

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Titled with a specific moment before dawn, an instant that is described as “the happy hour / when clarity visits” (242), Sarah Kane’s *4.48 Psychosis* presents the exact moment when one’s extreme clear-consciousness mixes with the most radical madness. Imposingly associated with Kane’s suicidal death and her chronicle of depression, this play deals with a psychotic patient who narrates her mental chaos and the suicidal death in fragmentary language saturated with collaged images. Premiered in 2000, *4.48 Psychosis* is produced posthumously and is often considered as an autobiographical suicide note that illustrates the playwright’s struggles against tortures of psychiatric therapy.<sup>1</sup> With a first-person narration, this play thematically presents an anonymous patient, who suffers from psychological depression and decides to commit suicide in an attempt of stopping her sufferings. In terms of the artistic form, *4.48 Psychosis* is distinguished from other Kane’s plays for its verse-like structure and elusive obscurity. Rejecting an explicit indication of time and space, this play comprises segments of poetic lines that do not resort to a specific contextual reference. Without an authorial designation of cast and stage direction, Kane uses a poetic style of fragmentation to compose the focal themes of mental disorder or psychotic breakdown. The chaotic fragments that do not conform to rationalized language signify the patient’s afflicted psychology and her disoriented thoughts, which are cruelly rejected by society that imposes the domination of logicity.

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<sup>1</sup> Suspected to be finished in 1998 or 1999, *4.48 Psychosis* was written when Kane suffered from the torture of “her most debilitating episode of depression” (Singer 158). She had been hospitalized since 1997 and hanged herself with her shoelaces in the early morning hours on February 20, 1999. After her unfortunate death, *4.48 Psychosis* was commissioned for a production. However, the performance was delayed until June 2000.

By using brutal language, Kane charges against the normalizing violence and engages her readers into dynamic perspectives of viewing, which exemplifies Antonin Artaud's urge of reconstructing violence in theatre. Through masochistic expression of self-mutilation, the patient communicates her anguish and despair to readers in self-destructive language. Being brutally forced to an authoritative way of thinking, the patient severely accuses the normalizing system of psychiatry. Her language reveals the rejection of the inherent violence in the hierarchical relationship between doctor and patient. While canceling a framed theatre with plotted dramatization and fixed arrangement of casting, Kane transforms the traditional spectatorship of viewing violence: readers are more than passive voyeurs and are inevitably involved in the performance of violence on stage as active participants. As a prevalent theme in the twentieth-century English theatre, violence has always been a significant tool that implies a purpose of social reformation. While shifting the focus from passive to active, Kane distinguishes her theatre of violence from the ones of her contemporaries' through incorporating dynamic perspectives of viewing, which is still a complicated topic worthy of readers' attentive discussion.<sup>2</sup>

Based on Artaud's inspiring theory of the Theatre of Cruelty, this thesis offers a crucial perspective examining Kane's images of violence and her poetic language in *4.48 Psychosis*. In his theorization of using theatricalized language of poetry, Artaud emphasizes the importance of presenting cruelty hidden in human society. He wishes

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<sup>2</sup> For more information about the recurrent appearance of violence in the late twentieth century British theatre, please refer to Aleks Sierz's essay: "Cool Britannia? 'In-Yer-Face' Writing in the British Theatre Today." In his examination of a number of violent plays by British playwrights, i.e. Harry Gibson's stage adaptation of Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*, Kane's *Blasted*, Jez Butterworth's *Mojo*, and Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking*, Sierz employs a detailed discussion of 'in-yer-face' drama focusing on the focal themes of sex, drugs, and violence. Sierz's study on these violent themes provides a basic historical understanding of Kane's theatrical writing atmosphere at that time.

to establish an intense communion between spectators and the staged performance of human sufferings. His theory provides a useful access to the understanding of how Kane uses a poetic style of language to narrate a painful mind tortured by normalizing society. Analyzing the fragmentary structure and collaged images in *4.48 Psychosis*, I focus my study on Kane's dramatic poetry of violence and examine how she textualizes her protest against social normalization.

### 1.1 Sarah Kane and Violence in Her Theatre

Sarah Kane, born in 1971 in Essex, England, left five plays and the script for a ten-minute screenplay. Committing suicide at the age of 28, she had dedicated her short life to the exploration and creation of drama. She started writing and acting while still at the University of Bristol and she actively participated in directing productions for experimental theatres. After graduating from the university with a First Class Honours Degree in drama studies, she entered Birmingham University and continued her education with a master's degree in playwriting. She received critics' attention when her first full-length play, *Blasted*, was premiered at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1995. Notorious for graphic depiction of physical violence, this play was fiercely attacked by the audience and reviewers.<sup>3</sup> After the controversial success of *Blasted*, Kane continuously created a series of works with loaded violent scenes that challenge the audience's moral acceptance. In her early plays, *Phaedra's Love* (1996) and *Cleansed* (1998), the theme of violence occupies a foregrounding position due to a close-up presentation of explicit brutal actions. During the

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed introduction of the early reception of *Blasted*, see Dan Rabellato's essay "Sarah Kane: An Appreciation," in which he points out the lasting significance of this play for its use of excessive violence.

succession of plays congested with bloody violence, Kane established her controversial theatre that attracted critics and the audience with entirely different opinions: some condemned her for using violence as a tool of claptrap, and others recognized her as a new voice. She did not become widely acclaimed until her later plays came out, *Crave* (1998) and *4.48 Psychosis*. Both plays carry on Kane's theatrical experiments examining cruelty in human society. Incorporating theatrical language of poetry, both plays present violence with an abstract form of language and pay emphatic attention to the audience's perceptual senses rather than to their comprehension of discursive content.<sup>4</sup>

Kane's theatre of violence shifts its focus from physical performance to language presentation. It is a significant change that still requires a sufficient theoretical discussion. Being interested in Kane's dynamic mode of dealing with staged violence, I propose some significant questions in my study of her theatre: what purpose does the excessive use of violence serve? How is violence connected to the mentality of psychosis in Kane's fragmentary language? How does the shift from physical to linguistic reformulate Kane's aesthetic of violence? These questions are essential in my interpretation of *4.48 Psychosis* since it is the play that signifies Kane's ultimate form of presenting violence in theatre.

Analyzing her excessive use of physical violence in her early plays, Kane specifically points out her attempt to create the shock effect and to subvert the audience's perceptual experience. She explained once in an interview of her attempt while writing *Blasted*: "A traditional form is suddenly and violently disrupted by the entrance of an unexpected element that drags the characters and the play into a chaotic

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<sup>4</sup> David Greig, in his introduction to the collection of Kane's complete plays, also attributes her late widely approval criticism to the production of *Crave*: "It would not be until *Crave* in 1998 that public perceptions of her work would begin to move beyond the simplistic responses of the *Blasted* controversy" (x).

pit without logical explanation” (Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 45). In her early plays, the effect of being shocked help to intervene in the rigid exercise of logic and to boom the interpretation with new possibilities. In her later plays, Kane shifts her focus from an explicit presentation of brutal physical actions to a stylized and unrealistic performance. She once commented in her original Royal Court production of *Cleansed* by saying, “I think the less naturalistically you show these things the more likely people are to be thinking what is the meaning of this act rather than ‘fucking hell, how do they do that[!]’” (Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 89). With an attempt to arouse the audience’s rational contemplation rather than emotional convulsion, Kane presents violence through abstract language. Therefore, *4.48 Psychosis* is characterized by its tendency of articulating violence in poetry since the playwright abandons the physical presentation of violence and transforms it into an experimental form of language.

With the scarce authorial description, it is insufficiently discussed in the criticism of *4.48 Psychosis* when it comes to the relationship between the use of poetry in theatre and the intimacy between the audience and the staged violence. In what ways does Kane present violence through poetry without evoking bloody sensations? In this study of *4.48 Psychosis*, violence is presented through her unique style of dramatic poetry in a variety of modes. First of all, without a specified description of physical actions, violence in this play is intensively expressed in language acts, i.e. interrogation, accusation, and self-condemnation. Second, without the fluent linearity of a dramatic structure, violence in this play is composed in fragmentation with frequent occurrences of repetition and interruption. Lines of severe condemnation reappear with echoes, which creates a poetic resonance that produces an effect of forced perception on the audience. Last, violence is often narrated with a collage of image as the patient’s psychotic hallucinations. In the collage of being violently

treated by oppressive society, readers are provided with a dynamic position of viewing, through which they are allowed to participate into the staged violence as onlookers, or even abusers. The listed phenomena require a detailed examination of theoretical support, so that the interconnected relation between violence-viewing and Kane's use of poetry can be fully understood. And this interconnection has its premier theoretical basis, which is Artaud's idea of presenting cruelty in theatre.

## 1.2 Understanding Kane's Violence through Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty

It is significant to examine violence in *4.48 Psychosis* through a comparative study of Artaud's theory because Kane herself points out their shared view on the performance of violence in theatre. Once interviewed in 1998, Kane confessed that it was relatively late in her writing experience to start reading and appreciating Artaud: "It's pretty weird – because a lot of people said to me for a long time 'You must really like Artaud,' and I hadn't read any of that" (Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 16). She refused to read Artaud because his writing was "recommended to [her] by a lecturer at university who [she] hated so much" (Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 16). After she started reading Artaud, she pointed out the echoing thoughts between them and reported that "this man is completely and utterly sane and I understand everything he's saying. [...] And I was amazed on how it connects completely with my work" (Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 16). As a play that is heavily attributed to the theme of violence, how should Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* be examined in the light of an Artaudian perspective? How does Artaud's idea of cruelty assist readers in the interpretation of Kane's fragmentary language and her imagery presentation of mental chaos?

Artaud suggests that violence staged in poetry emancipates one's repressed mind, breaks the presupposed moral standards, and establishes an interaction with performing actors. His treatises provides a theoretical support for readers to

understand Kane's shift from physical violence to poeticized violence.<sup>5</sup> Objecting to a direct association between cruelty in theatre and physical brutality, Artaud suggests that the theatrical presentation of violence should reveal the disturbance that oppresses the human mind. In his "No More Masterpieces," Artaud defines his concept of cruelty by negating its connection to graphic images of violence: "It is not the cruelty we can exercise upon each other by hacking at each other's bodies, carving up our personal anatomies" (79). Instead, he attributes the essential cruelty to the direct response, whether sensational, emotional, or conceptual, that is evoked in one's perception of a "terrible and *necessary* cruelty which things exercise against us" (79, emphasis added). Another clearer explanation is given in one of Artaud's letters to Jean Paulhan, starting again with negation of physical violence: "This Cruelty is a matter of neither sadism nor bloodshed [...], not in the rapacious physical sense that it is customarily given" ("Letters on Cruelty" 101). Instead, he defines his cruelty in the signification of "*rigor, implacable* intention and decision, [...] a kind of lucid control and submission to necessity" ("Letters on Cruelty" 101-2, emphasis added). In his second manifesto, Artaud elaborates on his idea of cruelty by incorporating the performance of "subjects and themes corresponding to the agitation and unrest characteristic of our epoch" (122). He further explains that "these themes will be cosmic, universal, and interpreted according to the most ancient texts" (123).

Depicting the repressed human emotions and the anxieties common to all men, an Artaudian theatre will furnish each spectator with the hidden truth in one's

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<sup>5</sup> Here I use the term "poeticized violence" to refer to Kane's presentation of describing normalizing violence in poetry. The language in *4.48 Psychosis* presents the physical tortures and the psychological oppression that the psychotic patient experiences when she is ruthlessly suffocated by social majority. By stressing Kane's poeticized violence, I do not intend to completely deny physical violence. Instead, in my interpretation, Kane dissects the process of social normalization and allows her readers to watch the violent acts from different perspectives. With repeated words and rhyming lines, Kane's poetry prevents readers from being immediately immersed into bloody sensation of violence and engages them into circumspective examination on her language.

subconscious mind, in which a taste for crime, erotic obsessions, savagery, fear, or even one's cannibalism pours out as an honest feeling. Emphasizing that the presentation of violence should work viscerally on the nerves and senses, rather than on the intellect, Artaud suggests that the Theatre of Cruelty aims at the arousal of one's repressed mind, revealing the unbearable disturbance in life for the general public.

In *Theatre and Its Double*, a collection of Artaud's theoretical writings, he specifically suggests that violence is brought onto the stage in order to destroy the aesthetics of realism that dominates the traditional western theatre. According to Artaud, violence in theatre is viewed as a revolutionary transgression due to some crucial reasons: to provide the essential shock effect, to break down the normalized logic of thinking, and to evoke the audience's lucid awareness to reconsider the connection between the violent performance and the violence in reality. To take a closer look into the viewing process, the first and foremost step is to cause traumatic experience in the spectator, which destroys the peace of mind. From the audience's perspective, when violence is exposed directly in front of their eyes, the abnormal brutality is shown as a norm, common for the protagonists but surprising for the audience. The sharp difference of moral standards estranges the audience from an ordinary position of viewing: they are impelled to come to an awareness of viewing an extremely violent act that intensively challenges their sensibility and tolerance. The explosive scenes of violence will immediately trigger the audience's resentment or rejection. They induce the clear consciousness of the audience to reflect on the staged brutal acts and to re-examine the violence that they originally fail to recognize in daily reality. The performance in the Theatre of Cruelty, in other words, should refresh the paralyzed senses of the audience, and force them to reconsider the value of this aesthetic experience. Theatrical cruelty functions as a powerful catalyst externalizing

the continuous disturbances that are hidden in our society and avoided to be revealed by a safe theatre of realism.

In Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, an immediate communication should be established in the viewing process between the audience as gazers and the actors as the gazed. The actor being gazed as a medium transmits the internal torment or spiritual affliction through physical performance. Instead of being a slavish copy of real life, actors should perform in "a form of heightened, visceral, hyperrealism, not of psychological character, but of the physical which provokes the emotions of revulsion" (Murray 69). In other words, actors in the Theatre of Cruelty do not follow conventions of realist dramas or consider the theatre as a representation of a predefined text. Instead, actors should aim at presenting performance as performance itself. The physicality of the actor serves as the primary theatrical instrument to attack the audience's perception and to engage them into an intense process of viewing. Movements and gestures without signification of objective meanings are presented to test the nerves of the audience. Various audio devices, i.e. shouts, cries, rhythmic sounds and incantatory speech, are also incorporated by the actor to form a theatrical spectacle. In terms of the audience as gazers in Artaud's theatre, they are different from the passive consumers in a theatre of realism. Rational re-examination of the audience stems from emotional rejection rather than paralyzed acceptance or sentimental immersion. Due to the extreme contrast of moral codes, the audience is constantly reminded of viewing an intolerable atrocity and remains a critical attitude dealing with the perceived irritation. In short, viewing violence in an Artaudian theatre involves a process of interaction between the sensual, the emotional and the rational. In other words, the audience in the Theatre of Cruelty is not simply invited to a process of eye witnessing the violent scene but to a process of interacting with the staged violence, an expression that is cooperatively narrated through actors'

performance and the audience's reactive response.

Rejecting a realistic theatre that stresses meanings in verbal communication only, Artaud opposes the idea that language as a meaning-making system defines and governs one's conception of the world. Instead of viewing meanings as linguistically constructed, he attempts to present in his theatre the "dubious plasticity of abstract concepts that undermines any real signifying power they may have" (Morfee 101). By incorporating various theatrical elements, whether visual or audio, Artaud proposes a new form of language that provides humans with more profitable possibility of communication. From his point of view, readers can understand why Kane turns to poetic language to textualize violence in her theatre. Challenging the standardized convention of performance, Kane subverts readers' habitual experience by presenting violence with various techniques. In Kane's theatre, the techniques of poeticizing violence include an excessive use of visual images, incongruent combination of sound and silence, elimination of characters' fixed identities and plot development. Respectively used in Kane's previous plays, these techniques are repeatedly used in *4.48 Psychosis* and collaboratively constitute the poeticized violence as her ultimate form of narrating a psychotic mind and presenting social repression. In order to interpret the poeticized violence in *4.48 Psychosis*, Kane's finalized form of presenting violence, it is necessary to diachronically examine how Kane deals with violence in her previous plays. My focus here is to see how these plays respond to Artaud's idea of cruelty and how these precedent works essentially influence Kane's use of violence in her last play.

Kane's first play, *Blasted*, provides the graphic presentation of physical violence, i.e. rape, body mutilation, baby-eating, the male forcing the female to masturbate himself, the female biting the male's penis while performing oral sex, etc. It fiercely challenges the audience's moral judgment and aesthetic experience. In the end of

*Blasted*, a series of silent tableaux, fragmented by continual lights and darkness, presents the blinded Ian, who performs various violent and revolting actions. Scenes of violence immensely combine with one another to form a body of collage that collectively gives a grotesque portrayal of brutality in life. The visual images of atrocities best illustrate Artaud's proposition that a theatre should be constituted by "a bloodstream of images, a bleeding spurt of images in the poet's head and in the spectator's as well" ("No More Masterpieces" 82).

Similar to the excessive presentation of physical violence in *Blasted*, Kane's second play *Phaedra's Love* also presents the most severe physical violence with a combination of two extremes. In the end of the play, when Hippolytus is beaten to death and his body is dismembered by the citizens for being accused of raping Phaedra, a bloody scene with a mutilated physical body is combined with a silent presentation of Hippolytus as a muted victim. Also in the violent sex performed by Phaedra and Hippolytus, the incestuous scene is accompanied by soundless silence, which centers the provoking brutality to its visual presentation in particular. Another combination of extremes is presented in the juxtaposition of the holy and the obscene: before Hippolytus's execution takes place, he goes to the church, having his confession, and the Priest performs oral sex on him. The language of sacred prayer is accompanied by the graphic presentation of tabooed sex. These examples of combining extremes correspond to what Artaud suggests as "inversions of form" and "displacements of signification" ("Metaphysics and the *Mise en Scène*" 43). It is the combination of the two extremes that attributes Kane's violence to Artaud's depiction of the excessive cruelty in his theatre, which should comprise "extreme condensation of scenic elements" ("The Theater of Cruelty (Second Manifesto)" 122) and should be "experienced directly by the mind without the deformations of language and the barrier of speech" ("The Theater of Cruelty (Second Manifesto)" 124).

While her earlier plays are characterized by their terrifying images of violence, Kane's later play *Crave* is formally experimental in its lack of realistic presentation and broken narrations composed of fragments. Performed by four characters labeled by letters only (A, B, C, and M), *Crave* is distinguished for its repetitive use of violent images and poetic exchanges narrated by the four anonymous voices on stage. Eliminating the characters' names signifies a fluid identity that the audience may fail to recognize. Without specific details of plot development, the interpretation of cruelty in *Crave* is realized in the process of reconstructing the fragments of language. It is Kane's deliberate experiment of language, the coherent meaning is disrupted and the poetic fragments are disordered. The four identical characters with their intrinsic coherent discourse can be heard as four individualistic minds that operate separately. However, the four voices with the indispensable correspondence echoing among one another can also be interpreted as various components that form a unified Self.

