THE POSTDRAMATIC PLAYWRIGHT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES FOR REPRESENTING REALITY

BY
CHARLOTTE MEADES

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between the postdramatic genre and representations of reality. The works of three playwrights are considered. Samuel Beckett's plays *Not I, Footfalls* and *Rockaby* will be utilised. These works enable an understanding into the distortion of dramatic theatre, and question the authority of character and time in performance. Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave* will also be studied as modern examples of the postdramatic in practice. Kane's plays establish a precedence of exploring structure in the space. Martin Crimp's play *Attempts on Her Life* will also support this, questioning how reality can be created and dissolved within the performance realm. The thesis looks at how technology has become an increasingly vital component of theatre, and comes to conclusions as to how this affects a non-linear play structure. An investigation is also made into the role of the semiosphere and 'void', enquiring whether performance can exist without preconceived semiotics. Live performance examples are drawn upon, and the association between dramatic theatre modes and postdramatic platforms are discussed.

For my Grandpa

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

When considering postdramatic theatre, the intention to create reality is often at the forefront of discussion. This thesis will debate how the playwright constructs their own version of 'truth', and how this can be translated onto the stage. Strategies for representing reality will first be addressed, and then expanded upon to see how this affects the semiosphere of the performance. Karen Jürs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles confront the issue of representation during the introduction of *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political*. They state that 'delineating the conceptual issues that attend the postdramatic in these terms of 'representation' versus 'real' is inevitably crude and reductive/ but it does serve a useful purpose, namely framing and setting some parameters.'[1] 'Truth' and its subjectivity enable each playwright to define their own boundaries. It is this ethos that will be used when approaching the question of reality; the focus on the 'real' or 'truth' invites an exploration of phenomenology. This prompts a questioning of what is actual versus conceptual in the space, and how this becomes fluid. Reality is therefore used as a tool for defining the immediacy and direct nature of the playwrights' work.

I will define the dramatic through Hans-Thies Lehmann's understanding in *Tragedy and the Dramatic Theatre*.

I will address the postdramatic form with Hans-Thies Lehmann at the forefront of the research. His works *Postdramatic Theatre* and *Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre* will prove vital in the assessment and progression of the essay.

---

[1] Karen Jürs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles, *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013) p.6

Lehmann suggests that 'it problematizes the constitution of a dramatic fiction and world in general and with it also an immediate reference to social reality.'[2] It is this confrontation between dramatic and postdramatic that often creates controversy around the term; can a performance combine a postdramatic text and a dramatic performance style? I will examine the relationship between these two fields. I will do this through considering Lehmann's initial groundwork. I will then see how this mode of thought has progressed, and whether his definition of the postdramatic becomes problematic in the changing performance and social landscape. Erika Fischer-Lichte states, 'I agree with Lehmann's definition of presence as a process of consciousness, but one that is articulated through the body and sensed by the spectators through their bodies.'[3] Fischer-Lichte offers a change in how presence is perceived and has developed to include the audience in its conception. The transformation of presence in theatre will be crucial in my exploration. I will question how this understanding affects the link between the postdramatic and traditional dramatic storytelling.

Peter Szondi's definition of the dramatic will help me to outline the limits placed on the word, and the journey towards the postdramatic in theatre. Szondi uses a relatively brief approach to explain drama;

'it largely observed the formal requirements of Aristotelian dramatic theory, and it served a specific historical and cultural function, answering the

[2] Hans- Thies Lehmann, 'Preface to the English Edition,' *Postdramatic Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.IX
[3] Erika Fischer-Lichte*, The Transformative Power of Performance* (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2004) p.98

need for an artistic form which would articulate the new individualist and humanist worldview of the post-medieval period.'[4]

This implies that drama fits into a specific historical period, and therefore the following development of performance breaks the original Aristotelian conventions. Michael Mangan analyses Szondi's restrictive definition in *The Drama, Theatre & Performance Companion*; 'Szondi argues that, by the time we reach Ibsen, the drama is already in crisis.'[5] Any delegation from Aristotelian tradition breaks historical dramatic convention. Dymphna Callery explores this framework in *the Active Text*, where she considers the practicalities of Aristotlean definitions of Drama. She states 'when he defined the elements of drama in his *Poetics*, Aristotle placed them in order with Plot preceeding Character and followed by Language, Thought, Spectacle and Music.'[6] Callery describes a linear and definite order to events and priorities within the text, to be translated into the performance. As the text has evolved, arguably the traditional conventions that governed it have to be adapted to suit the changing landscape of the subsequent performances.

It is in this crisis that I will argue that the postdramatic is able to emerge. 'Szondi sees crisis as arising from a contradiction between the subject matter of modern theatre/ and the imperatives of Aristotelian dramaturgy.'[7] With this definition, we can understand how the postdramatic understanding developed. Lehmann 'accepts and develops Szondi's basic premise, that new cultural

---

[4] Michael Mangan, *The Drama, Theatre & Performance Companion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.287
[5] Ibid. 287
[6] Dymphna Callery, Th*e Active Text* (London: Nick Hern Books Ltd, 2015) p.17
[7] Ibid. 287

movements demand new aesthetic forms.'[8] Lehmann uses the definition to sculpt a performance form that goes beyond the Aristotelian beliefs. It provides a working ideal for dramatic texts., and a framework to base a working definition upon.

It is vital to discuss how the postdramatic will be defined in this thesis. I will be looking at it as a close relative of the dramatic. Lehmann claims that 'tragic experience puts the self into question.'[9] One cannot be entirely removed from the other, and it would be impossible to regard the postdramatic without a performative aspect. Fisher-Lichte discusses the role of presence. She argues that 'it marks the emergence of something very ordinary and develops into an event.'[10] This is how I will essentially approach the definition of the postdramatic; the development of presence, and how it affects the event space. As previously stated, Lehmann will serve as a root of context for the postdramatic. However I will also reach to other works, including Erika Fischer-Lichte's *The Transformative Power of Performance: a new aesthetics* and *Postdramatic and the The Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance* by Karen Jurs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles. These will supply further context for how the definition of the postdramatic has grown over time to encompass further explorations of presence and 'self.' This expansion of the term is apparent in both texts, as well as in the works of the three chosen playwrights.

---

[8] Ibid. 287

[9] Hans Thies-Lehmann, *Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 2016) p.408

[10] Erika Fischer- Lichte *The Transformative Power of Performance* (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2004) p.99

To analyse the shift towards the performance event, I will study the works of Samuel Beckett, Sarah Kane and Martin Crimp. Jürs-Munby states that the postdramatic shows a 'historical shift out of a textual culture and into a 'mediatized' image and sound culture.'[11] The event centres on the abilities of modern technology, and how this can affect a traditionally human- centred performance. The three playwrights' discussed in this thesis have been chosen because of their investigations into the performance event. Aleks Sierz describes a change in the theatrical landscape in 'the 1990s when new writing enjoyed a remarkable comeback.'[12] Both Kane and Crimp expand on the image that was depicted by Beckett. The text has not been removed from the event, however there is a consensus of textual minimalism apparent. A hybrid performance is created, incorporating the human performer into the technical elements of the piece. Additionally, Jürs-Munby discusses Lehmann's observation of onstage media; 'the impact of media on performance manifests itself not only in the use of high-tech 'multimedia' onstage, however, but sometimes also in its very opposite.'[13] The chosen playwrights' all juxtapose chaotic technology-centric work with a landscape of emptiness. These platforms overlap, creating a path between the postdramatic event and the semiotic world.

In order to discuss reality, we must first determine the meaning of this term in the context of the postdramatic. Ulrike Garde and Meg Mumford discuss reality in theatre. They argue that plays may enter the postdramatic realm by the

[11] Karen Jürs-Munby, 'Introduction,' *Postdramatic Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.2

[12] Aleks Sierz, *Rewriting the Nation: British Theatre Today* (London: Methuen Drama, 2011) p.21

[13] Karen Jürs-Munby, Introduction,' Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.10

'rupturing of a fictional cosmos and/or the sealed nature of representation.'[14] By breaking the dramatic expectations, representation can be experimented with. This allows a different reading of reality to become established. The playwrights have been chosen because of their individual responses to illusory worlds, and how representation is used in response to this. Each playwright experiments with this to a different extent. However all of the plays approach abstraction and authenticity in the event, questioning whether reality can be obtained through text-based work. Garde and Mumford claim that 'postdramatic Reality Theatre is distinguished by the use of authenticity effects in such a way that they open up liminal states of disorientation in the spectator.'[15] The spectator becomes the judge of reality in performance. They join the event as a constituent that deduces the legitimacy of the information provided. Each individual spectator draws their own conclusions from the event, varying the response to authenticity and perspectives of reality.

Beckett has been specifically chosen for his role in deconstructing traditional dramatic methods. His work combines a symbiotic mix of dramatic worlds and a postdramatic void space. Sam William Dawson discusses the dramatic state, arguing that 'dramatic structure is the means whereby what is most important in the action is kept consistently in the centre of our attention.'[16] However Beckett's work shifts the focus from the human character. The action

---

[14] Ulrike Garde and Meg Mumford, 'Postdramatic Reality Theatre and Productive Insecurity: Destabilising Encounters with the Unfamiliar in Theatre from Sydney and Berlin,' *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance*, ed. Karen Jürs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.151
[15] Ulrike Garde and Meg Mumford, p.164
[16] Sam William Dawson, *Drama and the Dramatic* (Norfolk: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1970) p.35

becomes non-linear and removed from a chronological time scale. The audience's attention can no longer be defined as drawing towards one particular narrative. The plays *Not I*, *Footfalls* and *Rockaby* have been chosen for this reason. Absence becomes the focus of the event. The void draws attention to what is missing, rather than what is present. These pieces have recently received attention on the British stage; the 2014 performance, named *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby*, will be discussed in relation to its written counterpart. The pieces are performed together, and so creating a timeline between the plays. Beckett's work fuses together the methods of dramatic and non-dramatic presentation, and the live performance further strengthens the relationship between the two.

Beckett's work expresses a distinct movement towards the deconstruction of the 'self', and the projection of meaning through form and structure. As the technical production becomes more centred, 'self' becomes less attainable for the isolated figures. Beckett challenges the dogma surrounding performance, and takes a standpoint that the stage can be a space for discussion, and create a paradigm of truth. Andrew Haydon states that Lehmann's work 'doesn't seek to be a manifesto for how theatre ought to be, but simply describes an observable movement in the form.'[17] It is important to keep this in mind when exploring Beckett's work; the plays analysed encompass modes of postdramatic performance, however also present methods of the dramatic. Beckett's work serves as a distinguishable platform for developing reality. Jonathan Kalb explores 'the way in which presentational and representational action is blended

---

[17] Andrew Haydon, 'Postdramatic Theatre is No Longer a Closed Book' in *The Guardian,*
<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2008/nov/11/postdramatic-theatre-lehmann> [Accessed: 4th August 2015]

in his theater.'[18] His destabilising of traditional methods of work inspired many modern playwrights to adopt a post-mimetic world and further define the use of abstraction. De Vos writes that Kane's '[...] concatenation of sentences originating from different sources is reminiscent of some Beckett plays.'[19] He draws a parallel between Kane's *Crave* and Beckett's plays, particularly looking at how the playwright's approach text. Both playwrights' take a transgressive stance on characterisation and the potential of theatre to create a space for examination. Increasingly, modern playwrights are viewing how the technical performance can influence the theatre. Beckett's work serves as an example of how 'self' and identity can influence the performance space.

Martin Crimp's *Attempts on Her Life* also presents many of the postdramatic elements that appear in Beckett's plays. Jürs-Munby states that the spectator must be able to 'tolerate gaps and suspend the assignment of meaning.'[20] Similarly to Beckett, Crimp creates multiple worlds and identities for a singular conscious. Anne is a figure that is recreated multiple times through the play. She serves as a fluid human form that can be recreated to suit the needs of the concept. There are many voices in the text, and one states, 'the whole of the past is there in her face.'[21] Anne encompasses the identities of the world around her. She has no affixed traits and serves as a reflection of the event. This draws similarities to Mouth in Beckett's *Not I* and May, a character in *Footfalls*. Peter

---

[18] Jonathan Kalb, *Beckett in Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) p.3
[19] Lauren De Vos, *Cruelty and Desire in The Modern Theater: Antonin Artaud, Sarah Kane, and Samuel Beckett* (Maryland, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011) Kindle Edition, Loc. 238-249
[20] Karen Jürs-Munby, 'Introduction,' Hans- Thies Lehmann, Postdramatic Theatre, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby, (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.6
[21] Martin Crimp, *Attempts on her Life, Plays: One* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.215

Boxall supports that 'this adaptation of Beckett's stage can be seen across the world.'[22] Both Crimp and Kane create parallels to his work. Their similarity when approaching 'self' is apparent. Increasingly, the exposed identity is revealed on stage, and the reality of 'self' is opened up for discussion. Aleks Sierz proposes that 'In writers such as these, the streams of European absurdism, surrealism and modernism wash through British Theatre.'[23] Their work has similarly influenced others to ask what is present, or real, in the space.

Furthermore, in *Attempts on Her Life*, the voices imagine different situations. They create theoretical places where Anne could exist, hypothesising as to the type of person she might be in these environments. Crimp's work further delves into the semiosphere, before jumping back to the 'real' of the stage. Vicky Angelaki claims that 'in Crimp's theatre it is in language where everything begins and ends, where lives and identities are built and destroyed.'[24] Each act holds a separate identity. Anne is recreated as the play progresses, and the structure of the piece supports this journey. This notion of the semiosphere will be defined in the next section, and I will discuss how this marriage of identity and semiotics affects Anne in Crimp's piece. When discussing Anne, Angelaki states that 'she is everywhere and nowhere, in multiple conceptualizations that cause her identity to fluctuate wildly.'[25] A biosphere is created for the abstract identity to inhabit. It changes to suit how Anne develops, assimilating to the needs of the piece. Similarly to the selected Beckett plays,

[22] Peter Boxall, *Since Beckett: Contemporary Writing in the Wake of Modernism* (London and New York, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009) p.10
[23] Aleks Sierz, *Rewriting the Nation: British Theatre Today* (London: Methuen Drama, 2011) p.25
[24] Vicky Angelaki *The Plays of Martin Crimp: Making Theatre Strange* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.36
[25] Ibid, p.54

Crimp's character has elements of multiplicity, combining different flexible identities. However she also struggles with having no set corporal being. Crimp extends the examination of identity being a non-fixed entity. Anne becomes controlled by other conscious minds, questioning the free thought and intentionality of the individual. This will be investigated in the following chapters, identifying the power of the collective consciousness.

Kane's texts *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* have been chosen because of the journey that is made between the two plays. *Crave* preceded Kane's exploration of a timeless event space. It is clear that Crimp's aforementioned play and Kane's plays bare similarities in the approach to fluid identity. Graham Saunders states that 'ideas from the structure and dramatic form of *Attempts on her Life* find its way into both *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*.'[26] However, whereas *Crave* names four separate conscious minds, the latter play included 'unidentified and unnumbered voices.'[27] Similarly to Anne's manipulation and distortion, *4.48 Psychosis* takes control over the themes instigated in *Crave*. The play becomes more chaotic, and the deterioration of the structure descends the play further into the void. Any conformity to linearity is removed. There will be an exploration into the 'now' that is centred in the performance. The present is a vital component to both of Kane's pieces; the journey from *Crave* to *4.48 Psychosis* illustrates the progression of reconstructing the aesthetics of theatre. This focus on the 'now' becomes the driving force in the examination of the plays, probing the relationship between a boundless structure and time.

---

[26] Graham Saunders *'Love me or Kill me': Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002) p.111
[27] Ibid, p.111

As previously mentioned, live performance will function as a fundamental component of the thesis. This includes performances observed by the playwrights themselves, and those performed independently or posthumously. According to Lehmann, 'the actor of postdramatic theatre is often no longer the actor of a role but a performer offering his/her presence on stage for contemplation.'[28] In the performances chosen, presence becomes fundamental to the event. This includes technical elements or lack thereof. There is an immediacy that is manifested into the void; nothing exists before, or after the event. The state of 'now' becomes more apparent during the performance. The empty stage enables the figure, or voice, to enter the stage without premise. It removes much of the semiosis that the audience could connect with. The suspension of meaning allows the voice to speak without individuality. John Hartley argues the connectivity that semiotics supply; 'Social links are continuously renewed, reworked, extended and made productive by myriad 'users' going about their daily business, using the physical infrastructure and operating within the equally complex webs of signification and mediation that make the city.'[29] Each act, however subconscious, affects the semiotics of the environment. The combined actions create a fluid semiotic phenomenon, linking each individual in a collective identity. In order for the piece to move into addressing a single identity, the semiosphere can be employed as a tool for distinguishing cultural representation.

---

[28] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York and London: Routledge, 2006) p.135

[29] John Hartley, 'Genre, culture and the semiosphere: New Horror cinema and post-9/11' *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol.18 (1) (Sage publishing, 2015) p.82

Hartley confirms that 'A good practical example of how the 'clash of systems' generates productivity out of difference is *marriageability*. Marriage is easily understood – a near-universal cultural practice with wide local variation, that is both personal and economic.'[30] It is this *marriageability* that is crucial in this reading of the postdramatic. If phenomenology 'wants to explain the meaning of our experiences,'[31] the void acts as a rift between the differing ideologies. The reading of the chosen texts will take into consideration this marriageability of philosophies. During this thesis I will hypothesise whether meaning can be transcended in this void space, and probe the relationship between the postdramatic and modern philosophy.

0.1 Semiotics and the Semiosphere

The semiosphere is a system of semiosis, each interlinking to create a single body. Andres Schonle and Jeremy Shine examine how Lotman's semiotic research was established; 'In the 1980s Lotman began to develop a theory of culture / on how messages are embedded in a fluid semiotic environment from which they draw their meaning.'[32] Lotman's work detailed how the semiotic surroundings of a culture influence consciousness and the understanding of signs. Angela Ndalianis discusses the effect that this has on the arts, stating that 'Lotman's theory of the semiosphere provides us with a useful model with which to analyse the generic development and understand how genres interact with

---

[30] Ibid, p.84
[31] Stephen Kaufer and Anthony Chemero, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2015) p.32
[32] Andreas Schonle and Jeremy Shine, Jeremy, *Lotman and Cultural Studies: Encounters and Extensions* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2006) p.6

culture to effect genres and new patterns in a genre.'[33] The semiosphere is not a static entity. It changes as other cultures overlap, and brings new signs into the system. It also ages, and signs can become lost, or changed over time. The semiosphere becomes a link between conscious minds. It creates signifiers in culture, which are universally understood. This can be transferred into the theatre, linking elements of the performance together.

Vladimir E. Alexandrov also examines the work of Lotman. Alexandrov explored the platforms created by the semiosphere and 'Lotman's view that our planet is enmeshed in a vast and multileveled polyphony of voices, texts, and languages.'[34] The world is made up of a combination of signs and symbols, and these can span over different mediums. According to Alexandrov, 'a semiotic principle that the meaning of a sign- or utterance- is dependant on the larger systems of signs in which it exists.'[35] Therefore the cultural root of the semiosphere is vital. Yana Meerzon declares that 'the binarity principle secures the inner growth and development of each particular culture.'[36] Essentially, this creates a point of heterogeneity, or universal understanding of the ideas that are presented onstage. The semiosphere becomes paramount in the understanding of the postdramatic. By distinguishing a semiosphere on the stage, it becomes more apparent what mimetic transformations have been abandoned. The chosen

---

[33] Angela Ndalianis, 'Genre, culture and the semiosphere: New Horror cinema and post-9/11' *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* Vol. 18 (Sage Publishing, 2015) p.137

[34] Vladimir E. Alexandrov, *Biology, Semiosis, and Cultural Difference in Lotman's Semiosphere* (Comparitive Literature, 2000) p.340

[35] Ibid, p.344

[36] Yana Meerzon, 'On Theatrical semiosphere of postdramatic theatrical event: Rethinking the semiotic epistemology in performance analysis today,' *Semiotica* (2011) p.245

playwright's all endure between these two realms; one creating a cultural familiarity, and the other a boundless void.

Alexandrov also considers that 'both individuals and the cultures they constitute are defined by borders that are functions of the differences between them.'[37] During a performance, the semiosphere serves as a limitation to the understanding of the event world; It defines what is in the performance space, and what is included in the stage realm. It creates interconnectivity between the performance elements and can encourage a phenomenological reading of a piece. The world created is built upon the mutual comprehension of what is used in the performance. 'Cultures are actually constituted by transactional semiotic interchanges with other cultures. But this does not vitiate the importance/of cultural discreteness.'[38]Elements of other societies can be adopted into a society, merging the semiospheres to create asymmetrical levels. However despite this acceptance of some semiotics, there is a fixed binarity that is revisited as a 'truth' of a culture. The 'originative cultural discreteness'[39] remains as a fundamental level of the sphere. In this sense, reality can be found in the semiosphere in the form of cultural understanding and appropriation.

In all the playwrights' pieces examined here, there are also points of semiotic rejection. The created space of mimesis is compromised. This allows a stronger sense of 'self' outside of the cultural identity surrounding an individual. Marvin Carlson pronounces that 'Lehmann's postdramatic theatre seeks to

---

[37] Vladimir E. Alexandrov, 'Biology, Semiosis, and Cultural Difference in Lotman's Semiosphere,' *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 52, No.4 (Duke University Press on behalf of the University of Oregon, Autumn 2000) p.350
[38] Ibid, p.350
[39] Ibid, p.350

completely abandon the mimetic for the solely performative.'[40] Although this does define Lehmann's original objective, it is arguable that the postdramatic has increasingly created an awareness of the limitations of the semiosphere. Rather than completely eliminating the intention, the postdramatic shows how the void can create a conflation of ideas that exceeds the boundaries of semiotics. This is independent from a cultural start point, thereby allowing a creation of 'self' that is external to a semiosphere. The 'self' can become timeless, and unfixed to a particular realm. It can become an abstraction, or an example of a concept. The juxtaposition of these two paradigms can therefore present further levels to the understanding of self, and develop multi facets of identity. 'Self' becomes unfixed and a marriage of various semiotics.

This questions the role of 'spatio-temperal elsewhere,' or domain created on stage, in the translation of 'self'. Meerzon describes this as 'a possible world originating in a theatrical performance that is created by the actors.'[41] This arguably defines the semiosphere. The aim for postdramatic work is to remove this 'elsewhere.' The audience is not transported anywhere, as they enter a void of timelessness. Essentially, they are presented with a state of nothing. As previously noted, nothing exists before the event and there is no prior history. The only state is 'now.' Michael Hays discusses the work of Szondi, who looked into the issues of creating drama. Hays reviews Beckett's work, arguing that 'if his plays no longer take this material seriously, that is because the form of

---

[40] Marvin Carlson, 'Postdramatic Theatre and Postdramatic Performance,' *Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies* (September/December 2015) < http://www.seer.ufrgs.br/presenca>[Accessed: 13th May 2016] p.589
[41] Yana Meerzon, 'On Theatrical Semiosphere of postdramatic Theatrical Event: Rethinking the Semiotic Epistemology in Performance Analysis Today,' *Semiotica* (2011) p.239

modern drama itself embodies an assertion of the meaningless of the cultural paradigms on which it draws.'[42] As the culture changes, the assigned meaning is obscured and lost. This perhaps presents the semiosphere as a temporary element of performance. Whereas the void holds a timeless state, the dramatic sphere can be manipulated as the play ages. A level of immediacy is created from this necessity to preserve the semiotics. The familiar points of culture become estranged from the actors in modern performance. Hays states that 'Because the characters can no longer create their own presence, the drama itself is in jeopardy.'[43] Aristotelian drama is reliant upon the void to preserve universal structure. The elements coincide to move between worlds, exceeding the boundaries of the cultural beginnings of the work. Both the semiospherical 'elsewhere' and postdramatic void can co-operate with the other in the event, and this will be shown through the performance examples.

0.2 Phenomenology: Definitions of Reality

Stanton B. Garner describes phenomenology as 'the study of givenness/ of the world as it is lived rather than the world as it is objectified, abstracted, and conceptualized.'[44] It also questions how consciousness reacts to objects in the space. Similarly to this, the postdramatic event concerns itself with the perception of reality. The substantial necessity to create or obtain the 'real' is a

---

[42] Michael Hays, 'Drama and Dramatic Theory: Peter Szondi and the Modern Theater,' *The Criticism of Peter Szondi,* Vol. 11 No. 3(Duke University Press, Spring, 1983) p.80
[43] Ibid, p.75
[44] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994) p.26

motivation for both ideologies. Lehmann ascertains that 'the postdramatic theatre is the first to turn the level of the real explicitly into a 'co-player.'[45] The 'real' becomes an active component in the performance, rather than the consequence of the action. Garner provides a definition of the intention of dramatic work; 'drama, in short, presents "the thing itself" as a bounded (or floating) facticity, available to a variety of specific actualizations.'[46] Drama is rooted in recreating a specific action, and relies upon this for an image of representation. In this thesis, I will argue that the postdramatic can also present reality to the spectator, removing the boundedness experienced in the dramatic. It also relinquishes hold on time as a linear construct that controls the sequences of acts. The 'real' drives the event forward. Time and presence also become active participants in the creation of the paradigm, probing whether the individual can exist in the postdramatic environment.

Garner discusses the link between phenomenology and Beckett's plays. He states that 'Beckett's work represents an evolving and increasingly complex response to a set of essentially phenomenological questions concerning subjectivity, embodiedness, and perception.'[47] The discussion of consciousness will be intrinsic to the thesis examination. Beckett's work moves towards asking what is truthful. Levels of understanding are made on stage; the abstract platforms overlap with semiospherical universes. The void coincides with actuality. Each concept is cancelled out and simultaneously validated by its opposing participant. This further prompts the question of what can be

---

[45] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York and London: Routledge, 2006) p.100
[46] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994) p.6
[47] Ibid, p.25

considered real or fabricated in the performance event. It becomes vital to explore how these techniques alter the perception of a theatre 'elsewhere.' Avra Sidoropoulou explores the effect of applying a conflation of ideologies; 'auteurs who attempt to unite theatre's inherent duality as a semiological/mimetic field and a phenomenological performance space have a lot more space to move in.'[48] Beckett however unites both factors, and pushes them into conflict. Opportunities open up in the event for the individual conscious to move between the constructed fields. It is this relationship between the conscious and the abstract platforms that allows the postdramatic to become present.

Certainly, different branches of phenomenology exist. For the purpose of this thesis, I will specifically engage with philosophers who relate to this theory. In particular, the work of Edmund Husserl will be considered. Steven Kaüfer and Anthony Chemero state that 'consciousness is a steady, uninterrupted stream, which shifts and vacillates between manifold objects and attitudes.'[49] The conscious mind is presented as a vessel that embodies intentionality, allowing it to make precise choices. It reacts to the stimulus it is confronted with, and subsequently alters the void to accommodate the stimulus. However during postdramatic performance, this intentionality is questioned. *Transcendental reduction* is interwoven through the thesis. This is 'the methodological step that leads us to attend to the structure of acts that directs them at their objects, rather than the object itself.'[50] For example, in the case of the three chosen playwrights, the experience of the theatrical phenomenon and the reason behind

---

[48] Avra Sidoropoulou *Authoring Performance: The Director in Contemporary Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p.8
[49] Stephen Kaüfer and Anthony Chemero, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2015) p.32
[50] Ibid, p.49

each action becomes centred. The journey of the piece is driven forward by the discoveries established by the acts and ideas of those involved in the event. Yet the void changes how consciousness responds to these acts. 'Our ability to be intentionally directed at time is basic for much, if not all of our experience.'[51] This implies that a concept of time is necessary for the mind to interact with the *noema*, or 'meaning of an act.'[52] If a void is entered, conscious intentionality is diminished. Memory and the past become displaced, and so the *noema* is obscured. This arguably leads us towards *transcendental reduction*. The act itself is no longer pivotal, but rather the journey and reasons behind the onstage occurrence.

By removing or changing the perception of time, consciousness transcends a singular identity. Lehmann states that there is 'the intention of utilizing the specificity of theatre as a mode of presentation to turn time as such into an object of the aesthetic experience.'[53] If time becomes an act, it in turn develops its own *noema* for reflection. In the chosen plays, time becomes a crucial component. It is notable in its presence and during its absence. 'The *prolongation of time is* a prominent trait of postdramatic theatre,'[54] alongside 'an *aesthetic of repetition*.'[55] Time is no longer a fixed point. It can become a method of changing the theatrical aesthetics. If time becomes an act, it can be manipulated by the conscious mind. Time no longer holds authority as a linear structuring tool. Lehmann argues that this 'is now used for the destructuring and

---

[51] Ibid, p.41
[52] Ibid, p.48
[53] Hans- Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.156
[54] Ibid, p.156
[55] Ibid, p.156

deconstructing of story, meaning and totality of form.'[56] It is not a reliable presence in the piece. As an act, it can be subject to manoeuvring. It can now be seen as a *noesis*, 'a specific intentional, conscious act.'[57] It enters the event as a tool of the playwright. This presents time as a factor for conscious deliberation. It manipulates the intentionality of the event, questioning what elements of the piece can be seen as 'real.'

The requirement to find reality can also invoke criticism of the form. 'The experience of the real, of the fact that no fictive illusions are created, is often accompanied by disappointment about the reduction, the apparent 'poverty'.'[58] Yet it is this sparse dramatic nature that is engaged in order to strengthen the reality of the pieces. For example, Beckett's *Not I* is dependent on reduction to create the onstage image of the Mouth. The human mouth is suspended in the centre of the stage, surrounded by darkness or a void-like environment. Lehmann states that 'radical reduction rather lets the simplest things shine.'[59] The Mouth is the only physical entity, and sparseness governs the void. However Beckett's work is ambiguous in defining the consciousness that is on stage. The phenomenology of the single conscious becomes problematic; can multiple conscious minds exist in one entity? Although the Mouth may be in a state of *noesis*, it speaks without an individual memory or background. This arguably makes the Mouth an abstract concept itself. A phenomenological reading of the play can aid in the discussion of the real, and whether it can be embodied in the

---

[56] Ibid, p.156
[57] Stephen Kaüfer and Anthony Chemero, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2015) p.48
[58] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) pp.100-101
[59] Ibid, p.101

world itself. Reduction is used to pull objects into focus, and clarify the reason behind their existence. This balance between the phenomenological platform of reality and the postdramatic void will be discussed throughout the thesis. I will define the postdramatic void using a passage written by Lehmann in his text *Tragedy and the Postdramatic Theatre*. He exemplifies the work of Kantor. He defines Kantor's work *Sur le Theatre* as 'the "in-between" between what is active (life) and what is passive (death).'[60] It is between these that the postdramatic void resides. will examine how these concepts can exist together, in order to simultaneously create levels of presence.

