



A WEB OF POWER CIRCULATING IN EVERY DIRECTION: DELEUZE AND GUATTARIAN READING OF SARAH KANE'S CLEANSED¹

GÜÇ AĞININ HER YÖNE YAYILMASI: SARAH KANE'NİN CLEANSED ADLI OYUNUNUN DELEUZE VE GUATTARI FELSEFESİYLE OKUNMASI

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Abstract

During the 1990s, a new movement on British stages emerged owing to the cultural, political, ideological, and social changes prevalent in British society. Despite the multiplicity of definitions loosely attributed to this movement, the term “in-her-face theatre,” appears to be more commonly well-received and more encompassing. As an overt reaction to the changes taking place in British society at the time, newly emerging dramatists express their disillusionment, nonconformity through transgressing the bounds of purported decency in theatre, subverting conventional dramatic representations and techniques with the use of striking and challenging imagery. Belonging to this in-her-face oeuvre, Sarah Kane, has given voice to several contemporary issues, including survival under harsh conditions like in war zone, indifference and desensitization to war, the power imbalance both in public and private spheres, commodified love and sex, gender and identity politics, as well as growing consumerism and repercussions in the society. Her third play *Cleaned* (1998) takes place in a stifling and captivating educational institution where characters in the play are allegedly disciplined and trained by violence against their unconformities. While criticizing the prevalent oppressive educational system that diminishes desire and unique individuality by seeking to subjugate students to the limits of conformity, Sarah Kane topsy-turves dualistic thoughts based on societal norms between female/male, self/other, victim/victimised, body/mind, inside/outside oppressor/oppressed, victim/perpetrator, natural/unnatural, normal/abnormal, moral/immoral, and sane/insane. Despite the proclivity to interpret her plays fraught with pessimism and hopelessness towards future, this article recontextualizes her play *Cleaned* using Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's positive and life-affirming philosophy, which I believe, will open up new alternative visions in the articulation of her play with regards to the question she raises about the fixed nature of identity, long-standing norms of sexuality, and gender inscription on the bodies.

Öz

1990'lerde İngiliz toplumunda hüküm süren kültürel, politik, ideolojik ve sosyal değişimlerin etkisiyle İngiliz tiyatro sahnelerinde yeni bir akım doğdu. Bu akım değişik bir sürü tanımla adlandırılabilir da “in-her-face tiyatrosu” tanımı daha yaygın olarak kabul görmüş ve daha kapsayıcı bir kavram olarak görülmüştür. O zamanlar İngiliz toplumunda meydana gelen değişikliklere açık tepki olarak öne çıkan yeni oyun yazarları, memnuniyetsizliklerini, topluma uyumsuzluklarını, nezaket sınırlarını ihmal etmeyi ve geleneksel teatral tasvir ve tekniklerini çarpıcı imgeler kullanarak yıkmayı amaç edinirler. In-her-face tiyatrosunun bir parçası olan Sarah Kane, savaş alanı gibi zorlu şartlarda ayakta kalma mücadelesi, güç dengesizliği, savaşa karşı kayıtsızlık, materyalleşmiş aşk ve seks, toplumsal cinsiyet ve kimlik politikaları ile toplumda artan tüketim gibi birçok konuyu eserlerinde işlemiştir. Üçüncü oyunu *Cleaned* karakterlerin toplumsal uyumsuzluklarına karşı onları sözde disipline edip eğiten, boğucu ve tutsak edici bir eğitim enstitüsünde geçmektedir. Öğrencileri toplumsal uyum sınırlarına indirgeyerek, istek ve bireyselliği yok eden yaygın ve baskıcı Batı eğitim sistemini eleştirirken, Sarah Kane dişi/erkek, ben/öteki, kurban/kurban edilen, beden/akıl, baskılayıcı/baskılanan, masum/suç isleyen, doğal/doğal olmayan normal/normal olmayan ahlaklı/ahlaklı olmayan ve akıllı aklı başında olmayan gibi toplumsal değerlerin dayandığı ikili düşünce sistemini yıkmaktadır. Oyunları çoğunlukla geleceğe karşı karamsar ve çaresizlik içeriyor gibi değerlendirilse de bu makale onun *Cleaned* oyununu Deleuze ve Guattari'nin pozitif ve yaşamı onaylayan felsefesiyle değerlendirilecektir. Bu değerlendirme, Kane'nin sabit kimlik anlayışı, süregelen cinsellik normları ve bedenler üzerine atfedilen toplumsal cinsiyetler üzerine sorular sorması bakımından oyunu değerlendirmede yeni bakış açıları getireceğine inanıyorum.

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In the 1990s a new kind of drama movement flourished in Britain reflecting the ongoing social, political, ideological, and cultural shifts prevailing the society. Referred to as “in-yer-face theatre,” this newly born movement challenges traditional notions of theatrical representations through grotesque experimentation in style, content, and conventional character portrayal. Playwrights belonging to this oeuvre employs gruesome violence, unpleasant sex, and onstage rape to provoke and startle the audience so that they would feel violated, and thus respond to that violation particularly by searching for possible changes to the horrors committed all around the world. Bearing close resemblance to Antonin Artaud’s understanding of “Theatre of Cruelty,” which states that “theatre must give us everything that is in crime, love, war, or madness, if it wants to recover its necessity,” and that “*the image of a crime presented in the requisite theatrical conditions is something infinitely more terrible for the spirit than that same crime when actually committed*” (85). Very much influenced from Artaud, and drawing on his idea that the theatre should be abhorrent and provocative, these playwrights’ theatre encompasses reactionary and uplifting scenes to stimulate the audience into action. In other words, the very purpose behind the demonstration of shockingly repellent images is to make the audience cognizant of socio-cultural and political events taking place both locally and internationally, and have them “*question current ideas of what is normal, what it means to be human, what is natural or what it means to be real*” (Sierz 5). A forerunner British theatre critic, Aleks Sierz, who coined the term in-yer-face theatre in his book *In-Yer-Face Theatre British Drama Today* (2000), posits that “[t]his new writing is aimed at invading personal areas and putting someone in the position of being disturbed. It suggests the transgressing the conformity norms and standard mediums” (5). This includes challenging the construction of fixed notion of coherent, organic, stable identities, long-held dichotomies, restrained sexualities and selves. Within the wider context, in-yer-face theatre

[i]s any drama that takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message. It is a theatre of sensation; it jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses, touching nerves and provoking alarm. Often such drama employs shock tactics, or is shocking because it is new in tone or structure, or because it is bolder or more experimental than what audiences are used to. Questioning moral norms, it affronts the ruling ideas of what can or should be shown onstage; it also taps into more

primitive feelings, smashing taboos, mentioning the forbidden, creating discomfort. Crucially, it tells us more about who we really are. Unlike the type of theatre that allows us to sit back and contemplate what we see in detachment, the best in-yer-face theatre takes us on an emotional journey, getting our skin. In other words, it is experiential, not speculative (Sierz 4).