From *Blasted* to *Crave*, Kane gradually develops her discourse of violence in a tendency of using an fragmented form of language and inviting the audience's reconstruction. In her early plays, the physical presence of violence is combined with an excess of incongruous images to produce the shock effect of incompatibility. In her later plays, the poeticized violence is presented in fragmentary language which signifies the deconstructed subjectivity. In her final play, a synthetic mode of presenting violence is incorporated: the imagery of violence is repeated excessively by a poetic voice that signifies various subjectivities or a deconstructive consciousness. As David Greig suggests in his introduction of Kane's plays, he points out that this play "sees the ultimate narrowing of Kane's focus [...] from civil war, into the family, into the couple, into the individual and finally into the theatre of psychosis: the mind itself" (xvi). Without the indication of identity, Kane composes

4.48 *Psychosis* in the form of a free-verse dramatic poem and narrows the scope of

her language experiments to the innermost core of Self, a disturbed mind that can not be physically presented on stage by simply showing bloody scenes with brutal images. Instead, the cruelest presentation of one's spiritual struggle is to let the disturbed mind in theatre speak for itself, spatializing the representation of violence in the spectator's mind through the expression of language. Thus, the audience in *4.48 Psychosis* can experience what Artaud proposes as a theatre of poetry, in which the audience can perceive "what is communicative and magnetic in the principles of all the arts" (50) through experiencing "an acuteness so intense and so absolute [...], beyond the tremors of all music and form" (51).

Another tendency of Kane's experimental language presenting violence is her excessive use of visual images. Instead of merely provoking nauseous sensations, the images are verbally presented in a communicative space that is cooperatively built by the participation of actors and the audience. What distinguishes *4.48 Psychosis* from other plays by Kane is the active role that the audience should play in. In other Kane's plays, most violent scenes take place when the audience is situated in a voyeuristic position. Though stricken by the shock effect, the audience as peeping spectators are secured in a distanced position knowing the borderline between the staged violence and themselves. But in Kane's finalized presentation of violence, abundant images are incorporated to provide the audience with dynamic positions as perpetrators that impose the afflicting tortures on the victim. It is a technique that forces an active participation from the audience. In other words, the audience in *4.48 Psychosis* perceive the staged violence from different perspectives and experience the patient's disturbed mind in a more intense process of viewing.

### 1.3 Literature Review

Since physical violence occupies an emphatic significance in the diachronic

study of Kane's early plays, most criticisms discussing Kane's treatment of violence tend to focus on the explicit presentation of violent images in her plays. Constantly associated with 'New Brutalism,' a stylized group of theatre writing emerged in the late twentieth century Britain, Kane receives this label because an intensive gaze and a closely-distanced presentation of violence are demanded in her theatre. A common reception of Kane's early theatre is to treat her intensive description of violence as a challenge of perception. As Tom Morris suggests in his experience of watching *Blasted*, visual violence in Kane's plays is used as a tool to evoke the sense of uneasiness within the spectator's mind: "Watching the cruelest of these plays in a small studio theatre is like watching a simulated rape in your own living room [...], so the audience is trapped in close proximity to the action, giving the playwright free reign to have his or her own say in the bluntest possible terms" (qtd. in Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 5). Thus, another term is constantly connected to Kane, that is, 'In-Yer-Face Theatre,' where violence is shown as norm to shock the audiences by the extremism of language and images and to unsettle the dead uniformity of her contemporary society.

In the criticisms focusing on Kane's later plays, a closer attention is paid to the aesthetic form of its postmodern presentation: fragmentation and repetition. By drawing on parallels between Sarah Kane and Howard Barker, Karoline Gritzner analyzes the technique of fragmentation that is vastly saturated in their plays. The experimental technique crucially presents the shared theme in both Kane and Barker's plays: a dissolved or segmented subjectivity that is commonly found in postmodern society. By incorporating fragmentariness as a central theme, both playwrights "denounce the notion of autonomous subjectivity as an illusory humanist concept" (329). In her analysis on Kane's writing, the presentation of a subject is constantly accompanied with a series of disjuncture and dislocated fragments. The cruelty of

Kane's theatre lies not only in the excessive display of violent images but also the chaotic disorder that her aesthetic resorts to. Ariel Watson, in her study on mental illness of several characters in Kane's plays, specifically points out the technique of repetition as "literary kleptomania" (192), a way of expressing a decentered self in a permanent lack of its original discourse. In Watson's analysis, Kane's prominent use of "talismanic repetitions" (192) is pointed out as a symptomatic writing embodying the postmodern schizophrenia: "the condition of alienation, of being asleep, of being unconscious, of being out of one's mind" (198). According to the above study of Kane's shift from physical presentation to language experiments, the dynamic violence in *4.48 Psychosis*, within which a graphic display of images is mixed up with a chaotic presentation of poetic language, can be seen as a synthesized violence that best illustrates what Kane possesses in mind to finalize her theatre of cruelty. In other words, the interpretation of violence in *4.48 Psychosis* should begin its theoretical examination from the two significant aspects.

With its main themes of depression and death, *4.48 Psychosis* is often interpreted by many critics as an explanation for Kane's suicide. In the introduction of Kane's collected plays, Greig interprets this play as being "written in the almost certain knowledge that it would be performed posthumously" (xvi). In the historical study of the British theatre in the nineties, Aleks Sierz points out that the initial critical response of Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* could be generally summarized as "a thinly veiled suicide note" (90). Michael Billington, in his comparison of *4.48 Psychosis* and Sylvia Plath's *Edge*, suggests that this play "is a rare example of the writer recording the act [suicide] she is about to perform" (*Guardian*, 30 June 2000). David Ian Rabey, in his recent analysis on Kane's plays, connects her artistic form to the manner of her death and suggests that suicide as an artistic form should be viewed as "the ultimate performance art" (204). What should be supplied into the author-oriented

interpretation of this play is to examine the relationship between Kane's aesthetic techniques of writing and the theme of violence that permeates her plays. In what ways does this author weave her psychotic experience into her theatrical writing of violence? What distinguishes this play from other Kane's violent plays is her language-oriented treatment of violence, which includes the reduction of physical display, the elimination of plotted event and a diverse use of poetic fragments in theatre. Unlike the visualized atrocities in *Blasted*, the violent scenes in *4.48 Psychosis* are narrated as poetic fragments in hallucinatory language without consequential logicity. Extended from the surrealistic imagery with clear stage descriptions in *Cleansed*, the illusionary images in *4.48 Psychosis* are narrated as a discourse of psychosis with no clear instruction of how a particular image should be visually presented. Similar to the experiment of composing violent lines with a musical rhythm in *Crave*, the language of *4.48 Psychosis* multiplies the rhythmic repetition and enhances the enforcement of listening by engaging the audience into a direct position of response. To sum up, it is the diverse mode of utilizing poetry that builds the essential discourse of violence in Kane's *4.48 Psychosis*. To understand Kane's theatrical violence in relation to her use of language, the most primary access of a theoretical study is provided by Artaud, who proposes that a theatre should assist in conveying an intense interaction to humans' mind through a utilization of poetic language.

Criticisms that draw a direct connection between Kane and Artaud tend to pay a comparatively focused attention on staged violent images. Gabriele Rippl, in his analysis on the dismemberment scene of Hippolytus in *Phaedra's Love*, illustrates a crucial connection between Kane and Artaud: "Kane's compulsive, inescapable images of torment are closely related to the images Antonin Artaud asked for in his 'Theatre of Cruelty'" (180). What Rippl suggests is the effect of "fervent magnetism"

(180) built up by the intense and ritualized images with powerful gestures and extreme actions that captivate the audience and break down the paralyzed pattern of performance in the Western psychological theatre. The focus on visualized images is somehow justifiable in the interpretation of Kane's early plays. However, in the interpretation of Kane's later works, some critics pay further attention on her shift of emphasis from powerful images to poetic language has to be developed. James Hansford, in his assessment of Kane's works, finds correspondences to her use of violent images to Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and Howard Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe. What Hansford emphasizes is the excess forms of violent images that are constantly appeared in their works. The uniqueness that distinguishes Kane's works is "a declamatory economy and austerity" (349) inherent in her repetitive use of reproductive images. In other words, the various images of violence are essentially assimilated and put together to form individualized style of violence in Kane's theatre. Ken Urban, in his analysis on In-Yer-Face Theatre, proposes that the violent scenes that are prevalent in the late twentieth century Britain are essentially corresponds to the aesthetic of nihilism. By using Kane's most brutal scenes as examples (i.e. Hippolytus's death scene with his dismembered body in *Phaedra's Love* and Ian's rape scene of being sexually mistreated in *Blasted*), Urban points out the undetachable sense of abjection stemming from the unbearable experience of witnessing violence. And what matters is the psychology of denial only through which can the beauty of cruelty be comprehended. In other words, it is the "self-destructing" experience that can provide the crucial illustration of "life-loving sensation" (369). What Urban suggests is the shared sense between Artaud and Kane: their common aim to unsettle the rigid moral framework or ideological certainty through the presentation of violence. Focusing on the similarity, I shall propose that the examination of Artaud's idea on theatrical language can indeed help us to understand Kane's various modes of

presenting violence through language of poetry.

Overall, most critics discuss *4.48 Psychosis* in terms of its thematic focus of suicide, authorial connection to Kane's history of depression, abstraction of textual meanings, postmodern style of writing, and various possibilities of theatrical presentation. Most critics pay tributes to the textual analysis of defining a concrete and possible meaning to the interpretation of this play. However, they primarily focus on the discussion of the play's elusive content and literary techniques. They pay less attention to how poetic language with fragments and images contributes to the presentation of violence. On the other hand, some critics study Kane's violence and prioritize, not the poeticized violence presented in an abstract form of language, but the physical violence graphically presented in her early plays. Hence, there is a vacancy for a research that analyzes the poeticized violence in *4.48 Psychosis* and theorizes Kane's dramatic poetry of violence. In other words, a further discussion on how Kane presents violence through poetic language is required to benefit the interpretation of her last play.

#### **1.4 Purpose and Methodological Approach**

Suggested in the previous discussion, it is Artaud's concept on presenting cruelty through poetic language that provides the best access to the understanding of Kane's violence. Therefore, in this thesis, I employ the Artaudian concept of presenting cruelty in theatre to explore the dynamism of *4.48 Psychosis*. My aim is to reveal how Kane's dramatic poetry of violence reflects what Artaud theorizes as the most essential cruelty, not mere physical violence in a realistic presentation, but the metaphysical interaction between text and theatre. Analyzing Artaud's treatises on the Theatre of Cruelty and related criticisms, I focus my theoretical study on Artaud's concepts of language and images in theatre. Identifying the intertextual connections

between Artaud's writings and Kane's work, I examine *4.48 Psychosis* to see how Kane presents a psychotic mind and the violence of social normalization in fragmentary language with an excess of images. My textual analysis of this play focuses on its fragmentary structure and the collaged images, both of which serve as the most crucial characteristics of language that best illustrate a socially repressed psychology and the violent process of normalization. From the Artaudian perspective, *4.48 Psychosis* can be viewed as a play illustrating a protest from a psychotic mind attacking the normalizing violence.

### 1.5 Organization

To deal with the problem of how to understand violence through a poeticized drama in *4.48 Psychosis*, I begin my study in Chapter Two to examine how Artaud responds to the question of presenting violence through poetic language in theatre. As a playwright who suffers from speech disorder, Artaud rejects a theatre that relies mainly on semantic communication in dialogic conversations and plotted events. By sorting out his general idea on the insufficiency of language as a communicative tool, I study the fragments in Artaud's poems and prose, focusing on details and examining what he says about fragmentation in language. Artaud's poetic fragments provide a direct connection to the interpretation of the fragmentary structure in *4.48 Psychosis*. From Artaud's concept of presenting the ruptured state of one's psychology through fragmentary language, poetic fragments in *4.48 Psychosis* symbolize the inconsistency of one's inner thoughts and embody a psychotic mind which is in perpetual lack of fluent logicity. They are also a linguistic behavior that demonstrates one's attempt to express the intended meanings when one feels the perpetual frustration to do so. Through the analysis on Artaud's prose and poems I examine the connections between his poetic fragments and Kane's fragmented

structure of *4.48 Psychosis*. Since both Artaud and Kane suffer from the pain of mental illness, the intertextual study between the two authors can help readers to understand how a psychotic mind narrates violence in a language with fluidity and logicity, a major task that one has to face while reading *4.48 Psychosis*.

On the basis of the theoretical research on Artaud's concept of fragmentary language, I further study the fragmentary structure of *4.48 Psychosis* and its relation to the thematic focus of violence. As a literary technique, fragmentation breaks the limitation of a traditional, more linear and logically ordered narration. The process of reading *4.48 Psychosis* is constantly interrupted by repeated fragments and recurring disruptions. Not only the temporal coherency is repetitively interrupted, but also the mode of narration is presented in the continuous shifting, from monologues to dialogues, from poetic lines to numeric images, which constructs a dynamic process of presenting how the psychotic patient is dramatically tortured by normalizing violence. The essential connection between a fragmentary narration and the presentation of a psychotic mind under social repression is also demonstrated and discussed in more details Chapter Two.

In Chapter Three, I extend my study into the pictorial presentation of violence by examining the images in *4.48 Psychosis* scattered in each fragment. Elaborating from the discussion in Chapter Two, I examine the collaged images, which possess a prominent significance of illustrating the psychotic hallucinations in the patient's mind. From the graphic presentation of violent images in *Blasted* to the surrealist collage of violence in *4.48 Psychosis*, Kane's utilization of images presents a gradual transformation: avoiding a direct but simplified illustration of violence and launching a language experiment to test an uncertain but flexible way of theatricalizing violence. In the structural analysis of *4.48 Psychosis*, Kane's violence in *4.48 Psychosis* is composed in a fragmented form that undoes the well-organized structure of a

traditional drama. My study in Chapter Three focuses on how Kane builds up the fragmentary structure by excessively using images in her narration, which corresponds to Artaud's approach of using pictographic language to present violence in theatre.

Beginning with a discussion on Artaud's idea of incorporating images in theatre, I look for details in his treaties to see how he emphasizes the use of images of violence in the theatre. Influenced by Surrealism, Artaud in his plays incorporates poetic images and dream visions. He suggests that these surrealist images reveal the truth that is embedded in humans' unconsciousness. Based on Artaud's proposition, a textual analysis on Kane's images in *4.48 Psychosis* can assist readers in establishing a better understanding of the psychotic patient, who throughout the play narrates her mind in a chaotic explosion of bizarre images. My analysis here focuses on two kinds of images incorporated in this play: first, the visual images composed of surreal elements, and second, the textual images of layout with a special design. Analysis on these two kinds of images is provided in Chapter Three, focusing on revealing their different functions in narrating the patient's discourse of violence. I intend to demonstrate how the psychotic patient uses images to engage readers into dynamism of viewing. In other words, the violent process of social normalization and the mental tortures that the patient suffers from are observed by readers from all dimensions.

Like many theatres of the avant-garde, the theatre of *4.48 Psychosis* is built up as a psychological space that interrogates the concept of a holistic self that rests on unity, continuity and completion. The textual presentation of this theatrical space is composed of fragments with disjunctive narration and broken images. By interpreting *4.48 Psychosis* through an Artaudian approach, we can understand how Kane uses poetic language in her theatre of violence to illustrate the brutal oppression that regulates her thoughts and tortures her mind. New insights and inspiration will be

shown when the intrinsic connection between Artaudian cruelty and Kane's violence is discovered and put into a more detailed analysis. As a testimony of a subject with psychotic mentality, *4.48 Psychosis* illustrates the violent process of normalization, in which a shattered subject narrates its mental suffering through incomplete fragments of poetry. The violence enacted by brutal society is provided with diverse perspectives of viewing, which can only be established when a theatre is constructed through the utilization of poetic language. Hopefully, the Artaudian approach of understanding cruelty will shed light on the way in which Kane uses a theatrical writing in combination of a fragmented structure and collaged images to illustrate her most drastic protest against violent society of normalization.



## Chapter Two

### The Fragmentary Structure

With the characteristics of fragmentary structure and rhythmic tempo, *4.48 Psychosis* serves as a significant landmark in Kane's poetic theatre of violence. Referred by Kane herself as a play that deals with "the split between one's consciousness and one's physical being" (Saunders, *About Kane* 80), this play is created by its author in an attempt of presenting psychological breakdown through theatrical experiments of language.<sup>1</sup> Describing a psychotic patient facing the violence of social normality, Kane manifests a disrupted state of madness and embodies this psychology as a disastrous battlefield of colliding voices within the patient's enclosed mind. Dislodged from logical coherence and contextual description, this play does not use traditional dramatization and a plotted structure to present one's psychological confrontation. Instead, it is a play that voices the patient's mind in a composition of fragments with various forms of language.

#### 2.1 Embodiment of the Patient's Disrupted Psychology

Without a smooth flow of logic, the patient's disturbed mind and her chaotic thoughts are mainly narrated in soliloquies or conveyed through her conversations with the doctor. In some fragments of soliloquy, the patient excessively repeats herself and narrates her discontinuous thoughts in a form of free verse. Here I define the patient's poetic language as free verse due to three characteristics. First, its irregular length of lines does not conform to any fixed metrical pattern. Second, the repetition

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<sup>1</sup> Kane specifically points out her focus of language when asked about her writing process of *4.48 Psychosis*: "Now my entire work is moving more and more towards poetry. [...] At the moment it doesn't even have characters – there is only language and images. But all the images are within language rather than visualized. I don't even know how many people there are" (Saunders, *About Kane* 81).

of words creates a flexible cadence of rhythmic groupings. The poetic rhythm is sometimes characterized by anaphora, i.e. “[e]verything passes / Everything perishes / Everything palls” (218), or the use of rhyming syllables, i.e. “the capture / the rapture / the rupture / of a soul” (242).<sup>2</sup> With a poetic form of disheveling words scattered across the page, the patient’s thoughts are repeated in disjunctive lines that constantly sneak into her mind, block the flow of her narration, and attack her perception. Each fragment of soliloquy contains emotional outbursts, in which a frustrated mind reveals its torment of not being recognized and understood. On the other hand, in some fragments of conversation, the patient embodies her confrontation with the outside world in various forms of language conflicts, i.e. accusation, interrogation, and quarrels. The dramatic tension embedded in her confrontation is verbally suggested, rather than concretely described. Instead of mainly watching actions, the spectators of *4.48 Psychosis* experience the patient’s mental tortures by listening to the staged dialogues. When the questions are repeated and accompanied by some silent response, the interrogation reveals more implicit information than its semantic meanings. When the quarrels are performed in conversations, the spectators experience the violent confrontation as an eavesdropping third party. It is a completely different viewing experience from watching a well-structured drama, because the spectators have to reconstruct a devastated mind and feel the brutal oppression that it has suffered from through the patient’s enigmatic language.

