

Subversion of Language and Communication in Selected Plays of Sarah Kane and Edward Bond

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Abstract—This article explores how Sarah Kane and Edward Bond subvert conventional language and communication in their plays to reveal the themes of trauma, alienation, and violence in postmodern society. Through a close analysis of *Blasted*, *4:48 Psychosis*, *Saved*, *Lear*, and *Cleansed*, the study highlights fragmentation, silence, clipped dialogue, and textual violence as strategies that destabilize dramatic expression. Kane's focus on psychological turmoil contrasts with Bond's socio-political realism, yet both redefine dramatic communication by revealing the inadequacy of traditional language to convey human misery and existential crises. Their linguistic experimentation contributes to the evolution of contemporary drama.

Index Terms—Subversion, Language, Communication

I. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary theatre often challenges the adequacy of language as a medium of human interaction. Sarah Kane and Edward Bond exemplify this through fragmented dialogue, silences, repetition, and vulgarity. Their plays interrogate the limits of communication in expressing trauma and violence, situating language as both a weapon and a site of breakdown. This study compares Kane's psychological focus with Bond's political realism to show how both dramatists subvert language in postmodern theatre.

Kane's and Bond's plays use fragmented dialogue, silence, repetition, unconventional forms of speech, and vulgarity to challenge conventional modes of communication and to portray the limitations and breakdown of language for human interaction in postmodern society. These unconventional methods of communication in their plays help to explore the themes of trauma, violence, and the limitations of human understanding. Postmodern drama questions

the way writers use language in their plays. In Sarah Kane's plays, she uses language to delve into characters' psychological turmoil and to present a chaotic environment in which words become inadequate vessels for conveying pain and misery. Contrary to Kane, Bond's plays confront societal issues through stark realism and absurdity, using language as a political weapon of resistance.

Drawing on Lyotard's critique of metanarratives, Saussure's structural linguistics, and Derrida's notion of language as difference, the paper situates Kane and Bond within postmodern discourse. Language is viewed not as transparent communication but as fragmented, unstable, and shaped by social and cultural forces. This framework underscores how both playwrights exploit linguistic breakdown to dramatize human crises.

Fragmentation of Language

The application of language in the plays aligns with Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* through the notion of incredulity towards metanarratives, as he argues that no notion stands above others. According to him, the metanarratives have become obsolete and cannot account for the crisis of metaphysical notions and the institutions that depended on them. The grand narratives are losing their ground, and the future relies less on the system than on the pragmatics of language particles, as there exist many language games (73). This tenet of postmodern theory is reflected in the fragmented use of dialogues and speeches in the plays of Kane and Edward Bond. Kane uses concise language in *Blasted*, as her characters use only words that convey the message, rather than the conventional, lengthy dialogues and speeches. In the play's edited version, Kane tries to abbreviate dialogue between characters, as is the case with Ian's first question to Cate, which goes as "Do you want bath?" which later

changes to “You want bath?” in the final version (Sierz 51). He states that Kane affirmed that:

The first draft of Blasted was dreadful, full of huge dense monologues about the characters' backgrounds, every feeling stated, every thought spoken. A friend read it and didn't say very much, but he gave me a copy of Saved. I'd read this year before, but I read it again in 1993. And that really was where I learned to write dialogue. At first, I thought Bond's approach would be of no use to me – I wanted my characters to be articulate and precise. (Sierz 101)

From the implication of this quotation, Kane wants to use a pattern of communication understandable to common people, rather than being entangled within the confines of traditional dramatic high diction and lengthy dialogues full of words reflective of only the educated. She commented that “I don't like writing things that you don't need, and my favorite exercise is cutting cut cut cut” by introducing words, statements, and stories with the simple or ordinary forms of meaning. Only those linguistic elements are important for conveying the message. According to Rusul Sami in “A Semiotic Analysis of Cruelty in Sarah Kane's Drama”, Graham Sanders' description of this is “minimalist telegraphic language,” as Kane was influenced after reading Bond's *Saved*. He maintains that *Blasted* is marked by cruelty and shocking scenes, but Kane was more fascinated by its language (Rusul 51).

