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GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES

Trabajo de Fin de Grado

Identity as a Performative and Social Corrective in Sarah Kane's *Blasted* (1995)

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Signature

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to examine Sarah Kane's reconfiguration of the conventional notion of identity by pursuing the public realisation of it as a malleable flux in her first play, *Blasted* (1995). As a playwright, Kane displays a magnificent understanding of the dramatic conventions and techniques, which she subverts or utilises in her favour, thereby deconstructing normative, patriarchal identity through the play's violent destruction of the conventional Naturalist space. Kane's *blast* distances the spectators from the play's fictional illusion, urging them to reassess identity, which the dramatist explores as a fluid category through the use of ambiguity. In *Blasted*, the protagonist couple internalise the normative foundations of patriarchy that entraps them into fixed and harmful gender roles, which becomes a trigger for violence. It is precisely the characters' brutality what shocks the spectators, thereby urging them to reconsider patriarchy as a detrimental concept that reduces humans to stock characters who are forced to perform coercive and inhibiting socially-defined roles. Moreover, this normative performativity fails to define the complex nature of identity because as Kane depicts through her play, people change over time and cannot be defined by one single quality. This understanding leads Kane to explore cruelty as simply one of the idiosyncrasies of the characters' identities, thereby correcting the conventional social beliefs held by her audience. Hence, *Blasted's* value relies on its subtext and the audience's ability to read it.

KEY WORDS: Sarah Kane, Identity, Patriarchy, Space, Violence, Distancing Effect, Conventions, Performativity, Gender Normativity, Social Corrective

RESUMEN

Este estudio examina cómo Sarah Kane reformula la noción convencional de identidad presente en su primera obra *Blasted* (1995) para convencer a su audiencia de que esta no es sino una categoría dúctil y dinámica. Además, como la ejemplar dramaturga que es, Sarah Kane exhibe un entendimiento magistral de las convenciones y técnicas teatrales, que subvierte o manipula persiguiendo deconstruir la identidad patriarcal normativa. Para ello, Kane *revienta* el espacio teatral naturalista, lo que distancia a sus espectadores, instándoles a reexaminar el concepto de identidad gracias al uso de ambigüedad. En *Blasted*, la pareja protagonista interioriza los fundamentos del patriarcado, lo que los lleva a verse atrapados en unos roles de género pautados y dañinos que desembocan en actos violentos. Es precisamente la brutalidad de los personajes lo que conmociona al público, empujándoles a replantearse este patriarcado como un sistema prejudicial que reduce al ser humano a un mero arquetipo encasillado en roles sociales restrictivos. Además, esta simplificación es insuficiente a la hora de definir la naturaleza humana ya que, como Kane mantiene, las personas poseemos una identidad compleja que cambia a lo largo del tiempo. Así, Kane explora la crueldad de sus personajes como una de sus muchas idiosincrasias tratando de corregir las creencias convencionales de su audiencia. Por consiguiente, el valor de su obra reside tanto en su subtexto como en la habilidad de su audiencia para interpretarlo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Sarah Kane, Identidad, Patriarcado, Espacio, Violencia, Distanciamiento Brechtiano, Convenciones, Performatividad, Normatividad de Género, Correctivo Social

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sarah Kane's harrowing *opera prima* titled *Blasted* portrays the definite shift from twentieth century drama's adherence to the realist conception of theatre as a means of entertainment. By doing so, *Blasted* gives voice to victims of abuse who were silenced and deeply ignored by the British society. The play explores the abusive relationship of Ian and Cate, which preludes a series of atrocities worldwide that never get resolved. This open-ended aspect of the play emphasises the pragmatic transformation of the characters' identities in this game for survival that enables Kane to *blast* conventions, thereby offering unexplored possibilities for her characters' idiosyncrasies.

In this essay I will try to show how, in *Blasted*, Sarah Kane subverts conventions through the employment of visceral, shocking imagery connected to the play's structure that dehumanises her characters in order to elude stereotyping. Hence, by deviating from traditional theatre, Kane allows for the reconstruction of identity (hinted through ambiguity) as a malleable flux. This renegotiation of identity functions as a corrective device for her audience.

