how Dutch painters used mirrors to convey this relationship, mentioning that the interior of a room, and everyone in the room including the painter himself is included within the effect that mirror creates. Moreover, one’s habitual movement of eye, labor of vision is also incarnated there (“Eye and Mind” 6).

Mirrors are instruments of a universal magic that convert things into spectacle, spectacle into things, myself into another, and another into myself” (7). Therefore, with Herbert’s putting the mirror on stage creates a reciprocal bond between audience and performers. At the same time, the audience is alienated from their habitual way of seeing, by encountering their own gaze and the founding structures of mind.

In conclusion, the rush of suicidal thoughts, the effect of psychosis on the body, tormenting love are reflected through the lens of fragmented character(s) in the play. These traumatic elements are presented with synesthetic expressions. The ability to reach synthesis is what the patient cannot have because of her experience of mental illness. The idea of fragmented subjectivity is the element that brings plot, time and setting in *4.48 Psychosis*. Because all the theatrical components heavily depend on dispersed narratives, these speeches form the disorganized plot in the play. When the speaker endures psychosis, she begins to experience a queer synesthetic apprehension which shapes the concept of time and place. In accordance with that, synesthetic expressions and postdramatic elements are utilized to convey feelings of pain, anger and frustration. For the patient loses her ability to reach synthesis among multiplicity of stimuli, her pathological stance also serves as a ground of confusion for the audience, leading to “retreat of synthesis” in Lehmann’s terms. Therefore, the audience is alienated from their habitual way of apprehending the world, and Kane’s theatre achieves to create new associations between her audience and character(s) on stage, forming a reciprocal relationship between the world of fiction and the world of our own.

## CHAPTER 3

### CRAVE

*I will show you fear in a handful of dust.*  
TS Eliot, *The Waste Land*

*Crave* was staged by Paines Plough at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh in 1998. Saunders recounts *Crave* was written “less than 3 months after *Cleansed*” and while Kane was in New York (100-101). In *Crave*, Kane wanted to experiment with musicality, while she used even less words than she utilized before. Compared to her previous plays such as *Blasted* and *Phaedra’s Love*, *Crave* and *4.48* are clearly of a different form. *4.48 Psychosis* relies entirely on dispersed dialogues apt to fragmented characterization; a similar style can be observed in *Crave*. In this play, Kane used only letters for character names (A, M, C and B) and juxtaposed their lines without any discernible logical order; the play has no setting though there are abrupt references to some places within the decontextualized speech(es). To ease comprehension, the reader can follow the lines of the same character, merging the interrupted parts of his or her dispersed narratives. While these speeches give very little background information, rearranging these fragments in this way makes it possible to identify the speakers, to tracing the recurring traumatic past they are speaking of. However, the spectator cannot do this, and is exposed to an incessant narration conveyed by four characters without any act divisions, and with very little or no action on stage. The lengthy narratives which at times overlap is the result of on-going traumatic rumination, which is reminiscent of the style in which *4.48 Psychosis* is written. When asked about the identity of the characters Kane clarified:

A was 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, Abuser (because they are the same thing Author and Abuser); Aleister- as in Aleister Crowley<sup>137</sup> who wrote some interesting books ... and Antichrist. My brother came up with Arse-Hole which I thought was quite good. It was also the actor who I originally wrote it for who's called Andrew. M was simply Mother, B was Boy, and C was Child, but I didn't want to write those things down because then I thought they'd get fixed in those things forever and nothing would ever change (qtd in Saunders 104).

Similar to Kane, Sierz also believes that a clear-cut identification of the characters might limit the possible richness of further analyses<sup>138</sup>. Nevertheless, this chapter relies on the description above for a more accessible analysis. It will firstly mention "synesthetic" expressions and the function of "synesthesia" in *Crave*. Therefore the evaluation on synesthetic expressions will precede the in-depth character analysis pursued in the section "being-in-the-world". To further analyze the internal states of the characters and their fragmentation the terms "embodiment" and "being-in-the-world" will be discussed along with the traumatic speeches of the characters. Subsequently, the relationship between the characters and their (dis)embodied state within the world in which they live will be considered. Lastly, postdramatic sensibilities in *Crave* will be studied along with the occurrence of the alienation effect.

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<sup>137</sup> Aleister Crowley is a British occultist who created a religion and became famous after death. (see *Britannica* "Aleister Crowley")

<sup>138</sup> Kane also thinks that characters utter things that reveal their identities. Quoting M's lines, she says: "I thought that there were always things that the characters said that made it very clear. For example, it would've been very odd if a man had said 'when I wake I think my period must have started.' It would also be very strange if a man kept talking about how much he wanted a baby. But on the other hand, yes it could be done. I'm sure I'll see a production in Germany where this is done" (Kane qtd in Saunders 105). Kane might be referring to Ostermeier's productions of her plays here. (Haydon's chapter titled "Sarah Kane and Mark Ravenhill" has more information on how Kane was received by German spectators as well).

### 3.1 Synesthesia

In an interview she gave on 3 November 1998 in Royal Holloway College,<sup>139</sup> Kane mentioned how she planned to write *4.48 Psychosis* by drawing a diagram for Dan Rebellato. These are the pictures Kane drew to elicit the structure of her plays:

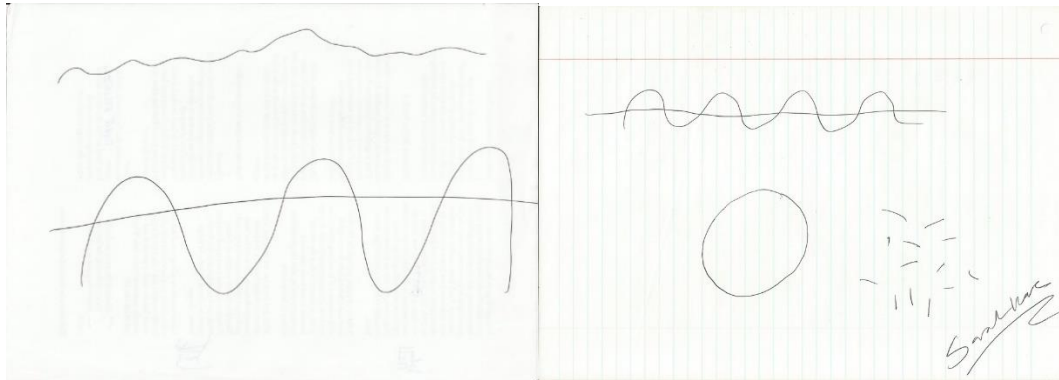


Figure 2.1 (Kane)<sup>140</sup>

On the top left, one can see *Blasted*'s plot organization -slightly fluctuating line. Below that, the second diagram on the same page is for *Cleansed*<sup>141</sup>. In the second picture right, the following circle and dots are for *4.48 Psychosis*, which can be also related to how *Crave* is organized. Kane drew a circle for the story and some fragments. Clarifying this last picture, Rebellato recounts “the analogy was with the self, experienced in bits, unprotected by any coherent sense of whole personality,

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<sup>139</sup> Rebellato says that it might be the last interview she gave, as in that winter she started to have a serious depression, and she killed herself on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1999.

<sup>140</sup> The pictures are taken from Rebellato's interview “Sarah Kane Interview” published online in his personal blog.

<sup>141</sup> For her *Cleansed* resembles to Büchner's *Woyzeck*: “the straight horizontal line represents the plot; the story is a series of dramatic peaks and troughs with only the most extreme and violent events appearing in the plot (above the line). Everything else is silenced; the ‘backstory’ is not made manifest in the play” (qtd in Rebellato “Sarah Kane Interview”)



open fatally to the world” (Rebellato “Sarah Kane Interview”) The fragmented self-perception, which necessitates a new approach on synesthetic apprehension, is the subject matter of Kane’s plays catalyzing novel ways to unite miscellany of sensory data chaotically. In this respect, there is a direct correspondence of style and content between *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave*; they are also referred to as “companion pieces both reflecting a shift in her work” (Urban 43)<sup>142</sup>. Reminiscent of her last play *4.48 Psychosis*, the characters are severely traumatized and they wish to die after a breakdown in *Crave* as will be discussed later. A, B, C and M mainly talk about the incidents that happened to them, rather than their impressions regarding those events. Therefore, albeit using fewer synesthetic expressions to describe the inner states of mind, Kane still conveys the experience of pain and chaos through such metaphors in *Crave*. Since the plot structure heavily depends on these narratives, the play juxtaposes various elements to beget distortion. Although none of the characters seem to be responding to each other, their voices are trapped within the same plane, due to a chaotic (re)arrangement of theatrical signs.

Synesthetic unity and harmony cannot be found in *Crave* for it evidently aims to experiment with the concept of synesthetic unity itself. In natural attitude, subjects are unaware of synesthetic apprehension because of sensations of color and tactile data presented harmoniously in immanence. Yet, for Merleau-Ponty, “nothing could in fact be more confused, and that because they accepted it readily, traditional analyses missed the phenomenon of perception” (*PP* 3). In *Crave*, A[buser] is tormenting C[hild] to have a relationship with him and M[other] is insisting on having a baby from B[oy]. The incidents on stage reveal the utter confusion due to distorted synesthetic perception. Inviting the spectator or the reader to perceive loss of such a founding structure, none of the characters are presented with background information, and the text becomes a locus of impressions. Dramatic time heavily

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<sup>142</sup> After watching both plays Lyn Gardner comments: “it is quite clear that they [*Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*] are as linked as night and day. They are like a pair of terrible, beautiful twins, fascinating, subtly different and yet also the same. You can’t stop staring although you know for decency’s sake you ought to avert your gaze (“*Crave/4.48 Psychosis*”).

depends on narratives, which are also not linear in this play. The characters retell their traumatic memories simultaneously, and their responses occasionally form a unity. When this collision is repeated more than once, the audience deduce the events and identify the characters. A and C occasionally seem to respond to each other, while M and B's speeches intervene, forming the other pair. At times, their speeches merge into a whole:

**A** Has it ever occurred to you you're looking in the wrong place?  
**M** Now.  
**B** Never.  
**C** No. (160-161).

In *Crave*, far-fetched synesthetic metaphors convey the impression of pain. It is possible to encounter these impressions when C says she saw her mother being beaten. Simultaneously A gives an account of his feelings about C concerning the aftermath of his abuse:

**A** We made love, then she threw up.  
**C** No one to help me not my fucking mother neither.  
**A** I crossed two rivers and wept by one.  
**M** I close my eyes and I see her close her eyes and she sees you.  
**A** The *scream of a daffodil*,  
**M** The *stain of a scream*.  
**C** I watched my father beat my mother with a walking stick.  
**A** A stain,  
**C** An echo,  
**A** A stain  
**B** I'm sorry you saw that.  
**B** I'm sorry he did it. (emphases added, Kane 179).

In parallel with the confusion on stage, deixis can only be inferred in the fragmented moments, as is found in B's response (I'm sorry you saw *that*). However, it is not clear whether B refers to C's sexual abuse, or her being witness to the violence that happened in the domestic sphere. Hence the deictic relationship is in constant change on stage for none of the characters is directly addressing the other. In tandem with that, synesthetic expressions reveal that the characters experience utter confusion due

to relating appalling incidents which are extremely hard for them to express . According to Merleau-Ponty, an object is “an organism of colours, smells, sounds and tactile appearances which symbolize, modify and accord with each other according to the laws of a real logic”(PP 45). However, synesthetic expressions in the play do not resonate with this proclaimed logic, due to the fact that the speakers channel traumatic events to the viewers while undergoing fragmentation. These violent incidents the characters recount have their own peculiarities that are hard to comprehend for a person who did not experience such pain. Hence, synesthetic impressions such as “the scream of a daffodil”, “the stain of a scream” and “an echo” communicate subjective experiences.

Indicating such a need to form other means to describe distinctive qualia, Kane reported that she was interested in the “inadequacy of language to express emotion” (Kane qtd in Stephanson and Langridge 132). She also believed in staging anything that is hard to convey, which was her moral stance as a playwright. She claimed: “If you are saying that you can't represent something, you are saying you can't talk about it, you are denying its existence. My responsibility is to the truth, however difficult that truth happens to be.” (qtd in Urban “An Ethics” 39). One of the examples of such an emphasis on qualia is expressed by C: “No one can know what the night is like” (187). To express truth about perplexing inner states of mind, which are taken to be incommunicable<sup>143</sup>, Kane utilized far-fetched synesthetic expressions albeit sacrificing the plot linearity.

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<sup>143</sup> Sarah Kane seem to work on elements of “qualia” while using synesthetic expressions extensively to depict what is generally understood to be unrepresentable. Mental qualia is the phenomenal experiences, which are subjective, “intrinsic-non representable qualities”. Michael Tye lists them as “perceptual experiences” like in the case of “hearing trumpet, seeing green, smelling the sea air”; “bodily sensations” for example, “a twinge of pain”, “feeling an itch”, “having stomach ache”; reactions or emotions “feeling lust, fear, love, grief, regret” and moods such as “feeling elated, depressed, calm, bored, tense, miserable” (please see Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy “Qualia” and Haugeland pp:230-235). William S. Haney also believes writers like Beckett, Ibsen and Strindberg aim at describing “qualia” by poetic images to draw attention to mental phenomena and how it is experienced prior to reflection (38).

Along with the postdramatic elements which will be discussed further, the distortion in synesthetic apprehension has a profound effect on characterization in terms of fragmentation as well. Due to being recounted at moments close to breakdown or traumatic rumination, these characters distort the idea of time, place and action; their speeches are barely comprehensible but function as if they are commentaries. In the disorganized speech given before, C's own violation and her mother's condition are communicated by B and M through synesthetic expressions. Accordingly, in the fragment below, taken from the beginning of the play, A and C seemingly comment on B and M's exchange:

**B** Will you come round and seduce me? I need to be seduced by an older woman.  
**M** I'm not an older woman.  
**B** Older than me, not older *per se*.  
**C** You've fallen in love with someone that doesn't exist.  
**A** Tragedy.  
**B** Really (158).