Kane, just like Bond, uses fewer words than required for communication, making it vague and difficult to understand. Grice Herbert Paul, in “Utter's Meaning and Intention”, terms this quantity implicature, in which the speaker uses fewer words, leading to a communication barrier (Grice 49). This can be exemplified in the following dialogue in *Blasted*:

Cate: What we celebrating?

Ian: (doesn't answer. He goes to the window and looks out)

Hate this city. Stinks. Wogs and Pakis are taking over.

Cate: You shouldn't call them that.

Ian: Why not?

Cate: It's not very nice.

Ian: You a nigger-lover?

Cate: Ian, don't.

(...). (*Blasted*, 4)

The above conversation between Cate and Ian appears in a truncated pattern filled with racial slurs against foreigners in their country. His model of speaking exposes moral decadence in the postmodern society.

The first words Ian utters immediately they get into the hotel indicate the use of obscene language in the text. He starts by telling Cate that, “I've shat in better places than this”, “Tip that wog when he brings up the sandwiches” (*Blasted* 3). Ian's vulgarity in communication with Cate breaches the ordinary drama that the audience may expect. The use of clipping statements in the play continues with Cate and Ian in the same scene as:

Cate: Have champagne, better for you.

Ian: Don't want it better for me.

Cate: You'll die quicker.

Ian: Thanks. Don't it scare you?

Cate: What?

Ian: Death.

Cate: Whose?

Ian: Yours.

Cate: Only for mum. She'd be unhappy if I died. And my brother.

Ian: You're young.

When I was your age –

Now. (*Blasted*, 16-17)

The dialogue between Cate and Ian features clipping, in which words are shortened while retaining their intended meaning. The two speakers frequently omit words or phrases, thereby creating a sense of informality and intimacy in their communication. Instead of “Have some champagne, it is better for you”, Cate's line is clipped to “Have champagne, better for you”. Also, they use short, direct sentences, which create a sense of tension, as evident in Ian's responses to Cate, such as “Don't want it better for me” and “Thanks”. The speeches are devoid of their thoughts and feelings, instead offering brief and clipped answers. This is particularly noticeable in Cate's reaction when she says “Only for mum” and “You're young”. This clipping allows Cate and Ian to communicate without redundant information, unlike conventional speech, which prioritizes completeness and clarity.

Kane's concept of mini dialogues in *Cleansed* dissolves the boundaries of communication by avoiding lengthy dialogues filled with myriad words

and lengthy lines. Characters avoid lengthy dialogues in their communication to escape their burdens. Ahmet Bicer posits that:

In Cleansed, language still serves as an interpersonal means of communication; it is rather a means to express thoughts and feelings, to get rid of the burdens that weigh on the characters' minds. In the text, words are used as a theatrical element. And they are positioned beyond language which is important sign of postdramatic panorama. Kane plays and experiments with the language. She constructs a paired dialogue. Therefore, she shows meaning of the play not with words but with images. In this regard, Sarah Kane creates theatre images in Cleansed; she doesn't misuse any word and gives the message only through images. (qtd in Bicer 79)

In adherence to this quotation, Kane uses fewer words to express the characters' inner battles and feelings. She selects and uses only the words she considers sufficient to convey the characters' messages. She sees that putting more words into the characters' mouths is an additional burden to their existing traumas. Through this, Kane experiments with a new style of language that differs from the old pattern of communication, in which characters' dialogues are longer, allowing them to interact and relate to one another. She exemplifies this method of mini dialogue in *Cleansed* at the beginning of Scene One between Tinker and Graham:

Graham: Tinker

Tinker: I'm cooking.

Graham: I want out.

Tinker: (looks up)

Silence.

Tinker: No.

Graham: Is that for me?

