

EAT ME:  
AN UN/(RE)-MATERIALIZING THE MATERIAL ON THE STAGE-  
A STUDY OF THE CANNIBALISTIC NATURE OF THE THEATRE;  
OR,  
THERE IS (NO) MATERIAL: THE TEXT AND THE BODY ARE THE SAME

By

Matthew Miles Bowman

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Literature in English

2012

## ABSTRACT

EAT ME:  
AN UN/(RE)-MATERIALIZING THE MATERIAL ON THE STAGE-  
A STUDY OF THE CANNIBALISTIC NATURE OF THE THEATRE;  
OR,  
THERE IS (NO) MATERIAL: THE TEXT AND THE BODY ARE THE SAME

By

Matthew Miles Bowman

Cannibalism in drama collapses the gap between the performative word and the performance of a text or body. It answers Antonin Artaud's call for a new kind of theatre. He calls this new kind of theatre one of Cruelty, i.e., one that shakes the audience out of passive state *vis-à-vis* bourgeois, Western, narrative-based theatre. Artaud pushes for a recodified theatrical language that does not depend upon language. His desire to circumvent spoken or written language, however, cannot occur, a fact he even acknowledges as a possibility in his *The Theatre and Its Double*. Cannibalism accounts for this inability by mediating the gap between performance and the performative. It reconstitutes the body and the spoken and/or written word in such a manner that the two are indistinguishable. Through a study of cannibalism in a selection of twentieth-century dramatic texts, this project suggests that a Theatre of Cannibalism might accomplish what Artaud is after, a life before birth, a consciousness before consciousness.

Copyright by  
MATTHEW MILES BOWMAN  
2012

## **DEDICATION**

For Pops, who wrote this along with me.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I could not have accomplished this project without the support of Dr. Michael Nealon, Dr. Paul Jurczak, Jeff Janowick, Sharon Park, Doug Sjoquist, Molly Cryderman-Weber, Dennis Hinrichsen, Andy Callis, Melissa Kaplan, Dr. Kevin Brown, Dr. Eric Snider, Tammy Vance, and everyone in the Humanities and English Departments at Lansing Community College. My deepest gratitude goes to my dissertation committee: Dr. Miguel Cabañas, Dr. Ann Larabee, and Dr. Ann Folino-White. Thank you all for your patience and for giving me the most insightful feedback one can ask for, especially on an ever-evolving project like this one. For the Chair of my committee, Dr. Judith Roof, I cannot begin to thank you enough for your guidance, encouragement, and confidence in this project. It is because of you I am where I am, and I will never forget that. To Dr. Norm Gilbert, thank you for your kindness and motivation. And to my brilliant and very good friend, Dr. Lance Norman, to you goes a special acknowledgment. Without your wisdom, without your balanced approach to research, and without your certainty that, although captivating, only the near opposite of this project's thesis will do, I would not have finished. For that, I am grateful. And to Erin, Mom, Pops, Lee, Harlee, Reese, and Rachel: Thank you so much for your love and support.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                                        |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| INTRODUCTION.....                                                                                      | 1   |
| CHAPTER 1.....                                                                                         | 25  |
| TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' <i>SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER</i> : (re)INSCRIBING THE BODY<br>VIA CANNIBALISM          |     |
| CHAPTER 2.....                                                                                         | 55  |
| SARAH KANE'S <i>BLASTED</i> : THE PERFORMATIVE AND PERFORMANCE ARE THE<br>"SAME"                       |     |
| CHAPTER 3.....                                                                                         | 92  |
| DAVID GREIG'S <i>SAN DIEGO</i> : CANNIBALISM (THE PARATEXTUAL/THE<br>PARALEPTICAL) THROUGH THE AURAL   |     |
| CHAPTER 4.....                                                                                         | 128 |
| THE PARATEXT AND CANNIBALISM IN FERNANDO ARRABAL'S <i>THE<br/>ARCHITECT AND THE EMPEROR OF ASSYRIA</i> |     |
| CONCLUSION.....                                                                                        | 157 |
| THE PARALEPTICAL/THE PARATEXT: <i>TITUS ANDRONICUS</i> , ARTAUD, AND A<br>THEATRE OF CANNIBALISM       |     |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY.....                                                                                      | 172 |

## Introduction

Edward Bond's 1968 play *Early Morning* answers Antonin Artaud's call for a new kind of theatre that "takes gestures as far as they will go" (TD 27) with a "physical language, aimed at the senses and independent of speech" (TD 25). "Gestures" in this project applies to more than just body movement or props, although Artaud does refer to these extensively in his *The Theatre and Its Double*. For Artaud, this new theatre of reinvigorated or rewritten gestures should accost the audience, and to paraphrase Derrida, the accosting shall elicit a kind of "death before birth" (WD 233) or a "consciousness . . . before birth" (Artaud Anthology 190), i.e., an experience through theatre that can erase codification outside the theatre. A recodified theatre is excessive; it is excess, as he suggests. He states, "In its very gratuitousness, [ ] the action and effect of a feeling in the theater appears infinitely more valid than that of a feeling fulfilled in life" (25). Excess does not dissolve, however, as Artaud later suggests (28). Excess is permanent, and once spilled, it is unavoidably visible, especially in its invisibility. Gratuity can be understood, in part, as an awareness, perhaps even as an hyperawareness, of watching a play as staged. Cannibalism mediates this awareness.

For example, in Bond's play, the material excess of the Siamese twins' body cannot dissipate, but once in heaven and separated, the older George feeds upon his headless brother Arthur, per Arthur's command. The representation of the metaphysical body in heaven is more palpable and tangible in its undeniable physicality. Cannibalism in heaven rematerializes the immaterial connection the two brothers have in speech. It is only in heaven that a separated George is finally whole. Cannibalism inverts and twists how the body and representation interact. This cannibalistic process goes on indefinitely, and it applies to the stage, as well as the script on the page. Cannibalism recodes and reconstitutes what constitutes the material and what

does not; and, the gesture of cannibalism, in its various manifestations on stage and/or on the page, takes gesture itself as far as it will go.

The performance of the body and its relationship to the performativity of language is a cannibalistic performance and a cannibalistic performative. Unlike Artaud, who considers all language as “[d]ialogue—something written and spoken—[which] does not specifically belong to the stage but to books” (25), i.e., language represents, this project shows language does not just represent. Language performs as the body does, and they both perform upon one another. Language, like the material body, can have the ability to do things, i.e., to do what it also says, to follow the theories of the philosopher J.L. Austin. Cannibalism mediates the performative nature of language with Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty, and the differences between the performative and performance become rather difficult to discern.

Chapter One suggests cannibalism in *Early Morning* facilitates an inversion of how spoken language and the body interact. A speaking body has no power in heaven. Rather than a metaphysical body’s power to speak commands, it is a headless, dismembered Arthur who is able to speak, “Feed them” (221), and it is done. The characters reabsorb his word only in a state of cannibalism and disembodiment. However, they do not follow his word to the letter; they eat each other, not of themselves, as Arthur commands. They have reconstituted both Arthur and his word.

Cannibalism in Chapter Two mediates the relationship between the spoken and written word *vis-à-vis* the body in Tennessee Williams’ *Suddenly, Last Summer*. Catherine’s spoken word re-members her cannibalized cousin, Sebastian, with his written poem that does not exist. Both merge, reconstituting him. His life-long wish has been fulfilled: He is his own art.



Catherine's spoken re-memberment of Sebastian cannibalizes his work with the feast-ful event. The body of work and the body of Sebastian are one and the same, incessantly eating each other.

The cannibalism in *Blasted* is on the stage and on the page in an active, performative way. Chapter Three examines how the gesture of cannibalism, or its spectre, on stage or in the script, does not necessarily apply to how the script itself functions. The stage directions indicate that the "/" denotes an overlap in dialogue. The mark never appears. It is absent. That absence cannibalizes the presence of the text; in other words, the absent mark becomes as present as the very visible script itself. It overlaps the cannibalism on stage and reconstitutes the play to the point where the delineation of where the line of theatre begins and ends cannot be discerned.

Further, David Greig's "Editor's Note" that accompanies the play cannibalizes it. This cannibalism is a paratextual and a parenthetical process. His announcement that the text you are holding in your hands is THE text reconstitutes Kane's play with his note. Greig, then, posits himself in the text. Greig also posits himself in his play *San Diego*, in which he figures in a myriad of manifestations, one of whom eats of his friend, Laura, at her command. The playwright Greig, in the "Editor's Note," in *Blasted*, and the playwright Greig who writes Greig into the play *San Diego*, parenthesizes the "Editor's Note"; it is more important than the text itself. It is more important, it is parenthetical because this project places it in such a way that it cannibalizes.

In *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*, cannibalism mediates itself. In Chapter Four, cannibalistic gestures consume in Fernando Arrabal's play. They reconstitute the cannibalistic gestures that came before them. In a similar fashion, this project positions this play in the last chapter so that it cannibalizes the Introduction. If the Introduction is a causally motivated narrative, and it is, then the last chapter is a dismemberment of that narrative. The

Introduction calls for a new kind of theatre that realizes Artaud's vision. The last chapter posits not only that theatre is always-already cannibalistically performing, but also that it produces nothing at all. Thus, a Theatre of Cannibalism is both a material and immaterial in-actuality that does and does not apply to all and no theatre at all. Presence in absence begets more presence reconstitutes absence with that presence, and so on. What power does theatre have in the wake of cannibalism? Is it empowered or disemboweled? Or both? In other words, what happens to the excess that Artaud rightfully postulates when the script and the stage dissect and reconstitute each other? The format of this project attempts to answer those questions, to enact performative cannibalism as an adjective and as a verb.

### **Epilogue**

How does cannibalism function in *Early Morning*? Once dead and in heaven, the character Arthur discovers that you have to eat people to "regrow," to become present in absence and vice versa. In Artaud's theatre, the audience finds cruelty in the absence of recognizable uses of theatrical language, especially the kind that lends itself to narrative. Thus, those types of recognizable elements associated with the theatre do not stop with the word, but continue on to the structure (or not) of the play, the theatre, and the consumer's (audience member or reader) relationship to both. Those recognizable elements, then, in Artaud's theatre are to give way to sounds, lights, and props which are to take on new powers that affect the audience. Physical bodies on stage are to give way to metaphysical concepts, and metaphysical concepts should become so tangible one can almost touch them. When Artaud says he is looking for a "death before birth" through his Theatre of Cruelty, he wishes to discard older representing agents in order to provoke the audience out of its seat. How does a sound performed enable theatrical

recoding, though, in its absence? In the absence of the sound, when read on the page, as a script, the absence of an actual audible sound is more deafening than its presence could ever render.

Cannibalism's excessive attention to the human form's presence, that, in its absence, it becomes more present than before, and in this kind of retroactive performativity, sound, or any other mechanisms put forth on the stage (or not) or the page (or not) in a theatre of cruelty, like language, still resonates with the self-sustaining, older systems of habits that creates or consumes them. Cannibalism in *Early Morning* uniquely performs those very same habits (how to consider violence on stage, the taboo of the act, etc.) in such a way, however, that language, in its excessive presence at the beginning of the play, produces a literal dematerialization of Arthur's metaphysical body in heaven (he is a talking head), at the end of the play. Further, the body, in its excessive presence at the end of the play, produces a figurative rematerialization of the once physically joined Siamese twins, Arthur and George. The performativity of the word overlapped with the performance of the body produces a new, un-utterable, in-expressible but active theatre.

Arthur's disembodied head in heaven, for example, speaks, and it is because of this disconnection, coupled with his command to the others, "Feed them," that compels them to eat. Somehow, his words do more when his body is not. For Arthur, his saying literally enacts the doing, and all of this occurs before he commits a *death before birth* (he commits suicide in heaven):

VICTORIA. You can't kill people in heaven. They can only kill themselves.

GRISS. No speeches.

VICTORIA. You're hungry.

LEN. 'Oo says?

VICTORIA. He did. That's why he killed himself.

JOYCE. Do what?

VICTORIA. He told you not to eat each other.

.....

But he knew he was asking something unnatural and impossible.  
Something quite, quite impossible. And because he loved you—and  
he only attacked you out of love—he wouldn't ask you to eat yourself,  
as he did. . . . So he died, to let you eat each other in peace.

GRISS. Fact?

.....

VICTORIA. His last words were "Feed them."

(221)

In this scene, hunger is no longer associated with pain, as Victoria exclaims when they all first arrive in heaven, "Nothing has any consequences here—so there's no pain" (200). Hunger is not a result of, a representation of something not happening (eating); it is an activity, a habit, of nothing happening all the time (being full without getting one's fill). Cannibalism showcases, both in terms of the language that represents it and in terms of the act itself, the ability to reconsider the distance between doing something, whether in terms of the word or in terms of action, and between representing something collapses.

Without its typical sign of pain, hunger no longer fills but simply temporarily reconstitutes one body with another. The absence of pain in its apparent but redefined presence in heaven, then, condenses the differences between the material body and the representing agents that code the body in/the body of the theatre (on the page and on the stage) together to such a degree that Arthur's earlier self-consumption to which Victoria refers is the real performance of

the play: hyperbolically, it uses the habits of representation to expose the arbitrary manner by which the body and the word are differentiated in the first place.

For example, George's reading from his mother's note in the first half of the play not only puts his mother center-stage, it also cauterizes his mother to him. They are quite indistinguishable, metaphysically. Arthur's presence, though, simultaneously destroys the metaphysical link by reiterating the physical, over the represented. Arthur is joined at the hip with George, physically. Arthur's presence augments George's absence as a human being. His reading guarantees his and Victoria's umbilical-like metaphysical link. George's dead corpse, his absence as a moving entity enunciates his physicality to the audience and his metaphysicality to Arthur: He just can't seem to live without him. In heaven, in Arthur's metaphysical absence, George finally can eat Arthur, who had previously attempted to eat himself to avoid cannibalism as an economy for others, now guarantees a perpetual gratuity in the consumption, over and over again, of others.

The play, too, reconstitutes itself by reframing and recoding the Siamese twins, Arthur and George, a paratextual body in the first portion of the play, become parenthetical asides in heaven. The difference between the two brothers becomes a matter of what matter is, exactly, and in heaven, if cannibalism is the new economy, and it does not seem to work, exactly as the characters think it ought in any case. It is the habit of eating that continues, not necessarily what it abates, but what it does. The habit of pain goes, so the habits of activity continue. Cannibalism on stage becomes a new kind of habit, and this project will examine a selection of twentieth-century dramatic works that exhibit cannibalism in a variety of ways in order to show how a shift in habits can evoke what Artaud may have been after, a theatre with gestures that are both performative and a performance. Cannibalism mediates this language.

This new language shifts focus from the material to the ephemeral in *Early Morning*, from George as a conjoined and living skeletal prop in the first half of the play, for example, to George as a physically independent zombie with a desire for human flesh in heaven in the second half of the play, a zombie who must eat his brother to be (w)hole again. Victoria and George continually complain that George cannot be complete without Arthur, the second, the aside. This (in)complete-ness, how the stage conveys the connections between the physical and the immaterial, is what this dissertation wants to examine via the use of cannibalism in a selection of twentieth-century plays. In *Early Morning*'s case, on the surface, not only does the play challenge conventional rules of the (im)material by inverting the values and processes that makes the life of the first half of the play human(e), but it also questions the nature of how theatrical representing agents function in their, to paraphrase Artaud, death before birth.

After the deaths of all the characters, it is in heaven where it is not George, but rather Arthur who is able to affect the others with his dismembered body (eventually "he," that is, his talking, body-less head ends up underneath Florence's dress). In heaven, cannibalism is the economy through which growth, or as the characters put it, through which "regrowth" occurs. Before entering, Arthur must undergo a trial, and Victoria presides as judge, who commands Albert to perform a "trial by ordeal" (199), as the Foreman exclaims, or, as Victoria sentences, "The usual formality" (199):

*Albert sticks the sword into Arthur. Arthur does not react. A slight pause.  
Albert pulls the sword out.*

VICTORIA (*sniffs*). Do I smell burning?

ALBERT. The verdict?

FOREMAN. Guilty and admitted to heaven.

*Albert cuts Arthur from George with the sword. There are loud shouts from the*

*crowd . . . Len runs downstage carrying a leg. It is torn off at the thigh and still wears its sock and shoe. The stump is ragged and bloody. Len chews it. The crowd fight round him like sparrows.*

CROWD. Me! Me! Me!

LEN (*fights them off by kicking at them, and swinging the leg*). Lay off!  
'Ang about! Get the other one! (*He chews.*)

ALBERT. You're interrupting a trial.

VICTORIA. It's disgraceful . . .

CROWD. Me! Me! Shares!

LEN. 'Old on, 'old on. (*He turns to Arthur.*) Yer once did me a good turn.  
Welcome t' 'eaven. It's all yourn— (*He wrenches a bite from the leg.*)—  
wass left of it. . . . An' I 'ope it chokes yer.

.....

ALBERT. In heaven, we eat each other.

VICTORIA. It doesn't hurt.

ALBERT. And it grows again.

GEORGE. Like crabs.

VICTORIA. Nothing has any consequences here—so there's no pain. Think of  
it—no pain. Pain is just a habit. You forget all your habits here. Bon  
appetite.

(199-200)

Cannibalism is the only means by which regrowth can occur (apparently, this is an instinctual desire all share, save Arthur). They must eat each other, eternally, not unlike the ninth circle of Dante's Inferno. Pain, as habit, suggests that it is not the body that counts, *per se*. It is the inverse. It is the habit that counts. Pain is a habit. Representation is a habit. Victoria indicates that in life this repetitive pattern of pain, of representation, is an effect, not a cause. In heaven, the inverse is true. This project proposes that Artaud's so-called Theatre of Cruelty can be

effected by understanding J.L. Austin's theories regarding the performative power of words anew. In other words, this project considers language and the body as interchanging and interchangeable, as they are embodied and enacted in anthropophagical acts.

*Early Morning* suggests that this recoding occurs in a kind of pre-death, accessible *vis-à-vis* cannibalism. In life, after Florence poisons Albert and he returns from the dead, he insists that even though Arthur is second, he ought to have been first, which implies that Arthur did not work hard enough to beat out the dumber George for his rightful position, reinscribing, reiterating Arthur's obligation to succeed, due to his obvious failure in the womb. Now, more than ever, Arthur must salvage the country, the family honor, and now that George is even dumber than before, must serve as usurping, matricidal, fratricidal King. Albert yells:

Kill the Queen. Make yourself King. Let the country live in peace. Let us die in peace.

ARTHUR. George is King!

ALBERT. Kill him too!

ARTHUR. No!

ALBERT. This is why you came here.

ARTHUR. No! It was an accident. We came in a circle—

ALBERT. You came so that I could cut him off! (*George whimpers. Albert comes slowly down from the gravestone as he talks.*)  
(167)

In heaven, it is not chronology that determines rank. In heaven it is the evidence that cannot be seen, the eating and regrowing, that proves, not rank, but existence. George cannot exist with(out) Arthur. This existence depends upon anthropophagic activity. If this action does not occur, then, George feels the representation, the habitual happenings of the body, physically. Even in death, in his spiritual form, the habit returns. What is it about cannibalism that quells his



fear of non-existence? What is it about cannibalism that spurs regrowth instead of termination? In life, one can claim that the lines between object and subject blur when cannibalism occurs. In heaven, how is this possible when there is no body? In *Early Morning*, cannibalism is the economy by which existence persists. Theatre through cannibalism/cannibalism in theatre puts a heaven on earth, so to speak in order to reexamine the relationship between words and the body.

Nowhere does the body show itself as a physical entity than in the beginning of the play. The tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum-like figure(s), brothers Prince Arthur and Prince George, hilariously appear in Scene Two in bed. The stage directions indicate that “*George isn’t seen till he wakes up*” (141). First, Arthur wakes and speaks to his father Albert regarding the details surrounding their planned regicide of Victoria. Then, George, the Prince of Wales, pops up from under the covers, stupidly unaware of their plot. Because they do not get out of bed, it is not until Scene Three that when “*Arthur and George come on [ ] [i]t is seen that they are Siamese twins. Bow*” (143). I write “figure(s)” because the two brothers are one and (not) the same. (How do Siamese twins sit up separately anyway?)

Their relationship is tenuous to say the least. Arthur continuously concerns himself with the impossibilities of marriage. For example, while in bed in Scene Two he states:

I can’t marry! Have you thought of that?

GEORGE. That’s up to you.

ARTHUR (*angrily*). No it isn’t! How could I involve a woman in this unless I was forced to? (*Slight pause.*) When you do marry we must stop quarrelling. She’ll have enough to put up with without—

.....

. . . I’m trapped!  
(142)

It is not just that Arthur's conjoined status with George precludes physical activity for him (although they share the same heart, it is unclear whether or not they possess separate sexual organs), but also that poor George has to do things like greet his future wife, Florence Nightingale, for the first time by reading a note his mother gave to him, "Dear Miss Nightingale, I welcome you to Windsor and hope you will be happy here" (144). Not only does George not think for himself, but Arthur does not even get a note. Arthur is the aside, the parenthesis. The afterbirth. Their father exclaims to Arthur, "You were first in the womb. Your mother screamed and struggled and your brother thrashed his way out in front" (168), which explains why, when Albert pleads for Arthur's help now that Florence has poisoned him, "Arthur, I'm your father. Help me!" (160), Arthur retorts, "You're a liar" (160). Arthur's humiliation stops once George is shot in the face.

The Queen's assassination fails, and when it does, someone injures George in a scuffle. He wakes in Scene Six to the Doctor and Arthur arguing:

DOCTOR. The Prince of Wales is dying.

.....

I shall cut him free.

ARTHUR (*looks at George*). He'll die.

DOCTOR. Yes, I give you my word.

ARTHUR. And I'll live?

DISRAELI. Yes?

*An officer comes in.*

.....

ARTHUR. I won't cut my brother off.

.....

DOCTOR. You're in pain.

ARTHUR. It's gone.

(164, 165)

The Doctor's answer is a confirmation of an uncertain outcome. However, it also becomes an unuttered, simply interrupted, impregnated *sans* birth, response. A silent scream. It is a response that is not a response, and the interruption manifests in the threat of an operation, of a separation, and the apparent lamenting that Arthur exhibits earlier in the play suddenly turns into a rage, as he desperately wishes to nurse his ailing brother back to health.

The once desire for separation becomes the present scapegoat Arthur uses to justify George's continued status as first in line. Arthur must be second. "Look at the signs!" Arthur seems to exclaim. Despite the definitive proof that George is not well and must be sacrificed, triaged, Arthur is not convinced of the Doctor's plan. Despite the pain he denies feeling, Arthur will not let go. Pain, apparently, is one signal, one representing agent that indicates it is time for poor George to go. Even George himself politics for it:

*The Doctor goes out.*

GEORGE (*frightened*). Cut.

ARTHUR. No.

GEORGE. Breadboard.

ARTHUR. Walk.

GEORGE. Knifeboard.

ARTHUR. We'll slip out through the secret passage.

GEORGE. Cut.

ARTHUR (*opens trap*). You'll be all right . . . .

GEORGE (*going down*). Cut . . . Cut . . . Cut.  
(165-66)

Arthur just will not do it. He rejects George's command, despite the fact that George must be obeyed, as he is first in line. The irony in this scene turns to absolute burlesque comedy as George, after dying from a hunger strike, slowly decays and rots from scene to scene, until eventually, he is a mere skeletal prop clinging to Arthur's side. That prop introduces the idea that there is more to the physical than the material body, and further, it reveals that there could be consequences if commandments are not followed, or perhaps, rewards if they are. The command manifests in the dematerializing and then rematerializing and then unmaterializing of the physical body, and there does not appear to be any way "to tap into," or not, the means to command the command. One way or another, it seems, verbal commandments appear to apply to the physical, but not the metaphysical, but in heaven, unspoken commands, only, consummate. The verbal has no agency in heaven. Only the physical-imagined-matters.

Traditionally the metaphysical applies to the spiritual, the non-material; however, in *Early Morning*, Arthur treats George's dead body, that which can be seen, proven, mapped, as something else entirely. It is not simply something that can be cut off; it is more than a part of Arthur. In George's death, an inversion occurs: George becomes more metaphysical and indistinguishable from Arthur, for Arthur, than in life. The closer George is to confirming the physicality of the body in his expiration, the further Arthur goes to deny the spiritual in order to save the physical. "You don't want to die, brother," Arthur seems to say. "The meaning of your life lies here, in the physical world where you can be more than just the Prince of Wales. You are my brother, a part of me, me." Ironically enough, for Arthur, the starving, dying, and then rotting corpse of his brother produces George, as a brother, that is, a spiritual being for whom one must

feel sympathy. It is as if in Arthur's reiteration of the body to the surgeon as that which cannot be lost, in its absence, its presence dominates all the more.

Arthur rescinds his initial wish to physically separate from George, whose presence actually lingers on more presently (metaphysically) in that physicality which cannot, or is not supposed to be denied: George's skeleton. So even though George as subject is dead, as object or prop, he has more power over Arthur (he is more subjected to George) than when he was alive. However, at no time is George as alive (save for being a skeletal prop) as when he reads his mother's note as the Prince of Wales to Florence. He is front and center. He is authoritative. He is important, but it is the Queen, from the side of her son and on the stage, who receives the focus. It is "her" note, or at least, the note she wrote that is being read aloud to Nightingale, which exerts power, not to initiate the wedding between George (not Arthur too?), but between herself and Florence. The subsequent cannibalism that occurs in the second half of the play in heaven retroactively performs upon and unwrites the first half of the play wherein cannibalism of the ephemeral body complicates the relationships between the material and the immaterial codes set up in the first half of the play. Physically speaking, if their speaking renders a kind of doing, it is direct and unrelated to the body, at least, less so than in the actual metaphysical where acting and reading, become interchangeable, where, metaphysically speaking, there is only the (im)material (indistinguishability between them) on stage.

The Queen's words, read center stage, become the focus and the acting agent, in and out of its author's presence. Her words, disembodied and then doubly embodied in George/Arthur, are literally center stage, pulling attention to Victoria, not George. Her words parentheticalize George. Her words paratextualize him as well, as she addendums herself to the physical paratext that is George/Arthur. Her words create an interchangeability that occurs via a simultaneous

process of paratextuality, because there is a kind of excess in these words that eventually, inadvertently effect the lifeless but still conjoined physical body of George.

In the latter half of the play, as George finally eats his own living-dead brother, cannibalism serves on another level as both a metaphor and as an act, for the power of the spoken word shifts to the dismembered body, as author. In life, Arthur is impotent on multiple levels. In death, his disconnected head has the ability to code a new economy: cannibalism, and even though he rejects it at first, he finds middle ground, as it were, by eating (of) himself. His disobedience, his outright defiance of the cannibalism code disrupts the first half of the play. At first, it seems as if cannibalism is a metaphor for politics, or cultural dynamics, etc. The play achieves this understanding by relying on the taboo, the ghost of cannibalism. “I understand that cannibalism wouldn’t normally be a part of heaven. Even if it were, when juxtaposed with the first half of the play, I understand that the first half is just as cannibalistic as the latter. People are just as cannibalistic in life as they are in death.”