It might be thought that each character has a function similar to a member of a chorus in classical Greek drama, commenting on the traumatic events<sup>144</sup> that the other character(s) endured. Yet, there is neither action nor a clear exchange that can be reckoned as dialogue while these speeches collide to form the plot. Though each character refers to, and thereby seems to know the incidents the other(s) experienced; the audience has to infer what is being referred to between the lines, and sometimes they are left clueless due to the play's rather fast pace. Therefore, similar to 4.48 *Psychosis*, synesthesia does not function to present the world in unity, but it conveys to the audience a feeling of a severe fragmentation of subjectivity. The plot organization also presents such disruption, the decontextualised voices confuse the

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<sup>144</sup> When Saunders asks about A's function as "the audience's guide" Featherstone, the director of the first performance of the play, accepts and says "when we started rehearsals we saw him as the chat show host" (*Love Me or Kill Me* 133). Gutscher discusses the possible use of chorus in Kane's *Cleansed*, but she does not certainly conclude that the Voices can be regarded as a choral element in the play (88-89).

audience and distort their synesthetic perception to some extent <sup>145</sup>. It is also not possible to identify the speakers, for instance, we cannot truly guess the identity of A[buser]. Towards the middle of the play, the reader learns that C's mother may have been murdered by A:

**A** Guilt *lingers* like the *smell of death* and nothing can free me from *this cloud of blood*.

**C** You killed my mother.

**A** She was already dead (Kane 184; emphases added).

It is possible that C[hild]'s mother was murdered by her father, or it might be her abuser. Yet, C was abused by her father, grandfather and a stranger in the play, and it is hard to guess whether any or all of these might also be A. We may assume that A[buser] stands for all the aggressors, singular or plural<sup>146</sup>-he might be both the murderer and the people who sexually assaulted C, and therefore not really a single character at all, but just the voice of this amorphous personification of abuse.

Bringing *4.48 Psychosis* to mind, in the quotation give above A seems to be merging olfactory stimuli with the incessant pain that guilt causes. Towards the end of the play, one may find more synesthetic expressions as the speaker(s) start to be drawn closer to the idea of fragmentation and death. Synesthetic utterances guide the reader or audience to understand tormenting feelings such as "fear" which "rumbles over the city sky" (189), never leaving the characters alone. To indicate the prolonged pain they experience the speaker(s) utilize(s) synesthetic metaphors further:

**A** Move in shadows, once in a fog.

**M** Pain is a *shadow*.

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<sup>145</sup> **B** Where you been?

**M** Here and there.

**C** Leave.

**B** Where?

**C** Now.

**M** There. (Kane 157). It is not possible to guess to whom these questions are addressed, for the deixis is lost.

<sup>146</sup> In such case, A might be "embodiment" of all the evil C has encountered, which will be discussed further in the next section of this thesis.

A The *shadow* of my *lie*.  
C Red rock of ages  
B You're not a bad person, you just think too much. (Kane 193).

While these metaphors do not resemble conventional ones such as a “bright sound” or a “sweet smell”, they convey the inner states of the mentally deteriorated characters. They resemble the synesthetic expressions in *4.48 Psychosis*, which were also used for unreturned love. To reveal his painful interdependence with M, for instance, B says:

C When she left –  
B *The spine of my life is broken.*  
A Why is *light* given to one in misery  
C Bring her back.  
A And life to the *bitter in soul*  
B If you were here –  
M I am here.  
A Like a *deep summer shadow.*  
C I love her I miss her  
B I'm through. (193; emphases added)

If light stands for knowing one's self, C's frustration resonates with profound knowledge of the inaccessibility of one's essential self. Reminiscent of the speaker in *4.48 Psychosis*, separation from M causes great distress for B. Once more, pain is associated with taste “bitter in soul”, and corresponding to A's guilt likened to a cloud expressing a quasi-presence of a feeling. Similarly, the existence of M is rendered like an in-between entity, a shadow. Evident in C and B's lines, M ceases to exist, yet she claims to be there still, which can be analyzed together with the Merleau-Pontian insights into being-in-the-world and phantom limb phenomena and with reference to the traumatic memories recollected by the characters. These concepts will be studied in the following section.

It could be concluded that synesthetic expressions in *Crave* unveil the traumatic experiences of the speakers, contributing to the plot organization which consists of dispersed dialogues. The speaker(s) apprehend the world around them in a distinctive way, peculiar to their mental degradation and deterioration, and they seem to

colligate disparate events, while also managing to juxtapose sensory stimuli in a novel pattern. Synesthetic depictions in the play not only convey the inner states of mind, but when thought of as the structure of apprehension, distortion in synesthesia influences characterization and plot organization. There are fewer synesthetic metaphors in the play than in *4.48 Psychosis*, which is likely to be because in *Crave* Kane narrates traumatic events more than their impressions, which shows that her writing becomes even more impressionistic and experimental after this play, at the end of her career.

### **3.2 Being-in-the-World:**

In *Crave*, it is possible to realize that the world is unresponsive. The speakers are unaware of their condition as victims or aggressors since they are dissociated from the world. The characters are suffering from trauma, which haunts them like a phantom limb. They feel that life is meaningless, and they do not want to live. This section claims that by staging “being-in-the-world” phenomena in relation to pathological figures, Kane’s theatre reveals the foundations of a mind, and communicates the mindset of mentally ill persona.

In the play, characters prove the absurdity of “being-in-the-world” according to the traumatic events they encountered. The beginning of the play provides some clues about the identity of all characters and the personality disorders of which they are mostly unaware. For instance, A says he is “not a rapist”, but a “pedophile” and ironically introduces himself as “a rarity”: “I don’t drink. I hate smoking. I’m vegetarian. I don’t fuck around. I’ve never visited a prostitute and I’ve never had a sexually transmitted disease other than thrush” (162). B says he “wants to die”, he smokes and drinks and he is most probably addicted: “I shake when I don’t have it

[...] Brain melts when I do” (159)<sup>147</sup> He wants to be seduced by an older woman, having an affair with M. M is an older woman, but she wants to have a baby fathered by B. She introduces herself with reference to the random affair she had<sup>148</sup>, and later she reveals she is afraid of getting older: “I don’t want to grow old and cold and be too poor to dye my hair [...] I don’t want to die alone and not to be found till my bones are lean and the rent overdue” (165). In her relationship with B, she is the abusive partner. At the beginning of the play, none of the speeches clearly contribute to meaning. The characters seem to reside in a chaotic mindscape, existing only as voices. After a few lines, the sound of a “beat” seems to carry them to the same locus:

**C** Somewhere outside the city, I told my mother, You're dead to me.

**B** No that's not it

[...]

**M** Is it possible?

**B** Sorry?

**A** I'm not a rapist.

**M** David?

*A beat*

**B** Yeah.

**A** I'm a paedophile.

**M** Do you remember me?

*A beat*

**B** Yeah. (Kane 155-156).

In the lines above, A or B might be remembering a moment, or they might be confronting one another in their mindscape. “David” is the only name that can be found in the play other than the above mentioned letters. However, it is not possible to know if B is David for certain, for C utters the name when telling about her own sexual abuse, and is interrupted by A, which complicates the interpersonal

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<sup>147</sup> The reader or audience can only guess what “it” refers to, for there is loss of deictic relationship. Jolene Armstrong says that he is addicted to sex (153).

<sup>148</sup> M says “I keep telling people I'm pregnant. They say How did you do it, what are you taking? I say I drank a bottle of port, smoked some fags and fucked a stranger” (155).



relationships in the play<sup>149</sup>. *Crave* is one of the bleakest of Kane's plays, for the characters are isolated from the outside world and trapped within their memories and pathological states of mind. This utter dissociation also complicates characterization, for the reader can hardly collect data about the relationships between the voices. As if to stress the characters' isolation from the outside world, A claims "The outside world is vastly overrated" (189), underestimating the vital bond one shares with the world, for these characters are disconnected from life, their worldview depends heavily on their distorted self-perception. For instance, A[buser]'s page-long ceaseless speech is full of expressions of romantic love he felt for C[hild]. In that part, no other character intervenes and no punctuation is used, a postdramatic trait causing immense restlessness in its listeners. This long narrative starts with A's wish to play hide and seek with C, and continues very disturbingly:

[I want to] give you my clothes and tell you I like your shoes and sit on the steps while you take a bath and massage your neck and kiss your feet and hold your hand and go for a meal and not mind when you eat my food and meet you at Rudy's and talk about the day and type up your letters and carry your boxes and laugh at your paranoia and give you tapes you don't listen to and watch great films and watch terrible films and complain about the radio [...] (169)

As seen in the speech above, A does not regard himself as a pervert. In the aftermath of this incessant narrative, C succumbs to mental distress, repeating the same things over and over in a paragraph: "this has to stop this has to stop this has to stop [...] It's getting worse" (170). It is not clear whether A and C are situated in the same time and place, but their voices seem to form an exchange. C might be remembering A's words that were once addressed to her, or A might be the one recalling the same incident. Nevertheless, they are placed as the aggressor and the victim, blind to their own condition. Their narratives flow parallel to each other, generating opposing discourses, relating the same event from two different perspectives. A[buser] thinks

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<sup>149</sup> This is how she narrates the incident: "The navy denim dress I wore at six, the elastic red and blue belt tight round my waist, nylon socks, the hard crust of scabs on my knees, the metal barred climbing frame between my legs, David –" She is stopped by A: "NO" (176). We cannot know if C also had an affair with B or if it is A whom she speaks about.

he is “lost in the mess of a woman” (171) and only partially regards his ill-doing as a crime at times of guilt. In the play, such recurring traumatic recounts are prevalent as a motif. C constantly recalls A, later revealing her romantic feelings for him when she asks “How did I lose you?” and in return A answers “You threw me away” (185). Likewise, B narrates having an infatuation for M, although they do not have a real love affair. These recurring traumatic circumstances and distorted self-perception, for Merleau-Ponty, resemble phantom limb syndrome that is “not a recollection” but “a quasi-present and the patient feels it now, folded over his chest, with no hint of its belonging to the past” (*PP* 98-99). Trapped in their thoughts, characters in *Crave* relive persistent traumatic incidents simultaneously, which are delivered in pieces. The recurring reference to past incidents, both in *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave*, might be an example of the repressed memories which utterly haunt the stage. Merleau-Ponty relates phantom limb syndrome to trauma, which also discloses the chaos and distorted perception in *Crave*:

Rather than admit failure or retrace one’s steps, the subject, caught in this existential dilemma breaks in pieces the objective world [...] They establish and maintain its place, prevent it from being abolished, and cause it still to count in the organism. They keep empty an area which the subject’s history fills, they enable the latter to build up the phantom, as structural disturbances allow the content of psychosis to form into delirium (*PP* 99).

This rejection is presented by B and A together with their pathological love affair, for they say they think, dream and talk about the person they are attached to; and that they like having them in their “system” (173). B and M’s ghostly presences ruin each other on a mental plane; and A and C continue to suffer for the same reason. These traumatic incidents cause self-inflicted harm in the form of rumination, and the subjects sever their habitual bonds with the world. Their narratives seem to be solipsistic at first glance, but they have a meaning when the audience evaluates them together. By interlacing these accounts, the understanding of time and place is molded in the play. Time is rendered vague due to the fact that C and others start to lose their memory:

**B** She *wants* a kid *yesterday*.

[...]

**C** Listen.

**B** Look.

**C** Listen. I am here to remember. I need to... remember. I have this grief and I *don't* know why.

**C** I *didn't*

**A** I don't

**C** Understand (171; emphases added)

It is hardly possible to guess when M wanted the baby, for there are few references to time apart from this line. The use of present and past tenses altogether also reveal that the concept of time is lost. C seems to lose her memory, and in tandem with that, she loses her agency and subjectivity. According to Merleau-Ponty, the subject and temporality cannot be analyzed disparately, time is “the affecting of self by self”; as a multiplicity of presents it is unfolded by the subject who moves from “one present to another” (*PP* 495). Kane juxtaposes all those “presents” chaotically by eroding subjectivity through trauma and memory loss. Recounting their memories totally in confusion, the characters shatter the concept of time, creating layers of narrative to which each voice on stage contributes. Due to mental deterioration and trauma, for instance, C perceives and expresses time ambiguously: “Three summers ago I was bereaved. No one died but I lost my mother (155). [...] I believe in anniversaries. That a mood can be repeated even if the event that caused it is trivial or forgotten. In this case it's neither [...] When I wake I think my period must have started or rather never stopped because it only finished three days ago” (155-156). Referring to her own biological rhythm and her menstrual cycle and her failure to track her own body, C seems to have lost her concept of time. She is repressing the events she cannot forget, haunting her like a phantom limb for she moans, “I keep coming back” (177). As if having an anniversary, the same events are being pondered on, while she also starts to have problems regarding her memory.

Later C recounts various events related to her violation to how she lost her children: “I have children, the men come, I am fighting but they take them, I realise, the men, they came, they said, in the night, they said” (178). The way C’s narrative goes back and forth in time shows that she ties traumatic events together without a particular linearity. For Merleau-Ponty, “being-in-the world” establishes the understanding of time, for time is the outcome of the relationship between the embodied subject and the world. According to him, time is “not a real process” but “arises from my relation to things. [...] It is often said that, within things themselves, the future is not yet, the past is no longer, while the present, strictly speaking, is infinitesimal, so that time collapses” (PP 478). Because the subject is correlated with time and all the being, time is understood as a fold of presents, that is, present times, in which the subject exists and perceives. In *Crave*, since the bond between the world and the subjects is ruptured, subjective time- that is the result of experiences, interpersonal exchanges, actions and inner states of mind- is distorted. Thus, the cycle of life seem to be depicted as meaningless, people only yield to the routine to which they are compelled:

**A** Most people,  
**B** They get on,  
**A** They get up,  
**B** They get on.  
**A** My hollow heart is full of darkness.  
 [...]

**M** Filled with emptiness.  
**B** Satisfied with nothing (175).

In the play, this meaninglessness is manifested repetitively in various manners. The characters seem to have lost their faith in life, regarding it as an endless circle of traumatic events following one another without any inherent logic. They feel empty and express their feelings while their speeches merge to indicate emptiness as a motif also present in *4.48 Psychosis*<sup>150</sup>:

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<sup>150</sup> *4.48 Psychosis* resembles *Crave* in such an extent that the reader can accept Kane’s last play as a continuation of *Crave*. For instance, the unnamed speaker in *4.48 Psychosis* says “There’s no drug on earth that can make life meaningful” (220).

**C** Don't fill my stomach if you can't fill my heart<sup>151</sup>.

**B** You will fill my head as only someone who is absent can (187)

In this futility, even death loses its meaning as C believes “You can only kill yourself if you're not already dead” (183), which also draws attention to the experienced duality between the body and mind. She apparently refers her body and mind as distinct entities in other parts of the play as well: “Cured my body, can't cure my soul” (199). She says she wants to feel “physically as she is emotionally. Starved” while her words are completed by M's remark: “Beaten”, and A's “Broken” (179). When a man (probably A/buser) buys C a make-up kit, she paints “bruises, cuts, swellings” on her face and writes “ugly” on the mirror (180). This denotes her self-perception, which indicates a distorted mental state. In habitual perception, the body and soul are not conceived as disparate entities, and the subject is not aware of his/her body when immersed in the action. For Merleau-Ponty, the union of the body and soul “is not an amalgamation between two mutually external terms, subject and object, brought about by arbitrary decree. It is enacted at every instant in the movement of existence (*PP* 102). Because these figures cannot have this pre-predicative condition, bifurcation of body and mind becomes a motif, which is also prevalent in Kane's last play *4.48 Psychosis*. Similar to C, M also goes through disembodiment. She says the shape of her head alarms her: “I catch sight of it [her head] reflected in a darkened train window, the landscape passing through the image of my head. Not that there is anything unusual or... alarming...about the shape of my head, but it does...alarm me”(160). Her distorted bodily apprehension emphasizes the perceived duality between body and mind. Contributing to that, C says she wants to be someone else and refers to herself always in the third person because she cannot accept who she is:

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<sup>151</sup> Again a similar line can be found in *4.48 Psychosis*: “I can fill my space fill my time but nothing can fill this void in my heart” (219).