Similarly, Kane's play *4.48 Psychosis* and Crimp's *Attempts on her Life* create equilibrium between these two attitudes. Both take place in a suspended void. In this void, time becomes non-linear and fluid. This enables the playwright to practise reduction, and concentrate the event on an objective. In addition, the role of the dramatic human entity changes. Dawson conveys that 'a dramatist's imagination is seized by a situation, not an argument. Any argument that arises from the play must be abstracted from it/ abstraction is fraught with the possibilities of misunderstanding.'[61] The dramatic, in this instance, is centred on delivering the meaning of the play to its audience. Any confusion surrounding this presents a breakdown in the conveyance of situation. The character supports the conveyance of meaning, and nothing outside of this necessity exists. The 'elsewhere' is hinged upon the actor's transformation into the character. In the postdramatic, the human takes on a different role. Franco Berardi discusses

---

[60] Hans-Thies Lehmann Tragedy and the Postdramatic Theatre, trans. Erik Butler p.428
[61] Sam William Dawson, *Drama and the Dramatic* (Norfolk: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1970) p.68

the phenomenological 'trans-human.' He states that 'the synergy of biotechnology and artificial intelligence opened the way to unprecedented opportunities to replace the organic body with a synthetic organism.'[62] The world between technology and humans is increasingly overlapping. This is reflected in the postdramatic, assimilating to this reliance on modern equipment. This changes the perception of how the conscious mind can cooperate alongside technology, and ultimately function without a human body. The commonly anthropocentric nature of the theatre is adapting to the acceleration of machinery in culture, further separating the body and mind.

Berardi also states that 'utopia and dystopia came closer, almost melting into the transhuman imagination of the future.'[63] The human form is enhanced by the technical advancements of the world. However this can be viewed as a utopic or dystopic phenomenon. The transhuman becomes a simulated version of consciousness. Lehmann argues that the postdramatic 'gains a new playing field in the sphere of machines, which connects human beings, mechanics and technology.'[64] The relationship between the human body and technical enhancements demonstrate how the human form can be manipulated. The human, once characteristically centred in the piece, becomes part of an event collage. The individual appears to evolve into a collective component. Lehmann refers to this change as an *anthropological mutation*.'[65] The shape and understanding of the human self has changed. What once signified an individual

[62] Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, *And: Phenomenology of the End* (Cambridge, Mass and London: The MIT Press, 2015) pp.279-280
[63] Ibid, p.280
[64] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.165
[65] Ibid, p.165

is relinquished. In Crimp's *Attempts on her Life*, the piece immediately opens with the human voice layered in technology. The piece begins with the voicemails on a phone line. The first scene is experienced through the phone call. The voices become transhuman, lacking an identity. The messages are deleted. Humanity becomes an abstraction, coated in the technology it has created. Existence in the void is temporary. Phenomenology and the abstraction of 'self' interconnect, marrying these ideologies of performance.

0.3 Ideologies: Meeting and Marriageability

It is vital to analyse the criticism that the postdramatic has sustained, particularly when noting the affects on reality in performance. The perception of reality in the performance space has frequently been discussed. We must question whether the postdramatic field can coincide with dramatic elements. Liz Tomlin claims that Lehmann's outlining of the postdramatic 'serves to undermine the political efficacy of those dramatists whose innovations might not neatly dovetail with the '*self-reflection, decomposition* and *separation.*'[66] The outline for the term is specific and thorough, distinctly mapping out intentions. This approach to discovering reality jars against traditional dramatic methods of representation. It becomes difficult to sustain the postdramatic as an isolated ideology. I therefore argue that the postdramatic must encompass elements of the dramatic. This allows the event to encompass the semiosphere, and explore reality within the context of these extra dimensions. Tomlin also states that 'it is

[66] Liz Tomlin, Forward: Dramatic Developments' in Vicky Angelaki, *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.x

only by breaking the 'wholeness' of the model of dramatic representation [...] that theatre in the postmodern era can escape complicity with the discredited philosophical notion of a singular, objective and authoritative reality.'[67] Both the dramatic and postdramatic must be destabilised. By doing so, an association can be made between the terms. This allows reality to be deliberated through the changing modes of performance, and question the role of authenticity in theatre.

The relationship between the abstract and the 'real' is important when viewing the chosen texts and performances. The marriage of the semiosphere and the phenomenological ideology are necessary for the postdramatic reading of the chosen texts. As previously mentioned, the 'real' becomes a co-player in the piece. However during this thesis I will also argue that the abstract concept is also a participant in the system, and can transcend the real. A continuum is created between the two, merging the experiences of these techniques. This also creates a relationship between the objective reality that the audience experiences, and boundless polyphony of the abstract realm. Garner argues that there are elements that can ground the piece into the *mise-en-scène*; 'by extending and physicalizing the body's operation on its material environment, props situate the body more firmly in it.'[68] Props or elements on stage ground the piece to a particular existence. They create material evidence of a created world. If we reverse this, by creating a minimal space, arguably the piece becomes less rooted in the generated atmosphere. In order for the levels of the event to exist together, the elements on stage need to be temporary or

---

[67] Ibid, p.ix
[68] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994) p.89

changeable. The event has to become fluid in movement, disallowing the body to become rooted in a particular realm for too long.

In addition, the semiosphere also transforms the postdramatic void. The figures that dwell inside this space are pulled out, entering into a space with cultural basis. Ndalianis states that:

'Lotman's model makes possible a more systematized model that speaks to how genres exchange, translate and often radically transform the semiotic texts that circulate within the space of culture; and, in turn, how the semiotic spaces of genres are part of a greater process of meaning production that is the semiosphere of culture.'[69]

The semiosphere can also transform the structure of plays. This will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters, and I will examine the possibilities of the semiotic phenomenon playing an important role in modern performance. The semiosphere is based in the present of the culture it represents; it moves forward and changes alongside the evolution of society. This can be seen in the chosen plays, and in the subsequent live performances. As the plays are performed, the semiotics of the time alters. This will be traced through the pieces, illustrating how the semiosphere allows the piece to adapt to the time it is performed.

There is an element of hybridisation in the chosen plays, linking together separate attitudes. According to Sierz 'the idea of the hybrid is a model, an ideal

---

[69] Angela Ndalianis, 'Genre, culture and the semiosphere: New Horror cinema and post-9/11' *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* Vol. 18 (Sage Publishing, 2015) p.150

which can both be aspired to and used to question the ownership, legitimacy and authenticity of received ideas of national identity.'[70] The hybridisation of the event space is fundamental to its growth. The appropriation of different ideologies enables the development of new theatre types. The practice of adopting semiotics into the postdramatic allows the medium to span between dramatic and non-dramatic structural models. The form of the piece is altered by these factors, and changes the intentionality of the piece. Lehmann claims that 'spectators are confronted with the problem of having to react to what is in their presence, that is as soon as the safe distance is no longer given,'[71] and this creates an '*aesthetics of risk*.'[72] There is a risk when creating hybrid theatre, and removing the safety of traditional theatre. Yet this also creates an opportunity for the authenticity of the piece to progress. With each alteration the performance embodies aspects of the modern culture it is being constructed in. With risk, also comes the possibility of placing the audience in a performance space that challenges their perception of the performance event. I argue that this is also the case with Kane and Crimp's work.

This thesis will explore how these elements culminate in the creation of reality. Garner states that realism is 'reserving the freer verbal creation for the presencing of offstage worlds.'[73] However, in the postdramatic, communication solely focuses on the event. Abstract worlds do not exist, creating a *sprechraum*. David Roesner describes this as 'a resonance chamber for 'sounding out'

---

[70] Aleks Sierz, *Rewriting the Nation: British Theatre Today* (London: Methuen Drama, 2011) p.228
[71] Hans Thies-Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.187
[72] Ibid, p.187
[73] Stanton Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.141

thoughts.'[74] Essentially, the *sprechraum* enables topics to enter the void for deliberation. The meeting of these ideologies provides a platform into defining what is 'present' or real on stage. According to Lehmann, 'it is part of its constitution to hurt feelings, to produce shock and disorientation, which point the spectators to their own presence through 'amoral', 'asocial' and seemingly 'cynical' events.'[75] The spheres of ideology change the spectators' involvement, and the noema they assign to each action. There is a 'hope for cooperation and reproductive success,'[76] during this marriageability, and this is the case during postdramatic performance. There is a desire to create new theatre from the inspiration of previous pieces, and this is noted when examining the theatrical reaction of Crimp and Kane to earlier playwrights' work.

Liz Tomlin approaches Lehmann's principles, stating that 'all attempts to conclusively categorize artistic forms […] will inevitably be defeated by the vital and necessary resistance of artistic forms to total categorization.'[77] Indeed, it would be impossible to define the chosen plays as specifically and entirely postdramatic. Yet by nurturing both dramatic and postdramatic elements, the artistic form can advance to pursue authentic reality. Yet the *marriageability* of the postdramatic with the chosen ideologies enables a reading of the pieces that transcends established character and linear structure. This thesis will look at how the postdramatic can grow as a term, and hybridise with other ideologies.

---

[74] David Roesner, Musicality in Theatre: Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre-Making (New York: Routledge, 2016) p.169

[75] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.187

[76] John Hartley, 'Genre, culture and the semiosphere: New Horror cinema and post-9/11' *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol.18 (1) (Sage publishing, 2015) p.84

[77] Liz Tomlin 'Foreward,' *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground*, ed. Vicky Angelaki (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.x

The chosen plays will enable us to see how this relationship between methods can alter. Over time, scholars have adapted methods to ensure longevity of contemporary relevance in each play. Lehmann himself stated that 'postdramatic theatre poses the question of tragedy not just by *showing* "tragedy of play" but by *being* it.'[78] I will strive to explore how Lehmann's methodology has been assumed and adapted, moving theatre towards a transcendental *sprechraum*.

[78] Hans-Thies Lehmann, Tragedy and the Postdramatic Theatre, p.444

SAMUEL BECKETT: THE POSTDRAMATIC AND THE SUBJECT OF 'SELF'

In this chapter, I will establish how the postdramatic can be explored in Samuel Beckett's work. His plays *Not I*, *Footfalls* and *Rockaby* all serve as a focal point for the subject of 'I'. These have been chosen due to their recent acclaim in British theatre. Numerous contemporary playwrights have adopted the postdramatic style, and it becomes necessary to examine the playwrights who encouraged radical thinking in the theatre space. It is notable that the work of Beckett has inspired contemporary playwrights in their experimentation with performance form and structure. I aim to determine the radical ways in which Beckett defied traditional performance devices. I will then look at how this subversion changes how 'self' is identified in performance. His plays will be explored individually to see how 'self' is made up of communal semiotics and personal experience. Critics have previously stated that there is an 'inability to compete with the verisimilitude of film.'[79] *Verisimilitude*, or believability of a fictional situation, is vital in the creation of postdramatic work; can fictional work or a playwright's hypothesis present reality? Conclusions will be made on how Beckett's work has affected the development of the postdramatic for contemporary playwrights, as well as the debates that the work generates. In particular, I aim to demonstrate that Beckett changed the perception of dramatic form, and introduced methods to alter the observation of 'self.'

---

[79] David Barnett, 'Text and Material?' in Performance and Performativity in German Cultural Studies (Germany, European Academic Publishers, 2003) p.147

Martin Meisel argues that it is important to remember that 'the printed play exists as a manual or a blueprint for performance.'[80] With this in mind, I will consider how the aforementioned plays have been translated to the modern stage. I will be drawing upon the 2014 performance of the three texts, named *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby*. This UK touring play was performed by Lisa Dwan, and directed by Walter Asmus. Throughout this chapter, the performance will be identified as 'the 2014 trilogy.' Dominic Cavendish states that 'For about 45 minutes, we're confronted by one spectral apparition in the void after another.'[81] Each piece runs into the next episode to create a singular event. It is important to note that Beckett showed no intention for the plays to be experienced in this way. Therefore it is clear that a tentative consideration must be adopted when surveying the trilogy's effect as one singular performance. The combining of the plays enables the audience to see the differing approaches to 'self' in Beckett's work. It creates a sense of linearity through the event, yet deviates from the standalone quality of each piece. The suggested 'blueprint' for the work is altered, and this changes how the pieces are perceived individually.

The postdramatic has a specific model of how performance could be framed on stage. Extensive logocentricity and mimesis become less prevalent in favour of reality through the discovery of the *sprechraum*. Erika Fischer-Lichte proposes that 'through the performer's presence, the spectator experiences the performer

---

[80] Martin Meisel, *How Plays Work* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007) p.1
[81] Dominic Cavendish, 'Lisa Dwan: Not I/Footfalls/Rockaby, Barbican, review: 'claustrophobic thrill' in *The Guardian* (3rd June 2015) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/11643102/Lisa-Dwan-Not-IFootfallsRockaby-Barbican-review-claustrophobic-thrill.html> [Accessed: 2nd October 2016]

and himself as embodied mind in a constant process of becoming.'[82] The *sprechraum* connects the actor and spectator through the shared experience of the text. The definition provided by Gerda Poschmann can be used to map out a developed understanding of the postdramatic. 'Gerda Poschmann and Hans-Thies Lehmann are among those who have contributed most substantially to theorising the dissolution of autonomous character.'[83] David Barnett describes Poschmann's terms; 'character is replaced by 'text bearer' (Textträger), and the dramatic dialogue or monologue becomes 'text to be spoken' (Sprechtext).'[84] The actor takes on the role of textträger, or text-bearer. By undertaking this role, the actor relinquishes previous ideas of identity. They no longer possess or own the text. Instead, the text-bearer present the words, exposing them to the event. 'Self' enters a different dimension, reflecting not only the singular actor but also the playwright and spectator. The event evolves to encompass the text-bearer in the concept of identity.

The phenomenology, or understanding of consciousness, is important to the experience of the three plays. Specifically, Beckett interacts with this through 'a temporal ambiguity where the narrative past slips into the present.'[85] Conscious thought becomes altered in Beckett's plays, and the chosen trilogy portrays the figures as losing control of this. The actor becomes a vehicle for the

---

[82] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (New York, Routledge, 2008) p.99

[83] Ariane de Waal, Theatre on Terror, (Berlin/Boston: CPI Books GmbH Leck, 2017) p.41

[84] David Barnett, 'Staging the Indeterminate: Brian Friel's "Faith Healer" as a Postdramatic Theatre-Text,' *Irish University Review* Vol. 36, No. 2 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, Autumn - Winter, 2006) p.382

[85] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.134

text to be delivered. Any characterisation that initially is present becomes overridden by the *sprechtext*. The text-bearer loses control of the piece, and so the pieces become suspended in the void 'present.' They enter a realm where individual consciousness can be questioned, and the overriding text-bearer function becomes prevalent. During the 2014 trilogy, the text-bearer contributes towards a metanarrative. Each figure presents their loss of singular embodiment, and converts to become a vessel for the text. This connects all the event members through a common theme. However each singular play allows ideas to be more intrinsic than the narratology surrounding the performance. Focus is removed from dramatic methods of storytelling, opening up the opportunity for structure and abstraction to be explored.

Katherine Weiss claims that 'Beckett never gets rid of language altogether.'[86] Yet the playwright was always conscious of utilising only the necessary vocabulary required for the play's progression. His work strove to make the event an experience which differed from many heavily language based canonical plays. Beckett's pieces rely upon the spaces between dialogues. Each pause is deigned to create a specific effect, whether to emit subtext or halt a stream of consciousness. Silence often expresses the playwright's intent, enabling the space to become a reflective area. The text-bearer does not necessarily apply meaning to the words, and therefore leaves room for the piece to be examined. The text is vital, yet the silence is also pivotal to the exploration of phenomenological consciousness. Modern playwrights have emulated similar language styles to the work of Beckett. The chapter will also reveal how Sarah

---

[86] Katherine Weiss, *The Plays of Samuel Beckett* (New York and London, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.2

Kane and Martin Crimp have adopted a Beckettian approach to the subjectivity of 'I', creating postdramatic notions of self within their own work. All stated playwrights have adopted a minimal style when including language. This changes how the audience experiences action in the space, questioning how the event can be moved forward without a character's narrative journey.

1.1 The Void and 'Self' in *Not I*

Weiss argues that Beckett uses the performance space as 'a place where political tyranny and personal ghosts can be confronted.'[87] The themes of communal fear and self-reclamation are recurrent in his short plays. However it is also arguable that Beckett surpasses issues of a specific time, skirting away from political or historical context. Instead he presents the human state at its most exposed. He transcends conventions and instead focuses on how life develops and deteriorates for the individual. Specifically in the aforementioned plays, Beckett questions how 'self' can be lost in the performance void. Paul Davies proposes that 'Beckett's art is precisely the art of a consciousness finding itself in non-location.'[88] This suggests that the plays take part in a state that is otherworldly; a void is created, and is filled by the playwright's dialectic for the *sprechraum* quality. The postdramatic is reliant upon the need to remove the boundaries created by time and character; Identity is questioned and the metanarrative becomes clearer as the event progresses. Beckett removes location and fixed

---

[87] Katherine Weiss, p.15
[88] Paul Davies, 'Beckett's Metaphysics of Non-Location: Vagrancy, Void, and Formless Fire' *Samuel Beckett Today* (Editions Rodopi B.V, 2000) p.400

linearity. This creates a timeless abyss, placing the piece outside of structured time.

One might argue that *Not I* operates outside of a spatio-temporal realm. It offers no context, and operates outside of conventional time parameters. Instead, an abyss is created to serve as a platform for the text. Jonathan Kalb discusses Beckett's objectives:

'A Beckett play's only identifiable subject, if you will, is the impossibility of naming a subject- which is a dilemma moreover with which the spectators empathize [...] they empathize with the actor's obviously painful circumstances.'[89]

Although the audience may empathise with the technical difficulties of executing the piece, the void disallows a connection to spatial or time-based context. Particularly in *Not I*, there is no overriding subject. Dawson discusses the traditional role of action, stating it 'must include what is actually happening at any given time of the play.'[90] There is no defined action. A stream of consciousness allows for no structured beginning or end to the information provided. Consciousness is examined, both individual and collective, through one singular voice. The removal of time and space allows the voice to be isolated. 'Robbe-Grillet, one of Beckett's earliest critics, recognized this central point of

---

[89] Jonathan Kalb, *Beckett in Performance* (Cambridge, University Press, 1989), p.47
[90] Sam William Dawson, *Drama and the Dramatic* (Fakenham, Norfolk: Methuen and Co. Ltd, 1970) p.89

"presence" onstage.'[91] Arguably, Beckett theorises the different ways presence can affect identity in the event. This is furthered by Asmus' choice to combine the three plays in the trilogy. He creates a journey through identity, beginning with the individual voice.

Identity has frequently been addressed in the dramatic medium. Sam William Dawson discusses this; 'the nature of the stage […] the settings and style of acting, should be as to assist the language in its creation of the metaphorical world.'[92] The audience enters a performance world, a semiosphere of signs and mimesis. Yana Meerzon defines the semiosphere as 'an anthropological and social space of communication, in which every participant maintains their existence concurrently across temporal, linguistic, and cultural zones.'[93] The semiosphere allows semiotics, or signs, to relate and rely upon each other. However during Beckett's work, a metaphorical world is replaced by abyss. This allows for a theoretical void, but not the creation of a spatio-temporal elsewhere[94]. This means the audience is no longer transported to a different world. Ryan Claycomb states that 'in drama as in fiction, such conventional openings mark a new narrative world and the audience's entrance into that world.'[95] The 'elsewhere' is temporarily eliminated. Instead, the playwright's

[91] Jonathan Kalb, *Beckett in Performance* (Cambridge, University Press, 1989) p.47

[92] Sam William Dawson, *Drama and the Dramatic* (Fakenham, Norfolk: Methuen and Co. Ltd, 1970) p.8

[93] Yana Meerzon, 'On Theatrical Semiosphere of postdramatic Theatrical Event: Rethinking the Semiotic Epistemology in Performance Analysis Today,' *Semiotica* (2011) p.235

[94] Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 2nd Edition (New York, Routledge, 1980) p.102

[95] Ryan Claycomb, 'Curtain Up? Disrupted, Disguised, and Delayed Beginnings in Theater and Drama', *Narrative Beginnings: Theories and Practices*, Ed. Brian Richardson (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008) p.168

theories are centred. The 'elsewhere' is arguably replaced with a 'nowhere,' a space that sits outside linear time. With the start point, or basis of culture being removed, 'self' can be examined. Immediate allocation of semiosis or context is withheld, allowing the text to be centred. The audience enters a space of timelessness, exposed to the intentions of the event.

The removal of the spatio-temporal elsewhere is present during the 2014 trilogy. The audience enter the dark auditorium, with no interval involved. Once seated, complete darkness is brought over the auditorium, removing our visual awareness of other audience members. Simon Edge refers to the stage conditions as a 'perfect black-out space.'[96] The spectator is isolated; any exits are hidden in the dark. Asmus includes the audience in the void, confining them within the event. The space feels smaller, more intimate when the surroundings are obscured. Lyn Gardner describes the experience as 'an hour that feels like being trapped in somebody else's nightmare.'[97] The stage is the only source of light, and so the spectator can solely focus on the event. 'Self' is approached in this void, first by exposing the spectators to their own isolation. The play becomes a lonely event.

Each play has been chosen to run in a specific order, and the importance of this shows a journey through the *sprechraum*. Although this could be altered, *Not I* serves as a detachment from the traditional semiosphere. Whereas the two

---

[96] Simon Edge, 'Not I/Footfalls/Rockaby at the Royal Court Theatre – review,' *Express* (14th January 2014) < http://www.express.co.uk/entertainment/theatre/453844/Samuel-Beckett-triple-bill-Not-I-Footfalls-Rockaby-at-the-Royal-Court-Theatre-review>[Accessed: 14th March 2016]
[97] Lyn Gardner, 'Not I/Footfalls/Rockaby – review,' *The Guardian* (14th January 2014) < http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/jan/14/not-i-footfalls-rockaby-review> [Accessed: 14th March 2016]

other pieces provide a closer relationship with the semiosphere, *Not I* solely uses the void to create a post-semiotic phenomenon. Each subsequent play creates another facet of identity, combining the void and semiotics to move between a fictional world and the postdramatic void. The same actor portrays the fragmented conscious of all the plays. It becomes unclear whether they create one entity, or multiple examples of 'self' on the journey through the trilogy. By combining the plays, simultaneity of identity takes place. The valency of combining identities enables an experience of multiplicity. 'Self' encompasses more than the individual, and is challenged by all three plays.

Not I begins with the appearance of Mouth, the only visible figure in the space: '*Stage in darkness but for MOUTH, upstage audience right, about eight feet above stage level, faintly lit from close-up and below, rest of face in shadow.'*[98]The audience is presented with an unnamed and partially concealed figure; the mouth is suspended in the centre of the space, the actor otherwise hidden. The isolation of the voice recurs throughout the 2014 trilogy. However in *Not I*, this separation of body and the conscious is overt. The remaining human body becomes surplus, hidden from view. When talking about her experience of the play, Lisa Dwan states '"I have a chest infection, I pull muscles, I damage my neck."'[99] The body comes second to the voice, and even suffers, to aid the playwright's intentions. Avra Sidiropoulou argues that *Not I* 'exudes any visible signs of human presence or even traces of life that had existed in some remote

---

[98] Samuel Beckett, *Not I/Footfalls/Rockaby* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.13

[99] Liz Hoggard, 'Lisa Dwan on Beckett: 'We don't normally look at our frailty' in *The Guardian* (31st May 2015)
<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/may/31/lisa-dwan-samuel-beckett-not-i-interview> [Accessed: 14th March 2016]

past.'[100] Mouth takes on a simulacrum of life; human characteristics are filtered away. She becomes a reiteration of information, conveying the text without physicality. Although the audience is aware of the actor, the figure becomes dehumanised by the environment. Lehmann believed that the event should connect the human facets of performance. The story no longer holds the importance, rather the entirety of the experience that can exceed ''after' the authority of the dramatic paradigm.'[101] The lone spectator meets the simulacrum of a human being. The environment becomes conducive to the creation of the *sprechraum*. Beckett's aesthetic choices remove Mouth from being regarded as human, instead placing her as the text-bearer of the piece.

Additionally, the shape and shadows in the play also define the piece. Garner states that 'flushed faces, bulging eyes, wrists that register the pulse's rhythms- the human body threatens artistic control.'[102] The human body creates individuality through its natural responses. Mouth is centred on the total isolation of a singular feature. Any extra detail breaks this illusion of isolation. During the 2014 trilogy, nothing on stage could be seen except the Mouth. The total darkness highlighted the colour and shape of image, speech altering the figure as it appeared. 'Animation is at the center of Beckett's increasingly complex imagistic use of his theatrical elements.'[103] Mouth arguably simulates an animation. She loses elements of humanity through her lack of other features. She is an icon suspended in the event, and this image is maintained through the

---

[100] Avra Sidiropoulou, *Authoring Performance: The Director in Contemporary Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p.63
[101] Hans- Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.27
[102] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.59
[103] Ibid, p.61

play. Although her image is theatrical, she relinquishes claim over character and context. She exists as a present image. Her role as text-bearer becomes dominant to the performance, existing to deliver the text. The event caters for her role entirely, allowing Mouth to develop into the text-bearer.

Not I expresses elements of the Aristotelian drama. The isolation of the mouth is dramatic in itself, creating a dimension that is separate from reality. Just as the void removes the 'elsewhere,' it can also distance the spectator from the reality being translated in the text. Although this must be considered, it is also important to understand that the intention is not to eliminate the dramatic form. The play merges the dramatic with the postdramatic sense of 'now.' Mary Bryden states that 'Beckett once said in an interview that his own writing seemed to him "like an unnecessary stain on silence."'[104] Certainly he indicates a minimalistic element to his work. Beckett's plays are detached from traditional modes of dramatic storytelling, where narrative and character are dominant to the theatrical experience. In the case of *Not I,* Beckett reflects on how elements of the visual and aural can be removed. Silence and dramatic absence become crucial aspects of the piece. The absence of elements inhibits the creation of on stage worlds. The void remains empty, only filled with Mouth. The playwright's voice fills the space, uninhibited by the surroundings. Beckett has a voice within his work; *Not I* provides an outlet for his voice. Language takes a central role, and shares the role of the text-bearer through the event.

'Mouth' is estranged by her name. Beckett defines her by her one, central characteristic. Mary Catanzaro summarises the intentions for Mouth, stating that

---

[104] Mary Bryden, 'Sounds and Silence: Beckett's Music' *Samuel Beckett Today (*1997, Editions Rodopi B.V) p.279

'As the recitation progresses, Mouth perceives that her text is a sequence of words and memories that speaks involuntarily.'[105] The figure speaks, arguably at the speed of contemplation, regurgitating the facts of a third person character. Mouth speaks impersonally, delivering the text. The nature of this appears almost erratic, the figure divulging large amounts of speech before taking breaths, or pauses, from the dialogue. It becomes clear that the figure is increasingly confused by the third person viewpoint. During the 2014 trilogy, the speed of the text made segments incomprehensible. Mouth would lose trails of thought, and the piece became fragmented. When approaching *Not I,* Wendy Salkind states that, 'at a certain point, we agreed I had to forget all the research, and just feel the play in my body.'[106] The importance of creating a character for Mouth becomes inconsequential; the figure cannot be examined in this capacity. Mouth is devoid of most traits that could imply a character, making her a vessel for the text. She exists between identities. The fluidity of the text and words becomes the critical focus. The rhythm created by the text spurs on an accelerated pace. This brings a high energy to the event, propelling the spectator into the void.

A prominent question that arises from *Not I* is deliberated by Enoch Brater; 'why is Mouth so compulsive in its stubborn refusal to abandon the security of the third-person singular?'[107] The figure refuses to relinquish the text she bears. The Mouth avoids any form of personal address, and this subsequently

---

[105] Mary Catanzaro,'Recontextualizing the Self: The Voice as Subject in Beckett's "Not I"' *South Central Review* (The John Hopkins University Press on behalf of The South Central Modern Language Association, Spring 1990) p.37
[106] Wendy Salkind quoted in Katherine Weiss, *The Plays of Samuel Beckett* (New York and London, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.195
[107] Enoch Brater,'The "I" in Beckett's Not I' *Twentieth Century Literature* (Hof'stra University, July 1974) p.191

prevents a connection to be made between the audience and the figure becoming a character or personal being. She also lacks the human characteristic of questioning why she should tell another's story. She refuses to give herself any authority over the text, delivering it without imposing herself into the piece. Instead she chooses to remain detached and becomes helpless in the narrative. This enables the text to hold authority over the figure. Mouth embodies the text-bearer, however appears to struggle with this postdramatic role; Brater goes on to discuss 'Beckett's own absorption with "the transcendental 'I'"[108] that surrounded many aspects of the trilogy. Beckett strove for his work to go beyond the personal narrative. He looked at how text could control the event and those in the space. Beckett discussed the subject of 'self.' He believed that by destabilising notions of 'I,' the phenomenology of the work could become more substantial:

The final disintegration of the "I" in the creative act is made possible by the use of a language which is a mantic instrument, and which does not hesitate to adopt a revolutionary attitude toward word and syntax, going even so far as to invent a hermetic language, if necessary.[109]

Beckett argued that language was pivotal, and greatly shaped the journey of the play. In *Not I,* language is delivered at high speed, almost difficult to hear or

---

[108]Enoch Brater, 'The "I" in Beckett's Not I' in *Twentieth Century Literature* (Hof'stra University, July 1974) p.191

[109] Beckett quoted in Enoch Brater, 'The "I" in Beckett's Not I' *Twentieth Century Literature* (Hof'stra University, July 1974) p.191

decipher every word that is stated. Mouth becomes a vehicle for the translation of Beckett's text, and Beckett highlights the struggle for the figure to understand 'I.' The speed that Mouth speaks gives a sense of frantic energy and confusion, speaking much faster than is easily comprehended by the audience. Mouth cannot be viewed as one conscious, as 'self' cannot be pulled from the text. 'I' becomes paramount to the journey of the Mouth. She never grasps an identity, and this is a theme that runs through the piece. Self is presented as something that is highly sought after, yet it is also viewed as inaccessible. She continues speaking as the lights fade, her journey continuing on. She is lost within the void, bearing the text that withholds her single identity.

Silence within the work is pivotal to the event. The text is fraught with breaks and moments of pause. Mouth states; 'not knowing what... what she was-... what?... who?.. no!... she!... SHE!... [*Pause.*]'[110] Mouth's grasp of the third person deteriorates, exposing the frantic thought process of the text. The monologue becomes a dialogue, though it is unclear who Mouth converses with. Dwan's live version of the Mouth similarly halts and stutters the flow of speech, becoming confrontational as she pushes through the text. This adds another dimension to the speech, as Mouth looks for a response. Lehmann states that 'the theatre situation as such becomes a matrix within whose energy lines the elements of the scenic fictions inscribe themselves. Theatre is emphasized as a situation, not as a fiction.'[111] If we accept Lehmann's notion that the theatrical event is a situation, Mouth is no longer creating a fictional story, instead they are

---

[110] Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.21
[111] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.128

contributing to the conditions set by the playwright and performance setting. Mouth becomes a image of how the text can hold authority over the event. The pauses and subsequent deterioration of the speech further shows the importance of the text. The text continues, regardless of its clarity, and carries on as the Mouth fades away.