In Scene Nineteen, in heaven, Arthur and Florence express their feelings about their predicament, and as they do so, the power of a theatre that recodes its own signs of communication emerges:

ARTHUR. I’m tired.

FLORENCE. (*sits*) Why aren’t you happy?

ARTHUR. I’m in pain.

FLORENCE. I’m sorry, you can’t be. Not in heaven.

ARTHUR. You don’t feel pain.

FLORENCE. Sometimes I’m hungry. That’s all—They ate my arm.  
It didn’t hurt. Eat me. Part of me.

ARTHUR. No.

FLORENCE. You do eat. Sometime's George's pains a bit better.

ARTHUR. I eat myself.

FLORENCE. O.

ARTHUR. When it's too bad, I eat my arm. (He moves the back of his forearm across his mouth and chews.)

FLORENCE. Does it hurt?

ARTHUR. Less than hunger.

.....

My beard grew overnight. The night I ate my father. I ate some of him. I don't know what. When I woke up I was old. My hair was white and I had a beard. It was white whe it came, and wet—I must have been crying. I felt very tired, as if I'd been born with a beard.

.....

Don't eat.

FLORENCE. I—

ARTHUR. Most people die before they reach their teens. Most die when they're still babies or little children . . .

.....

Bodies are supposed to die and souls go on living. That's not true. Souls die first and bodies live. They wander round like ghosts . . . there *must* be peace when you're dead. Only I'm not dead.

(208-209)

Arthur indicates that the body's demise confirms that representation must no longer function as he once knew it. Arthur denies death, in death. On the one hand, pain is a register, a sign that you are alive. On the other, it is, once in heaven, and as Victoria points out earlier, a habit. Habits can be broken, and new habits can be adopted. On the other hand, hunger (which I typically associate with a very specific *kind* of pain) Arthur and Florence separate as autonomous feelings. Florence

tells Arthur of his brother's pain, which abates when, it seems, Arthur eats of human flesh.

"Sometimes George's pain's a bit better," Florence says. Arthur replies, "I eat myself."

Self-eating, though, does not cure George's ailment. Arthur's does. George's is not a satisfactory self-substitute. The body, Arthur's body, does matter; however, because the body cannot have matter in heaven; he cannot be killed. The act of eating will not do it either. It, too, then, must be seen as yet another habit. So how is pain a habit, a representation that can, for all extensive purposes, stop operating, while the act of eating is not, and does? The answer lies in the relationship between the body and the word, i.e., that they are indistinguishable in nature, not in name. This project will treat itself as both a representation and as a textual and physical body in order to complicate and play with the interplay between the two. Cannibalism serves to expose this interplay between the written and spoken word, and further, cannibalism, whether read from the script or experienced in a theatre on stage (albeit with different effects), acts as a command that comes about due to George's words not being followed. The eating in heaven follows. The failure to dismember on earth results in its ephemeral codification, where its consummation is a foregone conclusion. This endless eating of others overpowers the original body, the original body-sign economy. Cannibalism is the most extreme of gestures because it not only overpowers, but in its specter on stage, and on the page, cannibalism offers a means to understand how the theatre works by performing the very paradoxes that make it unique, i.e., absent gestures overwrite and then reconstitute present ones.

### **Preface**

In Chapter One, cannibalism takes the form of absence; it manifests, not in retrospect, but in a retroperformative fashion. Catherine Venable's retelling of how street urchins ripped her cousin, Sebastian, apart and then ate him alive on their summer vacation, cannibalizes him all



over again. Her talking, her words are performative. They perform the act of cannibalism upon Sebastian; they perform Sebastian by reconstituting him as the cannibalized art object that he always wanted to be. His mother, Mrs. Venable, explains that a “poet’s life is his art, and vice versa” (12). Sebastian the immortal poet never published a single word. In fact, he never even composed a single line of verse. The pages in his *Poem of Summer* that Mrs. Venable references repeatedly are blank, a blank-ness with which he wished to be joined somehow in order to become a living work of art, to cheat death by dying before birth. Ironically, through Catherine’s speaking, he gets his wish. Her words do not just recapture an event, but they enact the event upon Sebastian for everyone else. This recapitulating, reconstituting, and retroactive performance of cannibalism renders a very present Sebastian on stage, especially in his absence.

Chapter Two considers the way by which cannibalism in Sarah Kane’s *Blasted* functions via the reading of the play. *Blasted* enacts cannibalism via the script. In the newly added “Author’s Note” in the 2001 edition of the text, which precedes the script, an unnamed author directs that any time a “/” appears in the script, the meaning is that one actor interrupts/overlaps another. None of these marks appear in the script. Not unlike Sebastian’s *Poem of Summer*, the text asks for something to be found that was never there in the first place. Ian’s simulated penetration of the dead baby doubles back onto the un-penetrated text; what is “really” penetrated is not, and what is not “really” penetrated is.

This process of penetration doubling-back in on itself in a consuming fashion, i.e., retroperformativity through parenthetical and paratetextual activities, must be enacted in this study as well in order to more fully examine the ways by which the word on the page performs. . While David Greig’s “Author’s Note,” which precedes Kane’s script, authorizes Kane as author, it simultaneously disconnects Kane from the work and paratextually re-members itself with the

script. Its addition reconstitutes not only *Blasted*'s script, but Greig, as author, and Greig's play *San Diego*. Chapter Three's place, in the middle of the project, serves to enact this kind of interplay between text and text and body and text again by paratextualizing and parenthesizing itself. In other words, the official, 2001 edition of Kane's play must be experienced paratextually, with the Editor's note getting the reconstituting, the eating, the focus of the script; it is in the middle. The reader pays more attention to the asides than to the "main" text. The script of Kane's *Blasted* tears into the Editor's Note. Her Author's Note tears into the Editor's Note. Cannibalism, in the reading, takes on a new hue in this light.

The Editor's Note, which one may infer is by the playwright David Greig,<sup>1</sup> has the ability to enact a critical awareness to a point where it can be "gotten through/over"? Sarah Kane, in an interview she gave to the *Independent* in 1995, expressed shock; she was taken aback "by the baby being stoned" in Edward Bond's *Saved*. She evokes the passive voice, *as if* she was acted upon by an object<sup>2</sup> indirectly; rather than a subject<sup>3</sup> directly, which ensures the subjectivity of the reader (Kane) by maintaining the objecthood of the text (the script<sup>4</sup> for *Saved*), i.e., an entity which indirectly represents, later on, in the future. She was reading the play, not *seeing* it right then. The representation occurs on stage, not on the page.

---

<sup>1</sup> Who knew Kane and who penned the Introduction for the 2001 edition of Kane's work.

<sup>2</sup> part of the sentence

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Please note that this application of the term "script" applies to the written words on the page. This application does not evoke Richard Schechner's use of the term, "script," which is the essence of a text that can be transmitted into new situations. He considers the "theatre" to be an event, specific to a performer's activities, and he considers the "performance" to be "everything" that went into the specific event. See "Drama, Script, Theatre, and Performance." *Drama Review* 17.3 (Sept. 1973): 9.

That indescribable feeling of “having the all-overs,” or the disquiet that accompanies seeing a performance, echoes through Sarah Kane’s reaction to reading *Saved*. Sitting in proximity to (not with)<sup>5</sup> others while a representation transacts upon her in a theatre, while she is “alert but still,”<sup>6</sup> is unnerving in the way that reading *Saved*, in hyper-proximity to oneself (not with)<sup>7</sup> others while a rehearsal,<sup>8</sup> i.e., reading the script for a performance-to-be, is unnerving. In both instances, there is a distancing<sup>9</sup> that occurs, either between the “spectator/performance binary” (Sagnon 124) or the reader/text binary. In the first scenario, there is alienation from yourself and someone sitting next to you, via the actor on stage. In the second scenario, there is alienation within yourself, from yourself, as you read, as you must lose yourself in the process of consuming the work.

The act of the *anthropophagai*, of the human-eater, undergirds this project. Using the figure of the script-ual<sup>10</sup> cannibal, to-be-enacted, this project will show that the gap between representation and the actual expands and contracts; this en-(s)cripting<sup>11</sup> process necessarily conceals that the difference between the two on stage is a matter of degree, at most. Sebastian’s cannibalism reveals the en-(s)cripting processes in the theatre, as well as on the page. His

---

<sup>5</sup> Those who are having a communal, collective experience.

<sup>6</sup> See Eric W. Sagnon’s “Theater Blows [*Coups de theater*]” in *Dismemberment in Drama/Dismemberment of Drama* (2008). Trans. Craig N. Owens.

<sup>7</sup> Alone with oneself and the text.

<sup>8</sup> Borrowing from Roland Barthes’s use of the term, “rehearsal.” See *Image-Music-Text* (1977).

<sup>9</sup> Passive Voice.

<sup>10</sup> The cannibal in the play’s script. The cannibal as taboo.

<sup>11</sup> The play on the terms: “encrypt” (to encode); script (the document used for a play rehearsal); “sript” (key for un/locking encryptions); and, “crypt” (the always-already eternal, living but dead, status of writing).

supposed sacrifice serves as a means to understanding theatre itself to be a cannibalistic enterprise. The tension between the text on the page and the text on the stage is a self-sustaining, self-cannibalizing one, each usurping and reconstituting the other.

Chapter Three examines Laura in David Greig's *San Diego*, who also wishes to pull the veil of representation away. She cuts off bits of her flesh to offer to the character David in order to join with him. Her word, "take ye and eat," and the act of cutting and frying and giving to David (who one hears smack, smack, smacking away) enact J. L. Austin's notion of the "explicit performative": The intonated, commandment is the doing, consummated in the hearing of the smacking. Laura wishes to collapse the distance between herself and David, to transcend self and other. The saying and the doing connect, through the sound of cannibalism. Laura's explicit commands that the character David eat her, consummated in the sound of David's smacking, challenges the Austinian notion of the performative. The saying and the doing depend upon the hearing, which distances the saying from the doing.<sup>12</sup> In order to condense the distance between actuality and representation, the hearing splits the doing in such a way that it cannot be perceived. Derrida denotes that "hearing-oneself-speak,"<sup>13</sup> precludes Laura being both speaker and hearer, both that-to-be-consumed and consumer. She cannot enact transubstantiation with(out) such a gap on stage.

It is the hearing that challenges the ability to be both subject and object, both eaten and eater because the "instant" is not really that at all. In other words, to hear, as a speaker, requires

---

<sup>12</sup> The hiatus must exist as the silently speaking to oneself requires one distance herself from speaker and hearer. In *Languages of the Unsayable*, Derrida indicates that this process is one of negation that denies the self (25).

<sup>13</sup> Found in *Speech and Phenomena*, pp. 69-78. Note Derrida is playing off of Husserl's idea that lived experience (*Erlebnis*) has more to do with the interior than the exterior. Derrida wishes to add exterior "detours" to the process.

that one distance oneself from oneself in order to be both. Laura is both, though. Shoshana Felman's *The Scandal of the Speaking Body* examines *Don Juan* via Austin and suggests that:

speaking bodies . . . commit literary speech acts . . . speech always brings the body—the unconscious into play . . . from the standpoint of other characters in the play . . . by the constancy of God himself, *by the voice of Heaven*—a promise . . . is only the promise of language to refer, to make sense, to ensure a meaning that will be lasting, constant, constative [as opposed to performative] . . . to be secluded . . . refuses . . . to be seduced by language, to believe in the promise of language. (21)

Cannibalism buries this promise in that gap between Laura and David. Cannibalism in theatre, then, proves to be more than just a metaphor as it also proves that there is more to materiality than the material. Sebastian not only becomes his own material figure through cannibalism; the (dis)embodied voice transubstantiates Sebastian. Laura's voice enacts, and David's sound consummates the cannibalism, i.e., the sound reconstitutes Laura *au sein la chair de la chair de* David.

Chapter 4 examines how in Fernando Arrabal's *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*, nothing works for the interloping Emperor, who has manifested, he says, in order to educate and civilize and give purpose to the beast he labels the Architect. Despite the Emperor's best efforts to be someone else, nothing works. Cross-dressing, role-playing, and acts of naming do not propel the Emperor and the Architect into a transubstantiated relationship. In the last line of the play, the Emperor commands the Architect to eat him. The Austinian command is problematized, as the saying gets disconnected from the doing. Only the after-effects present themselves, as the Architect suckles the last morsels of flesh from the Emperor's bones, from an Emperor who reappears in the guise of the Architect, who has just cannibalized the Emperor.

This project asks how cannibalism might challenge the Austrian notion of the performative via cannibalism (paratextual and parenthetical activities) in order to fulfill Artaud's wish for a new kind of theatre. The figure of the cannibal (dis)embodies the theatrical exchange between inside and outside. Sebastian, in Tennessee Williams's *Suddenly, Last Summer*, serves as such an example. He hopes to collapse the distance between his art and himself, between object and subject, so too does this project attempt to put the theatre of the page and the stage into simultaneous interplay to such a degree that the difference between the two is one of degree.

**Chapter 1**  
**Tennessee Williams' *Suddenly, Last Summer*:**  
**(re)Inscribing the Body via Cannibalism**

**Part I-Cannibalism Off Stage and On the Page**

Art is not the imitation of life, but life is the imitation of a transcendental principle which art puts us into communication with once again.

*Antonin Artaud from Complete Works (1970)*

MRS. VENABLE. A poet's life is his work and his work is his life.

*(from Suddenly, Last Summer, 12)*

In Tennessee Williams' play *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1958), an old-money, New Orleans family, the Venables, face a crisis that threatens to destroy their good name: What happened to poor Sebastian last summer? On vacation with his cousin, Catherine, in Spain's seaside resort town, Cabeza de Lobo, Sebastian mysteriously dies. When the play opens, Mrs. Venable contends that there is something not quite right with Catherine's story. The audience does not yet know what this is, and it is up to Dr. Cukrowicz,<sup>14</sup> a hard-up psychiatrist in the area who practices lobotomies at nearby Lion's View Psychiatric hospital, to discover the truth. By the end, the good doctor's drugged patient reveals that Sebastian had been ripped asunder and, in all probability, partially consumed by teenage boys living on the streets. Catherine asserts that they looked so hungry; there were "bands of homeless young [boys] that lived on the free beach like scavenger dogs, hungry children . . . this you won't believe, nobody has believed it, nobody *could* believe it, and I don't blame them!—They had *devoured* parts of him" (81, 92).

Catherine's stories about Sebastian threaten his legacy.

For Sebastian's mother, Mrs. Venable, the representation of him as a posthumous poet-god in the play is what matters; and, the stories her niece, Catherine, has been telling threaten

---

<sup>14</sup> Pronounced *su-kre-it*, the Polish word for "sugar" or "sugarman."

that. Catherine claims street urchins “devoured parts of him.” For this reason, Catherine must be made to stop telling. If she does not, she will be declared insane. Mrs. Venable has a doctor consider the possibility of giving her a lobotomy. The problem is not that Catherine does or does not tell the truth; her babbling about Sebastian’s cannibalism reveals the nature of the theatre itself to be cannibalistic.

Piece by piece, Catherine puts Sebastian back together again; she re-members him. He becomes more present in the play than the other characters, and in this way, he is more material in his absence than any of them. At the end of the play Catherine’s talking moves beyond the earlier lyrical symbolism Mrs. Venable uses; Catherine’s talking transforms, transubstantiates Sebastian. The material is no more or less real than something that is represented. Thus, we cannibalize Sebastian, after the play is over, by participating in the re-membering ourselves. Catherine spends a great deal of time on the minute details of their vacation. The more specific the event, the more abstract the language to enact it. Sebastian becomes an abstraction, for example, when Catherine moves from the materiality of his suit to his ephemeral, always-present spirit that has been merged with the landscape, which includes the boys who ate him, the town where the boys ate him, Mrs. Venable’s salon, and the location of the text, either on stage or on the page:

[I]t was one of those white blazing days in Cabeza de Lobo, not a blazing hot *blue* one but a blazing hot *white* one . . . Sebastian was as white as the weather. He had on a spotless white silk Shantung suit and a white silk tie and a white panama and white shoes, white—white lizard skin-pumps! He . . . kept touching his face and his throat . . . with a white silk handkerchief and popping little white pills in his mouth . . .

*(During the monologue the lights have changed, the surrounding area has dimmed out and a hot white spot is focused on Catherine.)*



He is a white hot blur. Despite the details of his handkerchief or his lizard skin-pumps or his panama hat, the overriding image is that of whiteness. Thus, all that one is able to focus upon is the words. What is seen is not what is seen. These words call Sebastian forth and transform him into a poet-god, whose worshippers include the street urchins, everyone in the play, and the consumers of the play. Pieces of Sebastian get reconstituted in this act of worship. Street urchins are no longer street urchins; they are “featherless little black sparrows” who are also part of Sebastian. The outside is now inside. Noises and music even eat:

It was all white outside. White hot, a blazing white hot, hot blazing white . . . It looked as if . . . a huge white bone had caught on fire in the sky and blazed so bright it was white and turned the sky an everything under the sky white with it! . . . [F]eatherless little black sparrows . . . Torn or cut parts of him away with their . . . jagged tin cans they made [oompa-oompa] music with . . . [the—following band . . .] had torn bits of him away and stuffed them into those gobbling fierce little empty black mouths of theirs. There wasn't a sound any more, there was nothing to be seen of Sebastian, what was left of him, that looked like a big white-paper-wrapped bunch of red roses had been torn, thrown, crushed!—against that blazing white wall . . . (89, 92)

The play forces a shift from inside to outside (Catherine's talking), from outside to inside (Sebastian inside of those urchins). The play reveals the nothing that is always-already represented in theatre is something that eats itself.

How do intimations of cannibalism in theatre serve to apprehend the essence of theatre as cannibalism? In “The Disembodied Voice,” Judith Roof notes how voices off stage “guarantee[] the self-contradictory status of the theatre as that which both is and never was. The disembodied voice on stage is an interloper that assures us that the nothing there . . . has never been there and never will be . . .” (23). Sebastian, too, is both and never was. His re-membling on stage is a performance in itself. At the heart of that performance is Catherine's disembodied voice; she is outside of herself as she goes over her story, which has clearly been rehearsed before, and is

being performed, yet again, one more time. The voice that is doing the speaking is in question. Just because she seems to be talking, some other force within must be at the helm.

If she is not taking drugs to give her these cannibalistic illusions, then perhaps she should be taking something. Thus, the Doctor gives her a little assistance to get the truth out, even if the help has nothing to do with her state of mind. Eventually, she is under the influence of a powerful medication, which possibly influences her behavior. She claims that she has “to wait now and then till it gets clearer. Under the drug it has to be a vision, or nothing comes . . .” (85). The vision of Sebastian’s cannibalism is anything but visible. As we hear Sebastian’s coming together and out of her, the doctor attempts to stop it. He hopes to force the truth out of her, which cannot possibly be that Sebastian was eaten alive. “I’ll have to tell Aunt Violet what happened” (44), Catherine explains to her mother and brother, regardless of how her story threatens Mrs. Holly’s and George’s hopes to cash in on Sebastian’s will, “*To each of us, fifty grand, each!—AFTER! TAXES!—GET IT?*” (George, 45). In a way, Mrs. Holly and George cash in on cannibalism as well; through Catherine’s hopeful adjustments to her tale, they might be able to nibble on Mrs. Venable. Cannibalism, though, precludes the dispensation of their money, as Catherine’s story consumes Mrs. Venable’s.

As an interloper, that disembodied, drugged voice evokes Sebastian in both a holistic and holy way. We receive the whole story, complete with holes in him. He is holy because cannibalism has made him so. The process of the penetration of his flesh, its consumption, reconstitution, and undoing and then Catherine’s redoing of that process via telling, supplies the missing pieces of the original text of her story. The talking is supposed to cure her of her delusional fantasy that Sebastian was eaten alive. Instead, as she narrates cannibalism, the play ends with the doctor’s proclamation that her story *might* be true, rather than building toward

climax and revelation. The possibility still remains that she might be lobotomized, unless the talking stops.

The telling materializes Sebastian (or at least a version of Sebastian) on stage, which reveals “the presence of something that stands for something that was never there” (Roof 23). The “nothing” that was never there in the first place is the art/ist it/himself. Catherine’s telling constitutes an interference that re-presents what was never there while becoming itself the focus of the play. Catherine’s is an embodied voice that disassociates itself from its source. Her voice itself becomes a self-cannibalizing material figure in the play. As her recounting of the cannibalistic scene violates, penetrates, and represents Sebastian, each time the scene is retold, he is told, the scene—and Sebastian himself—are interrupted. Dr. Cuckoricz interrupts Catherine. Mrs. Venable interrupts Catherine. Catherine’s mother and brother interrupt her. Catherine interrupts Catherine. After each interruption of Catherine’s representation, Sebastian rematerializes. The telling resumes. Each time, the violence Catherine does to him via her representation of his cannibalization tears him apart to be consumed, only to be reconstituted to start all over again.

As that which must be repeatedly recommenced, Sebastian, who desired “to live his art,” as Mrs. Venable exclaims, wished to be his own art. Becoming art will make him godlike, capable of living forever, in the (telling of the) writing (that always/never exists/ed). The writing becomes the Sebastian who has been consumed. The writing becomes him; he becomes the writing. His *Poem of Summer*, though, is blank. There are no composed lines of poetry. The pages are blank. That Sebastian conflates himself with his work not only mirrors what happened to him, it also re-enacts what happened to him. Catherine’s babbling about Sebastian’s

cannibalization transubstantiates Sebastian so that he might be repeatedly re-cannibalized.

Sebastian's art, then, must itself be absent; to be his art, Sebastian must be consumed.

Thus, the absence of signifiers within this work parallel the absence of his body's signification, creating a new Sign that reveals the identity of form and content as well as the insight that form and content are inherently interchangeable. Like an Ourobouros, they eat one another.

In the first scene of the play, Mrs. Venable has brought the doctor in with the expectation that he perform the lobotomizing procedure on Catherine, regardless of whether or not her story is true. Catherine's mode of revealing Sebastian's absent writing unmoors Mrs. Venable's plans to secure her own and Sebastian's legacies as their bodies and souls conjoin. . Catherine's telling undermines Mrs. Venable's plans to achieve transubstantiation herself by joining with Sebastian as the transubstantiated artist. Mrs. Venable produces a ritualized, rehearsed and mythologizing tale to convince the Doctor of her comm-union with Sebastian, as she informs the Doctor that when they are on vacation, "We were a famous couple. People didn't speak of Sebastian and his mother or Mrs. Venable and her son, they said 'Sebastian and Violet, Violet and Sebastian are staying at the Ritz in Madrid. Sebastian and Violet, Violet and Sebastian have taken a house at Biarritz for the season'" (25). Her attempts to convince the doctor of their unity are not succeeding.

Dr. Cukrowicz informs Mrs. Venable that even though performing lobotomies "pacifies" (30) the patients, which makes him "[feel] proud" (19), "[t]here is a great deal of risk in my operation . . . the person will always be limited afterwards . . . I can't guarantee that a lobotomy would stop her—*babbling!!* (29, 30). Mrs. Venable calmly replies, "That may be, maybe not, but after the operation, who would *believe* her, Doctor?" (30) just as long as people believe she is insane, Sebastian's death, in all its inevitability, can be redefined, traversed, and transcended,

Catherine's insane talking re-codifies death through the p/stage. Cannibalism re-codifies death from something that can be verified by the body to something that shows the body's potential in its reconstitution.

In *The Theatre and Its Double* Antonin Artaud suggests that by de-emphasizing dialogue, life and art in the theatre might meld. In his analysis of Artaud's theories regarding the theatre, Derrida comments that :

Artaud is the embodiment of both an aggressive and repairing gesture . . . identifying life with art . . . . Theatricality must traverse and restore "existence" and "flesh" . . . Thus, whatever can be said of the body can be said of the theatre. Rebirth . . . occurs through a kind of reduction of organs. But this redemption permits the access to a life before birth and after death ( . . . through dying/I have finally achieved real immortality," p. 110), and not to a death before birth and after life. (WD, "Theatre of Cruelty: The Closure of Representation," 232)

Cannibalism is a ritualistic version of the reduction of organs that enables rebirth and redemption. The trope of cannibalism in Williams' play is an aggressive and repairing gesture, and as such the evocation of cannibalism raises questions about how art transforms the human body in theatre in so far as Artaud urges, "Whatever can be said of the body can be said of the theatre." If art is the means by which Sebastian can create a life before death and restore the flesh and existence to a state of redemption, what happens when the art is the body that homeless boys ate? Is it in that eating that the art is finally made? Is the art produced and enacted in Catherine's recounting of the scene? Where does the self-perpetuating cannibalism of Sebastian end? The transubstantiation of the art from medium to medium ,(i.e., Catherine's retelling), reduces organs, enables rebirth, enables redemption.

After her injection, Catherine in her recounting begins to talk of her and Sebastian's trip together. The interruptions are significant:

CATHERINE. . . . [S]uddenly, last summer . . .

DOCTOR. Go on.

CATHERINE. The Blue Jay Notebook!

.....

MRS. VENABLE. I know what she means . . . Sebastian used [it] for . . . his  
"Poem of Summer." It went with him everywhere . . . in his jacket  
pocket, even his dinner jacket.

.....

DOCTOR. I don't quite get the connection between . . . clothes . . . and the  
Blue Jay notebook.

MRS. VENABLE. I HAVE IT! . . .

DOCTOR. With all these interruptions it's going to be awfully hard  
to— (74, 75)

With the loss of the organs, the transformation of the human body is not just a reduction, but a reduction through cannibalization—through the (dis)embodying process of Catherine's telling itself. The retelling reduces the body to the writing, George's clothes no longer serve as Sebastian's metaphor because Sebastian himself is being transubstantiated. To stop this process (perhaps to reserve it for herself), Mrs. Venable attempts to project Sebastian onto others by providing her own ritualistic speeches, Christian allegories, and Darwinian theories of evolution to Dr. Sugar, her new sounding-board. Metonymic objects, such as his old clothes, can no longer be correlated with Sebastian. Mrs. Venable chastises George, "I see that he had the natural tact and good taste to come here this afternoon outfitted from head to foot in clothes that belonged to my son!" (51) The reminder only distances her from, rather than bringing her closer to Sebastian

because of the remainders (“what was left of him”)<sup>15</sup> that are left over after Catherine’s telling. Catherine is able to recombine the detached “organ” of the notebook with Sebastian’s organs, and rather than stopping her, Mrs. Venable assists with the reconstitution, that is, Sebastian’s cannibalization, with her interruptions. In her last line in the play, Mrs. Venable gasps, “*Lion’s View! State Asylum, cut this hideous story out of her brain!*” (93). Even in her material intervention, not only with the babbling potentially not stopping, but the babbling will, outside of Catherine’s own words, even after her words have ceased being heard, continually cannibalize and transubstantiate Sebastian.