**C** She is currently having some kind of nervous breakdown and wishes she'd been born black, male and more attractive

[...]

**C** She's talking about herself in the third person because the idea of being who she is, of acknowledging that she is herself, is more than her pride can take

[...]

**C** She's sick to the fucking gills of herself and wishes wishes wishes that something would happen to make life begin. (Kane 182-183).

The expressed dissection between body and mind is crucial, for both M and C can never perceive the world in unity, and they feel alienated from their bodies.

According to Merleau-Ponty, the body as a permanent perceiver cannot be understood as an object in the world, “but as our means of communication with it” and the world is revealed like a “horizon latent in all our experience [...] ever-present and anterior to every determining thought” (*PP* 106). Hence, M and C’s bodily dissociation result in disorientation and loss of identity. Towards the end of the play, C totally loses herself and she expresses her in-betweenness through a metaphor: “That's me. Exist in the swing. Never still, never one thing or the other, always moving from one extreme to the furthest reaches of the other” (193). This in-betweenness is stressed further with a direct allusion to Hamlet’s fourth soliloquy (“To be or not to be”) uttered in pieces by all the characters in the play:

**A** What do you want?

**C** To die.

**B** To sleep.

**M** No more. (158).

In this soliloquy, Hamlet famously ponders on the meaning of existence<sup>152</sup> and life. Self-reflection alienates him from his own being, which situates Hamlet within a

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<sup>152</sup> In an interview, Kane told that “theatre has no memory, which makes it the most existential of the arts. No doubt that is why I keep coming back, in the hope that someone in a dark room somewhere will show me an image that burns itself into my mind, leaving a mark more permanent than the moment itself” (qtd in Saunders “Love Me or Kill Me” 14). Thereby, it is possible to discuss her writing with the school of existentialism.

“void” between being and nothingness<sup>153</sup>. Paying tribute to the elaborate nature of this dilemma, a self-reflective state is being rendered by the characters in the quotation above. For one can never reach an idea of self in totality, and reflection on existence loosens the threads that binds us to our environment, presenting the world as “strange and paradoxical” (*PP* xv). Dismissing the idea of a transcendental truth, Merleau-Ponty writes : “We are in the world, since indeed our reflections are carried out in the temporal flux on the which we are trying to seize [...] There is no thought which embraces all our thought” (xv). For him, in the habitual apprehension of the world, being is not something one reflects on, but it is a silent perceiver, interlaced with the environment without losing its identity. Because the characters in *Crave* have lost this inherent unity due to trauma and exercising or suffering from violence, they are alienated from their own existence and they want to die. When they express how they feel, their speeches overlap, revealing the “being-in-the-world” of a pathological mind. Referring to one of the solid places in the play, C discloses that she is hospitalized by imploring: “Put me down or put me away” and A completes her line: “No one survives life” (187). In the later parts of the play, C’s treatment becomes a form of torture for her, and her wearisome medication process is reflected through repetitions :

**C** They switch on my light every hour to check I'm still breathing.  
**B** Again.  
**C** I tell them sleep deprivation is a form of torture.  
**B** Again and again.  
**M** If you commit suicide you'll only have to come back go through it again.  
**B** The same lesson, again and again.  
**A** Thou shalt not kill thyself.  
**C** Vanity, not sanity, will keep me intact.  
**M** Do you ever hear voices?  
**B** Only when they talk to me.

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<sup>153</sup> Asli Tekinay also uses Sartrean terms “void” and “nothingness” when analyzing Hamlet through Kierkegaard and his existentialism. (see “From Shakespeare to Kierkegaard: An Existential Reading of Hamlet” pp: 115-124)

A Weary souls with dry mouths (Kane 188)<sup>154</sup>.

As the fragment above shows, the characters endure mental disorders together and they might be all hospitalized except for M who interrogates them possibly in the role of a doctor. Similar to *4.48 Psychosis*, *Crave* also criticizes health institutions by placing a patient-would-be in the role of a doctor. These interwoven speeches in the form of a decontextualized exchange reveal that “being-in-the-world” of a unhealthy mind can be understood only through suffering and derangement, which breaks away from the apparently natural attitude the spectator holds. It is possible that these characters have committed suicide more than once, but have been saved by a health institution that is more tormenting for them. Similar to B, C is also delusional; whenever she looks at something carefully, she says “it swarms with larvae” (175). The characters experience “a horror so deep” that “only ritual can contain it/Express it/Explain it/Maintain it” (176) in their words. Originating from ritual, theatre becomes a convenient area to present such a feeling. Accompanied by this feeling of terror, the characters begin to suffer from erosion of subjectivity as C implores “where’s my personality gone?” (194) through the end of the play. The others contribute to her speech, for they also seem to have lost cognizance of their own body:

C Weight.  
B Don't know.  
M Date.  
A Don't know.  
B Fate.  
C Don't know (195).

Their condition indicates issues regarding “body image” which is understood to be “a compendium of our bodily experience, capable of giving a commentary and meaning to the internal impressions and the impression of possessing a body at any moment”

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<sup>154</sup> Repetition is among postdramatic traits the play has. There is a striking contrast between the wish to “move on” and inaction in the play.



(*PP* 113). Such a distortion results in confusion and feelings of emptiness and thus life loses its meaning. C finds living unbearable: “She ceases to continue with the day to day farce of getting through the next few hours in an attempt to ward off the fact that she doesn’t know how to get through the next forty years” (Kane 183). The characters start to express their physical degradation, which happens to be another symptom of their traumas, presenting the experienced dissection between body and mind. This pain comes by “association”, creating a physical ache which “kicks” inside:

**B** Something inside me that kicks like a bastard.  
**C** A dull ache in my solar plexus.  
**M** Have you ever been hospitalised?  
**A** Pain by association.  
**C** I need a miracle to save me.  
**M** What for?  
**A** Insanity.  
**C** Anorexia. Bulimia  
[...]  
**A** The truth is simple.  
**C** I'm evil, I'm damaged, and no one can save me (173).

The speakers also mention “impaired judgement, sexual dysfunction, anxiety, headaches, nervousness, sleeplessness, restlessness, nausea, diarrhea, itching, shaking, sweating, twitching” (187) among the other illnesses listed above. This long list evokes the symptoms that are presented by the speaker in *4.48 Psychosis*, indicating the urgency of the situation characters endure. The theatrical space becomes the locus of their distorted impressions, while their physical degradation is verbalized. Whereas the characters are afflicted by dissociation, their pathological state shows that the body and mind are closely related in the play, dissolving the mind-body problem that is also thematized. According to Carel, studying illnesses illuminates the normal experience “because it both extends and contrasts with it” and he also proposes that pathologies “can be developed into a phenomenological method in their own right” (201). A similar endeavor can be found in Kane’s theatre, where she presents mental illness to point at the primary structures of the mind.

### 3.3 Embodiment in *Crave*:

In *Crave*, characters seem to reflect the cruelty of the outside world as if it is inlaid in their traumas. However, the characters cannot relate themselves to the world, while the concept of time is heavily influenced by their loss of identity. These characters haunt each other within their memories and both because of this and contributing to it, the world around them becomes increasingly uncanny. A confusing multiplicity of incidents are given within their narratives, which show the intricate relationship between the subjects and the world around them. This section analyzes the manifestation of intersubjectivity in *Crave* together with the term “embodiment”.

In *Crave*, most of the characters are adversely influenced by the other personas; they harm their surroundings while simultaneously being tormented. For instance, C has problems with her family, she was abused when she was a child and had witnessed domestic violence as mentioned before. Her familial bonds are constantly referred and the lines reveal how they are detrimental for her:

**C** I hate the smell of my own family (158).

[...]

**A** Why do you do this?

**C** I find it alarming.

**M** There's so little time

**B** Base 1.

Base 2.

Base 3.

Bingo

**C** You'll smell better when you're dead than you do now (160).

[...]

**A** A mother beats her child savagely because it runs out in front of a car (161).

**C** Shit on a plate. Look enthusiastic or your own mother will take you apart (195).

C seems to be addressing A when she says she loathes his smell in the quote above. A and C seem to be pairs, inflicting pain and haunting each other. Therefore, the

stage becomes the locus of the intersection of the multiplicity of evil. A's smell is redolent of C's family which is also abominable because of the abuse they both exercises.

In the play, A seems to be narrating nearly all the incidents apart from his own acts that are "beyond the pale" (174)-- C's violation when she was a child, and her parents' cruel fights, --which situates him not only as C's abuser, but also as the center of all the evil narrated on stage. Among all the other elements, he also mentions the Vietnam War (out of context), the only event referring to the outside world in the play: "A Vietnamese girl, her entire existence given meaning and permanence in the thirty seconds she fled from her village, skin melting, mouth open" (180). He alludes to a well-known photo, which pictures a naked child with other children running, crying or screaming, from a napalm attack on their village.



Figure 2.2 Pulitzer Prize winner "Napalm Girl" (Ut).

This embodiment of evil within the persona of A corresponds with C's stance as the absolute victim. She seems to be the victim of sexual molestation, family abuse and becomes "the Other" in all respects, because she is also rendered mentally and physically impaired due to her breakdowns. Therefore, although A and C are trapped within their minds in a solipsistic way, they are also heavily influenced by the world

they are situated in; but they cannot have any connection with it, existing as outcasts because of the marginal status they have as the aggressor and the victim, and they are also the representatives of the bleak side of the world far from the sight. They are interwoven with the chaos and cannot comprehend their environment. Thus, A seems to have lost the ability to truly recognize his position as the abuser, and C also has dissociative problems.

In the play, the characters seem to have serious issues with family figures and they have no one to whom they can communicate their problems. A recounts the abuse of “a small dark girl” (157) who is violated by her grandfather and father at the same time in a car. C says she could never leave that car park (189), disclosing her traumatic past. She also says she is “still sleeping with Daddy” (180), revealing her recurring violation by talking as if she is still a little child. Due to her mental instability and her disarranged speech, the audience has to juxtapose these pieces of her narrative. For instance, it is also C who says “What ties me to you is guilt” (165), revealing that her abuse by A did not happen once, but became a kind of an affair. She seems to blame her mother for what she experienced as well, and she constantly recalls her memories of her mother: “Shit on a plate. Look enthusiastic or your own mother will take you apart [...] Somewhere outside the city, I told my mother, You're dead to me” (155) When she is abused, she feels helpless: “No one to help me not my fucking mother neither” As C’s narration clearly shows, while these characters seek help from each other, it is impossible for them to obtain it. Moreover, the characters seem to rely on unhealthy intrasubjective bonds, for C wants M as her mother when she seems to be in the role of M’s patient in the middle of the play:

**C** You could be my mother.

**M** I'm not your mother.

**C** I have this guilt and I don't know why

**A** Only love can save me and love has destroyed me (173-174)

These same lines are repeated when B and M are in a relationship. B believes M could be his mother, feeling a sort of an incestuous attachment to a stranger who is

older than he is. In return, M rejects B in the same way -repeating “I am not your mother” (168)-she had done when talking to C. However, towards the end of the play, M wants to be B’s mother. This time, it is B who rejects such a bond. While B does not want to be the M’s partner at first<sup>155</sup>, his unhealthy attachment to M in later parts of the play resembles to A and C’s pathological affair as a pair. They do not have a real bond since B reveals: “In a day or two I’ll go back for another affair, although the affair is now so on-going it almost constitutes a relationship” (174). Yet, he later feels that he is overly attached to M: “If you died it would be like my bones had been removed” (192). This constant change in the intersubjective/intrasubjective exchanges also reflect the instability of the world around the characters. A’s line “Only love can save me and love has destroyed me” at the end of the fragment above becomes even more meaningful, for these character’s voices seem to be facing traumas lurking behind the love bond they had. They continue to harm each other to such an extent that it results in utter disembodiment, trauma and then repression. Devastated but remaining co-dependent, these figures exemplify traumatic bonding, which causes (dis)embodiment. They both “love, hate, and need” (189) each other, which complicates the plot organization and characterization in the play:

**C** I love you.

**M** Too late.

**A** It's over.

**C** (Emits a formless cry of despair.)

**A** silence.

**A** We don't know we're born.

**C** What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me?

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<sup>155</sup> **M** If love would come.

**B** It's just not me. (Kane 160).

they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me?<sup>156</sup>

**M** Grow up and stop blaming mother (191).

In the part above, C seems to be addressing both M and A, and all the evil that is done to her is posed in third person plural. M seems to be talking as if C's mother is demanding her to grow up, which complicates interpersonal relationships. It is apparent that C is harmed physically and mentally, which can only be expressed through the ruptured embodied relationship one has with the world. As the subject is interlaced with the world and her body is a silent agent responding to stimuli, sexual abuse and oppression results in disembodiment. Thus, disembodiment might be the natural result of unhealthy and obsessive bonds these characters form as a substitute to healthy bonding. As her abuser(s) torment C, her aggressor(s) also cannot remain intact mentally and physically, but they experience utter rupture as a consequence of trauma and violence they enacted and endured. Because the subject has a reciprocal relationship with the outside world, as Merleau-Ponty claims, their collective pain and breakdown shows the outcome of a ruptured bond they all experience as the victim(s) and the aggressor(s):

**B** My back aches.

**C** My head aches.

**A** My heart aches. (Kane 166)

[...]

**C** (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

**A** beat.

**C** (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

**B** (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

**M** (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

**B** (Emits a short one syllable scream)

**A** (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

**M** (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

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<sup>156</sup> I had the chance to watch Chichester Festival's production of *Crave* directed by Tinuke Craig on internet. In the performance there was an extensive use of multimedia, helping the spectator to realize inner states of characters and some of the lines in the play were being reflected. As there was always a shift of center through use of projected images of actors, I believe the performance could be analyzed with the help of Susan Broadhurst's terms. Eirini Nedelkopolou also evaluated Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (Athens 2003) together with philosophy of Merleau-Ponty to analyze the use of technology, creating an effect close to "chiasm".

C (Emits a short one syllable scream.)  
A beat. (Kane 186-187)

In line with this mental collapse they experience all together, the setting abruptly changes into that of a mental institution. After that reconfiguration, the identity of the characters change. M becomes the doctor of C, asking questions, insisting: “If you won’t talk, I can’t help you” (187). C’s reply “Silence or violence” discloses that she has been forced to keep silent before, which prevents her from speaking to her psychiatrist. At the beginning of the play while C[hild] suffers, A[buser] perceives their forced sexual relationship as a love affair and he constantly moans because of losing her:

A And I am shaking, sobbing with the memory of her, when she loved me, before I was her torturer, before there was no room in me for her, before we misunderstood, in fact the very first moment I saw her, her eyes smiling and full of the sun, and I shudder with grief for that moment which I've been hurtling away from ever since.  
B Begin again, begin again. (177).

