Psychoanalytical study of Sarah Kane, a feminist writer and her power of language, in "Crave"

Estudo psicanalítico de Sarah Kane, uma escritora feminista e seu poder de linguagem em "Crave"

Prof. Ms. Sepideh Kamarzadeh[1]

[1] M.A. in English Literature, Islamic Azad University-Arak Branch, Arak, Iran, Sepide.Kamarzade@gmail.com

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Abstract: In this study attempts is made to study treats of characters within a play and analyze it through Freud's theories and the play's relationship with expressionist theater and experimental theater. Sarah Kane was a British author, who committed suicide at age 28. Obviously, this play is full of loss, death, unfulfilled desire, rape, violence, so this essay surveys the play, analyzes through Freud's theory of psychosexual development and efforts to find any relationship between Sarah Kane's Crave and Freud's psychosexual development theory.
Keywords: Sigmund Freud, Sarah Kane, psychoanalytic development, Crave, life and death instincts.

Resumo: Este estudo é feito para estudar personagens dentro de um jogo e analisá-lo através de teorias de Freud e a relação do jogo com o teatro expressionista e teatro experimental. Sarah Kane era um autor britânico, que se suicidou aos 28 anos Obviamente, este jogo está cheio de perda, morte, desejo não realizado, o estupro, a violência, de modo que este levantamentos ensaio da peça, análises através da teoria do desenvolvimento psicossexual e os esforços de Freud para encontrar qualquer relação entre Crave de Sarah Kane e teoria do desenvolvimento psicossexual de Freud.
Palavras-chave: instintos Sigmund Freud, Sarah Kane, desenvolvimento da psicanálise, Crave, vida e morte.

Introduction

Sarah Kane's biography

Sarah Kane was an English contempory playwright, who was born in 1971, United Kingdom, Brentwood, Essex, and raised by parents, one who believes in the teachings set forth in the New Testament. Kane believes in Jesus and Christianity in her puberty age, but later she declines and refuses all those beliefs. In 1992 she completed her course of studying drama and received a degree from Bristol University, and afterward she went to University of Birmingham in order to study playwrighting in MA course.

At first, before starting to write drama, Kane decided to be a poet, but when she realized her inability in making known and understandable her feelings and thoughts by means of poetry, she started to write for stage. As she herself mentioned in Guardian (1998) that: "theatre has no memory, which makes it the most existential of the arts... I keep coming back in the hope that someone in a darkened room somewhere will show me an image that burns itself into my mind".

Her plays' themes are mostly about love, pain, loss, sexual desire, and physical and psychological torture. All of these themes revealed by using particular way of theatrical form, language, and verbal dimensions of violence of stage action. Kane scholarly observes her works as influenced by expressionist theater and Jacobean tragedy. Aleks Sierz, a well-known critic, expresses her work as an In-Yer-Face style of theatre, a form of theater which under question all the naturalist theater's conventions and styles. Kane's works is little and includes five plays, two articles for Guardian newspaper, and one short film, Skin.

Kane suffered from depression for many years and for two times, she admitted to Maudsley Hospital in London. And finally in 1999, she hanged herself in a bathroom at London's King's College Hospital by her shoelace and committed suicide.

Sigmund Freud's biography

> Sigmund Freud (German pronunciation: [ˈziːkmʊnt ˈfʁɔɣt]; born Sigismund Schlomo Freud; 6 May 1856 – 23 September 1939) was an Austrian neurologist who became known as the founding father of psychoanalysis. Freud qualified as a doctor of medicine at the University of Vienna in 1881, and then carried out research into cerebral palsy, aphasia and microscopic neuroanatomy at the Vienna General Hospital. He was appointed a university lecturer in neuropathology in 1885 and became a professor in 1902 (Wikipedia, 2014).

Freud talks about ego, superego, and Id, and he believes that culture is a tension and struggle between eros (the life instinct, expressed in sexuality) and Thanatos (the death instinct, embodied in aggression). Like his ancestors, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, Freud has no delusion about the place of ideas: "man's judgements of value follow directly his wishes for happiness - that, accordingly, they are an attempt to support his illusions with arguments" (Freud, 771). Actually, "civilization is built up upon a renunciation of instinct" (Freud, 742).