2. THE CONFIGURATION OF IDENTITY THROUGH SPACE: DECONSTRUCTING ILLUSION AND THE SELF.

Sarah Kane is well versed in the earlier Naturalist tradition focusing on creating a chimera and lulling the audience into it, which she perceives as a reliable reflection of our socially-indoctrinated identity. Therefore, Kane presents a domestic Naturalist illusion in which she unveils her characters' patriarchal attitudes transforming it into a misleading space. Then, Kane collapses illusion for her spectators not to surrender to its fictive essence through a violent spatial distortion, which deconstructs this harmful identity so as to guide her audience's perception towards a re-evaluation of patriarchy.

2.1 Kane's Illusory Breakdown: Collapsing Naturalist Domestic and Feminine Spaces

In *Blasted*, Sarah Kane aims to address "the breakdown of human nature itself" through a spatial deconstruction (qtd. in Saunders 61). To do so, Kane creates a Naturalist domestic illusion that she violently collapses, suggesting that the actual dangers of our world are not on the outside, but rather inside, in the patriarchal foundations that deny female self-fulfilment *blasting* feminine space.

To begin with, Kane lulls her audience into a Naturalistic illusion so as to recreate a real life situation for her flesh-and-blood characters. This Naturalist configuration of space is essential to maintain her spectators' interest for feeling identified with the situation. During the identification process, Kane transforms a neutral space (a hotel room) into a *domestic* one, basically considered a *safe* place that people *share*. Thus, Kane introduces certain elements into the room (such as a shared "*bathroom*" or a "*double bed*") for her protagonists to partake (S. Kane 1). Besides, the familiarity of the protagonists' dialogue creates a domestic ambience that, conjoined with the Naturalist mise-en-scène, isolates the characters of Cate and Ian from the dangerous world outside (that makes Ian reach his gun every time an outsider knocks the door).

Yet, for Kane the illusory hotel-*home* is not reliable¹ because it presents a *surface* understanding of domesticity. Therefore, she introduces conflicting behaviours, which casts doubts on the room's communal and protective essence. Whereas Cate venerates "[its] classiness", Ian assumes his supremacy over space throwing "[his] newspapers on the bed" (1). These opposing attitudes imply a rupture with the Naturalist notion of domestic safety that climaxes when Cate affirms that "[s]he is in danger" (9). Moreover, Ian's possessive conduct prohibits Cate to "open [the door]", thereby suggesting her subordination and locating her as inferior to him (6). Such a hierarchal distribution destroys their equalitarian co-living dismantling the initial conception of shared haven.

Resultantly, a reformulation of space is required. Kane manages to direct Ian's disrespectful denigration towards the room ("I have shat in better places") and Cate ("You are too thick to understand"), connecting space to femininity due to their shared inferiority (1, 8). It is precisely through subjection that Cate becomes an object for Ian to possess. Cate's compelled objectification, combined with Ian's expropriation of the room, suggests that his behaviour is not momentary, but rather a crescent, dangerous *modus operandi*.

Therefore, Kane presents Ian's hegemonic possession as out-of-control, depicting physical impossibility to explore femininity. Kane pushes the Naturalist setting to foster claustrophobia when Ian "[l]ocks the door" (27). This oppressive sensation reaches its zenith when Cate surrenders to patriarchy, being unable to access external information ("[answering] the phone"²) without Ian's consent (12). Hence, Kane's Naturalist portrayal of space is too limited for being founded on an extreme rationality that atrocities such as rape or war lack.

As a result, Kane explores feminine subjectivity allegorically. Cate's inhibited individuality is subjected to her fits, through which she accedes a "lovely", off-stage,

¹ Constantin Stanislavski criticises Naturalism for exclusively reproducing "the surface of life" (Benedetti 17)

² This absence of external information reminds me of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* where Nora, the female protagonist, is denied access to the mailbox.

feminine non-space where she can explore her sexuality “like when [she] touch[es] [her]self” (23, 22). However, Cate’s corporeal acquiescence during these seizures renders her powerless, permitting Ian to “simulate[] sex” over her in an attempt to impose his patriarchal supremacy (27). This brutal scene represents a turning point in *Blasted* for it epitomises the audience’s function that parallels Cate’s reaction to violence: Cate, previously lulled into an illusory fit, wakes up to face violence directly exposed over her; accordingly, the audience, entertained by *Blasted*’s surface illusion, suddenly confront explicit violence. Therefore, their realisation leads to a re-evaluation of violence, achieved *blasting* the hotel room with a bomb, which symbolises the collapsing of that Naturalistic space. The explosion leaves Kane’s audience into a sort of liminal non-space pursuing their shock and consequent speculation.