His attitude as a lover seems to be changed at the end of the play, A stops “loving” C, saying “I lied for you and that is why I cannot love you” (188) and this causes great pain for her. It tears her apart, for while she is aware of her state as the victim, she also thinks that she has feelings for A: “You get mixed messages because I have mixed feelings” (165). These sudden changes due to memory loss, traumatic thoughts and narratives of violence cause an utter disorientation, the characters totally lose their balance:

C I'm not ill, I just know that life is not worth living.  
A I've lost my faith in honesty.  
B Lost my faith in  
M *Forwards, upwards, onwards,*  
C *Lost.* (188; emphases added).

The words of direction are all defined through the body's direction and how it is situated, so loss of such a structure indicates not only a pathological state of mind but also a problem regarding bodily apprehension. According to Merleau-Ponty, the "embodied" experience of the subject generates spatial and temporal apprehension<sup>157</sup>. In other words, the deictic relationships are formed through our bodily presence and our situatedness, which creates the context and possibility of communication. Merleau-Ponty proclaims the necessity to comprehend "the perspectives and the point of view as our insertion into the world-as-an individual, and perception, no longer as a constitution of the true object, but as our inherence in things" (*PP* 408). Hence, when these characters endure mental pain, an outcome of dissociation, their sense of direction is lost along with their sense of identity and self-perception. Kane's theatre communicates such a pathological state by merging form with the content, which can be discussed through experimental techniques predominant in her oeuvre.

The portrayal of nature also contributes to the understanding of isolation in the play. Characters expect a real love that is "rooted and grows upwards in daylight" (190) but they cannot reach it. The natural cycles of nature seem to point at nothingness and create an absurd repetition which one has to accept. There is no cure for the evil in the world, the outside world is ignorant of the experienced pain that is hidden from the plain sight:

**M** Absence sleeps between the buildings at night,  
**C** Between the cars in the lay-by,  
**B** Between the day and the night (189)

[...]

**A** Life happens.  
**B** Like flowers.  
**C** Like sunshine.

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<sup>157</sup> Merleau-Ponty believes "in space itself independently of the presence of a psycho-physical subject, there is no direction, no inside and no outside" (*PP* 236). Please see the previous chapter for how temporality is discussed in 4.48 *Psychosis* according to the concept of body.



A Like nightfall.  
C A motion away,  
B Not a motion towards  
[...]  
C As if the direction makes any difference (191).

When the discussion on the sense of direction by Merleau-Ponty is taken into consideration, such meaninglessness can also be explained through the feeling of dissociation, the loss of deixis and existential yearning due to the feeling of nothingness. By all means, attachment to the world is not attainable for these characters for they are isolated in teleologically empty and unresponsive nature. On the contrary, by communicating with the world, the subjects communicate with themselves and the subject “holds the time in its entirety” for Merleau-Ponty (*PP* 493). Reminiscent of *4.48 Psychosis*, in *Crave*, the subjects cannot have this complementary relationship, and the cycles of nature epitomize futility. Therefore, in the play the outside world corresponds directly to the inner states of mind, which is complementary to the thematic structure of the play, thus manifesting the idea of meaninglessness, lack of contingency and isolation. The individual feels alone, fragmented and ruptured from the natural bond s/he has with his/her surroundings.

### 3.4 Postdramatic Elements and Alienation in *Crave*:

Often, the element that most outrages those who seek to impose censorship is form. Beckett, Barker, Pinter, Bond - they have all been criticised not so much for the content of their work, but because they use non-naturalistic forms that elude simplistic interpretation. [...] I suspect that if *Blasted* had been a piece of social realism it wouldn't have been so harshly received. The form and content attempt to be one - the form is the meaning

Kane, *Rage and Reason: Women Playwrights on Playwriting* (130)

Aleks Sierz in his *In-Yer-Face Drama* has a chapter on *Crave* and the play apparently has elements that bear the sign of both postdramatic and in-ye-face

sensibilities<sup>158</sup> as it narrates violent incidents with horrific details. For Sierz, *Crave*'s performance on stage was "intoxicating" as "it was a proof that Kane never rests, never stands still. The minute you categorize her, she moves on to explore different feelings, a different style, another extreme" (88). Having biographical allusions such as Kane's breakdowns and hospitalizations (88), the play has a direct correspondence to *4.48 Psychosis* in terms of its subject matter and form. In her introduction to *Postdramatic Theatre* Karen Jürs-Munbry regards *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave* as "postdramatic" along with the plays of Martin Crimp and Suzan Lori-Parks (6); while Lehmann also mentions Kane's name and renders her style as "post-Brechtian" in that it does not consider *fable (story)* as the *sine qua non* (33). Postdramatic elements can be listed as obscure characterization which is presented through disarranged speech(es) which overlap occasionally, and an lack of setting and action. As the characters are named through letters, the identity of the speakers remain a mystery throughout the play.

In *Crave*, "synthesis" (Lehmann 143) can never be achieved because of the confusing multiplicity of speeches that are presented simultaneously. The play is set in "postdramatic emotional landscapes" (Haydon 150) and is reminiscent of Beckett's late drama, in which characters speak without any intervals, and therefore complicate deictic relationships in the play. The fragment(s) of narrative is shaped as a pendulum moving back and forth from past to present, while the speaker(s) continue to endure traumatic memories and confront each other in an immaterial mindscape. The play reflects postdramatic tendencies because it addresses the

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<sup>158</sup> Aleks Sierz did not add *4.48 Psychosis* to his book, which might be because the time the play was written "when I heard the news [of her suicide on 20 February 1999]" Sierz recounts, "I was just putting the finishing touches to the first draft of this chapter [on *Crave*]" (68). *4.48 Psychosis* hadn't been staged back then. Yet, *4.48 Psychosis* does not have in-her-face tendencies, as it does not contain on-stage violence which "takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shake it until it gets the message" (10). Rather than that, the speaker(s) seem to be narrating their feelings, which is also a prevalent technique in *Crave*. Though the narrated events can be challenging to listen to, as there are no euphemisms but long narratives on noisome reality, these incidents are only graphically depicted by the speaker(s). Kane said that she wrote the play when she lost faith in love "I actually think *Crave*-where there is no physical violence whatsoever, it's a very silent play-is the most despairing of the things I've written so far" (qtd in Saunders 108).

“spectator’s involvement” in the chaotic confusion. Therefore, the spectator is responsible for a mental synthesis of the event, leaving their attention open (143). The dramatic tension is sustained while the speakers shift the center of narrative from one incident to another. Issues regarding family, love affairs and crime are presented without temporal and logical linearity and the character(s) lose their sanity before the eyes of the spectator. The form reflects the content of the play whereby to evoke the mental deprivation of the characters:

**C** Ha ha ha

**B** Ho ho ho

**M** He he he

[...]

**A** You're losing your mind in front of my eyes.

**M** It slipped silently out of control.

[...]

**A** A small girl became increasingly paralysed by her parents' 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. Finally, in moments of calm, she would take bottles of milk from the fridge or doorstep and leave them in places where she may later become trapped. Her parents were unable to understand why they found bottles of sour milk in every room in the house.

**M** Why?

**C** What?

**B** Why what?

**C** What?

**M** Why are you crying? (Kane 185).

The reader or audience can only make assumptions about the identity of these speakers in this “theatre of voices” where there is “phonetic materiality, loss of teleology and self-identity” and the spectators experience “presence of the speaker as a question to them” (Lehmann 148-149). It is hard to know who witnessed the constant fights of his/her parents, but it is highly possible that it is C[hild]. A[buser] communicates the feelings of C in the fragment above, while other characters pose the questions she once received as a little child because of the milk bottles. C might be responding with a desperate cry to the questions, which also shatters the

understanding of time. Therefore, since the play can be articulated in many ways, the postdramatic theatrical signs are not easily deciphered. As if to stress the loss of identity, time and place, A responds “we were many things” when C says “You are not my mother” (196). Accordingly, the deictic signs -which are pronouns such as “you”, “her” and also unanswered Wh questions- confuse the audience due to the shattered structures of dialogue. The postdramatic approach aims to form concepts to describe this “non-sense of signifiers” (Lehmann 82) which complicate the action on stage, as manifested in *Crave*.

The play is hard to conceive and fast-paced for it is not divided into acts. After the first performance, the director of the play, Vicky Featherstone learned from her audience that they “felt it was too fast” and “that they needed more space to ponder the language”, yet, she adds that it is an effect aimed to create “the rhythm through the communication of the lines to the next person” (qtd in Saunders 130-131).

Kane’s theatre seems to obscure delivery to complicate on-stage action, which creates a “density of signs” on stage. Therefore, it is possible to observe that “play, object and language point simultaneously in different directions of meaning and thus encourage a contemplation” for audience while their perception “has to remain open for connections, correspondences, and clues at completely unexpected moments, perhaps casting what was said earlier a completely new light” (Lehmann 87). This creates the sense of alienation in the audience, due to its proximity to perceptual confusion.

As mentioned above, *Crave* is hard to follow because of the disarranged multiplicity of signs it presents textually, whereas the first performance of the play was actually simplistically staged. Vicky Featherstone arranged four chairs on stage where the characters could talk as if they are in a “chat show” (qtd in Saunders 132).

Featherstone felt that the contemporary world invited us “to unburden our emotional baggage” without taking any responsibility, so she wanted to “address the dialogue straight to the audience” (133). Thereby *Crave* discloses the postdramatic attempt “to

turn the level of the real explicitly a co-player in a practical level” (Lehmann 100), and “irruption of the real” finds expression on the play’s minimalist stage design. Featherstone’s choice for a simplistic setting is meaningful, for the illusion of a well-made play is made redundant. It is possible to see that *Crave* alienates its audience in order to resituate them to have an ethical stance and to make them see the world anew by presenting how the characters apprehend the world around them. Perceiving things out of the habitual boundary is also the pivot point that Merleau-Ponty uses to describe phenomenological inquiry. In his words, phenomenology “places abeyance the assertions arising out of the natural attitude [...] but it is also a philosophy for which the world is always there before reflection begins—as ‘an inalienable presence’” (*PP* vii). Through these postdramatic elements, Kane’s theatre manages to present these two realms together to help the audience to perceive things in an unaccustomed way, while judging their own stance. The audience is made aware of the perplexing mental states the characters experience.

Reminiscent of the thematic concerns of *4.48 Psychosis*, *Crave* also problematizes the structure of well-made play, for mental collapse might be perceived and channeled only when such a totalizing frame is discarded. Accordingly, the play self-reflexively points at the loss of a foundational structure which begets fragmentation:

**B** A circle is the only geometric shape defined by its centre. No chicken and egg about it, the centre came first, the circumference follows. The earth, by definition, has a centre. And only the fool that knows it can go whatever he pleases, knowing the centre will hold him down, stop him flying out of orbit. But when your sense of centre shifts, comes whizzing to the surface, the balance has gone. The balance has gone. The balance my baby has gone (192).

Thereby, *Crave* projects physically degraded and alienated bodies while also thematizing alienation, disorienting the audience through experimenting with the form. The play also refers to writing as an endeavor, which can alienate the informed audience as they provide a meaningful connection between the staged world and the

author's life<sup>159</sup>. C says "I write the truth and it kills me. [...] I hate these words that keep me alive/ I hate these words that won't let me die" and B finishes her lines "Expressing my pain without easing it" (184). Moreover, the play refers to "ES3" where Kane stayed when she was hospitalized<sup>160</sup>. These biographical elements referred out of context are mingled with the speeches of other characters in the play. They contribute to the confusion on stage, blurring the line between the experienced reality and fiction, and they alienate the audience. However, they should not draw more attention to themselves than to the text itself. This was the basis of Ken Urban's criticism of a USA performance that he claimed had a reductive approach: "Axis's *Crave* [...] seemed more a testament to Kane's death [...] biographical connections seem inevitable, but locating the source of the work's profundity in biography does Kane a disservice" (Urban "Performance Review" 497-498). Therefore, evaluating the play solely through the life events of the author is misleading, which is reminiscent of *4.48 Psychosis* and its reception as a suicide note.

Among the other postdramatic elements, the use of intertextual elements referred to in the various parts of this chapter in the play are also essential, one of which is TS Eliot's *The Waste Land*. A direct reference that can be identified is "In den Bergen, da fühlst du dich frei" (196)<sup>161</sup> which Kane wittily translated to German. "Nothing to

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<sup>159</sup> Yet, Kane wanted these references to be puzzling "In some ways *Crave* has very fixed and specific meanings in my mind which no one else could ever possibly know unless I told them. For example, who knows that 199714424 (198) means? I'm the only person who knows-and the actors- and I have no intention of telling anyone what it means. So I can't possibly expect to see the same production of the play thank God" (qtd in Saunders 105).

<sup>160</sup> It can be inferred from the dedication of *Cleansed*: "for the patients and staff of ES3" (Kane 105). *Cleansed* also puts harsh criticism on health institutions through the character Tinker, who is a drug dealer and the torturer referred as a doctor. There seems to be a thematic integrity between *Cleansed*, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*. In *Crave*, when ES3 is mentioned, A continues "I am the beast at the end of the rope" (105), which reminds one of Kane's suicide at a health institution.

<sup>161</sup> "In the mountains there you feel free" (Eliot, line 17) . The others include "HURRY UP ITS TIME"(Kane , see also Eliot, lines 141 and 152), "give, sympathize, control" in Eliot it is "Datta. Dyadhvam. Damyata" (Line 432), which is translated from Sanskrit (see Nageswara Rao's "Why Sanskrit Words in The Wasteland" 531).

be done”, the very first line of *Waiting for Godot* also finds its place in the play, among repetitions the characters utter<sup>162</sup>. They wish to “move on” but they remain totally inactive:

**M** Can you  
**C** Would you  
**B** Will you  
**M** Move on.  
**A** Never again I swear on Christ.  
**B** If I lose my voice I'm through.  
[...]  
**M** Still here.  
[...]  
**M** It's like waiting for your hair to grow (193-194).