Freud offers that the professional and inventive writer captures in a specific play: "He creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously – that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion – while separating it sharply from reality" (Freud, 437).

As mentioned before, Freud was the father of psychoanalysis development, so he "effectively extended the meaning of sexuality to encompass not merely genital satisfaction but a broader bodily function, having pleasure as its goal and only subsequently serving a reproductive function. Secondly, sexuality now encompassed all of the emotions of affection and friendliness traditionally subsumed under the word love" (Habib, 2005).

He was against feminism, so claimed that a young woman "the erotic wishes predominate almost exclusively, for their ambition is as a rule absorbed

by erotic trends. In young men egoistic and ambitious wishes come to the fore clearly enough alongside of erotic ones" (Freud, 439). "Clearly, Freud challenges many of the central impulses of Enlightenment thought: the (Cartesian) view of the human self as an independent unit; the view- extending through many Enlightenment thinkers into the work of Kant- of the ego as autonomous and rational agent; the idea (culminating in the philosophy of Hegel) of human progress in the history; the notion that the external world and nature can be subjugated both intellectually and materially; and, perhaps above all, the view deriving from Plato and Aristotle and reaching into the later nineteenth century, that human beings can understand themselves" (Habib, 2005).

Discussion

Summary of Crave

Crave is a one act play, written in 1998 by British Sarah Kane (1971-1999). Whole the story is represented by four characters, A, B, C, and M. Both of them are woman, and the other two are man. Along the play, it is obvious that all of characters are craving for something. A craves for his missed love and as he cries, he can't find her, C craves for buying a new tape-recorder along with a blank tape, B craves for M and tries to attract and allure her, but M craves and cries for a child, her wish is to have a lovely child. All the story is shown by using various dimension of brutality, sexual, physical, and verbal. It begins with the word "die", they are tired of life, and think that death is the unique way to escape from their sophisticated life and access to absolute life without any pain, full of happiness.

In Sarah Kane's interview with Dan Rebellato, she clarifies features and attributes of characters within a story as:

> To me A was always an older man, M was always an older woman, B was always a younger man and C was a woman... A, B, C and M

> do have specific meanings which I am prepared to tell you. A is many things: the author and abuser, because they're the same thing; Aleister as in Aleister Crowley, who wrote some interesting books that you might like to read, and the Anti-Christ. My brother came up with arse-hole, which I thought was good. There was also the actor who I originally wrote it for, who was called Andrew, so that was how A came to life. M was simply mother, B was boy and C was child. But I didn't want to write these things down, because then I thought they'll get fixed in those things forever and they'll never change" (Rebellato, 1998).

Freudian theory of psychosexual development

In his theory of psychosexual development, Freud explains about 'drives' or 'instincts' which are natural, in born, and universal sense. "An instinct differs from a stimulus in that it arises from sources of stimulation within the body, operates as a constant force and is such that the subject cannot escape from it by flight as he can from an external stimulus. An instinct may be described as having a source, an object and an aim. The source is a state of excitation within the body and its aim is to remove that excitation" (Freud 1938).

Freud believes that instinct's aim is protecting the primary incidents, so death drive provides an eager to living and come back to the inanimate condition which exists before. "The aim of all life is death . . . inanimate things existed before living ones... (Freud 1920). After Freud, death drive becomes a debatable notion in psychoanalytic and tends to cause differences in opinion.

The sense of sexuality starts in the early stage of life and through a complicated and extended time is developed. Moreover, "the sexual instincts are remarkable for their plasticity, for the facility with which they can change their aim . . . for the ease with which they can substitute one form of gratification for another" (Freud 1938).

Childish attributes of sexual life were supposed to be "essentially auto-erotic (i.e. that it finds its object in the infant's own body) and that its

individual component instincts are upon the whole disconnected and independent of one another in their search for pleasure" (Freud 1905).

It is only in pathological cases that they become active and recognisable to superficial observation" (Freud 1905: 64). According to him, it didnot occur that three pre-genital stages support each other and have a clear relationship: "one may appear in addition to another; they may overlap one another, may be present alongside of one another" (Freud 1940). He also came to believe that in what amount the earlier stage "obtains permanent representation in the economy of the libido and in the character of the individual' (Freud 1938).

