

TEXT POETICS AND ALLUSIVE ELEMENTS IN SARAH KANE'S PLAY "CLEANSED"

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Abstract. The article discusses poetics and allusive elements in Sarah Kane's play "Cleansed" Sarah Kane was the first dramatist, who fundamentally changed the 90's British theatre and after her first play "Blasted" that was very scandalous the new style of plays became dominant on British stage called "In –yer- face" theatre.

Sarah Kane's "Cleansed" that was premiered in April 1998, that marked her return not only the Royal Court but also for the first time onto the main stage in one of the major productions of that season.

As David Greig mentions in the introductions of her complete plays "Cleansed" is yet another step away from naturalism. She completely striped away the explanatory narrative and presented the audience with a series of poetic images and pared dialogue." (Greig, 2001: 3)

The set of the play develops in a former university now transformed into some kind of an institution where one of the main character Tinker controls and transforms the characters.

The episodic structure of the play is taken from Georg Buchner's "Woyzeck" that was staged by her in 1997. The story and the structure of the play is disconnected.

The couples and their love story are presented throughout the play such as: the identical twins Grace and Graham, Carl and Rod, Grace and Robin, Tinker and Woman, Tinker and Grace. Each relationship is broken and doesn't have a happy ending of course but the main question of the play is what one can endure for the sake of love.

Keywords: Sarah, Kane, Allusions, Cleansed, Shakespeare, Orwell.

Introduction. On January 12, 1995, the premiere of the first play of the 23-year-old, still unknown playwright Sarah Kane - "Blasted" took place at the Royal Court Theatre. Her age was used against her by several theater critics, and it can be said that it was initially one of the major obstacles to understanding the real value of the play.

The scandalous and shocking forms of expression of the play shocked the British audience and theater critics, and Kane soon came under the attention of journalists and critics, most of whom harshly criticized the author and considered his first play to be an absolutely useless work.

Despite the differences of opinion, today it can be safely said that Sarah Kane was the first playwright who made a turning point in the British theater of the 90s and started a new trend, which Alex Sierz called "In-yer-face theatre".

Sarah Kane's third play premiered in England in 1998. Which in a way marked her return not only to the Royal Court, but now to its main stage and this time to the regular repertoire of the theater.

The aim of this article is to analyse not only the structure and poetics of the play but the allusions that author uses in it.

Methods. The research is based on comparative, hermeneutical and historical methods. Sara Kane's third play "Cleansed", as well as the existing scientific literature about her work and specifically about this play, are taken for research. In addition, the article discusses allusions to such authors as Shakespeare and Orwell.

Discussion and Results. In Sarah Kane's third play, "Cleansed", the action takes place in a closed institution, which used to be a university, but now it has become a place of torture and experimentation of people.

The play consists of eighteen scenes, in which the action takes place in different parts of the building. For example: inside the fence, on the perimeter of the university, in the white room - in the university sanatorium, in the red room - which used to be the university gym, in the black room - which used to be the university shower, and now it is full of booths of striptease dancing women, and the round room - used to be the university library.

It should be noted that the play does not specify a specific time of the year and season, however, we see the passage of time through the short markings at the beginning of the action. In the first scene, it is snowing, and in the second, it is midsummer and the sun is shining, which should indicate that time is passing and the actions are stretched out in time.

The beginning of the play is ambiguous, the author informs us in advance that the action takes place inside the perimeter of the university, but the first thing we read is Tinker, who heats the heroine with a silver spoon. Graham, who is the second character in line, enters and asks that if the medicine is for him, then increase the dose. Tinker does the same, doubles the dose and injects Graham, Graham counts down from ten to five, thanks the doctor and stops talking.

“Graham Ten. Nine. Eight.
 Tinker Your Legs are heavy.
 Graham Seven. Six. Five.
 Tinker Your Head is Light.
 Graham Four. Four. Five.
 Tinker Life is sweet.
 Graham That's what it's like.
 They Look at each other.
 Graham (Smiles.)
 Tinker (Looks away.)
 Graham Thank you, Doctor.
 (He slumps)
 Tinker Graham ?
 Silence
 Tinker
 Four.
 Three.
 Two.
 One.” (Kane, 2001: 107)

In the play we meet different characters who form couples and each of them has their own story. Such are Grace and Graham, Carl and Rod, Grace and Robin, Tinker and Grace, Tinker and Woman.