These repetitions create circularity in the plot. However, this vicious circle seems to be a punishment as ceaselessly and implicitly mentioned in the play, and thus life

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“I crossed a river and wept by one” which might be an allusion to “By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept/Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song” (Eliot, lines 182-183. Line 183 is directly quoted from Spenser’s “Prothalamion” by Eliot himself). Kane’s reference to “red rock of ages” is also reminiscent of “The Burial of the Dead”, where Eliot writes “There is a shadow under this red rock/(Come in under the shadow of this red rock)/ And I will show you something different from either/ your shadow at morning striding behind you/ or your shadow at evening rising behind you/ I will show you fear in a handful of dust” (Lines 25-30). *The Waste Land* might be alluded in *Blasted* as well, where rains of spring, summer, autumn and winter separate the scenes. In the opening lines, Eliot mentions spring rain (“stirring dead roots”), winter (“covering people with forgetful snow”) and summer (“coming over Starnbergersee with a shower of rain”) (Lines 4-8). Critics such as Saunders, Rebellato and Armstrong generally refer to Kane’s interest in “The Wasteland”. Kane told that “the play [*Crave*] is quite obviously very heavily based and influenced on” the poem and that she wanted to include footnotes to *Crave*, but did not do it to avoid aiding her reader. (qtd in Saunders’s *Love Me or Kill Me* p: 104. See also pp: 129-130). Kane’s modernist influences have been found surprising by her friend and playwright Mark Ravenhill. He says: “It struck me that she was essentially a modernist - her enthusiasms were Beckett, TS Eliot; work that was flinty, imagistic, not immediately accessible [...] Kane was placing her work in an essential, somehow more substantial, landscape” (Ravenhill “Suicide Art? She’s better than that”).

<sup>162</sup> The play can be related to the idea of absurdism. In *Crave*, C directly quotes Camus’s *The Plague*: “One fine morning in the month of May” (174). In *The Plague*, this line is uttered by Grand who attempts to write a novel. “One fine morning in the month of May...” is the first and only line which is continuously rewritten of this novel-would-be. Grand expresses his concerns about this first and only sentence that he has written to Rieux continuously, which creates a ludicrous effect. It might be thought that C implicitly points at writing as an attempt to create an artefact, which reveals the textuality of C’s narrative as a piece of fiction.

continues without altering. A says “But God has blessed me with the mark of Cain” (195), referring how Cain continues to exist waiting for his ultimate in the other world<sup>163</sup>. As if all marked, while the characters continue to exist in a vicious circle, the audience seems to be blamed equally for not taking a stance against crime. In Lehmann’s words, not only the content but also the form poses a challenge to the audience of *Crave*: “the tiring repetition, emptiness, pure mathematics of what is happening on stage [...] forces us to experience the very symmetry we are dimly afraid of because it brings with it nothing less than the threat of nothingness” (99). In a similar vein, *Crave* aims to create an urge to take sides and stop these traumatic events from occurring ever again, obscuring comprehension by mixing voices and narrating events in fragments:

**A** *It's a punishment for hedging your bets.*  
**M** Keep coming back.  
**B** Again and again.  
**A** The eternal return.  
**B** *If I lose my voice I'm fucked* (195; emphases added).

As B’s line clearly shows, the necessity to be heard and the importance of bearing witness to crime are emphasized in the play. The play stresses the necessity of recording and speaking up against the violence, and preventing crime. C continuously refers to the act of recording. She buys “a new tape recorder and blank tapes” although having “old ones that will do just as well in actuality, but the truth has little to do with actuality” for her, “and the point (if there is one) is to record the truth”. After uttering these lines, C starts to record how A molested her<sup>164</sup>. However

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<sup>163</sup> It is sort of a protection Cain receives after killing Abel. Cain is left to wander on earth after killing his brother: “a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth” [Gen 4:12]. Yet, Cain fears to be killed and in return God marks him: “Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him” [Gen 4:15]. Kane’s own surname bears a similarity with the Biblical figure.

<sup>164</sup> These are the lines that directly indicate the crime. Intervening lines are omitted.

**C** One touch record.  
 [...]  
**A** One touch.  
**M** Record.  
**C** My bowel curls at his touch.



after a few pages, the reader may observe that all the characters attempt to hide the crimes committed. They keep their silence, which can be related to the way crime is hidden<sup>165</sup>:

**M** Rule one.  
**C** No records.  
**M** No letters.  
**A** No credit card bills for afternoons in hotel rooms, no receipts for expensive jewellery, no calling at home then hanging up in silence.  
**C** No feeling,  
**B** No emotion  
**M** A cold fuck and a goldfish memory  
**C** My bowels gave way.  
[...]  
**A** Never keep souvenirs of a murder.  
**M** Everything's clear.  
**C** Another girl,  
**B** Another life.  
**C** I did nothing, nothing.  
**B** I did nothing.  
[...]  
**A** God forgive me I want to be clean (181).

Because these lines directly communicate with the spectator, they have a defamiliarizing effect, dislocating the spectator in the process of conveying the experience of crime, which leaves the perceiver aghast or benumbed. When C is abused, the incident is narrated with horrible details. The play self-reflexively shows how the crime is perceived by the victim, which stands in direct contrast with how it is presented to and understood by the public:

**A** No witnesses.  
**M** *And if this makes no sense then you understand perfectly.*

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**A** Poor, poor love.  
**C** I feel nothing, nothing. I feel nothing.  
[...]  
**A** I'm going to die.  
**M** This abuse has gone on long enough (Kane 175).

**A** It's not what you think.

**C** No that's not it.

**M** Time after time, some fucking excuse (159; emphasis added).

As if to emphasize the ignorance of the audience further, when A utters “There are no secrets”, M completes his lines “there is only blindness” (190). Therefore, Kane aims at a war against what Lehmann calls “automated perception”, as he believes “every form of art that produces new modes of perception wages this war” (105). By unsettling the spectator, *Crave* provokes new ways of seeing crime, trauma and liminal states of mind which are not within the boundaries of logic. Complicating the plot even more, the characters mention some memories that cannot be articulated through causality, thus breaking away the linear understanding of time. These events are neither plausible nor articulated by further commentary. They are referred to out of context; what came before and after is never mentioned:

**M** I was catching a plane. A psychic predicted that I would not get on this flight but that my lover would. The plane would crash and he would be killed. I didn't know what to do. If I missed the flight I would be fulfilling the prophecy so risking my lover's death. But in order to break the prophecy I would have to get on a plane which seemed destined to crash.

**A** What did you do?

**M** Begin again.

**A** Begin again (176)

Similarly B says that his nose looks deformed not because he broke his nose, but because his father did, and claims “we transmit these messages faster than we think and in ways we don't think possible” (162). Because B is talking about physical deformation, it might be thought that the crime endured has an impact not only on the victim's body, but also harms the upcoming generations. Working on its own logical framework to beget a multiplicity of possibilities, the play shatters logical structures:

**A** A small boy had an imaginary friend. He took her to the beach and they played in the sea. A man came from the water and took her away.

The following morning the body of a girl was found washed up on the beach.

**M** What's that got to do with anything?

**A** Clutching a fistful of sand.

**B** Everything.

**C** What's anything go to do with anything?

**M** Nothing. (163)

Moreover, revealing the textuality of her narration C says she is “an emotional plagiarist, stealing other people's pain, subsuming it into my own until” – and her words are continued by A and B’s “I can't remember” /“Whose” and then she completes with “ Any more”. Therefore, it is not possible to know if C had experienced all the events that she narrated, which creates suspension and alienation. Because the play’s inherent logic seems to point at arbitrariness to convey complicated narrative strands, *Crave* is “driven by language not narration or spectacle” (Urban “The Body’s Cruel Joke” 150). The play terminates the function of language as a shared and acknowledged set of rules by decontextualizing dialogues and sometimes using foreign languages, which is also a postdramatic trait. These parts are conveyed by B in three different languages<sup>166</sup>, emphasizing universality, while also alienating the English-speaking audience. Thus the play reveals the instability of life and the temporariness of the world by concatenating a multiplicity of signs in non-hierarchical manner. This inconstancy is also shown with the laws that govern nature and incidents that happen out of causal relationships. A’s

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<sup>166</sup> B speaks in Spanish, Serbo-Croatian and German. He says “El dinero viene solo” (Money comes alone) (160) and “Besos brujos que me matan” (176) (Witches' kisses that kill me) in Spanish, “Meni ni iz džepa, ni u džep” (167) (It’s neither in my pocket nor out of it) and “Jebem radoznale.”(I’m fucking the curious) (179) in Serbian, “Du bist die Liebe meines Lebens” (172) (You are the love of my life) and “In den Bergen du fühlst du dich frei” (196) (In the mountains, there you feel free) in German (please see “Notes” added in the *Complete Plays* 201).

In the beginning of the play, all the characters contribute to the way B is described. It reminds one of *Waiting for Godot*, for Beckett also utilized names belonging to various nationalities for his characters which is ambiguous but also universal at the same time.

**C** Looks like a German,

**A** Talks like a Spaniard,

**C** Smokes like a Serb.

**M** You've forgotten.

**C** All things to all men. (156)

lines “my life is nothing special” is followed by C’s remark “a stream of haphazard events like any other” (196); and none of the characters are able to perceive the world in unity. Realism as a framework is irrupted to imply a loss of coherence. The play self-reflexively reveals the inherent logic by which the play is constructed at the end of the play in the form of an epilogue:

A And don't forget that poetry is language for its own sake.  
Don't forget when different words are sanctioned, other attitudes  
required.  
Don't forget decorum. Don't forget decorum (Kane 199)

A’s above-mentioned speech is conflated by the piece’s only feeling of relief, which comes with the expressed desire for death, and the characters even speak as if they are already dead, expressing wishful thinking about life after death. They feel uplifted, yet emptiness and sorrow accompany them as well while they dream about a better place. The adjectives they use are contradictory, and “synesthetic” expressions are utilized once more to communicate the feelings of the speakers:

A Peace  
M A *sickly glare* with no single source,  
A A pale gold sea under a pale pink sky,  
M A distant bell crosses the empty sea,  
C Clouds coverage as I see I am on a globe,  
C *Waves sob like a pulse* (197; emphases added).

As discussed before in *4.48 Psychosis*, characters start to refer to light to imply death, which might be explained through a “pure sensation” as described by Merleau-Ponty. A “pure sensation” cannot be explained by anything in the world, for it implies an utter rupture. He claims: “The perceptual ‘something’ is always in the middle of something else, it always forms a part of the field” (PP 4). The stark light described in the fragment below, thus, can be conceived as a “pure sensation” since it is totally disintegrated from spatial and temporal configuration:

**B** Kill me.  
*A* beat.  
**A** Free-falling  
**B** Into the light  
**C** Bright white light  
 [...]

**M** Glorious. Glorious.  
**B** And ever shall be  
**A** Happy  
**B** So happy  
**C** Happy and free (200).

The death of the characters is presented as an ultimate source of happiness whereas such an end creates an absurd effect after all the horrible events recounted on stage. This ironic humour can be found also in *4.48 Psychosis* when the patient says, “I dreamt I went to the doctor’s and she gave me eight minutes to live. I’d been sitting in the fucking waiting room for half an hour” (Kane 221). According to Ken Urban, Kane’s humour “*brackets* the violence for the viewer, forcing a reassessment of that violence, not as a release from the intensity of the spectacle, but as a reinforcement of its spectacular power” (“The Body’s Cruel Joke” 150).<sup>167</sup> Therefore, while the

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<sup>167</sup> Urban thinks that laughter “hurts” in Kane’s plays, indicating the relationship between comedy and body (151). He uses Bergson’s idea to show that there is “cruelty” and “growing callousness at social life” (163) at the center of comedy. As presented, this insensitivity of the social life is also present in *Crave*, where characters talk about happiness that the death will bring. Urban also believes that comedy makes use of “defamiliarization” for one laughs at the incongruities that come in unexpected moments (151). The audience is confronted with the illogical and at times at the truth about physical crudity, while the element of comedy explores the gap between “being a body and having a body” (Critchley qtd in Urban 153). According to Urban “when the body’s ‘baseness’ topples the ‘deep’ abstractions of metaphysics, the tragic laugh erupts” (153). What is referred here can be also explored with the ideas of Merleau-Ponty, for he says “I am my body [...] The experience of one’s own body runs counter to the reflective procedure which detaches subject and object from each other from each other, and which gives us only [...] the body as an idea and not the experience of the body” (*PP* 231). In Kane’s theatre, while the spectator is aware of the bodily expression of pain, they also observe the debasement of body. To illustrate, in *Blasted*, Ian who forced Cate to have an affair is raped by the Soldier, blinded and he ends up in a whole after eating a dead baby. His bodily degradation is truly ugly and all the expression of it is presented on stage. Yet, the way he cannot die and curse at the end creates a ludicrous effect. The crudity of the body is presented together with expression of pain in a farcical way. Therefore, it might be thought that Kane juxtaposes those two images with the absurd elements in her plays. The painful experience of existence is presented together with absurdity of grotesque images of the body, which situates laughter in Kane’s theatre another response for sorrow. Sierz also asserts the most successful plays are those which “seduces the audience with a naturalistic mood and then hit it with intense emotional material or those where an experiment in form encourages people to question their assumptions. In such cases, what is being renegotiated is the relationship between the audience and performers- shock disturbs the spectator’s

characters practice suicide as an act of violence, these brief moments of dark humor do not provoke relief, but alienate the audience and emphasize the absurdity of “being-in-the-world”.

Death as an ultimate destination to reach placidity and end the cruel circularity of violence is present in all of Kane’s plays. To illustrate, in *Blasted*, Ian wants to commit suicide while he is degraded both physically and mentally, Hippolytus finds death calming in *Phaedra’s Love*, and in *Cleansed* Robin takes his own life. In line with that, Karen Jürs-Mulbry refers to the close kinship between postdramatic theatre and traumatic memory that is being mediatized, and analyzes traumatic memory as a collective phenomenon. She believes that in *Blasted* Kane “felt compelled to seek new textual and theatrical forms that explode dramatic form [...] to address relationships between the trauma of domestic abuse and the (mediatised) experience of war trauma” (218). A similar vein can be found in *Crave* too, as the “being-in-the world” of the speakers is presented through a confusing density of signs. The trauma endured by these voices is treated as a collective malaise that can be found anywhere.

To channel the cruelty of the world to her audience, Kane engages with the world by breaking away from the habitual way of perceiving trauma, absurdity and violence. The form appropriately complies with the content, which confuses the audience and resituates them to perceive things anew. Cézanne, for Merleau-Ponty, had the same mission when “giving up the outline [...] and abandoning himself to the chaos of sensation, which would upset the objects and constantly suggest illusions, as, for example, the illusion when we move our heads that the objects themselves are moving” (*Sense and Non Sense* 13). He believes that Cézanne’s art was thus paradoxical, while prioritizing perception, Cézanne did not abandon the sensuous surface and immediate impression. Merleau-Ponty quotes Bernard who called this

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habitual gaze” (11-12). Though both in *Crave* and 4.48 *Psychosis*, there is only the voices and they hint on how the bodies are tormented, the spectator’s habitual attitude is unsettled by the descriptions of these illnesses or other calamities.

attempt “Cézanne’s suicide: aiming for reality while denying himself the means to attain it” (12). It might be thought that Kane took the same path, which was not less travelled, but still created a massive effect because of the blatant violence it used as a technique. Stemming from the modernist influences of such as Beckett and TS Eliot, her theatre prioritizes perception, and it conveys the inner states of mind appropriate to the shocking matter they contain. It alienates the audience by destabilizing and resituating them to experience the world of the Other, creating a vertigo-effect for its audience, blurring their vision.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the narratives of the characters in Sarah Kane's plays have been examined through three Merleau-Pontian concepts which are "synesthesia", "being-in-the-world" and "embodiment". The thesis argues and the analytic chapters have shown, in detail, that the form and content of the selected plays are complementary. The study was able to relate the chaotic narration of events to the distorted "synesthetic" apprehension of the speakers and revealed how these characters act as "embodied subjects" within their environments. The thesis further suggests that the characters' detachment from the world and disembodiment due to mental illness corresponds to the postdramatic plot organization, the change in time-space interaction, and the lack of dialogic structure. It asserts that the theatrical techniques Kane utilized to convey almost inexplicable pathological experiences beget a shared feeling of alienation for the audience.