Among significant and provocative representatives of in-yer-face theatre, Sarah Kane has carved her entrenched place in the group of five notorious dramatists called the “Fabulous Five” (Billington and Gardner 10). These new controversial dramatists are Jez Butterworth, David Eldridge, Martin McDonagh, Joe Penhall, and Sarah Kane, who replete their dramas with disturbing imagery to express their discontent with the new consumerist and throw-away culture, leading to social fragmentation and destructive impacts. Emphasizing their deep-seated cultural and political anxiety towards Britain and its structuring, Vera Gottlieb notes that

all these writers are very much in touch with the malaise amongst their generation, all too aware of consumerism, drug culture and sexuality paralyze the plays. And yet they do speak to their audience, if only because of their referential use of pop culture, television and Hollywood films — the postmodernist emphasis on form as distinct from content (212).

Growing under the power and the rule of the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, who notoriously stated that “*there’s no such a thing as society. There are only individuals,*” (qtd. in Woddis 193) they simultaneously felt empowered and disempowered. Owing to Margaret Thatcher’s advocacy of individualization, these playwrights seized the opportunity to give a distinct voice to their own individual concerns, and to desert state-of-the nation plays that are in conform with the settled values and predominant ideologies of the state. Using individualization as a pretext for their experimentation with the form and the content, they did not vacillate to transgress conventional dramatic structure, break taboos, mention disturbing subjects, shatter expected modes of behaviors and normative roles. In particular, they played with, and mostly dissolved, long-standing binaries between private/public life, male/ female, oppressor/oppressed, victim/perpetrator, natural/unnatural, normal/abnormal, moral/immoral, and sane/insane that confine individuals into certain categorizations. While transforming this societal change into their own advantage, these dramatists also felt disjointed and

disempowered due to the changes. For that reason, they are even alluded to by Mark Ravenhill as “Thatcher’s Children” (309), and as “Mrs. Thatcher’s disoriented children,” by Benedict Nightingale, (20) for they suffered from social and psychological disorientation resulting from this paradigm shift in terms of cultural, political, and economic dynamics. However, as Ian Rickson also argues, “*Thatcherism provided both a climate of anger and the motivation to do something about it,*” (qtd. in Sierz 39) so, even though they were feeling dismayed, this dissenting group of playwrights were motivated to bring new aesthetics and sensibility to British drama and stage, which they replete with diverse unsettling subject matters and fragmentary style to lucidly demonstrate the kind of the world they are living in by breaking down the political correctness in drama. The period is succinctly summarized by Aleks Sierz, which could be helpful to understand the period in which these writers were producing:

Imagine being born in 1970. You’re nine years old when Margaret Thatcher comes to power; for the next eighteen years- just as you are growing intellectually and emotionally-the only people you see in power in Britain are Tories. Nothing changes; politics stagnate. Then, sometime in the late eighties, you discover Ecstasy and dance culture. Sexually, you’re less hung up about differences between gays and straights than your older brothers and sisters. You also realize that if you want to protest, or make music, shoot a film or put on an exhibition, you have to do it yourself. In 1989, the Berlin Wall falls and the old ideological certainties disappear into the dustbin of history. And you’re still not even twenty. In the nineties, media images of Iraq, Bosnia and Rwanda haunt your mind. Political idealism – you remember Tiananmen Square and know people who are road protestors – is mixed with cynicism – your friends don’t vote and you think all politicians are corrupt. This is the world you write about (237).

Within this in-her-face oeuvre, Sarah Kane has, without a doubt, received much attention as well as criticism due to her overt use of obscene scenes, violence, disturbing images and sharp language in her works. Sarah Kane, who has been pigeonholed as the “*naughtiest girl in the class,*” (Spencer 86) is a controversial playwright, who has been extensively discussed, yet mostly criticized harshly by literary critics and stage directors. Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the fact that

[h]er plays demonstrate remarkable insight and clarity. They offer us a powerful warning, by showing the tragic but logical conclusion of humanity's escalating, destructive behaviour. Simultaneously, they force us to confront our shared responsibility for the brutal reality which already exists ... She pioneers a new generation of playwrights and is uninterested in a direct examination of gender struggle, which she feels is symptomatic of a much wider malaise (Stephenson and Langridge 129).

On one hand, she is acclaimed for her experimental language and technical innovations; on the other, she has become notorious owing to her use of overt violence and brutal scenes on stage. Sarah Kane, a radical playwright, in fact uses her plays as an instrument to convey the death of values in society, and generates a way to escape from dominant structures existing in the society that trap the individuals within. Through the medium of her writing, she targets to ruin the traditional images of theatrical representation, and question the widespread presuppositions demonstrating extreme violence, which is the only way for her characters to express themselves within a confined atmosphere. By means of transcending the limits of conventional forms of representation, Kane rebels against Western representations that are grounded upon clear-cut binary oppositions, such as men/women, doctor/patient, body/mind, truth/fiction, origin/non-origin, self/other. As Ken Urban underlines, Sarah Kane "knew the stage is always, as Beckett taught us, a place of thought, and this made her push the boundaries" (46). Thus, avoiding constraining categorizations by pushing them, she claims to address universal issues that concern whole humanity. She remarks: "*I write about human beings, and since I am one, the ways in which all human beings operate is feasibly within my understanding. I don't think of the world as being divided up into men and women, victims and perpetrators*" (qtd. in Stephenson 133). In her works, by bringing dichotomies together, Kane deconstructs the hierarchical status of organizations and domineering institutions.

In this article, Sarah Kane's groundbreaking play *Cleansed* (1998), which addresses the issues of oppressive education, gender construction, the breakdown of social and political boundaries in which characters are trapped, will be analyzed and recontextualized within the context of the distinctive features of in-yer-face theatre and Deleuze and Guattarian concepts. Gilles Deleuze, one of the prominent philosophers of the 20th century, working in-collaboration with the psychiatrist Félix Guattari, introduced new and innovative concepts into the field of philosophy;

such as “Body without Organs,” “Deterritorialization,” “Schizoanalysis,” “Desiring-Machines,” and “Becomings” which can also create new openings for Kane’s plays to be reconfigured. Through their concepts, Deleuze and Guattari engender new spaces of freedom of thought from the forms of any kind of oppression, and offer new possibilities and connections of challenging traditionally stifling norms, modes of living, hierarchical discourses, and positioning along with confining categorizations of human beings under certain sexuality, race, or identity. Exploring Sarah Kane’s *Cleansed* in the light of their emancipatory terms is feasible, for Kane questions whether there is a possibility for the characters in the play to escape from the restrictions of societal factors and totalizing oppression. Despite the proclivity to interpret her plays fraught with pessimism and hopelessness towards future among critics, this article considers *Cleansed* life-affirming with respect to raising numerous questions about the fixed nature of identity, long-standing norms of sexuality, and gender inscription on the bodies.