Arguably this is shown in the 2014 trilogy. The intentions of Beckett combine with the technical elements of the performance; Van Badham says that the actor was 'physically strapped into a device for *Not I* that allows Beckett's direction of a beam of light to maintain its precise focus on her mouth, which does indeed appear to float eight feet above the audience.'[112] The actor is suspended higher than a human would stand, and so becomes something 'other' in the event. Beckett's intentions were taken into consideration when approaching the staging of the event. Lehmann states that 'the postdramatic process occurs *with/on/to* the body,'[113] and the actors physicality is greatly affected through the performance conditions created. The body is entirely removed as a vessel of expression. There is a discomfort when watching the isolated Mouth. It is suspended high up, giving the impression that it floats independently. The intensity of this isolation offers no relief. All focus is drawn to the centre of the stage. The absence of the body furthers the presence of the voice. The Mouth becomes confrontational, unavoidable despite its own lack of clarity. The human body is intrinsic to Beckett's intentions. The isolation of

---

[112] Van Badham, 'Not I, Footfalls, Rockaby review – a technical masterclass in Beckett '*The Guardian* (18th February 2015) http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/feb/19/not-i-footfalls-rockaby-review-a-technical-masterclass-in-beckett [Accessed: 4th August 2015]
[113] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.163

human traits emphasises abstraction of identity, delving further into the postdramatic role of text-bearer.

1.2 Multiplicity in *Footfalls*

Footfalls embodies its own distinct performance style, yet bares a strong similarity to *Not I*. This play is largely affected by the silence and simplicity of its appearance. Yet this piece also encompasses roles and dialogue between two figures. (M) represents the role of May. This figure is present on stage, visible during the performance. (V) represents a voice that is assumed to be May's mother. During the 2014 trilogy performance, she is shrouded in darkness upstage. She becomes an dark presence in the event, absent at points through the moments of silence. May's pacing movement is contrasted by the stillness of her Mother. It becomes clear that character will not be restored to an authoritative role. The pseudo-couple challenges whether there are two conscious figures present. The voice is detached from the scene, creating a distance between figures. Lehmann indicates a move towards 'a theatre that retracts its signifying character and tends towards a mute gesture,'[114] when analysing theatre through a postdramatic perspective. It becomes difficult to empathise with a character due to the pseudo-nature of the figure. Although the voice is present, her absence from the stage estranges the traditional parental role. This is replaced with space for the event hypothesis to take place. The spectator is faced with two figures, yet there is uncertainty as to whether they encompass two separate identities.

---

[114]Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.104

Character is assigned, only to be stripped away in an exploration of 'self' within the pseudo roles.

Consciousness is divided between two vessels. This serves to be phenomenologically problematic; there is a non- binary approach to the work. Garner 'suggests that subjectivity is even more fundamental to language.'[115] The conscious individual minds override the piece, their existence contradicting each other's needs. The two figures appear to sporadically share a single conscious. Any autonomous realities are combined and one existence is created. Walter Asmus, who also directed previous performances of *Footfalls*, stated that 'I think it's a play about an inner revolution of a girl against her mother.'[116] However the two figures are intertwined. Any revolution that happens to one must also affect the other. The voice replies to May that 'there is no sleep so deep I would not hear you there.'[117] The two are linked through their joint conscious. They operate independently, but with a constant awareness of their link. Weiss maintains that 'she keeps her memories at a distance, using the third person singular, like Mouth, and using a pseudonym.'[118] May appears to detach from a personal identity. This enables her mother's consciousness to be reflected through her.

The mother and child relationship is explored during the play. There are arguments surrounding how they relate to each other. Martin Esslin argues that

---

[115] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.135
[116] Walter Asmus Interview, Jonathan Kalb, *Beckett in Performance* (Cambridge, University Press, 1989) p.181
[117] Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.27
[118] Katherine Weiss, *The Plays of Samuel Beckett* (New York and London, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.47

figures such as May, 'have no sense of self because they lack an 'Other.''[119] May lacks a human counterpart who is personal with her apart from her Mother, who appears to be slipping away. Additionally, her Mother appears only as a voice. It becomes difficult to allocate the Mother her own identity, and so she cannot unveil May's either. The empathetic quality of her is decreased. With a physically absent Mother, and no other character present, no one can assign identification to May. They exist within a void, isolated from time and worlds. With no one to reflect on her identity, May's 'self' becomes suspended in the abyss. This is similar to the Mouth in *Not I*, whose lack of others interferes with her own identification. This implies that identity is created through the reflections of others. Whilst trapped in the event void, there is no sense of self that can be ascertained from May. This complies with Lehmann's theories that situation and event become intrinsic. The play embodies the *Gedachtnisraum,* an environment for recalling memories; May recalls her relationship with her mother, however the narrative is flawed and obscure. Beckett presents characterisation as no longer construing truth.

Davies claims that 'Beckett noted to an actress playing May that this character was based on a girl "who hadn't really been born."'[120] The figure enters a world of non-location, existing in the conditions set by the playwright. This detachment is shown in the 2014 trilogy. The lighting and sound of the stage eluded little to a modern or historical past. Light shone through the door, giving the impression of an unseen world outside of the space. May becomes a concept

[119] Mark Esslin, 'Patterns of Rejection: Sex and Love in Beckett's Universe' in Ben Zvi (Ed.) *Women in Beckett: Performance and Critical Perspectives* (United States of America: University of Illinois Press, 1992) p.61
[120] Paul Davies, 'Beckett's Metaphysics of Non-Location: Vagrancy, Void, and Formless Fire,' *Samuel Beckett Today* (Editions Rodopi B.V, 2000) p.403

rather than a physical being. She sits between the void of the space and the world through the door. Unlike Mouth, May is not physically trapped in the space. She can leave, but chooses to remain during the event. She relentlessly paces, discontent, yet unwilling to be removed from the space. The location of the episode is undisclosed, and there is an ageless quality that encompasses the entirety of the performance. During *Footfalls*, the piece appears disjointed with reality. Time within the space becomes irrelevant. Lehmann discusses the reality of the voice, relating to Gruber's theatre: 'not the timeline of action; not the drama but the moment when the human voice is raised. A body exposes itself, suffers.'[121] This is the case with Beckett's play. The distress of the daughter watching her aged mother deteriorate is translated through her frantic movement and physical repetition. Time is no longer measured in events, but in the words that are said by the voice before death. Just like May, the room enters non-location. It exists as a space for suffering.

However, it can be argued that May's isolation from the outside world enables a strengthening of the maternal bond, increasing the identification of their relationship. The strongest identity May obtains is one as a daughter. Moonyoung Chung argues that 'Listening to the disembodied mother's voice, the daughter increasingly withdraws into her own isolation from the outside world in order to enter a space for the mother/daughter fusion.'[122] From this they become a singular conscious. Characterisation is disassembled to leave the recognition of a parental bond. The link between the two voices becomes

---

[121] Hans Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.76
[122] Moonyoung Chung, 'The Mother/Daughter Relationship in Beckett: "Footfalls and Rockaby,"' *Irish University Review* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999) p.285

principal to the experience, the interchanges between them examining the construction of the voices in the space. May tells the story of parental relationship, stating that 'raising her head and fixing Amy- the daughter's given name, as the reader will remember.'[123] It becomes indistinguishable to recognise whether the figures are referring to their own narrative. This situation becomes universal, and specific identity lacks necessity. Each individual loses the definition of character. May is defined by her role as a daughter, sacrificing her individuality to strengthen the synthesis with her Mother.

Beckett has distinctly mapped the structure of *Footfalls*, including a diagram of May's journey back and forth across the stage. May has a pre-set path to walk, every aspect of her movement controlled. There is no freedom implied for the actor, or character, to change this destiny. Beckett brings focus to how the actor passes the stage, to great detail. Movement is a pivotal aspect of the play. Each action is planned, carefully chosen to monitor the progression across the space. The play includes a routine of movement, which serves as a visual reminder of May's repetition. No action is unplanned, and May follows the path that is designed for her. This coincides with the dark and droning nature of the text. Sidiropoulou states that 'the constitutional function of lighting is also prominent in *Footfalls* (1975), adding to the intriguing aural atmosphere of the play and reinforcing imagistically the recurrent structural motif of footsteps.'[124] Just as past productions followed these directions, the 2014 production also encompassed the movement plan. The actor utilised the space, bathed in the

---

123 Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.31
124 Avra Sidiropoulou, *Authoring Performance: The Director in Contempotary Theatre* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p.62

light of the doorframe. The technical elements of the performance are used to heighten the image of the movement. The lit space highlighted the path that May would use. The rest of the space appeared dark, an abyss that existed where her Mother dwelled. The movement became isolated. May stayed within her light space. The light became a space of safety, the door offering an escape. The shadow exaggerated the movements, becoming less human and amplifying simple actions. May's movements are completely planned, and so she can no longer be personified. She becomes a vessel to encompass a physical score, the overriding need to complete the movement spurring speech. May takes on the form of both a text-bearer, and a vehicle for physicality.

As previously noted, the path that May takes across the stage is lit. Garner describes *Footfalls* as 'Beckett's study in shade.'[125] The light that falls from the door becomes a focal point. During the 2014 production, May's journey across the stage was accompanied by her shadow. The surrounding darkness ensured that this repeated journey was well observed by the spectator. She exists in the darkness, striving to move within the light. '*Footfalls* is a drama of light, of its insistent though diminishing attempts to define figure and space.'[126] Unlike Mouth in *Not I*, the shape of May is more human and frail. Her corporeal body juxtaposes the image the audience was shown in the previous play. However the playwright similarly restrains May. She moves with 'the weary pacing of a caged animal.'[127] The light limits the space she can inhabit. Although she has access to the stage, the map made for her by Beckett and the light strip hinders her

---

[125] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.69
[126] Ibid, p.70
[127] Ibid, p.73

freedom. Even with her body, May holds little more authority than Mouth. Both figures are trapped within the space they have been placed. May's absence of free choice becomes clear as her movement continues, pulling her tentatively through the piece.

The inclusion of absence is fundamental in Beckett's piece. The absence of text during the conclusion of *Footfalls* marks desolation in the presented emotion. The bond between the figures becomes splintered:

 '[Pause. Fade out on strip. All in darkness.

Pause.

Chime even a little fainter still. Pause for echoes.

Fade up to even a little less still on strip.

No Trace of May.

Hold ten seconds.

Fade out.]'[128]

The ending of the piece is elongated, stretched out by the shock of absence. May is removed from the space; her absence is notable after the rhythm of her movement encompassed so much of the visual element on stage. She escaped the void, entering the world beyond the door. Dwan's performance utilised the silence carefully, creating an air of rest after the relentless pacing. Christopher Innes argues that Beckett's work curves towards the 'stripping away of worn-out theatrical idioms to create minimalist images- but despite early interest in the

---

[128] Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.32

surrealists, his existential vision is quite distinct from the avant-garde stress on liberating the primitive side of the psyche.' [129] The image of the empty stage is poignant after the fixed movement for the duration of the piece. The moments of truth and fear are most poignant when action halts. In the silence of the auditorium, the spectator is left alone in the void. May was able to leave; however the audience must remain. There is no resolution to the piece. Beckett exposes the truth that there is only one possible destination for the figures. The play embodies *Lehrstuck*; it becomes a play to learn human limitations and the value of 'self'. The mortality of humans is heightened as a theme by the chiming of the clock, the echo of this providing hollowness to the passing of time. May must leave the space, and her Mother. The audience is left with this image of absence; truth is found in the simplicity of this message.

1.3 The Acceptance of the Void: *Rockaby*

Rockaby is the final episode in the performance trilogy, and follows a similar pattern to the prior plays. Yet the use of a pre-recorded voice introduces another layer to 'self' within the theatrical space. Craig Owens states that 'the recorded words in *Rockaby* seem to stand in for the character's thoughts, motivations, and memories.'[130] However they also, similarly to *Footfalls*, imply a distancing of the woman to her own self; W reflects back on her last days and impending sense of

---

[129] Christoper Innes, 'Avante Garde Theatre: Themes and Definitions,' *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance* (London, Routledge, 2000) p.73
[130] Craig N. Owens, 'Applause and hiss: Implicating the Audience in Samuel Beckett's "Rockaby" and "Catastrophe." In *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* (Midwest Modern Language Association, 2003) p.74

death, wishing she had found 'another like herself.'[131] However the use of the recorded voice disconnects the vocal quality from W, and although the audience is led to assume it is indeed her voice, she speaks within the third person and refuses to relate the stream of thought to herself. This could imply that W has been searching for herself, trying to understand her own identity but never fulfilling this over her lifespan. The creature she searches for is her own acceptance. Mouth searched for 'self'.' May searched for an identity away from her Mother. The woman in *Rockaby* accepts her failure to ever grasp her identity in her lifetime. The live performance cultivates the knowledge of individuality to shape the event, using the aural elements of performance to identify a detachment of self. After the distress of *Not I* and the repetition of *Footfalls*, *Rockaby* has a slower pace and quieter atmosphere. The previous figures showed disorientation in the void, however the woman accepts her place within the abyss.

The subject of the final performance is an old woman. She sits in her rocking chair, shrouded in darkness. The aura of this is projected throughout the piece, the relative stillness of the image evident in comparison to the other pieces. The aura is the atmosphere radiated from the event, the live example using this to exemplify the themes. Badham argues that 'in *Rockaby*, her rock towards death is meted out with hypnotic verbal rhythm.'[132] The rhythm of the play appears slower than its predecessors, implying that the event is drawing closer to the

---

131 Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.39

132 Van Badham, 'Not I, Footfalls, Rockaby review – a technical masterclass in Beckett ' in *The Guardian* (18th February 2015) http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/feb/19/not-i-footfalls-rockaby-review-a-technical-masterclass-in-beckett [Accessed: 4th August 2015]

destination of death. W states 'More'[133], at points, coaxing on the voice to continue its thought trail and the rocking to continue. The rhythm gives lethargy to the piece. There is a sense of begrudging acceptance and defeat through the tumbling nature of the text. In performance, the delivery of the text was blunt and unwavering, arguably drawing a similar parallel to *Not I;* the mind jumps between ideas, often repeating or going over memories to try and make sense of them. Once again the text becomes paramount in its abundance at points, and simplicity at others. W only states 'more,'[134] on the stage, the voice providing all other speech. W remains silent whilst the voice recites the text, rocking in her chair as she listens to the words. This gives a sense that the playwright's voice and authority is dominant. The mind continues to speak whilst the physical counterpart deteriorates. The voice and woman onstage merge into one form, arguably removing character and instead presenting one tangible vessel of text and rhythm.

The relationship between the semiosphere and void is valuable to observe. This semiosphere is explored within Alexandrov's article, looking at the work of Lotman and semiosis. Lotman argues that meaning can occur 'within a sign; between signs; between phrases, sentences or utterances; between larger subdivisions of a language […] between individuals; and within the phenomenon we call a conscious self.'[135]Meaning is interwoven through all aspects of the performance. *Rockaby* reflects on the immediate moments leading up to death.

---

133 Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.39
134 Ibid, p.39
135 Vladimir. E. Alexandrov, 'Biology, Semiosis, and Cultural Difference in Lotman's Semiosphere,' *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 52, No.4 (Duke University Press on behalf of the University of Oregon, Autumn 2000) p.351

Words and actions are repeated; during the 2014 trilogy, the actor recounted each word monotonously. The sentences collapsed together, creating a lulling effect alongside the rocking of the actor's chair. Death is not explicitly mentioned within the text, however Beckett relies upon the audience's understanding of semiotics. The signs of death run alongside the existence of the abyss. Regardless of her condition, the woman urges the voice to continue. The text again becomes paramount. The suffering of the body is again positioned secondary to the needs of the event.

The semiosphere appears to clash with the event void. Both coincide during the event, moving the void between fictional worlds and hypothesis. Yana Meerzon defines the latter as a state that 'all the semiotic connections within the possible worlds and between fictional and actual worlds are broken.'[136] During the 2014 trilogy, the rocking chair is placed next to a window. This essentially signifies a room, and so creates a spatio-temporal existence within the event. However the language and traits of the figure remove realism. It becomes impossible to place the woman within a time; although a space is created, it becomes a purely abstract without a fixed point of context. The voice and woman are detached into two separate presences. When the voice finishes, W states 'More.'[137] The voice then continues on. The woman, who appears on stage physically, becomes less substantial than the voice. The voice exists separate to her being, and so abstraction occurs. Beckett removes the familiarity of semiosis. Void, fiction and

---

[136] Yana Meerzon, 'On Theatrical Semiosphere of postdramatic Theatrical Event: Rethinking the Semiotic Epistemology in Performance Analysis Today,' *Semiotica* (2011) p.241

[137] Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.40

reality become a simultaneous experience, creating a continuum reliant on all three elements.

Chung writes that 'Beckett in nearly all of his works has explored the complex relationship between humans and machines.'[138] The relationship between the recorded voice, the actor, and the rocking chair is vital to the structure of the piece. Each becomes part of the performance in equal necessity; where once the actor was the vital component, the balance is now made between the various technical elements to construct the form of the event. The experience creates an effect of distancing from the traditional dramatic. Lehmann says that 'playing with coldness constitutes one of the significant traits of postdramatic theatre. We repeatedly come across a tendency towards 'disinvolvement' and ironic, sarcastic distance,'[139] wherein the human body is traditionally associated with warmth or heat, the figure onstage presented as cold, detached from the world. The only world that exists is within the walls she lives in, the voice removing her free speech and the chair restricting her free movement. Michael Billington writes 'Dwan rocks herself towards death in her mother's chair, her movements in and out of the light take on the beats of a slowly collapsing heart.'[140] The live *Rockaby* affirms the repetition created in *Footfalls*, however this time the onstage figure herself is crawling towards the void. In essence, the human body becomes part of the system, distanced from being personal or creating a link with others.

[138] Moonyoung Chung, 'The Mother/Daughter Relationship in Beckett: "Footfalls and Rockaby"' in *Irish University Review* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, Winter 1999) p.288
[139] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.118
[140] Michael, Billington, 'Not I, Footfalls, Rockaby review – Lisa Dwan's breathtaking Beckett trio,' *The Guardian* < *http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/jun/03/not-i-footfalls-rockaby-review-lisa-dwan-samuel-beckett*> (3rd June 2015)

Beckett's play presents the coldness that Lehmann describes, enabling manipulation of the stage to suit the intent of text and form. This again demonstrates that although there is certainly an element of the dramatic within the work, the overriding conflict concerning dramatic form is a driving force in the work. W is offered as another structural mechanism for the performance and the sterile event state enables the audience to see a transferral from character to technical mechanism.

During the performance, it is also vital to note the direction applied to the rocking chair. When the speech stopped, the rocking of the chair also ceased. Beckett writes '*coming to rest of rock, faint fade of light.*'[141] The removal of the rocking filled the space with absence. The fading of the light disconnected the actor as intrinsic to the event. The continuum of the semiosphere was broken, and the abyss became present. The woman is reliant upon the voice to create meaning. Once the voice speaks, she again becomes part of the mechanism. She cannot continue without the voice. Lehmann states that the 'body becomes its own message, and at the same time is exposed as the most profound *stranger of the self.*'[142] The woman becomes a message of death, and simultaneously is devoid of all elements of 'self.' The semiotics denoted by this conveyance implies a deterioration of the body. Yet her lack of speech and mechanical actions create the image of a vehicle. The woman is suspended between reality and the metaphorical world. She is both abstract and actual, forcing the spectator to question whether there is any conscious identity on stage.

---

[141] Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.40
[142] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.163

Beckett's use of coldness, as described previously by Lehmann, is also apparent in his play;

Attitude:

Completely still till fade-out of chair. Then in light of spot head slowly inclined.[143]

Beckett controls the emotion of the piece, removing any exaggeration of movement. *Rockaby* sheds away the heightened energy that consumes the other plays, replacing it with a different tone. The stillness of W furthers the notion that she is part of the structural apparatus of the performance, only speaking when necessary. Speaking about the play, Billie Whitelaw claims that 'I do find *Rockaby*, even sitting in a chair and listening to my thoughts on tape, quite emotionally draining and depressing.'[144] Even when attempting to remove certain aspects of the dramatic, the emotive nature of the text bleeds through. This calls to question whether the playwright can truly control whether the performance piece is dramatic through acting, or the emotions displayed through reading the text and translating it in a modern theatre. Beckett's strong vision for his figures onstage is often one that can inspire playwrights towards the modern day postdramatic. The playwright is unable to dictate their ideals of exposing reality on stage when they relinquish hold of their text, nor the reception of this by the spectator. Each audience member can interpret reality

---

[143] Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.37
[144] Jonathan Kalb, *Beckett in Performance* (Cambridge, University Press, 1989) p.234

differently. With each member isolated, independent thought regarding the dramatic is encouraged.

Garner discusses the light choices made by Beckett; 'modulating between light and darkness in a way that underscores their mutual interpenetration.'[145] In the three plays, the shadows are intrinsic to how the text-bearers move. They are limited to their light-space, their shapes defined by its existence. During the 2014 performance, the stage was bathed in darkness. Light shone in through the window, highlighting aspects of the figure in her chair. The light shrouded her features, but her shape was highlighted. As she rocked in her chair, the repetitively moving shape pulled focus. Unlike Mouth and May, the rocking figure does not portray the same hurried emotion. Her face does not show worry or distress. In contrast to the previous plays, there is a resolution to the figures atmosphere. With her shape more prominent than her features, individuality becomes lost in the space. How Beckett dresses the 'figures streamline the visual irregularities of the human shape.'[146] The shape becomes a symbol of the human form. Instead of having an individual persona, the event uses the semiosphere to deduce a symbolic meaning for the rocking figure. The representation of humanity becomes an image of *Rockaby,* a link between the trilogy.

Nevertheless, it is this detachment that makes it difficult to entirely move away from Beckett's vision for the piece. The use of repetition throughout the text reiterates the stream of thought multiple times. It is indicated that W is reliving her thoughts recurrently, very little altering in her speech from the beginning to the end of the text. There is no obvious crescendo in the text and

[145] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.69
[146] Ibid, p.63

there is in *Not I*, no obvious falter where the third person begins to blur. V states 'so in the end close of a long day.'[147] This is repeated numerous times. The sentence serves as a beginning of the trail of thought, V coming back to it each time as a starting point. There is no doubt that the figure is aware that she is close to death. The coldness of this fact is instilled within the text and semiotics. Repetition is crucial as it returns the figure back to the original intent; V restates that the day is coming to its end, and arguably this is the most important element of the piece. Regardless of how events unravel, this is a solid expectation that death will be the end of the journey for W. The text serves as grounding to the figure, the live performance particularly using this to present the fragility of the individual. In the 2014 trilogy, this also serves as a definite ending to the event. *Rockaby*, unlike the other plays, appears to welcome the void. This succumbing to the abyss signifies the end of the performance.

W encompasses aspects of the postdramatic by her presence; language and movement become the protagonist, rather than her consciousness. Lehmann claims that 'presence is the untimely process of consciousness- located simultaneously within and without the passage of time.'[148] It is indistinguishable to eliminate the actor from the mechanism. The body becomes enveloped in the technical elements of the stage, and each tool in the performance is required to mobilise the next. They performance operates outside of any time, and certainly the body works alongside the event conditions rather than a traditional narrative or emotional stimulus. The 'postdramatic theatre aims at a public exhibition of

---

[147] Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014) p.44
[148] Lehmann quoted in Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (New York, Routledge, 2008) p.98

the body, its deterioration in an act that does not allow for a clear separation of art and reality.' [149] The event aims to blur the lines between the performance and the truth of mortality. It would be impossible to remove *Rockaby's* technical elements, relying on these to continue W's journey towards death. Beckett consciously removes the actor as an emotive vessel to do this, instead allowing the structure to speak for itself in its complexity. The form of the performance finally serves as a dissipation of consciousness, W finding peace in the release from being the event device and her lonely existence. It is notable that the playwright refuses to relinquish hold of the characters until they have exhausted the created structure. W continues to rock as the piece fades, entering the void without the identity she craved.

1.4 Beckett and the Modern Theatre

It is important to note that by branding Beckett as postdramatic, it may seem paradoxical to do so; with the term being relatively new, it would not have been an original perception of the plays. However his work inspired a multitude of playwrights to alter how performance is approached. Jonathan Kalb states that Beckett encouraged 'a broad category of innovative work categorized by quasi-'conscious' theatrical landscapes, decentred dramatic characters, and uncertain metaphoricity of the stage.'[150] Lehmann argues that 'post-dramatic theatre is a

---

[149] Hans- Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.166
[150] Jonathan Kalb, 'Samuel Beckett, Heiner Muller and Postdramatic Theater,' *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui* (Editions Rodopi B.V, 2001) p.74

post-Brechtian theatre.'[151] Beckett's distancing from dramatic storytelling has created a platform for modern playwrights to subvert dramaturgy. There is a distinct similarity between Beckett and the work of Sarah Kane. Laurens De Vos claims that 'ontological instability comes as a result of a deeply-felt schism between body and mind, the real and symbolic, as the analysis of Kane and Beckett will demonstrate.[152]' Here, De Vos locates how both playwrights' feel a strong detachment between the physical body and personal identity. Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* presents a rebellion against singular characterisation. Identity becomes subjective, and is interchangeable throughout the play.

Kalb argues that modern theatre must harbour 'changed modes of perception, in fresh means of questioning what is and is not 'I'.'[153] Beckett's work does not stay in a synchronic sphere; his work has been adapted and furthered. Abstraction within the event void has further entered its own objective reality. Where Beckett incorporated a semiotic continuum, arguably Kane attempted to remove semiosis as a representational system. 'Self' is fundamental in both playwrights' intentions. By analysing this, and how this is constructed, truth is unveiled from self-reflection. The 2014 trilogy focuses on the identity of each figure. The postdramatic is present in the didactic elements of the figures; each presents the audience with the deterioration of human form and leads us to believe that 'self' needs to be analysed by all. Beckett highlights the necessity to seek identity within the performance space, looking towards this instead of

---

[151] Hans-Thies Lehmann, p.33
[152] Laurens De Vos, *Cruelty and Desire in Modern Theater: Antonin Artaud, Sarah Kane, and Samuel Beckett* (Lanham, Maryland: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011)
[153] Jonathan Kalb, 'Samuel Beckett, Heiner Muller and Postdramatic Theater,' *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui* (Editions Rodopi B.V, 2001) p.82

character. Ultimately each figure searches for their own understanding of self, emphasising the distance that Beckett perceived to have been created between reality and traditional theatre.

Martin Crimp's piece *Attempts on her Life* also presents many of the postdramatic elements that were present in Beckett's plays. Karen Jürs-Munby states that the spectator must be able to 'tolerate gaps and suspend the assignment of meaning.'[154] Similarly to Beckett, Crimp creates multiple worlds and identities for a singular conscious. Anne, a figure that is recreated multiple times through the play, A figure states 'The whole of the past is there in her face.'[155] Anne encompasses the identities of the world around her. She has no affixed traits and serves as a reflection of the event. This draws similarities to Mouth in *Not I* and May in *Footfalls*. Peter Boxall maintains that 'This adaptation of Beckett's stage can be seen across the world.'[156] Both Crimp and Kane create parallels to his work. Their solidarity when approaching 'self' is apparent in their works. Increasingly, the exposed identity is revealed on stage, and the reality of 'self' is opened up for discussion. It is important to mention the playwrights in context of Beckett because of the emulated language styles, and adapted Beckettian approach. The work of all three playwrights serves as an example of progression to the postdramatic, and shows the development of the term from its original conception.

---

[154] Karen Jurs-Munby, 'Introduction,' *The Postdramatic Theatre*, (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.6
[155] Martin Crimp, *Attempts on her Life, Plays: One* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.215
[156] Peter Boxall, *Since Beckett: Contemporary Writing in the Wake of Modernism* (London and New York, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009) p.10

Lehmann states that 'Theatre is real virtuality. For the theatrical gaze the body onstage turns into an 'image.' [157] The image of humanity loses clarity as an individual, and instead promotes the unknowable person as a common component in the postdramatic. The voice blurs the textual voice and the actor's together, focussing on the effect that this creates. Beckett arguably presents a theatre of images: he repeatedly shows the same image and recurrently utilises blank personas as vessels for the text. The use of this within the trilogy creates a compromised sense of self, and a promotion of the performance theme over the characters. Beckett reiterates this through the works, each figure having a set physical score, or space in which they inhabit in the event. They become part of the structure, and although this does have postdramatic elements, it is also highly dramatic in its statement. The avant-garde challenges traditional modes of storytelling, and is also known for its highly stylistic approach to theatre. Beckett's plays have a distinct style;, it is clear that there is also an element of his work that aims to desensitize the figures' emotions on stage and alienate the audience from the social situations created. Weiss analyses the characters, and states that 'their attempts are hindered by mechanical repetitions and habit.'[158] They no longer represent relatable human traits, and so cannot be present on an emotional level. The dramatic is interwoven into the sheer nature of creating images on stage, reliant on mimesis to create audience understanding. The body becomes dehumanised by the gaze it is subjected to by the audience. It therefore becomes the image of truth, rather than actuality.

---

[157] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.172
[158] Katherine Weiss, *The Plays of Samuel Beckett* (New York and London, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.65

An issue when approaching text-based material is the audience's existing awareness of the work. Colin Counsell states that 'We are likely to have read reviews, seen publicity material, or at least have heard of Samuel Beckett before buying our ticket.'[159] Beckett's style is well documented within theatre and the audience largely knows what to expect when approaching his work on the stage. This calls to question whether reality, or elements of truth can be experienced when watching a Beckettian performance. Any rooting to time or a social world outside of the play is removed entirely from the performance, the pieces appearing to take place in an ageless zone. Yet despite this deconstruction of reality, there is an element of verisimilitude that runs through Beckett's work. There is no aging to the text because it lacks any factor that could pinpoint it to a date. The speaking space is born through a need to express ideas, rather than events, and so abstraction becomes vital to its existence. The postdramatic is apparent in the removal of boundaries, the work placing itself neither in the past nor present day. Truth is created through a phenomenological view of conscious identity, allowing the tense of the piece to suspend between timeframes. Indeed, the human consciousness is paramount to the performance, and intentionality of discovering truth in performance drives the piece away from a traditional semiosphere.