Within the scope of the thesis, the historical background of 1990s Britain and transcendental aspects of phenomenology have not been discussed. In the theoretical background, the school of semiotics has been briefly studied and the term "deixis" is analyzed together with Merleau-Pontian understanding of the body. In theatre, deictic relationships are established through the exchanges between characters and with words such as "me, you, him" or "here, there, below, above". Correspondingly, the theatrical elements such as characterization, space, and action are formed by dialogue (Aston and Savona 5). In postdramatic theatre, there is the absence of dialogue or the dialogic structure is shattered to create confusion, and the bodies presented on stage are ill or "deviant" as also described by Lehmann (95). Therefore, this thesis claimed that "deixis" is closely related to how the body is situated in the



world and its relationship with the environment. The thesis also claimed that the semiotics of theatre and phenomenology can be complementary fields in discussing postdramatic theatre.

The first chapter of this thesis examined *4.48 Psychosis*, which relies heavily on fragmented narratives or ponderings of a psychotic speaker as the play is set in her mindscape. The synesthetic expressions of this speaker were analyzed according to their implications regarding the speaker's experience. It is asserted that the narratives of the doctor and the speaker are juxtaposed to reveal the experiential dimension of mental illness. The utterances of the speaker(s) are interlaced presenting complicated narrative strands to be deciphered by the reader or audience which cannot be understood by objective approach. When analyzed with the concept of "being-in-the-world", the ruminations of the speaker seem to have a direct correspondence with the understanding of time and space projected by the play. The speaker's psyche seems to be affected by the chaos stemming from the violence in the outside world. As a consequence, she does not have a harmonious bond with her environment and thus feels alienated. Her disembodiment- the experience of her body and mind as separate entities- also reveals her severed and traumatized relationship with the world. When analyzed with Merleau-Pontian concepts, the speaker's mental disorientation and the postdramatic elements that channel it to the audience are shown to correspond to each other. Therefore the erosion of subjectivity becomes the central issue to be considered in Kane's theatre when analyzing these postdramatic plays. To understand fragmentation and the postdramatic signs in Kane's theatre in relation to mindscapes rendered in dispersed narratives, an integrationist understanding of Merleau-Pontian phenomenology as an analytical method was found to be both functional and productive. Tracing the speaker's unaccustomed synesthetic expressions and subjective experiences, the audience feels alienated and ruptured from their habitual way of seeing the world with the help of postdramatic elements on stage.

The second chapter scrutinized *Crave*, which has a similar plot structure to *4.48 Psychosis*, being set in the mindscape of four personas and showing no demarcation between scenes and no recognizable or conventional dialogic structure. A cluster of events hinted at in the dispersed narratives indicates that the characters are/were related to each other, and through their fragmented narrations the audience witnesses them torment one another within their mindscapes in the form of intrusive thoughts. Since the characters narrate the violent events directly rather than using metaphors to reveal their inner states of mind, there are fewer synesthetic expressions as figures of speech in the play. In tandem with that, the play can be considered as a representative of “in-yer-face drama”, as Sierz recognizes when he included a chapter on *Crave* in his book *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today*. Because synesthetic apprehension of the characters is distorted due to mental illness, this thesis argues the formal elements in the play such as characterization, plot, and setting are shaped accordingly. Therefore, the thesis considered the play as an example of postdramatic theatre, since there is no on-stage violence in the play and the speakers convey the traumatic incidents that they experience(d). Interlaced narratives of the speakers are analyzed together with the terms “being-in-the-world” and “embodiment” and postdramatic theatrical signs which prove that there is a strong correspondence between the form and content in Kane’s oeuvre.

It can be concluded that Kane’s postdramatic theatre conveys inner states of mind that generates the on-stage action and theatrical techniques to be employed. Thus, fragmentation, intense scenes with violence, erosion of the subjectivity, and intervention of outside violence which influences the domestic sphere and psyche of the individual can be analyzed with reference to diverse phenomenological schools of thought. Further research that focuses on alienation and perception in postdramatic theatre can be conducted.

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## APPENDICES

### C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tezde, Sarah Kane'in *4.48 Psychosis* ve *Crave* adlı oyunlarındaki karakterlerin anlatıları, Maurice Merleau-Ponty'nin üç kavramı "sinestezi", "dünyada-olma" ve "bedenlenme" üzerinden incelenmiştir. Tez, seçilen oyunların biçim ve içeriğinin birbirini tamamlayıcı olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Bu oyunlardaki kaotik söylemi, konuşmacıların çarpık "sinestetik" kavrayışlarıyla ilişkilendirir ve oyun karakterlerini "bedenlenmiş özneler" olarak analiz etmeye çalışır. Karakterlerin dünyadan kopuşunun ve ruhsal hastalık nedeniyle bedenlerine yabancılaşmalarını postdramatik olay örgüsü organizasyonuna, zaman-mekan etkileşimindeki değişime ve diyalog yapısının eksikliğine karşılık geldiğini ileri sürer. Açıklanması güç patolojik deneyimleri iletme için kullanılan teatral tekniklerin izleyiciler için ortak bir yabancılaşma duygusu yarattığını iddia eder.

Tez kapsamı gereğince Sarah Kane'in oyunlarını yazdığı 1990'ların tiyatro geleneğiyle ilgili tarihsel bir açıklama yapmamakta, fenomenolojiyi transendental boyutlarıyla incelememektedir. Tez konusunun seçiminde Beckett tiyatrosunun daha önce Merleau-Ponty felsefesiyle incelenmiş olması etki sahibidir. Bazı kaynaklara göre, Merleau-Ponty'nin kütüphanesinde Beckett'e ait kitaplar bulunmaktaydı (Dennis 7-8). Merleau-Ponty Fransa'da École Normale Supérieure'deyken, Beckett de aynı üniversitede ders vermekteydi (Maude 5). Sarah Kane'nin Beckett tiyatrosundan ilham almış olması da tezde fenomenoloji ile analiz yapılmasında bir etkidir. Karakterlerin deneyimlerini aktarmaları, fenomenoloji ile yapılmış bir incelemenin oyunların anlamsal bütünlük içerisinde ifade edilmesini mümkün kılmaktadır.

Kane *4.48 Psychosis*'i (1999, *4.48 Psikozu*), *Crave*'den (1998, *Tutku*) sonra, intihar etmeden önce kaleme almıştır. Yazarın son eseri olduğu ve postdramatik tiyatro özelliklerini bütünüyle yansıttığı için (Lehmann ix) tezde *4.48 Psychosis* yazarın olgun eseri olarak değerlendirilmiş, bu sebeple oyun *Crave*'den önce incelenmiştir. Tezin ilk bölümü teorik bir girişten oluşmaktadır. Bu kısımda Merleau-Ponty ve tiyatro ile ilgili çalışmalarla ilgili bir literatür taraması yapılmıştır. Merleau-Ponty'nin yukarıda da belirtilen kavramları detaylı olarak tanımlanmıştır. İkinci bölümde *4.48 Psychosis* incelenmiş, sonrasında *Crave* analiz edilmiştir. Tezin dördüncü bölümü sonuç kısmıdır.

Önceden de belirtildiği gibi, tezin teorik çerçevesini postdramatik kavramlar ve Merleau-Ponty'nin üç kavramı olan “sinestezi”, “dünyada- varlık” ve “bedenlenme” oluşturmaktadır. “Postdramatik tiyatro” kavramı daha önce Schechner tarafından kullanılmış olsa da Hans-Thies Lehmann tarafından *Postdramatik Tiyatro* (1999) adlı kitabında kavramlaştırılmıştır (Lehmann 26). Kitabın Jürs-Munbry tarafından yazılmış girişinde Kane'nin *4.48 Psychosis* ve *Crave* adlı oyunlarının postdramatik tiyatronun tüm özelliklerini taşıdığı iddia edilmektedir (6). Jürs-Munbry tarafından da belirtildiği üzere, postdramatik tiyatro dramatik tiyatrodan bir kopuşu ifade eder. Postdramatik oyunlarda oyun metninde çizgisellik yoktur, oyunlar serim düğüm ve çözüme sahip değildir. Yine bu oyunlarda dramatik tiyatrodaki gibi karakterler bulunmaz, zaman ve mekanda da belirginlik kaybolmuştur. Lehmann'a göre postdramatik ve postmodern tiyatro arasındaki temel fark, izleyicinin ve yönetmenin bir senteze ulaşamadıkları radikal deneyimde yatar (25). Tez, Lehmann'ın tanımları ve düşüncelerinden faydalanmakla beraber dramatik formdan neden ve nasıl bir kopuş gerçekleştirildiğini sorgulamakta ve bu kopuşu Kane'nin tiyatrosunda karakterlerin zihinsel ve bedensel deneyimleriyle ilişkilendirmektedir. Merleau-Ponty'nin bahsi geçen terimlerinden bu noktada faydalanmaktadır. Postdramatik tiyatrodan alınan kavramlar “sinestezi”, “parataksis/hiyerarşinin yok olması”, “eş zamanlılık”, “gösterge yığmacası”, “fiziksellik”, “gerçekliğin/ durumun yokluğu”, “sıcaklık/soğukluk” adlı kavramlardır.

Tezin teorik kısmının devamında tiyatro semiyotiği ile fenomenolojinin ilişkisi postdramatik tiyatronun iki alandan da beslenmiş olabileceği düşüncesiyle birbiriyle ilişkili olarak incelenmiştir. Tiyatro semiyotiği tezin ana hatlarını belirleyen bir teori değildir, dolayısıyla tezde kısaca değinilmiştir. Bu alanda çalışmaları olan Aston ve Savona'ya göre tiyatrodaki karakter, zaman ve olay kavramları diyaloga göre şekillenmektedir (52). Postdramatik tiyatrodaki diyalog yoktur ya da diyalog yapısında bozulma vardır. Tezde, tiyatro semiyotiği alanından, postdramatik tiyatrodaki diyalogun yokluğu ve “deiktik” ilişkiler göz önüne alınarak faydalanılmıştır. Deiktik ilişkiler “ben, sen, o” ya da “burada, şurada, aşağıda, yukarıda” gibi kavramlarca kurulur, bu kavramlar da oyun kişinin fiziksel konumuna göre şekillenmekte, ve diyalog bu sayede anlam kazanmaktadır. Ancak, tüm bu kavramlar “burada, yukarıda, aşağıda, şimdi” vb. bedenün dünyadaki konumu ve yine bedenün dünya ile ilişkisi düşünüldüğünde anlamlıdır. Bu tezde de savunulduğu üzere, postdramatik tiyatrodaki tüm bu kavramların yokluğu da yine benlik kavramının Merleau-Ponty'nin beden düşüncesiyle incelenmesiyle anlaşılabilir. Merleau-Ponty'ye göre beden dünyadan ayrı düşünülemez, onunla ayrılmaz bir bütündür. Dolayısıyla, dünyadan koparılmış bireyler, hastalıklı bedenler ve parçalanmış öznelğin temsili ile birlikte postdramatik oyunlarda diyalogun yokluğu ve dildeki parçalanmışlık da özne-dünya bağı göz önüne alındığında birbirlerinden ayrı irdelenemez.

Fenomenoloji çerçevesinde gelişen incelemeler, tiyatro semiyotiği alanını sahnedeki her öğeyi yapısalcı göstergelere indirgediği, tiyatro üzerinde etkili olan politik ve sosyolojik etkileri göz ardı ettiği için tiyatro semiyotiği ile yapılan irdemeleri yetersiz bulmuşlardır. Bu konuda Bert O States, Merleau-Ponty'yi alıntılıyarak tiyatronun birbirinden bağımsız öğelerden oluşmaktan ziyade, seyircinin algısal deneyiminde bütünlük teşkil ettiğini iddia etmektedir (7). Kane'nin oyunlarında sahnedeki karakter(ler) kaotik bir dünyanın parçalarıdır. Her ne kadar Kane, tiyatrosunda yoğun olarak politik olaylara doğrudan gönderme yapmamışsa da, karakterlerin, şiddetin, savaşın, tecavüzün ve her türlü iğrendirici olayın tezahür ettiği bir dünyada zihinsel ve bedensel olarak parçalanmış figürler olduğu açıktır. Sahnede gösterge yoğunluğundan faydalanılarak algısal sentezin ortadan

kaldırılmasıyla, zihinsel hastalıkların tecrübesi esnasında gerçekleşen zaman-mekan karmaşası ve dilsel özellikler sahneye yansıtılmaktadır. Travmatik olayların algılanma biçimi sahneye konmakta, seyirci de bu ortamı deneyimleyerek alışılacelmiş tiyatro deneyiminden uzaklaştırılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda postdramatik ögelerin, bireyi dünya ile ilişkisi içerisinde, bireyin algısını önceleyen Merleau-Ponty fenomenolojisi ile incelenmesi; zarar görmüş zihin-beden ilişkisi, karakter analizi ve postdramatik tiyatrodaki karakterin yokluğunu bir bütünsellik içinde açıklamaktadır. Bu ilişki, yine sahne ve birey arasındaki bağ ve “yabancılaşma” kavramı birlikte incelendiğinde anlamlıdır.

Tezin teorik çerçevesinde Merleau-Ponty’nin üç kavramı ele alınmıştır: bunlar “Sinestezi”, “Dünyada-varlık” ve “Bedenlenme”dir. Özün bu kısmında kısaca tanımlamalara yer verilecektir. Sinestezi, Merleau-Ponty’ye göre günlük deneyimimizde bulunabilir; renkleri “sıcak” ya da “soğuk” kavramlarıyla birlikte kullanırız, ya da sesler “net”, “keskin”, “yumuşak” olabilirler (*Sense and Non Sense* 49-50)<sup>168</sup>. Bu anlamda rengin ve seslerin deneyiminde görsel, dokunsal ve işitsel nüveler birlikte algılanmaktadır. Bu anlamda algı bütünseldir, nesnenin kavranmasında tüm bu nitelikler algıda birlikte var olurlar. Bu algı, düşünmenin ve analizin öncesinde gerçekleşir. Postdramatik tiyatrodaki parçalanmışlık ve Lehmann’ın tanımıyla sinestezi<sup>169</sup>, bu bağlamda önem kazanmaktadır. Karakterlerin dünyayı algılayış biçimindeki bozukluk, bedenlerdeki bozulma, zihinsel hastalıklar ve

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<sup>168</sup> Bozer’in *Postdramatik Tiyatro ve İngiliz Tiyatrosu*’ndaki “Giriş” kısmından Lehmann’ın terimlerinin çevirisinden yararlanılmıştır. Emine Sarıkartal ve Eylem Hacımuratoğlu tarafından yapılan Merleau-Ponty’nin eseri *Algının Fenomenolojisi*’nin çevirisinden de faydalanılmıştır. Bunun dışında yukarıdaki gibi bazı parçaları ve Kane’in oyunlarından bu öz için alıntılanmış kısımları kendim çevirmeye çalıştım.