After Sarah Kane’s third play *Cleansed* debut in April 1998, making a huge impact on British stages regarding the thematic framework it embodies, it has been assessed and interpreted in a multiple of ways. Kane herself did not want *Cleansed* to be fixated upon just one meaning as she declares in an interview that “almost every line in *Cleansed* has more than one meaning” (qtd. in Armitstead). Thus, Kane seeks to be elusive intentionally as also pointed out by Aleks Sierz that she “is grappling with a theatrical language capable of generating a multiplicity of meanings” (114). After its first blatantly shocking performance, several critics were very quick to draw a resemblance between her first play *Blasted* and *Cleansed*. Some deemed *Cleansed* to be a subsequent piece of work that was built on *Blasted*. For instance, Summer Neilson Moshy asserts that “*Cleansed* picks up where *Blasted* left off, continuing Kane’s ongoing inquisition of the inextricability of love and violence and the respective binding effects between those who share either’s perpetration” (18). Similarly, Christine Woodworth points out that “Sarah Kane’s *Blasted* and *Cleansed* dramatized worlds of extreme violence to illustrate the oppressive and repressive nature of heteronormative power relations... Both plays critiqued masculinized violence and constructed nature of gender” (129). Thus, overall, one can argue that *Cleansed* bears resemblance to *Blasted* in terms of the prolongation of both psychological and physical suffering, the deep exploration of cruelty in human nature, the desire to love and to be loved, the extreme abuse of the body, the unequal power relations, the deconstruction of binaries such as

victim/perpetrator, abused/abuser, public/private, object/subject, the ritualization of violence, brutality of the educational institution and survival in oppressive enclosed environments. Equally, as disturbing as Kane's notorious play *Blasted*, *Cleansed* offers a suppressive surrounding that recalls a nightmare which makes the audience participate in this imaginative slice of hell. *Daily Express* reveals that "this feverish work has a bizarre integrity to it and a feeling that it has been ripped fresh from a hellish personal vision and nightmare landscape" (qtd. in Saunders 89). Also, Ian Rickson notes that "her bravery is that she dramatises the nightmares that are around us in a thoroughly theatrical way" (qtd. in Sierz 113). While Rickson emphasizes the fact that Kane conceptualizes her work like a nightmare in a dramatic way, Evelyne Pieiller contends that Kane represents a nightmarish world in order to declare valid concerns, and hence she points out that in her plays, Kane inflicts "a nightmare which, like all nightmares, tells a truth" (1). What is more, John Peter from *The Sunday Times* asserts that

Cleansed is a nightmare of a play: like a nightmare, it unreels somewhere between the back of your eyes and the centre of your brain with an unpredictable but remorseless logic. As with a nightmare, you cannot shut it out because nightmares are experienced with your whole body. As with a nightmare, you feel that somebody else is dreaming it for you, spinning the images out of some need that you don't want to think of as your own. *Cleansed* is a brilliantly searing dramatic experience: you have been warned (Peter).

Therefore, *Cleansed* signifies a nightmare-like world in which all the characters are trapped and are left to confront horrific and shocking events.

In *Cleansed*, what Kane portrays is a devastating environment in disguise of an educational institution. Seven characters in the play, trained and disciplined through savagery and torture under the surveillance of unrestrained authority, strive to endure atrocities inscribed on their bodies and mental state. On these characters, namely, Tinker, Grace/Graham, Rod, Carl, Robin, and the dancer is exerted horrendous physical violence as well as are exposed to psychological abuse as punishment for an attitude that clashes with society's expectations or norms. Linked to these characters, different symbolic stories are displayed. Each story seems to be encompassing a distinct topic, and, although the events do not follow a straight-line sequence as they are arranged in a non-linear pattern, yet they are

interwoven in the end. The essential story embodies Grace's search for her brother, Graham, who is overdosed with heroin by Tinker, and is supposedly dead. When she cannot find her deceased brother, Grace insists on getting his clothes. She is admitted to the university/institutional camp, and is given Graham's clothes back worn by Robin, another student/inmate at that university. The moment she wears the clothes, she feels reconciliation and unification with her dead brother, and demands to have a penis transplant. In the end, she receives a penis transplant through sex-reassignment surgery, and affirms a new identity. Meanwhile, there begins an ambiguous relationship between Robin, a nineteen-year-old boy and Grace, who teaches him how to count. Yet, after Robin is in full command of measuring the time, he realizes the length of time he is supposed to spend in that institution, and commits suicide.

Another story circles around a gay couple Carl and Rod who bring up the idea of commitment, betrayal, and unconditional love. One is romantic and the other is idealistic in terms of love and faithfulness, respectively. Carl's alleged bonds of love are tested by Tinker via exertion of violence and torture. Yet, Carl does not keep his promise for eternal love and betrays Rod, the one who is sacrificed for love. The last story, on the other hand, is related to Tinker and the dancer whose identity is intentionally blurred. Nonetheless, it is assumed that Tinker uses the dancer as a substitute to consummate his desires for Grace.

More elaborately, there are four different (love) cyclical relationships in the play which are between Grace and Graham, the heterosexual relationship between Carl and Rod, a mother/a child or a teacher/ a student relationship between Grace and Robin, and lastly the ambiguous relationship between Tinker and the dancer. Terribly stuck in this destructive environment, these characters attempt to exhibit their love, since the desire to love and to be loved characterize the primary motive of the characters in the play. However; the fervent love and the strong attachment they feel one another is the very reason why they are inflicted upon numerous violent acts. Because they show love relentlessly, they are subjected to undergo the destructive side of it, which *"involves madness and loss of self. These people are trapped on a microscope slide. It is an experiment about love and how far you can push it. It's a bleak world of view"* (Peter).

In *Cleansed* Kane, through the characters, explores the possibilities and limits of love and passion as well as the brutal side of love which makes them victims of their love. What stimulates these characters is the deep need for love and affection. As Dan Rebellato specifies,

they are all just in love. I actually thought it's all very sixties and hippy. They are emanating this great love and need and going after what they need, and the obstacles in their way are all extremely unpleasant but that's not what the play is about. What drives people is need, not the obstacles (29).