[159] Colin Counsell, *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance* (New York, Routledge, 2000) p.204

<u>1.5 Conclusion.</u>

The strive for reality through an exploration of new form and structure has inspired many contemporary playwrights to look towards the postdramatic and similar subversive styles of performance. Furthermore, the playwright's command over the text has altered over time as well; Gerald Rabkin states that 'the playwright's intentionality is, then, not irrelevant, but this intentionality is perceived within a complex matrix of interpretation.'[160] The intention of the playwright within contemporary work becomes further altered in terms of presence in the space. Rabkin also notes that 'Beckett defenders insist on a fixity of his intentions.'[161] Although there are certainly examples of work that moves away from his intentions, there is definitely a distinct tendency in performance to follow the wishes of its creator. Whereas Beckett has become well known for his dominance over his work, similarly innovative writers have been far more open in how the plays are translated in the rehearsal space. It is this expansion from the original intentions which is necessary; when reviewing the live trilogy, Van Badham claims that it is 'the re-enactment of a once-bold experiment whose conclusions have long been accepted as fact.'[162] As structurally challenging as Beckett's work is, it is only through expanding on this original subversion that truth and reality in performance can be further extended into the event. The

---

[160] Gerald Rabkin, 'Is There a Text on this Stage?: Theatre/ Authorship/ Interpretation' in *Performing Arts Journal* (Performing Arts Journal, Inc, 1985) p.158
[161] Ibid, p.148
[162] Van Badham, 'Not I, Footfalls, Rockaby review – a technical masterclass in Beckett ' in *The Guardian* (18th February 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/feb/19/not-i-footfalls-rockaby-review-a-technical-masterclass-in-beckett)

notion of the speaking space is reliant on the necessity of projecting truth through its ideas. Beckett's intentionality is clear through his plays, and is apparent in the live performance. However does the playwright need to write with the postdramatic in mind in order for it to be deemed the term? The playwright may have authority in aspects of the voice, but the combined voices of the performance equally adopt resonance in the work. The actor and the company are vastly important: Lisa Dwan states that 'The big beast you're tackling is your own internal *Not I*.'[163] The actor is part of the theatrical mechanism, and ultimately has their own intentionality behind the work.

The present void coincides with the dramatic semiosphere. Meerzon argues that 'theatre is also characterized by its own aesthetics: theatricality or poeticity of representation.' [164] Both *Rockaby* and *Footfalls* encompass representation of space and time within the event. However each play juxtaposes this with the postdramatic void. During *Not I*, a total void is created, removing any semiotic phenomenon in the space. Lehmann ascertains that the real can be observed 'when the staging practise forces the spectators to wonder whether they should react to the events on stage as fiction (i.e aesthetically) or as reality.'[165] Beckett's collision of worlds allows the spectator to question the event's authenticity; it becomes impossible to assign a fixed point to the plays, both individually and as a trilogy. In the 2014 performance, each play operates

---

[163] Liz Hoggard, 'Lisa Dwan on Beckett: 'We don't normally look at our frailty' in *The Guardian* (31st May 2015) http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/may/31/lisa-dwan-samuel-beckett-not-i-interview [Accessed: 2nd October 2016]
[164] Yana Meerzon, 'On Theatrical Semiosphere of postdramatic Theatrical Event: Rethinking the Semiotic Epistemology in Performance Analysis Today,' *Semiotica* (2011) p.239
[165] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.104

within its own complex phenomenon. The combined plays present the fragility of identity inside a void. By combining the pieces, Asmus enables the audience to question whether signs in performance allow identity to take root within the context of the semiosphere. Without this, identity loses its boundaries.

Beckett's work shows a distinct movement towards the deconstruction of the 'self', and the projection of meaning through form and structure. As the technical production becomes more centred, 'self' becomes less attainable for the isolated figures. Beckett challenges the dogma surrounding performance, and takes a standpoint that the stage can be discursive and create a paradigm of truth. Lehmann ascertains that 'we have to maintain the *interruption*, the caesura of the aesthetic contemplative mode in theatre.'[166] Regardless of the newer nature of the term, the postdramatic allows the interpretation of Beckett's work to extend past traditional boundaries of time. It is important to keep this in mind when exploring Beckett's work; the plays analysed encompass modes of postdramatic performance, however also methods of the dramatic. Beckett's work serves as a distinguishable platform for developing metatheatrical work. His destabilising of traditional methods of work inspired many modern playwrights to adopt a post-mimetic world and further define the use of abstraction. De Vos writes about Kane's involvement with Beckett's plays, stating that, 'this concatenation of sentences originating from different sources is

---

[166] Hans-Thies Lehmann, 'A Future for Tragedy? Remarks on the Political and the Postdramatic,' *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles (London & New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.107

reminiscent of some Beckett plays.'[167] She draws a parallel between Kane's *Crave* and Beckett's plays, particularly looking at how the playwright's approach text. Both playwrights' take a transgressive stance on characterisation and the autonomisation of theatre. The event allows for a speaking space. Increasingly, modern playwrights are viewing how the technical performance can influence the theatre. Beckett's work serves as an example of how 'self' can be explored without allocating identity in the space.

Beckett's work enables the spectator to ask whether reality can coincide with a postdramatic methodology alone. The truth of obtaining 'self' is clear within his pieces, and often utilises dramatic methods to contrast the theatrical realms. The void can operate alongside a dramatic 'elsewhere' or semiotic system. Approaching the ideology of phenomenological truth from a postdramatic standpoint allows us to view his work outside of the spatio-temporal performance space. The postdramatic can exist alongside dramatic techniques, each benefitting the other to create multi-levelled performances. Although the work was not originally conceived as postdramatic, it extends further than the avant-garde of the time and has provided a foundation for those wishing to explore the role of reality. Beckett questioned the role of semiosis and representation; this provided the base for future playwrights to look at different modes of creating 'self' and further develop the concept of postdramatic.

Furthermore, the plays show how the human form can be simplified into basic shapes and movement. Each play demonstrates a different state of the

---

[167] Lauren De Vos, *Cruelty and Desire in The Modern Theater: Antonin Artaud, Sarah Kane, and Samuel Beckett* (Maryland, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011) Kindle Edition, Loc. 238-249

human form, yet all arguably lack an entire individual identity. Garner argues that 'Beckett heightens the visual weight of *activity*, making gesture and movement dramas in their own right.'[168] Each small movement has been carefully chosen to serve the text-bearer. Beckett presents a sparse stage, filling it with the aesthetic shape of his figures. The shape alters in each piece, but undoubtedly the complete human form is never obtained. A simulacrum of humanity is produced from the elements, combing with the technical components of the performance. The 'activity' in each piece is reliant on this relationship between elements of the stage. Garner claims that 'movement, then, highlights the solidity of location.'[169] However in this case, it also perhaps solidifies the suspension in the void. The text-bearer eludes many of the characteristics that would signify a singular conscious identity. By entering the void, a sense of location and time is lost. Each figure becomes isolated, and exists solely within the presence of the event.

As the text or visual stimulus ends, there is still the question of whether the play is concluded. 'The body may seem to approach its vanishing point in a realm of the purely verbal,'[170] and indeed each figure deteriorates in some way. The action can continue on. The light may remain or silence be drawn out over the event. It is perhaps this extension of the event that leads us to the next chapter, and to the work of Sarah Kane. Once the performance aspect of the event has ended, are any explorations still being made? It is clear that Beckett intended his work to span further than the event space and to be taken home with the

---

[168] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.72
[169] Ibid, p.73
[170] Ibid, p.31

audience. The reality, and truth of 'self' is delivered to the spectator, and it is only this facet who can deduce the reality they have been given. Similarly, it is this authority of the spectator that creates a relationship between Beckett and Kane, the latter playwright investigating how this exploration of identity can be furthered.

SARAH KANE'S *CRAVE* AND *4.48 PSYCHOSIS*: REALITY IN TEXT-BASED WORK

The link between the postdramatic and Sarah Kane's plays appears frequently during my research. Kane's work is known for its immediacy and controversial content, 'in fact many of the reviews seemed to revel in listing the outrages committed onstage.'[171] In particular her plays *Blasted* and *4.48 Psychosis* have received attention for their shocking nature in terms of written text and visual presentation onstage. The graphic images and emotion she creates has drawn audiences and defined her work as unpredictable in nature. Reviews of *Crave* present a different mode of thought from both the critics and indeed Kane herself. Rather than the overt visual terror that she presented in *Blasted*, *Crave* instead took a very different form and hinted towards a much more subtle form of translating turmoil. 'Those who still doubted Kane's ability to investigate what a play could be were silenced by *Crave*, a "text for performance" that premiered three-and-a-half years after *Blasted*.'[172] The immediate shock-quality that had been previously attached to Kane's writing was somewhat dissolved with the creation of *Crave*, the event focussing upon the textual elements and ideas of performance. Kane's focus on the text offered a detailed exploration into how the actor verbalised the work, the simplicity of both this and the structure proving vital in the spectator's involvement with the piece. *Crave* played with the notion

---

[171] Graham Saunders *'Love me or Kill Me': Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes* (2002, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press) p.9

[172] Lyn Gardner, 'Crave review – Sarah   Kane's penultimate play thrives in a stark, simple revival' (15th March 2015) <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/mar/15/crave-sheffield-crucible-review> [Accessed: 18th May 2015]

that the structural form of a performance was potentially more powerful than characterisation, highlighting the need to investigate the technical elements of production.

In addition to *Crave*, I will also explore *4.48 Psychosis*. The play hones many of the ideas that its predecessor *Crave* establishes. It is vital to see how the beginnings of theatrical discourse are achieved in the first play and how these have been extended in *4.48 Psychosis*; the elements of distorted form and structure engage further in the latter play. I will utilise examples of contemporary performance and playwrights in order to explore ways in which the postdramatic has been introduced into the theatrical event in recent British theatre. This will enable a deliberation as to how the postdramatic has been interwoven into modern performance, in works succeeding Kane's publications. I will consider *2071,* written by Duncan Macmillan and Chris Rapley and directed by Katie Mitchell. This will serve as a contemporary example of how a non-dramatic text gains dramatic form when in the event space. The genre encompasses various structures and forms of work, opening up the possibility that non-dramatic, or certainly less dramatic focussed work, can attempt to channel reality. *2071* utilises a lecture format to educate its audience. The example holds very different and varied form to Kane's*,* as well as a response to the ideas on character and action within the space. It is vital to consider that various methods can be considered postdramatic, whether in part presenting a form of the dramatic medium or working completely on a non-fiction basis. Kane has written a broad variety of structures, however *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* both enable the spectator to be presented with a non-traditional structure and equivocal notion of characterisation. Both the Kane examples and 2071 aid the

hypothesis that traditional dramatic theatre is not the only way to generate reality in the event. Gaelle Ranc states that 'theatre's role is to show the truth, to remind us that we are all going toward our own end.'[173] Truth is interwoven between all three of these pieces, linked by a realisation through all that the human state is fragile on its journey.

Nevertheless it is important to address how Kane can be labelled 'postdramatic,' particularly when there is little evidence to suggest she would have used the phrase to describe herself. The term postdramatic, when used in this sense, implies a 'reflection on the dramatic without necessarily presenting a complete break, yet, as we shall see, the postdramatic does not simply suggest an extra metadramatic layer either.'[174] A distinction is made from dramatic performance, however the postdramatic playwright also acknowledges that a complete detachment from the form is not always necessary to reflect reality. Indeed previously Kane's work certainly has worked with dramatic form to enhance elements of the surreal or further various qualities in her characters. Contrastingly, in Kane's work the elements of the absurd and a Beckettian style of theatre are carefully intertwined to present the true grotesqueness of reality. This revelation of the everyday grotesque can be as poignant as fictional dramatic storytelling; Saunders writes that her work 'is informed and influenced far more closely by classical and modern European theatre than 'rave culture.' [175] Her style mirrors a similar pattern to European playwrights, including Klaus

---

[173] Gaelle Ranc, 'The Notion of Cruelty in the Work of Sarah Kane' (2002) <http://www.iainfisher.com/kane/eng/sarah-kane-study-gr1.html> [Accessed: 13th May 2015]

[174] David Barnett, 'When is a Play not a Drama?' in *New Theatre Quarterly* (Cambridge: 2008) p.14

[175] Graham Saunders, *'Love me or Kill Me': Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002) p.7

Michael Grüber. Yet although dramatic elements from the aforementioned practices are apparent in examples of her work, it is clear that rejections of the dramatic exist in the distancing from representation and mimesis in the text. Barnett states that 'postdramatic theatre becomes a theatre of language in which the word is liberated from representational or interpretive limitation.'[176] Kane's texts often denote vulnerability and exposure of the human state. Yet it also exposes the dramatic word to a performance world that arguably moves between representational and reality driven moments. Once again I question how marriageability between these states develops in Kane's text, and can be understood as holding themes of the postdramatic in modern interpretations of the texts and performances.

'The 1990s marked a decade of political turmoil and resulted in disruptions in political and ethical/cultural terms.'[177] Various modes of European, and British theatre turned towards presenting societal discourse and the awakening of the audience's participation with the onstage action. However *Crave* presents a 'less hierarchal world than that of the earlier plays, a world that emerges only immanently in the bare voices of the plays four figures.'[178] The play steers away from the political and more towards the self within a personal context, and this assists in setting the text apart from the previous work generated by the playwright. The piece removes the confines of timeframe, Kane

---

[176] David Barnett, *When is a Play not a Drama?* (Cambridge: New Theatre Quarterly, 2008) p.21

[177] Natascha Siouzouli, 'Un/familiar Landscapes: Tragedy and Festivals' in The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures, ed. Erika Fischer- Lichte, Torsten Jost and Saskya Iris Jain (New York: Routledge, 2014) p.139

[178] Ehren Fordyce, 'The Voice of Kane' in *Sarah Kane in Context*, ed. Laurens De Vos and Graham Saunders (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010) p.107

providing a blank canvas in terms of pinpointing linearity in British history or locational information. The removal of these factors allows a fluidity in how the piece has previously been staged, instead the voice and sense of self arguably becoming a more vital component of the performance. A focus is pulled towards the human condition within stagnant societal boundaries and social expectations. Although politics and society are touched upon in the plays, the emphasis is placed on how these affect the individual rather than analysing specific historical points. Arguably the form of the text aids the performers in detaching the themes of the piece from solid narrative particulars, instead drawing the spectator to the event as a timeless entity. The focus is drawn entirely away from confines that could refer to an event, enabling the spectator to concentrate on the event figures and performance form.

Tomlin highlights the problematic nature of the postdramatic. She argues that a solution for changing how the field is perceived would be to 'ask instead how such work begins to redefine what we might mean by twenty-first century drama.'[179] Once this has been defined, a relationship can be made between the two. It would be difficult to place modern British works within the same confines that were placed on previous historical works. The semiotics of the era evolves, changing the event translation. Tomlin also states that 'what seems to be overlooked is an acknowledgement of the capacity of the dramatic model.'[180] Here, Tomlin suggests that dramatic elements of the performance must be approached with complexity. Due to the changing role of the dramatic, it is

---

[179] Liz Tomlin, 'Foreward' *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground*, ed. Vicky Angelaki (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan) p.xii
[180] Ibid, p.xiii

essential that the postdramatic be discussed as a multifaceted interpretation of Kane's work. In this chapter, I strive to explore how the dramatic can pertain to the postdramatic. Yet I will also explore how text-based work can create equilibrium between the forms, creating a new relationship and reading of contemporary performance.

2.1 Kane's Incentive for Performance

Elaine Aston argues that 'women playwrights understandably were anxious not to be over-determined by the "woman" label.'[181] Kane refused to be defined solely by gender roles and instead focussed also on the human entity within changing structure and form. Although characters or figures on stage could be defined as female, the feminist attitude that often was involved during the 1990's was not the singular aim for the work. There are many terms circulating from this era onwards, trying to define the movement away from the traditional dramatic and the way the human state is portrayed on stage. The 'postemotional' argument can be investigated here; 'we are, as it were, unable to feel our way to thinking for ourselves.'[182] This argument discusses how we are desensitised to shock onstage, and unable to associate what we see in performance to true emotion. The playwright relies on this interpretation of 'self' to move the performance away from a fictional paradigm and towards a more transgressive experience, leaving room for us to question how we discover our own identities.

---

[181] Elaine Aston, 'Feeling the Loss of Feminism: Sarah Kane's Blasted and an Experiential Genealogy of Contemporary Women's Playwriting' in *Contemporary Women Playwrights into the Twenty- First Century* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.18
[182] Ibid, p.23

The postdramatic aids the examination of 'self.' 'Postdramatic theatre is a *theatre of the present,*'[183] and therefore the recurrent issue of what reality in performance means to each individual can be observed in the event space.

As mentioned in the prior chapter, Kane's work alludes to playwrights from the avant-garde era. She showed a particular interest in the work of Beckett and often mirrored aspects of his structural style. In another play, her 'language has rhythmic echoes of Beckett,'[184] and arguably this is present in *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*. The inner workings of the play were vital to her purpose for each piece. Lehmann explains that 'It is not the occurrence of anything 'real' as such but its *self-reflexive* use that characterizes the aesthetic of postdramatic theatre.'[185] The understanding of the event is paramount; neither Kane nor Beckett alluded to creating a detached fictional semiosphere. The phenomenology of their works remains fluid, however it is clear that first-person 'self' is a recurrent theme in both playwrights' works. In particular, similarities can be drawn between the voice of Beckett's *Not I* and the figure in *4.48 Psychosis*. The energy and motivations of both forms are directed towards seeking personal ego.

The elements of suffering in Kane's work hold a similarity with Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty. Allain and Harvie argue that Artaud 'championed the theatre's role as providing a liberating and purgatory experience that could

---

183 Hans- Thies Lehmann *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.143
184 Dan Rebellato, 'Sarah Kane before Blasted: The Monologues' in *Sarah Kane in Context* ed. Laurens De Vos and Graham Saunders (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010) p.35
185 Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.103

cleanse society of its violent excesses.'[186] Kane focuses on presenting violence, physically onstage in cases such as *Blasted*, and conceptually in the description of events in *Crave*. The experience is presented as cathartic, however invariably this is not only for the audience. The experience is shared between the different components of the piece, and it is this that creates reality; truth of emotion is uncovered in the moments when all the active members of the event are being heard. The spectator is not just a translator, but also a component of it. This ultimately enables the liberating experience of reality and vulnerability to be shared by the event members. Artaud's work shows a definite move towards violence as a key to uncovering the human state at its worst, Kane capitalising on this to further show how this can be appropriated in a form that is freed from stage effects, elaborate costume or even the actual physicalisation of violence. Artaud's work is prolific for its exaggerated content and larger-than-life onstage forms, however Kane takes the elements of the work and formulates them into a piece which removes dramatic elements to prepare the way for reality through presenting the truth of the human soul.

Lehmann discusses the link between Artaud and the postdramatic; 'It wants the stage to be a beginning and a point of departure, not a site of transcription/copying.'[187] The event accommodates a 'speaking space,' for original thought. M states, 'You're very naïve if you think you still have those kind of choices.'[188] Kane questions the choices made by the members of the event, questioning the authority of roles created in both the theatrical realm and

---

[186] Paul Allain, and Jen Harvie, *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.17
[187] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.32
[188] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.166

contemporary cultural society. The piece does not focus on narrative, but on opening a wider discussion of the analysis of human behaviours. Just as *2071* opened a debate on the effect of global warming, a parallel can be made concerning the debates created from Kane's work. The link between Artaud's exaggerated Theatre of Cruelty and Kane's *Crave* is the freedom of discussion that is encouraged during the piece. This encourages the thought that tragic dramatic theatre can coincide with modes of the postdramatic; 'Here a genuine tragic experience is communicated.'[189] The value lies in enabling the event members to identify with the subject and supply their own form to stylise the work, uplifting the prominence of the speaking space. Members are not just speakers, but listeners and consumers of the stimulus created. The audience, actor and playwright absorb the piece; all have an active role in considering the values generated through the opening of discussion. The void timelessness keeps the action transient and unfixed. This leaves space for the spectators to apply their own morals and understanding to the event.

2.2 Kane and *Crave*

'Eckart Voigts-Virchow sees *Crave* as a 'modernist retreat from the employment of violence, to an involvement with a poetic methodology of semi-Beckettian 'verbal despair.'[190] The links to the work of Samuel Beckett and Howard Barker

---

[189] Hans-Thies Lehmann, 'A Future for Tragedy? Remarks on the Political and the Postdramatic,' *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles (London & New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.106

[190] Eckart Voigts- Virchow, 'We are Anathema'- Sarah Kane Plays as Postdramatic Theatre Versus the 'Dreary and Repugnant Tale of Sense.' In *Sarah Kane in*

are notable within the text, and there are particular references to both writers that are intertwined with the postdramatic form. The rejection of false Gods or rulers and a disturbed structural form recur in the aforementioned playwright's works, and it is arguable that Kane draws inspiration from the avant-garde to create a platform for extending reality. Kane's interest in the atheistic approach to a dystopian universe is explored widely in her piece *Cleansed*, and in *Crave* it emerges through the character of A. The figure states 'But God blessed me with the mark of Cain,'[191] referencing the biblical story of Cain and Abel. What would usually be seen as a curse is treated as a blessing, Kane voicing her dissatisfaction of the influence of biblical observations. A becomes the vehicle in which theology becomes broken down, the intentions of any God becoming void in the theatrical event. This enables the spectator to glean the impact divinity can have upon the human state, wiping clear any notions of an active higher power within Kane's world.

The influence created from the work of Barker affects the text and performance in a particular manner. A is portrayed as possibly the most flawed of all the characters, yet arguably also the most steadfast in their own beliefs. This draws similarities to *The Last Supper's* Lvov, a character that Barker designs to embody the form of a saviour. He becomes representative of the fall of mankind and the blind following of those who rely upon him. During *Crave*, A speaks of a similar redemption, which inevitably leads to the demise of his form. There is reliance upon religion that underlies both works, questioning the nature of personal belief. On the other hand there is a vital difference in the two

Context. Ed. De Vos, Laurens and Saunders, Graham (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010) p.97

[191] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (2001, Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd) p.195

characters, which arguably lies in the contrast that is created between representation and the actual portrayal of reality on stage. Mimesis on stage is no longer prioritised. Instead Kane sought to remove the act of imitation on stage and present truth away from the elements of the dramatic form. A avoids the dramatic which Lvov is laced with, and instead speaks of religion as a reproduction of religious speech. Whereas Lvov theatrically embodies the form of a deity, A stands outside of representation and instead acts as a text-bearer, a vessel in which the text runs through. Kane steps away from mimesis as a vehicle for expression and employs the text as the strongest method of spurring the audience's judgments.

A notable connection with the style used by Beckett is the interaction created between the text-bearing pairs within the plays; Saunders states that 'Kane's use of the pseudo-couple is a notable feature in her work up until *Crave*,'[192] however it is arguable that the couple format still exists within the play in how the figures interact. There is a distinct relationship hinted at between A and C, and M and B. Although they operate as an entirety at points to create a collective voice, there are moments when these couple relationships emerge in the text. Barnett ascertains that 'radical shifts open up new and engaging ways of experiencing performance, beyond the twin dogmas of individualism and psychology.'[193] Kane moulds Beckett's original pseudo- forms and surpasses the modes of representation to express her own conflicted philosophies of how love can be affected by the surrounding conditions. The couples enable a dialogue to

---

[192] Graham Saunders, 'The Beckettian World of Sarah Kane,' in *Sarah Kane in Context*, ed. Laurens De Vos and Graham Saunders (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) p.69
[193] David Barnett, *When is a Play not a Drama?* (2008, Cambridge: New Theatre Quarterly, 24.1) p.23

open between the forms, and further understand that the voices are interconnected and sharing the theatrical space rather than individually driven. Representation through historical and humanised characterisation is no longer relied upon to develop meaning. Instead Kane looks towards utilising playwright's knowledge of form, and developing this to create a more radical performance and strives to expose reality on stage.

The utilisation of form and structure as an active component of the event conforms to Derrida's ideals of performance. In particular Derrida's concepts of decentring the event from the usual confines of character development and the progression of linear time can be employed. Instead the philosopher noted the importance of 'theatre as direct presentation, not as *representation*.' [194] David Greig argues that *Crave* has 'obviously personal resonances,'[195] and it is clear that Kane applied her own experiences and stream of thought to her playwriting. *4.48 Psychosis* has been deemed by critics as particularly biographical, however *Crave* also notably streams Kane's consciousness through the four separate entities on stage. The piece appears erratic as it jumps between the various stories, however arguably all of these fragments culminate into the theme of desire and present different cravings that take hold in the different times of someone's life. The figures are at points presented as separate and each an individual personality, yet at other moments they combine into one voice screaming out towards a common goal or mutual feeling of fear. The text produces a gateway between the spectator and the playwright, enabling the spectator to decide whether they hear

---

[194] Inmaculada Lopez Silva, *Contemporary Theatre in "Post" Perspective: Postdrama as the Antisemiotical (R)evolution?* (Cincinnati Romance Review 35) p.40
[195] David Greig, 'Introduction,' in *Complete Plays,* Sarah Kane (2001, Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd) p.xv

one voice or more from the onstage figures. The text channels the playwright's numerous perspectives on the various facets of love and subsequently attempts to root these in the figures created in the theatrical space.

The theatrical event is a particularly noteworthy aspect of *Crave* to approach. Kane generated an environment in which the text is foremost in the spectator's focus, the set creating a neutral background for the actors. There are no directions hinting towards any playwright intentions for the performance, creating an assumption that the stage would best suit a bare approach to staging. Patrice Pavis argues that 'the problem with the stage interpretation of a text so difficult grasp is that it can be too dominant and can swallow the words, which cannot stand any stage illustration.'[196] Here, the text is seen as arguably the most important aspect to be conveyed, the stage a vessel in which to help translate the narrative and not overwhelm the senses or impact of the written work. *Crave* centralises emotion rather than a particular character narrative, leaving little hint at a timescale or setting which could help develop staging. It is this connection to the original text that is highlighted in many performances of Kane's work; a production directed by Vicky Featherstone at the Royal Court Theatre, showed that 'ears may be even more than eyes, because *Crave* is put across by four people perched in a row at a table.'[197] The simplistic approach to staging enabled the audience to view Kane's word in a very direct way; the focus was entirely on this, rather than creating a complex staging or technical detailing around the performance.

---

[196] Patrice Pavis, *Contemporary Mise En Scene: Staging Theatre Today* (New York: Routledge, 2013) p.174
[197] The Times, 'Reviews' <http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/crave/?tab=4> [Accessed: 18th May 2015}

It is also significant to consider the environment that is created, both by Kane's text and the theatrical event generated from this. Pavis argues that the space 'must serve the text or the subject while remaining silent.'[198] The basis of the theatrical event enables a performance to present an initial idea to the spectator of what they are about to see, yet also arguably should allude to very little in order to allow a total focus on the present and the text. The actor's reliance is on the text and the spectator, rather than the elements around them to create the journey in the space. This is the case in a version of *Crave* by the Actors Touring Company. Reviews stated that 'for *Crave*, the four actors stand in a row on a raised platform in a production that offers a Beckettian simplicity and brittleness.'[199] The environment only alludes to the desolation and emptiness of the cravings presented by the entities on stage, enabling the spectators to be drawn to this. The fragility of the actors on stage is magnified by the lack of built up set or props, the raised platform in this case trapping the figures in one place and securing the static nature of performance, which Kane hinted in her text. The actors are confined to a particular space, enabling the voice to become paramount.

Kane states; 'there's no waste, I don't like writing things you really don't need.'[200] Each line is considered by the playwright and deliberated on its necessity. Unlike the deliberately descriptive nature of *2071*, Kane's pieces create sharp bursts of speech, framed by silence and pauses. The movement is also

[198] Patrice Pavis, *Contemporary Mise En Scene: Staging Theatre Today* (New York: Routledge, 2013) p.74
[199] Lyn Gardner <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2012/may/18/crave-illusions-review> [Accessed: 18th May 2015]
[200] Dan Rebellato, *Interview with Sarah Kane: 3 November 1998* (Department of Drama and Theatre: Royal Holloway University of London, 2009) p.13

reduced, mimicking the style of the speech. The static nature enables any movements created by the forms to become breaks in the physical silence, just as the words punctuate any verbal pauses on stage. Lehmann states that 'the postdramatic body offers the image of its *agony*.'[201] As previously mentioned, the body is reduced to energy and impulse, however in Kane's work this is presented as caged and repressed; it is unleashed into the performance space. Unlike *4.48 Psychosis*, the energy is more static. There are points where the text becomes more withdrawn and reserved. Each word is chosen carefully. The onstage energy challenges the simplicity of the text, serving to juxtapose the pace of the performance elements. Just as the event serves as a voice for expression, the text also obstructs the communication of the figures.

Kane's play emphasises the cravings of each form on stage, finding a common theme between each of the vessels: the pain that each of these cravings can present in their victims. A particular performance directed by Cheryl Faraone was formatted so that 'figures speak in circles without moving, but their dialogue is filled with action: Ravenous and earnest, the script demands emotional attention.'[202] Kane sculpts her own views into the performance, and particularly in this case, the emotions of the playwright are taken into consideration in the production. This calls to question what the postdramatic playwright's role in creating reality is after publication, especially in cases where the playwright is absent. Lehmann suggests that the playwright's voice becomes part of the text-scape, wherein their opinions combine with those of the

---

[201] Hans- Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.163
[202] Aaron Riccio, 'Potomac Theatre Project Crave and Somewhere in the Pacific' (11th July, 2008) <http://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/potomac-theatre-project-crave-and-somewhere-in-the-pacific> [Accessed: 18th May 2015]

company in order to present the real. He states that this 'does not mimetically represent reality but creates a space of association in the mind of the spectator,'[203] culminating the elements of voice, sound and text to create a collage of reality. However, this also presents issues in itself. The text becomes designated to the position of 'material,' and loses the authority in the performance space.

The production post- publication therefore holds just as much authority over the work as the playwright. Just as Faraone's performers chose not to move, Kane controls text and the pace it is delivered from her choices of formatting the text. In the author's notes, Kane writes ''A stroke (/) indicates the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue.'[204] She indicates the delivery of lines, and how much of each statement is revealed to the spectator. She maintains control over the information provided. The *sprechraum* is therefore not only a space for the actors to speak, but also for the playwright to gain a public voice. The text-scape created by this offers a didactic experience, learning about how the playwright shapes a performance. The use of the stroke in performance also allows a discursive move between themes. During *2071*, the logical approach to each section of speech was calculated to create a didactic experience of Global warming. Each item was considered in a linear order. In the case of *Crave*, ideas switch and jump; just as soon as an emotion is expressed, the subject changes and grows into a new topic. The didactic quality of the postdramatic is often present, despite a schism between the ways it can be presented. The postdramatic playwright's intentions are a necessary component in the creation

---

[203] Hans- Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.148
[204] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.154

of reality. Diderot believed that 'representation calls much more directly for the utilization of intellectual insight and technical devices,'[205] however Kane's work was dedicated to the translation of the text in the space rather than a reliance upon the technical elements of performance for meaning. Reality is instead generated through the combination of the actor, spectator and playwright; instead of the aforementioned text-scape, perhaps there is instead a move towards a scape of text-bearers and translators; each adds their own depth to the text, creating layers of understanding generated after publication. Lehmann insists that 'the concern here is precisely to close the gap between production and reception, between actor and spectator.'[206] This connection enables a journey to be undertaken by all of the human variables of performance, the actions of each determining the continuation of the event. The representational dramatic form of traditional performance is no longer the only generator of dynamic thinking for the spectator, the journey created by the contemporary postdramatic enabling a more active response by all entities within the performance space.