In the process of sexual development, there is five stages which are the oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital stage. In succeeding, all these stages become discussed clearly.

The oral stage (the first year of life)

In Freud's opinion, the primary erogenous, sensitive to sexual stimulation organ in an infant is mouth, by its sucking action. "To begin with, all psychical activity is concentrated on providing satisfaction for the needs of that zone. Primarily, of course, this satisfaction serves the purpose of self-preservation by means of nourishment… The baby's obstinate persistence in sucking gives evidence… of a need for satisfaction which, though it originates from and is instigated by the taking of nourishment, nevertheless strives to obtain pleasure independently of nourishment and for that reason may and should be termed sexual"(Freud 1940).

Passionate and physical sucking is recounted as a repeated and regular action and "not infrequently combined with rubbing some sensitive part of the body such as the breast or the external genitalia. Many children proceed by this path from sucking to masturbation" (Freud 1905).

He remarks that in what way and manner throughout the oral or "cannibalistic" stage, "sexual activity has not yet been separated from the ingestion of food . . . The sexual aim is incorporation of the object – the prototype of a process which, in the form of identification, is later to play such an important psychological part" (Freud 1905).

"So the infant seeks to take in or incorporate whatever he comes across or experiences. At this stage his well being is largely dependent on others. If his needs are satisfied, he comes to conceive of existence in a positive way and to see the world about him as warm and benevolent. If he is deprived, his emotional orientation may well be pessimistic; he comes to anticipate that the world will be unrewarding and hostile to his needs… fixation at this stage… is likely to result in an adult who is overly concerned with oral gratification" (Stevens 1983). Also Freud explains about the manner that "during this oral phase sadistic impulses already occur sporadically along with the appearance of teeth" (Freud 1940). Moreover, there is a few other discussion about this part in psychosexual stages of Karl Abraham.

The anal stage (1 to 3 years old)

The anal stage, like oral stage, has its effect on sexuality and it is possible to occur that it joins itself to other physical organs. Freud points out that this stage begins from the first year old to third years old infant and through the second year, controlling bowel is began and developed. This matter leads us to a change from erogenous or sensitivity to sexual stimulation to anus, as a controller of bowels and "as a stimulating mass upon a sexually sensitive portion of mucous membrane" (Freud 1905).

In his idea, this stage is the first and earliest stage of forming "ambivalence", when the functional an unfunctional course are matured. Sadistic in internal unconscious begins to take action to a vast area. There are observed like a "fusion of purely libidinal and purely destructive urges" (Freud

1940). Although, one thing that remains these pre-genital stages is "the combination of the component instincts and their subordination under the primacy of the genitals have been effected only very incompletely or not at all" (Freud 1905).

Freud in his Three Essays on Sexuality (1905) declares that the focus at this stage in on musculine who is the dominant gender and the sexual pleasure is for him, as a result of his activity. "Children feel the need for a large amount of muscular exercise and derive extraordinary pleasure from satisfying it" (Freud 1905).

> In response to the demands made upon him, he can submit, rebel or learn to cope with authority while maintaining his own autonomy… if the pleasure a child takes in playing with his faeces is severely constrained by his parents, for example, he may develop defences against such forbidden pleasures which may express themselves later as obsessive orderliness and cleanliness. If parents reinforce his production on the potty, this may lay the foundation for later pleasure in creating. And miserliness may result from a child developing an unwillingness to 'let go' (Stevens 1983).

The phallic stage (3 to 6 years old)

Phallic stage begin at the age of three years and generally developed in six years old. In this stage, the erogenous part is changed to is the genitalia, when children start to find out the differences between their own organ and other's erogenous part. as children begin to explore their own and others' bodies. The external genital's area is aroused through the act of washing and drying in everyday life, and an infant comes to know the way of arousing his genital's area for himself.

It is to be noted that it is not the genitals of both sexes that play a part at this stage but only the male ones (the phallus). The female genitals long remain unknown" (Freud 1940). Freud believed that the states of growth and advancement of both genders are related to male sexual development. "Maleness exists, but not femaleness. The antithesis here is between having a

male genital and being castrated. It is not until development has reached its completion at puberty that the sexual polarity coincides with male and female" (Freud 1923, Freud's italics).