2.2 *Blasting* the Fourth Wall: Brechtian Distancing Effect Applied through Violent Shocks

Sarah Kane seeks the public re-evaluation of the diseases of a patriarchal society that allows maltreatment. Hence, her audience’s critical response is required. To achieve it, Kane *blasts* the normative concept of spectatorship as passive promoting her audience’s intervention into her drama, which Bertolt Brecht unfolds as his *estrangement* or *distancing effect* (Biçer 76). To maximise its outcome, Kane enables violence to trigger a spatial dislocation into a warzone that intensifies the spectator’s evaluation of patriarchy.

Before I focus on Kane’s particular manoeuvre, an explanation for this *distancing effect* must be provided. For Brecht, “the emotional contagion does not take place automatically” (133). Thus, spectators may distance themselves from their emotions to consciously receive the dramatic action. To good effect, the audience’s behaviour must never be a “complete self-surrender” (Brecht 131) to fiction, but a distanced contemplation of its insights in that both audience and performers should partake the same dramatic framework (Lehman 155). Hence, the audience must be separated from illusion so as to lack empathy for

Cate and, therefore, be able to raise critical awareness for her situation. After being raped, a non-victimised Cate “goes into the bathroom” and inexplicably leaves the room (S. Kane 35). Her ambiguous exit, anticipated by her claim “I’m having a bath and going home”, stands for “a moment of magical realism” that reverses the Naturalist illusion (35; N. Kane 16).

Kane is now available to dislocate her dramatic critique with the irruption of war (epitomised by a Soldier and a mortal bomb) to ultimately deconstruct conventional identity. Therefore, she forces space to tremble, collapse and faint into one of Cate’s seizures, relocating her dramatic action into a *non-space*. Once the hotel is “*anywhere*”, the narrative becomes a sort of *mise-en-abîme*³ that restates the previous Naturalist subtext from a Surrealist perspective, destabilising its meaning to illustrate deconstruction (S. Kane 1). This time, the Soldier takes possession of space “urinat[ing] over the pillows” leaving Ian powerless to be “rape[d]” (39, 49). The Soldier’s empowerment detonates Ian’s and the room’s interrelated destruction (which resembles Cate’s subjection) to enable a reconfiguration of space.

The presence of bleakness on stage proves Kane’s taste for violent motifs, result of the pervasive influence of Antonin Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty. Artaud claims that “[w]e need above all a theatre that wakes us up: heart and nerves” (84) shocking the spectators to reconstitute the auditorium and the stage into a compact entity, returning theatre to its non-realistic medium to acquire critical significance (Mihaylova 217). In other words, to perform Brecht’s distancing through violence. As a result, Kane shocks her audience relocating the room into a horrid warzone; a coercive scenario that triggers what Barker calls “moments of graphic beauty . . . which, despite the terror of the event described, or because of it, complicate and subvert the ostensible meaning” (55). Ergo, violence is no longer isolated in

³ This notion, introduced by André Gide in *Journal 1889-1939*, consists in presenting a reality and mirroring it by placing a smaller replica of it in its centre, “en abyme” (41).

Leeds' urban microcosm, but rather functions as a spatial connector reminding us that our allowance of a single assault in Leeds detonates large-scale violence (Greig x). In the end, Kane is *blasting* a naturalised illusion so as to dissect the reproachable patriarchal attitudes that it allows in front of her audience. Hence, her spectators are encouraged to re-evaluate abusive conducts as an endless source of violence and, therefore, aim correction.