Due to the multiple modes of presenting normalizing violence through language, the audience of *4.48 Psychosis* is endowed with the task of interacting with Kane’s

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<sup>2</sup> In *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*, the term “free verse” is used to define a kind of “speech still deliberate enough to be rhythmic, but not patterned enough to be a metre” or to describe “a poetry in which utterance in only an intermittent emergence from speech, and whose complexity derives more from multiplicity of tone than from multiplicity of meaning” (94). The form of free verse predicated on the three characteristics will be discussed later in relation to Kane’s technique of repetition, in Chapter Two pp. 10-14.

theatre. This interactive process of watching is supported by Artaud as a crucial step of reconstructing one's suppressed mind controlled by society. For the script readers, the interpretation rests on its textual presentation even more. Since this play is not provided with a prescribed context of characterization or fixed dramatic actions, the fragmentary structure of language describes the violence of normalization in a diverse form of expression and demands readers' participation. What is verbally expressed or hinted? Who is talking on stage at this point? To whom are these words addressing? Without knowledge of who the addressor and the addressee are, readers' focus aims primarily at the patient's fragmentary language itself. Without the interference of contextual information, such as social classes or personal history, the patient can be associated with more possible identities. By peeling down the signification of a fixed identity, readers are provided with a more direct access to the fruit: the psychological state of psychosis. This strong demand of inviting readers' reconstruction essentially connects Kane's theatre of violence to Artaud's idea of cruelty in theatre.

## **2.2 Artaud's Idea on Fragmentary Language**

As a revolutionist in the western theatre, Artaud's idea on presenting a socially repressed mind through theatrical language of fragments can serve as a theoretical support for Kane's readers to interpret the fragmentary structure of this play.

Language in Artaud's conceptualization is not a mere tool used by the actors to translate the printed text onto the staged performance. Rejecting a rationalized human language that focuses on external verbal communication, he proposes a poeticized language that expresses one's latent thoughts hidden in mind and penetrates into one's innermost psychology. Attempting to deconstruct a text-oriented theatre that depends mainly on a well-plotted script, he suggests that language in theatre should be used for its vocal sounds and ideographic signs, everything that is "manifested and expressed

materially on a stage” and can be “addressed first of all to the senses” (“Metaphysics and the *Mise en Scene*” 38). Defining language as “active and anarchic,” he proposes a use of language in theatre, where “the customary limits of feelings and words are transcended” (“Metaphysics and the *Mise en Scene*” 41).<sup>3</sup> By rejecting traditional language dominated by reason, Artaud wishes to create a theatrical space filled with this “concrete language” in an attempt to convey humans’ thoughts that are “beyond the reach of the spoken language” (“Metaphysics and the *Mise en Scene*” 37).<sup>4</sup> As a tool of self-expression for the playwright, language in theatre should reveal the most fundamental anguish of life which is irrational and logically inexplicable. As a tool to produce revolutionary act and to reshape our society, language in theatre should aim at the audience’s perception of senses and challenge their ordinary understanding about life. What is proposed by Artaud is a theoretically authorized possibility. From this line of thinking, we can interpret Kane’s broken language as an embodiment of psychological breakdown. In other words, fragmentation in *4.48 Psychosis* exemplifies the cruel process of how a psychotic patient tries to reveal her illogical thoughts that are muted by society. Reading the fragments in this play is to read against the traditions of rational writing, a process of experiencing the patient’s resistance against the inherent violence of social normality that we are accustomed to.

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<sup>3</sup> Here Artaud extends the meaning of the term “language” to its largest scope. In the article “Metaphysics and the *Mise en Scene*,” Artaud makes several examples to illustrate his use of language, encompassing “all the means of expression utilizable on the stage,” including “music, dance, plastic art, pantomime, mimicry, gesticulation, intonation, architecture, lighting, and scenery” (39).

<sup>4</sup> Artaud’s wording of language may cause misunderstanding. He uses the word “language” to refer to both the ideal language that he calls for and the bad language that he objects to. Generally speaking, Artaud despises discursive language based on logical thinking that we use in daily communication. He puts emphatic attention to poetry, physical language or incantatory speech, forms of language that resort to the deepest emotions hidden inside humans’ unconsciousness. The Artaudian language incorporated in theatre is defined by critics as “visceral,” “ant-rational,” and “druidic” (Murray 88). In other words, language that Artaud endorses is “a new form of language [...] which would subordinate dialogue to all the physical resources of the stage” (Murray 88).

Due to his mental illness, Artaud rejects a reason-governed language that fails to articulate his disturbed mind. Instead, in his literary writings, he uses fragmentary language to symbolize one's irrational thoughts and exposes the most repressed emotions, i.e. fear or anxiety, that are not allowed to be expressed in daily interaction. For readers of *4.48 Psychosis*, a biographical study of Artaud's mental illness and its influence on his writing is illuminating and beneficial to interpret the mental chaos of the psychotic patient. Once suffering from a severe case of meningitis in his adolescence, Artaud has serious troubles in verbally formulating his thoughts and communicating with others fluently. He experiences speech disorder in his oral presentation: "this inability to form or develop thoughts might [...] be regarded as analogous to the stammering which possesses my outward elocution almost every time I want to speak" (*Selected Writings* 293). His desire to speak causes him an outward spasm, which hinders the fluency of his thoughts and worsens the situation of failing to express himself. Acknowledging the limitation of expressing himself in language, Artaud specifically points out the fragmentary nature exhibited in his works and indicates that the rupture of his fragments influences his writing significantly.

Presented in Artaud's prose and poems, the psychological frustration caused by the failure of expressing one's thoughts is textualized in a fragmentary form of language, within which the meanings are constantly ambiguous and unattainable. Artaud's authorial expression and literary composition of poetic fragments provide a contextual basis for readers to get access to the psychotic patient, to approach a socially repressed mind that is not allowed to express its abnormal thoughts. It is crucial to recognize the ruptures in his language as a tormented state of psychology when one faces the great pressure of losing an effective way of expression, a painful situation that people suffering from psychological depression constantly encounter. In a letter to his doctor Soulie de Morant, written in 1932, Artaud talks about his

problems of formulating his thoughts, and refers to his thoughts as slippery prey that the castrated hunter of mind invariably fails to seize:

the mind [...] found itself deprived of the continuity of its inner life, to the point where [...] these images, these representations, these forms *took pleasure* in tantalizing the mind by disappearing or disintegrating too soon, maddening the mind that was trying to grasp them. (*Selected Writings* 288, with original italics)

He insists that he is so affected by these mental interruptions that his brain can no longer function: “these breaks in thought, these impediments to intellectual manifestation happen to everyone, [...] whereas with me it is the whole fabric, the break temporarily destroys all of consciousness” (*Selected Writings* 292). The absence of expressions is a complex phenomenon in Artaud’s intellectual mechanism and it symbolizes the crucial moment for an author when language fails to present the abundant information in his mind.

For an author like Artaud, who suffers from psychotic delusion, the failure of expressing thoughts in fluency produces persistent frustration. And this emotional lack persistently attacks the psychotic mind and worsens its situation of losing expression. In a letter to his best friend Jacques Riviere, Artaud attributes the “scattered quality” of his poems to “a central collapse of the soul, [...] a kind of erosion, both essential and fleeting, of the thought” (*Selected Writings* 35). In Artaud’s diagram of verbal formulation, when the mind loses its power of continuation, it loses the possibility to convey the transient thoughts that define his inner self, the most essential part of him that he wants to communicate and to be understood. For Artaud, it is a vicious circle to find an adequate verbal form in an attempt to define self-existence: on the one hand, the broken mind fails to capture the abundant thoughts that he produces; on the other, the ever-escaping thoughts presents the devastated mind from finding a proper tongue that is interpretable by normal majority.

Thus, Artaud's intense longing for a mechanism of verbal formulation leads to a continual sense of frustration. It is important to interpret his fragmentary writing as a psychotic mind stuck in a perpetual lack of expression, a painful state that meanings are constantly procrastinated from being transcribed and understood.

In Artaud's prose-like poem "I Have Aspired No Further," collected in *The Nerve Meter*, he demonstrates the interactive relationship between the growing frustration within a psychotic mind and the constant procrastination of meanings in his fragmentary language. Since thoughts are slippery and always succeeding in eluding away from his verbalization, he is trapped in the "pain of an abortive adjustment" (*Selected Writings* 80). Defeated by hopeless frustration, Artaud laments for the people who can pay sympathetic identification to his isolation, and his elegy of those people, whether real or imaginary, is twice disrupted by modification of thoughts:

I am a total abyss. Those who believed me capable of a whole pain, a beautiful pain, a dense and fleshy anguish, [...], an effervescent grinding of forces rather than a suspended point  
— and yet with restless, uprooting impulses which come from the confrontation of my forces with these abysses of offered finality  
    (from the confrontation of forces of powerful size),  
    and there is nothing left but the voluminous abysses, the immobility, the cold —  
    in short, those who attributed to me more life, [...] who believed me immersed in a tormented noise, in a violent darkness with which I struggled  
— are lost in the shadows of man. (*Selected Writings* 80)

The first interruption, indicated by the dash, takes place when the poet-narrator "I" mentions the "grinding of forces" that causes him pain. Connecting the forces to "restless, uprooting impulse" and identifying them as "my forces," the poet suggests that the confrontational forces share an intrinsic relationship with his inner self. The

supplementary statement is again interrupted by a parenthesized phrase, stating that the forces are “powerful” in size. The gigantic physicality of the forces equally contrasts to the abysmal I, a “voluminous” vacuum that can contain the confrontational forces. With a clear awareness of his ceaseless speech, the poet redirects his attention to the description of the lamented. While acknowledging the “tormented noise” and “violent darkness,” the poet is facing a dilemma without solution: the more description he makes for the people, the greater isolation he is entrapped in. The verbal formulation of his difference from those people solidifies his desperate alienation from them. Indeed, if this poem can be summarized into a concise sentence, it is a dedication to those who “are lost in the shadows of man.” While interpreting the fragmentary form of language, with its superfluous description that is constantly distracted by interruptions, it is significant to identify the disrupted fissures within each fragment as the crucial moments when one intends to say something but fails to find an adequate expression.

In addition to the growing frustration and the constant delay of meanings, another significant feature exhibits in fragmentary language is one’s clear meta-consciousness: one is clearly aware of the fact that he or she is in a perpetual failure of losing self-expression. In a letter to Morant, Artaud expresses his sharp awareness of being stuck in the state prior to verbal presentation when experiencing mental ruptures. He particularly defines his essential being in the moments of mental ruptures: “[a] lack of continuity, a lack of development, a lack of persistence in my thoughts is, therefore, one of the essential characteristics of my condition” (*Selected Writings* 292). This meta-consciousness propels the psychotic author to keep on finding expressions although it is a never-ending process of torment. Different from rejecting his disintegrated mind, Artaud uses an assertive tone to acknowledge this mental state of disintegration and dissects it as a combination pieced up by various

forms of transient thoughts. Not only thoughts clothed in incomplete verbal forms convey who the man is as Antonin Artaud, but the thoughts that are not yet expressed, faintly sensed by him, provide a full articulation of his being. In other words, Artaud is clearly aware of the cruel fact: it is when he experiences the “lack of persistence” that he fails to present “in mind a number of archetypical images corresponding to [his] personal sensations and representations” (*Selected Writings* 292). With Artaud’s reflection on the meta-consciousness of losing self-expression, it is crucial for readers, who belong to the normal majority, to get access to the abnormal psychology with a focused study on these crucial ruptures in its literary presentation.

Last, fragmentary language is characterized by its easiness of being visually presented, which is a significant feature that is related to my study of collaged images in Chapter Three. In an essay collected in *The Nerve Meter*, Artaud refers to himself as “an idiot by the suppression of thought, by the malformation of thought” (*Selected Writings* 83). He complains about his dumbness when experiencing mental blanks that can not be articulated in language. Being “vacant by the stupefaction of [his] tongue” (*Selected Writings* 83), Artaud chooses a visualized way of expression instead of using a verbal form of terminology:

All the terms in which I choose to think are for me TERMS in the literal sense of the word, that is, true terminations, borders of my mental                   , of all the states to which I have subjected my thinking. (*Selected Writings* 83, with an original blank and capitalization)

While pointing out the impediment that blocks his thinking, Artaud does not use an adequate term to refer to the mental ruptures that he experiences. More faithful than a verbal presentation, the emphatic blank provides a visual illustration for his situation of failing to find words that are in accordance to his thoughts.

In addition to visualizing the mental ruptures that snatch the peace of his mind,



language as a point of departure, we can now examine how Kane utilizes fragmentary language in her play. As a leading trait of Kane's poetic theatre, the fragmentary structure of *4.48 Psychosis* liberates the limitation of linear narration and challenges readers' presupposition of a unified reality.<sup>5</sup> This challenge for readers is better set up in the fragmentary structure, which has to be interpreted in a complex process of reading. If we take a closer look into the reading process, it is crucial to note that the fragments are pieced-up in various combinations and are repeated in different frequencies. From readers' point of view, when a segment re-appears, the identical form in various contexts triggers multiple assumptions: what does the fragment mean in the specific occurrence? What is the difference implied in the repeated fragment? These questions activate readers' awareness to examine the repeated fragment in a context of comparison. The deferred occurrence of fragment creates a varied meaning that can only be understood by referring to the previous one. In other words, the process of reading a fragmentary structure has to be contextual and retrospective. In order to dig out the various meanings in its preceding and repeated occurrences, readers have to examine the disassembled fragments in dislocation. Therefore, the process of reading can never be fluent and continuous. Frequent interruptions and delays are required since the fragment has to be referred to retrospectively. This discontinuing process of reading is welcomed by Artaud in his theatre: to experience a "new language of the theatre, a language and words, [...] through which the totality of emotion could freely superior instrument of communication beyond the mere discursive use of concepts, flow from body to body, from actor to spectator" (Esslin 71). It is through the structure full of fractures that one can break down the rigid

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<sup>5</sup> Mel Kenyon, Kane's agent, recognizes "an increasing sense of fragmentation" in her chronology of writing. He identifies this writing technique with her attempt to deal with a "particular conflict that she felt very acutely" (Saunders, *About Kane* 148).

distinction between the author and readers, enabling readers to partake in the author's most shattered thoughts and frustrated emotions.

### 2.3.1 Repetition

In *4.48 Psychosis*, the technique of repetition is frequently used to describe the patient's mental disturbance and to create the torturing therapeutic environment in which she is situated. Some lines are repetitively copied to produce the compelling atmosphere of normalizing oppression. Some recurring fragments are pasted to challenge readers' assumption. Some sentences with a similar grammatical pattern collectively form a ceaseless echo that persistently repeats itself. In the beginning of this play, for instance, all the aforementioned types of repetition are incorporated in the opening fragment. Starting with "[a] very long silence," the first fragment of this play features a continual interrogation of an anonymous voice, demanding a mute listener to answer the question:

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

The opening scene resorts to the form of a conventional drama with stage directions and spoken lines. The scarce stage directions form a silent voice and create a

speechless resistance against a strong interrogative force. The accusing tone of the interrogator strongly suggests a confronting position and sets up a pair of unbalanced power relation. As an ironic contrast to the emphasis said by interrogative voice, “[w]hat do you offer your friend to make them so / supportive[?]” (205), the persistent silence is situated in a stance lack of support, replying the continuous questions with a mute protest. The design of enjambment, marking a breath or a pause in the flow of a sentence, signals a unique significance of the word “supportive.” The question “[w]hat do you offer[?]” (205) is emphatically paid attention to since it is repeated three times. The technique of repetition amplifies the interrogative tone and secures the authority of the questioning party. And it also brings into focus the thing that the patient owes to others, the primary thing that differentiates the muted addressee from the normal majority.

Repetition happens not only in lines but also across pages. The opening fragment reappears in the later part of the play as an interlude of a complete conversation and challenges readers’ assumption. In the first occurrence, the initial line, “[b]ut you have friends” (205), suggests that the fragment is an excerpt of a complete conversation. The function word “but” implies that the following sentence is indeed a response to a prior statement that is not yet heard by readers. The opening fragment may attribute to a verbal combat between two voices within the patient’s mind. The assumption is reformulated in the second occurrence when this fragment reappears in a form of conversational confrontation:

- You are my last hope.
- (*A long silence.*)
- You don’t need a friend you need a doctor.
- (*A long silence.*)
- You are so wrong.

- (*A very long silence.*)
- But you have friends.
- (*A long silence.*)
- You have a lot of friends.
- What do you offer your friends to make them so supportive?
- (*A long silence.*)
- What do you offer your friends to make them so supportive?
- (*A long silence.*)
- What do you offer?
- (*Silence.*)
- We have a professional relationship. I think we have a good relationship. But it's professional. (236-7)

With a comparative examination between the repeated fragment and the complete conversation, the unbalanced power relation is provided with a clearer contextual reference: it is indeed a verbal wrestle between a doctor and a patient. The patient's desire to establish a balanced relationship, maybe friendship, is rejected by the doctor. What the doctor approves is a "professional relationship" (237), a distanced connection from which the emotional attachment is eliminated. The repeated fragment signifies the essential cause of the patient's psychological breakdown: the cruel rejection denying the craving of being accepted. With its doubled occurrences, the fragment of interrogation is attached with two possible meanings: it is an inner conflict within the patient's psychotic mind, and it is also a social confrontation between an authorized doctor and a tortured patient. If the fragment is not repeated, but appears once in a form of complete conversation, its significance of proliferating the multiple possibilities is reduced.