Catherine tears the inner and outer organs, i.e., his poems that serve as signposts for Sebastian, inside-out. Mrs. Venable claims that she and Sebastian “had an agreement between [them], a sort of . . . covenant between us . . . I’d reach across a table and touch his hands and say not a word, just look . . . until his hands stopped shaking and his eyes looked out, not in, and in the morning, the poem would be continued” (76). Catherine changes this arrangement or holy contract between Mrs. Venable and Sebastian; she cuts “that string of pearls that old mothers hold their sons by like a—sort of a—sort of—*umbilical cord*” (77). Curiously, Catherine evokes the material, anatomical umbilical cord as a metaphor to describe Mrs. Venable’s hold on Sebastian. The poem is the link between Sebastian and Mrs. Venable; yet, the pages upon which the poem exists are blank, as Catherine’s telling threatens to expose, which, ironically enough, Mrs. Venable exposes herself. Mrs. Venable protests, “. . . I want you to see [the Blue Jay notebook]. Here it is, here! [*She holds up a notebook and leafs swiftly through the pages.*] Title? “*Poem of Summer,*” . . . After that: *what? Blank pages, blank pages, nothing but nothing!*” (75).

---

<sup>15</sup> Catherine, 92.

Catherine makes Mrs. Venable the interloper, an umbilical cord that remains after the birth, connecting nothing to nothing else. The poem, however, continues because Sebastian's absent rhetorical signifiers look in, not out. Or, they are inside, rather than outside. The reduction and redemption of the lines of poetry, his organs, can be understood as re-membering something that never existed in the first place: his work of art/him as poet, which is constantly dismembering the re-membering that Catherine is doing through her talking. He exists more in his absence.

Catherine is clearly aware she is being watched in his absence; she has been through interrogations before. It is a performance that she consciously and conscientiously attempts to effect. After the Doctor give her a shot she does not feel dizzy, she performs her dizziness:

DOCTOR. Stand up.

*[She holds him tight against her.]*

CATHERINE. How funny! Now I can! Oh, I do feel dizzy! Help me, I'm-

*[He rushes to support her.]*

-about to fall over . . . .

*[He holds her. She looks out vaguely toward the brilliant, steaming garden. Looks back at him. Suddenly sways toward him, against him.]*

DOCTOR. You see, you lost your balance.

CATHERINE. No I didn't. I did what I wanted to do without you telling me to.  
(70-71)

This layer of her performance gives the Doctor his cues. He needs it in order to continue on with his dissection of her brain, first, psychoanalytically, and second, surgically. Her telling in the end precludes any of the instructions, what Catherine calls a command, i.e., to be told, he gives her. His telling interrupts her performance which allows for the transubstantiating telling that reflects



on Sebastian's cannibalization while the talking itself gets cannibalized. The talking is a scalpel, more blunt and more effective than any knife the Doctor might use.

Thus, each time Catherine is interrupted, the re-memberment of Sebastian occurs. Organs get reduced and redeemed, and in an allegorical sense, once the Doctor takes a bite of Catherine's talking, once he bites, once he starts to believe her performance is a result of drugs or trauma, he believes he can cure her; he believes he can solve these hysterical symptoms. The further he pushes, cutting into her telling, the more he enables her telling to effect an always-already cannibalized Sebastian. The Doctor cannibalizes Sebastian too, and, Catherine's interruptions destroy earlier manifestations of Sebastian/*Poem of Summer*. Even though Mrs. Venable does not know it, she assists in the cannibalization, "*Blank pages, blank pages, nothing but nothing*" (75). Interruptions destroy the old Sebastian in lieu of the new. Mrs. Venable's fear is that the new, cannibalized Sebastian signifies nothing at all. Or, at least the wrong something.

Roof indicates, theatre reveals that there was "nothing" there to begin with; this nothing is an act produced in and by interrupting the consumption of the telling, of the eating of Sebastian. The constant need to reinvoke the nothing, and reinitiate the cannibalism enacts the conflation of both absent body and absent art as they continually become present. The pages are blank; the present absence of there being any writing in the text emphasizes Catherine's telling and re-membering of Sebastian. The Doctor loses his patience with all of the interruptions, but not his own.

The Doctor, too, interrupts . . . the interruptions: "What's that got to do with—" (75); "These interruptions—" (76); "Please!" (77); "You musn't interrupt her" (79) Either he is a lousy doctor, or he has no real intention of stopping Mrs. Venable's repeated asides, which attempt to complete Catherine's babbling. When the Doctor asks what the blank pages have to do with

Sebastian's clothes, and further, with anything at all, Mrs. Venable responds it has everything to do with "[h]is destruction"(75) because a "poet's vocation is something that rests on something as thin and fine as the web of a spider, Doctor. That's all that holds him over!—out of destruction. . . . Few, very few are able to do it alone! Great help is needed! I *did* give it! She *didn't*" (76). Each time Mrs. Venable interrupts Catherine, a ritualized, repetitive incantation occurs. Catherine begins to repeat the phrase, "Suddenly, Last Summer" (a total of four times during the climax of the interrogation), over and over again. Each time signals her having been reset by the interruptions, and each interruption tears into Sebastian's art, his flesh, and with each repetition, the form of Sebastian morphs and transforms. Even the Doctor cannot help himself to a little nibble:

CATHERINE. *[quoting Sebastian]* [H]e said: "Don't look at those little monsters. Beggars are a social disease in this country. If you look at them, you get sick of the country, it spoils the whole country for you . . ."

DOCTOR. Go on.

CATHERINE. I'm going on . . .  
(84)

The difference between the telling of what happened and whatever representations of Sebastian manifested beforehand overlap, are interrupted, and are persistently consumed.

As the Doctor and Mrs. Venable continue interrupting, the dialogue becomes cacophonous, not unlike the jungle noises which proliferate in the play. The stage directions indicate that the interrogation shall be done with so much rapidity that interrupting turns into overlapping: "*(The following ten speeches are said very rapidly, overlapping)*" (76). This effect recurs in moments in which Sebastian explicitly serves as a wafer--as the sacrificial body that will seal communion and community, as, for example, when Catherine begins to get to the end of her telling:

CATHERINE. The, the the!—band of children began to—serenade us . . .

DOCTOR. Do what?

CATHERINE. Play for us! On instruments! Make music!—if you could call it music . . .

.....

. . . they would come darting up to the barbed wire fence as if blown there by the wind, the hot white wind from the sea, all crying out, “*Pan, pan, pan!*”

DOCTOR. What’s *pan*?

CATHERINE. The word for bread, and they made gobbling noises with their little black mouths, stuffing their little black fists to their mouths and making those gobbling noises, with frightful grins!  
(85, 84)

The word for bread is “Sebastian, Sebastian, Sebastian!” The telling begins to shift out of representation to become an evocation of transubstantiation, “Gobble, Gobble,” but thanks to the Doctor’s interruption, Catherine does not evoke something that cannot be represented. The Doctor’s interruption does that for her, the interruption performing the presence that recounting can only imply. Making sure to emphasize the act of representation via the most obvious of unmasking agents: translation, the Doctor hopes to assure himself that what she means is what happened: What the beggars said, how they behaved; what the color of their lips were. What does “pan” mean?

There is safety in surgery as much as there is “safe surgery” (per the Doctor’s assurances). THE definitive answer lies in the body, that is simply real; it is not a representing agent, *per se*. And yet Sebastian’s absent body re-presents the entire saga of life/death/rebirth. Catherine insists her telling is a story of the times. She means the story is a metaphor or is indicative of the times: We eat each other. However, the act of speaking, also, is an e/inaction

for our times as well. Catherine makes this cannibalistic claim in order to avoid the material fate of her cousin, being reconstituted inside a bunch of teenage boys. This is why she repeatedly uses biological metaphors to make her claim about the existential dilemma embodied (but really dis-embodied) that is Sebastian; she cannot deal with what “really” happened unless she gives as many details as she possibly can about his body being torn apart and eaten. It is the metaphysical, not the physical, that she fears. She exclaims, for example, “Yes! Yes, something had broken, that string of pearls that old mothers hold their sons by like a—sort of a—sort of—*umbilical cord, long—after . . .*” (77). The emphasis on the biology is to bring forth a more “significant” (other than) meaning for Sebastian, which must come hurriedly, before he meets his fate all over again. “Access to a life before birth and after death . . . and not to a death before birth and after life” (Derrida) occurs cannibalistically in so far as cannibalism joins the physical with the symbolic.

Sebastian is redeemed from theology, only to enact his own kind of redemption. What he redeems is the theatre itself. Derrida claims that through Artaud, we might do away with the theological servitude of the stage:

The stage is theological for as long as it is dominated by speech, by a will to speech. (235)

Cannibalism’s ability to combine the symbolic and the physical thwarts the will to speak, thwarts the reader’s will to speak, the title of this project “out loud,” for example. Catherine’s will to speak is enabled; it is able to manifest, to transubstantiate body and existence from the past to the present, from physical being to story, from attempt to art, from being to memory. These manifestations and the will to transcend through transformation is exactly what Mrs. Venable is after: to join with the art that is Sebastian and vice versa. She desires a kind of immortality, for both her and her son. The threat of death is alleviated through the imaginary joinder of

anthropophagy. Ironically, then, the matriarch's attempts to stem the threat of permanent and meaningless death provides the means for Sebastian's life before death. Stopping the dissemination of Catherine's "babbling" might just save the mythical status of Sebastian Venable, the artist, who wanted to live his art, to be his art. Mrs. Venable's insistence that "[a] poet's life is his work and his work is his life" (12) manifests in Catherine's talking, not hers. Mrs. Venable delays the potential of the transubstantiated, sacrificed Sebastian to exist. Eventually, Catherine's performance--her interrupted babbling--wins out by exciting the processes of signification to such a degree that, as the good Doctor exclaims at the end of the play, "I think we ought at least to consider the possibility that the girl's story could be true . . ." (93). The truth is in the telling; the truth is that theatre is a cannibal; in eating what was never there it produces what Artaud may have been after in his Theatre of Cruelty, which can be seen as an artistic expression that is as far away from representation as it can be, or at least, uses different kinds of representation in performances that are *not* speaking. Perhaps we might join with the art too.

Despite whatever assurances Mrs. Holly, Catherine's mother, gives that "nobody, absolutely nobody in the city, knows a thing about what you [Catherine] been through. Have they George? Not a thing. Not a soul even knows that you've come back from Europe" (60), she cannot face the truth that meaning consumes—eats—itself. Get her to stop that yaking, or we will have to cut out her brain. Ironically, Mrs. Venable's intervention with Dr. Sugar's safer surgery puts an end to the psycho-babble, offering the material scalpel to the material brain, for in theoretical terms, psychoanalysis (an interrogation as intervention) should preclude the lobotomy (an intervention as the Final Interrogation, "when the treatments fail"<sup>16</sup>), and, most

---

<sup>16</sup> Mrs. Venable, *Suddenly, Last Summer*, p. 55.

certainly, the lobotomy precludes any idealistic hopes of getting to the bottom of things: Where is Sebastian? (Psst...he's in/outside you).

Once the Doctor invades Catherine's material body, in theory, the talking, the representing will dissipate. The material is the final point of intervention. Despite Catherine's insistence throughout the play, "I still think I'm sane!" (62), everyone else never speaks directly about the issue of her sanity. The Doctor, for example, responds to her claim, "You think [Mrs. Venable] . . . had a stroke?" (62). Her mother, Mrs. Holly, suggests that Catherine think about the real truth to her story, which is not the "fantastic story" (Mrs. Holly, 44) she (Catherine) has been telling, which reveals that there is not a difference between the material and the representation. The Doctor believes that psychoanalysis, practiced as a talking to/through trauma, may not take care of the problem. Attack the body instead. His continual doubt in his own abilities reveals in this moment his (perhaps every character's) need to construct and maintain the actual/representational binary by relying more heavily on the sureties of the body instead of the methodologies of psychoanalysis. In the excesses of the body's cannibalization, the revelation and ultimate redemption is that there is no body.<sup>17</sup> What is in a body? What embodies the body, exactly? And, how does that relate to a new kind of cannibalistic theatre?

Derrida claims that Artaud embodies violence *and* the means to repair that violence. Sebastian (dis)embodies violence and the means to reconstitute that violence. The violence off stage gets reconstituted via Sebastian's cannibalization. Through his having been cannibalized, through his continuously being cannibalized through the telling, and then, through the body that is the play's telling of Catherine's telling, under duress, is an encrypting process that eats itself, (un)raveling as it is being told. No one can read anyone else. Their bodies are unreadable,

---

<sup>17</sup> -"Who hurts you?" -"Nobody."

unspeakable in the cannibalistic chaos that is the interrogation. Their bodies are so unreadable, unspeakable that the Doctor insists she continue her tale so that they all might be marked and washed anew in the blood of the sacrificial lamb, Sebastian. Doctor Sugar administers the solution: Give her an injection.

The Doctor hopes to tease the god-poet forth and out, but he is not confident. Catherine's talking, though, does this very thing. Through Sebastian's re-membering, she exposes the seams/seems of theatre. Sebastian's persistently transubstantiated body/art redeems the play and the theatre itself from conventional, ritual, material routines associated with the stage; the mythical figure of Sebastian brings the material and the abstract together in a transubstantiated moment. Neither the material surgery, nor the abstract, talking cure, brings Sebastian forth. Neither the Doctor's cold, clinical tonality (emphasis on the real, the material) at the end of the play, nor Mrs. Venable's magical incantations at the beginning (emphasis on the ephemeral, the mythical) prove successful. However, the structure of the play, bracketed on either end with the magical and the material, with Catherine-Sebastian/art in the middle, enacts a condensation towards the middle that makes Sebastian's image and aura present and palpable, present temporality in talking repetitively about him. Stories about cannibalism become a cannibalism of the stories as the stuff of the stage; this stuff is the art of a consistent deferral of art as art itself. Catherine explains that she "tried to save [Sebastian from] . . . Completing—a sort of!—*image!*—he had of himself as a sort of!—*sacrifice* to a!—*terrible* sort of a—"; "—God?" the Doctor asks (64). His sacrifice is made possible through this moment.

His absence, then, is presence for her. Likewise, even for Mrs. Venable, her focus on the various elements of the garden, like the Venus fly trap, become a metaphor for Sebastian, as a predator, as a meticulous man, as a man terrified of not having a resonance or meaning outside of

himself. To be living art, even before/after death, the outside must be made inside for Sebastian. And, *vice versa*. Representation can be eschewed only if it is excited and proliferated. When this occurs, transubstantiation can occur: the image becomes the act; representation becomes performance; performance becomes performative.

Catherine feels the additional burden of her mother and brother pressuring her to change whatever tale she has relayed before the play begins, as they stand to lose whatever inheritance Mrs. Venable might decide to bestow upon them, which, does not seem too promising anyway, as Catherine's brother decides to appear in Sebastian's old clothes the day this all takes place, a clear embodiment of their tackiness, a false embodiment of Sebastian's legacy for Mrs. Venable, yet another threat, another reincarnation. Everyone represents Sebastian, projecting him onto items, people, and even states of age and sexuality. Sebastian's ghost gives Mrs. Venable a lover's mark, rather than a mother's. Sebastian's ghost can give Catherine relief from his being eaten alive. Perhaps he might let her know it was part of his plan, and thus, she is expunged from any guilt and subsequent horror that she is feeling.

This specter of Sebastian does not give either character what she is after, however. Mrs. Venable's lyrical speaking about Venus fly traps and baby turtles being devoured by birds while she and Sebastian are on a trip to Dr. Sugar is an attempt to project Sebastian onto Sugar. He becomes a sugar-substitute for the godlike Sebastian, but his mother is unable to recapture his essence, even by recalling what her son saw on an earlier summer trip, i.e., birds eating poor helpless baby turtles which allowed him to see God. Mrs. Venable recollects:

[Sebastian] was looking for God . . . He spent that whole blazing equatorial day in the crow's-nest of the schooner watching this thing on the beach till it was too dark to see it, and when he came down the rigging he said "Well, now I've seen Him!," and he meant God. (19)



Whatever Sebastian's essence is, it is doomed to repeated evocation and cannibalization. It cannot be surmised because it is constantly in the process of being reconstituted. Mrs. Venable indicates that for Sebastien seeing the frenzied consumption of the hundreds of baby sea turtles by birds on the beach in the Encantadas was like "seeing God": These parallel consumptions call attention to the ritual character of the play itself.<sup>18</sup>

Sugar serves as Sebastian's substitute for both Catherine (she exclaims they look alike and then kisses the Doctor) and Mrs. Venable (she suggests the Doctor reminds her of him). Projecting Sebastian onto Sugar is an art project of sorts and parallels Sebastian's own activities, as he sublimated his activities into "art" and his art into life. This process of sublimation becomes self-conscious during Sugar's interrogation of Catherine. As he allows Mrs. Venable to take him for her son, he also allows Catherine to see him in a similar light. She obliges him. Presumably, he does this in order to get to the truth about Sebastian. Although rupturing the delusions of the delusional may also be a form of cannibalism, in this play such activity becomes an antidote to the delusion of cannibalism itself. The talking cure must be administered painstakingly, meticulously, ritualistically. Thus, Catherine, too, transfers Sebastian onto Sugar,

---

<sup>18</sup> This meta-textuality not only evokes the sexual repression and perversion that underlies the play, but its own legacy to other acts of cannibalism. Scholars such as Janice Segal suggest that Euripides' *The Bacchae* and Williams's *Suddenly, Last Summer* have as much to do with the object of Sebastian or Pentheus (or not) as with the subject of their memories and legacies. She purports, "*Suddenly Last Summer* resonates strongly with many of the themes and plot details of Euripides' *Bacchae*. Much of the action in both plays turns on the consequences of a perverse sexuality born of repression (manifested among other ways as a disturbing sexual connection between mother and son). Other shared themes include the son's search for a god he sees as a Destroyer, the irresistible pull of eros, the consequences of the psychological fragmentation of an individual, the struggle between those who seek to reveal truth and those who are determined to conceal it, and the participation of a mother in the destruction of her own child" (538).

and this transference enables Sugar to discover the details of Catherine's story, i.e., of Sebastian's life before birth, his reconstitution, his redemption.

The ritual of the talking cure and its transferences produces a tension between the ostensible historical facts of the event and their likelihood or perhaps even impossibility. The question is not whether or not the cannibalism actually happened, but how stories become credible. This tension between belief in one kind of representation (Sebastian is a gentleman, a poet, a heterosexual) over another (Sebastian is a pimp, a work of art, a homosexual) is resolved by the transubstantiation of Sebastian—by his turning from memory into myth into the ritual of that myth's perpetual retelling.

Mrs. Venable's hope to produce a myth that allows her to achieve immortality cannot succeed because she cannot stop the dis/re-memberment of Sebastian coming out of Catherine's mouth, coming out of Sebastian's mouth (she quotes him repeatedly). Mrs. Venable exclaims, "Most people's lives—what are they but trails of debris, each day more debris, more debris, long, long trails of debris with nothing to clean it all up but, finally, death" (26), but not his life, and not her life, not their life. However, even Mrs. Venable cannot escape the debris of her own life, as it is piled up upon her in the wake of Catherine's talking.

The tour Mrs. Venable gives the Doctor of Sebastian's garden in her Garden District home is the beginning of her attempt to transcend this debris of her own life that has been piling up. She sets the garden as the stage by which her own talking to the Doctor will allow her to conjoin with her son. This attempt fails, and it reveals that one of Sebastian's foremost preoccupations with the Venus flytrap within his garden was a first step. The flytrap foreshadows the act of cannibalization, after-the-fact. Opening the play, she states:

Yes, this was Sebastian's garden. The Latin names of the plant were printed on tags attached to them but the print's fading out . . . some of the rarest plants, such

as the Venus flytrap—you know what this is Doctor? The Venus flytrap? . . . [I]t feeds on insects. It has to be kept under glass from early fall to late spring . . .

DOCTOR: It's like a well-groomed jungle . . .

MRS. VENABLE: That's how he meant it to be, nothing was accidental, everything was planned and designed in Sebastian's life and his—work! . . . his *life* was his occupation.

DOCTOR. I see.

MRS. VENABLE. No, you *don't* see, yet, before I'm through, you will.—Sebastian was a poet! That's what I meant when I said his life was his work because the work of a poet is the life of a poet—and vice versa, the life of a poet is the work of a poet . . .

.....

I won't collapse! She'll collapse! I mean her lies will collapse—not my truth—not the truth . . . *Forward march, Doctor Sugar!*  
(10, 11, 12)

“The well-groomed jungle” is probably the Doctor's reluctant recognition of Mrs. Venable's speech. Thus, the connection between Venus flytraps and grooming seems to be the care Sebastian gave to the garden, i.e., the glass coverings. Sebastian's care, however, is to keeping the Venus flytraps fed. One gets the strange feeling Sebastian wished to be consumed like those flies he fed, for it is not the natural unfolding of nature (the attention God gives to His works), such as the birds eating baby turtles at the Encantadas, wherein Sebastian sees God. It is the savage nature of being consumed that appeals to him. He sees God in being reconstituted.

So, Sebastian's occupation is his life, and his life is his art, and his art is his body, and his body is cannibalized. Mrs. Venable wants to keep its potential under wraps, under that glass jar, but the Venus flytrap is dying, just as her representation of him as an orderly and controlling being fades in the face of his new mythologizing. This new representation must be understood not just as mythmaking but also as a sacrifice—a ritual.

The cannibalism becomes figurative in the operation of theatre. In the theatre, the speech becomes an intangible presence, a presence felt in the conflation of the art and the poet Catherine's speaking produces. Mrs. Venable announces her hope to join with her son in immortality, through this same conflation, but Catherine's reconstituting of him does not allow her to join with him. Transubstantiation occurs without her. Mrs. Venable reveals her fear of being left behind by continually, ritualistically quoting her son:

‘Violet? Mother? You’re going to live longer than me, and then, when I’m gone, it will be yours, in your hands, to do whatever you please with!’—Meaning, of course, his future recognition!—That he did want, he wanted it after his death when it couldn’t disturb him; then he did want to offer his work to the world. All right. Have I made my point, Doctor? Well, here is my son’s work, Doctor, here’s his life going *on*!

DOCTOR: [reading the title] *Poem of Summer?*  
(13)

Mrs. Venable reveals to the Doctor that her Sebastian must be sacrificed in order to exist eternally, and, she reveals that the Doctor must participate, serving as witness to prove her transubstantiation occurs, both for others and for herself. In Scene One, she repeatedly attempts to get the Doctor to serve in this capacity, but once Catherine starts her talking, her interruptions only enhance Sebastian's sacrifice via Catherine.

Sebastian's book of poems is like bread substituting for Christ's body, via the poems, Mrs. Venable and Sebastian are one, "The role of the benefactor," she states, "is worse than thankless, it's the role of a victim, yes, they want your blood, Doctor, they want your blood on the altar steps of their *outraged outrageous* egos!" (27). By acting as Sebastian's benefactor, Mrs. Venable, too, is cannibalized, her blood offered as sacrifice. This figurative blood becomes real blood in Sebastian's transubstantiation, which cycles from history to memory to myth to ritual repeatedly. His book of poetry book is not just an extension of his body; it is his body and

*vice versa*, which would mean that she, too, must be cannibalized. She cannot sacrifice her own ego on her son's auto-cannibalizing altar of form and content, of body and existence. It would be her blood at the foot of the cross. Mrs. Venable states, "My son, Sebastian," a work(ing) of art, "and I constructed our days . . . we would—carve out each day of our lives like a piece of sculpture.—Yes, we left behind us a trail of days like a gallery of sculpture!" (26) Her debris will be cleansed and washed in the metaphorical blood of Se-bastian, her bastion of hope, of redemption, of immortality.

## **Part II-The Artist, God, and the Material**

The connection the play makes between the artist, the artist eaten, the narrative of the artist's being eaten, and art is that there is more to the materiality of art than its object-ness. As the art becomes the artist who becomes the artwork becomes the audience receiving that art, the art becomes artist; the artist becomes the art; and, both become the play itself. Interrupting Mrs. Venable's apparent ritualistic recall of her son's witnessing of birds devouring newborn baby turtles in the Encantadas, the Doctor asks and then answers his own question, unable to believe:

Did he mean we must rise above God?"

.....

I can see how he *might* be, I think he *would* be disturbed if he thought he'd seen God's image, an equation of God, in that spectacle you watched in the Encantadas . . . to escape that massacre you witnessed, yes, I can see how such a spectacle could be equated with a good deal of—experience, existence!—but not with *God*! Can you?

(19)

Yes, she does, and she does so via her sublimation of Sebastian onto the Doctor. The Doctor has become Sebastian for Mrs. Venable. This is how the work of art works.

Sebastian becomes God by becoming the work of art, both in terms of his body as art, and the body/art as the word as the body re-presented/membered and then

un-presented/dismembered again through Catherine's babbling. Catherine's talking, her words, do not "vent the inmost [of her] heart[]" (6). They obfuscate and defer to the past that breaks apart, and re/un-defines the present, both in the way she represents it and in what she represents. The present is the past, and the theatre becomes a perpetual retroactive re-performance.

That re-performance of the re-membering of Sebastian has temporal consequences as well as performative ones. Catherine's ability to talk Sebastian into (dis)embodied trans-substance cannibalizes the cannibalized, absent but present body. Johanna Frank suggests, "Unlike the physical violence of the act of dismemberment, temporal violence results from an encounter with a dismembered body of some sort, and that encounter is marked by the perpetual failure to remember and re-member" (92). The play's presentation of the representation of the mimetic processes is at odds with its performative qualities. Mrs. Venable's ritual, symbolic monologues that recall Sebastian's status as a work of art, his body, as the written word, and *vice versa*, is a play that meditates on the possibility of any permanence in performance. The possibility of the myriad contexts that produce the Venables as the Venables provide multiple opportunities for revivification under her purview, but not in her control, not in her words, not right now, but then, at this moment. Catherine's temporal violence disallows Mrs. Venable's.

In her "Statues, Jars, and Other Stored Treasures," Johanna Frank suggests in this study of the voice and its relation to the body that:

We might understand temporal violence as a remainder or residue of dismemberment. It is marked by the failure to correlate the past with the present as a unified whole, and by the failure to link what is, with what was, or what could have been . . . [C]ontemporary drama has the potential to intervene in the violence of dismemberment by positing voice as bound not to the body that is the source of voice but to the body of its receptor.

Sebastian's mark/ing, via Catherine's babbling, conflates past and present, into a unified whole via through its persistent rendering rendered, holy/wholly/holey, and succeeds in mooring a voice that is not his/but is his to a body that is re-lost and re-found. The failure to affirm or deny the re-membering that is always-already breaking down connects Sebastian's process to the process of the play. Dismemberment, though, does not attain transubstantiation. Catherine voices Sebastian's corporeality and his history, and the lack thereof, simultaneously. The perpetual re-evocation of this process is the process by which Sebastian, art, and the play itself become subject to an unending cannibalism. It is not the written art in Sebastian's notebook or in Catherine's journal that enacts this process. It is the talking, not the documentation that does this:

CATHERINE: . . .[Sebastian] took me downtown to a place for passport photos. Said: "Mother can't go abroad with me this summer. You're going to go with me this summer instead of Mother."—If you don't believe me, read my journal of Paris!—"She woke up at daybreak this morning, had her coffee and dressed and took a brief walk—"

DOCTOR: *Who* did?