3. SUBVERTING GENDERED POWER RELATIONS TO ENCOURAGE THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A FLUID IDENTITY

By deconstructing Naturalist dramatic inhibitions, Kane makes her audience comprehend to what degree life is shaped by ways of seeing, feeling or thinking (Lehman 36). Thus, she recurs to physicality in an attempt to subvert gender-related power imbalance while hinting the reconstruction of an untrammelled self. To do so, she exposes abjection through humour, triggering her audience's insight. Kane aims to destroy her spectator's canonical expectations, thereby fulfilling her corrective purpose of disrupting the conventional categories of gender in favour of performativity. This realisation is achieved through ambiguity that encourages Kane's audience to re-evaluate the detrimental effects of a gendered normativity as opposed to a malleable individuality.

3.1 An Acrid Application of Bergson's Humour: Exposing Abjection to Trouble the Audience

In *Blasted*, Sarah Kane utilises Bergson's humour to denounce the patriarchal standards of society, rendering gendered stereotypes constrictive. Thus, she exposes the abject⁴, transforming laughter into an unpleasant device, reminder of human deficiencies that brings together physical and metaphysical realms of human behaviour to alert the audience's sensitivity and question their convictions.

For Henri Bergson, laughter is "une espèce de geste sociale"⁵ that requires a response (20). Nonetheless, this gesture is somehow cruel. Bergson maintains that by surrendering to indifference, one will find that tragedy becomes comedy (5). This emotional detachment connects laughter to inhumanity, and therefore, transforms it into a sadistic device underlying a defective practice. Thence, Kane utilises laughter to denounce the normative automatism of patriarchy, exalting its impact on her audience to reassess their moral beliefs.

⁴ From now on, abjection should be understood as the ensemble of uncomfortable, *physical* scenes that make the audience feel aggrieved, disquieted or ill at ease.

⁵ French term that means a sort of social gesture (my translation).

In a patriarchal environment, bodies need to be categorised and characterised mirroring the idiosyncrasies of femininity and masculinity, which is a disposition that favours gender disequilibrium. To raise awareness on this damaging classification, Kane's comicality deploys laughter as a connector between distanced, metaphysical domains and one's flawed body (Urban 154). Ergo, the audience identify patriarchy as a reproachable source of physical abjection. Accordingly, Ian affirms that "[he] stink[s]", anticipating the defectiveness of his diseased body that later contaminates Cate through rape (S. Kane 8). Thereupon, Cate exclusively "*laughs hysterically*" (27). Cate's "dianoetic laugh"⁶ represents physically the metaphysical agony of a woman captured in restrictive femininity to which the audience respond, effectuating Brecht's distancing (Urban 165).

As a result, laughter's function is not to cause comic relief from violent scenes, but bracketing them for the spectators to react to a cruel joke (150, 155). Considering that "*le rire n'a pas plus grand enemi que l'emotion*"⁷, spectators feel inevitably troubled by the characters' physical suffering, which is a result of their patriarchal entrapment (Bergson 4). Therefore, when Ian indifferently teases Cate saying that she "[l]oved [him] last night", the spectators do not engage in his apathetic mockery because they have evaluated Cate's desperation, which stems from her perception of her raped body as symbolically "smell[y]" (S. Kane 31, 52). Cate's infection of Ian's abjection remarks his possession of Cate displaying claustrophobia. So, Kane presents the abject *in crescendo* to disclose patriarchy as a loop with inescapable repercussions that climaxes with clarity in Ian's absolute breakdown: "*He dies with relief . . . Eventually*"⁸ (60). Ian is in "a[n] [abject] state in-between life and death" where the lack of functionality of his body casts a shadow over the metaphysical dilemma of his death (Albett 68). The intense series of images displaying Ian's fragmented existence

⁶ "The laugh that laughs – silence please – at that which is unhappy" (Beckett qtd. in Urban 166)

⁷ Laughter's worst enemy is *emotion* (my translation).

⁸ See Appendix for a further understanding and full dramatic effect.

show him failing to escape the patriarchal chaos that he is part of. Thence, his fate can be referred to as a version of *reductio ad absurdum* in which his decrepitude keeps him alive, proving to the auditor that patriarchy is detrimental.