In addition to the duplication of the opening fragment, the patient also expresses her mental disturbance and painstakingly searches for her identity in a

compilation of sentences with a similar grammatical pattern. In the following fragment, the feeble I-soliloquist is provided with a lengthy space to express herself:

*I am sad*

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 (206, italicized emphasis added)

This passage encodes a continuation of litany, comprising the repetitive use of “I am...” to approach her own identity in a persistent quest (206). With the absence of periods, the compilation of sentences suggests a dispersed self that is constantly described by negative terms and expressions. Instead of using the “I-am” sentences to describe a state of being formed by negation, some other sentences are uttered in a negative form of auxiliary to convey an extreme pessimistic view of disability:

*I can't* make decisions

*I can't* eat

*I can't* sleep

*I can't* think

*I cannot* overcome my loneliness, my fear, my disgust

I am fat

*I cannot* write (206-7, italicized emphasis added)

Most of the negated verbs are intransitive, so the sense of negation is directed to the verb itself. Some verbs resort to fundamental acts to maintain one's life, i.e. “eat” and “sleep” (206). On the other hand, some verbs are referred as acts of production or creation in life, i.e. “think” and “write” (207). Put in a place like a crucial blank in a cloze test, the various intransitive verbs are filled into the compilation of “I-can't”

sentences and collaboratively define the patient. The combinational usage of “I-am” and “I-can’t” sentences shows the fractured mind of the patient. By using the “I-am” sentences, the patient uses a positive assertion to describe the essential quality of her existence to be “sad,” “guilty,” “a complete failure” and “dissatisfied with everything” (206). By using the “I-can’t” sentences, the patient employs the negative statement to acknowledge her lack of power to act. In this manner, the repetitive use of sentences in a similar grammatical pattern demonstrates the process of how this patient persistently constructs her own self-expression, defining herself in a continual negation.

### 2.3.2 Contrast

In addition to the technique of repetition, Kane also excessively uses the technique of contrast to present her theatre of psychosis. As if responding to Artaud’s call for using a language to express the agitated mind within the innermost self, Kane makes use of contrasting sentences in combination to establish a textualized space of irony that evades a clear-cut logic celebrated by normalizing society. In the fragment following the severe interrogation of “[w]hat do you offer [?]” (205), Kane presents a surrealistic scene, comprising contrasting images and an unbalanced combination of texts:

*a consolidated consciousness resides in a darkened banqueting hall near the ceiling of a mind whose floor shifts as ten thousand cockroaches when a shaft light enters as all thoughts unite in an instant of accord body no longer expellent as the cockroaches comprise a truth which no one every utters*

I had a night in which everything was revealed to me.  
How can I speak again?

the broken hermaphrodite who trusted herself alone finds the

room in reality teeming and begs never to wake from the  
nightmare (205, italicized emphasis added)

Without marks of punctuation, this fragment is composed of a continuation of clauses, rather than a compilation of complete sentences. Since the textual presentation is deprived of a normal logicity of grammar, it is hard to segment the clauses at the first glance. When the clauses are recited, repetitive fricatives will be heard and they produce a sense of inharmonic sonority. Images of conflicting relationship are scattered in the cluster of clauses: “a shaft of light” entering “a darkened banqueting hall” and “a consolidate consciousness” opposing to a shifting floor as “ten thousand cockroaches” (205). These contrasting images cooperatively create a bizarre space dislocated from normal logicity. Narrated in an objective voice, this fragment keeps an estranged distance for readers to evaluate the space.<sup>6</sup> As a sudden intrusion of consciousness, the two indented lines of soliloquy signify an anonymous I, addressing readers about her inability to express her being when exposed in the “teeming” room of “reality” (205), the immense world packed with signifiers. Presented in a collaged form of two unbalanced parts, the indented soliloquy sharply contrasts to the lengthened chunks of clauses. And this textual presentation of contrast is closely connected to the image of a small-sized psychotic patient that faces the colossal pressure of fighting against normal majority.

Besides combining contrasting images with distinct difference, whether visual or textual, Kane also uses paradoxical statements to situate the patient in an

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<sup>6</sup> As Greene observes, Artaud shares a similar view with his contemporary of surrealists, i.e. Andre Breton, that “[t]rue language [...] reveals the most fundamental human substratum which is irrational and logically inexplicable” (98). One literary technique of Surrealism is the use of poetic images: to create an image by “joining things or qualities normally quite unrelated to one another, entities that do not normally find themselves in any sort of proximity” (99). In the fragment of a “banqueting hall” and a shifting floor of “ten thousand cockroaches” (205), the bewildering images are combined to illustrate the destructed landscape of the psychotic mind. The force of destruction is hinted in the narration as the “teeming” “reality” (205), the normalizing force that imposes upon the patient. More detailed analysis on the images will be provided in Chapter Three.

ambivalent position that rejects a totalizing mode of thought. In the fragment of the patient's litany, paradox that creates the irony effect is found in several pairs of sentences:

I cannot be alone

I cannot be with others

My hips are too big

I dislike my genitals

[...]

I do not want to die

I have become so depressed by the fact of my mortality that I have decided to commit suicide

I do not want to live

I am jealous of my sleeping lover and covet his induced unconsciousness

When he wakes he will envy my sleepless night of thought and speech unslurred by medication (207-8)

Possessed with conflicting thoughts, the psychotic patient expresses her fear of “be[ing] alone” (207). Her thought of fear is closely followed by another statement illustrating her resistance of “be[ing] with others” (207). The paradoxical statements are significantly juxtaposed because only through the form of a pair can the inherent meaning be conveyed: the patient is suffering from the psychology breakdown knowing the fact that she can't get along with anyone, including herself. The strong feeling of self-loathing that she harbors within herself is expressed in her attack on her organs of sexuality. “My hips are too big” (207) is actually an overstatement because in most of the productions the patient is played by a skinny actress. Audiences can feel the irony not only by hearing the lines with conflicting messages but by watching a thin actress expressing her abhorrence of her over-sized bottom. Another paradox lies in the patient's decision of committing suicide when she knows that her life is

bound to come to an end. It is a complete contradictory proclamation to her previous statement, “I can’t make decisions” (206). The decision she is making also contradicts to her conflicting ideas, vacillating between “want[ing] to die” and “want[ing] to live” (207). By using paradoxes repetitively, the patient situates herself in a tottering position of psychological breakdown. Stuck in a place of feeling “jealous” and being “env[ied]” (208), the patient admires her lover’s sound sleep but is also ironically admired by her lover for her fluent speech and thought. What troubles the patient most is not only the disorder of sleep but the desperate situation of being isolated, not being able to gain empathic understanding from others.

### 2.3.3 Thematic Focus: Alienation

In the structural analysis of *4.48 Psychosis*, repetition and contrast are defined as Kane’s primary devices that help to portray the patient’s psychological turmoil and to articulate her protest against the social control of normalization. To establish an in-depth understanding of the significant content of the patient’s protest, a thematic study on her fragmentary language is required. Some important themes that frequently reoccur in her narration should be examined, i.e. her alienation from cruel society, her painful disjuncture of body and mind, her contradictory attitude toward the normalizing doctor, and her protesting act of committing suicide. As an echo to Artaud, who severely attacks western society that destroys a poet’s visionary powers, the patient confronts the normalizing violence in a complex way of expression rather than a simplified mode of offense. Without an absolute description of context and characterization, the recurrent themes in the patient’s language can be analyzed in the light of the correspondent views of Artaud, whose common experience of suffering from psychological breakdown and psychotic delusion can assist readers’ interpretation.

Situated in a marginalized position of abnormality, the patient articulates her protest against normalizing society by dislocating its language sanctioned by the logic of normality. In order to facilitate a secure stand for her protest, the patient puts herself in a distanced position away from society, a position that designates her difference from others:

Some will call this self-indulgence  
 (they are lucky not to know its truth)  
 Some will know the simple fact of pain  
 This is becoming my normality (208)

Instead of brutally blaming normalizing society as a whole, the patient sarcastically mocks the “lucky” society that causes her the greatest pain (208). The society is discomposed into different groups: there are those who cruelly criticize her psychotic situation as “self-indulgence” (208) and those who recognize her sufferings as “the simple fact of pain” (208). While identifying her “normality” (208), the patient ironically spotlights her condition of being rejected by the norm.<sup>7</sup> That is to say, when the patient mocks at society for being unaware of her pain and uses the word “normality” to refer to her disintegrated mentality, her self-assertion implies an severe accusation. Being normal is an identity that is culturally defined. Its definition is given by those people who internalize the logic system of knowledge sanctioned by dominating society. When situated in a distanced position, the patient can dislocate the word “normality” and disassociate its meaning from the original language that is only approved by normalizing society. The alienated patient reformulates the meaning

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<sup>7</sup> This irony situation is observed by James Glass and identified as a paradox that a psychotic patient has to face when fighting against social normalization. Though a psychotic patient can free the self from “the constraints of consensual reality” (Glass 198), it is a freedom that can only be earned when some rules are violated. Without violation, there is no freedom. Thus, the freedom is still “delusional” because a judgmental consequence always comes along with it (Glass 198). In other words, the psychotic being can identify its existence outside the limitation of normalizing society but is also permanently condemned by the exclusion.

of normality from the perspective of an abject, a cruel label that ironically facilitates her protest.

Challenging the rational language of logicity, the alienated patient describes normalizing society in a language that heavily resorts to bodily sensations. Because Kane uses language that is saturated with sensual observation, readers are provided with an alternative chance not only to intellectually understand the semantic meanings of the patient's words but to sensually feel the destructive mind of the patient. In a fragment with the patient's narration of her clinical experience, the violent force of normalization is presented as an indented fragment in the patient's narration of her clinical experience:

It wasn't for long, I wasn't there long. But drinking *bitter black coffee* I catch that *medicinal smell* in a cloud of ancient *tobacco* and something *touches* me in that still *sobbing* place and a wound from two years ago opens like a cadaver and a long buried shame *roars* its foul decaying grief.

A room of expressionless faces staring blankly at my pain, so devoid of meaning there must be evil intent.

Dr This and Dr That and Dr Whatsit who's just passing and thought he'd pop in to take the piss as well. (208-9, italicized emphasis added.)

The fragmentary ruptures symbolize the patient's disordered memory. Instead of using tenses to mark the change of time, Kane uses a graphic design of page to illustrate the temporal difference in the patient's narration. Starting with the detailed description of a sensory space, filled with the taste of "bitter black coffee" (208) and the mixed odor of "tobacco" (209) and "medicinal smell" (208), the patient narrates her memory of entering a consulting room and examined by numerous doctors without names. The memory is a shameful experience and is metaphorically described by the patient as a

“wound” like a “long-buried” “cadaver” that “roars its foul decaying grief” (209). The visual wound and the audio roars mix to create a sensational stance for the patient’s attack. The patient’s language with her prevailing use of human senses reveals that she is constantly and sensitively experiencing the world not only with her mind but also with her body. By appealing to sensual description, one’s physical and emotional responses are easily triggered, i.e. the welling saliva bathing the tongue when hearing the word “bitter,” or the reflexes of shivers when hearing someone roaring and seeing someone’s wound. With the involuntary arousal of responses, Kane’s readers are invited to feel a sensational landscape of a psychotic mind, which marks a distinctive contrast to the “room of expressionless faces” with their blank stares “devoid of meaning” (209).

Perceiving the inherent “evil intent” (209) in the meaningless stares, the patient narrates her painful alienation not only as an active observer but also a passive object. Penetrated by language of senses, the patient situates herself in a position of being sensually observed by the nameless doctors: “[w]atching me, [...], smelling the crippling failure oozing from my skin” (209). Describing herself as “stumbl[ing] over words” and “be[ing] deadlocked by that smooth psychiatric voice of reason,” the patient is suffocated by the doctors who “put words in [her] mouth” (209). The feeling of being sensually observed conveys the oppressive violence of normalization: the patient is paralyzed as a immobile prey that loses the ability to reject the penetrating gaze from society. Narrating the reciprocal process of sensual observation, the patient facilitates Kane’s readers to perceive her devastated mind in dynamic perspectives. When she narrates herself as an alienated observer, her language with sensual stimulation describes the external environment that afflicts her sensitive mind. On the other hand, when she expresses her feeling of being sensually observed, her language narrates the internal discomfort of her mind aroused by violent society. The dynamic

perspectives established by this sensual language set up a total theatre, proposed by Artaud as an ideal of theatrical space, where “everything [...] is addressed first of all the senses instead of being addressed primarily to the mind” (“Metaphysics and *Mise en Scene*” 38).

#### 2.3.4 Thematic Focus: Disjuncture of Body and Mind

In the patient’s protest, another inexplicable torment that frequently occurs is her painful disjuncture of body and mind. Treated as a suffocated object, the patient is violently muted by the doctor, who ruthlessly tells her “an objective truth” that her “body and mind are one” (209). Unable to find an adequate verbal expression for the illustration of her mental disintegration, the patient rejects what the doctor says about the union of body and mind, describing her painful disjuncture twice as being drowned in the devouring sea of reason:

I will drown in dysphoria  
 in the cold black pond of my self  
 the pit of my immaterial mind (213)

drowning in a sea of logic  
 this monstrous state of palsy

still ill (223)

The patient is tortured by the inability to verbally formulate her physical pain and the afflicted psychology. Stating that “[b]ody and soul can never be married” (212), the patient recognizes this disjuncture as an “incongruity which has committed [her] to hell” (212). In other words, her mind is in a fatal state of paralysis that fails to sustain or to explain the insufferable pain imposing on her body. This fatal state of paralysis is metaphorically described as a “pond” or a “sea,” in which the patient is immersed.

In the two fragments, the patient's language is in a continual process of reduction, from complete sentences (i.e. "I will drown in dysphoria") to phrasal entities (i.e. "drowning in a sea"), and to the most extreme, the combination of words in repetition of rhyming syllables (i.e. "*still ill*," with italicized emphasis). The repeated sound of "ill" emphatically suggests that the patient is doomed to be haunted by her illness. The patient's fragmentary language in reduction signifies the painful disjuncture that catalyzes the patient's death and manifests her diseased mind, which fails to give expression for her body in perpetual torment.

### 2.3.5 Thematic Focus: Self-Contradictory Attitude

The third prevailing theme scattered in the fragments of *4.48 Psychosis* is the patient's contradictory attitude of love and hate toward the mysterious voice of a doctor/lover. This self-contradictory attitude situates the patient in constant oscillation and loosens up her protest from being a rigid form of language that only strikes severe attacks. In a fragment of accusing her doctors, the patient categorizes this group of medical authority as "inscrutable doctors" (209) and "stupid moral cunt" (210). However, the patient lays an emphatic focus on this doctor/lover by attaching a cluster of signification to it:<sup>8</sup>

[...] I want to scream for you, the only doctor who ever  
 touched me voluntarily, who looked me in the eyes,  
 who laughed at my gallows humour spoken in the  
 voice from the newly-dug grave, who took the piss  
 when I shaved my head, *who lied and said it was nice  
 to see me. Who lied. And said it was nice to see me.*  
 (209, italicized emphasis added)

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<sup>8</sup> In *4.48 Psychosis*, the voice of the doctor/lover is not given a specific signification of sex. I choose to refer to this voice as a sexless third-person because this character is performed by a group of female actresses and a male actor in the 2000 premiere production in Royal Court Theatre. The distinction of pronouns ("it" as the doctor/lover and "she" as the patient) can also help me while referring to them simultaneously.

The patient's description of the doctor/lover expresses her desire of being understood by others. However, her self-contradictory attitude rejects the communication.

Adoring the doctor/lover for its willingness to have physical contact with her, the patient shows a positive attachment to the doctor/lover because her actions and jokes are responded. On the other hand, accusing the doctor/lover of telling lies, she rejects its greeting and reproaches it for possessing "fucking falsehoods that masquerade as medical notes" (210). The "falsehoods" stems from the doctor's wish to maintain a "professional relationship" (237), an unbreakable relationship demanded by medical authority and facilitating social normalization. Although sarcastically mocking at society and stressing the incapability of communicating with others through verbal expression, Kane does not put the patient in a static position of total objection. Instead, it is the patient's ambivalent emotion that reinforces her inner torture because she is constantly afflicted by her self-contradiction.

Oscillating between the emotions of love and hate, the patient is empowered to act and to speak because of her self-contradictory attitude. On the one hand, she persistently searches for the doctor/lover. On the other, she condemns her situation of being alienated from the doctor/lover. With the expression of "I feel your pain but I cannot hold your life in my hands" (237), the doctor/lover insists to remain a distance of reasonable judgment. In several fragments, the patient expresses her anguish of being tortured by the distance and desperately wishes to bridge up the gap:

And I go out at six in the morning and start my search for  
you. If I've dreamt a message of a street or a pub or a  
station I go there. And I wait for you. (214-5)

The eternal lack within the patient is never filled in her relentless search. The public places which signify social contact among humans, i.e. "street," "pub," "station" (214), can not provide the sense of belongings to the marginalized patient. The more

efforts she makes to find the doctor/lover, the more frustration she has to endure. Her growing emotional lack ends up with a painful expression in a foul language that simultaneously hurts her lover and herself:

[...] No one touches me, no one gets near me. But now you've touched me somewhere so fucking deep *I can't* believe and *I can't* be that for you. Because *I can't* find you.

[...]

Fuck you. Fuck you. Fuck you for rejecting me by never being there, fuck you for making me feel shit about myself, fuck you for bleeding the fucking love and life out of me, [...] but most of all, fuck you God for making me love a person who does not exist,  
 FUCK YOU FUCK YOU FUCK YOU. (215)

In the patient's condemnation, numerous sentences with similar syntax structures are compiled, i.e. "no one [do something to] me," "I can't [do something]," "fuck you for [doing something]," which creates a dramatic effect of audio repetition. By ceaselessly repeating her resentment, she condemns the doctor / lover and accuses society in an incantatory language,<sup>9</sup> which forces an compulsion on one's hearing and provokes a sense of irritated agitation. Contradictory to her craving for the love from others, the patient condemns this love that eliminates her existence. In other words, the self-contradictory patient strikes out her protest in a physical action of persistent search and in an incantatory form of brutal accusation. By using similar syntax structures and sound repetition, the patient's language forms an audio attack and breaks down one's innermost peace of mind.

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<sup>9</sup> The audio repetition in the patient's condemnation corresponds to Artaud's proposition of incorporating an incantatory language, "giving words approximately the importance they have in dreams" ("The Theater of Cruelty (First Manifesto)" 94). According to Artaud, when sounds, noises, cries and screams are performed on stage for their incantatory qualities, the repeated rhythm can serve a similar function as liturgical chants in religious rituals, which causes certain psychological reactions, i.e. experiencing a cathartic purging.