CATHERINE: *She* did. *I* did—from the Hotel Plaza Athénée . . . as if pursued by a pack of Siberian wolves! [*She laughs her tired, helpless laugh*—Went right through all stop signs—couldn't wait for green signals—"Where did she think she was going? Back to the Duelling Oaks?"—Everything chilly and dim but his hot, ravenous mouth! on—

DOCTOR: Miss Catherine, let me give you something.

CATHERINE: Do I have to have the injection again, this time? What am I going to be stuck with this time Doctor? I don't care. I've been stuck so often that if you connected me with a garden hose I'd make a good sprinkler.

.....

I didn't feel it.

.....

DOCTOR: Miss Catherine? I want you to give me something.

.....

Give me all your resistance.

CATHERINE: Resistance to what?

DOCTOR: The truth. Which you're going to tell me.

CATHERINE: The truth's the one thing I've never resisted!

DOCTOR: Sometimes people just think they don't resist it, but still do.

CATHERINE: They say it's at the bottom of a bottomless well, you know.  
(66, 67, 68)

If one simply read her journal, then all matters of doubt about what really happened will be resolved, and everyone could go on believing whatever they wanted to believe, just as long as it is not that particular story. Thus, when Catherine enters the scene, and Dr. Sugar interrogates her to discover "what really happened" in the past, the past is always in front of her and absent. Catherine recalls, "(T)he empty Blue Jay notebook got bigger and bigger, so big it was big and empty as that big empty blue sea and sky . . ." (81).

*Absence* is a special quality of performance, in particular, as it pertains to writing. "Writing," according to Judith Roof, "is perceived to have an interpersonal dimension deeply rooted in the psyches of all the filial players [poets, dramatists, playwrights], and the works of art exist, in conversation with one another as synecdoches of their creators and representative products of intergenerational struggles . . ." (9). The character of Sebastian emerges through the absence of any actual writing, even though everyone in the play believes the writing exists, especially because it has already been shown to be non-existent. Roof suggests that some plays, such as those by Beckett and Pinter:

recast[] influence as the complexities of absence . . . Influence in their plays



is a matter of the 'absent one,' whose brooding omnipresence and impossible address provides the occasion for drama . . . visions of a theatre whose nagging preoccupation is the absent one, where drama derives from the effects of absence . . . (10)

Sebastian, the absent one, omni-presently nags as well, and he is absent, and more present in his absence. Transubstantiated Sebastian, however, occurs through the triangulation of Catherine, Doctor Sugar, and Mrs. Venable, which produces a different model of cannibalistic exchange for theatre. When there is nothing but the material in the process of de-materialization, then, re-materialized, the absent nothing that preserves that "delusion of presence" (Roof 11) becomes complicated in the specter of Sebastian's cannibalization. In other words, there is no substitution; there is only re-constitution through Sebastian. I am born again. Their tearing away at Catherine's telling makes her telling his, and his telling becomes ours, and our own consumption of him is assured.

"The marvelous delusion of self," claims Roof, "where absence may just as well be the lack of self as the absence of someone else, and where the absence matters is finally the delusive quality of presence" (11), becomes a marvelous counterweight for Sebastian's transubstantiation through cannibalism. For Mrs. Venable, Sebastian has a quality of illusion because of Catherine's obvious delusion. She qualifies his absence; she provides the elusive (to be gotten away from) and certain quality of eating another human being (you can't get away from that), which provides her escape. She can be sure (assured) of that absence. She cannot be sure of that delusive quality of presence any longer in the wake of Catherine's talking, not because she is realizing how she is in a dream, as she exclaims, "I think I'm just dreaming this, it doesn't seem real!" (52), *per se*, but rather, she cannot be sure of presence's delusional qualities because

presence is being redefined through the hyper-material. okay now what is this? Because she cannot get away from the material (in its absence), she cannot get away from the material (in its present presence). There is nothing but the material; it is all representation. Representation is the material of the play.

The purpose of Catherine's interrogation is not to curb and control that infinity of possible stories that compete and supersede Mrs. Venable's. The purpose of lobotomizing Catherine is to ensure that this consciousness, what Derrida calls, "the conscious presence of the intention of the speaking subject" (14), is maintained, that the possibility of meaning continues, but of course, the meaning upon which Mrs. Venable insists. There is no "intentional meaning" in Catherine's story. It can only disseminate into the crowd and rewrite or remark the Venables.

The attempt to mark the truth via the supposed marking of Sebastian's body becomes complex, as the talking cure and Mrs. Venable's monologue, on the one hand, and the play's form that evokes a classical aesthetic, on the other, reflect back on themselves, turning on the specter of Sebastian, hovering over the text's promise for revelation that is never quite given, at least in the play.

This specter, produced repeatedly through an uncertainty about what *really* happened, transforms Sebastian into a perpetual state of being torn apart, of continually rupturing, further holding and denying the play's own cohesion. Thus, the promise of mediation, of understanding through representation, of there really being a "*really*," collapses upon this lingering metaphor that is in a state of flux, not because he is dead, but rather because there is no poetry to begin with, which, is not necessarily due to his not being a very good poet who never wrote (which is possible), but is most necessarily due to his *being*, via his body, art itself. Since his body/art no longer exists, what is it that the characters discuss exactly? The *(re)marking* and *(iteration)* of

Sebastian as text, as performance, occurs without any writing actually existing. Instead, his poetry, his body/art occurs through its promise to be read, not to be performed, but that promise depends upon an unacknowledged truth: Everybody knows it won't because it had never been a material truth, but the body/art becomes immaterially more real through its ritual evocation.

Sebastian's, and by extension the family's, myth that he is a heterosexual, tasteful, god-like poet who shall carry the legacy of the Venable name to new heights of immortality could be perverted to one of infamy, of a homosexual, and of a potentially tasty pretender to the Venable throne. Catherine's story stymies and eats this legacy. The metaphor of cannibalism is potentially literalized through her telling, both in its "original" enactment and in its being re-spoken and re-marked, into what could possibly excite the tension between myth as truth and its production to resonate back onto the metaphor of cannibalism to such an extent that the truth of the matter is the meat of the matter. Sebastian transubstantiates via the cannibalizing of Catherine's ritual-like telling.

She reveals that for years, Sebastian and Mrs. Venable had taken vacations together during the summer months. As in many of Williams's works, the father figure is absent, (not unlike Sebastian now that he is dead), and although Sebastian is in his forties before the play begins, the nature of his behavior reflects a boy doted upon for far too long in this paternal absence, still living at home and resting on laurels he never truly earned or deserved. Like the father, though, he is also always present in his absence. The explicit reason Mrs. Venable gives for his continued presence is because his art exists. He is, as his mother pontificates in a soliloquy early on in the play, a poet, an artist who lives his work. It seems clear that he was not very good and did not produce much, but rather, portended artistry, sans product. "His life was the art," Mrs. Venable exclaims to Sugar, and depending on what happened to him is rather

significant. Because his life is the art, the nature of what his death represents and the nature of how representation functions—becomes interwoven with the act of discovery, or perhaps manufacturing, depending on whether or not one believes Catherine’s babbling, which, will not matter if she receives the lobotomy, per Mrs. Venable’s request. It is the potential for possibility for difference and deferral to occur via the present absence, absent presence (and not absolute absence) of writing as performance.

The cannibal figure offers what Roof suggests, that is, “an exploration of the power to address the delusion of ontology as itself both method and matter of theatre” (22). Cannibalism suggests that the delusion of representation is a delusion of the theatre is a delusion of the body. So, if in *Suddenly, Last Summer*, cannibalism “occurs” offstage, but transubstantiates via Catherine’s telling, then Chapter Two asks what happens when Sarah Kane’s *Blasted* recodes simulated cannibalism onstage via absent grammatical stage directions, such as the “/” used to indicate overlapping interruptions. There are no such marks. The actor, the reader, must imagine where the interruptions must be. Neither the reader nor the performer are able to rehearse such interruptions, *per se*. The absent symbol or code for interruptions, which is already devouring other codings for the “/”, such as combination. The ghost of the “/”, its absence disrupts agreed upon, more present symbols to denote activity. The figure of the cannibal in Kane’s *Blasted* appears in a performative, grammatical fashion on the page in the form of the “/”: what if it does not appear? A mark speaks and can effect transubstantiation just as a sound can.

## Chapter 2

### Sarah Kane's *Blasted*: The Performative and Performance are the "Same"

**Author's note:**

*Punctuation is used to indicate delivery, not to conform to the rules of grammar.*

*A stroke (/) marks the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue.*

*Words in square brackets [ ] are not spoken, but have been included in the text to clarify meaning.*

*Stage directions in brackets ( ) function as lines.*

**Editor's note:**

*This edition of *Blasted*, first reprinted in 2000, incorporates minor revisions made to the original text by Sarah Kane shortly before her death. It should therefore be regarded as **the** definitive version in **all** respects.*

*from the opening of *Blasted* in the 2001 edition  
Complete Plays, emphasis mine*

Antonin Artaud<sup>19</sup> suggests that the emphasis on the words on the page in the theatre (the dialogue) destroys the power that theatre can have. The stage's power lies not in what the characters are saying to one another, *per se*, but instead, in what the actors do. The dichotomy between the text on the page and the text live, performed, must be collapsed somehow. He puts out a call for more non-dialogued works, and Kane's *Blasted* answers his call.

Performance, a sign too, can achieve its potential, with little, no, or at least, a re-written sign. Artaud states, "It is essential to put an end to the subjugation of the theater to the text, and to recover the notion of a kind of unique language half-way between gesture and thought" (89).

---

<sup>19</sup> Please note Kane's response to a correlation of her work to Artaud's. She states, "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. Artaud was recommended to me by a lecturer at university whom I hated so much that I thought 'well I'm not gonna read it if he thinks Artaud is good. He simply can't be.' So I only started reading him very very recently. And the more I read I thought 'now this is a definition of sanity, this man is completely and utterly sane and I understand everything he's saying.' And I was amazed how it connects completely with my work. Also his writings about theatre are stunningly good. And it's amazing to me that I'd never read it." *interview with Nils Tabert in Graham Saunders' Love Me or Kill Me.*

Sarah Kane's *Blasted* offers an aesthetic third possibility that is singular in nature, for both reader and performer, a third space not unlike what Artaud describes. Regardless of whether or not the reader and the performer are the same individual, the act of reading and the act of performing are not the same, and because of this difference in the activities, if the reader and the performer are the same individual, a schizophrenic experience best describes the phenomenon of reading to oneself, reading-to-be-performed outside of oneself, as a character or body on stage. The audience and delivery are inherently different. *Blasted*'s use (or not) of grammatical symbols results in an activity that eats itself, and Ian's consumption of the dead baby at the end of the play serves as a sign of this activity's nature: It is cannibalistic.

By exciting signification to its maximum capacities, instead of writing a new kind of visual code, *Blasted* un-writes those pertaining to linguistic signs. Note the Author's Note that precedes the script of the play; it alters the conventional meaning of a grammatical symbol, such as the "( )." The coding I once understood I must un-code and re-code for the purposes of understanding this play, which means that the code formerly known as a mark in textual space, the unspeakable, becomes a code of space, i.e., the performance on the stage.

Thus, the code for the "/" must un-coded and re-coded, too. However, it is never present in the text. The reader and the actor both look for a sign that is never there, and as a result, it becomes so glaringly visible in its intangibility that it becomes tangible; it performs. Typically, the grammatical mark on the page has the potential to be performative, and the body in space performs. In Kane's play, the "/" cannot be performative because it never appears in the text, and it performs as a result. For Lance Norman,<sup>20</sup> the "Author's Note" above enacts this premise: "These notes indicate that the activities are just as important as the lines themselves."

---

<sup>20</sup> Dr. Lance Norman, distilled from a series of panel presentations and intellectual debates, and condensed into a representative for academic deliveries.

Traditionally speaking, one infers, actors put too much emphasis on the lines and not enough on how to put them into action. In other words, the command that “[p]unctuation is used to indicate delivery” expresses the anxiety over the word overpowering the “delivery.” The linguistic could (as it might have in the past-?-) overtake the performance for the performer.

Striking a dissonant resonance for theatre conventions, rather than emphasizing “spoken dialogue” (89), *Blasted* visually vibrates with recontextualized objects and gestures. Artaud states:

[T]heir combinations [can] be carried to the point of becoming signs . . . Once aware of this language in space, language of sounds, cries, lights, onomatopoeia, the theater must organize it into veritable hieroglyphs . . . and make use of their symbolism and interconnections in relation to all organs and on all levels. (90)

For Artaud, the way through the sign is through the excesses of signification.<sup>21</sup> Seeing and coding a new kind of visual, *bodied* hieroglyphics, or language, whose “combinations be carried to the *point* of becoming signs,” Artaud intimates that such an endeavor can ultimately unify experience, or “all organs on all levels.” The “carrying” to a singular point, though, is still dependent upon the sign, as “making a kind of alphabet out of these signs” is inevitable. “Once aware of this language in space . . . the theatre must organize it into veritable hieroglyphs,” which, suggests a new kind of mediating, perhaps even priest-like status of the theatre, re-turning

---

<sup>21</sup> Ironically, one of the very things the theatre of cruelty attempts to escape is psychoanalysis, a model this essay uses to define experience, i.e., the inherently indefinable.

it to its former status as a place of worship, wherein the tragedy in *traigos*<sup>22</sup> has to do more with the *actual* sacrificing, rather than the simulation, substitution, or representation of the act.

Kane's *Blasted* asks how the relationships between the linguistic and the material, between the audience and the performer, between the processes of signification "on" and "off stage" might be accessed in such a way as to reconsider the potential that "the written" and "the performed" have. This chapter examines how, through the play's presentation of presence, "how in presenting, it offers" (Rayner 180) a new way to consider the unique status of words on the page as objects on stage *actually* doing what the words of the page denote, rendering a kind of collapse between the reading and performing experiences. Singularity arises.

For the reader, as to-be-performer, and for the performer, as once-having-had-already-read *The Theatre and Its Double*, this excess does not stop. It does, though, turn back in on itself. In other words, Artaud's text is the theatre, a performance/tive,<sup>23</sup> and the theatre has been transformed (back) into a place for a kind of religious revival. The revival occurs in the *awareness* of the non-language, performing in space. There are no interruptions designated by the "/." The actors believe they exist and behave accordingly. However, no one can find a uniform, agreed-upon code that applies the "/." Your interruption may not coincide with when I think the interruption should come. The interrupting may, then, be "genuine." Paradoxically, *Blasted* shows that there is a singularity of experience between representation and actuality: They eat each other; there is no difference between the two.

---

<sup>22</sup> "*Traigos*" being the Greek origin of the term, "*tragedy*," refers to the goat that was sacrificed at the Festival of Dionysus, which, once this festival became institutionalized and moved into the theatre, the actual sacrificing faded from implementation.

<sup>23</sup> Performance is the body, performing in space. The performative is the performance of language. One might consider the latter via Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* and Derrida's essays in *Limited, Inc.*



## **Part I: Eating a dead baby**

The movement between the actual and the represented is excited to such a degree that this fluid and nearly indiscernible interchange appears to become stagnant and collapse. One might equate what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls “flow” as one way to consider this exchange between action and awareness, or, to couch in terms of this argument, between performance and the performative. In the instance of the “Author’s Note,” the performative form of it and the performance of it upon the reader become indistinguishable. In the “Author’s Note,” the divide between the performer and the reader begins to close. This process occurs in a mutually cannibalistic way. “The delivery wants to be the words; the words want to be the delivery.” The delivery becomes indiscernible, or rather, indisectable from the non-words (“not to the rules of grammar”) on the page.

How does one consider the experience itself when faced with this idea? If writing is as, if not more powerful than performance, then performance artists and theorists, as well as dramatists and playwrights, argue that the performance (shall) overshadow and transcend the linguistic sign exactly because the performance is not a sign. Are reading and performing the same, or at least, close enough not “to worry about it?” What happens for the reading and performing experience in such a scenario? For the reader, Kane’s *Blasted* offers more insight into this half of the dramatic process, through the reading/performing of the notes. Enactment equals cannibalism; there is no difference between representation and actuality. The performance eats the text; the text eats the performance.

However, this difference is not apparent unless one reads the script. There are stage directions, endnotes, and grammatical punctuations that are to be enacted but are unseen, on

stage. Not unlike a Eucharistic ritual, the idea is to conflate representation and actuality by hiding the symbol or the act of transference. One way to do so is to relate the text to real events.

Several studies of *Blasted*<sup>24</sup>, although exclaiming a condensation of sorts does occur between representation and actuality, the attempts of teasing the inside world of the theater to the outside world of, say, Bosnia, are attempts to maintain those divisions. For example, Graham Saunders calls certain acts that occur on stage in *Blasted* “extreme” acts. He immediately ties these acts to current events. Such an act is self-assurance that the two are always separate. “Nothing can happen to me in this theatre.” Saunders asks Kane about the intent or the motivation that lie behind the play. She confesses that after seeing the siege of Srebrenica, Bosnia in 1995 on television the “penny dropped”: “[T]his [tragedy] is absolutely terrible and I’m writing this ridiculous play . . . so I now know what I wanted to write about . . . the connection between . . . a Leeds hotel room and what’s happening in Bosnia . . . one is the seed and the other the tree” (“‘Out Vile’ 71). What does this gesture, after-the-fact, mean? It means that the play, on its own, is uncomfortable, not because meaning is being applied to the play, but rather, because meaning cannot be found outside of the theatricality of the theater, on the page. The experience of the play in the theatre may or may not have such an e/affect on an audience. An audience may or may not “get” that connection Kane and Saunders reference. However, when reading the play, Ian’s act of eating the dead baby precludes any further ability to use the play as a metaphor. Seeing is not believing.

---

<sup>24</sup> Although this chapter does not have the space to do a comprehensive evaluation of dramatic studies and performance theories, I contend that this tension in the twentieth and twenty-first century United States, between drama and performance studies, is an extension of this tension. Both fields ask a similar question: “Can I get beyond language? Do I want to? And if I can, what value comes from it?”

Until this point, Ian eating that baby is safe. I do not believe he is eating that baby. There is no baby. It is just a doll of some sort . . . right? Ian's act is safe. It is representation, and I feel assured in that separation. The illusion must be maintained, and the plastic doll, the script on the page provides that safe distance that I need. Graham Saunders suggests that once the hotel explodes, the processes of writing and of performing are revealed to be separate. He states, "The fractured dramatic form of *Blasted* . . . is suddenly transformed into an undisclosed war zone, [which] reflects the sudden change in subject matter during the process of writing" (38). Writing reveals itself via the change in subject matter. But the matter that is on the stage is not the matter of the play. Anthony Kubiak asserts that "the preponderant voices in theater and performance theory are of a constructivist, cultural materialist bent, positions that tend to critique theater and performance as *document* or event or cultural formation from a position seemingly outside the theatrical, or, conversely, through the idea of the *performative* as a controlling metaphor" (xi). Kubiak does not use the term "performative" to apply to the performance of the linguistic; this study, however, suggests the concept of a self-aware performance state hides the ability to see the condensed, overlapped image of the cannibal and the form of the play, one consuming the other, which, is another layer of cannibalism.

The explosion does not signal a move away from the naturalistic setting of the expensive hotel room to the symbolic one of post-apocalyptic-whenever. The setting reveals itself to be just that, setting. That setting dismembers itself, and in that dismemberment, an awareness of its construction becomes apparent to the audience. It is fake. Perhaps if I had read the play, I would not be so aware that the experience is only an aesthetic one. Kane's play suggests through the set's self-dismemberment that there is no difference between the seeing and the reading. The set is as real as anything else.

Saunders expresses a desire to reconcile the text of the performance with the text of what is read, (The “Author’s Note” is typically overlooked),<sup>25</sup> yet, to satisfy such desire, he must move away from the play on stage to the play on the page, and he does so by authorizing the author and the written word, “I want to see how what I read, what the Author wrote, correlates with what I am seeing, right now, in this very room . . . and also to Bosnia.” Here is the real authorizer.

The aesthetic absence of the page usurps the material presence of the stage. Ironically, by looking so intently at Kane’s writing, denying one’s “own” reading experience, one also denies her experience with the play, as it is compared to Kane’s writing, or at least, what is imagined to be “hers.” “I don’t want these two activities to be different; I need continuity; so, I will deny my own interpretation and my own experience, in the wake of the aesthetic formality I imagine to be there, which I shall prove ‘is’ there via the ‘evidence’ of the hotel’s destruction, the play’s self-destruction.” She must pass through self-denial in order to confirm the self. “Just because there is no material proof of what I had imagined contextually while I read, I will believe there will be proof, a prop, or an act, that I had not anticipated, which denies my previous understanding of the text. I must deny that to reclaim my-self.”

The ability to deny depends upon clear subject/object binaries to exist, however fluid they might be. Cannibalism can serve to undo the binaries altogether. Annette Pankratz begins to touch on the subjective/objective tension in “Neither here nor There: Theatrical Space in Kane’s Work.” Focusing on the processes of mimesis,<sup>26</sup> Pankratz indicates that Kane’s plays “explore

---

<sup>25</sup> Note this is a performative act, enacting the paratextual.

<sup>26</sup> She defines “mimesis” as the processes of representation, i.e., only insofar as language is concerned, even though it performs according to Derrida, the ‘liveness’ is still unique for her. Performance, especially in Kane’s work, is described in the following manner: “Deictic markers

the divisions between inside and outside, between the bodies of the actors and the narrative mind-spaces of the play . . . with the entrance of the Soldier [for example] the mimetic space literally explodes and the referential points towards all places torn by civil war” (151). Thus, when the *actual* topography of the play falls apart, then, the play itself dis-integrates. The set reveals itself via the formal integration of the work, as dressing, as aesthetic representation.

The form of the text, both as a play on the page and as a play on the stage, dis-integrates its own form, which is literalized with the destruction of the set itself, which the language and the actions on stage defy any attempts to understand the play as *only* representation. Thus, as the hotel is blown apart, so too is the ability to grasp hold of the functioning of the play is lost in its symbolic meaning, even if that symbolic meaning is that there is not one.

On the contrary, and to reiterate, it is at this moment that the play begins its eventual collapse. Rather than ending with an explosion, the metaphorical and topographical landscapes overlap (as the “/” suggests): as the set explodes, it is “gotten into” by Ian, as he crawls underneath. As he is underneath the floorboards, he eats the baby. One prop explodes; another enters into it and then puts another piece of the play back into itself. This process is one of mutual cannibalism. A collapse made possible via things being torn apart and eventually recombined in very particular ways: The metaphor and the performance overlap. This process applies to the reader as well. But how?

**[(Supplement)]**<sup>27</sup>

---

such as personal pronouns or adverbs help to maintain the illusion that what we see on stage is part of a dynamic, complex and complete world . . . bodies on stage and the liveness . . . create a performance space, which is both real and virtual. [The characters seem to exist in an] ‘as if’ world but [ ] are actually present in the ‘here and now.’ Performance oscillates between indexicality and iconicity, between presence and representation.”

<sup>27</sup> Paraleptical/Paratextual cannibalism

In Ian's case, he cannot read: the terrain, others' intentions, his own; . . . he especially cannot read the final moments of the play, as he regresses/progresses toward an infantile-like state, unable to express himself fully, even with language. Peter Buse suggests that Ian's "journalistic haste—to meet a deadline, to capture a readership—only represses further the meaning of a traumatic event. Ian is obviously a bad witness: . . . he is detached, both literally and symbolically, from those events" (185), he transcribes to his editor at the beginning of the play. They always want to supplement. The reading on the page is yet another "ravage[ing] [that] Ian's body undergoes and the testimony, written on the body, of the events he has participated in . . ." (186). The reader recodes and rewrites Ian by consuming his testimony.

Cate, on the other hand, does read Ian. However, she cannot speak this reading that she is doing. She stu-stu-stutters. Ian berates her over and over throughout the first act. "Pst-pst-pst...", he bellows, mocking her inability to articulate herself. Cate reads without seeing. She speaks through the stuttering sounds, which cannibalize Ian's prioritization of codified language. Because Ian values simplicity, facts which he can see and hear, as he has been trained to see and hear, he cannot see himself as a text to be read. This so-called journalist's search for facts to write becomes the very body that is as materially readable and marked a text as the script of the play to be read, probed, and penetrated, to be consumed, digested, and reconstituted.

The act of penetration provides an opening and a closing into the body (of work).<sup>28</sup> There is always some-thing that will be missed, though, so the reader may not get beneath the code, as Ian does the floorboards in *Blasted*, not entirely; however, the reader may get "closer" to seeing transparency, while still being unable to see through the curtain of signification entirely. Through

---

<sup>28</sup> "Every exit is an entrance; every entrance, an exit." Lead Player, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

an implosion of presentation and representation, *Blasted* allows for this to occur, however briefly.

This cannibalism of the act of reading a material body applies to the immaterial as well. The lack of “/” manifests on stage, but it is only visible on the page. The spatial movement outside the performance to symbolic meaning, whether committed by the actor or the audience member, requires a temporal shift as well, from “right now in the theatre” to “at that time over there, then.” Temporal, as well as spatial states must shift outside and “mean something,” just so long as that something is “something else, unrelated to me.”

The best way to disavow that something is to supplement, to supplement with historical legacies, for example. Andrew Sofer attaches such meaning to his study of props on the European stage. He suggests that props are not just some things scattered about, but instead, show the dual function of the objects as both “more than” representations and also as “signifying” or indicative of the time in which a certain object, like a handkerchief or gun, is used. John Bell, contesting this claim, excavates out of Sofer’s theory in *The Stage Life of Props* a desire for present-ness, or live-ness, which the critic John Bell bemoans as self-delusion and wishful thinking on the part of playwrights and critics. He states that:

Sofer wishes to restore the phenomenological factor to the study of performing objects . . . [yet] he bases his analysis of props primarily upon stage directions and dialogue. Sofer writes in that special tense dear to literary criticism: the *imaginary theatrical present* . . . Sofer’s argument . . . relies upon a method that eschews the messiness of actual performance for the sureties of literary criticism. (emphasis mine, *TDR*)

The play images the immaterial. The always-already theatrical present that Bell refers to is an attempt to avoid the very thing Bell commits: Blurring the actual with the represented. Time is Bell's way around the absolute inability to account for the reader, who actually creates and maintains the imaginary theatrical present. The present-ness (presence in the present) of the live aspects of theatre does not rest in seeing the play, but rather, in reading it. Despite this necessary disbelief in the ability of a reading performance to have that kind of power, the tension in *Blasted* lies in the play's ability to disavow and simultaneously confirm this distance between the reader and the read-play, and between the audience and the play-performed. The ability to reserve the right to doubt the play's influence, its affective authenticity, is washed away in the wake of this simultaneity. The performance is full of doubt and immediacy and danger: Something may "actually" happen during the play, hence, Artaud. The latter is full of the search for certainty through contemplation and analysis, of mediation and distance, of safety: The audience member says to herself, "Nothing will 'actually' happen while one reads the text, at least, not materially, right?"