As previously touched upon, *Crave* also relies upon a state of pauses and overlapping text in order to generate pace and tone. The energy heightens over time, the speech between characters becoming shorter and considerably more disjointed as the text progresses:

---

[205] Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf, *Mimesis: Culture-Art-Society* (California: University of California Press, 1995) p.178
[206] Jerome Carroll, Karen Jurs-Munby, and Steve Giles, *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance,* ed*.* Jerome Carroll, Karen Jurs-Munby, and Steve Giles (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.191

'C: When she left -

B: The spine of my life is broken.

A: Why is light given to one in misery

C: Bring her back.

A: And life to the bitter in soul

B: If you were here -

M: I am here.' [207]

The use of dashes cuts across the various trails of thought, linking each performance figure. Only certain lines of speech contain full stops, indicating a continuation of thought. Without full names or distinguishable traits, the named vessels appear to all ultimately convey a similar message; they create one entire being, exploring the many facets of love that can affect the human condition. They each have a separate identity, however this becomes obscured by the collective drive. Callery states that 'part of the experience for us as individuals is to be taken deep into our selves; what we witness on stage activates reflection.'[208] Kane utilises the theme of damaged love throughout the text and punctuation is indicative of the actor's delivery. Ultimately this changes the audience's perception of the play's pace. The reality of the theme is reflected within the speed of the delivery, jumping between each figure to show the spontaneity and erratic nature of thought which links the performers in the event. Saunders argues that *Crave* made a 'retreat from realism and formal

---

[207] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.193
[208] Dymphna Callery, *The Active Text: Unlocking Plays through Physical Theatre* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2015) p.2

characterisation,'[209] and certainly the abbreviation of names or known history aids in the detachment of detailed character profiles.

This emphasis on the aural quality of the performance also bears similarities to Barker's plays, whose work inspired much of Kane's playwriting. Robert Lublin states that 'Crucial to Barker's notion of the Theatre of Catastrophe is the avoidance of simple notions of good and evil that remove from the audiences the responsibility of engaging human beings as multifaceted.'[210] Kane follows a similar trend with her characters, as well as clearing anything excess from the stage that could remove from the text's form. 'Barker writes in *The Last Supper*; '*The sound of desolation fills the stage.*'[211] Sound becomes the emotion of the piece, enabling the audience to gauge the emptiness and disparity felt by the characters from the beginning of the event. It also enables the director to take control of the performance after publication, inspiring the company to strive to present 'desolation,' and their own ideals of what this is in contemporary society. Similarly to this, Kane also relinquishes claim to certain aspects of the auditory presentation, however this comes in the form of the silence surrounding the performance. Instead of creating a supporting collage of sound to support the piece, Kane intercepts the piece with silence;

'B: Take no more.

A beat.

---

[209] Graham Saunders, *'Love me or Kill me' Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) p.102
[210] Robert I Lublin, 'I Love you Now': Time and Desire in the Plays of Sarah Kane' in *Sarah Kane in Context*, ed. Laurens De Vos and Graham Saunders (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010) p.115
[211] Howard Barker, *The Last Supper* (London: John Calder, 1988) p.3

C: This never happened.

A silence.'[212]

Without regular stage directions for the characters the piece appears fast paced and delivered at the speed of thought. The breaks from this in moments of silence are given to the director to create moments of rest in the energy, pauses to enable reflection for the audience and signify turning points in the emotions of the forms on stage. Kane enables the silence to bleed into the performance space between the pores of speech between characters, ultimately framing the reality of her thoughts with the subtle reflection that comes with silence in the event space.

The absence of redemption is a vital component of both Kane's work and the postdramatic. The issue with this lies in the creation of truth; 'when the stage is becoming like life, when people really fall or really get hit on stage, the spectators start to fear for the players. The novelty resides in the fact that there is a transition from *represented pain* to *pain experienced in representation*.'[213] The truth of the situations in Kane's plays inspires the spectator to feel genuine fear for those on stage. The erratic nature of the speech and emotional distress that bleeds through from the text frames the performances, *Crave* centring on the downfall of the broken human. C states 'Cured my body can't cure my soul.'[214] Whilst the material body can be saved, the human soul cannot be redeemed once it is sullied. Kane hints here that the soul

[212] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.194
[213] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.166
[214] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.199

must carry any burdens without any prospect of being saved, kept with the owner for the rest of their life. The empathy created by exposing the human soul enables the audience to create a link to the actor, the spectator becoming entrapped in the cumulative suffering created by dysfunctional love. Kane exposes the stage as a place where the soul can be dissected and presented for the examination of others.

The fall towards the light is an intrinsic part of Kane's work, signifying the destabilisation of the performance and the final deconstruction of the figures:

'B: Kill me.

A beat.

A: Free-falling

B: Into the light

C: Bright white light'[215]

The fall of the figures in the performance leads to their freedom. The destruction of self is the sole release from the challenges of the text, and the event itself. Fischer-Lichte states that 'the spectators generate meaning in a performance by virtue of the peculiar fact that they themselves partake in creating the process they wish to understand.'[216] All participants involved can understand the realities of death; the individual experiences of each spectator vary, however with the boundedness of the stage removed at the end, it is clear

[215] Ibid, p.200

[216] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (New York: Routledge, 2008) p.155

from the text that the light provides calm. The destruction of the figures at the end of the piece provides a resolution for the spectator that the themes of reality come at a price. The fall also signifies the conclusion of Kane's structure and text. Combined with the aural quality of the performance, the spectator is left to decipher what they have seen. The playwright's role is over and the audience is left to draw any conclusions regarding the fate of the figures.

Each figure becomes subject to the event's needs, each suffering from their pasts and affected by the others around them. The figures are interlinked in this respect, each reaching out for something they cannot obtain. Yet they are also arguably suffering objects of the playwright's intent. They become vessels, designed to convey the intentions of the individual controlling the text. A claims, 'don't forget that poetry is language for its own sake. Don't forget when different words are sanctioned, other attitudes required. Don't forget decorum.'[217] The figures are aware that the text is the ultimate focus, that even their own stories are methods of poetry first and foremost. This is similar to Kane's play *4.48 Psychosis*, again the figure aware of their role outside of the performance space. Each figure therefore undertakes the role of text-bearer. 'Postdramatic plays ask much of performers who are no longer so much concerned with depicting people, action and places than assuming the role of 'text bearer''[218] Kane's own voice is an active role in the performance, each 'character' subsequently voicing the playwright rather than their own journey through the event. Reality is pushed through in the form of stripping away traditional methods of

---

[217] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.199
[218] David Barnett, 'Post-Dramatic Theatre,'
http://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/genres/post-dramatic-theatre-iid-2516
[Accessed: 18th May 2015]

characterisation. The piece experiments with the notions of constructing truth through the form of the four on stage vessels, and strives to present themes over any formal plot or intrinsic characterisation method.

2.3 Considering *4.48 Psychosis* when Exploring Kane

When discussing the phenomenology of postdramatic work, Jerome Carroll states 'Does having no hard and fast premises or assumptions about what is real or true also preclude drawing conclusions about what is real/unreal or true/false?'[219] Kane obscures the line between the autobiographical playwright and the onstage world. One cannot be unravelled from the other, the playwright binding herself to the text. Instead a realm of affordance is entered. The playwright reacts to the environment created in order to continue the action of the figure on stage. Rhonda Blair argues that 'the self can be seen in some ways as what arises out of the dynamic neurochemical processes we experience and register as we interact with our environments.'[220] From this, perhaps a conclusion can be made that truth comes in the form of seeing the playwright in his or her own work. Although the figure cannot be depicted as Kane herself or an individual character, it can be ascertained that the conflation of these aspects that enables self to emerge. Unlike *Crave, 4.48 Psychosis* consolidates the cravings

[219] Jerome Carroll, 'Phenomenology and the Postdramatic: A Case Study of Three Plays by Ewald Palmetshofer' in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance,* ed. Jerome Carroll, Karen Jurs-Munby and Steve Giles (London& New York, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.238
[220] Rhonda Blair, 'The Multimodel Practitioner' in *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science: Body, Brain and Being,* ed. Nicola Shaughnessy (London & New York, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.139

into one onstage form. This will be examined, exploring how self materialises in Kane's final play.

Kane's final play is potentially her most experiential work. The piece draws a similarity to Grüber's thought; 'everything takes place in an atmosphere that could be entitled 'After all discussions'. There is nothing to debate any more.'[221] The questioned orthodoxy that encompassed *Crave* is no longer considered, favouring a state entirely detached from society. The play focuses on the question on where self begins and ends; Julie Waddington states that 'whilst the formulation of the question instigates a split between person/body and person/era, the very possibility of such a split is what is being considered.'[222] The 'I' previously detailed by Beckett is again approached. Kane relinquishes self as a conscious state, and asks the audience 'how can I return to form now my formal thought has gone?'[223] Similar to Beckett's *Not I*, Kane's figure detaches from the consciousness of one form. The vessel on stage takes on multiple voices, moving between the personal 'I' and an indicated dialogue. The traditional modes of presenting dialogue are dispersed in favour of a stream of thought, flowing from the playwright into the work. The discourse this creates allows the feeling of Beckett's piece, the human mind fast and erratic in its consideration of events. *4.48 Psychosis* pays homage to previous autonomous works, furthering many of the elements presented in *Crave.*

---

[221] Hans- Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, ed. Karen jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.75
[222] Julie Waddington, 'Posthumanist Identities in Sarah Kane' in *Sarah Kane in Context,* ed. Laurens De Vos and Graham Saunders (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010) p.140
[223] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (London, Methuen Drama, 2001) p.213

'Body and soul can never be married

I need to become who I already am and will bellow forever at this

incongruity which has committed me to hell' [224]

Kane discusses the incompatibility of self with corporeal being. Kane presents the soul as heterogeneous, existing outside physical confines. Neither appears to be reliant on the other for tangibility. She gives little instruction on how many actors are present, or how many souls are examined during the piece. Her work bears a likeness to Crimp's *Attempts on her Life*; Saunders writes that the plays are 'bringing together a myriad of unidentified and unnumbered voices to the drama.'[225] The era saw a surge in work examining the role of the nameless form on stage. The representational world that *Crave* questioned is dissipated in *4.48 Psychosis*, creating a schism between the voice and the world. Unlike its predecessor, the play entirely abandons formal named voices. The spectator is presented with the disembodiment of voice and concept; the outside world no longer exists for consideration. With the body cast-away, the 'soul' can explore the space. The voice is consumed by their own sense of 'self,' striving to discover the limits of the space.

A key British example of a piece that could be observed as postdramatic is *4.48 Psychosis.* Although it cannot be rendered entirely as such, it is clear that it attains many aspects, certainly enough to delve into how Kane's work presents certain European performance traits to a British audience. 'Voigts-Virchow argues that her success in Germany, France, Flanders and other regions on the

---

[224] Ibid, p.212
[225] Graham Saunders, *'Love me or Kill Me': Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2002) p.111

mainland seems to express an affinity between Kane and the European tradition of theatre practise.'[226] Her work, particularly this play, centres on the phenomenology of theatre. Kane surveys how consciousness affects the semiosphere. We can therefore assume that the playwright's focus was partially on changing the observation of dramatic theatre. If we maintain that theatre traditionally relies upon signs to affect its environment, Kane dispels the semiosphere to create her own paradigm. She transgresses semiosis as it has previously been considered. Instead she turns toward the Beckettian question of 'self' and what it means to bring the real playwright and their thoughts into the space.

An understanding of the fragmentation of 'self' is vital in the piece. However this is not limited to the performer; the audience must be active and present, ready to be immersed in the work. Lyn Gardner writes that 'This is theatre as a disappearing act in which time itself is obliterated.'[227] This relates to the 2015 revival of *4.48 Psychosis*, directed by Charlotte Gwinner and shown in conjunction with *Crave*. The audience is made aware that the performance takes place in a state of detachment from the world. Similarly to *Crave*, Kane's final work centres itself on the question of 'I', asking what it means to discover self within the universe. With an obscure phenomenology, the live performance is unhindered by what is real onstage. Instead the actor can focus on revealing truth found in the presented figure. Sophie Bush claims that the intention for

---

[226] Laurens De Vos, and Graham Saunders, *Sarah Kane in Context*, ed. Laurens De Vos and Graham Saunders (Manchester, Manchester University press, 2010) p.8
[227] Lyn Gardner, '4.48 Psychosis Review- Painfully Funny Revival of Sarah Kane's Last Work' in *The Guardian* (15th March 2015)
<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/mar/15/448-psychosis-sheffield-crucible-review> [Accessed 2 December 2015]

Pearl Chander's delivery of the text was present the 'underlying fear that there is perhaps a victim, persecutor and bystander within us all.'[228] Without the overt set or excess of characters, the performer is able to connect with the text on an essential level- there is little else information given, other than the intention of the playwright for the journey of the work. The live performance is given the difficult task of creating its own path, whilst adhering to the will of the playwright.

As previously noted, there are many similarities between *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*. This is very true when studying the live performances of the two pieces. Bush writes that 'Gwinner's production utilises the same stripped-back aesthetic as *Crave*, but takes it even further: grey clad performers against a grey set.'[229] The image of the piece is bleak; the grey omits the feeling of desolation and indicates the blankness of the space and character traits. It also reiterates that importance should not fall on the environment of the event. There is no illusion that the event takes place anywhere other than the theatre. Bruce McConachie states that 'when spectators first enter a space dedicated for performance, they begin to use their extended cognition to figure out the affordances of their environment.'[230] For example, during *2071*, the audience was seated overlooking a dark stage, a chair and table set out towards the stage left. In the case of this production, it becomes clear that the piece will begin as a static image. The area provided for the piece is also relatively small, creating an initial

---

[228] Sophie Bush, '4.48 Psychosis (Sheffield Theatres)' in *Whats On Stage* (13th March 2015) <http://www.whatsonstage.com/sheffield-theatre/reviews/4-48-psychosis-sarah-kane-sheffield_37365.html> [Accessed 2nd December 2015]
[229] Ibid
[230] Bruce McConachie, 'Introduction: Spectating as Sandbox Play' in *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science: Body, Brain and Being*, ed. Nicola Shaughnessy (London & New York, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.187

understanding that the performance will contain little movement. There is a sense of there being a specific beginning and end to the piece. Yet in Gwinner's performance, the notion of a start and end point is less defined. The audience coming into a desolate set provides a drear emotion, hinting to the audience that the affordance between actor and set will be less prominent than the relation between *2071*'s Rapley and his on stage aids.

'Peaks and climaxes are avoided'[231] in Grüber's theatre, a practitioner who has been associated with postdramatic performance. This is in an aim to create discussion rather than a dramatic moment. This can be seen in Duncan Macmillan and Chris Rapley's *2071*, which concerned itself with the effects of climate change. Michael Billington argues that 'the idea that theatre should be exclusively reserved for fiction has been knocked on the head by a surge of documentary dramas and verbatim plays.'[232] Rapley details his work carefully to the audience, speaking directly outwards. Instead of building up to a specific moment, the piece instead was presented as a form of lecture. Discussion was opened up to the audience at the end, which was clear from audience members standing and voicing current events and petitions regarding climate change within the United Kingdom. It was clear that the discussion had affected members of the audience, without traditional dramatic methods of storytelling. However Kane's work avoids dramatic climax entirely differently; the entirety of the piece is at climax. With the piece completely heightened throughout, peaks

---

[231] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.75
[232] Michael Billington, '2071-five-star review- Urgent Call for the Greatest Collective Action in History,' in *The Guardian* (7th November 2014) <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/nov/07/2071-review-urgent-call-history-royal-court-theatre> [Accessed 3 December 2015]

and climaxes are obliterated. It would be impossible to define a moment of climax, just as it would be unreasonable to attempt to find a non-dramatic moment.

Kane's piece defies ideals of the postdramatic by being highly dramatic. However it distorts the meaning of traditional Aristotelian performance; 'The whole with beginning, middle, and end is the *frame*.'[233] Instead, Kane's play positions itself in the middle of the climax, not removing itself from this until the final moments of the piece. There is no frame, the structure too disjointed to pinpoint even a beginning. Kane opens with 'But you have friends.'[234] The event begins in the middle of the conversation. No characters are introduced or any setting established. The audience become voyeurs. They are not addressed, however neither are they ignored. The text facilitates as many figures on stage as needed; no number of performers is established. Martin Meisel analyses the position of the modern avante-garde playwright stating that 'so fundamental a rejection of any ordering principle goes beyond the commandment of radical innovation. It is a declaration of war on art itself.'[235] Kane hyper-extends the dramatic in her pieces, distorting traditional dramatic notions. Any traditional frame maintained in Crave is dissolved in this piece, providing the hypothesis that the dramatic can be married with the postdramatic without bearing its original stigmas of storytelling.

---

[233] Hans Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.173
[234] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.205
[235] Martin Meisel, *How Plays Work* (Oxford, Oxford University press, 2007) p.22

The piece ends with the statement 'please open the curtains.'[236] The stage is addressed, and Kane perhaps reflects on her journey of creating texts for performance. As previously seen in *Crave*, the light is ultimately sought after in Kane's work. Although this perhaps offers some resolution to the pieces, it also opens up discussion; Certainly death is a vital component of the playwright's work, prompting the question of whether the journey towards death is the truth that Kane ultimately wished to examine. Saunders writes that the playwright 'revisits the imagery from *Crave*, where death is visualised as a bright engulfing light that finally snuffs out its speakers.'[237] Rather than a darkness associated with the end of life, the light creates relief; a willingness to relinquish control of the text and event space. Lehmann states that 'we have to maintain the *interruption*, the caesura of the aesthetic-contemplative mode in theatre.'[238] Life is fractured in the piece; the event becomes disjointed until it has no other destination except death. There is finality in both plays; it is clear that the figures cannot return to the event. 'The aesthetic appreciation is broken by the concrete questioning of self.'[239] The images created dissolve, however the themes of personal manifestation in the event continue on past the aesthetical performance quality. The orthodoxy of tragedy is repelled, instead the fall towards the light creating a indeterminacy of whether self is obtainable in the performance event.

---

[236] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.245
[237] Graham Saunders, *'Love me or Kill Me': Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2002) p.114
[238] Hans-Thies Lehmann, 'A Future for Tragedy? Remarks on the Political and the Postdramatic,' *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance,* ed. Karen Jurs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles (London & New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) (London & New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.107
[239] Hans- Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.109

Kane's truth of performance is varied by her own experiences and responses to the world. When looking at Grüber's theatre, Stephen Locke claims that 'the starting point for the theatrical expression of his reality is the material he works with.'[240] Just as Grüber has his own vision of reality, Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* is a reflection of her own outlook of the world. Each is unique. Relief from the world is dominant in both plays. This is not always the most apparent theme in her theatre, but principally in *Crave* there is a distinct feeling of relief at the end of the text. The final line of the piece is 'Happy and free,'[241] a complete contrast to the beginning of the text. *4.48 Psychosis* echoes this freedom from the world's confines in its final moments. The speech becomes shorter, even more fragmented, almost as if the forms are fading away from the reality. They various actors on stage are released from the speech they have recited, ending their role within the event space. On the other hand, this also relinquishes the audience from their place in the space, freeing them from the intensity of the performance. Kane claimed that 'what I can do is put people through an intense experience. Maybe in a small way from that you can change things.'[242] The intensity of the piece gives a sense of overwhelming the audience, and it is only once this experience has finished that arguably a large proportion of examining the work can be done. Also this enables the spectator to see Kane's intentions to shock thought into the audience, an understanding that it is the intensity of this, which can spur further thought after the event has ended. Moreover this also shows Kane's need to create change through her work; to leave the audience with a

---

[240] Stephen Locke, 'Klaus Michael Gruber', *The Drama Review*, TDR, 21.2 (MIT Press, June 1977) p.54

[241] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.200

[242] Sarah Kane quoted in Ken Urban, 'An Ethics of Catastrophe: The Theatre of Sarah Kane,' *PAJ*, No.69 (The John Hopkins University Press, 2001) p.56

lasting image of the piece. Reality is perhaps formed through this lasting impression, showing that the event continues after the audience leaves the theatre. Fischer-Lichte states that 'aesthetic experience is not just created by exceptional events but also by perceiving the ordinary.'[243] The audience is faced with the human state, stripped back to its essence. The impulses of negative energy drive the form onwards. This arguably leaves a poignant image for the spectator to reflect upon. Just as *Crave* focussed on the needs of its figures, *4.48 Psychosis* is driven by the figures need to simultaneously self-preserve and self-destruct. Torn between these factors, the figure is unable to sustain itself. It states 'watch me vanish,'[244] addressing the audience and confronting them with its demise. The ordinary human is trapped within the event, and the truth of this confusion is shown in the final moments of the performance.

During the play, it becomes clear that the piece is fixed to no world. The mind is secured to no physical body. When discussing performances, Garner claims that 'until movement is stilled by the fixity of conversation's end, these spatial fields are subject to correction and displacement.'[245] It is contestable that Kane's piece is reliant on this displacement for the freedom of the conscious. The mind frequently recreates the environment. It cannot entirely exist in this state, and it is repeatedly plummeted back into the abyss of the void. It can then recreate its next scenario. Until the mind is released in the final moments, the event is victim to the repetitive discourse that the voice wished to create. Only when the conscious mind met its demise could the action end, or discourse be

[243] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (New York, Routledge, 2008) p.179
[244] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.244
[245] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.151

calmed. During Beckett's pieces, the destiny of the figures was never met and their stories, however long, continued after the event finished. Yet in *4.48 Psychosis*, the voice appears to control, or at least be central to the theatre void. The void only exists while the mind is active. Once the hold of consciousness is relinquished, the atmosphere created cannot be sustained. Just as the mind falls, the void also echoes the sentiment.

Similarly this demise is mirrored in *Crave*. The identities reach the same destination, and the event ends with this resolution. This calls to question whether the voices in Kane's work can control the void, or whether the event chooses when the void will ultimately swallow the minds. Garner presents that 'the ambiguity of corporeal experience has profound implications for the phenomenology of theater, which is [...] the medium of the body.'[246] With the body separated in both of Kane's plays, the mind becomes an enigma. Arguably, the mind becomes vulnerable to the will of the event, and the playwright. Garner discusses Beckett's plays, stating that 'the actor's body threatened the stage's formal autonomy through its non-aesthetic physiology.'[247] This threat is similar in Kane's work, particularly *4.48 Psychosis*. The mind cannot continue to exist while it influences the space into chaos. In order for the spectator to be released from the event, the chaotic identity must be silenced. Arguably, the passing of the conscious entity was inevitable in order to conclude the piece. Ultimately, the event pulls the piece to its conclusion, releasing the spectator to continue their deliberation of the play.

---

[246] Ibid, p.51
[247] Ibid, p.57

<u>2.4 Responses to Kane's Plays</u>

Criticism has been spurred from the interpretation of form and aural presentation in Kane's work. With both factors becoming paramount to her texts and performances, characterisation is overshadowed and unbalances traditional modes of storytelling through solid fictional figures with individual motives. Unlike many realism driven plays, the human actor becomes fragmented; basic movement and speech are explored, helping to focus the spectator towards the individual human state. Lehmann argues that 'it is important to explore the new possibilities of thinking and representing the individual human subject.'[248] Primarily this deterioration of the human condition is presented in the loss of innocence and vulnerability of the individual in the world. In *Crave*, A states 'A small boy had an imaginary friend. He took her to the beach and they played in the sea. A man came from the water and took her away. The following morning the body of a girl was washed up on the beach.'[249] The imaginary friend is brutally removed, and thus the child in plunged into the world of reality and away from the protectiveness of childhood. The human condition is portrayed as fragile and painful. Ultimately the boy has to accept the loss of comfort that he sought from his own imagination, having to instead accept the cold truth of the world he is growing up in. The loss of the imaginary friend therefore perhaps becomes a symbol of the child's passage into adulthood, the spectator having to utilise the imagery of Kane's words to absorb meaning from the different anecdotes told.

---

[248] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.18

[249] Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001) p.163

However there is a particular criticism that is valid to discuss when considering reality in Kane's work; her pieces are often deliberated as biographical, and it is this that perhaps limits how companies approach the texts. Urban claims that 'I can imagine that over time these two plays will offer a wide range of possibilities for directors, far divorced from the personal biography of the playwright, thus perhaps opening those metaphorical curtains even further to new theatrical visions.'[250] Here he hints that the pieces are possibly hindered by a fear of changing interpretations of the text, or undermining the quality the playwright proposes. Particularly in the aforementioned version of the play, the piece is very simply presented, taking care to deliver the piece in its entirety as intended. This calls to question whether the reality is really explored when it is primarily one individual's concept of it, which is drawn upon. It is in answering this that the meaning of the postdramatic playwright is truly revealed. The playwright writes for self, yet with awareness that their work is a journey not only for themselves. When asked in interview about the meanings of the character names, Kane stated that 'I didn't want to write those things down because then I thought they'll get fixed in those things for ever and never ever change.'[251] Although she did have specific ideas concerning *Crave*, Kane was also unwilling to simply feed answers to readers of the text. This enables a postdramatic interpretation to develop past any biographical original reading. Although Kane arguably had intentions for the play, the absent space left has allowed for the piece to continue transforming in performance.

---

[250] Ken Urban, 'An Ethics of Catastrophe: The Theatre of Sarah Kane' in *PAJ* ,NO. 69 (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001)
[251] Dan Rebellato, *Interview with Sarah Kane: 3 November 1998* (Department of Drama and Theatre: Royal Holloway University of London, 2009)

This also raises the debate as to whether reality is obtainable in a theatrical event when the audience is within the confines of the event space. Although this is answerable only by the individual, there is evidence to suggest that Kane believed that it was in her plays. She stated 'they are at the rather extreme end of theatrical tradition, but they are not about other plays. They are not about methods of representation. On the whole, they are about love. And about survival and about hope.'[252] The aim is not to present a hypothetical course of events. *Crave* is motivated by the need to open a wider dialogue deconstructing emotion. Subsequently *4.48 Psychosis* furthers this debate, asking whether this emotion can be synthesised with the body and surrounding world. This also implies the place in which Kane positions her form of theatre within contemporary writing. Although often graphic in nature, her theatre still fits into a sequence of work created in Britain. She rejects any idea that the piece needs to glean towards a traditional dramatic text in order to have a notable structure. Furthermore her active role in the participation of her text is secured, presenting herself as willing to accept that, at least in part, her work does embody her own views and biographical approach to the text. In general the plays encompass and express her own values on the themes presented, specifically her focus on coinciding the human state with the understanding of 'self'.

2.5 Conclusion

---

[252] Ibid

To conclude, it is clear that the connection created between the text-bearer's vocal expression and the playwright's intentions for the piece are intrinsic to the event's journey. 'The voice and the text should marry. One is mutually dependent on the other for sound and sense.'[253] In the case of *Crave*, the text is wholly dependent on voice for embodiment. It is through considering the role of text and voice as a separate entity from character that the audience can see that Kane intends to overhaul the impression of theatre itself. Furthermore it is notable that voice can be observed detached from characterisation, instead drawing on the form of the piece to create expression. Kane claimed that 'driving all that there's always a desire to explore form and find a new form.'[254] Ultimately this was the force that influenced her work, looking towards this to produce a wider variety of theatre for the stage outside of the traditional dramatic state. Furthermore Kane was motivated by the need to create material which hadn't recurred in terms of form, believing this to often be the vital component in creating a connection between the text and the spectator. 'Sarah Kane is on record as describing her own work as 'experiential' in terms of the effect she wanted to produce on an audience.'[255] The transgression created by her work is clear; Kane's unique structure and intent to create radical messages through her work is poignant in both the considered texts. This provides a performance that focuses on driving the experimentation of the theatrical genre. It serves to show an audience that theatre does not need to rely on a linear narrative to create its own journey.

---

[253] Patsy Rodenburg, *The Need for Words* (London: Methuen, 2005) p.154
[254] Dan Rebellatto, *Interview with Sarah Kane: 3 November 1998* (Department of Drama and Theatre, Royal Holloway University of London) p.5
[255] Laurens De Vos & Graham Saunders, *Sarah Kane in Context,* ed. Laurens De Vos & Graham Saunders (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010) p.4

The dramatic form is rejected as the soul component of theatrical meaning, and instead the hypothesis is developed that the event requires new modes of presenting form is necessary to deconstruct pre-existing ideas of connecting with the audience. Lehmann states that 'new theatre can more plausibly bring the essence and specific chance of theatre to life.'[256] The postdramatic playwright hinders their work on the notion that although the text may be planned, the spontaneity of the event is detrimental to the journey of the established piece. It is clear that Kane was acutely aware that the performance was reliant upon the acting company and the spectator to continue on the event's meaning after the text had been removed from her control. Both *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* focus the intentions of Kane, however it is the expansion on this by the various participants of the production that give this physicality. Each member of the event serves to encourage emotion and questions from the audience. Reality is obtained through the connection made between all aspects of the theatrical event; each party becomes their own text-bearing vessel and combining these voices in the speaking space enables the participants to create one entirety in the performance. The reliance is therefore no longer on the text as a whole, however the text is not relegated to a position of 'material' or theatrical stimulus. It becomes a collage in the journey of the postdramatic event, each aspect intertwining in order to produce work that strives to change the perception of theatrical form.

Karen Jürs-Munby argues that work such as Kane's means that 'the spectators are no longer just filling in the predictable gaps in the dramatic

---

[256] Hans- Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.181

narrative but are asked to become active witnesses who reflect on their own meaning- making and who are also willing to tolerate gaps and suspend the assignment of meaning.'[257] This addresses the notion that the spectator is not only present to find meaning in the action, but also in the absence of what is expected. The aim of the piece is not to provide all the answers to the spectator, or expect them to draw every conclusion from what they have seen. The open-ended nature of the event means that some parts may go unanswered, or obscured. Work such as Kane's 'teaches audiences and critics how to watch it.'[258] Although the reaction of each spectator cannot be predicted, Kane's work seeks to challenge the audience's expectations of the theatrical experience. The epistemology surrounding dramatic performance is confronted, asking whether postdramatic phenomenology can provide reality. Answers are not always easily obtained in work that assimilates the playwright's own thoughts. *Crave*, containing many of Kane's understandings of adoration and fear, shows that the destination of love is unanswered and obscure, any answers provided on the subject difficult to obtain and unfulfilling for the on stage participants. 'Ultimately the purpose of the text is not that it is communicated to the audience,'[259] and they become part of the piece rather than receivers of the narrative.