<sup>169</sup> Terim aynı zamanda Merleau-Ponty tarafından da kullanılmaktadır. Lehmann’a göre postdramatik tiyatrodaki “göstergelerin sinestezik yapıyı hedefleyen ve var olan hiyerarşiye karşı gelen hiyerarşi-karşıtı bir biçimde kullanım” vardır (87). Hedeflenen sinestezik yapı, algıdaki bütünsel anlayış olabilir. “Bu terim şiirden alınmıştır, ve buna uygun biçimde tiyatrodaki yeni algıyı “sahne şiiri” olarak tanımlamaktadır. İnsan algı kolaylıkla bağlantısızlığı kabul edemez, bağlantılardan yoksun bırakıldığında kendisi bir takım bağlantılar kurmaya çalışır, hayal gücü çılgınlaşır, ve daha sonra benzerlikler, korelasyonlar ve bağlantılara ulaşır, bunlar her ne kadar birbirleriyle ilgisiz olsalar da. Bağlantı izlerini arayışına, çaresizce sunulanlara odaklanmış algısı eşlik etmektedir (belki bunlar ona bir sırı ifşa edecekler) (84).

karmaşayla ilişkilendirilmiştir. Tezde, bu durumların ifadesinin postdramatik ögelerle gerçekleştirildiği öne sürülmüştür.

Tezde irdelenmiş ikinci kavram “dünyada-varlık”tır. “Dünyada-varlık”, tüm insan deneyimi ve fenomenleri işaret eden, yalnızca objektif beden ve zihin ilişkisini değil, birinci tekil şahıs ve üçüncü tekil şahıs perspektifleri arasındaki ayrımı ortadan kaldıran ve dolayısıyla zihin ve doğa arasında gerçek bir iç içe geçmişliği temsil eden, algı öncesi gerçekleşen bir durumdur (Landes 81). Dünya ve birey(ler)in arasındaki yakın ilişki çerçevesinde, beden-zihin, ben-öteki, birey-doğa gibi ayrımlar ortadan kalkmakta, birey dünya ile kurduğu yakın ilişki içerisinde incelenmektedir.

Yine beden ve zihin arasındaki yakın etkileşimi belirtmek için, Merleau-Ponty bir savaş malulünün “hayalet organ” deneyimini aktarmaktadır. Merleau-Ponty’ye göre hayalet organ fenomeni malulün yalnızca fiziksel nitelikleri ya da salt psikolojik durumuyla değil, bunların arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyle açıklanabilir. Merleau-Ponty, hayalet organ fenomenini bireyin travmayı bastırma biçimiyle ilişkilendirmektedir. Buna göre, geçmişte olmuş olan bir şeyi kabul edemeyen, fakat aynı zamanda arzu edilen şeyin kaybına mevcut durumdaki değişimle birlikte katlanmakta olan bireyin durumu, hayalet organ fenomenini deneyimleyen insaninkine benzer. Ampüte edilmiş birey, kesilmiş uzvunun varlığını hissetmeye devam etmekte, o uzvu istemsizce kullanmaya çalışmaktadır. Merleau-Ponty bu durum için sevilen bir insanın kaybını örnek vermektedir, sevdiği insanı kaybeden kişi de ölen arkadaşı gözlerinin önünde olmasa da varlığını hissetmektedir, “tıpkı Proust’un büyükannesinin ölümünü kabul etmekle birlikte onu hayatının horizonlarında tutmaya devam etmesiyle onu tam olarak yitirmemesi” gibi (*Algının Fenomenolojisi* 94). Dolayısıyla, hayalet organ fenomeni bir uzvun temsili değil, uzvun belirsizce varlığını sürdürmesidir (94). Tez, Sarah Kane tiyatrosunda “dünyada-varlık” kavramıyla bireylerin hastalıklarını, bedensel parçalanmışlıklarını, travmatik düşüncelerini, metindeki parçalanmışlık, sahnelemedeki deneysel metotlar ve karakter kavramının yok oluşuyla birlikte incelemektedir. 4.48 *Psychosis* ve *Crave* adlı oyunlarda, karakterlerin sevdikleri kişileri kaybetmeleri, kendilerini



travmatize eden kişilerin rahatsız edici biçimde karakterlerin zihninde varlığını sürdürmeleri, bedensel ve zihinsel travmaların sahneye aktarımı “dünyada-varlık” kavramıyla incelenmiştir. Postdramatik tiyatrodaki zamansal ve mekânsal belirsizlik de yine karakterlerin zihinsel ve bedensel durumları ve “dünyada-varlık” kavramıyla açıklanabilir.

Tezde kullanılmış üçüncü kavram “bedenlenme”dir. Merleau-Ponty’ye göre beden ve zihin iki ayrı töz değildir, birlikte var olurlar. Beden, dünyadaki konumuyla algıyı şekillendirir. Bedenimiz algılayan ve aynı zamanda algılanan olarak dünya ile karşılıklı bir ilişki içerisindedir, iki elin kavuşumunda, bir el diğerini nasıl hissediyorsa özne- nesne ilişkisi de böyledir. Tıpkı bu birliktelikteki gibi birey de dünyaya bağlıdır. Merleau-Ponty, zihin ve beden arasındaki ikiliği ortadan kaldırırken dil bilimi, doğa ve tarih, politika gibi konuları da yine “bedenlenme” ve “ten” kavramıyla ele alır. Postdramatik tiyatro da teatral alanı, sosyal gerçeklikle ilişkilendirmeye çalışmaktadır, postdramatik tiyatro günümüz dünyasının yansıtıldığı parçalanmış ve yalnızlaştırılmış bedenlerin bulunduğu ve onların deneyimlerinin aktarıldığı alandır. Dolayısıyla Kane’nin eserleri de “bedenlenme” terimi üzerinden, karakterlerin dünyası ve fiziksel dünya arasındaki bağ göz önünde bulundurularak incelenmiştir.

Tezin ikinci bölümünde Kane’nin *4.48 Psychosis* adlı oyunu tartışılmıştır. *4.48 Psychosis*’de oyun karakterleri yoktur, mekan, oyun kişileri, kimlerin konuştuğu belli değildir, sahneler arasında net bir ayırım yoktur, ve olay örüntüsü çizgisel zamana göre açıklanmamıştır. Tezde anlamsal bakımdan birbirini takip etmeyen, kesikli beş çizgiyle birbirinden ayrılmış yirmi dört bölüm analizi kolaylaştırmak adına birer sahne gibi incelenmiştir. Oyunda diyalog bulunmaz, yalnızca konuşma çizgileriyle belirtilmiş konuşmalar zaman zaman birbirlerine yanıt veriyor gibi görünür. Oyun bu anlamda uzun bir monoloğu andırmaktadır. Zaman, mekan ve anlatı biçimi de karakter(ler)in dünya algısına göre biçimlendirilmiştir, oyun zamanı döngüsel ve oyun kişinin travma sebebiyle sürekli tekrar eden düşünce şeklini yansıtmaktadır. Oyun kişisi tekrar eden psikozları ve intihar düşünceleriyle zihinsel ve bedensel bir

çöküş yaşamaktadır. Oyunda doktorların ilgisizliği, sevilen kişiden ilgi görememe, ailedeki problemler, karakterin duygusal durumu ile yaşadığı dünyayla bağı yakından ilintilidir. Bu bölümde Kane'in kullandığı teknikler metinsel açıdan incelenmiş ve zihinsel çöküşün sahne üzerinde sergilenen karmaşık yapısı çözümlenmiştir.

Birinci bölümün ilk alt başlığında sinestezi kavramıyla oyun analiz edilmiştir. Oyundaki metaforlar, Merleau-Ponty'nin sinestezi tanımıyla incelendiğinde oyunun yapısal özellikleri ve konusu arasında yakın bir bağ olduğu görülmektedir. İsimsiz oyun kişisi, psikoz deneyimini aktarmak için alışlagelmiş, “sert koku”, “sıcak renk” gibi kullanımlar yerine, karmaşık ve birbiri arasında uzaktan ilinti bulunan durumlar arasında benzetmeler kurmakta; işitsel, görsel ve dokunsal verileri birbirleriyle ilişkilendirerek ruhsal bunalımını ifade etmeye çalışmaktadır. Örneğin oyunun başında, hasta medikal bir kokuyla karışık tütün kokusunu kahvesini içerken duyumsadığında bir şeyler onu hüzünlendirmekte, “iki yıl öncesinden bir yara kadavra gibi yeniden açılmakta ve uzun zamandır gömülü olan utanç *kokuşmuşluğunu ve çürümüşlüğü kükremekte*”dir (Kane 209). Yine oyunun aynı kısmında yer alan örnekte oyun kişisi “bedeninin ve zihninin bir olduğunu iddia etmekte olan aklın *yumuşak* psikiyatrik sesiyle çıkmaza girdiğini” hissetmektedir (209). Bu bağlamda 4.48 *Psychosis*'te ruhsal bunalım, görsel, kokusal, işitsel ve dokunsal öğelerle ilişkilendirilmiştir. Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi sinestezi doğuştandır, birey bir nesneyi algılamakta pek çok niteliği aynı anda birbiriyle ilişki içerisinde algılar. 4.48 *Psychosis*'te ise algılamada bir karışıklık ve hastalığa bağlı bozulma, mekan ve zaman algısındaki değişimlerde gözlemlenebilir, birey hastalığın algısını anlatımıyla sahneye taşımakta, bu sebepten ötürü olay akışı bozulmakta ve teatral öğeler de yine buna göre şekillenmektedir.

Merleau-Ponty, *Algının Fenomenolojisi* adlı eserinde “dünyada varlık” kavramıyla reflekslerimiz ve vücudumuzla birlikte, duyu organlarımızın dünyayla ilişki içerisinde birlikte çalıştığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu anlamda vücut, “yan yana konmuş bir organlar toplamı değil de tüm işlevleri dünyada varlığın genel hareketi içinde devralınmış ve birbirine bağlanmış sinerjik bir sistem”dir (319). 4.48

*Psychosis* 'de oyun kişisi bu sinerjiyi deneyimleyememektedir, psikolojik durumu sebebiyle de vücuduna yabancılaşmıştır. Kane'nin tiyatro anlayışı, oyun kişisini “dünyada-varlık” kavramına uygun biçimde, akıl hastalığı deneyimini hastanın dünya ile kurduğu ilişki çerçevesinde algıya dayalı olarak sunarak, travma kavramını hem hastanın bakış açısından hem de psikiyatrin deneyimle ilişik olmayan “objektif” bakışıyla sergilemektedir<sup>170</sup>. Oyunda, oyun kişisi düşüncelerinde kapana kısılmıştır ve vücut algısı da zihinsel parçalanmışlığını yansıtır biçimde bütünselliğini yitirmiştir. Hastanın yukarıda belirtilmiş sinestezi içeren ifadelerinin yanı sıra, doktor(lar) oyun kişisini yalnızca patolojinin tanıları çerçevesinde ele almaktadır. Oyun kişisi dünyadan soyutlanmış hissetmektedir, fakat etrafındaki doktorlar onu anlayamamaktadır:

“Burada değilim ve hiçbir zaman olmadım. Dr. Falanca bunu yazarken, Dr. Filanca sempatik bir mırıltıyla yanıt vermeye çalışıyor. Onlar beni izlerken, yargılarken, *tenimden sızan* ve beni sakat bırakan *başarısızlığı koklarken* [...] ben dehşetten ağzım açık, neden herkesin acı veren utancımın gizli bilgisiyle bana gülümsediğini ve baktığını merak ediyorum” (209).

Doktorlar oyun kişisinin acısına aldırılmamaktadır, yalnızca bir nesneye yaklaşırcasına oyun kişisinin anlatılarını psikiyatrik tanılara indirgemektedirler. Oyun kişisi kendi varlığını şimdi ve burada, “dünyada-varlık” olarak bütünsellik içerisinde algılayamamaktadır. Oysaki vücudun bütünsellik içinde deneyimi ve “ruhun ve beden birliğinin, nesnel bir olgu olmadan önce, bilincin ta kendisinin bir imkanı olması” (*Algının Fenomenolojisi* 145) gerekmektedir. Bu birliktelik durumuysa psikoz ve ağır depresyon geçiren oyun kişisi için anlaşılmazdır, çünkü bedenin ve zihnin birlikte deneyimi düşünce ve analizin ürünü değildirler, bu bütünlük doğuştan gelen bir durumdur ve hastalık esnasında bozulmuştur.

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<sup>170</sup> Merleau-Ponty *Algının Fenomenolojisi* adlı kitabının “Beden” üzerine kısmında objektif düşünce esnasında deneyim alanından uzaklaşıp, *ide*'ye geçtiğimizi belirtir. Ona göre “tıpkı nesne gibi ide de herkes için aynı olma, tüm zamanlar ve yerler için geçerli olma iddiasındadır” ve objektif düşünceyle birlikte “dünyayla ve zamanla ve bedenimle yüklem-öncesi bilgide, onlarla kurduğum içsel iletişimde onları deneyimlediğim halleriyle meşgul değilimdir artık” (113-114). Bu söylemiyle Merleau-Ponty, empirist ve psikolojik varsayımların ötesine geçmeye çalışmaktadır.

Doktorların hastanın deneyimine karşı aldıkları soğuk tavır oyunun on dördüncü sahnesinde daha da belirgindir: “Semptomlar: Yemek yememe, uyumama, konuşmama, cinsel dürtü yokluğu, mutsuz, ölmek istiyor.

Tanı: Patolojik mutsuzluk. Sertaline, 50 mg. Uykusuzluğun kötüleşmesi, aşırı anksiyete, kilo kaybı (17 kg), intihar düşüncesinde artış, planlama ve niyetlenme. Hastaneye yatıştan sonra durum devam etmedi.” (Kane 223). Oyun boyunca doktorların olduğu düşünülebilecek bu gibi anlatılar, oyun kişinin kendi anlatısıyla tezatlık oluşturmaktadır. Oyun kişisi kendisini “seksen yaşında gibi hissettiğini” söylediğinde bu durum tekrar vurgulanır, çünkü doktor “bu bir metafor, gerçek değil” (211) yanıtını verir. Oyun kişinin “bu bir metafor değil benzetme. Eğer metafor olsaydı bile, metaforun ayırıcı özelliği gerçek olmasıdır” (211) şeklinde doktora cevap vermesi, doktorun düşük farkındalığına vurgu yapmaktadır. Bu anlamda, oyundaki doktor karakter(ler)i indirgemeci bakış açısını temsil etmektedir. Oyun kişisiye kendi durumundan metaforlardan faydalanarak bahsetmektedir, hisleri ve düşünceleri bu anlamda “gerçek”tir, doktorun fark edemediği şeyse, oyun kişinin deneyimi, kendi gerçekliğidir.