Presumably, the place where the characters are trapped is a place where love especially unconventional desire is to be punished with severe cruelty. However, it also constitutes the mere hope for survival in this ugly world: "*Cleansed's idealism lies in its conviction that love is the one basis of hope in an evil world. It presents a vision of tough love that can survive not only physical torture but also the need to tell the truth about ourselves*" (Sierz 114).

This very stifling place "*dramatizes a microcosm of society under the power of an unrestrained dictator, a God-like figure named Tinker who maintains the control of a former university campus turned into an 'institution'*" (Earnest 110). It more resembles a concentration camp where the immanent infliction of torture and violence take place. By way of setting *Cleansed* in a former university/disciplinary institution, Kane makes a definite critique of repressive norms of education and power which inflict a punishment on "*those resistant to its rules and forms*" (Grosz 149). Sarah Kane questions the deep-seated repressive educational practices that are destructive, abusive, and dehumanizing. To give an incisive example to this, the acquired knowledge at this university leads to devastation when Robin, who learns how to count, obtains an abacus, and measures the thirty years of his punishment. This awakening and knowledge acquisition drag him to take his own life tragically.

It is revealed that the students or rather inmates within this university are expected to follow the orders of the educational system to which they seem to be fully committed, which is closely related to what Elizabeth Grosz states regarding how controlling educational systems need individuals who can be complicit in the disciplinary power:

regimes of order and control involved in modern disciplinary society need the creation of a docile, obedient subject whose body and movements parallel and correlate with the efficiency of a machine or

a body whose desire is to confess all about its innermost subjectivity and sexuality to institutionally sanctioned authorities (148-149).

In the light of the inmates' absolute dedication to the demands of the educational system, which is governed by Tinker, depicted as the holder of the control and discipline, it can also be inferred that the other characters like Tinker are also trapped within this mechanism where control and discipline prevail. Although Tinker seems to be the holder of the authority at this university, it is undeniably apparent in *Cleansed* that the regulation of actions and disciplines are not in the hands of one, stable, fixed authority, which is an indicative of the fluidity of power. That also makes Tinker an object in this totalitarian environment. In this way, *"totalitarian regimes are the regimes of the slaves, not only in terms of the people they subjugate, but especially the 'leaders' they foster"* (*A Thousand Plateaus...* 205). From such perspective, totalitarian regimes and oppressive forces subjugate not only individuals, but their leaders as well. It is clear that, when Grace seeks to be admitted to the institution, Tinker opposes the idea of her submission to the university by pointing out that *"I can't protect you."* And later, he says, *"I'm not responsible, Grace"* (37). Therefore, the omnipresence of greater power than the power what Tinker seems to hold is frequently felt in the play. In an interview with Graham Saunders, Stuart McQuarrie, who plays the role of Tinker, elaborates on the ubiquitous but invisible greater power over Tinker:

We came to idea that he [Tinker] was also incarcerated but was given certain powers within the institution. That often happens in prisons with harsh political regimes where they give someone a little bit of power and they do all the dirty work — and they feed them nonsense in order to keep them in control. Then again it's not absolutely stated so we felt there was someone up above who is higher than Tinker (qtd. in Saunders 184).

Thus, he is not an omnipotent powerful force holding the absolute power in his hands. Rather, he is simultaneously the obedient subject of the institution he operates at, which precisely resonates with Michel Foucault's idea of power/knowledge. Since, for Foucault, *"power is not something that's acquired, seized or shared, something one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points,"* (94) one can feel the circulation of power and power relations among the characters in the institution in every direction. Correspondingly, Deleuze and Guattari argue that hierarchical organisms and

authorities holding power, choose representatives who exert power on others so as to scrutinize and discipline individuals. They state that “[u]ndoubtedly, the great collective bodies of a State are differentiated and hierarchical organisms that on the one hand enjoy a monopoly over a power or function and on the other hand send out local representatives” (*A Thousand Plateaus* ... 403). In this sense, Tinker is the representative of educational institutions which are the sources of normalizing and regulating individuals, since “[t]he various forms of education or ‘normalization’ imposed upon an individual consist in making him or her change points of subjectification, always moving toward a higher, nobler one in closer conformity with the supposed ideal” (*A Thousand Plateaus* ... 129). Thus, Tinker at the university observes individuals and aims at making them conform to the educational forces.

The university is thus under Tinker’s constant observation who never hesitates to abuse his power and seek to stabilize it through purportedly training the students. His so-called training encapsulates standardizing and “normalizing” the students, yet in a brutal way. Elaine Scarry analyzes that torture and pain become the means of asserting power in this institution: “*The physical pain is so incontestably real that it seems to confer its quality of ‘incontestable reality’ on that power that has brought into being. It is, of course, precisely because the reality of that power is so highly contestable, the regime is so unstable, that the torture is being used*” (27). In this sense, power is implicated for the purpose of bringing the students into “normality.” Especially, in order to make them complicit and docile, Tinker uses their frailties and vulnerabilities towards their passionate love and desire. The power imposed on the subservient individuals with kryptonite towards love is easy to control in such a domineering institution at which “*the oppressors can do anything that their victims cannot stop them doing*” (Rabey 206). Thus, in *Cleansed Kane* portrays a repressive university setting, and oppressive practices in the educational system where the abuse of power is evident. With this kind of grotesque portrayal, Kane seems to be pointing towards how stifling the educational system has gotten in Britain, and how students feel trapped like inmates in that sort of constraining so-called educational practices.

As stated before, although Tinker seems to be holding the absolute power, there is a web of power circulating and flowing in every direction simultaneously. Power is a process and a matter of exchange which is continually changing and switching directions between one another. Besides, power circulates thorough decentred field of institutional networks and is exercised from innumerable points

which can never be totally acquired or seized. In this regard, Ronald Bogue argues that in terms of Deleuzian approach like the Foucauldian one, power/desire circulates in every direction including all organisms, which are involved in social institutions. He points out that

[t]he circuits of are also circuits of desire that the Law is not only a machine for processing defendants, but a desiring machine in which power/desire is imbued through every circuit. What this suggests is that the problem of power is not simply one of oppressors and oppressed, of those who have power and those who don't, but of the libidinal investments that characterize all power relations, of the docility of the oppressed and their complicity in their own oppression, as well as the diffusive spread of a mentality of coercion throughout widening circles of disciplinary regulation (81).