In comparison to this, the role of the spectator and playwright is also deliberated in Martin Crimp's work. Garner describes the evolution of the body

---

[257] Karen Jurs-Munby, 'Introduction,' *Postdramatic Theatre*, ed. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York: Routledge, 2006) p.6
[258] Dan Rebellato, *Modern British Playwriting 2000-2009* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.99
[259] Duska Radosavljevic, *Theatre-Making: Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21st Century* (Houdmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.20

in examples of performance. He states that 'mistrust of the performing body led to proposals that sought to eliminate the actor entirely or replace him or her with mechanical substitutes.'[260] The alienation of the body has been present in all the studied examples of Kane and Beckett's work. Yet in these instances, consciousness has worked with mechanical influences to enrich the event. Even when corporeal self appears to be lost, the voice remains. This implies that in these cases, the mind refuses to relinquish complete hold over their identity. Despite a clear struggle, each voice can speak for itself, or as a collective. However in the next chapter, the single identity becomes surrendered. Kane's work arguably highlights the struggle between the event and the identity for authority. Yet this will be extended further in Crimp's work, exploring the entire abandonment of 'self' in the contemporary event space.

---

[260] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) pp.58-59

A THEATRE IN THE VOID: ABSTRACTION AND IDENTITY IN MARTIN CRIMP'S *ATTEMPTS ON HER LIFE.*

Beckett's performance legacy has been observed over the years in British theatre. Aleks Sierz states that 'while foreigners seemed to flirt with philosophy, English writers boasted of their native common-sense.'[261] However although there was a perceived movement of realism, an experimental theatre was also establishing itself. Vicky Angelaki discusses the development of Martin Crimp's theatre; 'Crimp's work is not part of an established tradition, but an emergent one, still in its formative stages.'[262] His work is influenced by the work of Beckett, particularly noting the experimental structure and study of the human conscious. Sierz argues that 'Clearly, Beckett, the arch-modernist, ranks high on Crimp's artistic agenda.'[263] It is this influence that will be built upon to examine how Crimp invests his play *Attempts on Her Life* in the present. Furthermore, I will explore the phenomenological aspects of the play and probe how they challenge the role of time. This will lead into a discussion on the semiotic experiences of the play, and the crucial roles played by both elements when approaching the central figure of the piece.

In this chapter, I will be using *Attempts on Her Life* as a further example of an experimental structure based performance. Avra Sidipoulou states that 'The

---

[261] Aleks Sierz, *Rewriting the Nation: British Theatre Today* (London: Methuen Drama: 2011) p.18

[262] Vicky Angelaki, *The Plays of Martin Crimp: Making Theatre Strange* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.8

[263] Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp*, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.10

playwright contests the possibility of fixed representation.'[264] Crimp plays with the idea that identity on stage cannot be represented as a fixed singular entity. He challenges how a character can be translated onto the stage, showing that identity is constructed by external factors to the individual. Character is removed from a position of authority. Jürs-Munby discusses Lehmann, stating that ''Drama and theatre' as Lehmann argues, are treated as inseparable if not synonymous in the popular imagination.'[265] He questions how drama is so closely tied to theatre, and presented as a necessity in the performance space. However Crimp presents the co-existence of the dramatic and non-dramatic through the various scenarios. *Attempts on her Life* jumps between voices, obscuring the lines between the character and abstract ideas. This chapter will seek to analyse how this relationship has been installed into the performance. I hypothesise that this collaboration of identities can create reality in the text and performance and dispel reality through representation. It will also lead to the questioning of how non-fixed identity changes the role of the audience. With the complicating of all roles in the event, identity becomes a complicated aspect. This will be analysed to explore the balance the Crimp creates between the dramatic and performative events.

Attempts on Her Life focuses on establishing a single figure. This is shown through each of the acts, creating an overall collage of identity. Angelaki states that the play expresses 'continuously reconfigured states of imagination.'[266] In each scene, the girl Anne is recreated as a different concept. Martin Heidegger's

[264] Avra Sidiropoulou, *Authoring Performance: The Director in Contemporary Theatre* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p.146
[265] Karen Jürs-Munby, *Postdramatic Theatre* (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.10
[266] Vicky Angelaki, *The Plays of Martin Crimp: Making Theatre Strange* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.45

theory of 'the anyone' will be applied, to understand both Anne and the figures that seemingly control her passage through the text. Stephan Kaufer and Anthony Chemero define this as 'the shared, public sense of normalcy that guides most of our comportment most of the time.'[267] The voices that guide Anne's journey will be analysed with this statement in mind. Because of this detachment from linear narrative, it becomes difficult to assign character to any of the voices, including Anne; the thesis will discover how Anne becomes a construct of the piece. 'The anyone' voices, Anne and the spectator are suspended between the semiotic conceptual world and the phenomenological reality of the human state. I will examine how this affects the structure of the acts, and Anne herself as a transhuman entity.

In addition to this I will also explore the role of representation, and how reality is perceived from this. Sam William Dawson examines how the dramatic character is formed. He says 'how bad is it for us, the audience, to demand or expect that all characters should be either predefined abstract types or newly defined concrete individuals.'[268] Crimp's work often questions the system of representation, and how the individual is created on stage. The framework he places on the stage supports these elements. Liz Tomlin describes some of his work as having an 'explicitly poststructuralist aesthetic.'[269] Crimp looks towards new ways to structure his work, changing the dynamic of the event. He challenges the primacy of dramatic representation as an authoritative mode of

---

[267] Stephan Kaufer and Anthony Chemero, *Phenomenology: An Introduction,* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2015) p.77
[268] Sam William Dawson, *Drama and the Dramatic* (Norfolk: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1970) p.48
[269] Tomlin, Liz, 'Forward: Dramatic Development,' *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground*, ed. Vicky Angelaki (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.xii

creating reality. This enables the figures to fall between abstract constructs and single-minded conscious entities. Unlike the dramatic roles highlighted by Dawson, Crimp's forms are places between these categories. They do not require defining as a singular, and move between this and a collective identity. This combined consciousness serves as a vital component of Crimp's piece, and will be considered when approaching the work.

I will endeavour to analyse the effect of 'the now' in performance, exploring how the present tense affects the perception of time as an authoritative tool. This interference in linearity is significant in how the structure of the play is created. I propose that the removal of time is ultimately the postdramatic tool that translates reality. It creates asymmetric layers to the event, and changes how boundaries are formed. Lehmann argues that 'theatre itself would hardly have come about without the hybrid act that an individual broke free of a collective, into the unknown.'[270] It is with this mentality that we must question how the dramatic can be used in unison with the postdramatic, changing how reality is interpreted.

Stephen Bottoms discusses Liz Tomlin's approach to the postdramatic. Tomlin claims that the term 'unhelpfully maps onto the too-familiar rhetorical and institutional distinctions so often drawn between 'text-based' and 'non-text-based' theatre.'[271] It is notable that the postdramatic has previously been used to describe non-text based work, and so creating separation between the two types of performance event. Crimp's piece, although highly text-based, contains many

---

[270] Hans Thies-Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.179
[271] Stephen Bottoms, 'Editorial: Performing Literatures', in *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 14:1 (2009) p.3

aesthetics of the postdramatic. By embracing this balance of text in performance, the term is able to evolve in its definition. Lehmann discusses Hegel's standpoint on tragedy. He sees the 'process of thought as well as history as a kind of (spiral) staircase, leading [...] to ever more encompassing abstraction, rationality and finally absolute (self-)presence of mind.'[272] Comparably, by utilising text-based plays, the process of thought gains another dimension. In *Attempts on Her Life*, the mind and its processes becomes paramount to the play's focus. The text reflects this objective, asking how identity can be manipulated in the written script.

3.1 Time and Crimp

According to Lehmann's investigations, 'Postdramatic theatre is *a theatre of the present.*'[273] The expression exists within the present tense through its need to sustain reality. To explore this, we must first examine how time is appropriated in traditional dramatic theatre. Michael Hays draws attention to the theatre observed by Szondi; he states that 'dramatic form is not an abstract entity, independent of time and place, but rather inextricably tied up with the content it informs.'[274] This implies that dramatic theatre is bound to the historical or political settings it accumulates. Typically it is concerned with mimicking events or points of importance, reflecting meaning towards its audience. Lehmann

---

[272] Hans-Thies Lehmann *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.92
[273] Ibid, p.143
[274] Michael Hays, 'Drama and Dramatic Theory: Peter Szondi and the Modern Theater' in *Boundary 2*, vol.11, no.3, *The Criticism of Peter Szondi* (Duke University Press, Spring 1993) p.70

discusses this relationship between drama and history, noting that 'in classical aesthetics, the dialectic of the form of drama and its philosophical implications were of central concern.'[275] Essentially, this creates an issue for 'reality' in the space. Each piece is bounded by its historical and political context. We must therefore question how time, or the removal of it, can affect the performance space.

Tomlin states that 'The tendency of classical drama towards totality, closure and wholeness, makes the dramatic form, for Lehmann, ideologically regressive.'[276] Here, Tomlin indicates that drama comes to a conclusive finish, not exceeding the event. Although discussion may be opened up, it is also closed by the finality of the performance. Time is manipulated to open and conclude the action, tidying up any questions that derive from the onstage events. Unlike the postdramatic, specific characters drive the action along. The content is firmly rooted to occurrences alluding to the outer world beyond the performance space. On the other hand, abstraction within postdramatic theatre provides a platform for the figures to explore the technical elements in the text and event space. This provides a less linear route through the performance, enabling the event to take place outside of the modern or historical world. This allows the postdramatic to focus on not just the present, rather the exploration of an idea rather than a specific individuals experience. Time is pivotal to the presence of the postdramatic, and invariably becomes intrinsic to the translation of the text into the performance.

---

[275] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.39
[276] Tomlin, Forward: Dramatic Developments' in Vicky Angelaki, *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.ix

The work of Szondi is important in analysing the turn towards postmodern and postdramatic performance. Hays studied the scholar's concerns with the dramatic; Szondi argues that 'the characters in these plays could not create an active world through their language. They describe a situation which is static, in which the past, though irrevocably lost, is at the same time more "real," more amenable to productive acts than the presence.'[277] The past consumes the present in this example. The actors represent a world or situation that is possibly unknown to them, removing meaning from their creation. When reviewing the 2007 production, Tomlin states:

Because the audience are watching the exquisitely detailed close-ups on screen at the same time as they are watching the construction, set up, and location of the live shooting of that scene on the stage beneath, the representation of reality shown on the screen is revealed explicitly, and simultaneously, as construction.[278]

Here, the Stanislavski method of acting is combined with intermediality. The transhuman is developed through the exploration of the human-technology relationship. Although characters are created, they are translated through the technical elements on stage. The human-traits that they are assigned become distorted. The spectator is presented with humans as part of a theatre mechanism. They become integral to the performance form. Humanity therefore lters from its position authority, bending to a collective reliance on the media.

---

[277] Michael Hays, 'Drama and Dramatic Theory: Peter Szondi and the Modern Theater,' *The Criticism of Peter Szondi,* Vol. 11, No. 3(Duke University Press, Spring, 1983) p.75

[278] Liz Tomlin, 'Citational Theory in Practice: A Performance Analysis of Characterisation and Identity in Katie Mitchell's Staging of Martin Crimp's Texts', *Contemporary Theatre Review* (2014) p.375

Szondi recognises that this relationship cannot reflect reality, as the past situation cannot be returned to its original conditions during the performance. From this, it can be deduced that reality is dependant upon the present for a connection with the information provided by the playwright. Historical events cannot be re-experienced. Lehmann states that 'the present cannot be grasped conceptually but only as a perpetual self-division of the now into ever new splinters of 'just now' and in an instant'.'[279] Reality can be perceived as a shifting and instantaneous state. Lehmann suggests that it is a personal journey for each spectator or event member. This leads to the transformation and interpretation of each performance from its original text.

Certainly during *Attempts on her Life*, Crimp shows an awareness of how the present can change the direction of a performance. The piece contains seventeen scenarios, all centring around one common stimulus. Many of the scenarios presented in the piece are set in 'the now.' This allows the company to deliberate each of the instances regarding Anne and her actions:

'-But now a look crosses her face.

-A what?

-A look.

-A doubt.

-A look of doubt, yes, good, crosses Anne's face.' [280]

---

[279] Hans Thies-Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.144
[280] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.210

Crimp presents the scenario as a discussion between the company members. No characters speaking are named. The emphasis of the scene is placed on the crossover of ideas and thoughts, carving out the path of Anne. Elisabeth Angel-Perez states that Crimp 'writes theatre 'for a world in which theatre itself has died' and, consequently, needs to be reinvented.'[281] Just as Crimp reinvents drama, he continually reinvents Anne during the event. Anne herself exists solely in the present tense, a mechanism for the company to build images of the female condition. Each scenario reconstructs her, building up a figure, only to break it down at the will of the playwright and company. The present tense allows the constructs to exist only in the event space. None of the past episodes are taken into account during the successive scenarios, as they cannot infringe on the future. Each separate construct exists entirely on its own, each becoming its own event in the performance.

If we can ascertain that Anne exists only in the present, she herself becomes an abstraction within the event. To further understand this, the work of Julia Annas has been useful to examine Aristotle, Plato and 'the now'. She states that 'now determines time by marking off the future from the past, but without taking up any time itself.'[282] The now creates a point between the two, and this is where Anna lies. She does not move forward in time or exist in the past. She has no physicality or voice of her own. She is entirely crafted by others and recreated to suit the scenario she is positioned in. During the fifth scenario, the voice states

---

[281] Elisabeth Angel-Perez 'Language Games and Literary Constraints: Playing with Tragedy in the Theatre of Caryl Churchill and Martin Crimp in Vicky Angelaki, *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.81

[282] Julia Annas, 'Aristotle, Number and Time' in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 99(Oxford University Press, 1950-) (Oxford University Press, 1950-) p.109

'ALL THE THINGS THAT ANNE CAN BE,'[283] referring to her versatility within the event. Anne can be manipulated without leaving any trace of past or future repercussions; each scenario is a clean slate to work from. She becomes an abstract idea, reverting to the noesis role. Tim Albery, who directed the first production of *Attempts on her Life*, described Anne as having 'several different personalities.'[284] Although this can be argued, I would propose that Anne lacks a personality altogether. She is entirely spoken for by others; it would be impossible to determine if she is a physical living being at all, regardless of whether in the inner theatrical world or external world beyond. Although she is given a name, she could be any number of characters. Anne could consequently be a representation of the playwright's desire to construct multiple ideas in the space, the abstract object enabling each scenario to be linked solely by a name.

The abstraction of Anne can be supported by Sierz's interview with Katie Mitchell, who directed the 2007 and 2014 productions of *Attempts on her Life*. Mitchell states 'I had a problem with the first scenario 'All Messages Deleted', because I thought it implied that Anne was a single composite figure.'[285] Mitchell expresses a desire to allow the spectator to view Anne as more that a lone character. The first scenario is the only chapter that insinuates that characters know Anne and have physically met her before. Rather that beginning the event with this scenario, she preferred to uproot them from any ideas that Anne could be one static, subjective figure. She removed the scene, and so any ties Anne had

---

[283] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.223
[284] Tim Albery Interview in Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp*, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.193
[285] Katie Mitchell Interview in Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp*, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.198

with others became more elusive. Crimp directed that 'in performance, the first scenario, ALL MESSAGES DELETED, may be cut.'[286] He supports Mitchell's notion that Anne can be viewed as more than a singular figure, and so opening up a wider conversation on the role of Anne. Lehmann argues that during the creation of the real, 'no fictive illusions are created.'[287] Anne is not fabricated on stage. She is given no solid characteristics that would assign a personality to her. Those on stage also lack personal qualities, supporting the notion that they all exist to construct the abstract object. Without any past or future prospects, the concept of Anne exists only in the abstract reality of 'the now.'

This can be observed during a production of *Attempts on her Life* in 2011 by Defunkt Theatre, directed by Grace Carter in Portland, 'suddenly comes to a stop on the words "previously frozen" -- an appropriately sardonic note given the fact that Anne's identity will always be anything but "frozen."'[288] It becomes clear that once the text is in the performance space, Anne takes on a fluid identity to comply with the whims of the onstage figures. The company used the text to create a rift between the speaking figures and the concept of Anne. Even when members of the company are frozen, it is assumed that Anne continues on, unaffected by this halt in time. This would imply that although she is at the mercy of the event, she transcends it to reach further afield. She is not restricted to the limits that are placed upon the other figures, she remains in the loop of

---

[286] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.202
[287] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.100
[288] Richard Wattenberg ''Attempts on Her Life' review: No plot? No clearly defined characters? No problem in this experimental play' in *The Oregonian* (March 5th 2011)
<http://www.oregonlive.com/performance/index.ssf/2011/03/theater_review_no_plot_no_clea.html> [Accessed 29th January 2016]

abstraction once they are finished. Anne exists only inside the event realm, the abstract idea of her continuing on after the performance conclusion. The performance ends, but her involvement with the event continues. She lacks the boundedness that is common in dramatic theatre, removing the restrictions that are placed on the narrative voices. This implies that the reality of the ideas is infinite. The ideas that Anne encompasses can perpetuate further outside of the event.

This is shown in the 2007 production, directed by Mitchell at the Royal Court Theatre in London. Michael Billington writes that 'on a stage crowded with lights, cameras and video screens, each scene becomes a new set-up offering us a different image of Anne. And, while this means the 11 actors are kept restlessly busy, it too often turns the play into a self-conscious media satire.'[289] Mitchell's production predominantly focussed on utilising media to recreate Anne. She offers intermediality as a connection to truth outside of the event. With the space filled with theatrical tools, lights and equipment, Mitchell surpasses the suspension of disbelief, and makes the audience aware that they are in a state of active performance. There is no illusion that they have been transported to an 'elsewhere.' Transmedia is presented through the intertwining of technology and human elements, allowing the image of Anne to flourish. The world that she exists in changes frequently, and the media allows this to be evident. Mitchell stated that 'the play's scenarios create images of horror and- at the same time- comment on the way these images are created by capitalism in general and the

---

[289] Michael Billington, 'Attempts on her Life,' in *The Guardian* (Thursday 15th March 2007) (15th March 2007)
http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2007/mar/15/theatre3 [Accessed: 29th January 2016]

media in particular.'[290] Although some critics were unsure of this choice, the director had a clear vision of how she saw Anne on stage. She is not only constructed by the figures, but also by the media equipment and director. She becomes further depicted as an abstract identity.

Lehmann concludes that during Aristotelian tradition, 'time as such is meant to disappear, to be reduced to an unnoticeable condition of being of the action.'[291] *Attempts on her Life* utilises time as a vital co-player of the event; time becomes a component that allows Anne to exist in a looping 'now.' Time cannot become invisible, because it is a vital component of the event. The voices become time itself; in the same way time pushes life on, the voices propel Anne's journey onwards. 'The now,' or present tense, halts any action in the space from pressing further than its designated scenario. The action cannot continue onwards. Each scenario exists in its own realm. When the dramatic is present, the postdramatic serves to emerge as a vehicle to remove the safety that the past tense enables. The original hypothesis ascertains that the removal of 'past and future' time enables a closer similarity to the postdramatic; however it is also the utilisation of the present tense alongside the abstraction of identity that allows the piece to be placed outside of the dramatic realm. The abstraction of Anne places her as a vessel to portray theories through; the voices hypothesise the lives she could live, and she is placed in the present to facilitate this perpetual life cycle.

---

[290] Katie Mitchell Interview, in Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp*, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.200
[291] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.161

<u>3.2 Form and Structure</u>

When discussing Crimp, it is vital to consider the work that he contributes towards. 'His work is the great tradition of experimental modernists such as Samuel Beckett, Caryl Churchilll and Sarah Kane.'[292] His plays sit amongst a gathering of writers who have experimented in diverging from character or plot driven narratives. Moreover, these playwrights show examples of work that focus on non-linear structures and an open form. They often presented dramatic methods of storytelling and contrasted them against non-dramatic scenes. This section will discuss how reality and open form can coincide during performance, using Crimp's *Attempts on her Life* as an example of postdramatic consideration. I will look at how these affect the experience that is created, and why Crimp chooses a varied structure to present his abstraction.

Attempts on her Life encompasses many of the traits that defined Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave*. Theatre in this period concerned itself with redeveloping the framework of narrative. Tomlin addresses how some British playwrights moved away from fictitious works; 'the realignment of the text-driven and the postdramatic most often occurs when the play-text in question is seen to explicitly reject the most commonly recognised attributes of the classical dramatic model.'[293] There is also a thematic nature of the theatre, centring work on modern warfare and the social response to terror as experienced by western cultures. Sierz observes this, stating that 'given the anxieties created by the

---

[292] Aleks Sierz 'Interview: Martin Crimp in the Republic of Satire,' in *The Arts Desk* (10th December 2012) <http://www.theartsdesk.com/theatre/interview-martin-crimp-republic-satire?page=0,0> [Accessed: 29th January 2016]
[293] Tomlin, Liz, Forward: Dramatic Developments' in Vicky Angelaki, *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.xiii

digital age's affront to old and established views of reality, and to the ongoing global uncertainties unleashed by the War on Terror, the British public's desire for reality is more intense than ever.'[294] Both Kane and Crimp published works during this time, and were subjected to varying reviews. Neither playwright concerned themselves solely with the whim of social anxieties, but instead confronted the hegemonic dominance of bounded realism. Lehmann ascertains that 'Art in general cannot develop without reference to earlier forms,'[295] and it is important to note that the playwrights analysed are not exclusively postdramatic. Crimp utilises the dramatic but also pushes beyond the confines of traditional theatrical methods.

The play is divided into scenarios, each allowing the piece to be sectioned into different experiences. The structure is fluid, allowing the company to cut or interchange the scenarios. These instances surround the character, or communicative vessel, Anne. Erika Fischer-Lichte states that 'through the performer's presence, the spectator experiences the performer and himself as embodied mind in a constant process of becoming- he perceives the circulating energy as a transformative and vital energy.'[296] Similarly to the performer, each scenario also creates its own dynamic. The actors and audience are exposed to a fragment of life; it is delved into, but quickly discarded and replaced by the next scene. There is little time to dwell on the events shown. Crimp states that 'this is a piece for a company of actors whose composition should reflect the

---

[294] Aleks Sierz, 'Reality Sucks: The Slump in New British Writing' in *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, Vol. 30, No.2 (MIT Press on behalf of Performing Arts Journal Inc, May 2008) p.102
[295] Hans- Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.27
[296] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (New York, Routledge, 2008) p.99

composition of the world beyond the theatre.'[297] Crimp shows a commitment to considering the world outside the theatre, and the possibilities of the inner theatre space. He subsequently strives to connect these spheres. The fragments of the scenarios are reliant upon the actors to create the energy required to negotiate between each aspect of the performance. The world outside the theatre is acknowledged, and encouraged to have a place within the performance event.

Clara Agusti notes that 'Crimp himself has argued that his refusal to have Anne materialize on stage corresponds to his desire not to structure the play according to a central image that is 'transparent,' reassuring and readable.'[298] He shows a reluctance to present familiarity on the stage. The audience is removed from a state of comfort. There is no voice in the piece that is designated to guide for the spectator through the event. The spectator has to approach the piece with only their own thoughts, making them vulnerable to experience. There is no character to hide behind, and the audience is subjected to the experimentation of the playwright and the director. Avra Sidiropoulou states that Crimp 'expresses people's need to fabricate reality,'[299] however although the character Anne is continuously reinvented, the other figures in the piece lack the fabrication that is often used in traditional dramatic works. The audience is exposed to the concept of the dramatic, whilst also faced with the reality of the actor's voices and the awareness of being in a creative space. Although there is a desire for Anne to be fabricated, it is not a state that can be maintained. The dramatic is presented as a

---

[297] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.202
[298] Clara Escoda Agusti, 'Martin Crimp's Theatre: Collapse as Resistance to Late Capitalist Society' in *Contemporary Drama in English Studies*, ED. Martin Middeke, vol. 24 (De Gruyter, May 2013) p.118
[299] Avra Sidiropoulou *Authoring Performance: The Director in Contempotary Theatre* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p.146

state that cannot be sustained in the void space. Her image must return from the semiosphere, ready to be dismantled.

Sidiropoulou notes that 'In reality, the text's non-linear narrative is constantly shifting between dialogue and monologue forms, interspersed with media imagery and excerpts from the discourse of theory.'[300] Although this does define the piece, it is arguable that the terms 'dialogue and monologue' in general fail to recognise the complexity of the writing form used by aforementioned playwrights. During Crimp's piece, it becomes indistinguishable how many actors are on stage, or speaking in one moment. It also is notable that although there may be more than one person speaking, at points it is unclear whether they are aware of others and consciously entering into a dialogue. Often the voices overlap, cutting in before a stream of speech has been completed. Their responses do not always correspond to the voice speaking before, or even what they have said previously themselves. The voices present ideas rather than one entire stream of thought. For example, during the seventh scenario in *Attempts on Her Life*, there is speech, followed by a translation of the text in another language:

'-[phrase]

-The car twists along the Mediterranean road.

-[phrase]

-It hugs the bends between the picturesque hillside villages.'[301]

---

[300] Avra Sidiropoulou p.146
[301] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.234

Separate voices coincide, sharing a common text. However there is little other relation between them; they do not appear to acknowledge the existence of each other during the text. The issue of characterisation is removed by the alienation of the voices from each other. They speak the text, but are unable to discuss it between each other. It is also unclear if there are more than two voices present. Similar to Kane's work, Crimp allows for these choices to alter and transform in translations of the play to performance.

It is vital to address that the piece, much like the postdramatic itself, is not solely non-dramatic. Although there are many elements of the postdramatic, it would be incorrect to pretend that the work lacks a sense of the dramatic. It is here that I would argue that Crimp employs juxtaposition between the two, using the non-dramatic to highlight the exaggeration lack of reality shown in the dramatic elements. Dawson, whilst discussing the role of the dramatic, states that an actor can make a 'useful distinction between dramatic language expressive of character, and that which in one way or another transcends character.'[302] Here he ascertains that an actor must be prepared to step outside of character. The need to go beyond the individual character is essential in order to understand the greater meaning of the work. In the case of Crimp's work, the actor must enter a state between character and their sense of self. Instead of looking for the greater meaning, the actor must instead look for the components of the play's structure. The form of the piece is paramount to the performance, supporting the language and figures. This implies that the dramatic and the postdramatic can co-exist through a relinquishing on the static hold of linear

---

[302] Sam William Dawson, *Drama and the Dramatic: The Critical Idiom* (Norfolk, Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1970) p.59

character and structure. The spectrum of the dramatic can be entered into and exited at the whim of the playwright. The form supports both dramatic and non-dramatic elements, the assymetrical nature providing a platform for a hybridisation of the two.

This can be observed through *Attempts on her Life*. During the twelfth scenario, there is a contrast of two or more voices following Anne's next story. One voice engages in the story, telling the audience of the events as they are happening. The second voice interjects sporadically. It partially refers to parts of the narrative, however it also acts as a device to cut between ideas. The second voice moves the first to the next point. Whilst one voice lingers in the moment, the other moves briskly onwards:

-IDENTITY!

--.'… and curse all future generations.' And then when asked for more- that's right- for her identity falls silent.

-SILENCE!

Silence.

WHAT?

Silence.

WHAT?

-Then she's mumbling something about her garden and the plum trees and the city's dried-up fountains.[303]

---

[303] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) pp.257-258

Whilst one figure provides detail to the account, the other drives the description onwards. It is unclear whether the latter is more than one figure, or even human. The role assigned is simplistic and serves the sole purpose of picking out the vital information that will be presented next. When silence overcomes the stage, the voice continues to state 'WHAT?' They are unable to halt the continuous nature of their role. The human quality of this voice becomes lost, and the postdramatic becomes apparent in this; Lehmann states that 'there are directors who may stage traditional dramatic texts but do so by employing theatrical means in such a way that a *de-dramatization* occurs.'[304] Crimp's piece is not a traditional dramatic text, however the sense of the notion is still relevant; the director controls how dramatic or non-dramatic this passage could be on the stage. The form that Crimp creates encourages the voices to be explored, leaving many choices to the director and the audience's perception.

An example of this would be the 1997 production of *Attempts on her Life*, directed by Tim Albery. Matt Wolf states that 'It's not every writer who would pose much of his play in the form of a question, almost as if the language itself were interrogating the listener.'[305] The spectator was pulled into an active role, and Albery's choices appear to pull towards a more postdramatic style of performance. Albery states that 'I suggested that being so specific would stop us from thinking laterally, that it might be better to have nothing in the way of indications, apart from 'Silence' or 'Pause' to indicate the rhythmic shape of the

---

[304] Hans Thies-Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.74
[305] Matt Wolf, 'Review: 'Attempts on her Life'' in *Variety* (5th April 1997) <http://variety.com/1997/legit/reviews/attempts-on-her-life-1117436650/.> [Accessed: 30th January 2016]

scene.'[306] Albery worked alongside Crimp to shape the direction of the piece in performance. The 'Strangely' scenario was originally supplied with some setting direction, yet the director believed that this would limit the possibilities of the piece. The previously mentioned scenario was subsequently supplied with as little direction as possible, allowing Albery to explore the structural potential of the episode. The voices are placed in 'the now,' which is void of location that was discussed between playwright and director. The journey of the play continues in the hands of the company, and 'de-dramatisation' can occur at this stage.

Crimp also discusses the structure of his work. He addressed the scenario named 'The New Anny'; 'the moment Anny became a car. It's one of those moments when you sit there, smiling to yourself and you realise that although you have invented this structure which appears at first glance limiting, it is actually limitless.'[307] This scene, and arguably all the scenarios, has an unbounded value that allows the director to create the piece as they choose. Whether this is dramatic, or non-dramatic, Crimp's writing facilitates either option. Albery describes that Crimp 'was very concerned that the freedom he gave us should be enjoyed to the full.'[308] The dramatic representation of Anny as a car is juxtaposed by the postdramatic structure. Despite all the imagery, the reality is an empty stage. The piece is arguably dramatic in its content, yet its execution questions the authority of the human body over its own volitions. Any

---

[306] Time Albery Interview in Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp*, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) pp.192-193

[307] Martin Crimp Interview in Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp*, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.102

[308] Tim Albery Interview, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp*, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) pp.195-196

limits created by the representation are surpassed by the jolting truth of the voices being unable to produce her in the space as a tangible human. This relationship between the two forms can be dynamic in producing a full example of reality. Representation exists within the semiosphere, alongside the void. The piece shows that whilst representation can be deconstructed, only the ideas can surpass the confines of the event. Anne is trapped in the created image.