This stage of sexual development is considered as a "forerunner of the final form taken by sexual life" (Freud 1940). In phallic stage, the infant's desire to finding sexual similarities and dissimilarities of his own and others become elevated and "the sexuality of early childhood reaches its height and approaches its dissolution" (Freud 1940).

Wolheim (1971) explains about the conflict which is happened in a masculine infant, by using more complicated figure and formula that Freud postulates:

> On account of the loving wish for the mother and the hostile wish against the father, the child feels itself threatened by the father, and this threat is represented in the mind as the threat of castration. The child, however, also loves his father; and so along with fear of the father goes some measure of fear for the father – fear, that is for the father on account of his, the child's, hostility. In consequence of these two fears, the child's sexuality comes to grief and is altogether suppressed: and the so-called latency period sets in.

Jacobs (1992) claims that in what way an "actual sexual abuse, or even emotional seduction of children, or the use of children by parents as allies in their own warring relationship…. Makes the possibility of reso- lution of the Oedipus complex much more difficult".

The latency stage (6 years of age to puberty)

Latency is the pre-final stage of psychosexual development, which occurs from six years to the age of puberty. In boys, the latency goes along with the resolution of Oedipus complex, and in girls, Freud thought, the analogous and metamorphosed changed in the way of thinking occurs. He came to believe that latency is the stage of decreasing interior challenged and

the quiet and inactive restfulness of sex drive. According to Jacobs (1992), "although Freud said that this period was culturally determined, 'a product of education', he also felt that the development 'is organic- ally determined and fixed by heredity'". This stage has the great importance because of developing progressive enlightenment, as well as acting a remarkable role in shaping The neuroses' tendency by means of disgrace, abashment, shame, and fury.

The genital stage (from puberty onwards)

The last stage is genital which occurs from puberty age to the death time and it doesn't have any limitation. The physical growth of sexual organ becomes completed and the sexual sense arises again at puberty, it is time to sexual maturity. The grown child, now, is not controlling by himself, but he, after a long period of time, is looking for a person who takes part in an undertaking of another and other. The genital stage, the last one, depicts the finished line of growth, the achievement of wholly developed genital merging the knowledge of all pre-genital stages. Passionate, emotional desire, and affectionate feeling join together, and the natural and final goal of sex drive is attained. Freud categorized this stage as

> a state of things… in which
> (1) some earlier libidinal cathexes are retained,
> (2) others are taken into the sexual function as preparatory, auxiliary acts, the satisfaction of which produces what is known as fore-pleasure, and
> (3) other urges are excluded from the organisation, and are either suppressed altogether (repressed) or are employed in the ego in another way, forming character-traits or undergo- ing sublimation with a displacement of their aims."(Freud 1940).

Analyzing the play

During the play, Sarah Kane depicts the infernal world, full of devilish desires, and she is looking for a way to escape but never achieve:

> I've only ever written to escape from hell- and it's never worked- but at the other end of it when you sit there and watch something and think that's the most perfect expression of the hell that I felt then maybe it was worth it (Rebellato, 1998).

Annette Pankratz states that "Sarah Kane's plays pull the rug out from under our feet. They confront us with disconcerting worlds full of suffering, existential despair and violence" (Pankratz, 2010: 149). The basic focus of Kane's play is on violence from various dimensions, as psychological, sexual, physical, and verbal which include as a main purpose: "to force others to think through the ethical paradoxes of their lives" (Singer, 2004).

As makes clear before, "Crave marks a move away from the physicality of the earlier plays towards explicitly interior, psychological spaces" (Wallace, 2010). Unlike Blasted, Phaedra's Love and Cleansed in Crave there is no graphic physical and sexual violence. For this reason it receives positive reactions from the critics. Many critics have a positive outlook and reaction against Kane. One of them is Nicholas De Jongh, who claims in the Evening Standard that "Sarah Kane has been born again as a playwright. She has turned her back on those scenes of violence and suffering with which Blasted and Cleansed, her first two headline seizing plays, were so lavishly studded" (De Jongh, 1998).