3.2 Awakening the Unconscious to Butler's Performativity: the Rupture of Binaries through Dramatic Irony.

Sarah Kane refuses the notion of identity based on gendered binaries that a patriarchal society renders normative. Therefore, she applies to the trope of ambiguity in order to enable *performative* normativity to collapse on its own: A perception of the human ego seeking to dismantle asymmetrical, power-related logics.

Judith Butler claims that gender is an illusion that is created by our social acts and gestures to maintain hetero-normative sexuality (*Gender Trouble* 136). Therefore, impelled to imitate social, repressive standards we *perform* identity, which results in manifesting artificial gendered binaries. This "fabrication", Butler claims, can be subverted through a reversed performance (136-137). Her assertion is evident in Kane's drama in that it highlights her brilliance in the ambiguous manner in which she introduces the concept of performativity without imposing it⁹.

To begin with, Kane utilises dramatic irony in order to reverse patriarchal binaries. She does so by transforming her characters into victims of their own unfounded beliefs regarding the traditional gendered-defined qualities, which they ignorantly lack. For instance, Ian claims to be a fearless man, but "[he] *throws himself flat on the floor*" after hearing a loud noise (S. Kane 28). Moreover, Cate, characterised as a "*non-sexual*", innocent woman, deceits her alleged naiveté by exploring her fits as a sexual, utopic safe-place (5). Hence, this

⁹ By not making actresses play masculine roles and vice versa, normative performativity is *reversed* through language.

mismatch between the characters' beliefs and their actions proves identity to be *performed*, encouraging the audience's scepticism towards the characters' incongruous behaviour.

In deciphering this enigma, Kane presents gender as the trigger to a detrimental power imbalance, thereby awakening her audience to a tragic truth: Rape is not an isolated practice, but the harmful consequence of male empowerment over women. Initially, Kane emphasises Ian's monopoly of power over Cate; a patronising panorama that Cate tolerates until Ian rapes her committing a tragic transgression. Ian's crime is punished by Cate's *anagnorisis* when she awakens from her utopia (one of her fits) to dystopia (sexual assault) in order to discover that they "exist on a continuum" being tantamount to each other (Mihaylova 226). Her illuminating realisation empowers a damaged Cate to leave the room.

Kane introduces power as a violent force that supports performativity by addressing male suffering caused by an enforced masculinity, which renders men with "no choice" but to be violent (S. Kane 47). Then, Kane suggests that the expected outcome of conventional normativity is war. The Soldier snatches masculine power (as symbolised by a gun, revealing its out-of-scope danger) from Ian. The Soldier's act portrays leadership as performative to the extent of violently raping Ian while picturing his dead girlfriend Col. During this scene the Soldier is symbolically assaulting Col, but physically abusing Ian. Therefore, Ian's gender duality raises uncertainty: Does Ian represent femininity now? This ambivalence works as a catalyst to deflate gendered identity that allows patriarchy to collapse on its own: Ian's duality signifies a body-gender mismatch thereby permitting performativity to triumph over gender stability.

In presenting identity as performative and by highlighting the detrimental outcomes of patriarchy, Kane makes her audience hesitate, awakening their unconscious to resist normativity (Butler, *Physical Life* 88). Thus, when Cate returns, Ian's dependence on her

empowers her. However, the ongoing war forces her into pragmatism where she must trade herself sexually to obtain food. Cate's metamorphosis connected to Ian's thankful final words to her represent a *peripeteia* for Kane's audience. In the end, one finds that both characters have changed, which proves the performative nature of identity. Kane achieves to do so by not blatantly imposing her opinions, but by playing with ambiguity to open her audience's eyes to the farce of a naturalising society-constructed gender roles that seeks correction.

3.3 "Victim, Perpetrator, Bystander": Disintegrating Rationality with a Corrective Purpose

Sarah Kane applies ambiguity as a mechanism to destabilise conventional foundations (that praise a rigid and stable consolidation of identity) in order to reveal the human idiosyncrasy as complex. Thus, uncertainty serves as an effective means to shock her audience through *Blasted's* enigmatic ending, which encourages a public reflexion that might free Kane's audience from the straightjacketed reality in which they live. In fact, their constrictive reality, which masquerades as rational, is the one that she *blasts* in her play highlighting its corrective power. Thus, she exhibits on stage the outcomes of a stereotyped existence, implying the need for a liberated vision of the self.