If one considers the hotel room in *Blasted* as a prop, one might consider Ian as one also, at the very least, when the Soldier sodomizes Ian with a rifle, Ian is objectified. In other words, one is as "prop-y" as the other. The thingness of Ian's status as sodomized object does not reside in his objectification by the rifle, per se, nor in his being on stage. "Thingness is [ ] not an attribute of an object," according to Raynor, "but something more like an event or a moment when a material object is recognized as belonging to more than its representation, to more than is knowable, but also belonging to time and to mortality" (189). Ian is not really limited in his objectness, for his thingness transcends this. The meaning of this event or of any event, or all events in the play, these contextual moments ensure that Ian will continue to "matter," if not in



his material presence, in his aesthetic absence. Raynor describes interaction with these objects as a gift exchange:

It is [a] brief [experience] because the gift only appears in the moment of giving; it thus also entails a memory of the first loss [, i.e., of being given, received, lost] and a grieving. [This paradox, in the] [t]angibile, [ ] marks their own disappearance from time past as well as their persistence into the present. In their double nature they are uncanny because one wonders about their reality even as they give sensory testimony. (189, 190, 191)

“Getting” meaning is a gift that comes at a cost: one must always be in a perpetual state of grief and doubt. Yet, in Kane’s *Blasted*, that promise of doubting what one sees is precluded due to this collapse between performance and the performative. The author’s intentions begin to have *everything* to do with what is done *through* and *with* and *to* the play, and, as imagined as these intentions are, the announcement at the opening of the play, to which only the reader is privy.

Annabelle Singer emphasizes the performance and its visceral affects via *Blasted*’s formal structures’ self-destruction in order to show that the mimetic faculty serves the purpose of valuing the stage over the page. The spectator must “understand” the play with her emotions, which becomes not just the spectator’s, but everyone else’s as well.<sup>29</sup> Singer states:

The visceral drama that Kane promotes bypasses interpretation and, instead directly confronts the audience’s thoughts and feelings through physical reactions . . . [which opens up a] wider concept of performance. This concept

---

<sup>29</sup> I choose Singer’s argument at length because it allows for several key points of this work to surface, not because of any individual “issue” with her argument.

insists upon an intense connection with the spectator . . . So, while violence perpetrated destroys the self, pain communicated turns an individual's reality into everyone's reality. (141, 153)

Rather than valuing the play via the reader, Singer does so via the performer in order to glean a transcendental, collective, unconscious experience which she finds as the value of Kane's work in general. In her study of *Cleansed*, Singer, like Saunders in his study of *Blasted*, wishes for a collapse between reading and performing, between author and auditorium, between self and other. She states:

Graham's ability to disembody saves Grace: he teaches her to do it too. But her wounds embody Graham: he bleeds empathetically. Graham's experience is an 'unthought' physical reaction, implying that his empathy is not just a mental projection, but an experience of the pain itself . . . collapsing boundaries between self and other . . . [which] collapse[s] the boundaries between life and death. [Thus, Grace's] electroshock therapy [in *Cleansed*], which precedes the surgery [the sex-change], leaves Grace undone. . . . The surgery is actually the only thing that revives Grace . . . now she can speak again. Now she has the body of Graham, now they can really feel the same through the same Body. Grace no longer exists as a single-subject; she has dispersed . . . (154, 155, 156, 157)

The Soldier emphasizes the materiality of Ian's eyes in *Blasted*, for example, by sucking them out of his head and then eating them. The Soldier then immediately kills himself. Ian asks Cate to help him commit suicide because life is not worth living when trapped in the material cage of the body. This overemphasis on the object culminates with the baby's consumption. When Ian's

objectification (via the Soldier's rape) is re-subjectified (consuming the dead baby/being consoled by Cate, who has also been objectified via rape by Ian), the proveability of the material is not only called into question, but it appears to disappear in the wake of the image of cannibalism and its representative powers. For this reason, the stichomythic exchange spawns laughter, not horror:

IAN. Will you help me Cate?

CATE. How.

IAN. Find my gun?

.....

... Can you keep that baby quiet?

CATE. It's not doing anything. It's hungry.

IAN. We're all bloody hungry, don't shoot myself I'll starve to death.

CATE. It's wrong to kill yourself.

IAN. No it's not.

CATE. God wouldn't like it.

IAN. There isn't one.

CATE. How do you know?

IAN. No God. No Father Christmas. No fairies. No Narnia. No fucking nothing.

CATE. Got to be something.

IAN. Why?

CATE. Doesn't make sense otherwise.

.....

Thought you didn't want to die.

IAN. I can't see.

CATE. My brother's got blind friends. You can't give up.

IAN. Why not?

CATE. It's weak.

IAN. I know you want to punish me, trying to make me live.

When asked about proving whether or not God exists, Ian simply responds with further abstractions. "I'm blind; that's enough." Father Christmas and the land of Narnia are as childlike and pathetically hopeless as one can get. Ian does not want a father; he wants a mother. The Oedipal gets unmoored in this moment of cannibalism, and, hope lies not in the idea that there is not an Author, in so far as Ian is concerned, but rather that there is a divine that can be reached, rendering the focus on the hyper-material a focus on the absence of presence, materially speaking. Note Ian's death:

*Ian lying very still, weak with hunger.*

.....

*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.

(emphasis mine, 60)

In the wake of Ian's objectification of Cate/objectification by the Soldier, he objectifies the baby by eating it. He subjectifies the baby by eating it (it is now a part of him). He is no longer "wholly" himself. He is transformed (all notions that have been applied to cannibalism). However, Ian does not die. He opens the play with "I've shat in better places," and he ends the play in nearly the same way, wording "Shit." Because he is not dead, "dead" becomes "just a word." "Eventually," too, moves from being ambiguous to being ambivalent to being irrelevant. At first, it reads as though the rain comes through the roof, but after a long while. Then, it reads as though his declaration, "Shit," comes, but after a long while. Then, it reads as if both, simultaneously, might be the case.

The object is supposed to be, or rather, it must be felt, seen, touched, somehow. The subject is supposed to be the opposite of this, somehow. When the language has been re-coded, then un-coded, when the form defies its own content, and, when the action has been re-coded and then un-coded, when the content defies its own form, an overlap occurs wherein mimesis is shown to be a process of cannibalism, rather than a process of imitation. "I do not want to simply imitate, or even surpass what I see, I want what I see to be a part of me, so that, in the end, there will be only me." In *Blasted*, geographical topography (the set of the hotel/Leeds) gives way to cultural relativity (what is violence, exactly?), gives way to biological sustenance (there are no taboos; eat what you have), gives way to half-baked metaphysical ponderings, gives way to a non-oedipal mother because the text, like the content within, eats itself.

Ian consumes the dead baby under the floorboards, and this presentation of the taboo of taboos does what the "Author's Note" does: The symbolic and the representational collapse with each other. Ian's act slows the explosion of signification that is literalized by the set exploding. Ian's act confuses the formal revelation of representation (the explosion of the hotel), a reflexive

occurrence, and pulls the performer and the reader back together, a paraxive occurrence. Much work has been done on this concept of paratextuality, as it relates to the text. Kane's "Author's Note" is a fine example of a paratext. Any footnote, endnote, preface, Editor's Note, or grammatical punctuation that are assigned without the writer<sup>30</sup> may be considered paratexts. For Phillippe Lejeune, the paratext is "*une frange du texte imprimé qui en réalité contrôle sa lecture l'ensemble du texte*"<sup>31</sup> (45). This chapter looks to apply this concept in "more than" one way, i.e., to the text only.

## **Part II: Marks, Objects, Excess, and Authorial Intent**

How does materiality work in lieu of the recoding of language and the encoding of performance in Kane's *Blasted*? What happens to all that spilled blood? What happens to the "more than" or excess? It collides in on itself and is consumed and reconstituted, as it reconstitutes. In *The Anxiety of Influence*, Harold Bloom points out that writers (and I include readers in this instance) presume to be in some kind of conversation with those who preceded them, and one result of this psychological process is that the creation of a work of art as in "conversation with one another as synecdoches of their creators" (9). If, as the Author's Note reads, the stage directions emphasize action, and, it has gone to so much trouble to re-code the visual language as much as the written word, perhaps creating a new visual economy, then where are the "/" that indicate overlap, that concept that cannibalism em-bodies? In other words, the subtextual conversation, through the art, between reader and writer is more important than the primary text on some level. Thus, one automatically begins the hyper-critical, aware performance of the text, looking for that essence. It is there, and it eats itself. The absence of the

---

<sup>30</sup> I am distinguishing "writer" from Foucault's concept of the "author."

<sup>31</sup> "A fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one's whole reading of the text."

“/” becomes more present in its absence. The futile search, the performance, collapses with and reconstitutes the (missing) performative.

**[“/”-*where are they?*]**

Gérard Genette suggests such a liminal space is a paratext, a “threshold [(*seuil*)] between the text and off-text . . .”; he states that [it is] a zone of transition . . . and transaction . . . [it is] a privileged place” (2). This liminal space or interstice, this concept of fluidity that has appeared in a variety of philosophical modes of inquiry for the last thirty years, which Pierre Bourdieu’s work on cultural production reflects. In the case of the concept of the paratext, it is:

not only the direct producers of the work in its materiality (artist, writer, etc.) but also the producers of the meaning and value of the work—critics, publishers, gallery directors and the whole set of agents whose combined efforts produce consumers capable of knowing and recognizing the work of art as such. (Bourdieu 37)

The text produces a sense of ownership for the consumer, and the “consumer’s” awareness is an extension of that sense of control over a work of art. The extension serves to enable one to distance oneself from the awareness that these agents have anything to do with the relationship between object and subject in the first place. What happens through the experience of reading *Blasted* is that, formally (aesthetics), one can understand consumption as a desire to eat the work of art, to make it one’s “own,” in some manner or other.

The reader’s sense of ownership increases the closer the reader gets to the end of the play, and the ability to consider anything that precedes the main text, the hypotext, as it were, cannot be teased out of and considered “separate from.” Ownership depends on the paratextuality

of the reading experience, which ultimately leads to what Beverly Skeggs calls “affect stripping” (15). This is, she claims:

a process whereby affects are detached from the body of production and re-made as an exchange-value when re-attached to the body that does not produce the same affect but can capitalize on it . . . disgust evolved to protect the human being from coming too close . . . [one must] maintain [ ] the symbolic order. (qtd. in Aston 14, 15, 17)

“Coming too close” to the border of humanity/to the work/to oneself/et al, reveals a fear that “deictic markers such as personal pronouns or adverbs,” for example, “help to maintain the illusion that what we see on stage is part of a dynamic, complex and complete world . . . bodies on stage and the liveness . . . create a performance space, which is both real and virtual . . . performance oscillates between presence and representation” (Pankrantz 149, 151). The fear in that lack of “owning,” whether that be the “author’s” or the reader’s fear, is an awareness that is manifested in the lack of there being any “/” in the 2001 edition of Kane’s play that is in the authorized version.

The search for something that is both there and not there, and the oscillation between the two fuses so many potential would-be subjects and seen-objects together, and so quickly, that temporarily, there appears to be a collapse of the dichotomy between them. As Annette Pankrantz suggests, the play “explores the divisions between inside and outside, between the bodies of the actors and the narrative mind spaces of the play” (151). What happens, though, when a sign or object collapses the narrative mind spaces of the play by providing objects that have been defamiliarized, “autonomous from language . . . that points to itself [(the object)] rather than an external referent”? (Sofer 25)



Although Andrew Sofer's *The Stage Life of Props* does not use "a-subjective" or "hypo/er objective" to articulate the workings of stage props, his text proves useful in order to help answer how to consider taboos outside of external referents, especially when the divisions between subject and object have been obliterated/reinforced. John Bell considers Sofer's study and contends that the argument, like so much of literary criticism, depends upon the false notion of "live-ness." The threat is that the temporal, like the written word, can consume the spatial, the form, and questions persist regarding the status of the subjective and the objective.

Critics such as Ken Urban consider how its own community<sup>32</sup> of dramatists has reacted to her play. *Blasted*'s form, for Urban, is "not dominated by dialogue, her plays use images and movement to re-imagine the British stage" (40). The literary critic Chris Wixson goes further to suggest that not only is the play not dominated by dialogue, or language, but that the acting bodies, or objects, on stage convey what cannot be expressed through language. *Blasted* suggests that the dialogue is the material, is the body. Critics such as Elaine Aston go so far to contend, for example, that "[t]he images of reviews, the words on the page, have a physicality . . . that makes them [reviews] a part of the fabric of the show. If this is the case, *Blasted* echoes a concept not unlike Marvin Carlson's notion of ghosting,<sup>33</sup> wherein a particular play's meaning, through both form and content, precedes the actual production. My reading a review about *Blasted* before I see it colors my experience of it. (Un)cannily enough, then, this study, too, evokes similar methodologies to encounter the play, and by extension, shows the limitations of them.

---

<sup>32</sup> Kane states in an interview that one must be careful "not to confuse press with audience." From Heidi Stephenson and Natasha Langridge, *Rage and Reason: Women Playwrights on Playwriting*, (130).

<sup>33</sup> See *The Haunted Stage*.

Wixson considers the limitations of language and concludes that the body usurps the spoken because the material cannot be denied. In his “‘In Better Places’: Space, Identity, and Alienation in Sarah Kane’s *Blasted*,” Wixson states:

*Blasted* depicts the violence that underlies all symbolic mapping (Cate’s and Ian’s rape) as well as focusing upon the ways in which the corporeal eludes orientational inscription . . . In my initial interest in the apparent limits of theory (which I now perceive also as the limits of language), *the inability of theory to manifest the material, or useful body*, I searched for those circumstances in which the body is undeniable, when the body’s material presence is a condition of the circumstance. Interestingly, one is that of pain, and another is that of live performance: two cases when the body must be acknowledged. (par. 15)

The materiality of theoretical modes of inquiry dis-inscribes the undeniability of the marked body. “If I feel pain for long enough, I won’t feel it anymore.” One might consider this as one might consider a narcissist who continually looks inward. To constantly look for the undeniability of the object is to miss the deniability of the subject. One cannot lose sight of her ability to doubt. Pointing in towards itself long enough inevitably forces any reference to uncertainty, “Is that really happening on stage?” to absolute certainty, “Of course not.” Let one not ever doubt that once “put up there,” whether known or not, it is an object (of art). The fear that “That...touch touch touch” is more than that...that there is excess of the body that cannot be accounted for...that meaning, inversely, may be all too clear: There is nothing but the represented (body), as Ian finds out at the end of the play. Perhaps the ending is a romance,

reassigning the taboo of cannibalism a sweet turn, like a kiss on the cheek. Perhaps also the ending reveals that the consumption of the other is *not* material at all.

Use representation more, to remind us that the body is the more, and, all that there is. The characters, as well as the reader, wish to fall back on the word of the author<sup>34</sup>, the authorized word on the matter at hand for Ian and Cate. They cannot, however, reach her. he reflexive and the reflective. In Ellen Kaplan's study of Kane's plays *Crave* and *4:48 Psychosis*, the processes of signification fall back on the author's shoulders (Author's Note). Kaplan states, "The mental and emotional collapse seem to be taking place within the consciousness of the writer, offering a more despairing picture of disintegration" of the self" (120). Greig, among others, opposes this reading of authorial biography onto the work. Kaplan's essay is published by Intellect, a publishing company that prides itself in sticking to the author's power. Its website states, "We differ from other publishers by campaigning for the author rather than producing a book or journal to fill a gap in the market." The gap in the market exists in part because of this privileging of the author. The campaigning for the author creates and sustains that gap. Cannibalism in drama collapses the body of work with the body of the author in such a way that the newly constituted entity that cannot be qualified enables a death before birth from with-in/out that gap.

Cannibalism, in all its excess, does not dissipate, *per se*, but it does "fill" all kinds of gaps and has done so for quite some time, perhaps always. It is a sign that marks the fringes of humanity, the borders of conscience, as well as the borders between self and other. For Graham Saunders, the taboo helps to create a "space where convention and language itself [ ] collapse into non-iterability, to be replaced by Kane's poetics of corporeality and populated by bodies of

---

<sup>34</sup> See "part iii" for further explanation.

pain” (4). These bodies, Saunders continues, “are merged violently with their environment . . . Cate’s transporting interludes [, for example,] are similar to Kane’s explosive moments of spatial reconfiguration and graphic violence in that all are able to elude naturalistic currents, creating a textual hole that disturbs the phenomenological foundation that grounds identity in environment” (4, 5). Identity is grounded to the author in Saunders’ assessment. The “disquieting effect . . . her metaphorical landscape” (Saunders) has can be assuaged by the author. The dramatist Una Chauduri defines this feeling of disquiet a kind of “static exilic consciousness” (qtd. in Saunders 4) through a “staging of violence that violates the rules of representation and convention within what is designated as theatrical space” (Saunders 4).

In the instance of *Blasted*, the evocation of cannibalism does not evoke a zone of transition and transaction/graphic violence toward spatial reconfiguration. The cannibalism (content) of the play mimics the cannibalism (form) of the play which mimics the functionality of the “( )”<sup>35</sup>, which eats its own intended purpose. Further, the Author’s Note, regardless of its (stated) purpose, coupled with the Editor’s Note, produces yet another layer of cannibalism.

Herein lies a moment that collapses the reflexive (performance) and reflective (reading) experiences into a “new” kind of aesthetic experience, which reveals signification to be an infinite affair, due to its self-splintering, that finally cannibalizes itself, which then, blows apart again. The presentation of Ian’s cannibalistic act inverts the play’s formal self-destruction, i.e., an explosion on stage. The metaphor of cannibalism, and all that it signifies, is interwoven with its presentation: There is no material aesthetic; there is only aesthetic immateriality. The excess transforms the prop. In an interview with Graham Saunders, Kane exclaims that upon seeing the play for the first time the prop exceeds her intent for it:

---

<sup>35</sup> Which, if one considers that the Author’s Note asks that the conventional understanding of the aside be dropped, then this adds yet another layer to the paratextuality of the play.

In *Blasted* Ian's almost kind of deified I think in a way that I didn't realize until I saw it performed. I went in for the technical run and when I watched at the end and he had all this blood and it started raining, and the blood was washed away, I thought it was kind of Christ-like. (*LMKM* 64)

The performance does not match what she wrote. Kane expresses an awareness that the performative nature of writing *can* usurp the performative nature of speech, which is often valued at the expense of the written.<sup>36</sup> However, Kane's note expresses an anxiety that the opposite might occur during the performance: The actor might just spend a little too much time worrying over her lines, rather than on the performance of those lines.<sup>37</sup> Does Kane's note suggest a movement back to the operational because too much time is spent focusing on the writing, so much so that the writing has lost its power or edge?

In his *Love Me or Kill Me: Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes*, Graham Saunders points out that Kane distinguishes between the play on the page and the play on stage. He states, "Kane draws a [ ] distinction between *performance* in the theatre and *text for performance*" (17). For Kane, the reading experience threatens the performance:

Increasingly, I'm finding performance much more interesting than acting; theatre more compelling than plays. Unusually for me, I'm encouraging my friends to see my play *Crave* *before* reading it, because I think of it more as text for performance than as a play. (emphasis mine, qtd. in Saunders 17)

---

<sup>36</sup> Derrida's claim may be found primarily in his *Of Grammatology*.

<sup>37</sup> Refer to her Author's Note.

The performance touches “other things” that reading cannot, or should not color first, at least.<sup>38</sup>

“Performance is visceral,” Kane notes in a 1998 interview in *The Guardian*, “It puts you in direct physical contact with thought and feeling” (qtd. in Saunders 17). One still cannot unmoor the object-ness of the live-ness that is theatre/plays.

Saunders touches on an anxiety over the collapse of the performance and the performative, which is expressed in this desire to escape the symbolic, the mark, the code. Saunders states, “In an uncanny echo of the initial reactions *Blasted* was to provoke, Tom Morris expressed the disquiet he felt about being in such close proximity to graphic staged violence:

Watching the cruelest of these plays in a small studio theatre is like watching a simulated rape in your living room. In very small theatres, it is impossible to walk out, 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 5)

Is it the violence? Or, is it that the distance between representation, simulation, and actuality gets a little too close for comfort? Kane denotes quite the opposite experience occurs when seeing her work: It is precisely *because* people can leave (and have) that the live-ness, the danger, the spontaneity, or performative aspects of the work can perhaps transcend its moorings. She states:

The first previews of *Blasted* at the Royal Court—before I had any idea of quite how extreme the reaction was going to be we had a couple of people walk out . . . And now I think it’s bound to happen. If it doesn’t then its probably because something is not working. I’ve seen productions of *Blasted* where there was no reason to walk out because somehow they never

---

<sup>38</sup> Is this a double-negative/double-bind? In other words, how does a desire to avoid “coloring” the seeing of the play correlate with the request that parentheses be recalibrated?

connected emotionally, you could completely distance yourself from what was going on. (qtd. in Saunders 14)

The live-ness of the performance, as opposed to the play, does not keep one in her seat, nor does it force one to leave. This difference in opinion reveals a similar anxiety about the power of the overlapping of the symbolic and the operative. Tom Morris is afraid to get up. Sarah Kane is terrified that he won't. What's at stake here? The play doesn't need the actors or the audience. Summer Neilson Moshy indicates such a fear by collapsing the reader and the performer, in an attempt to emphasize the live performance, over the text. By emphasizing it is the text that "contains gaps wherein the reader/performer inserts his/her personal understanding" (44), she authorizes the live performance instead:

The infiltration of self, as either audience or performer, coincides with all live productions. However, the gap-filing and theatric alliance processes instigated by Kane's texts intensify this immersion of self into performance text . . . Kane's work creates a wedge between the text-bound theatre production and an experiential Artaudian production . . . to an experience ultimately 'free' from the text itself. (44-45)

The text is the text. There is but a difference of degree (perhaps) between the text on the page and that on the stage. The necessary delusion of separation is what Artaud wants to destroy by disavowing, nearly, one in lieu of the other, which is quite probably impossible to do. By paralectically passing over the text, Moshy emphasizes the performance in the guise of "experience," tied to the event, the performance/performative. In other words, Moshy advocates a kind of phenomenology.

The audience does not need to stay in the theatre in order for the show to go on, despite it influencing the performance, however slightly that may be (Kane qtd. in Saunders 9). Why is it that the audience shall not be reading her plays before seeing them, but, the performance can transcend that experience, nevertheless, and despite the limitations of the form of theatre? For Kane, “form is content” (Stephenson and Langridge 130), and to want to distance the play from the theatre is to reveal a fear of the power of the reader, who, Graham Saunders figures outside of the reciprocal processes at work in performance. In his assessment of her assessment of how performance optimally works, Saunders states, “Kane’s vision, like her Renaissance predecessors, is also an uncompromising one. For her, tragedy [meaning drama in general-?] is a case of the writer, actor and audience” (21). How much, if any, credence one assigns Saunders’ claim, the reader still has a definitive role to play when the writer, actor, and audience “descend into hell imaginatively in order to avoid going there in reality” (Kane from *Rage and Reason* 133).

That Kane perceives a real difference between representation and actuality reinforces the fear, not that hell exists here already, as Kane claims (Saunders 20), but rather, that there is no hell to be had in the first place. The thought that “There is no uncertainty” must be avoided at all costs. Perhaps for this reason Kane made only one film, *Skin*. She states:

[The theatre] has always been the form I loved most because it’s live. There’s always going to be a relationship between the material and the audience that you don’t really get with a film . . . it’s a completely reciprocal relationship between the play and the audience . . . if people [give theatre] . . . the level of analysis that you listen to on the terraces [at a football game] . . . but they don’t. (Benedict, “Disgusting Violence?”)



The lack of reciprocity, which she notes exists in the live-ness of theatre (see analysis above), cannot occur for the audience and the film. The film goes on without the audience. It is not influenced one way or another. The play, though, goes on without the audience too. The reader's relationship with the play goes on, as long as the process of reading continues. Material documentation is not what makes the material, and, influence, as Judith Roof defines it, is multidirectional, up to a point. As one consumes the work of art, and is made one with it, so too does it linger and continue.

As much as Kane protests film's limitations, other critics and playwrights, like David Edgar, laud the play's uncanny similarity to television. He states, that Kane, not unlike her contemporaries, "operat[es] within the context of a British television drama . . . imprisoned within the homogenizing constraints of genre. And the return to plays set in real rooms has been matched by the equally dramatic re-emergence of plays set in real time" (*State of Play* 28). Edgar denotes the uncomfortable nature of the live-ness of theatre, but, he also reveals a clear desire to see the staging of cannibalism or rape as simulated, and not actual. The stage directions in *Blasted*, further, imply something similar. They do not indicate for the first rape, of Cate by Ian, that it is "simulated"; whereas, the second rape, of Ian by the Soldier, is. For Edgar, laying claim to television as the indicator of a place of cultural origin-ation (no origin), to be put onto the mediated and less-authentic stage, threatens the myth that there is no difference between the simulated and represented, and perhaps the actual, if for only a brief moment. The stage directions, on the other hand, still express a similar anxiety, as a reader to-be-performer is not shown, precisely, what the difference is, exactly, between simulation and actuality. She may infer, but she may not see "for sure." But, to figure, "It must be simulation, and therefore, not entirely 'real'" is to dismiss the uncertainty, giving credence to that which is uncomfortable,

falling into the illusion of the material, “That is real, that is not,” still does not distinguish between one “that” and the other “that.” The reader must choose a certainty that there is (always-already) uncertainty to prevent the notion that there is no uncertainty *vis-à-vis* the certainty of the taboo of cannibalism overlapping and denying its own (re)/presentation.

The Author’s Note enables yet another layer of cannibalism. It indicates that the “/” “indicates a point of interruption in overlapping dialogue” (2). How is the performative to function in this equation, from the reader’s perspective? This interruption, this penetration, is not an act of splitting apart *only*. The violence gives way to “overlapping,” or a kind of simultaneity. This mark is a means to unravel how the play treats materiality. At first glance, the material is everything for *Blasted*. From the re-scripting<sup>39</sup> of the language, materially on the page, to the emphasis on the props of the play, materially, on the stage, is what “it all boils down to.” And if “form is content,” as Kane suggests, and if she is dissatisfied with that form, meaning the structures of the Western dramatic tradition, then how shall materiality serve?

In her analysis of *Blasted*, Alice Rayner suggests that the objects on stage, the props, are “more than” what one sees. There is an excess of meaning, then, spilling out of the objects. There is more object-ness in objects. She states, “The ‘more than’ means the thing is not exhausted by whatever it may signify. The ‘more than’ paradoxically stands independent of representation at the same time it might be representing” (189). The objects on stage become less tangible by simply being on stage. “The more I see (excess), the more intangible it becomes.” Further, through the notes on the page, the explosion of the set, and the consumption of the dead baby in *Blasted*, the exchange between the reader (imagining herself as a performer seeing her as an audience member see the performer perform) and the actor (seeing herself as a performer

---

<sup>39</sup> A Derridean term meaning both “script” and “encrypt,” revealing the secreting nature of language.

imagining herself perform outside of herself) between the text on the page and the text on stage, between the immaterial and the material changes the nature of exchange.