Tinker: I don't use.

Tinker: More.

Graham: No. (*Cleansed*, 1)

As per the dialogue, Tinker and Graham are entangled in a conversation in which each character uses clipped statements or single words to communicate. Tinker tells Graham he is cooking, but does not reveal what he is actually cooking or its purpose. From their responses, they seem to understand the context of their discussion. To show interest in what Tinker is cooking, Graham expresses his desire for it when he says, "I

want out," but Tinker rejects it with a "No." The stage direction describes Tinker as heating smack on a silver spoon, which is a slang term for a drug. As their dialogue continues, we understand that Tinker has administered Graham a smack as he says he wants "More," and Tinker confesses his guilt, saying he is "a dealer, not a doctor." Their quasi-dialogues reveal they are unable to express their inner battles, and drugs have become a means of liberation from stress.

Also, Kane's *4:48 Psychosis* is embedded with fragmented language that chronicles the unnamed character's state in the play. The fragments of language in the text do not communicate rational thoughts, showing a manifestation of mental breakdown in the character who is brutally maltreated by society. Language here expresses the character's inexplicable inner pain, which she grapples with, going beyond ordinary means of understanding by breaking the boundaries of conventional communication. It communicates her mental disorder, where the audience struggles with difficulties in understanding what is being communicated, leading to a breakdown in communication.

Kane uses monologues in some of his plays, like *4:48 Psychosis*, whereas Bond's *Saved* comprises quasi dialogues, which is a similar feature in Kane's *Blasted*. This indicates a lack of proper communication in postmodern society, as the writer seeks to deviate from the mainstream dramatic use of language to interact with others. This manner of communication portrays alienation of human relations in the community. According to Richard Scharine in *The Plays of Edward Bond*, the language in *Saved* serves only to keep others at a distance (61). This assertion can be justified in Len and Pam's discussion in the park, which reveals her family situation where they are alienated from each other:

silence

LEN: She reckon me, yer reckon?

PAM: Never arst.

LEN: Thought she might'a said.

(...)

PAM: I'm going'a knit yer a jumper.

LEN: For me?

PAM: I ain't very quick.

(...)

PAM: I got a smashin' pattern.

LEN: You worried about that rent?

PAM: I 'ad it give us.

LEN: Yer 'andn't better be one of the niggers.

PAM: What colour's best?

LEN: Thass about one thing your ol' girl don't do.

PAM: What?

LEN: Nag 'er ol' man.

PAM: What's yer best colour? (Saved, 20)

The conversation between Len and Pam shows some emptiness. The questions asked of each other are not properly answered when they keep a distance between them. Len's statements and questions are focused on rent, while Pam focuses on knitting a dress. The dialogue is fragmented and inconsistent as there is no proper expression of the character's inner thoughts to their counterpart.

Moreover, communication in both plays is dysfunctional. This is a powerful and central theme used by both Sarah Kane and Edward Bond to reveal the darkness and despair within human societies as projected by their characters. This thematic concern extends to Kane's *Cleansed*, which is manifested in the romance between Grace and Graham. Grace, standing opposite Graham, dances and imitates his steps, adopting his masculine movement and facial expression to look like Graham. Even when she speaks, her voice sounds like that of Graham, as in the subsequent excerpt:

Graham: So/ very very good.

Grace: Very very good.

Graham: (stops and considers her)

I never knew myself, Grace.

Grace: (stops mirroring him, confused)

You've always been an angel.

Graham: No. I just look good.

(He smiles at her confusion and takes her in his arms). (Cleansed, 13)

In the dialogue above, the two characters are unable to connect, as Grace repeats fragments of Graham's speeches. We later encounter patches of dialogue as Graham professes his love to Grace.

Graham: I used to ... think about you ...

I used to ... wish it was you when I ...

I used to ... (Cleansed, 14)

Communication here is devastated, as it appears in fragments of lines with suspension marks, suggesting an inability to understand one another, which leads to the ultimate failure of their relationship.