Tortured by her self-contradiction, the patient, in her argumentation with the doctor, manifests the hierarchical structure of power in their relationship, a brutal social construction that sets the psychotic patient apart from the normality. Though making a severe protest against normalization, she is sharply aware of the fact that her wish to be warmly accepted by the doctor/lover and normal majority can never be fulfilled. In several fragments, the doctor/lover, in an attempt to relieve the patient's pain, repetitively reminds her of her illness:

- Do you despise all unhappy people or is it me specifically?
- I don't despise you. It's not your fault. You're ill. (212)
- (*Looks*) And you don't think you're ill?
- No.
- I do. It's not your fault. But you have to take responsibility for your own actions. (217-8)
- No. It's not your fault.
- It's not your fault, that's all I ever hear, it's not your fault, it's an illness, it's not your fault, I know it's not my fault. You've told me that so often I'm beginning to think it *is* my fault.
- It's not your fault. (220)

The statement "it's not your fault" is repeated with an increasing frequency. The gradually intensified repetition creates an audio oppression that forces the reader to hear the amplified statement of correction with the patient. The hierarchical structure of power in society privileges those with the ability of rational thinking to make a judgment evaluating the faultiness of one's behavior. When the doctor says "it's not your fault," the implied meaning is that "it is a fault indeed, but not *yours*." "It is due to the illness so that you made the fault." So, from the patient's point of view, hearing the judgment is not a relief from her fault but a confirmation of her illness. The

speech of correction manifests the unbalanced structure of power and ensures its speaker to occupy a higher position of articulation and its listener a lower position of being judged or corrected.

What implies in the conversation between the doctor and the patient is an unchangeable situation: language approved by society dominated by logic fails to comprehend the patient's mind. On the verge of committing suicide, she takes in what the doctor/lover has always preached to her:

- It's not my fault.
- I'm sorry, that was a mistake.
- It is not my fault.
- No. It's not your fault. I'm sorry. (238)

What is implied in the statement "it's not my fault" is actually the affirmation of being the abnormal, "I'm ill." As a reply to the doctor's vindication, "I fucking hate this job and I need my friends to be sane" (237), the patient copies what the doctor/lover has said, changes her position to self-recognition, and gives up using language in her battle against society. Abandoning the hierarchy of power inherent in dialogues, fragmentary language in soliloquies is a better tool for the patient to illustrate her subtle consciousness at the point of unplugging her life. By showing the patient's retreat, Kane proposes that language in a logical mechanism of conversation is not a valid tool to convey the deepest anguish within the psychotic mind. The ready-made formulation of language spoken by the doctor fails to provide consolation to the patient. Instead, medical language of reason exhibits an authorized power that cruelly condemns the patient's difference from the normal and affects her language performance.

### 2.3.6 The Patient's Suicide as the Ultimate Form of Protest

Excluded from the group of sanity, the patient understands her permanent incompatibility to society and resolves to carry out her final protest through the deliberate action of suicide. As an embodiment of what Artaud proposes as the ideal language that conveys the mental torment “[w]ith plowshares of anguish, with the keen edge of a stubborn obstinacy” (Greene 98), the patient demonstrates her suicidal death by using segmented sentences and dislocated phrasal entities. Rejecting the paralyzed state of her life, the patient recognizes death as the only rescuer while she decreases her use of vocabulary to express her near-death psychology in a language form of simplicity. In the fragment of her soliloquy, she expresses her reason to stop her life because death crucially provides her with the peaceful mind that she longs for:

Find me  
Free me  
from this  
corrosive doubt  
futile despair  
horror in repose (219)

The sentence of the request is segmented into phrasal entities and its form of simplicity builds up a desperate cry, like listening to a drowning person with a vital call for help. With the urgent signals of “[f]ind me” and “[f]ree me” (219), the patient points out her fatal situation of being killed by torment of life. Connoting to a sense of deprivation, the torment that she suffers from is defined as “doubt” that erodes her essential being and “despair” that is devoid of significance (219). Her “horror” is equated as “repose” with a connotation of death in peace (219), which implies her current situation as a dead-like person that prolongs her last gasp in society. By using indented lines, the blank space on the page creates a visual effect of emptiness that

best illustrates her mental state of serenity. The language form of simplicity, with its reduced structure of segmented phrases and its arrangement of blank spaces on the page, serves as a textual embodiment of the patient's near-death consciousness and her peaceful psychology.

As an intuitive response to her mental turbulence suffering from social alienation and psychotherapy, the patient values death because it can liberate her mind from the painful torture of disjuncture. The patient's act of committing suicide is a direct protest against social normalization because she unites her body and mind in her own way, not in the ways sanctioned by normalizing society. And the patient's determination to choose death explicates the Artaudian cruelty inherent in the theatre of *4.48 Psychosis*.<sup>10</sup> In the fragment where the patient describes her peaceful mind while facing death, she identifies death as the key to her spiritual lack:

I can fill my space  
fill my time  
but nothing can fill this void in my heart

The vital need for which I would die (219)

By asserting the possibility of filling her own "space" and "time" (219), the patient proclaims her physical existence in both the scales of temporality and spatiality. But she can not measure her spirituality since the deadly "void in [her] heart" (219) can only be filled when she courageously puts an end to her life. In other words, the patient welcomes death because it can free herself from the boundaries and reach the

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<sup>10</sup> Artaud specifically emphasizes the significance of self-determination in the action of committing suicide: "[s]uicide will be for me the only one means of violently reconquering myself" ("On Suicide" 56). Explaining the deliberate act of putting an end to one's life, Artaud suggests that the brutality inherent in the act itself is the most effective weapon to charge against the tortures of life: "I free myself from the conditioned reflexes of my organs, [...] and life is for me no longer an absurd accident whereby I think what I am told to think" ("On Suicide" 56). Thus, the patient's self-contradictory attitude, embracing it with a peaceful mind and a strong determination, molds the basis for the audience in an Artaudian theatre to understand the lesson of death that Kane tries to convey.

tranquil state of lucid awareness. In her repeated fragments of suicidal announcement, she connects the essential moment of four forty-eight to a mixed consciousness of “desperation” (207), “sanity” (229), and “clarity” (242). In every attempt of killing herself, the patient approaches the “happy hour” (242) in which her mind and body can finally be united. This is also the moment defined by Artaud as an ideal death, a “complete and permeable state” in life (“Who, in the Heart” 51).<sup>11</sup> And this hour of lucidity is not given by logic thoughts approved by social normality. In other words, she regains her peace of mind due to the deliberate act of committing suicide, a violence that she determines to impose upon herself as the last protest.

Examining *4.48 Psychosis* through an Artaudian perspective of fragmentary language helps readers to approach the psychotic patient’s mind, which is severely destroyed by social normalization. Reading her mind through fragments and understanding her psychological pains are not easy for readers that belong to the group of normal majority. A theoretical basis provided by Artaud helps to bring illumination because he shares a common experience of suffering from psychological depression and mental disturbance. Artaud’s authorial explanation in treatises and his literary creation of poetic fragments serve as referential evidence because the psychotic patient lacks a defined identity that Kane’s readers can resort to. Though without a clear description of characterization and plot development, the fragments in

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<sup>11</sup> Suggesting that Artaud is influenced by the “Egyptian and Tibetan books of the dead,” Greene identifies this “complete and permeable state” as Artaud’s wish to obtain tranquility by experiencing death and to get away from the body, “the earthly embodiment which is unclean and contemptible” (110). The manifestation of embracing death is a significant feature in both Artaud’s and Kane’s writings. In a prose dedicated to Andre Breton, “Letter to the Clairvoyant,” Artaud refers to death in a language with a peaceful sensation: “[t]he mild and perfect light in which one no longer suffers from one’s soul, [...], the atmosphere of a serene and pious, of a precious fatality” (*Selected Writings* 126). By using the metaphor of light and salvation, Artaud’s language of describing his near-death situation produces a significant correspondence to the longing patient in *4.48 Psychosis*, who urges in some fragments twice: “[r]emember the light and believe the light” (206, 228).

This play can be read as an embodiment of the patient's inner thoughts and her mode of interaction with the outside world.

For a broken mind that is severely oppressed by society, it can only find a proper channel of articulation by incorporating fragmentary language. Because of his speech disorder, Artaud endures the painful experience of losing his control over verbal articulation. Some significant propositions by Artaud, i.e. his emotional lack of wishing to express himself and his rejection of a language dominated by reason, exemplify how and why the patient in *4.48 Psychosis* displays a self-contradictory attitude to the social normality and uses an illogical form of language to compose her protesting fragments. As a useful tool appropriate for conveying the dispersed thoughts, the fragmentary structure of language in this play textualizes the patient's mind in discontinuous and disorienting fragments.

In fact, a structural analysis of *4.48 Psychosis* may still neglect some crucial features that pervade in the patient's language, i.e. some constant images and scenes that appear frequently from fragment to fragment. By repetitively narrating these reoccurring images, the patient orchestrates her protesting messages not only in a language with fragmentary structure but also in a language saturated with sensory stimulation. The fragmentary structure helps to narrate the patient's disrupted thoughts, and her excessive use of images visualizes the psychological devastation enclosed in her mind. Therefore, in order to fully understand the patient's chaotic world of psychosis, a detailed analysis on the prevailing images in her fragments should be employed, which is the focus of the following chapter.

## Chapter Three

### The Collaged Images

If the fragmentary structure of language discussed in the previous chapter sets up the framework of *4.48 Psychosis*, the collaged images distributed within each fragment play a role as a crucial component that fills up the skeleton and helps readers to comprehend the implicit meanings in the fractured language. The two kinds of collaged images—the visual images and textual images—in this play illustrate the patient's psychotic mind, which dynamically and intensely takes the spectators into her theatre of psychological breakdown. Thanks to Artaud's theory, we understand that where rationalized language fails in conveying some latent thoughts, human emotions and perceptual experiences, this kind of ideographic language of Kane's leads us profoundly into the patient's innermost psychology. Therefore, it is equally appropriate and significant to read images in *4.48 Psychosis* from Artaud so as to establish an in-depth study of the patient's innermost psychology.

#### 3.1 A Dynamic Process of Viewing

To examine the incorporation of images in theatre, one should study the interlocking relationship between the spectators and the staged images, which forms a complex process of interaction. Suggested by Artaud, watching theatrical images is a dynamic process of communication between the image-producers and the viewers. Defined by Peter Brook, Artaud's theatre is an interactive space collaboratively created by directors, actors and the audience through an "unending succession of violent stage images" that deal with "powerful immediate explosions of human affairs" (59-60). Directors employ certain ways of *mise en scene* to translate their own interpretation of the script into concrete stage images. Actors use the medium of gestures, movements, or sounds, all of which constitute a variety of images in

performance, to embody their inner thoughts or emotions onto the stage. The audience perceives the images, whether arranged by the directors or performed by the actors, and connects the staged images to their daily experiences or memories of the past. With the collaborative participation of directors, actors, and the audience, the meanings of images in the theatre are simultaneously constructed and constantly under changes.

Moreover, watching violent images in the theatre of *4.48 Psychosis* is a penetration into one's innermost psychology.<sup>1</sup> As a creative work that voices for the psychotic patient, this play comprises images of brutal actions and intense emotions that signify her physical and psychological tortures caused by social normalization. When the patient cries for ecstasy or shouts with agony, spectators experience the physical reactions caused by extreme emotions. In other words, these images evoke the inexpressible pain embedded in the spectators' mind. As if watching a self-reflected image being amplified through a mirror of distortion, they are pushed to a new awareness of re-viewing the reality that they are originally accustomed to. Thus, the process of presenting images in *4.48 Psychosis* has to be completed when the spectators' participation is involved. The involvement of spectators is considered by David Graver as a crucial step that facilitates the communication in an Artaudian theatre because these visual images "dissolve in the agitated emotional atmosphere of

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<sup>1</sup> Kane identifies the visuality of images as a crucial strength of enacting humans' psychology, because an image provides a vision that directly reflects one's transient thought and "leaves a mark more permanent than the moment itself" (Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 14).

events” and “lose their integrity by becoming entwined in the reactions of the audience” (218).<sup>2</sup> The interactive approach of presenting theatrical images is specifically employed in *4.48 Psychosis*, in which Kane’s readers are involved to dynamically observe the patient’s dying mind that is strangled by the normalizing violence.

If *4.48 Psychosis* does not aim at a direct display of physical violence, but a poeticized presentation of violence in various forms, how does the playwright exploit a diverse use of images to match her thematic focus? What kind of images can best represent our violent society or the damaged psychology of the patient? In what way can the violent process of normalization be depicted into images? How does the patient deploy her destructive protest through an imagery presentation? Artaud’s writings on images in theatre can provide useful answers to these questions.

### 3.2 Artaud’s Idea on Images in Theatre

Under the influence of surrealism, Artaud emphatically focuses on the intense connection between humans’ perception and psychology, defining his theatre as a birth of “images of energy in the unconscious” (“No More Masterpieces” 82). Artaud professes his strong belief in the power of poetic images and dream visions, the most effective medium to present “a mosaic of unconscious images based on an irrational

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<sup>2</sup> In Graver’s study, among the avant-garde playwrights who use collage and montage in the theatre, Brecht and Artaud are preeminent for their intentional tactics to encourage the participation of the audience, to “place the audience within” their “heterogeneous constructions” (219). However, the two playwrights do not take the same route to achieve the purpose. Brecht uses images of silent or still motions to alienate his audience from being emotionally immersed into the play. What he intends is to engage his audience into a rational contemplation of the allegorical implication that he wishes to convey. Artaud, on the other hand, uses surreal scenes comprising symbolic visual components and extreme human emotions to summon the fear embedded in the subconscious of the audience. Instead of keeping an aesthetic distance of voyeurism, Artaud wishes to shorten the distance between the audience and the staged performance, enforcing the spectatorship to its limit and looking at humans’ suffering with no evasion.

disorder” (*Selected Writings* 10).<sup>3</sup> He suggests that the poetic images with its dream-like presentation on stage bridge up the gap “[b]etween real life and the life of dreams” and promote the “interplay of mental associations, relationships between gestures or events that can be translated into actions” (*Selected Writings* 163). In his display of poetic images, the most predominant action that Artaud chooses to present is the most violent atrocities that challenge the limits of moral codes in human society. He points out the lyrical effect in his exhibition of violence, which “summons up supernatural images, a bloodstream of images, a bleeding spurt of images in the poet’s head and in the spectator’s as well” (“No More Masterpieces” 82). Moreover, Artaud clarifies the misunderstood concept of relating his “image of cruelty” to “bloodshed, martyred flesh, crucified enemies” (“Letters on Cruelty” 102). Thus, the primary question is: how can violence be visualized in images without evoking the bloodthirsty sensation of the audience? Artaud himself does not give a direct and concrete answer in his treatises, but provides a theatrical exemplification in his play, *The Spurt of Blood*.

In *The Spurt of Blood*, Artaud combines outraging themes of incest and blasphemy with poetic images, which strongly challenge the accustomed rules that dominate the audience’s perception. In the opening scene, the stage is presented as a hallucinatory vision that seems impossible to be physically performed:

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<sup>3</sup> Andre Breton, in his *Manifesto of Surrealism*, calls for a “new mode of expression” that “explode[s] in a dynamic image” and reveals the profound depths of one’s inner being (Balakian 143). To reach the goal, he proposes the literary technique of using poetic images: combining visual components that are originally unrelated to one another. These components are “brought together by [the author’s] creative intuition” rather than logic deduction or rational thinking (Balakian 143). The lack of proximity between the visual entities promotes readers to associate the implicit connection. Artaud, stressing the unconventional association in the combined images, suggests that poetic images can liberate readers from the control of discursive language and “bring the audience closer to hidden reality” (Greene 100).

Then one sees two stars collide and a series of legs of living flesh falling together with feet, hands, heads of hair, masks, colonnades, porticoes, temples, and alembics which fall, but more and more slowly, as if they were falling in space, then three scorpions one after the other, and finally a frog, and a scarab which lands with exasperating, nauseating slowness. (*Selected Writings* 73)

The bloodthirsty sensation evoked by the dislocated body organs is diluted due to the juxtaposition of nonhuman constructions and low-graded living species that float in a weightless environment. Without an obvious indication of proximity, the surreal scene comprises unrelated components and creates the effect of disorientation, which primarily resorts to the audience's sensational perception, rather than their rational thinking. The emotional reactions of exasperation and nausea are not triggered by the graphic presentation of mutilation. Instead, the focus of spectators' attention is aimed at the extremely slow speed of these bizarre visual components. By presenting the peculiar images of organs without a body, Artaud subverts one's traditional experience of viewing, destroys an organic human body, and breaks the hegemonic rules that operate the unified universe.

Presented with a dream-like obscurity, the poetic images in Artaud's theatre help to convey the suppressed thoughts that are not allowed to be revealed in logical language. In *The Spurt of Blood*, Artaud presents his characters in abnormal bodily shapes, such as "a medieval KNIGHT in an enormous suit of armor" or "a wet nurse who supports her bosom with both hands and pants because of her swollen breasts" (*Selected Writings* 73). These images are even exaggerated into a disastrous devastation of human body, i.e. "an enormous number of scorpions emerge from under the WET NURSE's skirts and begin to swarm in her vagina, which swells and splits, becomes vitreous, and flashes like the sun" (*Selected Writings* 75). The distorted human body without normal proportion provides a significant access to a reading of dream visions. As Gustavus H. Miller suggests, "when images appear upon the dream

vision they are frequently distorted into hideous malformations that fill it with fear and excitement” (32). In other words, the presentation of disfigured human bodies resembles a dream vision that reveals the suppressed emotions or thoughts that one may not be consciously aware of in reality or that fails to be conveyed in language of logicity.

As a psychotic patient who is miserably tortured by fragmentary thoughts, Artaud uses images in his theatre to describe some fleeting thoughts or latent human emotions that are beyond his ability of verbal formulation. Constantly failing to create his own work with complete sentences, he expresses his envy of the painter’s ability “to control and dominate thought impulses by projecting them onto canvas” (Greene 91).<sup>4</sup> By ordering his thoughts through pictorial or spatial arrangement, Artaud wishes to supplement the insufficient expression of his language, a disappointing tool that constantly fails to render his thoughts into concrete forms. As a result, he turns to images as the essential tool to articulate his mind.<sup>5</sup> In his second manifesto of the Theatre of Cruelty, Artaud proposes a holistic view on images in theatre: they are a combination of physical “movements, gestures, dances, rites,” “fragmented melodies and sudden turns of dialogue” (*The Theory of the Modern Stage* 71). Identifying actors as “veritable living, moving hieroglyphs” that offer the audience a “marvelous complex of pure stage images,” Artaud suggests that actors in theatre should

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<sup>4</sup> In Greene’s biographical study, Artaud envies two of his friends Paolo Uccello and Balthazar Klossowski de Rola, both of whom are painters placing great emphasis on form and depth in their paintings. In his complaint, Artaud suggests that a good command of pictorial language can spare the artists’ need for verbal language and efficiently transforms the ideas or emotions into objects.