Crave is a hopeful and cheerful piece of art and because of having a this magic ability to create such a play, Kane is considering as a positive, confident, and even a real author. Although she never think that Crave receives positive reactions by people and critics and it surprises her. Because, in her own idea, Crave is a pessimistic piece of art and full of depression, as she herself have claimed:

> I actually think Crave- where there is no physical violence whatsoever, it's a very silent play- is the most despairing of things I've written so far. At some point somebody says in it 'something has lifted', and from that moment on it becomes apparently more and more hopeful. But actually the characters have all given up.

> It's the first one of my plays in which people go, 'fuck this, I'm out of here' (Kane, in, Tabert, 1998)".

All of her piece of writing is full of various brutality dimension, and her written works "completely replace the visual impact that her cruelty had provoked with language. They not only depict the body on the verge of disintegration... but the body of the text is under attack as well" (De Vos, 2010).

The patient in the text prepares her/his death as a result of madness and despair which pushes the insane mind to suicide with the declaration "it is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the underside of my mind/please open the curtains" (Kane, 2001).

In the process of the plays, she uses a brutal language which imposed death, depression, and hopelessness and questions the being-nature:

> I feel that the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve/I am bored and dissatisfied with everything/I am a complete failure as a person/I am guilty, I am being punished/I would like to kill myself (Kane, 2001: 206); I am charging towards my death... At 4.48/ when desperation visits/ I shall hang myself/ to the sound of my lover's breathing... I have become so depressed by the fact of my mortality that I/ have decided to commit suicide/I do not want to live (Kane, 2001: 207); I have resigned myself to death this year (Kane, 2001: 208); I feel like I'm eighty years old. I'm tired of life and my minds want to die (Kane, 2001: 211); I write for the dead the unborn/ After 4.48 I shall never speak again (Kane, 2001: 213); I miss a woman who was never born (Kane, 2001: 218); We are anathema/ the pariahs of reason (Kane, 2001: 228); Despair propels me suicide (Kane, 2001: 239); the only thing that's permanent is destruction/ we're all going to disappear/ trying to leave a mark more permanent than myself (Kane, 2001: 241); watch me vanish/ watch me//vanish/ watch me/ watch me/ watch" (Kane, 2001: 244).

The solution of violence which observes in act, seems to be control in the final speeches of the characters:

> C: Let the day perish in which I was born Let the blackness of the night terrify it Let the stars of its dawn be dark
> May it not see the eyelids of the morning
> Because it did not shut the door of my mother's womb. (Kane, 2001: 189)… What have they done to me? What have they done to me? (Kane, 2001: 191)... I feel nothing, nothing (Kane 2001: 199).
> B: Kill me.
> A: Free-falling
> B: Into the light
> C: Bright white light
> A: World without end
> C: You're dead to me
> M: Glorious. Glorious.
> B: And ever shall be
> A: Happy
> B: So happy
> C: Happy and free (Kane, 2001: 200).

According to Sean Carney, Kane's "work attempts to occupy a position in theatrical representation that is potentially impossible" (Carney, 2005).

Bayley maintains that: "War is confused and illogical...Acts of violence simply happen in life, they don't have a dramatic build-up and they are horrible. That's how it is in the play" (Bayley, 1995: 20).

In Freud's opinion, "This 'primary mutual hostility of human beings' threatens civilization with disintegration. Civilization must use its utmost efforts to deflect these aggressive instincts into 'identifications and aim-inhibited relationships of love' (Habib, 2005).

In Sierz's opinion experiential theatre "describes the kind of drama, usually put on in studio spaces, that aims to give audiences the experience of actually having lived through the actions depicted on stage. (But not literally!) Instead of allowing spectators to just sit back and contemplate the play,

experiential theatre grabs its audiences and forces them to confront the reality of the feelings shown to them" (Sierz, 2010).