Furthermore, Pam and Mary's family is dysfunctional, as evidenced by their lack of communication. They speak haphazardly without listening to each other, making their conversation void of logic. In the dialogue between Pam, Len, and Mary, Mary is looking for her *Radio Times* magazine. She asks Mary, "E's got my paper?" and Mary's response is off, and Pam is unable to understand her. This annoys Pam, and she resorts to insulting Mary, "It don't matter! You bloody deaf?" Len, on his part, intervenes and makes a comment that does not tie with the topic of the argument, "Now start on 'er!" while Harry, piling clothes, says "Didn't take long." As a response to the insult, asking him if he is deaf, Pam sarcastically tells Len that he is "bloody clever". We can see that a simple question about a magazine has escalated into a verbal battle within the family. In the midst of this conflicting discussion, Mary pays less attention to what is going on and concentrates on arranging her dresses (*Saved*, 85-86). Harry detaches himself from family affairs and refuses to comment on what is happening in the house, which portrays him as a deadbeat father. Lack of communication symbolizes the decay that exists in contemporary families.

Kane uses the technique of repetition in the beginning of *4:48 Psychosis* to reveal the character's mental disorder, portraying the society's neglectful or oppressive attitude towards people with psychological defects. The play opens in fragments with some repetitive lines to reveal the speaker's burden with confusion:

(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 supportive?

(A long silence)

What do you offer?

(silence)

..... (4:48 Psychosis, 3)

The scene opens with a stage direction describing an atmosphere of 'long silence,' and a voice that continues to question an anonymous character who ignores it.

This presents an imbalanced power relationship between the two characters. The interrogating voice persistently provides no answers to the question asked. The voice feels disappointed and frustrated from the series of pauses and enjambments of silence. The repeated question “what do you offer your friends to make them so supportive” shows a society where friendly relationships are failing due to human alienation. The voice, here, is in desperate need of assistance, though the quest becomes futile since no one offers a response.

The repetitive style not only appears in lines but runs through pages of the text. The fragments of repetition in the opening lines, such as “but you have friends,” are repeated on page 26, near the end of the play, indicating that the unnamed voice can be interpreted as a conversation within the patient’s mind. The reappearance of this fragment in the play can also be argued to be a combative conversation between a patient and a doctor, as in the dialogue below:

(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 supportive?

(A long silence.)

What do you offer friends to make them supportive?

(A long silence)

What do you offer?

(Silence.)

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

(Silence.) (4:48 Psychosis, 26)

The conversation shows an unequal relationship that binds the patient and the doctor. The patient’s deep urge to build a balanced bond with the doctor is rejected, as the doctor asserts that they “have a professional relationship”. This shows a void in the connection between the speaker and the doctor at a point where the patient is in dire need. A cliché of questions to the doctor who provides little or no answers to them is a clear indication of neglect of mentally drained victims by a professional medical practitioner. Kane presents an imbalance in the doctor-patient relationship as an attack on medical institutions

that have become threats to patients who need attention and love to feel included in them.

Ian’s language also shows his uncontrollable desire for sex. Cate ironically does not succumb to his words and proposes a friendship that is based on platonic terms, as is the case in the following dialogue:

Ian: Don't know anything. That's why I love you, want to make love to you.

Cate: But you can't.

Ian: Why not?

Cate: I don't want to.

Ian: Why did you come here?

Cate: You sounded unhappy.

Ian: Make me happy.

Cate: I can't.

Ian: Please.

Cate: No.

(...)

Cate: I love you. (Blasted, 22)

The language in the foregoing dialogue is filled with short sentences and single-word lines. They use words economically, selecting only those that convey meaning in their information.