Thereby, what is observed in *Cleansed* is the dismantling of fixed and prescribed power relations. Similarly, Deleuze presents “deterritorialization” of locatable power “*through an intensification of destabilizing, deforming and decoding forces that are being stabilized, formed and coded by the particular social system*” (Bogue 84). In this regard, Rosi Braidotti states:

Deleuze stresses the formidable exercise of power which upholds the process: bio-power, that is power of life and death over the bodies of human beings; the Panopticon – the power which is self-reflexively present without being seen. The intellectual's task is to decipher the networks of power such as they are displayed in the production of knowledge, in order to locate its effects and indicate where they are hiding; in other words; to unmask Power and limit its effects (118).

Similar to Deleuze and Guattari, Kane unveils the formidable practices of power and hidden corrupt systems in institutions and universities, in particular. She not only attacks “*power relations that... perpetuate Western colonialist power imbalances*” (Woodworth 95), but also as Summer Nielson Moshy touches upon, Kane seeks to

reveal the hidden systems of power by exploring and often exploding open how they manifest into our everyday lives. Thus, her texts elicit theatre pieces that also question and interrogate “hidden” systems. In Kane's texts, systems of power are revealed to be constructions, not absolutes, which can be deconstructed and re-organized to account for a larger, more egalitarian, experience (185-186).

In the very beginning of the play, Tinker exerts violence on Graham by injecting a syringe full of heroin “into the corner of Graham’s eye” (2). Graham, who seems to be an addict, is repressed, and exposed to violence in the institution. He wants to abandon this facility as he says, “I want out,” (1) but the response to his call which comes from Tinker is, “No” (1). He later is reported to be dead of an overdose, [“He slumps”] (2) yet continues to take part in this abhorrent situation as a ghost.

While the first scene comes to a close with the alleged death of Graham, the second scene opens with two male students, Rod and Carl, expressing their passionate love to each other. While Carl aspires their love to be sealed by the ring as a token of love, Rod displays hesitation to claim eternal love.

Carl That I’ll always love you

Rod (*laughs*)

Carl That I’ll never betray you.

Rod (*laughs more*)

Carl That I’ll never lie to you. (4)

Rod (*takes the ring and Carl’s hand*)

Listen. I’m saying this once.

(*He puts the ring on Carl’s finger.*)

I love you *now*.

I’m with you *now*.

I’ll do my best, moment to moment, not to betray you.

Now.

That’s it. No more. Don’t make me lie to you (5).

Aleks Sierz describes this moment as the moment when “*Carl’s romantic idealism collides with Rod’s cynical realism*” (Sierz 114). His love towards Rod is so compelling and overwhelming that he sacrifices himself for Rod.

This kind of relationship both traps Rod and Carl, and at the same time, grants them freedom. However, the homosexual relationship is not generally deemed as a socially approved relationship as opposed to a heterosexual relationship. Thus, Rod and Carl exceed the boundaries of a heterosexual relationship through professing their love for each other. Kane in this particular

play, dissolves the ascribed sexual norms and drives. Often deemed as abnormal and peculiar, homosexuality, for Deleuze and Guattari is just an invented label that resists the multiplicity of sexuality. For that kind of established thought prevalent in the society, they particularly blame psychoanalysis, which they consider is a field of making individuals territorialized and coded related to their sexuality. Strictly condemning repressive forces which restrain individuals carrying out their potentialities, Deleuze and Guattari reveal that

the sexuality arrangement reduces sexuality to sex (to the sexual difference, etc. and psychoanalysis is a key player in this reduction). I see a repressive effect here, precisely at the border between micro and macro. Sexuality, as an historically variable assemblage of desire which can be determined, with its points of deterritorialization, fluxes and combinations, is going to be reduced to a molar agency, sex, and even if the means by which this reduction occurs are not repressive, the (non-ideological) effect itself is repressive inasmuch as the assemblages are broken apart, not only in their potentialities but in their micro-reality (Deleuze 126).

What they aver is that is a homosexual identity is primarily constructed by the majority who, influenced by the doctrines of psychoanalysis, seek to marginalize and categorize homosexuals into certain limitations. As Nigianni Chrysanthi and Merl Storr aver, *“queer is always ready in response to a dominant heterosexual matrix: a solely reactive force of re-signification, mockery, disrespect to the dominance of heterosexuality, to the power of norms”* (4). Rather, Deleuze and Guattari oppose the singularity of sexuality stating that there is no gay or heterosexual identity, there is only “becoming” and transforming as they put forward, *“homosexual desire is specific, there are homosexual utterances but homosexuality is nothing, it’s just a word, and yet let’s take it literally, let’s pass through it, to make it yield all the otherness it contains – and this otherness is not the unconscious of psychoanalysis, but the progression of a future sexual becoming”* (Deleuze, Lapoujade and Taormina 288).

Homosexuality, thus, opens up new connections, becomings, assemblages, and transversal relations as they contend that it provides

all sorts of possible new relations, micro-logical or micro-psychic, essentially reversible, transversal relations with as many sexes as there are assemblages (*agencements*), without even excluding new relations between men and women: the mobility of particular S&M

relations, the potency of cross-dressing, Fourier's thirty-six thousand forms of love, or the n-sexes (neither one nor two sexes) (Deleuze, Lapoujade and Taormina 287).

Besides, Deleuze and Guattari underline the necessity of revolutionizing all institutions and disciplinary society, which subject individuals into either femininity or masculinity. Homosexuality can bring down the traditional configurations about femininity and masculinity, as well. As Dorothea Olkowski points out, *"the effect of this dual system of classification is to erase the difference as a concept and as reality and to subsume all difference under the one, the same, and the necessary"* (185). Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari react against psychoanalysis that attempts to reduce individuals into the normative through demolishing difference and different tendencies. What they advocate rather is *"the affirmation of difference in terms of a multiplicity of possible differences; difference as the positivity of differences"* (Braidotti 164). They further claim that homosexuality and heterosexuality cannot be differentiated from each other anymore: *"new regions where the connections are always partial and nonpersonal, the conjunctions nomadic and polyvocal, the disjunctions included where homosexuality and heterosexuality cannot be distinguished any longer"* (Deleuze and Holland 19). By being a minority, hence marginal, homosexuals can liberate themselves from hierarchies, since they are not part of the normalizing social fields. Chrysanthi Nigianni and Merl Storr argue that in order to break away from labeling and the constraints of social forces, gay people should always be a member of the minority. They claim that *"in order to be able to say something and to produce change, gays have to be part of the minority or, even more so, of a becoming minoritarian. Only in that capacity can they escape a hypocritical, normativising majority. Gays have to make pronouncements on sexuality itself and de-normativise it"* (27).