Kane finds rational foundations problematic because they obstinately portray human behaviour as simple and expectable. Such a concept is harmful because it legitimises human inequality and suffering. Conversely, she believes in human complexities that are driven by instinctive emotional forces. Therefore, probably influenced by a type of curiosity that "enables one to get free of oneself", Kane decides to explore and debunk these complexities (Foucault 8). Thus, Kane's characters are not two-dimensional stereotypes, but rather entities made of conflictive emotions. Both Ian and Cate are attracted and repelled to each other; Ian "love[s]" and insults her, while Cate "kisses" and "bites hi[m]" (S. Kane 17, 28, 31). Consequently, the emotional instincts of human beings become undeniable for her audience.

Kane contends that a rational constitution of identity is manufactured, and therefore, unnatural. This contention allows Kane to raise ethical questions about conventional morality in a cause-effectual basis. To prove the same, she intensifies ambiguity through moments of sympathy towards abusers, thereby encouraging her audience's moral reassessment. Kane redeems the masculine misuse of power by showing it as a direct effect of a higher cause. Even if the Soldier has raped Ian, he is not defined as a vile persona, instead he is incapacitated by war (result of patriarchal masculinity) and "crying his heart out" (49). As the Scottish playwright David Greig suggests, Kane follows her tripartite of "victim/perpetrator/bystander" to represent human complexity (xvii). The Soldier's behaviour underlines his humanity and presents him as a victim as well as an abuser and a witness. Kane's challenging dramatic technique signifies the destabilisation of subjectivity as non-fluctuating, uncovering various complexities of humanity in front of her audience.

Consequently, the significance of Kane's masterpiece lies in the perceptual amplitude of her public while facing "*that* which exists *in absentia*" (N. Kane 3) in her complex script. *Blasted* is a play without denouement that perpetuates ambiguity. Thence, Kane requires a patient and engaged audience that is ready to face atrocities and overcome them in order to reach a cathartic understanding of the internalised foundations of their reality that demand correction.

4. CONCLUSION

Sarah Kane's impactful first play, *Blasted*, sheds light on the painful outcomes that socially-imposed identity constructions (gender, sexuality, class and race) have on people. In doing so, the dramatist urges her audience to reflect on all these norms that they unquestionably accept and deploy to regulate their existence by showing them an optimistic path for correction. Yet, despite Kane's attempts to overturn what is believed to be socially acceptable behaviour, our society still seems to be trapped in a restrictive tradition that is defined and categorised by harmful conventions. Sarah Kane asserts to be "what I am. Not what other people want me to be" as a request for us to deconstruct our assigned identities in order to unmask our genuine selves. (qtd. in Saunders 106).

Therefore, as illustrated by *Blasted* and as an extension, by this dissertation, we ought to be aware of the need to find a subjective and personal definition of ourselves that liberates us from the miserable life of conventional automatons. In fact, one may assert that *Blasted* is a dramatised warning that *blasts* with a mortal bomb the interiorised biases of our conventional judgement favouring public acceptance of identity as a fluid turmoil of conflictive emotions and thoughts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Plot Summary

Sarah Kane's *Blasted* (1995)

Scene One

In a fancy hotel room in Leeds, Ian, a journalist in his forties, and Cate, his naïve, twenty-one years old ex-girlfriend, meet again for a romantic rendezvous in the middle of the night. While an indeterminate war begins outside, Ian attempts to enthrall Cate so as to have sex with her. Yet, Cate does not seem to be interested and, as a result, the couple's beliefs are constantly clashing. Deeply frustrated, Ian insults Cate to the extent of making her faint.

Scene Two

The following morning Ian wakes up to have an extreme seizure, reminder of his imminent death. His sound gets a resentful Cate out of bed, who destroys his jacket while Ian is having a shower. Ian finds out about her action and faces Cate to end up fighting until Cate passes out again. Ian, taking advantage of the situation, simulates sex over her unconscious body with a gun pointing at her head. Once recovered, Cate tries to leave the room, but Ian locks the front door for her to stay. At this point we discover that the reason for Cate's anger is that Ian has raped her during the night. After a short discussion, Cate goes to the bathroom and mysteriously disappears while a Soldier breaks into the room.