Additionally, Ian, in most of the scenes in the play, uses language that is racist, domineering, and loves to prey on weaker ones. He treats Cate with absolutely no respect, as he verbally abuses her in most instances. Ian ignores Cate’s choice despite her persistent refusal to have an intimate relationship with him. In his conversation with Cate, he uses bigotry in some of his utterances, such as: “You look like a lesbos”, “Don’t like your clothes”, “Stop fucking about”, “Hate this city. Stinks. Wogs and Pakis taking over,” “You a nigger lover?” “You like our coloured brethren”, “Retard, isn’t he?”, “Aye. Spaz.”, “Glad my son’s not Joey” (3-4). These homophobic, cussing, and racist slurs are spewed by a supposed journalist. Kane’s criticism is directed at the journalist for breaching the conventions of journalism and the conventional mass media. Cate is a 21-year-old, epileptic, and a vegetarian who stutters when she is in a stressful situation. Her language and actions contrast sharply with Ian’s, who uses harsh expressions and acts harshly. (Sierz qtd in Rusul Al-Hasnawi 55). Ian’s language is full, saturated with obscenity and racial

slurs, while Cate tries to ignore such to maintain decent communication.

Cate's character demonstrates maturity, as shown in her use of soft language when Ian verbally abuses her. Despite the harsh utterances used by Ian in the form of mockery to Cate's lack of a job, she uses sober words to confront him, which shows a level of decency:

Ian: You got a job yet?

Cate: No.

Ian: Still screwing the taxpayer.

Cate: Mum gives me money.

Ian: When are you going to stand on your own feet?

Cate: I've applied for a job in an advertising agency.

Ian: (laughs genuinely) No chance.

Cate: Why not?

Ian: (stops laughing and looks at her)

ate. You're very stupid. You're never going to get a job. (Blasted, 8)

Ian's and Cate's conversation shows that Ian cannot treat and encourage Cate in her desperate state. He instead goes ahead by discouraging her, making her feel frustrated. Ian's verbal and abusive language reveals his frustration when Cate refuses to build a relationship with him.

Textual violence

In postmodern drama, language sounds violent, hurtful, and assaultive, rather than just a tool for developing dialogue. In Course in General Linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure argues that the speaker's mind is unable to directly control language, which embodies a limitation. It is shaped by the linguistic habits and rules that evolve over time among a certain group of speakers (228). Jacques Derrida aligns with these theories of linguistics and the habits that develop over time and are shared by certain groups of individuals. He thinks that:

Language [which only consists of differences] is not the function of the speaking subject. This implies that the subject (in its identity with itself, or eventually in its consciousness of its identity with itself, its self-consciousness) is inscribed in language, is a 'function' of language, becomes a speaking subject only by making its speech conform – even in the so-called 'creation', or 'transgression' – to the system of rules of language as a system of differences. (Qtd in Waddington 78)

This indicates that the use is the articulation of reality within a particular social group. Kane contends that violence and race are reflections of societies and are culturally produced through the use of language. Kane makes us understand that these issues are not the cause of violence, but an outcome of the society that produces the violence. The discussion of Ian and the Soldier in *Blasted* reveals violence in Scene Three through their dialogue. The Soldier's language exposes his treacherous activities to Ian by confessing how he "broke a woman's neck, stabbed her legs, and snapped her spine" (44). This confession is filtered with pauses. In the course of their discussion, Ian pretends to the Soldier's story by telling him he is "not a torturer". The Soldier's language motivates him to expose his own atrocities, such as "shooting and rapes and kids getting fiddled by queer priests and schoolteachers". He also spews some racial slurs against blacks in conjunction with describing them as being "filthy like the wogs". Ian's atrocities sound insignificant to the Soldier. The Soldier reveals to Ian that he went to school and "made love to Col and bastards killed her" before proceeding to draw a rifle in Ian's face (46). Through the Soldier and Ian's conversation, the audience learns about their heinous and gruesome crimes. The Soldier recounts his atrocities of breaking a woman's neck, stabbing her legs, and snapping her spine, showing how women become victims of war crimes at the hands of soldiers. As if to boast of his crimes, he goes ahead to ask if Ian ever "fucked a man before" killing him. The Soldier's language portrays the postmodern man's sense of insecurity. He sees Ian as a threat and uses such language to scare him.