Going against this pigeonholed term, gay identity, Deleuze and Guattari rather emphasize that homosexuality has nothing to do with identity, but with desire. As also put by Chrysanthi Nigianni and Merl Storr, for Deleuze and Guattari

is continually transforming itself, and thus for Deleuze, there can be no pre-existing identity from which to transform oneself. There is only a label given by the majority that the gay person takes over... He is both gay and not gay. He is in a constant becoming that goes through desire (25-26).

The term desire frequently appears in Deleuze and Guattarian texts. Aiming to ascribe an affirmative meaning it, they posit, “*desire no longer lacks anything but fills itself and constructs its own field of immanence*” (Deleuze, Lapoujade and Taormina 156). Also, their understanding of desire is intensely corresponded with production and affirmation. It is a “line of flight” from the harsh implementations. It is a field for individuals to disclose entrapments and blockages as

desire includes no lack; it is also not a natural given. Desire is a wholly a part of functioning heterogeneous assemblage. It is a process, as opposed to a structure or a genesis. It is an affect, as opposed to a feeling. It is a hecceity – the individual singularity of a day, a season, a life. As opposed to a subjectivity, it is an event, not a thing or a person. Above all, it implies the constitution of a field of imminence or a body-without-organs, which is only defined by zones of intensity, thresholds, degrees and fluxes (Deleuze, Lapoujade and Taormina 130).

Therefore, desire as a productive force resists organizations, subordination, and signification.

Hence, from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattarian philosophy, Carl and Rod’s homosexual desires are released from the restraints of heterosexual ascriptions, which are only to be experienced between male and female gender since “[g]ender is the process by which women are marked off as ‘the female sex,’ men are conflated with the universal, and both of them are subjugated to the institution of compulsory heterosexuality” (Braidotti 172-173). Here, Kane destabilizes a heterosexual relationship and creates lines of flight, in other words, emancipation for her characters to live through their love in the way they desire. Desire as a productive force opens up new connections through creating new assemblages. For Deleuze and Guattari, in every sector of the society, desire is sought to be suppressed. As they criticize, “[w]hat you must be taught is Lack, Culture, and Law, in other words, the reduction and the abolition of desire” (Deleuze 80). Taking this into consideration, and equating it with Deleuze and Guattarian outlook, Kane attributes desire with affirmation and positivity, and she never ceases to push into extremes in the presentation of desire, for she holds onto the belief that this desire would only create new assemblages and new freedoms. Deleuze and Guattari and Kane substantially criticize sexual inequalities that restrict human’s potential, blissfulness, and freedoms by merely labeling them abnormal, diseased, or

aberrant. Deleuze and Guattari argue that psychoanalysis strengthens this thought as it binds new openings and becomings. They state that psychoanalysts “*reduce sexuality, i.e. desire as libido, to the difference between the sexes: a fatal error whether this difference is interpreted organically or structurally, in relation to the penis-organ or in relation to the phallus-signifier*” (Deleuze 93). Therefore, for them, psychoanalysis solely crushes desire and traps personal utterances. Sexuality as a discourse is constructed by the power practices dominant in contemporary society and the knowledge related to normalized notion of sexuality is controlled by the very mechanisms which determine the discourse of it. As a result, sexuality is inscribed on the body by scientific knowledge that normalizes sexual conducts as

sex is a knowledge of sexuality that uses the findings of the biological sciences to normalize sexual behaviour. In normalizing the sexual behaviour of the body, in creating a norm against which the body will measure itself, sex interjects within the body the residue of power. Sexual instinct, thereby, becomes a power opposed to power; hence a force that must be forbidden and repressed. This sex is not an autonomous biological force, an instinct inherent in the body, a dynamism of pure nature. Sex is a theory. It is a speculative and ideal construction, the result of a discourse of sexuality embedded in the strategies and techniques of power (Lemert 82).

In Deleuze and Guattarian thought “*difference refers to other differences that never identify but only differentiate it, such that each difference stands in relation to other differences, all of which are without centre and without convergence, both in relation to themselves and in relation to one another*” (Olkowski 26). By difference what Deleuze indicates “*is not to be confused with distinction, opposition, or contradiction, and indeed may be called ‘free’ only when it is freed from the logic of such notions*” (Rajchman 54). Likewise, Elizabeth Grosz asserts that “*women, the ‘disabled,’ cultural and racial minorities, different classes, homosexuals... are reduced to the role of modifications or variations of the (implicitly white, male, youthful, heterosexual, middle class) human body*” (188). In a similar proclivity, Kane affirms difference without centralizing any norms or behavior, and provides the possibility for her characters to resist normalcy. As Aleks Sierz remarks, in-*yer-face* playwrights’ aim is to “*question current ideas of what is normal*” (5). Thus, Kane struggles against fixed, gender sexual schemas and heterosexual relationships that are contemplated to be normal and natural. Kane subverts the understanding of heteronormative sexuality experienced between two opposite sexes. In the same

manner, Deleuze and Guattari resist reducing sexuality to two dualistic sexes, and assert that when one has a sexual encounter with another person, there occurs many multiplicities, connections and assemblages. Deleuze and Guattari remark that sexuality is badly explained by the binary organization of the sexes, and just as badly by a bisexual organization within each sex.

Sexuality brings into play too great a diversity of conjugated becomings; these are like *n* sexes, an entire war machine through which love passes ... What counts is that love itself is a war machine endowed with strange and somewhat terrifying powers. Sexuality is the production of a thousand sexes, which are so many uncontrollable becomings (*A Thousand Plateaus...* 278).

Therefore, what Deleuze and Guattari point out is the fact that sexuality should not be confined into single sexes but should be opened up to various multiplicities and becomings.

In order to make the audience respond how homosexuals are subjected to social and cultural constraints, Kane deliberately represents the exertion of violence on them since it is because of their homosexual relationship, they are tormented brutally by Tinker, whose supposed duty is to save the individuals from their own “perversions.” Therefore, the emotional intensity experienced between Rod and Carl is replaced with unbearable agonizing pain and psychological harm. Tinker, who watches them exchange their love, tests their tolerance to pain as well as the strength and faithfulness of their love. In this view, Graham Saunders states that

[i]ntegral to the theme of love in *Cleansed* are the ways in which love is tested. Often this is brought about in the most brutal and violent ways by the figure of Tinker ... Tinker is certainly a meddler in the fates of his charges, testing their desires, their delusions and professions of love; often to savagely logical conclusions (96).