Doktor ve hasta arasında geçmiş olduğu, ve belki de oyun kişinin sürekli olarak düşündüğü bu gibi durumlar oyunda zaman algısını da değiştirmektedir. Oyun, “arkadaşlarına seni bu kadar destekleyici olmaları için ne veriyorsun” sözleriyle başlar (205) ve doktorun bu sorusu sondan bir önceki sahnede yinelenir (236-237). Oyundaki bu ve buna benzer tekrarlar, oyun kişinin travma geçirdiğini ve benzer düşünceler arasında sıkıştığını göstermektedir. Oyun kişinin geçmişi, bugünü ve yarını bu çerçevede eşzamanlı sunulmakta, zihinsel bunalımını bu şekilde sahneye aktarılmaktadır. Tüm bu belirsizlikle birlikte, kimliği ve cinsiyeti belirtilmeyen oyun kişisi için zaman algısının kaybolduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Travmatik olayları tekrar düşündüğü ve bu anlamda deneyimlediğinden, oyun kişisi için “tüm şimdiler arasında bir şimdi, istisnai bir değer kazanır: Diğer şimdileri yerlerinden eder ve onların otantik şimdi olarak değerini yok eder” (*Algının Fenomenolojisi* 128). 4.48 *Psychosis*’teki birden çok, bağlamından koparılmış “şimdi” ise oyun karakterinin

karmaşık bir çizgide sunduğu deneyimlerinin yığılmasıdır. Bu anlamda oyun kişinin zihnini mekansallaştıran oyun, çoksesliliği ile “hayalet organ” tanımına uymakta, sahneyi terk etmeyen ve anlamsal bir karmaşaya yol açan bir çok sesi aynı anda sunmaktadır. Tüm bu karmaşa diyalog yapısındaki bozulma ile verilmiştir, sahnede uzun bir monolog gibi bir araya getirilmiş ses çokluğu deiktik sözcüklerdeki anlam kaybında da gözlemlenebilir.

4.48 *Psychosis*, sahneyi oyun kişinin zihni olarak kurgulayıp, seyircinin deneyimlediği oyun zamanını ise oyun kişinin zaman algısıyla eşgüdümlediğinden, oyundaki çok seslilik oyun kişinin karmaşık düşüncelerinin bir yansıması olabilir. Oyunun kaç kişiyle sahneye konulacağı da belirsizliğini koruduğundan, 4.48 *Psychosis*’teki bu çok seslilik, travmayı ve travmalardan kaynaklanan psikoza örneklerken, Merleau-Ponty felsefesindeki “sinestezi”, “dünyada-varlık” ve “hayalet organ” gibi terimler de Kane’nin postdramatik tiyatrosunun analizinde önem sahibi olmaktadır.

Birinci bölümde oyun analizinde faydalanılmış son Merleau-Ponty terimi “bedenlenme”dir. Birey ve dünya arasındaki ayrılmaz bütünlüğü ifade eden terim, 4.48 *Psychosis*’teki oyun kişinin kaotik dünyadan olumsuz etkilendiğini göstermektedir. “Yahudileri gazla ben katlettim, Kürtleri ben öldürdüm, Arapları ben bombaladım” (Kane 227) diyen oyun kişinin kendi suçluluğu, kendisiyle doğrudan ilgili görülmeyebilecek dünyadaki tüm kötülüklerle ilişkilendirilmiştir. Oyun kişinin *İncil*’den yaptığı alıntılar da bu durumu destekler niteliktedir. Oyunda doğanın tekrarlayan döngüsüne yapılan vurgular yine bu anlamda önemlidir. Doktorların önceden de bahsedilmiş olan ilgisizliği ve yanlış yaklaşımları da bu çerçevede ele alınabilir. Dünyayla bağı koparılmış oyun kişisi, kendi bedenine de yabancılaşmıştır; zihindeki parçalanmışlık, bedensel çökkünlük, dünyanın dekadant durumu ve sahne üzerindeki karmaşa yakından ilintilidir.

Oyundaki postdramatik öğeler ile yabancılaşma kavramı da bu terimler etrafında düşünüldüğünde yapısal özelliklerin oyunun içeriğiyle uyumuna işaret etmektedir.

4.48 *Psychosis*'te psikoz deneyimini sahnelemek adına diyalog yapısında bozulma vardır<sup>171</sup>, mekan ve zaman belirsizdir, metinlerarasılık mevcuttur; oyun kişinin monoton bir biçimde kendini suçladığı uzun bir monolog ve bağlamından koparılmış uzun medikal raporlar, yalnızca rakamlardan oluşan iki sahne, tekrarlar ve neden-sonuç ilişkisinde kopukluk bulunmaktadır. Oyundaki en kısa sahne “lütfen hemen yanıt verin” anlamındaki “RSVP ASAP” (214) harflerinden oluşmaktadır. Tüm bu ögeler postdramatik tiyatronun özelliklerine uymaktadır, çünkü postdramatik tiyatrodaki da “retreat of synthesis” (sentezin yokluğu)<sup>172</sup> hedeflenmektedir, seyircinin algısı parçalanmışlığa ve anlamsızlığa maruz bırakılır. Sapkın ve hasta bedenlerin (“deviant or ill bodies”) iç dünyalarının, metnin, seyircinin algısının bu parçalanmışlıktaki ortaklığı, Merleau-Ponty'nin kavramlarıyla tartışılabilir. Yine oyundaki sinestezik metaforlar hem Lehmann ve postdramatik tiyatrodaki algı karmaşası, hem de Merleau-Ponty terimleriyle irdelenebilecek olan hastanın doğuştan gelen sinestezik ve bütünsel algının bozulmuşluğu düşünüldüğünde anlamlıdır. Tüm ögelerin eşzamanlılık prensibiyle sunulması da sinestezik algıdaki değişim ve psikoz durumu göz önüne alındığında psikoz geçiren oyun kişisini anlamamızı kolaylaştırmakta; bizi dünyayı bütünsel algılamamızı sağlayan doğal algıdan uzaklaştırmaktadır. Bu anlamda 4.48 *Psychosis*'te seyirci oyunu izlerken anlamsal parçalanmışlığın ortasındadır ve yabancılaşma duygusunun tesiri altındadır.

Tezin üçüncü bölümü, *Crave*'i ele almıştır. Oyunda isimleri olmayan dört sesin, A, M, B ve C'nin, birbirine geçmiş ve zaman zaman diyalog gibi algılanabilecek ve bağlamlarından koparılmış konuşmaları metinde kaotik bir gösterge yoğunluğuna

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<sup>171</sup> Postdramatik oyunlarda “diyalog yerini çok sesliliğe bırakır ve böylelikle diyalogun yerini koro, ağıt ya da şarkı alabilir [...] Nedensellik içeren diyaloglara pek rastlanmaz. Geleneksel tiyatro anlayışında hiyerarşik yapının en tepesinde olan sözün gücü postdramatik tiyatrodaki alışıya edilir

<sup>172</sup> Postdramatik tiyatrodaki seyirci bir göstergeler karmaşası içerisinde bocalar, Lehmann'ın deyişiyle “postdramatik tiyatrodaki sentezin yerini tezler almıştır” ( akt. Bozer 14). Yine Bozer'in deyişiyle “seyirciden bir senteze ulaşması yerine oyundaki duygusal ve düşünsel anlamdaki yoğun anları algılaması istenir” (14). 4.48 *Psychosis* ve *Crave*'de bu durum mevcuttur, sahnedeki karmaşa hastalanmış zihindeki karmaşayı yansıtmaktadır. Bu karmaşa Merleau-Ponty'nin deneyimi önceleyen ve beden-zihin arasındaki Kartezyen ikilikten uzak görüşleriyle incelenebilir. Bu anlamda Kane hastalıktan yola çıkarak doğal algının bozulmasını sergilemekte, algıdaki parçalanmışlık metin, zaman, seyirci-sahne ilişkisi gibi pek çok katmanda yansıtılmaktadır.

(“density of signs”) neden olmaktadır. *4.48 Psychosis*’e benzer biçimde, oyun, karakterlerin zihnini mekan edinmiş gibidir. Oyunda sahneler arasında ayırım ve olay örgüsü bulunmaz, çok seslilik içeren bir monoloğu takip etmek için çabalayan seyirci sahnede ne olduğunu, karakterlerin kim olduklarını, geçmişlerini çıkarımsamaya çalışır. Dağınık anlatılarda ima edilen bir dizi olay, sahnedeki bu karakterlerin birbirleriyle ilişkide olduğunu ve rahatsız edici düşünceler şeklinde zihinlerinde birbirlerine eziyet ettiklerini göstermektedir. Karakterler, şiddet olaylarını şok edici detaylarıyla doğrudan ifade ederler, anlattıkları A’nın pedofili olması, C’nin aile içi şiddet ve tecavüze maruz kalması, M’nin kendi çocuğu yaşındaki bir adamdan (B’den) çocuk istemesi, B’nin de (muhtemel) bağımlılığıdır. Çoğu parçada A ve C birbirleriyle konuşur gibi benzer olaylardan bahsederken B ve M’nin de yine zaman zaman sözleri bir diyalogu andıracak biçimde birbirlerine yanıt veriyor görünür. Oyunda geçmiş, gelecek ve şimdi birbirlerine karışmıştır.

*Crave* incelenirken ilk alt başlık, sinestezi kavramına ayrılmıştır. *Crave*’de sinestetik bütünlük bulunmaz, metin olayları parçalar halinde anlatılmaktadır; dolayısıyla sinestetik algıda bozulma vardır. Birbirleriyle hem yapı hem içerik olarak benzeyen *Crave* ve *4.48 Psychosis* hep birbirleriyle ilişki içerisinde ele alınmış iki eserdir (Urban 43). Oyunda sahne üzerinde aksiyon yoktur, karakterler ruh hallerini anlatmak için metaforlar kullanmak yerine korkunç olayları tüm çıplaklığıyla anlattıklarından, söz sanatı olarak daha az sinestetik ifade vardır. Az sayıdaki sinestetik ifadelerden biri olarak, C’nin yaşadığı iki travmatik olayı aynı anda ortaya çıkaran aşağıdaki parça örneklendirilebilir:

**A:** Seviştik, sonra kustu.

**C:** Bana yardım edebilecek kimse yok(tu), sikik annem de dahil.

**A:** İki nehir aştım, birinin yanında ağladım.

**M:** Gözlerimi kapatıyorum, onun gözlerini kapattığını görüyorum, o da seni görüyor.

**A:** *Bir nergisin çığlığı,*

**M:** *Bir çığlığın lekesi.*

**C:** Babamı annemi bastonla döverken izledim.

**A:** Bir yankı

- B:** Bunu gördüğün için üzgünüm.  
**B:** Bunu yaptığı için üzgünüm. (Kane 179).

Yine yukarıdaki örnekte görülebileceği gibi, “deiktik” ilişkiler *Crave*’de de kaybolmuştur. B’nin hangi olay için üzgün olduğu belli değildir, “bunu” kelimesi çoklu anlama sahiptir. C, A’nın kendisine uyguladığı cinsel şiddeti anlatırken aynı anda annesinin başına gelenler aktarılmaktadır. A ve M’nin bu durumlar üzerindeki sinestetik ifadeleri de algıdaki parçalanmışlığa katkıda bulunur.

Sierz’in *Suratına Tiyatro: Britanya’da In-Yer-Face Tiyatrosu* adlı kitabında *Crave* için bir bölüm ayırdığından ve oyun, şiddet içeren ifadeler ve kaba, küfürlü, şok edici dil kullanımı sebebiyle “suratına tiyatro” nun bir temsilcisi olarak da düşünülebilir. Bu tez, karakterlerin sinestetik kavrayışları ruhsal hastalık nedeniyle bozulduğundan, oyundaki tiplere, olay örgüsü, olay yeri gibi biçimsel öğelerin travma algısına göre şekillendiğini savunur. Bu nedenle, oyunda sahne üzerinde sahne üzerinde sergilenen şiddet olmaması ve konuşmacıların yaşadıkları travmatik olayları sözle aktarmaları nedeniyle tez, oyunu postdramatik tiyatro örneği olarak ele almıştır.

Tezin devamında, konuşmacıların iç içe geçmiş anlatıları, Kane’in yapıtında biçim ve içerik arasında güçlü bir örtüşme olduğunu kanıtlayan “dünyada-varlık” ve “bedenlenme” terimleri ve postdramatik teatral göstergelerle birlikte analiz edilmiştir. Karakterlerin zaman kavramını alaşağı eden geçmiş, bugün ve şimdinin tortularını barındıran söylemleri travmatik anlatılara benzemektedir. A ve C’nin sürekli geçmişe dönen anlatıları, B ve M’nin de benzer biçimde birbirleriyle konuşuyor gibi rastlaşan söylemleri, tüm karakterlerin psikolojik anlamdaki yıkımı hayalet organ tanımına uymaktadır. Oyun kişilerinin dünyadan kopuk olmaları da gerçeklik algılarını sınırlamaktadır, A pedofili olduğu halde kendisinin hasta olduğunu düşünmemekte, yalnızca aşık olduğunu sanmaktadır. C de bazı kısımlarda A’ya aşık olduğunu düşünmektedir. B ve M’in ilişkileri de benzer bir örüntü içermektedir. Hastalık nedeniyle bedenle ruhun birbirine yabancılaşması da yine bu



oyunda işlenmiş bir konudur. Tüm bu durumların sahnede postdramatik öğelerle ifade edilişi, yabancılaşma hissi yaratmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, Kane'in postdramatik tiyatrosunun, sahnedeki aksiyonu şekillendiren içsel ruh hallerini ve kullanılacak teatral teknikleri oluşturduğu yargısına varılabilir. Parçalanma, öznel kavramının erozyona uğraması, bireyin bedenini ve ruhunu etkileyen dış şiddetin müdahalesi gibi postdramatik tiyatroya ait bazı öğeler çeşitli fenomenoloji ekolleriyle analiz edilebilir. Postdramatik tiyatrodaki yabancılaşma ve algıya odaklanan daha fazla araştırma yapılabilir. Merleau-Ponty'nin bedeni ve algıyı önceleyen felsefesi ile, Lehmann'ın teorize ettiği postdramatik tiyatro akımı hakkında daha fazla araştırma ve çalışma yapılabilir.

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