<sup>5</sup> In his prose “A Mental Painter,” Artaud expresses his expectation to construct his “mental syntheses” as “architectural structures” (*Selected Writings* 27). Through the “[o]rganization of images,” he can achieve “clarifications of visions of the mind” and “fixation, stabilization of thoughts” (*Selected Writings* 27). It is through the graphic presentation of images that “the secret objectivity of things is made tangible” (*Selected Writings* 27). His explanation illustrates the importance of understanding a psychotic mind through its expression of images.

externalize their inner conflicts through symbolic gestures and metaphorical signs in representation of “some unknown, fabulous, and obscure reality” (“On the Balinese Theater” 61).<sup>6</sup> By treating the staged physical actions as a way of self-expression, Artaud makes up for the lack of his verbal expression by translating one’s psychological thoughts and nonverbal emotions into a theatrical language of images.

Objecting to a conventional theatre of realism that is governed by rationalized and structured language only, Artaud pays emphatic attention to images and stress their significance to reveal one’s repressed thoughts and hidden emotions. According to Artaud, it is essential to understand the playwright’s psychology through the images, both visual and textual, which are often narrated in an abstract form of language. From Artaud’s perspective, it is essential to interpret how the patient uses violent images to manifest the unspeakable pains and prohibited thoughts in her mind, which are not allowed to be articulated in normalizing society and can not be formulated by rationalized language of logicity.

### 3.3 The Images in *4.48 Psychosis*

In *4.48 Psychosis*, a collage of images is incorporated and it reveals the repressed emotions in the patient’s subconscious mind. Kane’s visualization of a psychotic mind can be basically classified in two types: some images are visually presented as a surreal scene with enigmatic components, and some images are

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<sup>6</sup> Elaborating on the metaphor of hieroglyphs, Artaud further suggests that language in theatre should not be a mere “reflection of a written text,” but a mixed form of visual figures and audio features, a “burning projection of all the consequences of a gesture, word, sound, music and their combinations” (“Oriental and Occidental Theater” 73). In other words, images in an Artaudian theatre should be expressed in not only an “auditory language of sounds” but also a “visual language of objects, movements, attitudes, and gestures” (“The Theater of Cruelty (First Manifesto)” 90). With a stressed importance on sensational perceptions and their direct connection to humans’ psychology, the aesthetic experience of reading the images in an Artaudian theatre requires both the perceptions of seeing and hearing.

textually presented as a special design of layout on pages. On the one hand, the visual images of surreal scenes represent the disconnected hallucinations that the patient experiences. On the other hand, the textual images of typographical design reflect her disorganized speech and a disturbed state of consciousness in her mind. As an important element that forms the patient's schizophrenic language, both kinds of images function as a communicative tool that contributes to a symptomatic reading of the patient. From the perspective of art therapy, the images are a "projection of [the patient's] environment, or of pressures over which he or she has no control" (Kaplan 72). By interpreting the images, the patient's unutterable spiritual pains may become comprehensible in the preliminary process of diagnosis. Further, reproducing the images can release the patient's pressure, "substitute for emotions and help [the patient] to negotiate reality" (Kaplan 72). A more ambitious reading of the images in *4.48 Psychosis* will consider them as the patient's amplifier, her tool to voice her protest against society and to reassure her existence in the torturing reality.

With their intermittent occurrence, the collaged images in this play are characterized by the interdependent relationship in the fugal design. Appearing in an initial fragment as a preceding entry, an image will recur in the course of Kane's composition. Frequently, this image will emerge in a form of variations distributed in following fragments. Each variation shares a contrapuntal relationship with the preceding image, and they cooperatively transmit a significant message that the patient intends to tell. Neither can the variations be isolated, and nor do the varied images lose their uniqueness. Like the shadow that possesses a compact connection to the projected object, the fugal variations supplement the meaning of the preceding image, and cooperatively they form a complimentary network that complicates one's reading of the patient's imagery.

Massively composed of visual and audio elements, the fugal design of images

in *4.48 Psychosis* strongly resorts to one's sensual perception and creates a "feeling of gross sensory overload" (Kaplan 78). The repetition of images implies that the patient is severely tortured by her visual illusions. Her psyche is "overpowered and overwhelmed by stimuli it cannot sufficiently organize and interpret" (Kaplan 79). As Artaud suggests that "the Theater of Cruelty intends to reassert all the time-tested magical means of capturing the sensibility" ("The Theater of Cruelty (Second Manifesto)" 125), it is through the process of reproducing the images in *4.48 Psychosis* can readers be "affected by a direct pressure upon the senses" ("The Theater of Cruelty (Second Manifesto)" 125). In the 2000 London premiere of *4.48 Psychosis*, the set designer, Jeremy Herpert used a large mirror to replicate the images on stage: "the intriguing feature that dominated the set was a mirror slanted at a 45 degree angle, cutting off the back of the set so that it resembled a small attic room" (Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 115). The actors' gestures and movements have a mirrored projection so that the audience could simultaneously "witness the actors playing in front and above their heads" (Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 115). The dual perspective offered by the mirror enabled the audience to comparatively observe the images on two planes. This theatrical experience of watching mirrored images is similar to the process of reading contrapuntal images in the script, both of which require the spectator's reason to involve and to rationally analyze the aesthetic form of expression without being emotionally immersed into the play.

### 3.3.1 Visual Images

Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* derives its theatricality and its poetry from the creative use of surreal images and layout design, both of which can be symbolically linked to the thematic nature of this play. Embodying the patient's psychological world of psychosis, the visual images that repetitively appear in different fragments

collaboratively constitute the patient's protest against normalization. These images are the collage of a banqueting hall, the images of light, and the images of the patient's dismembered body. Together they play a vital role in assisting the patient in establishing a stronger voice and in providing readers with dynamic positions of viewing.

### 3.3.1.1 Thematic Focus: Desperation of A Broken Mind

The first surreal scene that initiates Kane's drama of psychological breakdown starts with an illustration of a "darkened banqueting hall" (205). The collage of the banqueting hall, with its visual components of immense darkness and a dancing couple on a "shift[ing]" "floor" of "cockroaches" (205), illustrates the patient with her broken mind, who is hopelessly trapped in an unstable environment of desperation. Reflected by its varied visual components, the collage of the banqueting hall repetitively engages Kane's readers into an ever-repeating drama of psychological breakdown. The spatiality of the banqueting hall resorts to an atmosphere of frenzy, which is replaced by emptiness and darkness instead. Without a furious crowd of guests, the patient attends a party that is held for herself only, a total alienation that is entirely contrastive to the banqueting hall which is "in reality teeming" (205). The patient can spiritually feel the crowdedness of the banqueting hall but cannot physically see the crowds, which resembles the invisible but compulsive pressures imposed upon her by normalizing society. The emptiness of the hall is physically presented in a later fragment when the image of cockroaches reappears:

a dismal whistle that is the cry of heartbreak around the  
hellish bowl at the ceiling of my mind

a blanket of roaches

cease the war (227)

Again, the image of “the ceiling of my mind” and “a blanket of roaches” (227) represents the fierce turmoil that seizes the patient’s mind. The oppositional positions of the mind and the roaches are visually presented in the layout as a ceiling above and a blanket beneath. As an echo to the image of the shifting floor, the blanket is once again covered by crawling roaches that imply an interminable war of psychological breakdown happened in the patient’s mind. The blank space between the lines enables readers to perceive the emptiness of the banqueting hall, though visually barren but psychologically turbulent.

In the presentation of the banqueting hall, Kane textualizes the patient’s psychological pain into a fragment with vast emptiness. This technique of embedding mental disturbances in an empty space of barrenness is stressed by Artaud as a primary spectacle in the Theatre of Cruelty: “to make space speak, to feed and furnish it; like mines laid in a wall of rock which all of a sudden turns into geysers and bouquets of stone” (“The Theater of Cruelty (First Manifesto)” 98). In addition to a direct display of explosion, violence can also be comprehended through an extremely contrastive presentation of subsidence. Artaud’s metaphor of mines suggests that the explosive power of destruction should be inherent in the physical presentation of a theatrical space. If a stage director wants to reconstruct a theatrical space presenting the psychotic mental state of the patient, the element of scarcity and emptiness that is conveyed by Kane through her design of layout should be the primary concern.

This image of a banqueting hall has its variations scattered in other fragments, which persistently remind readers of the inescapable situation that entraps the patient. As a sharp contrast to the “shaft of light” (205) that signifies the unification of thoughts, the immense darkness of the banqueting hall permeates the space and

symbolizes the desperation that the patient currently faces. The image of devouring darkness also creates its resonance in other fragments: “[a]ll I know / is snow / and black despair” (241), “warm darkness / which soaks my eyes” (242) and “[b]lack snow falls / in death you hold me / never free” (244). The black color is metonymically describes by the patient as warm tears that “soaks my eyes” (242) and snows that gently fall upon her when facing death. By using a peculiar juxtaposition of extremity, the patient depicts her death as a process of being immersed in the darkness, which connotes a positive meaning of warmth and a negative meaning of despair. The combination of extreme oppositional meanings re-emerges when the patient refers to death as “something blacker than desire” (226) and comments on death that “perhaps it will save me / perhaps it will kill me” (227). The patient’s ambivalent attitude toward death is demonstrated in her self-contradictory expression: she can be saved from her psychological breakdown since death grants her a peaceful mind, but the consequence she has to pay is the termination of her life.

Besides the image of darkness, the unstable floor in the banqueting hall also produces its mirrored images in other fragments, i.e. “a blanket of roaches on which we dance / this infernal state of siege” (228), “[t]read the ground on which wisdom walks” (229), and “[h]ere am I / and there is my body / dancing on glass” (230). Instead of being solid and firm, the ground that the patient stands on is either fluctuating or fragile. The instability of the stand ground is metaphorically compared with “a blanket of roaches” (228) that induces the embedded fear inside the patient’s mind or the “glass” (230) and causes the excruciating pain torturing her body. The image of a dancing couple stepping on the unstable ground is comparably reflected by the image of “wisdom” that also walks on the ground and tells the “beautiful lies” (229). The paired images, added with a commentary of “the chronic insanity of the sane” (229) by the patient, alludes to a hallucinatory act of harmonious interaction

between her body and mind. In other words, as far as the patient is concerned, dancing gracefully with her psychotic mind or having a peaceful walk with her fragmented thoughts is a delusional dream that can never happen because she is treading on the unreliable ground that symbolizes her easily broken mentality.

### 3.3.1.2 Thematic Focus: Confusion and Ambiguity

As a parallel to the image of “warm darkness” (241) that paradoxically brings the patient despair and comfort, the image of light implies oppositional meanings of salvation and condemnation. Characterized by its ambiguity, this image illustrates the patient’s confused mind that fails to cope with social normalization and psychiatric violence. The primary meaning of light resorts to a positive allusion to hope and salvation, through which the patient signals her wish of being seen and being saved. In the opening scene of the “darkened banqueting hall,” the image of “a shaft of light” breaks into the immense darkness and unites “all the thoughts” “in an instant of accord body” (205). The light of salvation saves the patient from the chaos of her fragmentary thoughts. Repeatedly addressing the audience to “[r]emember the light and believe the light” (206, 228, 229), the patient signals the precious moments of 4.48 when she can gain the most lucid consciousness and embrace “[a]n instant clarity before eternal night” (206). In the fragment where the patient urges for a mutual communication with the doctor/lover, she sets up a focal point appointed to the light and uses it as an allusion to her inner self that she wishes to be understood: “[w]hy do you believe me then and not now? / Remember the light and believe the light. / Nothing matters more. / Stop judging by appearances and make a right judgement” (229). What the image of light represents is the patient’s “essential self” (229) that is often veiled by the appearance. As a psychotic patient, she protests against the misjudgment of the psychiatrists, who often diagnose her illness by interpreting her

superficial behaviors without knowing her real plight inside. And it is her hallucinatory vision of light that voices her protest and breaks through the colossal darkness haunting her mind.

On the other hand, in a fragment describing her apocalyptic vision of humans' destruction, the patient perceives the light as the condemnation of her being cast into hopeless isolation. By referring to humans as "anathema" and "pariahs of reason" (228), the patient as a prophet reveals her "visions of God," in which the humans "depose our leader / and burn incense unto Baal" (229). Tortured by psychotic hallucinations, the patient condemns her situation of mental breakdown as humans in the doomsday, who fail to pass the Last Judgment and suffer from the punishment of being "broken in pieces" and "driven to darkness" (228). The only chance of her survival is to "[b]ehold the light of despair" and "the glare of anguish" (228). Therefore, the image of light in the patient's prophecy contains contradictory connotations: humans are blessed with the light of salvation which also appears to be a condemnation of despair.

The ambiguity of light is intensified when its image is combined with a horrifying landscape of a psychiatric hospital. Unlike the light of salvation and the apocalyptic light, the light in a normalizing hospital essentially signifies the psychiatric violence that constantly abuses the patient's sensations. In several fragments, the patient expresses her visions of seeing the "[s]tark light" shining through the "hatch" that confines her (225, 230, 239, 240). These fragments are presented in a layout design that is occupied by abundant blankness. For instance, in a fragment where the patient narrates her sight of seeing the light, she describes a horrifying gaze of surveillance from society:

Hatch opens  
Stark light

the television talks  
 full of eyes  
 the spirits of sight (225)

As a paralyzed object under the permanent gaze of surveillance, the patient is alienated by the normalizing power “full of eyes” (225). The lifeless hospital is described by the patient as an institutionalized environment operated by “the spirits of sight” (225). Unable to escape from the position of exclusion, the patient can only be perpetually gazed by the normal majority behind the screen. The vast space of blankness on the page creates a visual effect of barrenness. Without a detailed description of the landscape, the patient can not produce complete sentences to verbalize the sterile environment that surrounds her. The image of a psychiatric hospital as a cold space without vitality is crucial in the patient’s visions of the light. She repeatedly uses the image of stark light to express her experiences of visiting the psychiatric hospital, a restless process of coming “out of one torture chamber” and going “into another” (239). Defining her experience of psychiatrist therapy as “a vile succession of errors without remission” (239), the patient can only express her endless tortures by ceaselessly repeating the images of light in her language.

When charging her attack against psychiatric violence, the patient narrates her vision of the stark light with a simplified language, which signifies the regression of her verbal formulation. When the patient sees the stark light, she describes the inhuman institution in a plain language without ornament, which, i.e. “[h]atch opens / Stark light / A table two chairs and no windows” (230) and “Hatch opens / Stark light / and Nothing / Nothing / see Nothing” (239). In one fragment the patient’s language is even deducted to mere wordless wailing and ends with painful physical sensation:

oh no oh no oh no

Hatch opens  
Stark light

the rupture begins (240)

Identifying herself as “the child of negation” (239), the patient pronounces her protest against society in consecutive cries of “nothing” (239) and “no” (240). Being socially alienated, she is filled up with “[a]nguish for which doctors can find no cure / Nor care to understand” (239). Her physical existence is defined by doctors’ denials of healing. Her psychological mind is in persistent lack of mutual understanding from others. As a constant image that permeates through the patient’s discourse of madness, the stark light connotes the meaning of malicious manipulation imposed by society to regulate her deviated mind. And the regressed narration of the light image symbolizes the patient’s degrading ability of formulating her psychotic thoughts into a language with a well-structured form.

### 3.3.1.3 Thematic Focus: Attack through Self-mutilation

Consequential to the social regulation of eliminating irrationality and insanity, a cruel process of denying one’s abnormality, the patient embarks on her confrontation against normality by reclaiming her existence through the deviated and psychopathic behavior of self-mutilation. The image of a self-destructed patient is collaged by fragmented visual components, i.e. dismemberment of organs and the patient’s devastated body. These components are conveyed in various tones to help lead the spectators into her psychological world, i.e. emotionless instructions, feeble pleadings and rational descriptions. The dynamic tones of language provide readers with a flexible position of spectatorship to observe the inner conflict of the patient from a multi-dimensional perspective.

Unlike the graphic presentation of physical violence in Kane's early theatre, the image of self-mutilation in *4.48 Psychosis* is essentially narrated in various forms of language, combined by emotionless instruction and furious imploration. An obvious example illustrating the images of self-mutilation appears in a fragment where the patient cruelly treats her body as a mere object:

A dotted line on the throat  
CUT HERE

DON'T LET THIS KILL ME  
THIS WILL KILL ME AND CRUSH ME AND  
SEND ME TO HELL (226)

The word cutthroat with its connotation of cruelty is physically presented as an image implying the brutal action of slashing one's throat, the crucial organ that connects one's mind and body. The capitalized phrase "CUT HERE" (226) resembles the directional line of cutting printed on a regular form and a reply sheet that we often see in daily life. The instructive language, which indicates readers to fix their eyes on the "dotted line on the throat" (226), is voiced in an objective tone of detachment. The subsequent lines written in capitals embody the vital cry from the patient, who desperately signals the murdering force of normalization that "crush[es]" (226) her mind and endangers her life. The use of capitalization creates a visual effect of enforcement, amplifies the audibility of the patient's cry for help, and provides a counter comparison to the image of the silent throat being dotted.

The image of throat cutting visually corresponds to an image of gnawing the patient's tongue, both of which signify her accusation of being silenced by normalizing violence. In another fragment, where the patient claims her love to a woman "who was never born" (218), she fails to find a successful way of self-expression except for devastating her organ of articulation: "I gnaw my tongue

with which to her I can never speak” (218). The patient denies her tongue that is incapable of speaking for herself. Since the intact form of her body fails to convey her disruptive thoughts, the image of an injured body provides the patient an alternative mode of expression. While claiming herself of being murdered by her thought that “walks away with a killing smile” (218), the patient finds herself the most appropriate way of presenting her ravaged mind that “roars” with “discordant anxiety” (218) through an image display of a skull with an absent tongue. Comparatively speaking, both fragments present an atrocity of annihilating one’s organs of articulation and symbolize the privation of the patient’s ability to express herself. Lacking the ability to formulate her pain in rational language, the patient visualizes her protest in the brutal images where a violent removal of her voicing power is enacted.