By means of utilizing the patterns of torture and intense physical cruelty, Kane attacks repressive norms of sexuality and established normative expressions of love. As Gaëlle Ranc argues, “*Kane rejects the principles imposed by morals and the system of categories created by society, and for her, love goes beyond these categories*” (2009). First of all, Carl is tortured and exposed to pain for his betrayal and his false dedication. Thereby, meanwhile in *The White Room* Grace is noticed to arrive at the university in order to look for Graham, her brother. On being told that

her brother is dead due to an overdose of heroin, she insists on collecting Graham's clothes the moment she realizes that her brother is cremated. Tinker calls out for Robin who is another inmate/student wearing Graham's clothes, and he is told to undress while Grace wears Robin's/Graham's clothes. In this view, Kane makes the

gender construction purposefully ambiguous. When Robin puts on Grace's dress, he is feminized through the superficial trappings of gender. Yet Kane makes it clear that Robin is a 'boy' (19 years old) throughout the play. As a boy rather than a man, Robin exists in a transitional state in which the ambiguities of gender seem apt (Woodworth 123).

In the next scenes, Grace is observed to teach Robin the alphabet in *The Round Room-the university library*. Robin reveals his admiration and love for Grace who does not feel the same way. When it comes to naming their relationship, they cannot quite think of any label to possibly describe the extent of their love. At one point, Robin puts Grace in his mother's position; then he puts her in a lover's position. Robin tells Grace, "*My mum weren't my mum and I had to choose another, I'd choose you*" (20). Then, Robin says: "*If I had to get married, I'd marry you*" (20). Both seem to be craving to love and be loved even if they do not know the reason why they love:

Robin I'm in love with you.

Grace How can you be?

Robin I just am.

I know you -

Grace Tinker knows me.

Robin And I love you.

Grace Lots of people know me, they're not in love with me.

Robin

Graham I am. (22)

When Grace regains consciousness after fainting, she sees Graham in the room, and then they begin dancing. However, during this dance, Grace tries to imitate Graham's moves which she succeeds in doing in the end. In other words, as they proceed to dance, Grace not abandoning her feminine identity, totally becomes like her brother. In a way, their identities merge into each other:

Graham dances –a dance of love for **Grace**

Grace dances opposite him, copying his movements.

Gradually, she takes on the masculinity of his movements, his facial expression. Finally, she no longer has to watch him-she mirrors him perfectly as they dance exactly in time.

When she speaks, her voice is more like his (13).

Here, Kane establishes the breakdown of fixed and stabilized gender norms and subverts the subjectified identity. She reveals that current binary oppositions between the self and the other is reductive and prohibitive, and thus she opposes to enclose her characters within an immutable identity. Kane challenges the concept of determined identity and body by celebrating the unleashed body from the realms of identity and stability. This reminds Deleuze and Guattarian claim that that there is no subjectivity, or a single, coherent, unified body. In Deleuzian and Guattarian view “*the subject is not an ‘entity’ or thing, or a relation between mind (interior) and body (exterior). Instead, it must be understood as a series of flows, energies, movements, and capacities, a series of fragments or segments capable of being linked together in ways other than those that congeal it into an identity*” (Genosko 198).

Furthermore, Kane destabilises the recognition of one single, unified being when Grace seeks to become her brother Graham via a penis transplant. They generate becoming, “[f]or there is no being beyond becoming, nothing beyond multiplicity nor becoming are appearances or illusions... Multiplicity is the inseparable manifestation, essential transformation and constant symptom of unity. Multiplicity is the affirmation of unity; becoming is the affirmation of being” (Deleuze and Holland 23-24). Therefore, as Deleuze and Guattari indicate, one has to attain becoming in order to affirm his/her identity. Considering this, Grace searches for the affirmation of her identity by means of a penis transplant which helps her attain becoming. For Deleuze and Guattari, as well as for Kane, being is not a stable identity; however, it is a path to form new connections with other beings and sexes since “[w]e pass from one field to another by crossing thresholds: we never stop migrating, we become other individuals as well as other sexes...” (Deleuze and Holland 85).

As opposed to the form of organism with tightly sealed boundaries, Deleuze and Guattari put forward the conception of a body which is ceaselessly reconfiguring itself. All bodies intermingle with and interpenetrate other bodies forming incessant productive machines and desires. Thus, the self is a passage, a

threshold between multiplicities. Also, they lay stress on the death of a subject and this very subject is substituted by a “Body without Organs” which is made up of many intensities and becomings. Deleuze and Guattari underline that “[t]he body without organs has replaced the organism... Flows of intensity, their fluids, their fibers, their continuums, and conjunctions of affects, the wind, fine segmentation, microperceptions, have replaced the world of subject” (*A Thousand Plateaus...* 162). Deleuze and Guattari argue that that all bodies include conjunctions and disjunctions interacting with other heterogeneous circuits. In fact, the subject is

[w]ithout fixed identity, a nomadic flicker of intensity traversing the grid of the body without organs. It is a part produced alongside the machines, but it is itself also ‘a part... divided into parts,’ marked by ‘the parts corresponding to the detachments of the chain and to the partitioning of the flows carried out by machine.’ Yet, if the subject is ‘a part made of parts, each of which in a moment fills up the body without organs,’ one may say as well that the subject brings the parts together, conjoining them without unifying them (Deleuze and Holland 49).

Similarly, Sarah Kane also opposes the formation of one unified subject. Therefore, Kane problematizes the fixed single entity constructions through Graham and Grace. Since, “Body without Organs” is “to denaturalize the human body and to place it in direct relations with the flows or particles of other bodies or entities,” Grace’s attempt to reunite with Graham can be interpreted as her seeking to reach a *Body without Organs* in Deleuzian terms (Grosz 201). Therefore, Grace wants to stay at the university which stands for her searching for a sort of way that can provide reconnection with Graham in order to attain a becoming. Soon after, Grace and Graham make love and as they mutually experience orgasm, a sunflower blooms out of the ground. Deleuze and Guattari comment on making love by declaring that

[w]henver someone makes love, really makes love, that person constitutes a body without organs, alone and with the other person or people. A body without organs is not an empty body stripped of organs, but a body upon which that serves as organs... [a] full body clinging with multiplicities (*A Thousand Plateaus...*30).

Thereby, for Deleuze and Guattari having sex is not just an act experienced by two people but many since “sexuality is the production of a thousand tiny sexes, which are so many uncontrollable becomings” (*A Thousand Plateaus...*278). It can be

argued that making love composes multiplicities that effectively flow in each direction.

Later in the play, it is indicated that Grace is beaten by many voices and raped by one of the voices whose identities are also bleak. These same voices who have previously beaten Carl, want Grace to be dead and torn into pieces. While the hitting continues, Grace feels that Graham is in the room and wishes him to speak to her. She aims to feel the presence of Graham in order to identify herself with him. When Graham touches her, they are united since Graham bleeds in the same places where Grace bleeds:

Graham presses his hands on to **Grace** and her clothes turn red where he touches, blood seeping through.