The excess of meaning or signification occurs through an excess of the exchange that occurs through signification, between the reader and the text, the performer and the text, the reader and the performer, the object and the subject. If excited enough, though, this excess builds and has no room for further expansion; expansion does not go on and on. Eventually, the operational and the symbolic reach a critical stage of potentiality. “Eventually, I have to accept that there is only so much the form of the play and the meaning of the play can do, or not.” The “more than” gets treated from both a performing and reading experience as if that is all that there is, “more.” And so, the reader and the performer accept that inability to capture the excess and leave it, after that. Taboos can be considered as a representation of that excess. “If you go too far, you’ll leave humanity in all its *forms* behind.”

When put on stage, however, that excess of exchange is knowable directly from only the reader’s perspective. In *Dismemberment in/Dismemberment of Drama*, Craig Owens asks whether or not the script is more powerful than the performance. He asks, “What if we consider not only how language and theatrical conventions constrain performance, but are also necessary to it? . . . These constraints enable performance . . . the non-intervention of the audience is as essential as pretense is to the constitution of the performance *qua* performance” (128). What if the audience does *not*, though, “remain impassive, alert but still” (124) in the auditorium, i.e., the feeling that cannibalism is both a metaphor and an act, but not “really”? Revealed is the question, “Is it a gun?” Answer: “Absolutely (not).” It is unclear how to accept the objecthood of the gun on stage. “I want the object to be immaterial (both moot and non-existent).” Temporally speaking, this re-scripting has the affect of desiring time to be objectified, rather than relative,

perspectival, or subjective. How does one resolve these issues? Simple. What did the Author want? What is her “authoritative” word on the matter?

### **Part III: Cannibalism and the Author Function**

One sees the baby, as object, being eaten; Ian challenges its materiality by eating it. The baby as presented representation, its thingness, precludes or transcends its objectivity, as it too is shown to be eaten, becoming subject-ively reconstituted. Ian exclaims at the opening of the play that he has “shat in better places” (3) than the hotel in which he and Cate will be staying. Like that shat, under the floorboards, flushed beneath the material structure, he is reconstituted with the very object and thing-ness of the play, as he reconstitutes an object of the play with himself, which allows for the paratextuality of the play to (un)veil itself to the reader. This collapse reveals the truth that lies at the heart of the processes of mimesis. Taboos exist to ensure mimesis continues. Presented representations of taboos, in particular cannibalism, reveal that the gap between performance and the performative is only necessarily and perpetually in a constant state of explosion and implosion so that the option to doubt, that is, to construct one’s own narrative about self, via reading or performing, is sustained. Put on stage, cannibalism reveals this dynamic. The more one sees in the play, the more it gets “boiled down” to an irreducible affective response, which varies from individual to individual, but only in degree. The meaning for the play is not revealed to splinter apart, entering into an exponentially transacting occurrence. Alice Raynor claims that objects flow:

participate in multiple dimensions: in the signifying, narrative, and stylistic fictions of a drama; in the material, aesthetic, and tangible reality of things in themselves. But they also have a third function, which mediates these aspects, in the degree to which, as staged objects, they present themselves

as representations. Staging, that is, creates the representation of representation that isolates the fact of representation. (180-81)

The status of subject/objecthood changes when combining the processes at work via the notes that “precede” the play, and the processes at work when one considers Ian’s cannibalization of the dead baby under the floorboards at the end of Kane’s play. The former exposes how the power of play on stage is at odds with the play on the page. The latter enacts that awareness of signification to such a state of excitability that the representation of a presentation of a representation on stage denies signification, meaning that the page and the stage reconstitute one another. It is as if Ian fears his time will run out if he does not hurry up and use it. Paradoxically, he does not get to if it is spent. The reader does. Signification, taken out of its context and time, raises a fear in Ian: not only is an empty image that must be refilled left...he may not be able to do it with meaningful thoughts or acts.

However, this very thing that raises fear within Ian is the very stuff of transubstantiation, and that is scary. Annabelle Singer proposes that a theatrical outside/inside binary holds by emphasizing the performance over the will of the author. Because the characters on stage are treated as real,<sup>40</sup> in order to consider the individual audience member’s experience as not-her-own, “What they experience is what we all experience; the world is but a dream; the stage is more real than what’s outside the theatre.” Transubstantiation occurs:

The violence, the watched suffering [in Kane’s work], is not beautiful; it is a warning. Experiencing Christ’s suffering may bring us closer to him, but watching a human’s pain forces one to ask: What is the difference between him and me? (157)

---

<sup>40</sup> Notice how she posits the characters identities as in, as if their experience is real because the spectator sees it.

The warning is that transubstantiation might just occur, but not between spectator and actor. Transubstantiation occurs between the work on the page and the work on the stage, via the reader. Mexican dramatist Alexandro Jodorowsky<sup>41</sup> vehemently opposes such an idea, and, not unlike Bell, Jodorowsky in his “*Vers l'éphémère panique*” (1965) chastises any attempt to find the permanent, ephemeral essence of some ill-defined concept of theatre and/or plays. He indicates that a focus such as this leads to looking at the text, rather than at life, to looking at form as opposed to spontaneity (Carlson 459).

It is just too terrifying to admit that there is an imaginary theatrical present/ce that is felt *sans* either performer or audience member. The reader has access to transubstantiation, the end game for what lies at the heart of mimesis, that is, cannibalism, which functions both this “( )” way and this “/” way. The play enacts its own cannibalization and reveals that performance, like language, whether or written or uttered, is an self-cannibalizing act. This tension goes through a kind of *sparagmotic* process, as it collapses in on itself, which the reader considers: We want there to be meaning found only through piercing, through violence, through splintering...the individual pieces, as they relate to each other (like fucking atoms or particles). For once Kane's stage directions as in-direct performatives allows for the act of cannibalism to be seen as a looped paratext: The taboo on stage the act of signification is an act, a process of performance.

### **The Author is Dead. All Hail the Author.**

That act, then, as it relates to the Author, can be separated into two different kinds of authenticating. On one level, there is the assurance that the experience of the play, live, shall be more palpable and immediate than the reading of the play in solitude. As a reader, one is able to “peek behind the curtain” and get a look at presumably how the play will be interpreted by the

---

<sup>41</sup> Founder of *théâtre panique* with Fernando Arrabal

director and actors. The reader, though, is not “actually” the director, nor is she an actor on stage. She may be in an existential or metaphorical sense, but she is not really producing the thing. She is a voyeur; well, she is reminded of her voyeurism. So, despite any beliefs she may have about creating the text via the performance of her production of meaning,<sup>42</sup> the real thing is the material stage, material bodies, and material props. Thus, seeing it, being there with others to feel the play as a collective—the notation for the notations (Kane’s Note) implies that something unique and powerful does not transfer via the play on the page. Her notations suggest signification the actors must convey and that the reader must interpret and imagine, but not quite as well as what *would have happened* if she had seen the play.

Putting notations before the play is not unusual. Tennessee Williams’ stage directions for *Suddenly, Last Summer*, for example, cannot be considered as stage “directions” in the strictest sense. One understands how to have Mrs. Venable “enter[] with the assistance of a silver-knobbed cane . . . wear[ing] a lavender lace dress, and over her withered bosom is pinned a starfish of diamonds” (9). More unclear are the directions for the stage itself, which most certainly is its own character in his play:

The set may be as unrealistic as the décor of a dramatic ballet . . . The interior [of the house] is blended with a fantastic garden which is more like a tropical jungle, or forest, in the prehistoric age of giant fern-forests when living creatures had flippers turning to limbs and scales to skin. (9)

One can find these kinds of indicators in a myriad of other plays from a myriad of other dramatic genres, and in this example, one cannot help but see the use of repetition and imagery as poetry

---

<sup>42</sup> See *Six Characters in Search of An Author*.

in its own right. The purpose of Kane's notation or Williams' may be, as Kane's note indicates above, "to clarify meaning" (2). For her note above, it is to ensure that the use of the "[ ]" is understood, i.e., that the signifier "[ ]" signifies in a particular way that is not to be mistaken for another one:

IAN. Enjoy myself while I'm here.

*(He inhales deeply on his cigarette and swallows the last of the gin neat.)*

[I'll] Call that coon, get some more sent up.

(12)

It is as if a fantastical Kane is speaking "directly" to a fantastical actor, "Don't say those words in the '[ ]'s, 'guy-who-shall-be- playing Ian'; that's just for your own edification, to-be-performed, immaterially, and a knowledge that the reader now has as well.

The "( )" indicates that they (and that which is inside) are to be treated as "lines." The implication is that the actors, perhaps, may have a desire to rush through the actions. "Treat them as importantly as you treat the lines you speak," the words suggest. On another level, the author herself is being authenticated by the sheer positioning of the "Editor's Note" after it, yet "before" the play. Yet, who wrote the "Author's Note," in lieu of this unnamed editor? One infers that this note from the author is Kane's. And it is. But as much as the note may be Kane's,

The unnamed editor who penned the "Editor's note," which comes after the "Author's note," echoes such a sentiment; it portends what it states: there is an "authentic" version of this play "out there," and here it is. You are holding the thing in your hands, not to be mistaken from other versions you may have once held before. In other words, by sheer virtue of the "Editor's note" appearing second, it authorizes hierarchically, while collapsing the work with the author simultaneously; the Author is god, and you are holding an extension of said author, in your



hands, right now. Very right now. The work cannot be misconstrued from earlier versions, from before. It was “first reprinted in 2000”; in other words, smacks the unnamed editor, “please take back the ‘re,’ readers, by focusing on the ‘first’ in the first part of my statement.” This is the most original, authentic, authorized one, just so long as the reader forgets that the works and performances from “before” are unauthorized, or at least, lesser versions. It is almost as if the play is ashamed of itself, “Don’t look at those mistakes I made from before.”

The paradox lies in the desire to hierarchicalize via the conflation of the author with the work, via the authorization of the work’s authenticity, via the work’s being in its materiality, via the disavowal of earlier versions of the play. The implication is that the author and the work were not . . . one, before. They are always-already in a state of cannibalism.

**Chapter 3**  
**David Greig's *San Diego*: Cannibalism**  
**(the Paratextual/the Paraleptical)**  
**through the Aural**

The character Laura in David Greig's play *San Diego* cuts parts of herself off, sears them in a hot pan, and then commands the character David to take and eat. Performatively speaking, the vocal image of Laura that David's subsequent smacking produces cannibalizes Laura. The saying and the doing connect through the sound of cannibalism. Laura's explicit commands that the character David eat her, consummated in the sound of David's smacking, challenges the Austrian notion of the performative. The saying and the doing depend upon the hearing, which distances the saying from the doing.<sup>43</sup> In order to condense the distance between actuality and representation, the hearing splits the doing in such a way that it cannot be perceived. Derrida denotes that "hearing-oneself-speak,"<sup>44</sup> precludes Laura being both speaker and hearer, both that-to-be-consumed and consumer. She cannot enact transubstantiation with(out) such a gap on stage.

David, though, allows for Laura's transubstantiation, or in Derridean terms, the "hiatus" or gap between speaking subject and the hearing subject to collapse in this "moment" or "instant" (*Augenblick*)<sup>45</sup>. In "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials,"<sup>46</sup> Derrida indicates that the hearing challenges Husserl's idea of a present presence; through the gap between Laura and

---

<sup>43</sup> The hiatus must exist as the silently speaking to oneself requires one distance herself from speaker and hearer. In *Languages of the Unsayable*, Derrida indicates that this process is one of negation that denies the self (25).

<sup>44</sup> Found in *Speech and Phenomena*, pp. 69-78. Note Derrida is playing off of Husserl's idea that lived experience (*Erlebnis*) has more to do with the interior than the exterior. Derrida wishes to add exterior "detours" to the process.

<sup>45</sup> Literally, in "the blink of an eye."

<sup>46</sup> from *Languages of the Unsayable* (1989), p. 25.

David comes constant reflection back upon their separate pasts and anticipatory, subsequent looking forward to their separate futures. As the (dis)embodied voice transubstantiates Sebastian in *Suddenly, Last Summer*, so does the sound in *San Diego*. Laura's voice enacts, and David's sound consummates the cannibalism,

Because the play contains versions of the playwright David Greig, scholars contend he stretches the boundaries of how the theatre "mediates" (Rodosthenous 3). "His personal voice," according to George Rodosthenous, "is characterized by the sensitive musicality of his text, an individual sense of humour . . . Greig creates works of extreme visual beauty and emotional directness in lyrical soundscapes" (3). The act of eating, i.e., seeing the eating, does not necessarily confirm its having happened. The musicality of the text, the sound that transcends the text, transforms David, transubstantiates Laura. Note that Rodosthenous contends the visual divines from the lyrics: Smack, Smack, Smack. Also note that Rodosthenous does not stop with an analysis of how Greig's plays function, but he goes on to intertwine and collapse the works with the writer; he reconstitutes the writer with the text—he makes an Author, an Author with which Rodosthenous might eat himself.

The writer Greig, too, chooses to eat Sarah Kane in a similar fashion. Recall his "Editor's Note" that follows her "Author's Note" and precedes the script of the play. The "Editor's Note" thus cannibalizes, i.e., it reconstitutes itself with the play *Blasted*, just as Rodosthenous's "Abstract" that precedes his interview with David Greig does. Quoting Greig, he writes:

Greig believes that theatre is a form of voyeurism, a 'consensual exchange' to 'look at people and watch how they behave.' In his work, the act of watching thus acquires a new role surpassing the simple function of pleasure, and enabling the viewer to engage further with the theatre's mediation . . . voyeurism in theatre being re-read as a

new freedom of the gaze . . . an emancipation of restrained energy, testing the boundaries of taboo. (3)

Greig's personal voice is Laura's voice is the sound of her cannibalization. Rodosthenous wants to eat Greig, as Author/Work of Art. For him, the act is one of looking, which is odd since the vocal imagery he articulates at the beginning of his abstract depends upon, happens "in" the sound, which cannot be read.

Art historian Kathy O'Dell states this very thing. She claims that language and the body are inseparable and manifest one another.<sup>47</sup> Inspired by Lacanian concepts, she uses psychoanalysis to push beyond its limitations.<sup>48</sup> She states:

Lacan believes the body is "already written." . . . Lacan opens the door for individuals to seize control of what these moments entail. to take command of the powers of representation through which the body is already and always will be mediated, to marshal such effort toward doing one's mediating oneself. (55)

She, along with many art historians, considers body art as a means to see how inseparable the body and language truly are. Amelia Jones states that body art exposes "[t]he representational aspects of this<sup>49</sup> work" (33) as a play in and of itself, i.e., the body cannot exist without representation. In her study of the performance artist Laurie Anderson's work, Jones quotes Anderson when she states, "Body art . . . shows that the body can never 'be known *purely*' as a

---

<sup>47</sup> See Amelia Jones' *Body Art: Performing the Subject*, pp. 33-4; and, see O'Dell's "Fluxus Feminus," p. 55.

<sup>48</sup> In this instance, she discusses the inherent masculinity embedded in language and the body.

<sup>49</sup> She means her own, but, "this" refers to this study as well.

totalizable, fleshy whole that rests outside of the arena of the symbolic” (qtd in Owens, “The Discourse of Others” 169). But what about sound? How might sound factor into the myth of the totalizable, fleshy and knowable whole that is the body? What do we do with Laura’s self-cannibalizing acts?

I add that the word made sound made vocal image forces a reconsideration of the nature of the mediation in theatre. The inexpressible word or the un-sayable sound transubstantiates the poet through the work of art. “A poet’s work is his life, and vice versa,” according to Mrs. Venable. The form of Sebastian is the content of his work, and vice versa, and if the “form is the content” (Kane), then what of the form that cannot be categorized, or felt or proven to have been felt? What of the inexpressible word, or the sound?

#### **Part I: Paratextualizing the Author/Text**

*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth . . . For he spoke, and it came to be . . .*

Psalm 33:6, 9<sup>50</sup>

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . .*

John 1:1, 14

The Book of St. John lays claim to the inseparable nature of flesh and language. However, it is not transubstantiated until the first practice of the Last Supper, eating the flesh made from I AM, the inexpressible Word(s). As unleavened bread once signified salvation by being passed over, Jesus’s flesh now transubstantiates within the individual Christian, passing over the Passover. Note how the book of John expresses a desire to collapse the divide between the actual and the represented. David Greig’s *San Diego* similarly “desires” to cannibalistically collapse the represented David in the play and the actual playwright, David Greig. and the actual

---

<sup>50</sup> “Please, not *The Bible*.”

as well, but the cannibalism in *San Diego* is spoken to-be-actualized with David's sounds of smacking.

Laura's commandments that David "take and eat" her flesh fulfills St. John's wish: Language and Body are indistinguishable. Laura wants to be inseparable from her cell mate, David. Through a commandment, and all commandments are a performative, cannibalism occurs. Cut and seared flesh for David to consume will reconstitute Laura within him. Both *Blasted* and *San Diego* show that there is no difference between the written and the performed. However, unlike *Blasted*, *San Diego* proposes that it is the disembodied voice that cannibalizes.

Reflexively, David Greig's Editor's Note that authorizes Kane's text as the most authentic, functions paratextually, cannibalistically as well because it is situated in between the Author's Note and the script of *Blasted*. The script and the Author's Note, functioning as teeth, chomp upon Greig's note, and, if the body and language are the same, then Greig as well, not just his note. He is both playwright and work of art in the 2001 edition of *Blasted*.

Greig's note, situated as it is, cannibalizes itself. The body of the note manifests Greig's body. In *San Diego*, the body manifests via commanded cannibalism in *San Diego*, achieving what the protagonist is after in Goethe's *Faust*. At the end of the play, Faust decides to rewrite the "Word" to "In the Beginning was the Deed." Rather than seeing a dichotomy of inner and outer life (watcher and actor, audience member and writer), or even inner and outer body, or even subjective and objective experiences, Faust, like Laura, considers the possibility as to whether or not there might be an in-between space (of in-activity) but a lack of spatiality altogether. What if the body in space is not a body at all but a commandment embodied instead? David Grieg's *San Diego* equates commanded cannibalism to the paratextual, revealing that the two function in not dissimilar ways.

Cannibalism in David Greig's *San Diego* sheds light on the nature of how theatre performs and offers such a third option that collapses representation with the actual. When Laura insists that David eat a part of her flesh in the play, she commands, and he obeys. The performative utterance, what Austin calls an "explicit performative," of Laura's full-fills itself by doing the eating.

Like the title of this project, her utterance enacts Austin's notion of the explicit performative, i.e., that the saying or speaking is the doing. This project offers that a command that must be followed, enacts an unspeakable, but tangible response that performs. As one reads, one consumes the work. The doing becomes an act of performance through the reading. Hyper-reflexively, the reader is now, if she was not beforehand, rather aware of being hailed. Paradoxically, the reader knows what she must admit she does not know in order to engage with the work. She must give herself over to the work. She must lose herself in it.

David, too, knows he must lose himself by putting Laura into himself. Laura's self-penetration, coupled with her commandment, forces David to relocate himself spatially. He is no longer apart from Laura; he is a-part of her. Transubstantiation takes place. Further, the spoken word in the play becomes both asynchronous and synchronous, which adds another layer of cannibalization because commandments, by losing their Authors (who is doing the speaking exactly?), become Authors in and of themselves. The Method of Laura's substance being reconstituted into David is the Matter of David's redemption being constituted.

The fields of anthropology and linguistics have exhausted the concept of cannibalism as it pertains to language acquisition, and ultimately to subject-formation, but no linguistic studies have been done to suggest that language itself, functions cannibalistically.<sup>51</sup> Representation

---

<sup>51</sup> Neither does this work portend such a scientific claim.

itself functions because of the spectre of taboos, especially cannibalism. Rodosthenous states that through sound the “emancipation of restrained energy [we might] test[] the boundaries of taboo.” It is not that representation might be transcended, *per se*, as Moshy contends, but rather, the boundaries of taboo do not “really” exist, and never did in the first place. Cannibalism reveals itself at the heart of representation, a heart that eats and reconstitutes itself.

Cannibalism’s legacy to that binary between Civilized Man (clean and proper), who uses language, and the animal, who does not, who makes waste, is to remind the Civilized she is not human after all, and the rem(a)inder is supposed to confirm the death, the other-ness of the other. In that disavowal, though, of the waste or the material, is the disavowal of language as well. Without the language, there would be no waste. And Language allegedly separates the beast from beauty. In its inseparability *vis-à-vis* cannibalism, Laura, like all animals, comes to terms with the fact that she will eventually die, as Language begins to break down in the wake of her cannibalization, and this awareness she attempts to postpone with her occasional jests about her health, and with the drugs:

LAURA. Bite my lip.

David bites her lip.

Oww.

DAVID. Sorry.

LAURA. It’s all right  
Full of iron  
Builds your bones.

*Darkness.*

*End of Act Two.*

.....



PILOT. They'll help you here  
They'll help you out of it.

LAURA. Dad  
I wish.

PILOT. They can, Laura. Drugs nowadays.

LAURA. Yeah, drugs.

PILOT. It will. Trust me. It will go away  
You weren't always like this  
You were cheerful. You were a cheerful kid.

LAURA. Yeah. Before I fucked up.

PILOT. Before . . . before . . . what?

LAURA. I dunno  
I fell down a big well.

PILOT. . . .<sup>52</sup>

LAURA. . . .

.....

PILOT. Then what? Tell me, please.

LAURA. I honestly don't know  
I . . . It . . .  
It feels like I'm hungry all the time.

PILOT. Are you eating?

LAURA. Not hungry. Like I'm hungry.

*She slumps.*

I want to go home.

.....

COUNSELLOR. Why are you cutting yourself Laura?

---

<sup>52</sup> This elliptical notation appears in the published text.

LAURA. I'm not cutting myself exactly.

COUNSELLOR. What then?

LAURA. I'm butchering myself.

COUNSELLOR. You're certainly doing yourself harm.

LAURA. At least I'm eating.

COUNSELLOR. . . .

LAURA. I do cook the meat first. In fact, I want to be cured.

COUNSELLOR. Well, that's good, Laura, that's a start.

LAURA. In salt. Or maybe smoked.

*Darkness*

(45, 76-77)

Those boys in Cabeza de Lobo were sure hungry. Unlike those boys, the body does not seem to fill Laura, especially as she excises it to-be-consumed/conjoined by/with David. It is the sound that images the transubstantiation she is after, that is, to go home. Dr. Sugar administers a drug to Catherine to get her to talk it out, which Sebastian, in a way, does: Laura is administered drugs. It occurs offstage and apparently for quite some time. No one sees the drug going into the vein. This passive way of administration paves the way for transubstantiation. The drug delays the cannibalism, rather than speeds up the process of transubstantiation to occur. In that delay can be briefly heard that smacking sound again, ghosting in the mind.

Scholars such as Rodosthenous contend that the majority of the play examines how the alter-ego works, in particular, David Greig's alter-egos, which display and manifest a variety of talents, from highway construction to flying a plane to riding in one, these characters on stage tell Rodosthenous that Greig expands the boundaries of taboos and civic conventions. Just like

Montaigne's "On Cannibals," which asks which is the more savage, the European or the Cannibal, this examination of Greig's via the play forces a more present and forceful reappraisal of the cannibal/civilized binary.

The binary does not break down because there is not one. The play's form, further provides a way to understand how cannibalism functions in paratextual and paraleptical ways. The "Prologue," for example, opens the play, and, not unlike the paratextuality, the cannibalizing or reconstituting that Greig's "Editor's Note" enacts, *San Diego's* "Prologue" paraleptically opens the play, brushing aside the meat of the script as focused through the prism of "David Greig's" (the character's) choral-like soliloquies at the beginning and ending. Further, it brackets it with its counterpart, the closing "Epilogue." The play becomes the thing, paratextualized, cannibalized by paratextual notations:

#### Prologue

*David Greig is sitting in an aeroplane seat.*

DAVID GREIG. It's the summer of 2000. I'm flying to San Diego, California.<sup>53</sup>  
It will be the first time I have ever visited the American continent . . .

.....

DAVID. Thank God  
Thank you God  
Thank God.

*The bump and screech of a plane landing.*  
*The reverse thrust of engines.*  
*The noise quiets.*  
*Darkness.*  
*In the darkness.*  
*The Pilot's voice.*

PILOT. Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to San Diego, we hope you've

---

<sup>53</sup> Is it just me, or does that line echo Christopher Nolan's *Inception's*, "You're sitting on a train . . ."?

enjoyed flying with us today. The temperature outside is a rather warm 82 degrees and the local time is 3.37 p.m.  
(5, 115-16)

The Author at the end of the play reconstitutes himself into the David during the play, and, if we are to believe Greig's interviewers (biographers—author-izers), then all the characters are interchangeable. Not just interchangeable, but re-member-able. It is the bracketing that both reveals and enacts cannibalism; one can hear its aesthetic heartbeat, perhaps felt as a kind of abjection. At the opening of Act Two, Scene Two, the stage directions indicate:

*The Pilot sits at a table in the desert under an umbrella.  
The Stewardess and Andrew are looking at him.  
They are drinking from a bottle of whisky.  
The Pilot is sitting in silent abjection.*  
(45)

Abjection, for Elizabeth Grosz, "is a sickness at one's own body . . . the result of recognizing that the body is *more than, in excess of*, the 'clean and proper'" (emphases mine, 78). The "more than" that I analyze in Chapter 2 takes on a different hue in lieu of Grosz' (and Kristeva's) notion that there is more material to the body, rather than more meaning, *per se*. Teresa Brennan's *History After Lacan* (1993) suggests that the flesh and the word are nearly synonymous:

If . . . some part of the structure of language is based on an original form of intra-uterine communication, then the question had to arise as to why language works in ways that either facilitate or hinder connections. Presumably facilitating connections are basic to ***the language of the flesh*** which has to be logical, in the sense that one thing connects with another in a way that facilitates growth. This suggests that logical thought, the connections made through words, is ***a kind of mimesis of a hypothetical origin form of communication*** which was both mental and physical. And ***if . . . the word can be turned in certain directions, a***

*turning hinged on its connection with a visual image, affects and motor activity, then this direction will affect the ease with which connections are made.* This must be so, given that the image can lock a word inside hysteria (femininity). In masculinity, the outward forceful projection of image and affects should allow those words to flow more freely, but at the price of a divorce from affective feeling. (emphases mine, 223-24)

If “the word made flesh,” as Brennan intimates, a literal, rather than a figurative transubstantiated moment of commanded creation (see Austin) occurs. Such a move is one of apathy, an always-already projection of an (non-simulated) image of God, either in his (spoken/manifested) works or in his own manifestation as simultaneous father and son (other), that divorces the subject from its Author. “God never cared, if he set us up to descend into a demonic existence (Kristeva’s notion of language) absent the affective, but present the abject body. In *San Diego*, Pious, an illegal immigrant living in San Diego, who presumably lives under an expressway and does odd jobs to get by, tries to convince his new friend, who he has renamed “Daniel,” that his (Daniel’s) mother will turn up (he has been looking for her his entire life) because the worded map on the postcard she sent, its origin, will guide him to his destination. She claims she has been a backup singer for Wings, which Daniel infers must be the way to find her. Their questions about the topographicality, the materiality, the written/represented world, in God’s mind, is a desire to put oneself outside of the duality of spirit and flesh, between representation and action:

PIOUS. . . . .  
He’s watching us  
He’s in heaven watching us and . . .  
Daniel.  
. . . . .