In addition to emotionless instruction that ambiguously contrasts to furious imploration, the images narrating the ferocious act of self-mutilation is also combined with the patient’s feeble pleading, intermingling with a tender tone of lyricism. Combined with the tender narration, the violent image of the patient’s dismembered body subverts readers’ traditional experience of perceptions. In a fragment where the patient humbly pledges her body to protect her love, she dismembers her body piece by piece in with a gentle tone of imploration: “[c]ut out my tongue / tear out my hair / cut off my limbs / but leave me my love / I would rather have lost my legs / pulled out my teeth / gouged out my eyes / than lost my love” (230). The loss of “legs” and “limbs” (230) symbolizes the patient’s immobility. The absence of “tongue” and “teeth” (230) implicates that the patient is deprived of the ability to utilize language. In a rhythmic repetition composed of triplets, the patient’s body is gradually torn apart. Blinded by society, the patient loses her visions to perceive the reality in which she is situated. Readers perceive the visual presentation of the patient’s body being dismembered as though they witness a prisoner being executed. By using a tender

tone of lyricism, a crucial contrast that challenges a traditional experience of viewing.<sup>7</sup>

To charge her attack against social normalization, the patient visualizes the process of mutilating her organs. Gradually losing her body organs, the patient is dehumanized by society, which continually deprives her of the abilities to act. As a torso without organs, the image of the patient's body turns out to be a vacuum that is filled with love, the one and only thing that she is not willing to give up. In the presentation of a limbed body, the absence of organs symbolizes that the subject is stripped of vitality, like a loaf of meat on a chopping board that is ready to be butchered. Identifying herself as a “[f]attened up” animal that is “[s]hored up” and “[s]hoved out” (238), the patient resigns herself to death and objectifies her lifeless body as a powerless prey slaughtered by “those brutal hands” (238) of the doctor / lover. By pointing out the decay and disintegration of her body, i.e. “my body decompensates / my body flies apart” (238), the patient resides her life in the grasp of the doctor by imploring that “you will always have a piece of me / because you held my life in your hands” (238). This expression controverts with what the doctor has said, “I feel your pain but I cannot hold your life in my hands” (237). Composed of a lyrical expression with parallel sentences, this pair of counterstatements indicates that it is the doctor's rejection of understanding that kills the patient.

In addition to the objective instruction and abject imploration, the self-injurious behaviors are also presented in a language of medical judgment, which provides an

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<sup>7</sup> The image of an injured body with its poetic structure appeals not only to readers' eyes but also to their ears. As Artaud suggests in his idealized form of performance, the visual presentation of a violent image should better involve with the repetitive rhythm in the actors' speech: it is “the chain of a rhythm in which the spectator used to see his own reality in the spectacle” that enables the audience's identification, “breath by breath and beat by beat” (“An Affective Athleticism” 140). He stresses a theatrical space “thundering with images and crammed with sounds” (“The Theater and Cruelty” 87) so that the power of his violent images can create its resonance in audio repetition.

alternative perspective of viewing and allows readers to peep at the patient's suffering as a framed reality, as if watching a brutal scene through the television screen.

Narrated in the perspective of being cruelly observed by the psychiatrist, the image of self-mutilation is verbalized as a scientific record of psychotic behaviors: "[a]rgument with junior doctor whom she accused of treachery after which she shaved her head and cut her arms with a razor blade" (224). In this fragment, the language of a case report, with its emotionless tone that leaves a scientific track for the patient's symptoms, implies a position of authorized psychiatrists with their imposing gaze at the patient. Her behavior of self-mutilation is diagnosed by the absolute power of normalization as deviation. The image of the patient's injured body resembles an anesthetized object that is ready to be dissected and examined in a scientific experiment. The patient's actions of "shav[ing] her head" and "cut[ting] her arms" (230) are framed with an institutionalized context of a psychiatric hospital. Readers are situated in a distanced position to watch the patient as if through a safe monitor. It is an entirely different experience of viewing compared with a direct gaze at the victim at an execution spot. Instead of a direct way of staring at the screeching patient, the violence of *4.48 Psychosis* is also experienced in an indirect way of voyeurism, peering at the patient's suffering through a muted scene framed by psychiatry.

With her various forms of language, ranging from instruction, imploration, lyrical pleading, and scientific records of medical judgment, the patient not only secures Kane's readers in a position of voyeurism but also engages them into an active position of spectatorship. In other words, readers can experience the brutality of normalization by watching the patient's suffering as bystanders and by performing the violent action as perpetrators. For example, in a fragment with the brutal instruction of cutting the dotted throat, the action of shutting down one's organ of voicing is essentially performed, not by the authorized doctors, but by readers. This image with

its instructional implication demands the spectator to fulfill the action requested by the image itself. Instead of being a passive viewer that watches the patient tortured by society, readers actively involve into the play to complete the violent action, demolishing the patient's expectation of being communicated. If the brutal action of self-mutilation is performed by the patient herself, it tests the emotional tolerance of readers. However, if the atrocity is presented as an image that waits for readers' completion, it challenges the limit of readers' moral acceptance, which is identified by Susan Sontag as the essential access of understanding violence in an Artaudian theatre, an "emotional and moral surgery upon consciousness" that "reproduce[es]" one's "inner agony" (89).

As the patient points out the three essential components that constitute a violent act, i.e. "Victim. Perpetrator. Bystander" (231), Kane offers her readers dynamic positions to observe the patient's brutal act of self-mutilation from different perspectives. The scenic image of a dotted throat presents the patient as a victim that invites readers to activate the violent action of slashing. The motion picture of cutting off the body parts presents the patient as a perpetrator and allows readers to watch the violent act as a bystander. Dynamically moving between active participation and by-standing observation, readers' positions of viewing is not fixed in one perspective only. The various positions produce different emotional reactions of readers, such as the sense of guilt evoked when one performs the violent act and the sense of pity when one peers at the cruel scene. Violence is understood by readers through a direct physical experience. Instead of conveying the horror of violence in a rigid display of bloody images, this dynamic process of watching violence in *4.48 Psychosis* reflects what Artaud calls for an interactive spectatorship in his theatre, wishing to achieve a visceral response of "magical identification" from the audience that "we know it is we

who are speaking” (“On the Balinese Theater” 67).<sup>8</sup> To sum up, the meaning of the patient’s protesting message is not merely author-oriented. It requires readers to define or to create the meaning by participating into this play.

### 3.3.2 Textual Images

Another of Kane’s technique of visualizing the patient’s mentality of psychosis is to arrange her language in a unique design of layout, using the two-dimensional pages as a theatrical space and the printed texts as actors to present the patient’s fragmentary thoughts of delirium. As implied in what the patient defines as her own theatre of psychosis, “[a] glut of exclamation marks spells impending nervous breakdown / Just a word on a page and there is the drama” (213), the typographical presentation of language on the page assists in incarnating the mental state of the patient. With the arranged design of numerals, typography and anamnesis, the textual images incarnates the repression of the patient’s thoughts, the painful disjunction of her body and mind, and the torturing process of psychiatric normalization. Textualizing her death scene, the patient narrates her unchangeable resolution, the clear consciousness, and the complex psychological state in the tremendous pressure of facing death. For readers of *4.48 Psychosis*, it is crucial to understand the patient’s mind through its textual presentation of layout design.

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<sup>8</sup> What Artaud means by “magical identification” (“On the Balinese Theater” 67) does not suggest that the audience should identify with the characters in the play as a theatre of realism may expect. Instead, he wishes his audience to identify with the staged performance as a whole. In other words, an Artaudian theatre should not be a reflection of real life. It possesses the theatrical reality that the audience can identify with in comparison to their life. Susan Kattwinkel studies the Off-Broadway movement and suggests that Artaud’s idea of engaging the audience into the performance influences greatly on the actor-spectator relationship in the avant-garde theatre (i.e. The Living Theatre), where most productions promote the participation of the audience, wanting the spectators to be “placed in the middle of the action” (24). In brief, the staged performance is not a projected objectivity of real life, but real life itself.

### 3.3.2.1 Thematic Focus: Repressed Thoughts

The typographical design of numerals describes the normalizing process of repression to regulate the patient's thoughts from chaotic to systematic. One predominant example lies in a fragment where the patient counts the numbers backward in decrements:

100

91

84

81

72

58

69

38

44

37

42

28

21

12

7

(208)

The dispersion of numerals occupies the entire page and the spacing creates a visual effect of chaos. Without an obvious description for delivery in performance, a proliferation of meanings can be attached to this fragment. It may imply the patient's weakening desire of living that is in a continual process of decreasing. It may represent the patient's gradual loss of control and dissolution of her lucidity. It may represent the numeric figures that constantly appear in the patient's daily life, such as the doses of medicine, the number of her anamnesis, the room numbers in the mental institutions that she has stayed in, etc. Without specific designations of quantity, the numerals are not equipped with substantial meanings but endowed with physical significance: the imagery dispersion of numerals exhibits its primary function of visualizing the explosion of the patient's fragmented thoughts. With a contrapuntal image, this visual chaos is orderly reformulated in a linear form in another fragment:

100  
 93  
 86  
 79  
 [...]
   
 30  
 23  
 16  
 9  
 2  
 (232, six lines of numerals emitted.)

By sequencing the numerals in a left-sided column, the patient presents her thoughts in a rationalized arrangement, a purposefully achieved outcome promoted by medication and sanctioned by social normalization. The wide space of emptiness contrastingly mirrors the compressed numerals that are pushed aside. The figuration of compressed numerals embodies the patient's thoughts being oppressed by reality. The linearity of thoughts resembles the image of a stiff prey trapped in an invisible entanglement of a spider's web, which corresponds to what the patient refers to her life as being "caught in web of reason / spun by a doctor to augment the sane" (233). In the dispersion fragment, some pairs of numerals, i.e. "12" and "21," "38" and "28," "91" and "81" (208), are closely placed due to their similarity in shapes. Some numerals, i.e. "100" and "69" (208), are isolated in its peculiarity compared with other surrounding numerals. On the other hand, in the column fragment, the logically sequenced numerals are deprived of their uniqueness because the occurrence of each numeral is destined and predictable. The change from the irrational to the rational, from uniqueness to dullness, contributes to the patient's fierce objection of psychiatry, which "shut[s] down the higher functions of [her] brain" (221). The enigmatic coding of numerals requires readers to employ a visualized interpretation in the process of how the patient's mind is redirected and repressed by social normalization.

### 3.3.2.2 Thematic Focus: Psychology of Inconformity

Aside from numerals, the patient also uses textual images to present her insufferable pain when her broken mind fails to find adequate expressions for the physical pains that her body endures. This painful state of psychology is visualized as ruptures formed in the typographical design, which embodies the mental inconformity that the patient experiences when psychotic delirium strikes her. In one fragment with compilations of multitudinous verbs and insertions of isolated sentences, the patient presents her physical pains and afflicted mind in horizontal layers of texts:

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

it will never pass

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

Nothing's forever  
 (but Nothing)

(231, italicized emphasis added)

The compilation of verbs launches a violent attack on the patient's body to its extremity. Some verbs, i.e. "slash" and "wring" (231), represent an enactment of a brutal action, and some verbs, i.e. "flicker" and "flash" (231), connote a transient instant of a drastic event. Some verbs, i.e. "flicker" and "burn" (231), are particularly repeated in a form of assemblage rather than a loose distribution, which produces the visual effect of condensation and echoes with the oppressing pressure that the patient strives to tolerate. The lineation of gathering verbs resembles an image of a majestic

army that with its authoritative power cruelly marches on the devastated land of the patient's mind. These verbs collaboratively constitute a disastrous destruction in which only the patient's fragments of thoughts are exposed to readers as her feeble gasps of desperation in an attempt of living. In terms of aesthetics of violence, the massive attack should be accompanied with a weak defense out of proportion so that the cruelty inherent in the incompatible power relation of the dominating psychiatry and a victimized patient can be revealed. As a contrast with an extreme difference, the assembling verbs designate the physical discomfort that the patient takes pains to endure and the inserted sentences denote the faint thoughts that come across the patient's mind during the breakdown.

This technique of portraying the disruption dynamically creates diverse forms of layout and makes each fragment distinguishable from other ones. In the following fragment, the patient narrates her afflicted mind and physical pains in a vertical division:

Where do I start?  
 Where do I stop?  
 How do I start?  
 (As I mean to go on)

How do I stop?  
 How do I stop?

A tab of pain  
 Stabbing my lungs  
 A tab of death  
 Squeezing my heart (226)

With a continuation of interrogations, this fragment is unique in its vertical partition that marks the border between body and mind. In the left-sided section, the patient bombards readers with serial questions, exposing her doubt about the starting point and the termination of her life. The relentless questions appear to be the patient's

self-interrogation in permanent lack of response. As the patient's inner soliloquy, the repetitive question of "[h]ow do I stop[?]" (226) incarnates her mentality tortured by the ardent desires to end her life and to keep on living. The serial questions are indirectly answered by the patient's physical reactions in the right-sided section, where she uses an objective tone to describe the insufferable pains "[s]tabbing [her] lungs" and "[s]queezing [her] heart" (226).

The intolerable aches caused by the disruption of body and mind are visualized by the patient in a textual image of ruptures, signifying her psychology of inconformity. With the various forms of ruptures, the patient constantly invites her readers to witness the painful process of losing control over her body, a psychotic symptom that is considered by society as delusion that should be eliminated through the psychiatrist therapy. Thus, when the patient says, "I've never understood / what it is I'm not supposed to feel" (239), she complains about society of lacking understanding to her real predicament. Lacking an appropriate channel of expression, the patient is not given an alternative chance to live with her fragile mentality of madness since normalizing society authorizes the rational way of thinking only. As a result, she can only express her pains in a language of fragmentation and with a chaotic collage of images, a destructive way of expression that risks its comprehensibility.

### 3.3.2.3 Thematic Focus: Accusation of Being Objectified

To criticize psychiatry as a paralyzed system operated by a language of science and reason, the patient uses anamnesis, a systematic form of typographical design, to illustrate the cruel process of psychiatric therapy that she has suffered. Without the involvement of human emotions, the scientific language in the anamnesis cruelly simplifies the patient's mental tortures into lists of pathological categories, doses of

medication, and records of overt behaviors:

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

Diagnosis: Pathological grief.

Sertraline, 50 mg. insomnia worsened, severe anxiety, anorexia, (weight loss 17 kgs,) increase in suicidal thoughts, plans, and intention. Discontinued following hospitalization. (223)

As a standardized tool that helps the doctor in formulating a diagnosis, the anamnesis should be written in a systematic format and composed of rationalized language. In the detailed list of her external behaviors, the mute patient is recorded as a motionless mummy that loses the ability to maintain her physiological functions. Her lifeless state of stupor is medically defined as “[p]athological grief” (223), a short and cruel label attached by the authoritative doctor with his ultimate power of denomination.

To illustrate the worsening condition of her defected mind, the patient narrates her psychotic mind in a language of labels signifying various kinds of medicine with increasing dosages:

Lofepamine, 70 mg, increased to 140 mg, then 210 mg. Weight gain 12 kgs. Short term memory loss. No other reaction.

[...]

Fluoxetine hydrochloride, trade name Prozac, 20 mg, increased to 40 mg. Insomnia, erratic appetite, (weight loss 14 kgs,) severe anxiety, unable to reach orgasm, homicidal thoughts towards several doctors and drug manufacturers. Discontinued. (224)

In a continuation of listing, the physical condition of the patient is described in a list of side effects that she has suffered after taking some certain kinds of medicine. The side effects have to be written down by using objective nouns, which accurately illustrate the physical reactions of the patient but lack the description of her

psychological response. The abstruse medical terminology, such as “tardive dyskinesia and tardive dementia” (225), implies that only the professionally trained doctors are given the privilege to prescribe the patient. The complex process of the patient’s suffering has to be efficiently defined by pathological categories, like “[i]nsomnia” (224) and “[h]ypochondria” (225). The patient, without a power of control, is objectified as a passive organism that incessantly endures changes of medication and is constantly under the influence of drugs, i.e. “discontinued after patient got pissed off with side affects and lack of obvious improvement” (224).

In the symptomatic reading of the over behaviors in the anamnesis, the patient rejects the therapy that lacks humanistic respect and tries to fight back against the medical system, i.e. “[p]atient attempted to leave hospital against medical advice. Restrained by three male nurses twice her size” (223-4). From the perspective of normal majority in society, the patient’s behavior is diagnosed as “threatening and uncooperative” (224) and has to be restrained by an authoritative force. Another form of the patient’s fighting appears as sub-fragments in the anamnesis when she satirically imitates the language of psychiatry and reformulates her records of illness:

Mood: Fucking angry.  
Affect: Very angry. (224)

[...]

100 aspirin and one bottle of Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon, 1986. Patient woke in a pool of vomit and said ‘Sleep with a dog and rise full of fleas.’ Severe stomach pain. No other reaction. (225)

By employing a parody of the scientific record, the patient inscribes her resentment in the anamnesis in a form of orderly categorization. This disturbing emotion is diagnosed by the patient as being affected by the medicine. As a result, an endless vicious circle is enacted: the more resentful the patient is, the more medicine she has

to take. And the increasing dosages of medicine lead to the worsening situation of her indignation. Thus, the patient's history of medication ends with a fake prescription by herself, which is actually her plan of attempting suicide by drug overdose. The patient internalizes the medical language of prescription to voice her protest in the plan of suicide. Moreover, the textual presentation and the language form of anamnesis collaborate to produce a scenario of how the patient undergoes the tortures of psychiatric therapy and how she attempts to confront against the suffocating process.

### 3.3.3 Combination of Visual and Textual: The Patient's Suicide

The visual images and textual images eventually culminate in the patient's suicidal death as the ultimate form of accusation, illustrating her final attack against normalizing society. As a deliberate act of destruction, the patient's suicide demonstrates her self-determination and empowerment of performance. Her purposes of committing suicide are textualized in one fragment with clustered phrases and a series of infinitive phrases. The compilation of infinitive phrases visualizes the patient's intention of communicating with her readers, conveying her resolution of terminating her death, and reassuring her existential value in life:

- to achieve goals and ambitions
- to overcome obstacles and attain a high standard
- to increase self-regard by the successful exercise of talent
- to overcome opposition
- to have control and influence over others (233)

The aligned arrangement of the particles "to" textually visualizes an army of spirited soldiers that march forward side by side. This image transmits the message of the patient's protest, subverting the established view toward death as a destructive

concept. Contrarily, a proliferation of constructive meanings is attached to the patient's death. By ending her own life, she realizes her "goals and ambitions," regains "self-regard," and reaches "a high standard" (233). Regarding death as a "successful exercise of talent" (233), she can "vindicate the ego" (234) and protect herself by expelling the intrusion of "pain," "shame," "fear," and "weakness" (234). As a forceful way of fighting, death can help the patient "to be free from social restrictions," "to defy convention" and "to resist coercion and constriction" (234). Most important of all, death as a gesture of expression helps her to articulate her sincere wish: "to receive attention / to be seen and heard" (234) and "to form mutually enjoyable, enduring, cooperating and reciprocating relationship with Other, with an equal" (235). Her intention to establish a harmonious relationship of mutual understanding with others is explicitly demonstrated in the paired phrases: "to feed, help, protect, comfort, console, support, nurse or heal / to be fed, helped, protected, comforted, consoled, supported, nursed or healed" (235). Instead of asking for the love from others, what the patient demands most is to be given a chance to give her love to others. By using the active and passive voices, the patient expresses her idealized mode of interaction: an equalized communication shared between mainstream society and the marginalized psychotics. Without graphically presenting death in an exhibition of corpses or murders, the image of death is textually depicted with optimistic admiration. This positive tone significantly distinguishes the patient's suicide from a hopeless death of destruction.