Scene Three

A mortal bomb has destroyed the hotel room leaving Ian and the Soldier alone onstage. As the Soldier poses a threat, Ian unsuccessfully tries to neutralise him. Both characters discuss the atrocious outcomes of war and the Soldier asks Ian to inform the world

about them. Ian finds it uninteresting for the public taste. The desperate and hurt Soldier tells Ian the story of his dead girlfriend Col (who was raped, tortured and killed) and simultaneously rapes Ian to, later, suck his eyes out rendering Ian blind.

Scene Four

Cate comes back with a baby in her arms to witness a horrid scenario: The Soldier has committed suicide and his inert body lies next to a blind and lonely Ian. Ian tries to kill himself with the Soldier's revolver, but he fails due to Cate's intervention. Notwithstanding Cate's care, the baby dies of hunger.

Scene Five

Cate buries the baby and leaves the room again to trade herself for some food. Being alone again, Ian's desperation forces him to be instinctual in order to survive. He eats the baby's corpse and apparently dies with relief. It starts to rain on him and we discover that he is still alive. Cate returns with food and gin and feeds him. The play ends with the image of Ian thanking Cate.

APPENDIX 2: Scene Five, Ian's Breakdown (S. Kane, 59-60)

58 Blasted

Cate Shh.**Ian** What you doing?**Cate** Praying. Just in case.**Ian** Will you pray for me?**Cate** No.**Ian** When I'm dead, not now.**Cate** No point when you're dead.**Ian** You're praying for her.**Cate** She's baby.**Ian** So?**Cate** Innocent.**Ian** Can't you forgive me?**Cate** Don't see bad things or go bad places –**Ian** She's dead, Cate.**Cate** Or meet anyone who'll do bad things.**Ian** She won't, Cate, she's dead.**Cate** Amen.*(She starts to leave.)***Ian** Where you going?**Cate** I'm hungry.**Ian** Cate, it's dangerous. There's no food.**Cate** Can get some off a soldier.**Ian** How?**Cate** *(Doesn't answer.)***Ian** Don't do that.**Cate** Why not?

Scene Five 59

Ian That's not you.**Cate** I'm hungry.**Ian** I know so am I.

But.

I'd rather –

It's not –

Please, Cate.

I'm blind.

Cate I'm hungry.*(She goes.)***Ian** Cate? Cate?

If you get some food –

Fuck.

*Darkness.**Light.***Ian** *masturbating.***Ian** cunt cunt cunt cunt cunt cunt cunt cunt cunt cunt*Darkness.**Light.***Ian** *strangling himself with his bare hands.**Darkness.**Light.***Ian** *shitting.**And then trying to clean it up with newspaper.**Darkness.**Light.***Ian** *laughing hysterically.**Darkness.**Light.***Ian** *having a nightmare.*

60 Blasted

*Darkness.**Light.*

Ian *crying, huge bloody tears.*
He is hugging the Soldier's body for comfort.

*Darkness.**Light.*

Ian *lying very still, weak with hunger.*

*Darkness.**Light.*

Ian *tears the cross out of the ground, rips up the floor and lifts the baby's body out.*

He eats the baby.

He puts the remains back in the baby's blanket and puts the bundle back in the hole.

A beat, then he climbs in after it and lies down, head poking out of the floor.

He dies with relief.

It starts to rain on him, coming through the roof.

Eventually.

Ian Shit.

Cate *enters carrying some bread, a large sausage and a bottle of gin.*
There is blood seeping from between her legs.

Cate You're sitting under a hole.

Ian I know.

Cate Get wet.

Ian Aye.

Cate Stupid bastard.

She pulls a sheet off the bed and wraps it around her.

Scene Five 61

She sits next to Ian's head.

She eats her fill of the sausage and bread, then washes it down with gin.

Ian *listens.*

She feeds Ian with the remaining food.

She pours gin in Ian's mouth.

She finishes feeding Ian and sits apart from him, huddled for warmth.

She drinks the gin.

She sucks her thumb.

Silence.

It rains.

Ian Thank you.

Blackout.