Simultaneously, his own body begins to bleed in the same places (26).

Kane, through making their identities fluid, proposes that two different identities coexist without being concentrated into one single body. Although, violent assaults are inflicted on Grace's body, she manages to survive this brutalized beating. In fact, this brutal act both makes her suffer, and leads her to connect with Graham emotionally since he also bleeds like her. Kane emphasizes the fluidity of identity and the connection of body with other dynamic bodies. Graham and Grace are united in a mutual process of becoming. As Kane challenges the status of the autonomous modern subject, it can be deduced that Grace's process as a fluid corporeality of the embodied self extends to the other that is Graham. In order to constitute a reunion with Graham, Grace undergoes a penis transplant. Multiplicity is not a single autonomy but it is untotalizable as one cannot totalize and encode Grace's identity. Grace has achieved becomings which is a process of imminent change and dynamism exploring irreducible openness. Grace has attained becoming as the "*deterritorialization of the subject*" (Braidotti 173).

One cannot prevent becomings as they constantly switch directions in a positive and affirmative movement. Grace wants her genitals to be replaced by a penis and her breasts to be removed; hence Carl's penis is implanted on her:

Grace lies unconscious on a bed.

She is naked apart from a tight strapping around her groin and chest, and blood where her breasts should be.

Carl lies unconscious next to her. He is naked apart from a bloodies bandage strapped around his groin.

Tinker *stands between them.*

Tinker *undoes Grace's bandage and looks at her groin.*

Grace *stirs.*

Grace F- F-

Tinker What you wanted, I hope you-

Grace F- F- F-

Tinker *helps Grace up and leads her to the mirror.*

Graham *enters.*

Grace *focuses on the mirror.*

She opens her mouth.

Graham It's over.

Tinker Nice looking lad.

Like your brother.

I hope you –

What you wanted.

Grace *(touches her stitched on genitals)*

F- F-

Tinker Do you like it?

Grace F-

Tinker You'll get used to him.

Can't call you Grace anymore.

Call you ... Graham. I'll call you Graham

(He begins to leave.)

Graham Tinker.

Tinker *(turns and looks at Grace)*

Grace and Graham Felt it. (39).

Hence, Grace is subordinated to a sex change so that she can reaffirm her/his identity. Her only survival lies in becoming Graham, and she eventually does manage to survive by becoming her brother. *“Progressively, she becomes her brother: first by wearing his clothes, then by learning to dance and speak like him*

and finally by incarnating his body” (Ranc 2009). Her love towards Graham is so strong that it is a sort of a prison for her. In order to escape from this prison and reach multiplicity, Grace has to undergo a sex reversal: “A multiplicity is not a pluralized notion of identity, but is rather an ever-changing, nontotalizable collectivity, an assemblage defined, not by its abiding identity or principle of sameness over time, but through its capacity to undergo permutations and transformations, that is its dimensionality” (Grosz 192). Before this sex change takes place, Robin asks what Grace would change in her life if she had a chance, Grace answers that she would like to change her body:

Graham what would you change?

Robin

Grace My body. So it looked like it feels.

Graham outside like Graham inside (20).

In terms of Deleuze and Guattarian philosophy the body can be anything, connectable to any other dimension: “If the body is never just a body in itself but always also a medium of transformation and in complex relation to something else, then the body is simultaneously a simulation of a single identity and a pure substance, while also being a conduit to something else” (Kaufman, 1998, p.336). Kane concentrates on the unsteadiness of Grace’s body. This serves the dislocation of identity and brings together her composite identities. Thus, Graham’s identity is one of Grace’s composite identities that is in disarray. Therefore, Sarah Kane’s ideas correspond with Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas, who champion decentralization of the body and single subject. For Deleuze “[t]he embodied subject is a term in a process of intersecting forces (affects), spatiotemporal variables that are characterized by their mobility, changeability, and transitory nature” (Braidotti 163). Therefore, Kane’s characters with their fluid identities, sexualities, porous bodies, and their variability constitute Deleuze and Guattarian understanding of the embodied subject.

Consequently, Sarah Kane in *Cleansed* problematizes many concepts ranging from identity, gender construction, love and desire, oppressive forces, power relations to torture and violence. *Cleansed* embodies multiple meanings as it is almost impossible to arrive at one conclusion. Kane states in an interview that “almost every line in *Cleansed* has more than one meaning” (qtd. in Armistead 12). One of the most ambiguous parts of the play is its title. With the title “Cleansed”

Kane may be referring to ethnic cleansing which occurred in Nazi camps where people were reduced to subjects or to Bosnia where Serbian soldiers exerted harsh torture and pain on Muslims, or Kane titles her play "Cleansed" as she wants her characters to be cleansed through intense love. Hence, by means of avoiding telling her readers and audience a concrete and logical story following a straight line, depending on a specific situation, she presents her readers and audience a bleak picture of the world where the characters are disillusioned and dehumanized. For Kane's characters, violence is a self-expression to endure their existence in a rotten environment that reinforces their inherent violent proclivities, and crushes them continually. Kane's emphasis on representation of violence is not to glamorize it or insensate the audience towards horrendous images, but is to show local and global realities in a stark and shocking manner to stimulate awareness.

In Cleansed Kane explores the theme of love and how love can even develop in a repressive environment and takes an extreme form. In an interview, Sarah Kane declares that "[i]f you want to write about love, you can only write about in an extreme way, otherwise it doesn't mean anything. So I suppose both *Blasted* and *Cleansed* are about distressing things which we'd like to think we would survive. If people can still love after that, then love is the most powerful thing" (qtd. in Saunders 92). Kane presents both the destructive and liberating side of love which generally merge into each other. What Kane aims to make the audience question whether one can love without destroying himself/herself or not. In *Cleansed*, love is a painful obsession; thus love "seems to be like a disease..." (Ranc 2009).

Cleansed dramatizes a world of bodies gone amuck. *Cleansed* examines the role an institution plays in the process of moral cleansing, in making bodies docile. The setting of *Cleansed* is a university that now acts as a halfway house for the unwanted, but whose restorative and pedagogical functions have given way to brutalizing savagery (Urban 119).

On the other hand, *Cleansed* posits hope and salvation for the characters and a reference to the possibility of a change for the better in circumstances as at the end of the play since it stops raining, the sun comes out as a glimmer of hope and Tinker stops watching and observing his inmates:

It stops raining.

The sun comes out (44).

This image is simultaneously coupled with the rats' squeak and blinding light, which evinces Sarah Kane's ambivalent attitude towards future. It is not completely promising; nevertheless, her hopes for future are not entirely dashed at the time of her writing this work, at least.

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