Extending the constructive view on death, the patient demonstrates her lucid consciousness of a determined mind while committing suicide. The state of lucidity does not mean an easy decision with no hesitation. It is a sharp awareness of knowing how hard it is to make the decision and how necessary it is to execute the determined action. As Artaud suggests that "[c]ruelty is above all lucid," the patient is in a process



Speak

ten yard ring of failure  
look away from me

My final stand

No one speaks

Validate me

Witness me

See me

Love me

my final submission

my final defeat (243)

The frequent alternation of voices forms an interlocking pattern that resembles a combination of puzzle pieces. Contrastive to the left-sided voice which strongly urges for attention from others, i.e. “[s]peak / Speak / Speak” (243), the responding voice on the right denies the urging voice in a defeated tone, i.e. “[n]o one speaks” (243), and remains its position inferior to the left. In the conversational confrontation between the left and right sides, the intensity is built not only in its audio correspondence but also in its visual pattern of an interwoven network.

The emphasis on visual presentation continues till the end when the patient describes her last wish at the instant of dying:

Black snow falls

[...]

watch me vanish

watch me

vanish

watch me

watch me

watch (244)

Opposed to the preceding plea of “look away from me” (243), the patient requests an

emphatic visual focus of being gazed. The textual arrangement of verbal phrases forms a visual image of falling snow that symbolizes the fading consciousness of the patient. By watching the words descending, readers dive into the innermost consciousness of the patient, characterized by a vast space of emptiness on the page that embodies her spiritual void:

It is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the  
underside of my mind

please open the curtains (245)

The textual presentation of poetic lines that occupy the upper and bottom parts of the page creates an image resembling the “darkened banquet hall” (205) in the opening scene. The echoing combination of the beginning and the end produces the sense of a cyclic process that keeps on recurring. It implies an authorial message—death is not a termination, but a rebirth of the patient’s spirituality. By pointing out the “face” that is “pasted on the underside of [her] mind” (245), the patient leads her readers to a display of her spiritual mind that deserves a direct spectatorship. The last request of “please open the curtains” (245), with its implication of hopeful liberation, initiates a new process of watching.<sup>9</sup> As if uncovering the cloth and identifying the dead body,

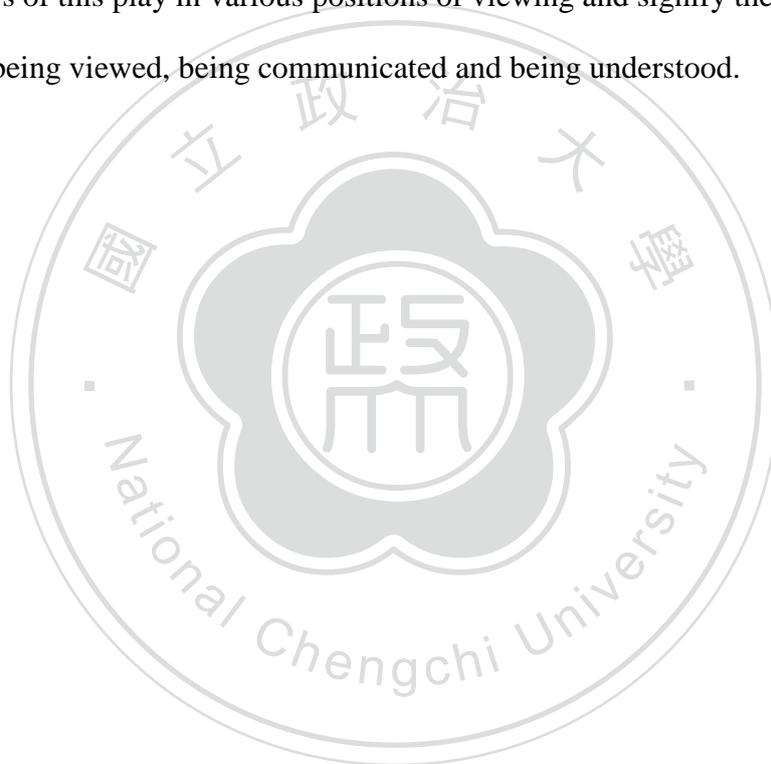
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<sup>9</sup> In the 2000 London premiere, the ending scene is performed by the actors “moving to the side of the stage, opening the shutters to the windows, and summoning in the light and sounds of the London street outside” (Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 116-7). The fused spatiality of the theatre inside and the reality outside, according to the critic Paul Taylor, creates an “uplifting” effect of “watching the final release of a turbulent spirit” (11).

readers are invited to witness the patient's suicidal death as a proof of her existence. Continuing the tone of celebrating death, the patient strikes out her last protest by exposing her long-denied irrationality to normalizing society that rejects to face squarely at her pains.

Striking a strong protest against psychiatric violence, Kane makes use of both visual images and textual images in the patient's fragmentary language to redirect readers into a total theatre that resorts to a sensation-oriented experience of watching. Composed of enigmatic visual components, the visual images illustrates the hallucinatory visions that the patient experiences. On the other hand, the textual images are formulated in various forms of typographical design, signifying the patient's disordered speech and the disturbed thoughts in her mind. With an intermittent occurrence, each image is repeated in variations scattered in various fragments. The patient's psychological chaos is presented in a contrapuntal design of images, which requires readers' comparative examination. In other words, for Kane's readers, the patient's psychotic mind is not viewed in a unitary process of observation. Instead, it is observed retrospectively in comparison, through which readers' perception is constantly challenged and a dynamic process of watching is established. Objecting to rationalized language dominated by logicity, Artaud stresses the use of images in theatre. In his conceptualization, images facilitate the articulation of one's transient thoughts or repressed emotions, the subtle experiences that can not be easily revealed by logical language. Influenced by surrealism, Artaud focuses on the incorporation of poetic images in his theatre as a way of communication. He attempts to release the embedded human emotions or suppressed thoughts in the one's subconscious mind. Therefore, it is crucial to interpret Kane's images presented in her written script, through which the repressed thoughts within a psychotic mind is visualized and experienced by readers.

Though severely attacking normalizing society, the patient strives to establish communication with the outer world by narrating her psychotic mind through an excessive use of images. The collage of a banqueting hall, plus varied images of light and a dismembered body, engage readers into the visualization of the patient's mental disturbance. The textual images of numerals, typographical patterns and anamnesis serve as the patient's persistent signals of verbalizing her mental chaos in a visualized arrangement. Composed in various forms of language, the collaged images situate the spectators of this play in various positions of viewing and signify the patient's ardent wish of being viewed, being communicated and being understood.



## Chapter Four

### Conclusion

As an echo in response to Artaud's call for a direct look into the essential violence, Kane in her theatre of *4.48 Psychosis* presents the inner reality of a psychotic patient's irrational mind and illustrates the devastated state of psychology tortured by social normalization. Under the oppressive annihilation of illogicality, the patient can only translate her fear into chaotic fragments and a collage of images. Reflecting the self-contradictory attitude of the patient, the fragmentary language reveals her rejection of a legitimate communication through a rationalized language, and the collaged images expose her ardent desire to establish a visual communication with the outside world. If we want to understand the normalizing violence and its smashing influence upon the psychotic patient, a textual analysis of her fragmentary language and images of her hallucinations is required. Instead of attributing violence primarily to physical performance, my thesis incorporates Artaud's pioneering concept of the Theatre of Cruelty and interprets Kane's violence as a textualized presentation of poetic fragments and collaged images.

Artaud's theory of presenting cruelty in theatre provides a useful access to the study of Kane's violence. To offer a new light, Artaud proposes a destruction of the conventional language and a replacement of a fragmentary language with unrealistic images. From Artaud's concept, the fragmentary language helps to convey a psychotic mind which is deprived of fluent thoughts and logical narration. By incorporating collaged images into the disrupted narration, one is provided with an essential channel to express his or her fractures of thoughts. Marginalized as abnormality, both Artaud and the patient of this play suffer from mental illness and lose the ability to formulate their thoughts in fluency. Therefore, the failure of expressing thoughts ends up in persistent frustration that results in a fragmentary and visualized presentation of

language. By examining Artaud's concepts on fragmentation and collaged images in language, this thesis studies the textual presentation of the psychotic mind. With the explosive images of sensory stimulation, the psychotic patient bursts out her chaotic fragments of thoughts and snatches the spectators' attention.

Based on Artaud's view on language, in Chapter Two I scrutinize the poetic fragments in *4.48 Psychosis*. By analyzing Kane's techniques of repetition and contrast, I examine the recurrent themes in each fragment to exemplify how the patient manifests her protest against normalizing violence through a fragmentary language. To begin with, I resort to Artaud, who objects to a speech-centered theatre and stresses the use of fragmentation to present violence, and defines the fragmentary language as a form of expression that illustrates one's repressed mind. As a verbal form of illogic thoughts, a fragmented language is uttered in resistance to the imposing logicity that is promoted by normal society. Performed in a way of self-repeated disintegration, language in an Artaudian theatre characterizes the physical performance of the actor as an anatomical site inscribed with one's psychological strife. An audience perceiving the fragmentary language does not find indestructible integrity that formulates our daily discourse. Instead, what is underscored is the discontinuous flow of narration that exhibits repetitive interruptions and delays of thoughts, which Artaud terms as "a different language of nature [...] whose source will be tapped at a point still deeper, more remote from thought" ("Letters on Language" 110). In Artaud's concept, it is a crucial theatrical tool used to describe the real pain endured by the tortured subjects who are incapable of expressing themselves in fluent speech of normality.

With their common background of suffering from psychological depression, both Artaud and Kane transform their written texts into a site of psychical and ideological resistance, a textual and corporeal territory where psychic disintegration and bodily

dismemberment articulate its power by fragmenting the logical and fluent form of discourse. Thus, in Chapter Two, based on Artaud's insights, I argue that the fragmentary structure of *4.48 Psychosis* reveals not only a disrupted form of language but also inflicted psychology. In Kane's subversive text, the patient's fragmented language functions as the playwright's technique to illustrate the violent process of normalization and to demonstrate a gradual destruction of psychology. The fragmentary structure of this play embodies the patient's devastated mind, in which a series of fragments echo with their variations and build up a network of interconnection that invites the spectators' reconstruction.

As such, I conclude that the poetic fragments cooperatively form a textual presentation of a psychotic mind under a severe bombardment of physical attack. Among these fragments, massive stimuli that induce visual and audio perception, i.e. a scenic montage with visual components and sentences with similar structures that produce a rhythmic tempo, are incorporated to create a space of frantic sensation. Standing on the deadly edge of psychological breakdown, the patient repetitively strikes out her protest against society in a self-reflexive language saturated with recurrent themes: her self-exclamation of being alienated from others, her sensational observation of cruel society, and her disjuncture of body and mind. Through the reoccurring fragments, the patient narrates in a rhythmic repetition about her ambivalent attitude to the doctor of authority with normalizing power and her resolution of committing suicide. Each fragment contains one of the essential themes, and collaboratively constructs the patient's protest against society. In addition to the repetitive occurrences that formulate an amplifying tone of emphasis, the fragmentary structure with its abrupt style of narration also enhances a persistent invitation of spectators' participation to reconstruct the most transient moment of psychological breakdown.

To understand how the psychotic patient narrates her protest in a visualized presentation, in Chapter Three I focus my study on the collaged images that are prevalingly scattered in each disrupted fragment of *4.48 Psychosis*. Elaborating on Artaud's concept of presenting violence through a poeticized language of sensations, I interpret images in *4.48 Psychosis* as a visualized presentation demonstrating the patient's attempt of establishing communication with the outside world. Rejecting images that evoke bloody sensations in his theatre, Artaud suggests that the presentation of images facilitates the narration of one's repressed thoughts or hidden emotions that are severely annihilated in the logic system of normalization. Influenced by surrealism, Artaud expresses his urge of presenting his repressed mind in a language pervaded with poetic images and dream visions. As a psychotic patient labeled as abnormal, he can only reveal his suppressed emotions or thoughts through illogical disjuncture with images of irrelevancy and discordance, such as the surreal images in the dream-like scenes of *The Spurt of Blood*.

Observing the interconnection between Artaud's surreal images that poeticize violence and Kane's presentation of images for normalizing violence, in Chapter Three I propose that Kane in her last play presents a dynamic theatre of violence, which engages its audience into multiple positions of viewing. In the textual analysis of the images, the cruel process of normalization is not only being observed through a voyeuristic perspective. Moreover, it is examined through various perspectives of viewing under the intensive eyes of readers. The various perspectives vary from a framed observation, which requires a distanced attitude of alienation, to an extreme close-up, which is suggestive to active participation. Each mode of watching is interdependent to one another. Readers observe the images arranged in diverse typographical designs, which illustrate the psychotic thoughts of the patient. The enigmatic bits of visual components, i.e. the stark light, the shifting floor, the ceiling

of a mind, etc., arouse readers' tension and anxiety in this process of penetrative spectatorship. Accompanying the penetrative observation, a stronger sense of anticipation is generated in readers when their visual attention is directed to a voyeuristic position, peeping at the therapeutic process. From witnessing the dialogic confrontation between the doctor and the patient to monitoring the physical oppression exercised by the mental institute, readers are gradually brought closer to the violent process of normalization itself. Corresponding to what Artaud proposes as an aggression of visual assault on the audience, Kane's readers are engaged into the performance of the violent act when the patient visualizes the image of her victimization as an objectified prey with a dotted line. Compared with watching a brutal act of bloodshed, the image of an object that waits to be slaughtered conveys an even more provoking assault, because it offends readers with an indirect invitation of practicing an immoral action. It transforms readers' viewing experience from passively watching a bloody outcome of merciless tortures to actively participating into the enactment of normalizing violence.

Identifying the multi-dimensional perspectives of viewing, I conclude that the excessive images presented in various forms of language delineate normalizing violence from dynamic perspectives and express the patient's intense wish to communicate with others. Continual and rapid shifts of visual perspectives enhance the dynamism of presenting violence and produce an unsettled, almost disoriented feeling in spectators. From a distanced observation of destruction, to a focused look at the victimized psychology, and then to a microscopic examination of broken body images, the swiftly shifting modes of watching embody Artaud's urge of presenting cruelty in all-dimensions and energize the visual communication in Kane's theatre of violence. As a literal presence in representation of the patient's psychological reality,

4.48 *Psychosis* is a complex construct built up by poetic fragments with visual

explosions. It is an anatomical site constantly intruded by multiple inter-fragmental voices or shattered identities. Interpreted as an Artaudian theatre of collaged images, this play does not present the psychology of psychosis as a finalized and fixed assemblage of fragments. Instead, its theatrical aesthetics lies in the dynamic process of piecing-up the fragments, of continually re-staging psychological breakdown, of reconstituting the transient thought that possesses the patient's mind while facing death.

Displaced and lost, the patient embodies her devastated psychology in the theatre of *4.48 Psychosis* through fractures and images. As an ever-turning kaleidoscope, in which the visual scope does not promise the stability of images, the theatre of *4.48 Psychosis* also presents the imagery of violence that is under constant changes of dynamism. As an incomplete puzzle, which is in perpetual lack of its missing pieces, the discourse of violence in *4.48 Psychosis* is characterized by its disrupted form in that each fracture serves as a crucial piece but none of them guarantee an integral form of presentation. Through a fragmentary language saturated with images, Kane establishes her ultimate approach of poeticizing violence and presents the mental chaos of the psychotic patient through a dramatic poetry. When questioned at an interview about her intention of incorporating violence in theatre, she answered:

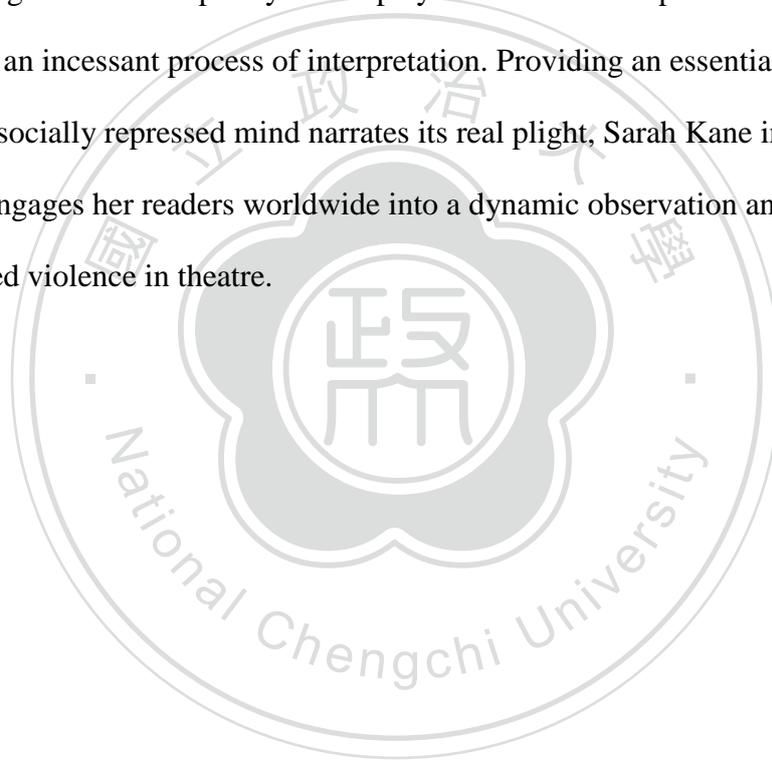
Art isn't about the shock of something new. It's about arranging the old in such a way that you see it afresh. The press kept asking why it was necessary to show such acts of violence on stage. [...] So suddenly all those familiar images were presented in an odd theatrical form which provided no framework within which to locate oneself in relationship to the material. For me, that's an amoral representation of violence – no commentary.

(Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me* 28)

It is through the unique style of dramatic poetry that the patient strikes out her fight

against the violence embedded in the therapeutic relationship of psychotherapy and the oppression authorized by normalizing society. For readers, this play displays the patient's rejection of a structured language and her desperation of establishing a communication with the outside world.

Finally, one should remember that the meaning of this play is not terminated in a finalized interpretation. Instead, the meaning is constantly under the construction of spectators' interaction with the text. Bearing these illuminations in mind, readers perceiving the dramatic poetry in this play can see violence presented in various forms in an incessant process of interpretation. Providing an essential window through which a socially repressed mind narrates its real plight, Sarah Kane in *4.48 Psychosis* indeed engages her readers worldwide into a dynamic observation and exploration of poeticized violence in theatre.



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