Being moved by the Soldier's narration, it is at this moment that Ian's language reveals his own offenses of also being a killer and a racist who despises blacks. In the case of the Soldier, his language is that of a sadist who derives pleasure in inflicting pain on others, and also a character who expresses his guilt of atrocities. Intimidated by the Soldier's confessions, Ian reveals to him that he is a "home journalist" but does not cover "foreign affairs". He is involved in other crimes such as "shootings and rapes and kids getting fiddled with queer priests and schoolteachers" before he continues with his abusive and racial slangs such as "filthy like the wogs. No joy in a story about blacks who give a shit". Kane is lambasting the deplorable states of social institutions. Such crimes are

committed by those who are considered role models of society.

Aston Elaine in “Rewriting the Fabric of *Blasted*” reflects on the language of the play as well as the action Kane builds in the Soldier’s narration on the happenings of the Bosnian War that were projected on television around the 1990s. He maintains that these activities did not capture the attention of British citizens or elicit their sympathy for Bosnia (Aston 16). This holds for Ian and the Soldier, whose language and diction show no trace of pity for their victims. Their language is a reflection of brutality, violence, and all forms of abuse rampant in contemporary society.

Similarly, Bond presents soldiers’ use of brutal language to expose the existence of brutality in society as revealed in their speeches. Bond argues in the *Author’s Preface to Lear* that:

I write about violence as naturally as Jane Austen wrote about manners. Violence shapes and obsesses our society, and if we do not stop being violent, we have no future. People who do not want us to write about violence want to stop them writing about us and our time. It would be immoral not to write about violence. (Author’s Preface to Plays: 2)

The language in *Lear* reflects the violence as a socio-political concern. His use of visceral speeches in his plays reveals the pain inflicted on characters by the government’s political forces. In Act One: Scene Four of *Lear*, the audience learns of the triumph of the sisters’ armies, but Bodice and Fontanelle conspire to kill their husbands. The logic is to prevent other characters from knowing what he has done. It is reported in an aside by Bodice that he had Warrington’s tongue “cut” to prevent him from talking about this, since he never attacked his sister’s men. When Cornwall and Officer go out, Bodice expresses satisfaction and talks about the deplorable state of men to Soldier A after the war, but tells him that he looks “strong and capable” and asks if he likes to go up to the world, and the Soldier replies with:

SOLDIER A: Yessam.

FONTANELLE: Good teeth, too.

BODICE: Get rid of them.

Soldier A flicks his head and Soldier B and C go out. Fetch him out.

SOLDIER A fetches Warrington of stage. He is disheveled, dirty, and bound.

SOLDIER A: Yer wan’ ’im in a fancy way? Thass sometimes arst for. I once ’ad t’ a throat for some ladies to see once.

FONTANELLE: It’s difficult to choose.

BODICE: (sits on her riding stick and takes out her knitting). Let him choose.

.(Knits)

SOLDIER A: I once give a ’and t’ flay a man. I couldn’t manage that on me own.

Yer need two at least for that. Shall I beat him up? (Lear 14)

From the excerpt, the Soldier’s language shows injustice. Their language exposes their atrocities during war. There is guilt in their speeches as they summon the courage to reveal their crimes. As if to hypnotize Soldier to speak more of his acts, Fontanelle retorts by telling Soldier A that “You’re all talk! Wind and piss” and Soldier says it is just the beginning asking Fontanelle to “Get it goin’ and see ’ow it goes from there” which Fontanelle says she “wants something – ”. Bodice being amongst them commanded Fontanelle to “shut up and let him get on with it”. To amplify his words, Soldier A hits Warrington, saying Warrington wants it “the hard way” and repeatedly hits him. Fontanelle requests Soldier A to “Use the boots!” and “jump on him” and “jump on his head” while Soldier A responds by pushing and kicking Warrington mercilessly.