DAVID. Tell me, Mother, in San Diego: do they suppose that we are ants? That there are so many of us? Do they suppose that we are dogs? That we love them? Do they suppose that we are cattle? That they can eat our bodies?

*[Pious and Daniel are still on stage, continuing their conversation]*

PIOUS. You musn't be angry, son.

DANIEL. Do you suppose that I came here to shovel their sand?

PIOUS. God will see to it.

DANIEL. When I was a boy in Jos  
I lived nearby a white family  
I walked into their garden one day  
A boy, about my age  
He was playing with a chemistry set  
I went to see what he was doing  
He threw blue acid in my face  
I ran home  
And my mother's sister's sister's sister held me  
And I asked her  
Did the white boy maybe suppose that I was a thief?  
And she said, 'No, you little shit. The white boy supposed that you had come to kill him.'

PIOUS. Everything is written in a map in God's head.

DANIEL. I know. I know what's written.

PIOUS. We can't know.

DANIEL. I know. I know exactly where I'm going. I know exactly.  
It's in a map in my head.

PIOUS. Son. You're grieving.

DANIEL. I didn't come to San Diego to bury my father.

PIOUS. Son.  
You came to San Diego to find your mother.

*Marie is on the couch.  
Andrew is caressing her face.*

*She wakes up.*

ANDREW. Did you see God?

MARIE. No.

ANDREW. Maybe it was just a passing thing and now he's gone.

MARIE. No

He'll come back.

(emphases mine, 83-4)

These exchanges model new exchanges for theatre. Cannibalism serves as a model to understand how sonic materiality or tangible immateriality in *San Diego* reveals the nature of the material to be more than materiality.

The “more than,” in other words can be found in the “excess,” or rather, the reconstitution that occurs in Act Three, which combines and restructures, i.e., eats, pieces and bits of Acts One and Two. The Prologue precedes Act One. Act Three opens with its own Prologue, but it does not speak language; David Greig does not speak. The paratextual monologue is silently marked:

## PROLOGUE<sup>54</sup>

*Darkness.*

*In the darkness, music: “Band on the Run,” Wings, at the instrumental break.*

*A sudden burst of flame.*

*Innocent's body lies on a pyre of flames.*

*Daniel and Pious stand before it. On the ground in the dust, the melon, cigarette lighter, the string and the knife.*

*The music is coming from a tiny flatbed tape recorder playing an old cassette.*

*Laura is lying in a hospital bed.*

*David is sitting on the bed, wearing a hospital gown.*

*They are holding hands.*

*Darkness.*

---

<sup>54</sup> Note that the “Prologue” earlier is in Lower-case; whereas, the “PROLOGUE” is in ALL-CAPS.

The mark of cannibalism, heard.

## **Part II: From Kane to Greig: The Mark of Cannibalism and Sonic Materiality**

Sarah Kane's stage directions in *Blasted* not only perform cannibalism on the page for the reader, but also reveal that the performative aspects of language are cannibalistic in nature. Since the 2001 edition is *the* definitive text to emulate, and the text lacks a definitive "point of interruption [that signifies] overlapping dialogue" (2), all that is left is a search for the interruption that never comes. Rendering only overlap to parse through, eventually, slows the process of signification because of the rab/pid act of looking that first occurs. The reader looks so much so that she disregards the search and disavows interruption in its entirety. "The visual image is what the crowd is after. The set explodes. The dead baby is eaten. A rape in Leeds is a metaphor for Civil War." The words are disregarded in lieu of the image, and ironically enough, the stage directions enact this anxiety by recoding what the signifiers have conventionally been understood to mean. The reading cannot find the interruption. The dialogue, theoretically speaking, is all overlapping in the absence of the "/". The reader can do what the actor cannot. The "/" can be enacted, but it cannot be inserted into the text. The lines do not interrupt. They overlap and overlap and overlap, eating the line that came before, consuming the line that comes after. The lack of a "/" becomes more influential than if there was one there. Regardless of whether or not one exists in the "original" text, Kane herself, along with Greig, insist that this is the authorized version. It trumps all others that are or may have once been floating about out there. The stage directions enact the thing it simulates on stage, on the page.



In *San Diego*, Laura, who may be an alter-ego of David (the persona of David Greig the playwright),<sup>55</sup> teases and then commands David to eat her flesh. Word becomes Spirit:

DAVID. I'm hungry.

*Andrew enters*

ANDREW. Love? You've been praying all night, love

Come to bed

...<sup>56</sup>

Love, you have to eat

You have to sleep

You have to . . .

...

Come on, love.

LAURA. How do you want me?

DAVID. In me.

LAURA. Tell.

DAVID. I want to feel full up again

Like before.

LAURA. Do you want me tender?

DAVID. Yeah.

LAURA. Do you want me wrapped in foil and butter

And baked

Slowly, slowly, so all my juices keep their flavor.

DAVID. Sounds good, yeah.

.....

LAURA. Or do you want me flash-fried over a hot flame

Hissing and spitting

---

<sup>55</sup> The play suggests this connection, as projected words on a screen announce the play is Greig's and that he, the author, has decided to drop in on the performance as fictional/real figure.

<sup>56</sup> Part of the text.

Herbs rubbed into my skin, rare and red on the inside.

DAVID. God yeah.

.....

LAURA. Or d'you want me marinated in wine  
Paper-thin strips of me  
Soaked in delicious booze.

DAVID. Bloody hell.

LAURA. Or stewed with chili  
So I burn your mouth off.

DAVID. Fuck  
I just want what you want.

LAURA. I want you to eat me raw.

DAVID. God. You sure?

LAURA. You scared to?

DAVID. No.

LAURA. Go on then.

DAVID. Just take a bite?

LAURA. Taste first  
Lick first.

DAVID. . . .<sup>57</sup>

LAURA. Go on.

*David gets into bed with Laura. He crawls between her legs.*

ANDREW. ....  
                    Seriously. I don't think God would mind . . .  
                    Would he  
                    Could he mind? If we . . . expressed our . . .  
                    He made us sexual beings after all

---

<sup>57</sup> Part of the text.

We have to conjoin, in union, blessed union, isn't it?  
 And we conjoin . . . in a holy way, and . . .  
 That's a form of worship isn't it?  
 It's a form of prayer in a way  
 Isn't it?  
 When two people lose themselves in each other's  
 bodies its' sacred  
 Isn't it?  
 I think, in fact, I know that God, if and when he  
 makes himself available to you in revelation, I know that  
 he, if you asked him would make it very plain to you by  
 sign or symbol that he wanted you to make love  
 With me  
 Now  
 . . .  
 Besides, love  
 You do look fantastic . . .

*Laura screams.*

*Marie falls sideways. In a faint.*

*Andrew approaches her.*

*David emerges from the bed.*

*He swallows something.*

*Laura kisses him.*

*They hold each other.*

(79-82)

Getting laid, getting eaten: The two get conflated here, both of which are to stand in for a desire to achieve transubstantiation. In *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Renato Poggioli indicates that such an experience, i.e., transubstantiation, is possible, but not through sound. He states, “[F]or modern poetry, the Word is not sound-sense, but idea-thing; in its vision the Word is not spirit which became flesh, but flesh which became spirit” (197). Poggioli calls this process the “metaphysics of the metaphor” (196), or what he claims that one finds in T.S. Eliot’s works, a “transhumanizing tendency,” i.e., “man is a thing we must transcend” (182). *San Diego* suggests that unheard sound-*sans*-sense via the text on the page. I can’t really hear the sounds when I read the play. Like Innocent, I “can’t read the writing” (61).

Poggioli quotes Louis Aragon, the twentieth-century French poet and novelist, who states, “Life is language; writing is a completely different one. Their grammars are not mutually interchangeable” (197). The “myth of *pure poetry*” (Poggioli 199) enacts in *San Diego*. Poggioli claims that this poetry is “ideally represented by Mallarmé” (199), but might the sound cannibalize the language on the page?

Still in Scene 2, the play shifts to another moment with other characters with little transition. Immediately following these stage directions, Pious and Daniel begin talking. Such an abrupt shift: from Laura asking (and then telling) David to eat her in a variety of preparations; to David presumably eating Laura (not sexually-?), and then swallowing; to a long monologue about the nature of God and love, while simulated cannibalism is occurring on stage . . . to this conversation gives the reader/audience a kind of aesthetic schizophrenic experience, not unlike in *Blasted* (See Chapter 4). The difference is the sound. “He swallows something” is heard and visualized in a way that one cannot see or necessarily read on stage or on the page.

One does not see the visual excess of simulated cannibalism one finds in *Blasted* in David Greig’s *San Diego*. Instead, the play asks how to (un)map the body sonorously. The cannibalism in Greig’s play exhibits more materiality through the materiality the accompanying (or not) sonic resonances. In the wake of Laura’s commandment to, and David’s later confession of cannibalism, the vocal image is more prescient and present for the reader. Liz Mills defines such a concept as a “vocal image,” which is “the generating of or presence of vocalized sound intended to form an acoustic image either linked to language or independent of language” (web). When Laura asks David if he would like a taste of her flesh, it is the smacking and chewing that materializes the act, not the simulation of it. Mills further claims it is the vocal image that can affect the actor’s conventional conceptualizations of performance space via the linguistic. Mills

sees the vocal image as a means to a kind of posthuman theatre, a theatre that produces an independence from language, through language. The materialization, though, of the flesh through sound is as illusory and momentary as it is reconstituted, because it is reconstituted, absent but present. The concept of the sonorous image is transubstantiation, not materialization. Ian's calls for someone to answer him manifest into material needs which are visually simulated; in *San Diego*, Laura's pawing at David to eat her flesh manifests into their stichomythic exchange which aurally materializes the act.

*San Diego* reconstitutes the voice and the word. Julia Kristeva provides a brief opening for such an experience to occur. Borrowing from Plato's *Timaeus* (his account of the creation of the world), Kristeva uses the term *chora*, or sound play, as a term to refer to a space wherein "natural" language can provide "for different modes of articulation of the semiotic and the symbolic" (*Revolution in Poetic Language* 24) experience, specifically in a performance space. For Kristeva, the *chora* is a "third space," or an "in-between" space, that is not devoid of the material.<sup>58</sup> She states:

Such wastes drop so that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing  
remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit—*cadere*,  
cadaver. (*PH* 2)

For Plato, this (prelinguistic) space is the place where Being, in its ideal, clean, non-human state, originates. The wastes that drop out of the body are a reminder, for Kristeva, that such a desire for the Ideal (body) is a desire to disavow boundaries and limitations of our physicality, of death. The subject, for Kristeva, cannot be removed in order to understand meaning *sans* the

---

<sup>58</sup> Plato does not believe that this is so.

biological.<sup>59</sup> Greig's *San Diego* uses the *chora* in order to suggest that this in-between space can become less fluid and more static than one might like to consider.<sup>60</sup> The illusion of limitations, of physicality hides the notion that we are already dead.

The *chora* provides the basis for theorizing an intertextuality of voice that references a dimension of sound play already evident in the theatre and performance practices of experimental theatre. The *chora* is that stage of psychosexual development wherein the ability to distinguish one's "own" desire from another's has not yet been acquired (Covino 16-18). Plato uses the term to refer to what Zeyl translates as "invisible" or a "characterless" thing (Covino 16-18). For Kristeva, this is not the case because one ultimately cannot escape the body. In this third space, ownership is not yet acquired, of one's self, of one's body. This is a stage of the prelinguistic, prior to moving into what Kristeva calls the "thetic phase." It is here that one moves from the semiotic—the fluid movement of sounds and language without referents—to the symbolic—the naming of things, which is the means to communicate. Since Kristeva does not believe the two are mutually exclusive, she denotes one overlap between the semiotic and the symbolic is a child's designation of a dog barking, "Woof-Woof." The signifier for the child and the sound the dog makes are the same.<sup>61</sup>

The intertextuality of voice, the object-status of voice is an idea that pulls the exponentiality of meaning back in on itself. At the opening of Scene 2, Laura's offering of her

---

<sup>59</sup> Also a Hegelian notion, i.e., that one can get beyond the subject and understand history outside of the subject. Language, in this model, can be purged of this influence, seeing only, in the end, pure logic.

<sup>60</sup> Please see *Amending the Abject: Aesthetic Makeovers in Medicine and Culture* (2004) for further reading.

<sup>61</sup> This information has been distilled from a number of sources. Please see: Julia Kristeva's *La Révolution du Langage Poétique* (1974); Julia Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984)

body, her flesh, for David to eat has little to do with the act of cannibalism and more with the way her requests are heard, which suggests that materiality is not only intangible but also defies representation to a degree.

Through the excesses of the material comes the shattering of the delusion of the material (alone). In his collection entitled *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Stanton Garner indicates in the introduction that:

the dramatic text . . . is a valuable means of access to the stage in particular to phenomenological configurations . . . the written text is both a blueprint for performance and a specific discipline of body, stage, and eye. In its directions for setting, speech, and action, the dramatic text coordinates the elements of performance and puts them into play; reading ‘through’ this text, one can seize these elements in specific and complex relationships. (5-6)

This assessment of the dramatic text puts it into the position of an “origin,” but an originating, auth(or)entic(ating) point that does not necessarily need to be followed, *per se*.

To echo Chapter One while evoking the futile search for the author, Tennessee Williams’ “Author’s Note” to the 1973 edition of *The Glass Menagerie* has the 1948 publication’s “Author’s Note,” which is Williams’ reflection upon the sudden “Catastrophe of Success”<sup>62</sup> that the play afforded him. More importantly, he indicates that a director in one production of the play removed the origin-al screen that Williams had envisioned up-stage and center, with images projected onto them, such as the words, “Magic Lantern.” Instead, Williams asserts, the director chose more of a mythical tone, a tone which Laurette Taylor amplified with an echoed legacy of her own, now, mythical performances of Amanda Wingfield. It was “not a regret” that Williams

---

<sup>62</sup> This first appeared in the *New York Times* in 1947 opening of *The Glass Menagerie*.

had, taking out the prop. Further, the Dramatists Play Service includes in the 1973 edition a “Publisher’s Note” indicating not to worry (to an implied reader or performer) over things like the alleyway and fire escape, the use of lighting and the “specific music cues,” or being unable to fit all the music Laura plays “onto three records.” If a director feels, the Publisher states, that none or only some of the original stage directions do not work for a specific staging of the play, then by all means, disregard them. If the use of “two scrim” is too much, then dump it. If the use of fades and other lighting techniques are misleading, then use the “traditional curtain drop” instead. But . . . at the very end of the “Publisher’s Note,” the “Publisher and the Author highly recommend” that you *do follow* the original stage directions, if they are to be actually potentially realized (see “Imaginary Theatrical Present”).

In both instances, performance is emphasized as: A) The fruition of the material text, which is the goal, i.e., the performance is the *real thing*; and, B) That the material aspects of the performance, especially the body, always-already adhere to a “discipline” that is not beholden to the written text, but instead, is trying to transcend it. One cannot transcend the material because the representation of the material is where representation “ends,” or rather, eats itself. The body cannot be a representation. In other words, the body is as much a text as Sebastian’s *Poem of Summer*. If the body is already a representation, and it is cannibalized on stage, but I hear it when I read it, what does one do with those studies of theatre that are phenomenological in nature?

Garner asserts that studying drama through a phenomenological lens can “illuminate the *possible* actuality already posited by the dramatic text” (7), which indicates that the playtext, too, has a phenomenal element to it. There is no difference between the text on the page and the text on the stage (5). What is lost in the process, however, is the ability to unmark the body, which



*San Diego* does allow to happen. Merleau-Ponty indicates that the body is more than just the body:

Experience discloses beneath objective space, in which the body eventually finds its place, a primitive spatiality of which experience is merely the outer covering and which merges with the body's very being. To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world. Our body is not primarily *in* space: it is of it. (148)

Is there no space for the (un)heard sounds? Is it possible to loosen the cont(r)act of space in this dichotomous model; is there a way of conceiving of the processes of representation of/back to the (non/hyper)body in a fourth or even a fifth "space," rather than a third, "in-between"?

The question of liminal spaces is as much a question about the boundaries of language, as it represents the body, as it is about the body. Does sound *actually* materialize? The use of the term "material," in this application, implies that something can be seen or touched. What does the actual mean exactly, in this sense? The actual heart of representation beats to the rhythm of cannibalism. To use a rough analogy to show how this concept is not an analogy, traditional African music often brings out the origins of a sound with asynchronous, dissonant, or supplemental music. The supplement is the matter at hand, and in Daniel's case, his search for his Wings-backup-singing mother fails because he continues to use the paternal, "natural" language that will maintain binaries.

According to Julia Kristeva, in "natural" language, there is no maternal. Daniel's search is a quest through language itself. His search lingers over the definition of metaphysical, abstract concepts about God and the role of the mother than *actually* finding his mother. There is no maternal in "natural" language, according to Kristeva. So, he will never find her there. Daniel's search for a mother is a search for a map that works, i.e., the matrix. He claims that he knows

where he is headed, and that that knowledge is God's also, i.e., he knows God's mind. Yet, "God," inasmuch as he is indefinable ("I AM"), is also as equally masculine (definable). Daniel suggests he has found a different map, of sorts, to guide him. If it is not in "natural" language that he shall experience something other than the masculine, and this is a non-representational map, then following Kristeva's suggestions above, then it must be the maternal that is his map.

Daniel is not just Daniel, though. The List of Characters indicates "Daniel/Grey Lag, an illegal immigrant" (3). Colin Thomas' review of *San Diego* when it came to Studio 58 in Vancouver in 2005 indicates that although actors play multiple characters, or, that relationships among characters may be opaque, Greig cannot help but include exposition in his work:

by explaining everything, Greig makes it look like he doesn't trust his audience.

He also plays shallow tricks. He riffs on images, including one of orphaned goslings. A young, emotionally abandoned character is nicknamed Graylag after a kind of goose, for instance, but we already have flight and loss of identity. (from the *Georgia Straight*)

The "/" in Greig's play indicates duality. In Kane's *Blasted*, it indicates a "point of interruption," that is, an overlap. Duality implies dichotomy. Overlap implies part of something is covered, but something else is uncovered. One is a piercing, a violence. In the latter example, interrupting is not. Daniel stabs David Greig to death. But, in the original production at the Royal Lyceum Theatre in 2003 (which Greig co-directed), "this ersatz Greig [afterwards] continues to look down on the proceedings, as though from a cabin window, in a looping video projection" (Cavendish). It is not that he is not dead, but rather, that his death signals a falsehood. It is as if the reviewer, Dominic Cavendish, finds this artificial David less "authentic." Even the first actor

to play, David, Billy Boyd<sup>63</sup>, was worried about getting the play, and by extension, getting ‘David’ “right”: “I’m an actor playing David Greig in a David Greig play about San Diego, but it’s a made up San Diego that’s in David’s head” (*theatreSCOTLAND*). “Made up” emphasizes this actor’s idea that there is a real and a fictional San Diego, just as there must be a real and a fictional “David Greig.” Several reviews, however, do not treat place the same way that it treats what is real. Colin Thomas states:

Craig Hall’s set [for the Vancouver 2005 production is a] foreshadowed a bit of freeway leading to a rectangular opening that continually varies in size . . . [it] is a lyrical piece of sculpture. In its articulate combination of airplane roars and spacy keyboard tinkling, Nick Powell’s sound design is similarly hip and melancholy. (from the *Georgia Straight*)

Place seems to have a kind of overlapping quality that is and is not representational; phenomenology must be left behind. Character, for Thomas, seems to adhere to rules of representation; whereas, the set, not so much. The moving and tinkling, “hip and melancholy” experience “gets a pass.” They work, somehow, but the “/” designation for a dual persona, “Daniel/Gray Lag,” seems like overkill, “I get it; but give me more moving sets and colors and sounds . . . those aren’t ‘boring.’”

“Boring” signifies a distance between the set and the bodies on set can be analogized in the distance between seeing and reading. The set, like seeing, is valued at the expense of the music, the reading. For Barthes the actor in certain plays, and the reader of all plays, are afforded an extraordinary, structuring power. It is her (actor/reader) ability to render the immateriality of

---

<sup>63</sup> Pippin in Peter Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings*.

the stage (music) in tangible ways that transcends the Grecian bind of theatre to geometry (an auditorium, for example). Barthes states:

The theatre is precisely that practice which calculates the place of things as they are observed . . . The stage is the line which stands across the path of the optic pencil, tracing at once the point at which it is brought to a stop and . . . the threshold of its ramification. Thus is founded—against music (against the text)—*representation*. (69)

The actor has opportunities<sup>64</sup> to challenge representation on stage, just as the reader has the power to challenge representation on the page. In Barthes' "Musica Practica," he goes on to ask how this challenge might occur by designating two kinds of music: the kind one listens to (passivity) and the kind that one plays (activity). According to Barthes, reading and performing are "two totally different arts" (). One can find that "the same composer can be minor if you listen to him, tremendous if you play him" (149). And for Barthes, to play is to read, is to compose. He states:

To compose . . . is *to give to do*, not to give to hear but to give to write. The modern location for music is not the concert hall, but the stage on which the musicians pass . . . It is we who are playing, though still it is true by proxy; but one can imagine the concert—later on?—as exclusively a workshop, from which nothing spills over . . . no 'soul' and where all the musical art is absorbed in a praxis *with no remainder*. Such is the utopia that a certain Beethoven, who is not played, teaches . . . ." (153-54)

---

<sup>64</sup> In this essay, Barthes provides a narrow account of these opportunities, such as, in Brechtian distanciation.

There must be something about music that transcends the notes on the page. Play accesses this excess that spills back into itself (no remainder). Doing. This intangible but present cannibalistic entity that is a process is not *completely* untouchable either. For Barthes, this inexact locality of the operational/representational is what fascinates him, and enables for a kind of touching:

[P]erhaps [ ] Beethoven's music has in it something inaudible (something for which hearing is not the exact locality) . . . Beethoven's [material condition of] deafness designates the lack wherein resides all signification; it appeals to a music that is not abstract or inward, but that is endowed . . . with a tangible intelligibility, with the intelligible as tangible. Such a category is truly revolutionary, unthinkable in terms of the old aesthetics . . . [it] can no longer be either performance or hearing, but reading . . . reading this Beethoven is *to operate* his music . . . into an unknown *praxis*. (152, 153)

In the excesses of activities *vis-à-vis* the personas indicated by the “/” is a duality that is shown simultaneously. For example, the reader can operate “Daniel/Gray Lag” because reading provides access to the inaudible sound that accompanies “seeing” the tag, “Daniel/Gray Lag.” The audience member does not have this ability to hear the inaudible mark or name, cannibalizing itself.

Reading is not just seeing. It is hearing the inaudible that dematerializes and reconstitutes the materiality of the script. The audience member cannot hear the simultaneity of that duality. For the audience member, this particular layer of cannibalism is either inaccessible or perhaps a passive experience. The audience member does not have access to this because the audience member does not have access to the “/” or the mark that denotes duality. The excess of site/sight (places in the play/ “seeing” cannibalism on stage) pulls the distance between the actual and the

representational closer together because the space outside the theatre space “with no other audience than its participants (that is, with all the risk of theatre, all temptation of hysteria<sup>65</sup> removed)” (149), exists more materially in its absence for the reader. There is still hysteria and the potential for danger in reading a script to-be-performed.

By sheer virtue of being in a seeing place, the space of the theatre, lends too much enticement to enable a cannibalistic mindset. One must be alone with/in her body in order to be able to access the materiality that Barthes is talking about. For example, Barthes claims Beethoven’s deafness provides more materiality to leak through the reading, rather than the hearing, of the music. The same holds for the character “Daniel/Gray Lag,” i.e., the reader has access to the “/”.<sup>66</sup> There is a paradox at work here.

On the one hand, the body DOES the marking. This is the new power of the reader; it is “as though the body were hearing—and not the ‘soul’; a music which is not played ‘by heart’: seated at the keyboard or the music stand, the body controls . . . having itself to transcribe what it reads, making sound and meaning, the body as inscriber” (Barthes 149). A staged environment marks the body. On the other hand, then, it is the body that UN-does the marking that has been done to it before the play ever began. Herein is where Barthes’ desire for the ideal presentation

---

<sup>65</sup> Consider *The Bacchae*, most especially, Pentheus’s fear that if left alone, the maternal, the female will overpower and rip apart the male, i.e., the maleness of Western culture (following Kristeva’s thinking) might just actually destabilize in the wake of a newly female engendered speak.

<sup>66</sup> Counter: One might consider Caryl Churchill’s *Top Girls* as an example of the inverse of this premise: Although I can read the “/” in her play, knowing that they signify one actor interrupting another, I do not truly “get the whole performance” without hearing the actors actually say the lines over the other. Such a claim of realization in “actual” space denies the reading experience that constructs an “imaginary” one.

of meaning, on stage, falters, for this cannot completely occur because the difference in natures of the text and the nature of the corporeal bodies on stage collapses in the wake of cannibalism.

Laura's marked body on the page might give a true, real essence for Barthes; yet, this goal cannot be attained, but only glimpsed at from the side, awry. When the character(s) "Daniel/Gray Lag" is(are) on stage, the audience cannot see that he is one or the other because he switches between the two, or at least, the reader knows that one is being played "independently" of the other except for when a character, like Pious, indicates that Daniel shall have a new name. The ability for the stage to be a-representational but the characters not to be indicates that there is a need to see the differences between the actual and represented...in the excess of site/sight...of characters, but not for place. It is as if place is a given.

The reviews of *San Diego* express an anxiety about the way the bodies of the characters are (un)marked, a fear of the word and the body becoming interchangeable. In *Image—Music—Text*, Barthes again contends that the flesh and the body are separable. The material body stands in excess of the stage directions of the text in production, whether acting or reading, but not seeing. Because Laura commands (performative) that David eat her flesh, the audience is pacified. "It's OK. Weird, but OK." Critical thinking is not occurring here because there is no distance; one is able to "identify" with the characters, especially with Marie, and one does so through the word games that stop functioning as words and start to function as effects. These effects, for the audience, though, are un-real. "He didn't *really* eat her." This ability to doubt that someone has been eaten "up there" reveals an unfaltering need for taboos to serve as reminders that signification goes on, indefinitely, subjectively. Cannibalism reconstitutes performance and the performative to recodify signification in the theatre.