3.3 Identity and Media in Text and Performance

The text and the performance are areas for radical thought to be expressed. This can be done under the supervision of the playwright, or under the watch of the director. Sierz states that 'Crimp isn't keen on explicating meaning,'[309] and just as the audience of the text must decipher the words, the company approaching the play must do the same. According to Tomlin, 'Mitchell's approach, counter-intuitively, is to opt for strategies of rigorously psycho-logical characterisation that embrace a Stanislavskian embodiment of continuous consistency.'[310] Mitchell chooses to assign actors to various roles, and so characterisation occurs. This enables a development to arise in the text, and the anonymous dimension to alter. There have been a variety of translations applied to *Attempts on Her Life*; each shows the evolution of the event and possibilities that can be applied to the figures.

---

[309] Aleks Sierz, 'Interview: Martin Crimp in the Republic of Satire,' in *The Arts Desk* (10th December 2012) <http://www.theartsdesk.com/theatre/interview-martin-crimp-republic-satire?page=0,0> [Accessed: 29th January 2016]
[310] Liz Tomlin, 'Citational Theory in Practice: A Performance Analysis of Characterisation and Identity in Katie Mitchell's Staging of Martin Crimp's Texts', *Contemporary Theatre Review* (2014) p.374

Identity becomes a source of debate in Crimp's play. Anne and the unnamed voices work as changing sources of consciousness. Rachel Clements reviews Crimp's play; she claims that 'the paradox of Anne, perhaps, is that whilst she continually shape-shifts and alters, she is also the play's rooting point.'[311] Anne lacks a single corporeal body, and so exists outside of a recognisable form. She is the consistent factor of the piece, yet simultaneously alters throughout the performance. She goes by a series of different names; Clements discusses the 2007 version of the play, directed by Katie Mitchell. Clements states that she 'attempted to avoid the construction of Anne as one single, stable character or absent figure. As well as intervening in the text, the decision to render Anne as partially, occasionally, and multiply present attempted to achieve this.'[312] Anne becomes further abstract in performance. During the performance Mitchell chose to ensure Anne could not be identified as a single conscience. She cannot be viewed as having the same traits as the voices of the piece. Once the figure enters multiplicity, she is able to surpass the bounded nature of dramatic anthropocentric work. She is central, yet instantaneously absent of consciousness. She does not appear to control her own actions, rather acting as a puppet for the conscious choices of others.

This could perhaps make Anne the noesis of the performance. Stephen Kaufer and Anthony Chemero explore Husserlian phenomenology. They argue that 'every noesis is particular, it comes and goes.'[313] The act can be changed; or

---

[311] Rachel Clements, 'Deconstructive Techniques and Spectral Technologies in Katie Mitchell's Attempts on Her Life,' *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol. 24 (3) (2014) p.334

[312] Ibid, p. 335

[313] Stephen Kaufer and Anthony Chemero, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2015) p.36

altered over time. Similarly, Anne also establishes this pattern of alteration through the play structure. She becomes an object to react to, and this enables the playwright to present her as functioning on a different level to the other voices. She becomes controlled by the playwright's intentions, and so becomes an icon of the concept she represents. She becomes a key element of the semiosphere, and the phenomenological progression of the piece. Sierz includes critics' responses of *Attempts on Her Life*; he states that 'Michael Billington saw Anne as 'basically a vehicle for the writer's moral rejection of a selfish, materialist civilisation based on consumer fetishism.''[314] She lacks human qualities, emotions or control of her own destiny. As the noesis, Anne becomes an item that can be changed to create a reaction. This questions the jurisdiction that one conscious can have over another. It also asks whether Anne has a conscious mind at all. As a vehicle for the playwright's reflection of society, Anne's motivation becomes larger than her own needs.

In *Attempts on her Life*, others simultaneously present Anne in various forms onstage; Crimp details the journey of Anya, another facet of Anne. Unlike the previous play, the figures deliberate another's destiny rather than their own:

'-She screams. She breaks down and scratches her cheeks like something/

from an ancient tragedy.

[314] Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp* (2006) p.52

-I don't think so. I don't think Anya screams. I don't think she breaks

down and scratches her cheeks like something from an ancient tragedy.'

[315]

The figures challenge each other over how she would react to destruction. Not

only does Anne take on an alias, her personality is also critiqued. There is no

element concerning Anne that is presented as static. Even her name can be

changed, this becoming an aspect for identity to be connected to. This also

implies that the voices have not met her themselves. The can choose how she

reacts to experiences, changing it depending on how they want the scenario to

proceed. Erika Fischer-Lichte discusses Robert Wilson's work. She states that 'for

the audience, the performer's body and the dramatic character diverged because

the actor's bodily being-in-the-world dominated the stage so exclusively.'[316] Just

as Wilson's characters divide from the theatrical realm, Crimp's figures are

alienated from the story that they tell. Anne exists in a realm separate from the

audience; however the actor's creating her story operate in the event. The

simultaneity separates Anne from becoming one full identity and enables

fragments of her existence to crumble further. This challenges her authority over

'self.'

The combination of technical elements is often observed during

performances of the play. Intermediality, or the fusion of technical elements, is

favoured in postdramatic performances. As previously noted, Mitchell's 2007

---

[315] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005)
pp.218-219
[316] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*
(New York, Routledge, 2008) p.87

production utilises it heavily. Billington writes that 'On a stage crowded with lights, cameras and video screens, each scene becomes a new set-up offering us a different image of Anne.'[317] These elements overwhelm the stage as well as the senses of those in the space. The audience simultaneously experiences both a physical actor's information, and the experience created by the surrounding media. Anne is vividly imagined, yet can then be recreated as a different image in moments. It also furthers the notion that Anne can only exist in the speaking space. Paul Allain and Jen Harvie state that media in performance 'raises issues of liveness and presence.'[318] Media elements require preparation, removing the spontaneity of the event presence. In the case of Anne, they serve to reiterate the idea that she exists outside of the performance realm. The technical components cement the limits of her ability to be present in the space. She can be translated by screen or by word, vessels that can change instantly. However the necessity for her identity to change so rapidly restricts her from taking on a singular form. She becomes a simulacrum of identity. She is conveyed by media and technology, and becomes part of the technical experience herself. This further challenges her ability to enter humanity and questions the reality of what is translated onstage.

There are further criticisms surrounding media used within modern performance. Billington states that whilst observing the 2007 performance, he believed that the use of media saturated the intentionality of the performance; 'The virtue of Crimp's play is that it offers carte blanche to its director. But

---

[317] Michael Billington, 'Attempts on her Life,' in *The Guardian* (Thursday 15th March 2007) (Thursday 15th March 2007) <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2007/mar/15/theatre3> [Accessed: 29th January 2016]
[318] Paul Allain and Jen Harvie, *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance* (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.174

Mitchell's version for me focuses too exclusively on media manipulation at the expense of the play's political purpose.'[319] Billington appears to argue that Crimp's original intentions for the event are shrouded by Mitchell's directorial vision. This calls to question whether the playwright's identity should also be taken into consideration when approaching a modern piece. Similarly to this, there is a notable distancing from the political in Lehmann's definition of the postdramatic. Brandon Woolf states that "Fuchs is frustrated by Lehmann's refusal to explicitly engage with questions of the 'political' in the body of his text.'[320] It becomes clear that aspects, which connect the play to specifics such as politics or a historical setting, are alienated from this performance, drawing a comparison to the postdramatic. 'The now' is approached as a timeless zone, which cannot exist in the reality outside the event. The playwright's intentions can be lost in the director's desire to place the piece in its own present. Just as the abstraction of the characters is fluid, the intentionality also takes on an elusive nature.

This criticism can be counteracted. When exploring the production, it is notable that Crimp had an influence in the translation of the piece onto the stage. Mitchell stated that 'the great thing about working with a living writer is that you can discuss the text.'[321] Although intentions for the play can change, Mitchell was careful to include Crimp in decisions that were made in the original production.

---

[319] Michael Billington [Accessed: 29th January 2016]
[320] Brandon Woolf, Towards a Paradoxically Parallaxical Postdramatic Politics?' in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perpectives on Contemporary Performance*, ed. Karen Jurs-Münby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles (London, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) (London, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.32
[321] Katie Mitchell Interview, in Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp (*London, Methuen Drama, 2010) p.202

The playwright becomes part of the production process, and the event encompasses more elements; the playwright and the director share in the creation of the event, broadening the tools used for translation in the performance. Mitchell goes on to say that ''In the rehearsal room, Martin tunes in to how you are directing, and he will only give notes using the language you are using with actors.'[322] She presents a synthesis between the playwright and director. Just as the director respects the original work of the playwright, the playwright supports the succeeding work that is based on the stimulus. It is clear that Mitchell chooses to expand on aspects of Crimp's text, creating a balance between the original text and the intentions of the director. Essentially, regardless of criticisms, Mitchell proves that a collaboration with the living playwright can be significant in extending the work further, translating the work from text into the performance space.

If we are to assume that the postdramatic offers no finality, it is fundamental to look at how Crimp approaches this ending of the event in the space. It is important to state 'in the space,' as arguably the event does not necessarily end when the performance does. Lehmann states that during the event, 'theatre becomes a 'social situation; in which the spectator realizes that what s/he experiences depends not just on him/herself but also on others.'[323] The active role of the spectator means that the awareness generated may leave the space, and so the event continues past the point of the theatre. The audience's role does not have a definite end point, and varies dependant on each individual. Identity becomes vital in the reception of the event. Each audience's

[322] Ibid, p.203
[323] Hans Thies- Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jurs-Münby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.107

response and awareness of others in the event may differ considerably. Crimp's piece ends on the discussion of murder:

> '-Brought his own child. Brought his own child in his pyjamas to watch him do it. Stab her. Yes.
>
> *Silence.*
>
> -And *can* it?
>
> -Can it what?
>
> -Mean 'previously frozen'?
>
> *Silence.'*[324]

The piece ends midway through the interchange between voices. One accounts the murder; the other appears confused by smaller details of the event. The conversation relating to 'how you define the word 'fresh''[325] undermines the serious nature of the discussion. It further disseminates Anne's identity as a non-human. The voices cannot relate to her, she is a system to aid the expression of narrative or myths. In addition, Anne lacks a 'fresh' quality by the final moments of the performance. She has become many abstract things in the event, yet ultimately she has also become nothing. In the time, her identity has become no more certain. We have learnt nothing concrete about her. It becomes clear that Anne is a tool of novelty for the voices, as they exhaust the possibilities of her being.

---

[324] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.284
[325] Ibid, p.284

Identity becomes a luxury that Anne cannot obtain. Even in a situation where she may die, there is no endpoint that can be certain. This reiterates the notion that the theatre can be the postdramatic speaking space. Anne is used as a visual illustration of a hypothesis. Angel-Perez states that Crimp, and fellow British writer Churchill, 'find a way of speaking out about the ethical disaster of our time.'[326] The speaking space is used as a reflection of society. The individual conscious is lost in the opinion of 'the anyone,' who operate as a collective. Anne becomes a victim of the postdramatic, being utilised as an example of societal corruption, whilst concurrently being corrupted herself. Angel-Perez also states that Crimp's work is able to 'reveal the inhumanity of humanity.'[327] Not only is Anne mistreated in the realm; she is mistreated in the event. The voices that control her actions continue to create worlds of dystopia for her to inhabit. The inhumanity in the piece is shown through the notion that she cannot be helped. Anne is trapped in the layers of event that she inhabits.

Towards the final moments of the performance, the voices more frequently overlap. Figures speak at the same time, expressing different ideas. Katie Mitchell summarises Crimp's form; 'using this form, you can move from specific events to general ideas really efficiently, showing how the same pattern is repeated at every level of society, and all over the globe.'[328] The overlapping of text and present tense enables the two final thoughts to run alongside each other. One voice considers Anne's final narrative. The other does not

---

[326] Elisabeth Angel-Perez, 'Language Games and Literary Constraints: Playing with Tragedy in the Theatre of Caryl Churchill and Martin Crimp in Vicky Angelaki, *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.93
[327] Ibid, p.81
[328] Katie Mitchell Interview, in Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp (*London, Methuen Drama, 2010) p.200

acknowledge the prospect of Anne's death. Instead it questions what it means to be frozen or 'fresh.' Anne has been the previously frozen factor of the event. However although she is faced with death in this scenario, it is unclear whether she can ever be unfrozen from the loop. If we apply a postdramatic reading, Anne's place in the event surpasses death, or existence in a past realm. Even if one version of herself dies, another one takes its' place. Lehmann presents the case of Marina Abramowicz, who 'presented herself to visitors stipulating that they were allowed to do anything to her.'[329] He states that by doing this 'danger and pain are the result of deliberate passivity.'[330] Similar to this example, the voices are passive to the process that Anne has been subjected to. Over the course of the event, she has been tormented and neglected. In no scenario has she been shown mercy by the voices that tell her story. They continue on with the event, regardless of how it affects the identity they present.

If we continue with this example, 'everything is unpredictable because it is left to the behaviour of the visitors.'[331] In the case of Crimp's play, the audience is in a physically passive situation; although they are challenged by the piece, they cannot alter the action. They cannot interfere in the event, as are placed in a situation where they are expected to question the actions but not interfere. Yet just as the intellectual response cannot be predicted inside the theatre, the reaction that will be given outside of the performance also cannot be foreseen. Blackadder states that 'Crimp evokes a contemporary world characterized by

[329] Hans Thies-Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jurs-Münby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.140
[330] Ibid, p.140
[331] Ibid, p.140

consumerism, ethnic hatred, sexual violence, and inauthenticity.'[332] It is arguable that the desire to question identity within a contemporary 'present' is a prominent theme of the event, but each performance varies their dependence on elements of the text and space. When referencing Crimp's work more broadly, Mireia Aragay argues that '*Cruel and Tender* is not so much a play about terrorism per se, as a play about ourselves.'[333] *Attempts on her Life* is similar in this respect. There are themes throughout the piece, however the fundamental element is how the audience take it with them beyond the event. It questions how we react to seeing pain and manipulation, whether on stage or outside of the performance. At the end of the performance, the audience moves from being exposed to the productions intent, to a position of power. They are able to deliberate the experience. They can answer whether the event does offer a solution, or rather pushes for the audience to find the solution themselves.

The role of the voices is also crucial. Each voice lacks personal traits that could allow the spectator to recognise them. They become 'the anyone.' Kaufer and Chemero discover that 'if we understand the world, we understand it as a world filled with others.'[334] The voices in the piece cooperate with each other, they work systematically to create Anne's path through each act. They have awareness for each other's opinions beyond the regard that they have for hers, if they have any understanding of her as a fellow conscious at all. They appear to view themselves as a separate entity to Anne. They are detached from her

---

[332] Neil Blackadder 'Review' in *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (John Hopkins University Press, March 2008) p.141

[333] Mireia Aragay, 'A Mirror of our own Anxiety: Civilization, Violence and Ethics in Martin Crimp's "Cruel and Tender" in *Atlantis*, Vol.33 No. 2 (AEDEAN: Associacion espanola de estudios anglo-americanos, December 2011) p.86

[334] Stephen Kaufer and Anthony Chemero, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2015) p.64

situation, and so cannot show empathy to the situations that she exists in. One voice states: 'oh yes. There's definitely a funny side.'[335] They make a decision on whether the situation that Anne is in could contain humour. Regardless of each act, Anne is treated as an external object. The voices lack accountability as they work as a collective. They cannot be recognised individually. This enables them to prioritise their own communal intentions, and use Anne as an abstract construction of the space.

Neil Blackadder, in contrast to other critics, writes; 'I for one was pleased to hear her recognize the pitfalls inherent in employing extensive technology onstage, and she deserves much credit for combining multimedia with live actors.'[336] Mitchell challenges how the stage can be used; it becomes more than a base for the actors. The stage is an active component of the event, detrimental to the perception of the text. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Mitchell directed the production of *2071*, a touring piece of theatre presented in 2014 at the Royal Court Theatre, London. The piece focussed on Chris Rapley's research; 'As one of Britain's leading climate scientists, he has been uncompromising in taking on global warming sceptics in debate and, as a former director of the British Antarctic Survey, he knows a thing or two about physical danger.'[337] In order to support Rapley's testament, Mitchell used the stage as a backdrop for his research. The stage became lit up with charts and graphs, moving to coordinate with the data being recounted. It became a hypnotic presence in the

---

[335] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.233
[336] Neil Blackadder, 'Review' in *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (John Hopkins University Press, March 2008) p.141
[337] Robin Mckie 'Royal Court play 2071 looks at future of humankind after global warming' in *The Guardian* (Saturday 1st November 2014) [Accessed: 30th January 2016]

space, and served as both an educational tool and a testament to the capabilities of technical equipment as a central aspect of performance. Without dramatic action occurring, the visual media served as a moving stimulus, creating energy behind the seated Rapley. This draws similarities to Mitchell's 2007 production. The media elements of the piece show how closely technology and the human identity can be presented.

In the 2007 production, the voices are each assigned to a particular figure. Each conscious is allocated to a specific actor, and so the anonymous nature of these characters changes. Tomlin declares that 'texts no longer drifted across each other, but were rather spoken by, and so originated from, specific and particular people, for example, a young blonde woman, a middle-aged black woman, a dark-skinned, dark-haired young man.'[338] The voices become recognisable, and encompass human traits. Unlike the text, each voice becomes responsible for their own actions; their physicality as a singe conscious allows the spectator to assign meaning to the text they deliver. 'The anyone' role becomes obscured by this assignment of identity, and the intentionality of the piece changes. Individuals now control the noesis of Anne. Tomlin also states that 'the spectator cannot help but begin to read character and identity into the spoken parts, it might seem as if the best that can be done/is to ensure that the inevitable identities that emerge are fleeting and non-consistent.'[339] In order to re-enter the void space, the voices must relinquish their assigned identities. This allows them to return 'the anyone' and re-establish the postdramatic text-bearer

---

[338] Liz Tomlin, 'Citational Theory in Practice: A Performance Analysis of Characterisation and Identity in Katie Mitchell's Staging of Martin Crimp's Texts', *Contemporary Theatre Review* (2014) p.374
[339] Ibid, p.374

role. This allows the event to continue moving between the established platforms.

It is clear that Anne lacks power, and identity in the play. Garner discusses the work of Gordon Craig and the Über-marionette; 'Craig called for the Über-marionette as a replacement for the actor's body, which [...] constituted a flawed instrument in the production of symbolic meaning.'[340] The body becomes a disposable element. The reliance of mechanical stage elements provides the necessities needed for symbolic, or semiotic understanding. Comparably, Annie also enters this transformation. Her body, at points, is no longer necessary. Her body is likened to a car; 'We see the new *Anny* snake along between the red-tiled Mediterranean rooftops.'[341] Her name is changed to serve the semiosphere she is place within. She becomes semiotic, a symbol of luxury and wealth. She mirrors the ownership and possession others have over her existence. Without a body, she further becomes reliant on others for existence. She creates a new type of marionette, one that transitions from corporeal form to a semiotic object. Her transformation to become a mechanism in the performance is clear, transitioning back into her body once the semiotic illusion is completed.

There is a notable comparison to be made between Mouth in Beckett's *Not I* and Annie. Both are victims of the marionette mechanism of the performance. Both entities lack the attached body. However whereas it can be assumed that Mouth has a hidden body, or a supporting mechanism, Annie can be entirely absent. The defining separation between the two figures is voice; Mouth can acknowledge 'self' and revert between identities. Yet Annie cannot

---

[340] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.59
[341] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.234

refer to 'self' without the voice of another. She is entirely dependant on others for her perspective of herself.   Garner describes Craig's 'abhorrence of the body's disruptive physicality.'[342] During *Not I*, all attention is placed on Mouth. There can be no disruption or pull of focus from the body. In contrast, Annie's body disrupts the space with its absence. There is no representation or simulacrum of humanity. In human form, Annie is lost. She is not only a part of the mechanism, but fully embodied by the technical event. Only when the void is reclaimed can Annie repossess a body.

Both the semiosphere and phenomenology face a problem in the theatre void; death and 'nothing' holds no absolution. The void is passed into and out of. It is here that the philosophy of Heidegger and existential phenomenology can be used to discuss the emotions of consciousness. Kaufer and Chemero define death and how it is approached by the conscious mind. They claim that 'death means that our entire commitment to a certain mode of being in the world is vulnerable and can dissolve at any moment.'[343] There is no fixed end for Anne, and she does not commit to the finality of death. The void is utilised as a permanent state of being. In the 2007 performance, Clements claims that 'In a considerable number of her appearances, the woman in the red dress seemed to be either dead, dying, or suicidal; the acts of her creation and generation speak also of death and demise, in a way.'[344] Here, Anne moves between various states. Her existence is

---

[342] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.59
[343] Stephan Kaufer and Anthony Chemero, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2015) p.75
[344] Rachel Clements, 'Deconstructive Techniques and Spectral Technologies in Katie Mitchell's Attempts on Her Life,' *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol. 24 (3) (2014) p.335

consumed by mortality, yet she cannot truly experience this herself. She is trapped with the present, and returns to the space for every act.

This is mirrored in all the explored plays. Death is no longer a certainty, or a definite end point for performance. Annie's regeneration bears similarities to *Rockaby*, whose figure rocks closer to death. In both plays, death is a clear theme. Yet passing on exceeds both through the entirety of the pieces. In the case of *Rockaby*, the figure is caught in repetitive verse and motion. This repetitive structure is also shown in *Attempts on Her Life,* but spans over many scenarios. Annie is salvaged many more times than Beckett's figure. Furthermore, whereas we can assume Beckett's figures would ultimately pass on, Crimp's never obtains this inevitability. Annie further becomes the marionette of the performance. Sierz describes Annie as ''an absence filled by other people's opinions and ideas.'[345] She does not have enough individuality to die. She becomes an idea that can be reprocessed. This lack of humanity separates her from Beckett and Kane's figures, and holds her perpetually within the event space. She cannot leave, and is destined to remain in the theatre mechanism.

The phenomenological *reverse-gaze* is also central to understanding consciousness in Crimp's play. Nicholas Ridout described the *reverse-gaze* as 'the rupture in the machine of illusion.'[346] In the case of *Attempts on Her Life*, the gaze can be applied to how the body exists corporeally. Without character, and identity questioned, the magnetism between body and human consciousness becomes weakened. Garner states that 'the reverse-gaze returns me to myself,

---

[345] Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp*, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.52
[346] Nicholas Ridout, *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) p.88

forcing a corporeal self-consciousness.'[347] The fluidity of the human mind is considered, questioning whether the mind can exist outside of a physical objective. Garner's statement also calls to question whether the playwright's gaze can become apparent once corporeal existence is transcended. During the play, the confusion and change of voices juxtaposes against Crimp's clear intentions for dramatic breakdown. Whereas the voices he creates are often tentative, or quick to change their minds, the playwright carves a path through the piece. He creates themes of control, both the power conveyed over Annie and his own authority over the piece. In Interview, Mitchell stated that 'obviously, the form that Martin has chosen is the most efficient way to communicate the play's content.'[348] In this circumstance, the intention of the playwright is paramount to the event experience. Mitchell shows that Crimp has authority over the performance. His gaze holds a notable influence over the event, beyond the text.

This influence is clear in Crimp's notes before the text. He implies that the play should contain 'actors whose composition should reflect the composition of the world beyond the theatre.'[349] The playwright assumes his own gaze. During this piece, Crimp's intentions transition from the text and into the performance. This is exposed to the audience's gaze. Ultimately it is the audience's perceptions of these choices that can determine the reality of the play. The audience deciphers the experiences of the actors, and so the assignment of 'truth' is left to them alone. Crimp's gaze initiates this journey, shaping the event. However once

---

[347] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) pp.50-51
[348] Katie Mitchell in Interview in Aleks Sierz, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.200
[349] Martin Crimp, *Martin Crimp: Plays 2* (London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005) p.202

the spectator receives this, their response is entirely individual. Garner argues that physical entity 'is an object in this world, much [...] of which is available to my direct perception.'[350] The spectators can assign meaning to their own body. They are able to surround it with their own semiotics and cultural understanding of physical form. Correspondingly, the spectator can then apply these models to the body they see in the event. The gaze of the onlooker absorbs the aesthetics of the human state in performance. It is through this that reality, or the representational reality of the semiosphere, can be delivered.

3.4 Conclusion

The role of the postdramatic performance is to open up a wider level of examination on the stage. Fisher- Lichte states that the work 'arises as an object from the activities of the creator-subject and is entrusted to the perception and interpretation of the recipient-subject.'[351] The efforts of the playwright and company are the first stage of the event, yet it doesn't end at this point. The spectator is then given authority over how they perceive the piece. They are not told how to feel, or what they should take away from the experience. There is an acceptance that the spectator will have his or her own individual view of the event. Sierz states that 'Anne's contradictory character indicates that she's an absurdist notion, an absence filled by other people's opinions and ideas.'[352] This

---

[350] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.50
[351] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (New York, Routledge, 2008) p.22
[352] Aleks Sierz, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.52

would indicate that the common theme through the postdramatic is absence; just as there is an absence of character there is a lack of resolution. The spectator is faced with fragments of thoughts and the generation of abstract realms. The event does not offer an escape from this. The removal of the passive theatrical experience is vital to the ideology, and that Crimp also values the importance of placing the spectator in an active position of thought.

The abstraction of Anne plays an important part in the execution of the play. Although she is the main topic of the performance, she is de-centred from focus and holds no authority in the space. Sierz presents that the play's 'formal daring also suggests a future kind of theatre in which the conventions of naturalism are subverted and reinvention.'[353] The term 'reinvention' has reoccurred throughout this chapter. Crimp's piece enters a state of constructing, and then breaking down any conventions in the space. The event becomes a platform for fabricating its own reality, to varying degrees of stability. Sierz also is suggesting that Crimp has a larger interest than the standalone play. He plans to broaden how theatre is approach, both in text and during performance. Character can no longer be used as an anchor for meaning. Anne is reinvented multiple times, to the excess that she cannot be rewarded with her own human traits. Her identity is a feature that is never fully achieved. Crimp presents the attainment of identity to be something sacred, and questions whether it can ever be fully realised. Anne is made up of the environment surrounding her. She is a product of others and the structure she is exposed to. Spencer Golub argues that 'given representation's aversion to death and nonbeing, is the truth that it shows

---

[353] Ibid, p.53

necessarily *self*-limiting?'[354] The representations of Anne limit her ability to encompass her identity. She cannot truly die, because she exists in a world that has no finality. The semiosphere suspends her as a signifier of meaning. She is not a full entity, yet she is also not lacking any existence at all. Her abstract state places her within a world of continuity, never allowing her to break out of this loop.

The form of the piece is constantly reinvented to serve the scenarios. It mirrors the loop of Anne, facilitating for the nature of her abstraction. The form does not just support, it also works alongside the text to become central to the event. Lehmann states that part of the role of theatre is 'to produce shock and disorientation.'[355] This can be done through the form and structure of the performance. The spectator is unable to become comfortable within the scenario. Each is quick and poignant, moving onto the next episode as soon as the prior is completed. The spectator's relationship concerning the theatre space changes. Sierz says that 'the play's audiences are voyeurs of a satire on voyeurism.'[356] The spectator is subjected to shocking events, helpless to change what is in front of them. Power is only relinquished once the audience leaves the space and is able to deliberate what they have seen. Crimp allows the audience to question their own role in the events, and how a passive role when watching violence affects their outlook on both their play and society. The form supports this, enabling the audience to see numerous images in a limited period of time. Emotion is not the focus of the form. Instead it is concerned with presenting how infinite the

---

[354] Spencer Golub, *Infinity (Stage)* (USA, University of Michigan, 2001) p.6
[355] Hans Thies-Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jurs-Münby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.187
[356] Aleks Sierz, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.53

possibility of Anne is. She is limitless within the realm she exists in, and the structure of the play reiterates this.

Attempts on her Life challenges how dramatic representation creates reality. It operates alongside non-dramatic elements throughout the piece. This allows the event to travel between representation and reality. Crimp shows that representation is fragile, and can only exist within the realm he created. It is unable to exist in realms outside of the abstract. Reality must be sought after away from theatrical representation. Albery argued that 'knowing too much can make you feel you know nothing- and today, there's simply too much to know.'[357] Crimp is careful not to push meaning into the representations; they construct ideas and facets of societal worries. However they are not discussed by the voices to examine them further. The voices relay the text, and move on. The media elements distance the voices from emotional connection to Annie, and so serve to disconnect the audience from perceiving her as a human identity. Lehmann states that '*fate is another word for representability*,'[358] Anne's fate to continue in her world of representation is clear. Yet outside of this realm her fate remains an unclear aspect of the piece. The voices, with no identities of their own, remain devoid of an escape from the present. They also are destined to remain in the performance event. The spectator is the only aspect that can leave the system. The figures' fate remains fluid, if there is one at all. The postdramatic presents the event as frozen in time, eternal in its abstraction. The play enters a

[357] Tim Albery Interview in Aleks Sierz, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.197
[358] Hans Thies- Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.173

continually active world. Crimp shows that form and tense are intrinsic to the perpetuation of ideas in his plays.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that by encouraging a relationship between the postdramatic and transcending ideologies enables a wider reading of reality. Tomlin also attempts to override Lehmann's dismissal of the dramatic, arguing that she strives to 'overturn his suggestion that this negates the capacity of such work to engage in the poststructuralist deconstruction he assigns solely to the postdramatic.'[359] The growth of the dramatic has enabled the viewer to experience reality from a different standpoint. It is the marriage of the postdramatic and dramatic elements that allow the void to become such an intrinsic *sprechraum*. The deconstruction of 'reality' can occur in both of these expression methods. By intertwining the two, the *sprechraum* can jump between ideas and scenarios. A concept can be constructed in the space, yet deconstructed and plunged back into the void. The deconstruction of the dramatic becomes just as paramount as the embrace of the postdramatic. This allows the postdramatic to encounter abstract realms, and destabilise the authority of representation.

Representation has been questioned as a vessel to convey 'truth.' Lehmann demonstrates that ''the *withdrawal of representation* in theatre […] makes sure the spectator's seeing is not deceived by the illusion.'[360] However, it is apparent that the dramatic does not always seek to create an illusion. Reality can be approached through varying platforms. By embracing the dramatic as a method of representation, the postdramatic can build on this to create a multifaceted image of 'truth.' It is through the cooperation of these mediums that

---

[359] Tomlin, Forward: Dramatic Developments' in Vicky Angelaki, *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.xiii
[360] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.172

Beckett's trilogy is able to create a *sprechraum*. Indeed, it would be impossible to remove the dramatic elements from the work. In the case of the explored plays, an entire withdrawal of representation would restrict the capabilities of the void. Tomlin suggests a 'diachronic analysis that identifies the clear progression of drama's self-reflexive capacity.'[361] Similarly, during this thesis I have attempted to discuss the advantages of embracing a semiotic structure into the event. By encompassing dramatic elements, elements of reality can be established from the audience's own knowledge. By basing further investigations upon this, the event can expand into the void, changing how the spectator receives the onstage stimulus.