Sarah Kane for describing her aims such as brutality and sexuality in her works, often uses experiential theater. She stands firm on the necessity of using experiential theater which is the source of devils and unfairnesses that is common in cruel and heart-less world. She makes clear her aim by watching Weller's Mad and claims that: "It was a very unusual piece of theatre because it was totally experiential as opposed to speculatory. As an audience member, I was taken to a place of extreme mental discomfort and distress and then popped out the other end. Mad took me to the hell, and the night I saw it I made a decision about the kind of theatre I wanted to make- experiential" (Sierz, 1999, in, Saunders, 2009).

Kane herself remarks that: "there isn't anything you can't represent on stage. If you are saying that you can't represent something, you are saying you can't talk about it, you are denying itsexistence" (Stephenson and Langridge, 1997).

It is clear that she represents violence and brutality through language and "attempts to occupy a position in theatrical representation that is potentially impossible" (Carney, 2005).

The author's main reason for creating such a piece of art the is "to be absolutely truthful about abuse and violence" (Aston, 2003), to criticize directly brutality and present particular system of violence and alter it. Kane supposed that "if we can experience something through art then we might be able to change our future...If theatre can change lives, then by implication it can change society, since we're all part of it" (Stephenson and Langridge, 1997: 134). She stands firmly on her idea about theater that it can make different people, but cannot alter whole of the world. As well, her attitude about theater is obvious in other words of hers:

> For me the function of the theatre is to allow experimentation through art in a way that we are not able to experiment effectively in real life. If we experiment in the theatre, such as an act of extreme violence, then maybe we can repulse it as such, to prevent the act of extreme violence out on the street. I believe that people can change and that it is possible for us as a species to change our future. It's for this that I write what I write (Giammarco, 1997).

In order to defend herself for accusing to represent violence and brutality, Kane condemns:

> The violence in this play is completely de-glamorized. It's just presented... Take the glamour of violence and it becomes utterly repulsive. Would people seriously prefer it if the violence were appealing? You'd think people would be able to tell the difference between something that's about violence and something that's violent. I don't think it's violent at all. It's quite a peaceful play (Nightingale, 1995).

In her play, Kane's effort is to representing different aspects of violence like sexual, physical, and verbal through actors of play. Kane criticizes the world through using a violent language, and instinctly, she did not admire violence and brutality and just used it as a weapon. "The ferocity images within Kane's texts suck both the performers and audience into a catastrophic cycle of life and death. Kane invites their participation not to shock them with the rawness of violence for violence's sake, but rather to break open a deep exploration of the lack of compassion in the human experience" (Moshy, 2008). She represents harshness and brutality in order to depicts force and vilolence which is on human's body and soul. In an interview with Rodolfo di Giammarco, she expresses her own idea and aims for representing brutality in her play:

> Violence is the most urgent problem we have as species, and the most urgent thing we need to confront. Personally, I say there is nothing better to write about. I don't like violent films, that's true, and I don't like violent scenes; and the reason I don't like violence

> is when I happen to see Reservoir Dogs, Pulp Fiction or the other films of that type I feel like using violence. When I wrote Blasted I tried to discuss what it means to be violent and to suffer violence, and it's like the music that's played when you're cutting off an ear. You are in a state of extreme suffering; it's not possible you can like it for the music (Giammarco, 1997).

Direct violence, brutality, and cruelty is a base of Kan's play, through them she enlightened the sleeped society. "Each of her plays explores, consistently and fiercely, similar content: the difficulty of responding to immeasurable experiences, like love, violence, suffering; and the challenge of making a claim about one's needs and desires that does not do violence to others" (Fordyce, 2010). Annette Pankratz points out that "Sarah Kane's plays pull the rug out from under our feet. They confront us with disconcerting worlds full of suffering, existential despair and violence" (Pankratz, 2010). She often represents the various dimensions of verbal violence and by using it, she accesses her basic aim that is "to force others to think through the ethical paradoxes of their lives" (Singer, 2004).

Conclusion

The various forms and figures that have been grown through psychoanalytic development represents how far and in what distance the psychoanalytic thought has stand from its original three stages of sexual drive in 1905. Object relations theory has been substituted for instincts or drive theory of Freud, but the psychoanalytic development which origin is infantry behaviours and playfulness has been still firm and they are in search of a appropriate way for check and examine for clear perception about what this essential period and phase of life affect all the adulthood and adolescence life and personality and it prescribes inner world and experience of life.

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