Soldier A’s language portrays his insensitivity to humanity. He commands Fontanelle to “Lay off, lady lay off! ’Oos killin’ ’im, me or you?” Bodice stays indifferent while witnessing the act as she sits knitting, which is an indication that she enjoys Warrington’s torture. Fontanelle tells Soldier A to “Do something! Don’t let him get away with it. O Christ, why did I cut his tongue out? I want to hear him scream!” Soldier lifts Warrington’s head, examines his eyes, and says Warrington is “boney-fidey sufferin’”. Fontanelle wishes Lear, her father, were here” to see Warrington in pains. Soldier A and Fontanelle jump on Warrington’s hands and all speak in the same voice “Kill his hands! Kill his feet! Jump on it – all of it! He can’t hit us now. Look at his hands like boiling crabs! Kill it! Kill all of it! Kill him inside! Make him dead! Father! Father! I want to sit on his lungs” (15). Soldier

A and Fontanelle use cruel language in the process of brutalizing Warrington, while Bodice observes in happiness without a word. This Soldier's speeches and diction are those of brutality. He repeatedly uses the word "kill" to expose the nature of his profession under the autocratic and cruel regime. On the flipside, Fontanelle's language depicts her as a figure of authority and an advocate of violence and injustice against the weak.

Contrary to Bond, monologues are used in Kane's 4:48 *Psychosis* as a means of revealing the unnamed character's trauma, rage, and painful relationship with people. Her words show that she is unable to conceal her heinous crimes perpetrated on individuals. In one of her monologues, she uses a confessing language by telling the audience that:

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

-It's all right.

-LOOK AWAY FROM ME

-It's all right. I'm here.

-Look away from me

Why am I stricken?

I saw visions of God

And it come to pass. (19)

In the monologue, the character's self-accusation communicates his sense of guilt. Verbs used are in the past tense, such as "killed", "bombed", "fucked", which show his reflection on her past crimes. She grapples with the trauma, and her self-accusation turns to threats where she mutters "...fuck I'm going to make your life a living hell I REFUSE I REFUSE I REFUSE LOOK AWAY FROM ME". These utterances reveal the character's depression from her past crimes. The repeated commands, such as "look away from me," amplify the inner, painful battles through the use of a personal "I" pronoun. In

"Language of a Broken Mind: Societal Poetic Techniques and Dramatic Dialogues in 4:48 *Psychosis*", Rosa Larena argues that Kane uses repetition as the main strategy to make the dialogue work (14). This expression changes from a monologue to a dialogue:

-At 4:48

when sanity visits

for one hour and twelve minutes I am in my right mind.

When it has passed I shall be gone again,

(...)

Why do you believe me now?

(...)

-It's all right. You will get better.

-Your disbelief cures nothing.

*-Look away from me. (4:48 *Psychosis*, 20)*

In the dialogue, the unnamed character suffers from depression and expresses a feeling of guilt that has changed her mood to that of grief. This feeling leads to the character's mental breakdown as seen in the language filled with gaps, which indicate communicational breaks. In the dialogue, the patient shows signs of mental instability, where she mutters, "Here I am, and there is my body". She stops for a moment and continues with a paradoxical statement like "In accident time where there are no accidents" (21).

II. CONCLUSION

Kane and Bond's plays demonstrate that language in postmodern drama is unstable, violent, and inadequate for expressing trauma and alienation. Their experimentation with clipped dialogue, silence, and brutality advances contemporary theatre by challenging traditional communication. The subversion of language and communication discussed in this paper reveals that Kane and Bond use fragmented dialogue to address issues of violence, alienation, and trauma in their plays, deliberately shifting away from conventional dialogue. Kane's emphasis on inner turmoil and Bond's critique of political structures converge in their shared subversion of language, redefining dramatic dialogue as a site of rupture and resistance.

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