The limits of reality on stage are vital in the relationship between the dramatic and postdramatic. Lehmann reflects on the differences between images created in theatre and film. He states that 'the theatre image has a low 'density', so to speak; it exhibits lots of gaps where the photographic image is without gaps.'[362] There are moments of absence in the action. There is an understanding that there is a limit to the represented onstage world. However the postdramatic thrives within these 'gaps.' Weiss argues that 'using technology thematically and formally, Beckett challenges the conventions of dramatic structure.'[363] The live performance examples show that the human form can be replaced by the mechanics of modern life. The performers became absorbed by the performance structure. Radosavljevic defines the postdramatic as 'transcending pre-existing

---

[361] Ibid, p.xii
[362] Ibid, p.116
[363] Katherine Weiss, *The Plays of Samuel Beckett* (New York and London, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.64

binaries.'[364] By introducing technology and removing the character autonomy, the performance limitations expand. The actors are no longer confined to a singular conscious character, and surrender to the technical elements around them. The boundaries of the space become extended, as a sense of time is lost by the disintegration of the singular consciousness. Representation loses its authority, giving way to a limitless void. The event is no longer contained to the stage.

Weiss notes that 'even when his machines fail, as seen in all his dramatic texts [...], these machines are still rooted in ideas surrounding authority and authorship.'[365] Similarly to Beckett's plays, Kane has shown a focus on the authoritative nature of the event structure. However, whereas Beckett carefully constructs scenarios, Kane removes many signifiers or semiotic realms for the voices to exist in. Lehmann analyses *4.48 Psychosis*, stating; 'it is the radical uncompromising drive for a completely authentic meeting.'[366] In both this play and *Crave*, the focus is pulled towards the voices. The role of the *textrager* is vital in these plays. Lehmann claims that 'the theatre presents the voice as the object of exposition.'[367] The plays consistently move between describing scenarios and then relinquishing the singular identity they have just embraced. Each voice transcends their singular role, only entering it to expose tragic elements of the piece. Beckett's *texttragers* lost control of identity, but Kane's voices maintain

---

[364] Duska Radosavljevic, *Theatre-Making: Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21st Century* (Houdmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p.18
[365] Katherine Weiss, *The Plays of Samuel Beckett* (New York and London, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.237
[366] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jurs-Münby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.106
[367] Ibid, p.147-148

the ability to manipulate the theme of individuality. This fluidity of identity demonstrates that by transcending identity, reality through the *sprechraum* can take place. Without the confinement of a singular conscious, the combined voices are suspended within the void to contemplate the tragic theme.

During *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, the playwright shows her willingness to explore the conscious human mind. Lehmann states that in the case of the latter play, it shows distinct signs of being 'a tragic text which corresponds to the aesthetics of postdramatic theatre.'[368] Although his text *Postdramatic Theatre* relinquishes all authority of the dramatic, here he ascertains a relationship that can be created between positions. Each can hold aspects of the other. The voices in both plays lack detailed histories and character profiles, however they have distinct emotion. This emotion can be conveyed by one or more voices, showing a combined consciousness. The tragic nature of both plays cannot be disputed. By embracing this, the postdramatic questions how the voices in the text react in a void space. The different figures in *Crave* move between independence and merging together. They cannot be defined as a singular identity, nor can they be entirely separated into characters. Comparably, the stream of thought in *4.48 Psychosis* can equally not be contained to one conscious. The void allows the voices to move between bodies and time frames. There is no static element to the structure. Fischer-Lichte states that 'what is fascinating about the phenomenon of presence is that, evidently, components of the body and mind meet and

---

[368] Hans-Thies Lehmann, 'A Future for Tragedy? Remarks on the Political and the Postdramatic', in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Theatre*, ed. by Jerome Carroll, Karen Jürs-Munby, and Steve Giles (London & New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) p.106

interact.'[369] Yet in the case of Kane's texts, presence is apparent from the mind meeting the void. The corporeal existence of the *texttrager* no longer signifies presence, arguably changing the aesthetics of meaning onstage.

Kane displays a measure of independent motivation for her voices, however this is very different in Crimp's play. During *Attempts on Her Life*, the central figure is completely devoid of consciousness. Any fixed identity is revoked, replacing her choices with narrating voices that determine her actions. The phenomenological reverse-gaze can be vital to interpreting the motivation of Annie. Garner claims 'the reverse-gaze catches me in the act of looking.'[370] Annie's entire creation is based around the spectator watching. She displays no independence. Annie serves entirely as a tool for other voices to create images of, displayed to the audience as a pawn in the play structure. Crimp's gaze is fundamental to the piece. The playwright's voice is apparent in the live performance, showing his own manipulation of Annie. Angelaki proposes that 'there is no such thing as an innocuous phrase in Crimp's theatre.'[371] Crimp is the ultimate control over Annie. Just as Kane and Beckett controlled the involvement of their voices with the event, Crimp starves his figure of control. The playwright is a powerful voice in his or her own play. The 'truth' of the playwright's intentions is particularly apparent in Crimp's play, questioning the power a single figure has in the space.

---

[369] Erika Fischer-Lichte, T*he Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskya Iris Jain, (New York, Routledge, 2008) p.98
[370] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.50
[371] Vicky Angelaki, *The Plays of Martin Crimp: Making Theatre Strange* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.67

Attempts on Her Life also serves as an experiment into the different event realms. It is clear that the play moves between a void space and understood semiospheres. Gebauer and Wulf argue that 'For Derrida, every text stands in mimetic relation to other texts.'[372] Just as all texts serve as a reaction to each other, Crimp presents created worlds in response to history and the spectators' assumed experiences. Each scene is derived from the semiotic understanding of the world. The switch between worlds, and abandonment of them, shows the semiosphere to be a delicate state. It collapses once Annie is removed, and in this case, cannot be revisited. The manifestation of the void recurs throughout the piece, becoming a more reliant condition. Although the semiospheres can exist allude to historical points, the void suspends entirely in the 'now.' Lehmann, when discussing Aristotelian drama, states that 'gaps and leaps in the internal continuum of time [...] would immediately function as points of intrusion for external reality.'[373] Likewise, the moments of fragmentation in the semiosphere allow reality to bleed through. The 'now' of the void recurrently resumes its' state in the event, showing other realms to be a temporary dramatic illusion. The postdramatic void becomes a reliable element in the structure. The 'now' takes authority from historical scenarios, and so becomes the vehicle for reality to be conveyed from.

Furthermore, Crimp's figure Annie shows the consuming nature of the event. Each playwright's figure holds a different level of authority. Annie shows a detachment from conscious thought. Sierz discusses the opinion of Dr Heiner

---

[372]Gunter Gebauer, and Christoph Wulf, *Mimesis: Culture- Art- Society* (California: University of California press, 1995)
p.294
[373] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.160

Zimmermann; 'for him, the play [...] post-dramatic theatre, in which images of Annie try to render her presence while simultaneously emphasising her absence.'[374] Annie's presence is entirely constructed by those around her. She becomes absent by her lack of choices. She does not relate to the voices who narrate her action, and a estrangement is established between them and herself. She is entirely created to become a part of the event mechanism, and reality is perhaps established in this; the human form cannot act freely in the performance space. Once this theory has been embraced, the spectator is faced with the human form as a mechanical construct. It becomes a part of the structure of the performance, and no longer requires the conscious identity.

All of the chosen plays ultimately show that reality is a delicate and elusive element of performance. It soaks into the event through the playwright's design. Garner discusses Beckett's play *Not I*, stating that 'Beckett creates a temporal ambiguity where the narrative past slips into the present.'[375] Arguably, all three playwrights investigate with the temptation of the present tense. It is through the conscious mind attaining this 'now' state that 'truth' can be realised. Whether discussing the representational reality of the semiosphere or the void *sprechraum*, it is notable that 'truth' is reliant on the present. Garner states 'the body is that by which I come to know the world.'[376] By relinquishing hold of individual corporeality, the conscious singular mind can be removed from the semiosphere. Each of the playwrights has demonstrated how the body can be absorbed into the mechanism of the event. It becomes a component of the space,

---

[374] Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp*, 2nd Edition ed. Patrick Lonergan and Erin Hurley (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006) p.54
[375] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994) p.134
[376] Stanton B. Garner p.50

and no longer holds the personal nature that Garner describes. The body exists solely for the influence of the playwright and the event. By surrendering this hold to physical singularity, the mind can transcend the representational dramatic and enter into the void present.

The playwrights all demonstrate the capabilities of theatre rooted within the present. Each has approached this differently, but all have used this as a platform to convey ideologies to the spectator. Lehmann articulates that 'aesthetically and conceptually the real in theatre has always been excluded but it inevitably adheres to theatre.'[377] The dramatic traditionally relies on illusion through historical and social stories that can be related to the audience. The present allows this reality to be realised. With no context, the event has to be experienced at as it occurs. 'When the real asserts itself against the staged on stage, then this is mirrored in the auditorium.'[378] The present allows this reality to potentially be observed. With no past, the voices can only be considered as they are in the space. The spectator must make judgements based on the stimulus, rather than deliberating a fictive history. The figures become suspended in this state. Equally, there is no future. They exist purely in the form they are exposed in, this repeating until the event must withdraw them. The present means there can no longer be characters, only ideas. It is here than reality can be observed, as the text-bearer fulfils their role.

In this thesis, I hypothesised that reality could be represented, or derived, through the cooperation of the postdramatic and traditional dramatic methods. I contend that by combining these methods, the performance space becomes an

---

[377] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.101
[378] Ibid, pp.103-104

environment conducive to analysing the conscious mind. In the epilogue of *Postdramatic Theatre*, Lehmann states that the spectators are confronted with the problem of having to react to what is happening in their presence.'[379] Ultimately, the audience is given their own mind for deliberation. Lehmann implies the power the spectator possesses. Once the action onstage is over, the spectator's own mind has authority over how they deliberate the performance. The event continues after the space is abandoned. The spectator decides the extent of the reality they have experienced, and whether they view it as a representational event or hold aspects of 'truth.' Sierz states, 'to experience it, you have to be there.'[380] The presence of the spectator in the event completes the experience. They become their own element, and ensure that the piece exceeds the space. Each play is dependent on the audience, and it is through this marriage that both the dramatic and postdramatic can convey reality. The spectators then take on their own role as a bearer of the event, which can allow the themes of the work to transcend the postdramatic event.

Lehmann describes the link between the dramatic and postdramatic, maintaining that, 'the limbs or branches of a dramatic organism, even if they are withered material, are still present and form the space of a memory.'[381] It would be impossible to completely separate the methods of expression. The dramatic is interwoven in the fabric of performance, influencing the reception of the postdramatic. Although Lehmann originally described a method that detached entirely from representation, it is clear that the platform

[379] Ibid, p.187
[380] Aleks Sierz *Rewriting the Nation: British Theatre Today* (London: Methuen Drama, 2011) p.11
[381] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) p.27

can be used in a mutual marriage. The postdramatic is reliant on the dramatic material for the portrayal of the ideas it presents. In the case of the studied playwrights, all have accepted the role of dramatic representation. It is by using the understood semiospheres that the audience can be reached on a 'memory' or semiotic platform. Representational reality, and 'truth' from the present become a symbiotic entity. It is through this cooperation that the figures can enter and destabilise onstage worlds, questioning the phenomenon of illusory theatre. The postdramatic pulls the figures back into the void. 'Now' is the basis of the pieces, and by revert to this tense the playwright ensures the shattering of the crafted semiospheres. The memory of these illusions echoes in the void. Lehmann argued for a 'theatre 'beyond' drama,'[382] however I would argue that this would not necessarily benefit the chosen plays. It is by accepting their dual-roles that the themes and reality of the piece can be realised. The postdramatic encompasses the elements of both fields, and the playwrights show that ideologies can be married in distinct ways. From Beckett's unobtainable identities, to Kane's transcending collective voices, to Crimp's lost 'self' and collective destruction of the singular conscious; it is clear that each playwright has envisaged the reality of identity differently. The postdramatic shows it continues to evolve in its definition, spanning out to further develop the understanding   of   modern   theatre.

---

[382] Ibid, p.74

Bibliography

2071, Duncan Macmillan and Rapley, Chris dir. Mitchell, Katie (Royal Court Theatre, London, 2015)

4.48 Psychosis, dir. Gwinner, Charlotte (Sheffield Theatre, Sheffield 2015)

Albery, Tim, Interview in Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp* (London, Methuen Drama, 2010) pp.192-197

Alexandrov, Vladimir. E, 'Biology, Semiosis, and Cultural Difference in Lotman's Semiosphere' (Comparatitive Literature, 2000)

Allain, Paul and Harvie, Jen, *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2006)

Angelaki, Vicky, *The Plays of Martin Crimp: Making Theatre Strange* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

Angel-Perez, Elisabeth, 'Language Games and Literary Constraints: Playing with Tragedy in the Theatre of Caryl Churchill and Martin Crimp in Angelaki, Vicky, *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp.79-95

Annas, Julia, 'Aristotle, Number and Time' in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 99(Oxford University Press, 1950-) pp.97-113

Aragay, Mireia, 'A Mirror of our own Anxiety: Civilization, Violence and Ethics in Martin Crimp's "Cruel and Tender" in *Atlantis*, Vol.33 No. 2 (AEDEAN: Associacion espanola de estudios anglo-americanos, December 2011) pp.75-87

Aston, Elaine, 'Feeling the Loss of Feminism: Sarah Kane's Blasted and an Experiential Genealogy of Contemporary Women's Playwriting' in *Contemporary*

Women Playwrights into the Twenty- First Century (Houndmills, Basingstoke and Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

Attempts on her Life, Martin Crimp, dir. Albery, Tim (Royal Court Theatre, London, 1997)

Attempts on her Life, Martin Crimp, dir. Mitchell, Katie (Royal Court Theatre, London, 2007)

Attempts on her Life, Martin Crimp, dir. Portland, Grace Defunkt Theatre (Back Door Theatre, Portland 2011)

Badham, Van 'Not I, Footfalls, Rockaby review – a technical masterclass in Beckett,' *The Guardian* [18th February 2015] http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/feb/19/not-i-footfalls-rockaby-review-a-technical-masterclass-in-beckett [Accessed: 4th August 2015]

Barker, Howard, *The Last Supper* (London: John Calder, 1988)

Barnett, David, 'Staging the Indeterminate: Brian Friel's "Faith Healer" as a Postdramatic Theatre-Text,' *Irish University Review*

Vol. 36, No. 2 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, Autumn - Winter, 2006) pp.374-388

Barnett, David, ''Text and Material?' in Performance and Performativity,' *German Cultural Studies* (Germany: European Academic Publishers, 2003)

Barnett, David, *Post-Dramatic Theatre* <http://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/genres/post-dramatic-theatre-iid-2516> [Accessed: 18th May 2015]

Barnett, David, 'When is a Play not a Drama?' *in Cambridge: New Theatre Quarterly* (24.1, 2008) p.14

Beckett, Samuel *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 2014)

'Bifo' Berardi, Franco, *And: Phenomenology of the End* (Cambridge, Mass and London: The MIT Press, 2015)

Billington, Michael, 'Attempts on her Life,' in The Guardian (Thursday 15th March 2007)<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2007/mar/15/theatre3> [Accessed: 29th January 2016]

Billington, Michael 'Not I, Footfalls, Rockaby review – Lisa Dwan's breathtaking Beckett trio,' *The Guardian,* (3rd June 2015) *<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/jun/03/not-i-footfalls-rockaby-review-lisa-dwan-samuel-beckett>* [accessed 2nd October 2016]

Michael Billington, '2071 five-star review – urgent call for the greatest collective action in history ' in *The Guardian* (7th November 2014) <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/nov/07/2071-review-urgent-call-history-royal-court-theatre> [accessed 3 December 2015]

Blackadder, Neil, 'Review' in *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (John Hopkins University Press, March 2008) pp.139-141

Blair, Rhonda, 'The Multimodel Practitioner' in *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science: Body, Brain and Being*, ed. Nicola Shaughnessy (London & New York, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013)

Brater, Enoch 'The "I" in Beckett's Not I' *Twentieth Century Literature* (Hof'stra University, July 1974)

Bryden, Mary 'Sounds and Silence: Beckett's Music' *Samuel Beckett Today (*1997, Editions Rodopi B.V)

Boxall, Peter, *Since Beckett: Contemporary Writing in the Wake of Modernism* (London and New York, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009)

Bush, Sophie, '4.48 Psychosis (Sheffield Theatres),' *Whats on Stage* (13th March 2015) <http://www.whatsonstage.com/sheffield-theatre/reviews/4-48-psychosis-sarah-kane-sheffield_37365.html> [accessed 2 December 2015]

Callery, Dymphna *The Active Text: Unlocking Plays Through Physical Theatre* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2015)

Carlson, Marvin, 'Postdramatic Theatre and Postdramatic Performance,' *Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies* (September/December 2015) < http://www.seer.ufrgs.br/presenca>[Accessed: 13th May 2016]

Carroll, Jerome, 'Phenomenology and the Postdramatic: A Case Study of Three Plays by Ewald Palmetshofer' in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance,* ed. Jerome Carroll, Karen Jürs-Munby, and Steve Giles (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013)

Carroll, Jerome, Jürs-Munby, Karen, and Giles, Steve, *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013)

Catanzaro, Mary 'Recontextualizing the Self: The Voice as Subject in Beckett's "Not I"' *South Central Review* (The John Hopkins University Press on behalf of The South Central Modern Language Association, Spring 1990)

Cavendish, Dominic 'Lisa Dwan: Not I/Footfalls/Rockaby, Barbican, review: 'claustrophobic thrill' in *The Guardian* (3rd June 2015)

Chung, Moonyoung 'The Mother/Daughter Relationship in Beckett: "Footfalls and Rockaby"' *Irish University Review* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999)

Claycomb, Ryan 'Curtain Up? Disrupted, Disguised, and Delayed Beginnings in Theater and Drama', *Narrative Beginnings: Theories and Practices*, Ed. Richardson, Brian (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008)

Counsell, Colin, *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance* (New York, Routledge, 2000)

Clements, Rachel, 'Deconstructive Techniques and Spectral Technologies in Katie Mitchell's Attempts on Her Life,' Contemporary Theatre Review, Vol. 24 (3) (2014)

Crave, dir. Featherstone, Vicky (Royal Court Theatre, London, 2001)

Crave, dir. Faraone, Cheryl (Atlantic Stage 2, New York, 2008)

Crimp, Martin, *Attempts on her Life, Plays: One* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd, 2005)

Crimp, Martin Interview in Sierz, Aleks *The Theatre of Martin Crimp* (London, Methuen Drama, 2010) p.102

Davies, Paul 'Beckett's Metaphysics of Non-Location: Vagrancy, Void, and Formless Fire,' *Samuel Beckett Today* (Editions Rodopi B.V, 2000)

Dawson, Sam William, *Drama and the Dramatic: The Critical Idiom* (Norfolk, Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1970)

De Vos, Lauren, *Cruelty and Desire in The Modern Theater: Antonin Artaud, Sarah Kane, and Samuel Beckett* (Maryland, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011)

De Vos, Laurens & Saunders, Graham, 'Introduction' in *Sarah Kane in Context,* ed. De Vos, Laurens & Saunders, Graham, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010)

Edge, Simon, 'Not I/Footfalls/Rockaby at the Royal Court Theatre – review,' *Express* (14th January 2014)

<http://www.express.co.uk/entertainment/theatre/453844/Samuel-Beckett-triple-bill-Not-I-Footfalls-Rockaby-at-the-Royal-Court-Theatre-review>[Accessed: 14th March 2016]

Elam, Keir, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 2nd Edition (New York, Routledge, 1980)

Escoda Agusti, Clara, 'Martin Crimp's Theatre: Collapse as Resistance to Late Capitalist Society' in Contemporary Drama in English Studies, ED. Martin Middeke, vol. 24 (De Gruyter, May 2013)

Esslin, Mark, 'Patterns of Rejection: Sex and Love in Beckett's Universe,' *Women in Beckett: Performance and Critical Perspectives,* Ben Zvi (Ed.) (United States of America: University of Illinois Press, 1992)

Delgado-Garcia, Cristina, *Rethinking Character in Contemporary British Theatre* (Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2015)

De Waal, Ariane, *Theatre on Terror: Subject Positions in British Drama* (Berlin/Boston: CPI Books, 2017)

Fischer-Lichte, Erika, T*he Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskya Iris Jain, (New York, Routledge, 2008)

Fordyce, Ehren, 'The Voice of Kane' in *Sarah Kane in Context*, ed. Laurens De Vos, and Graham Saunders (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010) p.107

Garde, Ulrike and Mumford, Meg 'Postdramatic Reality Theatre and Productive Insecurity: Destabilising Encounters with the Unfamiliar in Theatre from Sydney and Berlin,' *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance*, ed. Jürs-Munby, Karen, Carroll, Jerome and Giles, Steve (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) pp.147-164

Gardner, Lyn, 'Not I/Footfalls/Rockaby – review,' *The Guardian* (14th January 2014) < http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/jan/14/not-i-footfalls-rockaby-review> [Accessed: 14th March 2016]

Gardner, Lyn*, '* 4.48 Psychosis review – painfully funny revival of Sarah Kane's last work*'* in *The Guardian*, (15th March 2015) <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/mar/15/448-psychosis-sheffield-crucible-review> [Accessed 2 December 2015]

Gardner, Lyn 'Crave/Illusions- Review' in *the Guardian* <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2012/may/18/crave-illusions-review> [Accessed: 18th May 2012]

Garner, Stanton B, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Cornell University Press, 1994)

Gebauer, Gunter and Wulf, Christoph, *Mimesis: Culture- Art- Society* (California: University of California press, 1995)

Golub, Spencer, *Infinity (Stage)* (USA, University of Michigan, 2001) p.6

Hays, Michael, 'Drama and Dramatic Theory: Peter Szondi and the Modern Theater' in *Boundary 2*, vol.11, no.3, *The Criticism of Peter Szondi* (Duke University Press, Spring 1993) pp.69-81

Grieg, David, 'Introduction' in *Complete Plays*, Sarah Kane (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001)

Hartley, John, 'Urban semiosis: Creative industries and the clash of systems,' *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* Vol. 18(1) (Sage Publishing, 2015) pp.79-101

Haydon, Andrew, 'Postdramatic Theatre is No Longer a Closed Book' in *The Guardian* (11th November 2008)

http://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2008/nov/11/postdramatic-theatre-lehmann [Accessed: 4th August 2015]

Hays, Michael 'Drama and Dramatic Theory: Peter Szondi and the Modern Theater,' *The Criticism of Peter Szondi,* Vol. 11 No. 3(Duke University Press, Spring, 1983) pp.69-81

Hoggard, Liz 'Lisa Dwan on Beckett: 'We don't normally look at our frailty,' *The Guardian* (31st May 2015) <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/may/31/lisa-dwan-samuel-beckett-not-i-interview> [Accessed: 14th March 2016]

Innes, Christoper 'Avante Garde Theatre: Themes and Definitions,' *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance* (London, Routledge, 2000)

Jürs-Munby, Karen, 'Introduction' in Hans Thies-Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jurs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006) pp.1-15

Jürs- Munby, Karen, Carroll Jerome and Giles, Steve (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013)

Kalb, Jonathan *Beckett in Performance* (Cambridge, University Press, 1989)

Kalb, Jonathan 'Samuel Beckett, Heiner Muller and Postdramatic Theater' in *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui* (Editions Rodopi B.V, 2001)

Kane, Sarah, *Complete Plays* (Reading: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2001)

Kaufer Stephen and Chemero, Anthony, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2015)

Kershaw, Baz, *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard* (New York: Routledge, 1999)

Lehmann, Hans,-Thies *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York, Routledge, 2006)

Lehmann, Hans-Thies, 'A Future for Tragedy? Remarks on the Political and the Postdramatic', in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Theatre*, ed. by Carroll, Jerome, Jürs-Munby, Karen and Giles, Steve (London & New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013)

Lehmann, Hans-Thies, Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre, trans. Erik Butler (New York: Routledge, 2016)

Lehmann, Hans-Thies, *Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre*, ed. Erik Butler New York: Routledge, 2016)

Locke, Stephen, 'Klaus Michael Grüber', *The Drama Review: TDR*, 21.2, (1977), 45-58

Lopez Silva, Inmaculada, *Contemporary Theatre in "Post" Perspective: Postdrama as the Antisemiotical (R)evolution?* (Cincinnati Romance Review 35) 39-48

Lublin, Robert, ''I Love you Now': Time and Desire in The Plays of Sarah Kane' in *Sarah Kane in Context* ed. De Vos, Laurens and Saunders Graham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) pp.115-125

McConachie, Bruce, 'Introduction: Spectating as Sandbox Play' in *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science: Body, Brain and Being*, ed. Nicola Shaughnessy, (London & New York, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013)

Mckie, Robin, 'Royal Court play 2071 looks at future of humankind after global warming' in The Guardian (Saturday 1st November 2014) <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/nov/01/royal-court-play-2071-global-warming> [Accessed: 30th January 2016]

Meerzon Yana, 'On theatrical semiosphere of postdramatic theatrical event: Rethinking the semiotic epistemology in performance analysis today,' Semiotica (2011)

Meisel, Martin, *How Plays Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby dir. Asmus, Walter (The REP, Birmingham, 2015)

Mitchell, Katie, Interview in Aleks Sierz, *The Theatre of Martin Crimp* (London, Methuen Drama, 2010) pp.197-204

Ndalianis, Angela, 'Genre, culture and the semiosphere: New Horror cinema and post-9/11' International Journal of Cultural Studies, Vol. 18 (Sage Publishing, 2015) p.137

Owens, Craig N, 'Applause and hiss: Implicating the Audience in Samuel Beckett's "Rockaby" and "Catastrophe." In *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* (Midwest Modern Language Association, 2003)

Pavis, Patrice, *Contemporary Mise En Scene: Staging Theatre Today* (New York: Routledge, 2013)

Rabkin, Gerald 'Is There a Text on this Stage?: Theatre/ Authorship/ Interpretation' in *Performing Arts Journal* (Performing Arts Journal, Inc, 1985)

Radosavljevic, Duska, *Theatre-Making: Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21st Century* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

Ranc, Gaelle, *The Notion of Cruelty in the Work of Sarah Kane* (2002, http://www.iainfisher.com/kane/eng/sarah-kane-study-gr2.html [Accessed: 13th May 2015]

Rebellato, Dan, *Interview with Sarah Kane: 3 November 1998*. (Department of Drama and Theatre: Royal Holloway University of London, 2009)

Rebellato, Dan, *Modern British Playwrighting 2000-2009* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013)

Rebellato, Dan, 'Sarah Kane before Blasted: The Monologues' in *Sarah Kane in Context* ed. De Vos, Laurens and Saunders, Graham, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010) pp.28-44

Riccio, Aaron, *Potomac Theatre Project Crave and Somewhere in the Pacific*, 11th July 2008 http://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/potomac-theatre-project-crave-and-somewhere-in-the-pacific

Ridout, Nicholas, *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Saunders, Graham, *'Love me or Kill me': Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002)

Rodenburg, Patsy, *The Need For Words* (London: Methuen, 2005) pp.152-264

Saunders, Graham, 'The Beckettian World of Sarah Kane,' in *Sarah Kane in Context* ed. Laurens De Vos and Graham Saunders (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) pp.68-79

Schonle, Andreas and Shine, Jeremy, *Lotman and Cultural Studies: Encounters and Extensions* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2006) p.6

Sidoropoulou, Avra, *Authoring Performance: The Director in Contemporary Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

Sierz, Aleks, 'Interview: Martin Crimp in the Republic of Satire,' in *The Arts Desk* (Monday 10th December 2012) <http://www.theartsdesk.com/theatre/interview-martin-crimp-republic-satire?page=0,0) [Accessed: 29th January 2016]

Sierz, Aleks, *Rewriting the Nation: British Theatre Today* (London: Methuen Drama, 2011)

Sierz, Aleks, 'Reality Sucks: The Slump in New British Writing' in *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, Vol. 30, No.2 (MIT Press on behalf of Performing Arts Journal Inc, May 2008) pp.102-107

Siouzouli, Natascha, 'Un/Familiar Landscapes: Tragedy and Festivals', in The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures ed. Fischer Lichte, Erika, Jost, Torsten and Jain, Saskya Iris (New York: Routledge) pp.138-155

The Times <http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/crave/?tab=4> [Accessed: 18th May 2015}

Tomlin, Liz, *Acts and Apparitions: Discourses on the Real in Performance Practise and Theory, 1990-2010* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013)

Tomlin, Liz, 'Citational Theory in Practice: A Performance Analysis of Characterisation and Identity in Katie Mitchell's Staging of Martin Crimp's Texts', *Contemporary Theatre Review* (2014)

Tomlin, Liz 'Forward: Dramatic Developments' in Vicky Angelaki, *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp.viii-xxvi

Urban, Ken, *An Ethics of Catastrophe: The Theatre of Sarah Kane* (PAJ, NO. 69 The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) pp.56-66

Urban, Ken, 'Sarah Kane' in *The Methuen Guide to Contemporary British Playwrights*, ed. Middeke, Martin, Schnierer, Peter Paul and Sierz, Aleks (London: Methuen Drama, 2011) pp.304-322

Voigts-Virchow, Eckart, 'We are Anathema'- Sarah Kane Plays as Postdramatic Theatre Versus the 'Dreary and Repugnant Tale of Sense.' In *Sarah Kane in Context.* Ed. De Vos, Laurens and Saunders, Graham (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010)

Waddington, Julie, 'Posthumanist Identities in Sarah Kane' in *Sarah Kane in Context* ed. De Vos, Laurens and Saunders, Graham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010)

Wattenberg, Richard, 'Attempts on Her Life' review: No plot? No clearly defined characters? No problem in this experimental play' in *The Oregonian* (March 5th 2011)<http://www.oregonlive.com/performance/index.ssf/2011/03/theater_review_no_plot_no_clea.html> [Accessed 29th January 2016]

Weiss, Katherine *The Plays of Samuel Beckett* (New York and London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013)

Wolf, Matt, (5th April 1997) 'Review: 'Attempts on her Life'' in *Variety* <http://variety.com/1997/legit/reviews/attempts-on-her-life-1117436650/.> [Accessed: 30th January 2016]

Woolf, Brandon, 'Towards a Paradoxically Parallaxical Postdramatic Politics?' in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance*, ed. Karen Jürs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles (London, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013) pp.31-46