We must assume that the place that teaches people knowledge, free thinking and the pursuit of freedom has now turned into a totalitarian institution, where terrible laws apply and Tinker plays the role of the big brother, who watches all the couples, controls them and tries to test them in some way. However, it should also be noted that in this totalitarian micro-world, Tinker is also controlled and decisions are made by others besides him, although we only learn about the existence of others from his words, which he says to Graham in the first act: "Do you know what will happen to me?" (Kane, 2001: 108)

In addition to Tinker appearing in the role of the big brother who sees everything, in the play "Tinker is watching" there is a direct allusion to the novel by Carl's words: "Carl - Not me please not me don't kill me Rod not me don't kill me ROD NOT ME ROD NOT ME." (Kane, 2001: 117)

Winston Smith says the same words when the torture mechanism and the cage full of rats approach and because of terrible fear he sacrifices his "eternal" love to Julia: "For an instant he was insane, a screaming animal. Yet he came out of the blackness clutching an idea. There was one and only one way to save himself. He must interpose another human being, between himself and the rats. I don't care what you do to her. Tear her off, strip her to the bones." (Orwell, 2001: 288)

Unlike Orwell's characters, the characters of the play fight for love to the end and manage to endure everything, however, the author's experiment to create a dystopian reality in which his characters "live" is very interesting and is characterized by all the features that distinguish dystopia as a genre.

It is significant that Kane's play is influenced not only by Buchner and Orwell, but also by another great playwright, Shakespeare.

As everyone knows, Shakespeare's Twelfth Night is set in Illyria and tells the story of the love between Duke Orsino and Olivia. However, everything gets mixed up in the comedy when Viola appears on the island, looking for her brother Sebastiano, who was lost as a result of the shipwreck. Viola decides to disguise herself and start serving at the Duke's court disguised as a man. He does so and soon wins the duke's sympathies. Things get complicated when Viola/Cesario falls in love with Duke Orsino, Orsino with Olivia, Olivia with Viola/Cesario, and Sebastian with Olivia.

Davit Maziashvili in his book "Shakespeare's Postmodernism", speaking about "Twelfth Night", notes that Illyria is considered in the play as a utopian, dreamlike place or a place where people live without parents (therefore, without traditions or other rules) and all their dreams can be given wings. attack (Maziashvili, 2021: 130)

However, Illyria is also a real geographical place, which, according to what we read in the same book is located in Eastern Europe, on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, in the southern part of present-day Croatia near Dubrovnik, which was the border between the Ottoman Empire and the Christian West at the time of Shakespeare. .. (Maziashvili, 2021: 130),

Davit Maziashvili also points out that based on the above, we can conclude that Shakespeare has chosen Illyria accurately from a territorial and ideological point of view, "because in both cases it is an expression of a kind of boundary, as a religious-cultural (West/East and/or Christian/Muslim world) Also from a sexual and gender point of view, because in Shakespeare's time it was directly associated with the religious-ethnic-cultural geographical location.

In the second half of the twentieth century, and especially in the 60s and 80s, gender and queer research, including classical texts and their re-reading (for this purpose), became very popular. The reason is obvious, at this time important changes are taking place in Europe and America. The sexual revolution begins, the legalization of soft drugs and abortion, the liberalization of homosexuality, etc.

Accordingly, Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" becomes a kind of table book for literary critics.

Casey Charles notes in "Gender Troubles in Twelfth Night" that the rise of queer studies has led to a re-reading of many influential works in the academy, including, of course, Shakespeare's plays. While "Twelfth Night" is still considered one of the main texts of homoerotic themes in Shakespeare, interpretations of same-sex attraction in the comedy are still divided, especially because at the end of the fifth act, we see a marriage between a heterosexual couple, although the relationship between Antonio and Sebastiano prepared a thorough and fertile ground for this to research the issue. The author of the article also notes that, in his opinion, the play is more focused on feelings of love - as sexual attraction in general, and not in a specific category.

William W. E. Slights in his work "Maid and Man" in Twelfth Night notes that not so long ago, there was a theory according to which Viola's transvestite veil also represented her sexual orientation. According to the author, this theory has a reason for existence and it should not lose its relevance, because there was no such issue in the criticism of Twelfth Night before, and also this theory helps the reader to change his solid idea about the genre of comedy. Also with the fact that comedy should offer something light, entertaining.

Sarah Kane seems to have thought the same, for whom Shakespeare's play was interesting, not only from a gender point of view, but also because she used the play as a kind of plot thread for her own work.

If we return to the idea that Kane creates a kind of dystopian space in the play (for which he uses Orwell), then it should not be surprising that Shakespeare needs to use this very play, in which Illyria, as mentioned above, is a kind of ideal world where rules and laws do not apply and People can fulfill and realize their desires freely.

Kane's Illyria is obviously parodied and dystopian. In my opinion, the central figure of the play (at least one of them) is Grace, who appears in the third scene of the play. Looking for his missing twin brother, Tinker tells him that Graham died of an overdose. Grace insists on her brother's clothes, which 19-year-old little boy Robin is wearing. He then strips completely, wraps himself in his brother Graham's robes, and falls down heartbroken.

Tinker bathes Grace on the bed, injects her, and puts her to sleep. After waking up, Grace refuses to leave the space and asks Tinker to tell the others that she thought she was a man.

“Grace I want to stay.

Tinker It's not right.

Grace I'm staying.

Tinker You'll be moved.

Grace I look like him. Say you thought I was a man.” (Kane, 2001: 114)

In the fifth scene, Graham (in Grace's imagination) returns and tells Grace that since he is back, nothing matters anymore. They look at each other in silence and Graham utters the words: "More like me than I ever was." (Kane, 2001: 119) Which suggests that Grace, like Viola, has become visually and emotionally almost identical to her own brother in her search.

This is also confirmed by the Grace/Graham dance, during which both do identical movements at the same time, and even Grace's voice is similar to Graham's.

„Graham dances –a dance of love for Grace.

Grace dances opposite him, copying his movements.

Gradually she takes on the masculinity of his movement, his facial expression. Finally, she no longer has to watch him – she mirrors him perfectly as they dance exactly in time.

When she speaks, her voice is more like his.” (Kane, 2001: 119)

Casey Charles in her article "Gender Trouble in Twelfth Night" points out that Shakespeare's drama confronts the norms and pairings of the sexes of the time and secretly hints at the love of

people of the same sex: these are - Viola Olivia and Sebastiano - Antonio. However, in the end, they still marry people of the opposite sex according to the stereotypes and norms accepted in this era.

With Sarah Kane, it is clear that things will not unfold as they would in a Shakespearean comedy. Here we see the incestuous love of identical twins, who finally seem to unite physically and are represented by Grace/Graham's genitals, and Antonio Sebastiano's couple Carl and Rod.

Just as the male protagonists in Kane's "Blasted" and "Phaedra's Love" are not fully tyrants, they also have a human side, such as Tinker, who falls in love with Grace but knows there's no point in opening up, and tries to have a relationship with a stripper in a closed box-cell. And he manages to communicate with him by inserting coins. Tinker is a chameleon-like character who is everywhere and at the same time does not fully reveal his identity. "I'm a dealer not a doctor", "I'll be anything you need", "I'm sorry, I'm not really a doctor". (Tinker). Tinker is on the one hand a big brother, and on the other a Mephistophelian character who fulfills people's "wishes". And we can draw another parallel with Malvolio, he is like Malvolio, although obviously a more cruel figure in the play, a kind of controller to disrupt the good mood of people.

As we mentioned above, the play is difficult to perform on stage, it was always talked about when it came to his plays, although he himself mentions it in the interview. This is also noted by the director of the play, James MacDonald, who says that the words are only a third of the play. The bulk of the meaning is carried through the imagery. That's incredibly rare for the British playwright.

Conclusions. It should be noted that torturing people in different rooms and developing the action is a kind of journey, embarking on a search path, which I think ends partly failure for all of them. At the end of the play, the identities of all of them are mixed and combined. Each of them wears a part of the other, Grace looks like Graham, Carl wears Robin's clothes, the stripper woman says her name is Grace.

In the final scene fully transformed into a man, Grace, who is operated on by Tinker and sews a man's genital organ, utters a monologue:

“Grace
 Body perfect
 ...
 Died.
 Burnt...
 Me
 Hear a voice or catch a smile turning
 From the mirror You bastard how dare
 you leave me like this.
 Felt it.
 Here. Inside. Here. ...
 Here now.
 Safe on the other side and here.
 Graham.
 (A long silence)
 Always be here.
 Thank you Doctor. (Kane, 2001: 150)

At the end of the play, both surviving heroes, who no longer have their loved ones by their side and cannot love, stand in silence in the sunlight and the deafening noise of rats.

It can be said that Kane, like Orwell, creates a minimalistic micro-world, where rules and laws are designed to make people suffer extremely and no longer have the ability to choose joy and love.

However, unlike Orwell, here the characters of the play have retained the ability of loyalty and self-sacrifice.

We should also note that this play is an interesting allusion and material to be discussed for the study of Shakespeare's interpretation. The author creates a Shakespearean Illyria, however, as she has imagined, and this Illyria is no longer an idyllic kingdom, but cruel rules apply here and an Orwellian big brother is watching you to prevent you from fulfilling your wishes.

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