### Part III: The body is not visible: No Representation without Transubstantiation

The body is not the site of signification. *San Diego*'s use of cannibalism inverts Barthes' suggestion in *S/Z* that there is not one fixed signified linked to a myriad of signifiers. Can there be a fixed signified, in taboo, that has multiple signifiers that are aural, aurally read (internally)? The affect of the paternal, masculine nature of language can be understood as a cannibalistic enterprise, wherein the duality of/in space/time is lost in the wake of the conflation of subject and object via the sonic materiality of cannibalism in *San Diego*. The masculine nature of language cannibalizes itself, and in the theatre, one combines these two reading experiences.

First, there are several "David's" in the play. The only way to see these figures as actually (in in so far as representation goes) interchangeable is *to read* the David's, not see them. Any myriad of techniques might get the idea across to an audience, but the effect will be lost. Even by giving all the "David's" a William Shatner mask, for example, the absolute, equivalent David for David, cannot be attained. A true one-to-one exchange does not occur in the reading either. However, one can understand how the use of the trope of cannibalism can collapse the various figures into one another. First, note the list of characters:

#### *Characters*

David Greig, the author

.....

David, a patient

David A, someone who works in conceptual consultancy

David B, someone who works in conceptual consultancy

David C, someone who works in conceptual consultancy

(3)



The play, not unlike *Blasted*, conflates actual and represented states of being and statuses of objects/subjects. As Graham Saunders contends about Kane's *Blasted*, this play provides a means to enact a "new model of place and identity from the devastation" (3). David Greig's "Introduction" to Kane's works not dissimilarly suggests:

Her simple premise [is] that there was a *connection between a rape in a Leeds hotel room and the hellish devastation of civil war* . . . It is as though the act of rape, which blasts the *inner world* of both victim and perpetrator has also destroyed the world outside the room. The play's form begins to fragment. Its structure seems to buckle under the weight of the violent forces it has unleashed. The time frame *condenses*; a scene that begins in Spring ends in Summer. The dialogue erodes, becoming sparse. The scenes are presented in smaller and smaller fragments. (emphases mine, x)

The scenes, like the David's, collide and reconstitute each other. Each scene is shorter than the last. Greig's use of the terms "weight" with "condense," however, suggests material or tangible kinds of "forces" will condense, rather than time. The material and the temporal, too, reconstitute one another "under the weight" of the play's fracturing and reconstituting.

**Preamble to *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria vis-à-vis San Diego***

In a review of Fernando Arrabal's *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria* (see Chapter 4) being played at the Trap Door Theatre in Chicago, Lucia Mauro states:

What makes this hellish charade [in the play] so horrifying is that both men eventually become interchangeable. One morphs into the other—no matter how many costumes they don—underscoring one's capacity for the vilest acts of self-preservation in the guise of humankind's well being

(which usually leads to self-destruction). (*chicagotheatre.com*)

The charade, or what reviewer Clive Barnes similarly characterizes in his assessment of the play's 1976 NYC premiere, as "almost impossibly poetic . . . a dazzling madness of words scattered across the sky like diamanté stars . . .," language can be seen, and not just because Greig has flashing words on a scrim in the background. Barnes refers to the dialogue, the language the characters speak, or do not. Through this madness, Barnes suggests that "we all have a little of each [person] in us . . . Arrabal dreams in the images of reality" (Barnes). Through the use of word games, riddles, and the interchangeability of characters, the "play," according to Barnes, "play[s] God"<sup>67</sup> (Barnes). As Sebastian desires for a restructuring of the nature by which the material accesses the "soul," i.e., to become God through Art, so too does Barnes wish to restructure the nature by which the play functions (as does Greig) by showing that the work plays at being God, concealing and revealing the hidden creator or Author. The critic as spectator wishes to become Art by consuming its meaning (the review) and joining, then, with the creator. "Arrabal dreams in the images of reality." The first time Barnes saw the play in the 1971 London premiere, he abhorred it, and indicates as much in his 1976 review. What changes from the first time to the second? Barnes cannot explain it. "Was it the set?" he asks. No.<sup>68</sup> "The acting?" No.<sup>69</sup> "What was it?" In the end, he cannot explain the difference in his reactions other than he had time for the play to work on his subconscious.

---

<sup>67</sup> Barnes points out in this same review that when he first saw the play at its London premiere in 1971, he lambasted it, and he is not certain why.

<sup>68</sup> Tom O'Horgan, of *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* Broadway fame, staged the 1977 production. Bill Stabile built a set with eight platforms.

<sup>69</sup> Anthony Hopkins was in the 1971 production. Ron Perlman in 1977. Not that either of these gentlemen have given less-than-tolerable performances, on the whole, much of their stage work is met with above-average reception.

In *San Diego*, there is the moving image (the actor) of the dead (but not/but is-not) version of the playwright, crouching over the other actors. There is the banner projecting onto the scrim, announcing Greig's authorship of the work, presumably. There is the cannibalism, Laura offering David some of her sweet breads, and David, obliging. The site/sight of the cannibalism, however, is not located on the stage. For Elaine Scarry, such a dislocation makes sense. Pain is negating. Pain strips one of representation; unable to use language for expression, one's cries become guttural, unintelligible (*The Body in Pain*). Cannibalism is not only pain, but the representation of all that is beyond language, simultaneously. After-the-fact, Scarry suggests, pain can be represented in ways that do allow for the inner experience to be distilled out for shared, consumed experience. This consumption of cannibalism, though, works differently. The dislocation of self from world that Scarry articulates can be understood as Barthes understands the dislocation of a play from its own stage directions. It is as if theatre is having some kind of existential crisis almost.

In Barthes' assessment of "Baudelaire's Theater," he intimates that it fails (26) because its stages (stage directions) dishonestly believes in its own "precooked" nature (26), i.e., the works behave as if they came from nowhere and were always-already seamless and whole. There is just too much emotion, distraction, spectacle, or passivity in the conventional theatre for transformation to occur. Critical awareness, the a/effect of alienation (of *Episierung*) through Brecht's *Mother Courage*, for example, can show that art is constantly shifting in meaning through the reflection that might occur<sup>70</sup> (74-75). Baudelaire's work shows that "the actor's

---

<sup>70</sup> "The Tasks of Brechtian Criticism" (1956) from *Critical Essays*. Briefly, Brecht suggests that through distancing (non-identificatory dramatic art), one can see the seams in the art object. She can make meaning for the text because she sees its fabrication and can subsequently manipulate the creases.

disturbing corporeality” is evoked, but evoked in an imbedded, clandestine way (27). Barthes sees a tension between the body, the flesh, and the text.

The site/sight on stage is a displacement of corporeality. The seeing functions aurally as much as it does visually. The limitations of the body exist because of the reminders of its limitations through cannibalism, which, in Greig’s play, crystallizes the idea that not only is the inside and outside interchangeable, but also that they are equally dissolvable, consumable, and non-existent, in the end.

Pious gives Daniel a nickname: “Gray Lag.” Pious speaks and renders a new (masculine) marker of identity/subjectivity for Daniel, a fatherly gesture that is supposed to make up for a lack that is not there in the first place, at least, not anymore. Pious plays the role of father in order to speak the condition of his promised-to-be (for himself to himself and to the audience/reader by extension) son. The use of rhetorical devices, coupled with sounds of airplanes in the opening of San Diego is not that dissimilar from the opening of *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*.

(/)

## ACT ONE

### SCENE ONE

*Airplane noises. Like a trapped and frightened animal, the ARCHITECT looks for a refuge. He runs in all directions, digs in the ground, starts to run again, and finally buries his head in the sand. Explosion. A bright flash of flames. Trembling with fear the ARCHITECT, his face against the sand, puts his fingers to his ears.*

*A few moments later the EMPEROR appears. He is carrying a large suitcase. He has a certain forced elegance. He tries to keep his composure.*

*He touches the ARCHITECT with the tip of his cane.*

EMPEROR. Help me sir! I am the only survivor of the accident.

ARCHITECT. (*horried*) Fee! Fee! Feegaa! Feegaa! Fee! Fee!

.....

### **Blackout**

### SCENE TWO

*Two years later. The EMPEROR and the ARCHITECT are on stage.*

EMPEROR. It's quite simple, after all. Come on, repeat!

ARCHITECT. Escalator. (*He has some difficulty in pronouncing the "s."*)

EMPEROR. (*emphatically*) Now I've lived on this island for two whole years,  
I've given you lessons for two years, and you still hesitate! It would take  
Aristotle himself to teach you the sum of two chairs and two tables.

ARCHITECT. I can already talk. No?

EMPEROR. Well . . . yes. At least, if someone drops onto this island some day  
you can say to him, "Ave Caesar."

ARCHITECT. But today you are to teach me . . .

EMPEROR. Right now listen to my muse singing the wrath of Achilles.  
My throne!

(215-216)

**Chapter 4**  
**The Paratext and Cannibalism in Fernando Arrabal's**  
***The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria***

ARCHITECT. . . . What's important is what I think: there's a transmission of thought between us.

EMPEROR. (*thoroughly frightened*) Tell me seriously, do you read my thoughts too? Can you see into my mind?

ARCHITECT. I want to write. Teach me to be a writer. You must've been a great author.

EMPEROR. (*flattered*). I've written some famous sonnets! And what plays, with their monologues and their asides. No writer has succeeded in equaling me. The best have copied me! Beethoven, d'Annunzio, James Joyce, Charles V, Shakespeare himself, and his nephew Bernstein.

from *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*

Why does the Emperor fear that the Architect can read his mind? He insists, after all, that the Architect eat him towards the end of the play. Does he not wish his remain-ders<sup>71</sup> to conjoin with the Architect? Further, why does the Architect in Fernando Arrabal's play answer the Emperor paraleptically? "Do you read my mind?" "I want to write; teach me!" The Emperor and the Architect of Assyria asks what the relationships are between performance, reading, writing, and cannibalism.

The Emperor's wrath to destroy his own representation results in his despotic rule in *The Architect and The Emperor of Assyria*. His wrath is aimless, not unlike Achilles's, "You ignore the hygienic virtues of cold meat," the Emperor exclaims to the Architect, "You casserole, you turnip boiler, you chowder-head, you fly gawker. May my wrath of Achilles fall on you" (269).

---

<sup>71</sup> Meaning, both his remains and that which remains after the Architect eats his remains, remains, i.e., his "soul."

He thinks his wrath has aim, toward the Architect, but this wrath is self-inflicted and eventually manifests into a command for the Architect to eat of his (the Emperor's) body at the end of his self-proclaimed performance of a trial in order to leave representation behind.

"The best have copied me," the Emperor tells the Architect. The Emperor embraces the notion of being the penultimate representing agent, more so than even Shakespeare, and curiously, in this attempt to be the embodiment of representation, the Emperor hopes to escape older versions or representations of himself. Once the Architect begins to eat of the Emperor in Act Two, Scene Two, he becomes the Architect. Presumably, transubstantiation occurs in this act, for in the following scene, the stage directions indicate that "*Only the Emperor's bones are left on the table. The Architect now has the same intonation and manners as the Emperor. When the lights come up the Architect is sucking the last bone.*" (299). However, the Emperor is not dead; the Architect did not eat him because at the end of Act Two, Scene Three, the Architect "*hits the table with his hand and a bone rolls to the ground. He gets down under the table to pick it up and completely disappears from sight . . . When he reappears it is the Emperor who comes out from under the table, dressed as the Architect*" (299-300). Is it that this shift proposes that the Architect did eat the Emperor and that this representation, one *character* in another's stead, proves that? Or, is it that this shift from one *actor* to another is a representation of cannibalism that is still not quite achieving the freedom that the Emperor claims he is after?

The figure of the cannibal, or the cannibalized, just stopping short, or at least, being (un)full-filled on or off stage, collapses the represented with the actual by suggesting that the past is always in front of you, and the present is always behind. Representation cannot be escaped, but it can be excited to such a state that it appears to be escaped. For example, at the end of the play, the Emperor has completely swapped places with the Architect, a swap that

proposes that the illusion of representation is the illusion of the body. The two are interchangeable. At the end of the play, the Emperor, in the Architect's clothing, is not only interchangeable with the Architect, but after cannibalization, he is both, simultaneously and paradoxically:

EMPEROR. . . . Alone at last!<sup>72</sup> . . . I'll forget the past in such a way that I'll have it all the more present in my mind, so that I won't fall back into any of my past errors . . . I'll study and all alone I'll discover perpetual motion. (*He stretches out a leg and looks in the opposite direction.*) Scratch my leg, tickle me . . . That's it, there, scratch well . . . Harder. With your nails, I tell you. Harder, scratch harder. Still harder. Lower. Harder. Harder. ;

Note that it is the reliance on the material that assures the Emperor that "I am not what I am."<sup>73</sup> The cannibalism supposedly assures he is alone, but, he is not. The writing does not work. Does the eating? Not only does the Emperor, inside the Architect, make the Architect the Emperor, "he" is not singular, and he is not quite outside of representation, for the Architect, who once, in the past, was the Emperor, is still, in the present, the Architect. The past always eats the present, and this focus on the material to get outside the represented now or present fails.

The Emperor wishes to lose the ability to represent, and his anxiety, unlike Polyphemus in *The Odyssey*, for example, is that he will not. Polyphemus of the Cyclops stands as testament to the anxiety of being unable to express oneself abstractly with language.<sup>74</sup> The Architect (not) eating the Emperor enacts the meat of the matter at hand: The Emperor's command to be eaten reveals that the space between performance and performativity is a cannibalizing one.

---

<sup>72</sup> One cannot help but recall Martin Luther King, Jr.'s inescapable phrase, "Free at last!" Isolation and freedom go hand in hand in *The Emperor and the Architect of Assyria*.

<sup>73</sup> Iago from *Othello*.

<sup>74</sup> "Who hurts you?" ask the other Cyclops on the island. "Nobody," replies Polyphemus.



For the Emperor, his fear is that he cannot leave the representation he perceives exists outside of himself. He wishes to be set free by being punished, by being cannibalized. He is to be set free by being reconstituted within the Architect, presumably. It must be cannibalization, for nothing else the Emperor has tried works. In a long soliloquy that shifts in voice and tone, the Emperor embodies a variety of individuals. For example:

I'd dreamed . . . That I'd write and that I would be a great poet . . . what a poet I would have been . . . Emperor, what do you want me to do? I'm your subject. Command me. (247)

The Emperor wants to be un-representable, truly alone and without the need to exist with it. The corporeal body of his is the most prescient reminder of his being a sign, a sign of a bad husband, a despot, a cross-dresser, a madman, etc. For example:

EMPEROR. . . . I would like to die disguised. (A pause.) Disguised as the Bishop\ of Chess.

ARCHITECT. As what?

EMPEROR. The Bishop of Chess . . . a bishop in the game of chess. Accede to my wishes. It's very simple: you place a little stick between my legs so that I can stand up like a chess piece and you cover me with the mad Bishop's armor. (234)

Invoking/exhuming his ex-wife, being her, that does not get him outside of his own skin; it does not work. He cannot purge himself of the trappings of representation, of himself to himself via the expunging of himself in the dressing up as his ex-wife. Even as his ex-wife, she verifies those earlier representations of him, as a murderer, for example.

He is stuck in a feedback loop. The more he embodies others to deny who he was or is, the more those performed embodiments confirm that he is exactly who he does not want to be. So, for the Emperor, perhaps by putting the Architect through a variety of trials or tests, putting himself up for trial in the second half of the play, or by pontificating about the metaphysical

nature of God or wondering about ontological questions, perhaps these acts will get him over what seems to be a near sickness of sorts.

Not unlike a drugged Catherine in *Suddenly, Last Summer*, the Emperor seems to be possessed, talking outside of himself. Unlike Catherine's talking, though, the Emperor's is that of an embodied voice, inside of him, that is not his own. Someone else is doing the talking, and there is no reason to believe otherwise; some force may have taken over this person portraying the Emperor. He is sick with being stuck in a feedback loop: The more he performs, the less he is free. Performance does not even free him from representation. None of these manifestations allow him to land on the island of the Cyclops. "Dependence on representation sickens me. I can leave if I want to, but I don't want to...maybe just a little, but it's impossible, really, so what are we talking about?"

The Emperor's wrath is his throne, evoked/sung by a muse. Despotism is felt via his royal chair.<sup>75</sup> In this instance, the Emperor does not evoke representation; this is not metonymic worship; it is transubstantiated (im)materiality. There is no muse, no song. The inexpressible aura of the Emperor's power gets expressed in the actual, aural, performative silence of the muse's song. Because each subsequent scene consumes the one that came before it, as time and space are neither shared nor divided among the various characters in the play, inside has become outside; time is non/linear, for *San Diego* and for *The Architect and the Emperor*. Erik Østerud's *Theatrical and Narrative Space* studies J.P. Jacobsen's short-story "Mogens" to suggest that in the modern era of the twentieth century there may not always be a "direct correlation between meaning and aesthetic representation . . . [that] [w]hen the truth cannot be deduced from reality itself, but requires exegetic explanation . . . the confidence in the apparatus of interpretation he

---

<sup>75</sup> Meaning his backside, i.e., an ass, which he tries to become in Act 1.

applies is of paramount importance” (103, 132, 133). The “confidence” of aesthetic representation and interpretation, especially in this project, must exist in order for one to be able to doubt that he is a narcissist. It is a masking effort

/

(Repeat!)

*San Diego*’s uttered prologue mirrors the epilogue of the previous chapter and establishes yet another frame and another “meat of the matter” that the Conclusion will unpack. If the Introduction produces a map or guide to this study, then the Conclusion serves to cannibalize it. The project attempts to enact the paratextual, both in a macroscopic manner and also in a microscopic matter. This project contends that *it* is the figure of the cannibal, or at least, it attempts to roughly perform the very thing it attempts to describe. For example, Chapter 1, which focuses on Sebastian’s transubstantiation through the calling forth of a talking that perpetuates his cannibalization, eats, and *vice versa*, Chapter 4, which focuses on the Emperor’s inability to achieve transubstantiation with talking. The Emperor’s fits and tantrums at the end of his trial are beginning to sound as if he is getting a little unintelligible, and it is the pre-representational he is after. His movement is towards a pre-symbolic, perhaps even an animal-like state. For example, his attempts to get the Architect to ride him, not *as if* he is a donkey, but rather, *as* a donkey, i.e., the riding is supposed to, the Emperor hopes, transform him into one. The performing fails. Transformation, transubstantiation cannot occur without cannibalism, which is the only means to experiencing what Derrida calls, in his study of Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty, “life before birth.”

As the Emperor hopes to escape representation, which ultimately, he thinks, rests in the assurance of the material, and its ability to be consumed, Catherine hopes in *Suddenly, Last Summer* to imbibe and relish in representation. Chapter 1 states:

Sebastian . . . is both and never was. His re-membering on stage is a performance in itself. Within the heart of that performance is Catherine's disembodied voice; she is outside of herself as she goes over her story, which has clearly been rehearsed before, and is being performed, yet again, one more time. The voice that is doing the speaking is in question. Just because she seems to be talking, some other force within must be at the helm. (2)

It is a performative utterance that transubstantiates Sebastian, revealing representation has a cannibal heart. In Chapter 4, the Emperor finds that even utterances fail him. He cannot reach the pre-symbolic; he cannot combine bits of himself with the Architect, his work of art, his work in progress. So, the work of art must do it for him. "The performing fails. Transformation, transubstantiation," to reiterate, "cannot occur without cannibalism, which is the only means to experiencing what Derrida . . . calls 'life before birth.'" What kind of cannibalism is this?

/

Think of the Prologue of *San Diego* and the disembodied voices at the end of *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria* as a means to understanding how mimesis is a cannibalistic process at its heart that is felt in an affective (paratextual) way.

The Prologue to *San Diego* opens the play this way:

*David Greig is sitting in an aeroplane seat.*

As convention dictates that a dissertation shall progress linearly, so, too does convention dictate that the reader understand the italics listed above as stage directions. By using commands such as (*Repeat!*) in this project, the traditional, and expected, format of a dissertation must follow certain Enlightenment rules of argumentation. This evolution is misleading. It portends understanding shall be attained via the shape or form of my argument. It is not "my" argument. It

is “yours.” I do not evoke reader-response theory. I suggest, instead, that language itself does not want your order. It fights all its expectations and intentions. Derrida reiterates this concept over and over. The difference here is that eventually, this process reaches an end point. The anxiety of language, of the symbolic, of representation reversing its trajectory and falling back in on itself, as all linear arguments do, lies in this dedication to causality. (Do we not continually go back to a classic modeled piece and “pick at it” and “pierce” it and “violate” the text in order to render and squeeze more meaning out of it?) This project explicitly plays with the notion that body and text are inseparable, that one exists interdependently, after-the-fact.

The argument is “yours,” and thus, it then commands. But it does not command “you.” It commands itself, as all language does. The use of cannibalism in these plays allows for this process to be unveiled to a degree. Therefore, a command, such as (*Repeat!*), signals that that which came before has been re-mapped; it is no longer a sign for editorial work to be done; although it is; it is a designation of that which is about to happen, conceptually speaking. You have read this before, and it consumes your current reading right now, to-be-read.

(*Reconstitute!*)

By shaping the argument in a non-linear way the reader understands the body is non-linear, that the body of the text is not conventional. Convention dictates, commands, that the reader understand the italics as stage directions, as well as to understand “David Greig” as the person/a of the playwright. “It’s really (not)/‘him’ in there saying things about ‘real’ time and ‘real’ places, like Scotland.” In lieu of other speeches in the play, wherein poetry and prose conflate, one wonders if this convention entirely holds water. Is the outside now the inside of the theatre, as in Kane’s *Blasted*?

The character David Greig opens the Prologue with a speech, a rather long speech. Time, as much as place, and how to represent both are on the character's mind:

It's the summer of 2000. I'm flying to San Diego, California. It will be the first time I have ever visited the American continent. I have been in transit for some eighteen hours now and for almost all that time I have been awake and drinking alcohol . . . despite being such a great place to live, San Diego is featured in almost no fictions, films, novels, or plays, but it has, and I quote 'served as the un-named backdrop for several episodes of *America's Missing Children*. (5)

The *skene* (backdrop) metaphorically shows a myriad of lost children on stage, and, as it seamlessly shifts (and does not) from "scene" to "scene," or rather, from place to place, within a fictional San Diego, it becomes harder and harder to see where one should locate herself in relation to the stage, in "relation" with figures in the play. When in *San Diego* Daniel is re-named to Grey Lag, the action shifts from one re-naming to another. David gets re-named and re-marked via Marie's volunteering for her flesh to be eaten, on stage, seen. These characters also interact, however tangentially or directly, but not quite at the same time or place:

INNOCENT. Son, you killed a fat goose today  
For us to eat at this, the feast of your naming  
A meaty white goose to eat  
Since you brought us the gift of a goose, we'll call you  
Grey Lag  
After the goose.

GREY LAG. Grey Lag.

.....

INNOCENT. Then let us pray—Holy Father, help us push  
the desert back tomorrow morning  
Help us shape the meat into patties . . .  
.....  
Roger  
Over and out  
Please cut into the flesh

*Laura cuts a thin slice from her body.*

.....  
*The sound of a car screeching to a halt a little way up  
the road.*

*The Pilot runs toward the car.*

PILOT. Please. Please. Wait.

*Amy walks along the dusty path by the side of the  
road to where David is lying.*

AMY. Oh my God.

PILOT. We have to get him to a hospital.

*She kneels by David and holds him.  
Laura starts to bandage herself up.*

Past reviews have qualified these kinds of shifts as a meta or reflexive gesture. The jest, though, has to do with the gestures of the bodies on stage. Rather than seeing the images of words projected onto the background. Sounds on stage and in the script, have no origin of place:

MARIE. Have you got the baby monitor?

ANDREW. Yeah.

MARIE. Switch it on.

*Andrew switches the monitor on. He passes it to Marie.  
The sound of a baby breathing close to a microphone.*  
(9)

Characters on stage have no origins of place or of time. David exists both within and without the various diegeses/personas in the play. Immediately following the switching on of the baby monitor David states:

Speedbird seven november, turn to heading two-five-zero, join localizer for runway two-six right. Your traffic is twelve o'clock, five ahead now. Do you have the airport in sight?

PILOT. We have the airport, but not the craft.  
(9)

As David embodies, but does not, all the characters in the play (here, he speaks as/for/with the air traffic controller), the materiality, the so-called proof of his being there, is being challenged. Defining a “sound” as a marking one cannot see. The disembodied voices which speak throughout the play also challenge the ability to prove aesthetic representation and experience via the material:

VOICE. First new message  
Received today at 7.21 p.m.  
To listen to the message, press one  
.....  
(112)

Laura’s voice is then heard on an answering machine, presumably because a prop is treated as an answering machine. Juxtaposed with characters looking for individuals who are not there (but are), such as Laura’s search for her dad, leaving an origin-less message for him:

LAURA’S VOICE. Dad  
I’m in Scotland  
I’m sorry.  
(112)

One has already seen Laura’s body on stage. One figures this as the origin of the sound (or the machine); it is a representation of her. However, *what if*<sup>76</sup> the play is staged using different voices, at different times, for “Laura” or “David”? *The Telegraph*’s Dominic Cavendish suggests the play “cruises with chilly, high-altitude detachment over similar psychological terrain . . . The cast, milling around a set as soulless and sterile as a departure lounge . . . wear—on and off—grey T-shirts bearing his [David Greig’s] name” ( ). The e/affects of the voices can have similar e/affects as the interchangeability of the images have. The imaged words on display and the “looping video projection” (or at least what seemed like a video projection) of David up above

---

<sup>76</sup> I consciously evoke the hypothetical.



the other characters numb out the significance of subjectivity in the play; as screens reconstitute language as hieroglyphic images on screens, and then negated entirely as the simulated pain of cannibalism ensues. How does this work, this pain function on the page? Is the mimetic faculty the same in this instance? Artaud's theatre may get manifested on the page, the very frame he desired to escape, that the Emperor desires to escape: Representation. The sounds, of smacking, of slurping down human flesh, enact an inexpressibility that is marked "in transit, in an aircraft, fixed in our seat, surrounded by a limited number of people . . . that 'we can be certain we belong' (Cavendish). This sense of collective belonging through aesthetics is thwarted in this play as the training one gets to understand conventional play reading and watching is confirmed in the material.

Language is supposed to function in a similar way. "In transit." Always changing code that must be continually interpreted and transcribed, always moving, like a plane. Complete atrophy occurs otherwise:

EMPEROR (*changing the subject*).<sup>77</sup> Have you prepared the cross?<sup>78</sup>

ARCHITECT. There it is. (*Pointing to the bushes.*) Will you crucify me now?

EMPEROR. What! I'm the one who has to be crucified! Isn't it me?

ARCHITECT. We drew by lot. Have you forgotten?

EMPEROR (*angrily*). How could that be? We drew by lot to see who would atone for humanity?

ARCHITECT. Master, you forget everything.

EMPEROR. How did we draw by lot? With what?

---

<sup>77</sup> Ten point font. (Please note that Proquest refuses alteration to the footnoting font size, from 12 pt to 10pt)

<sup>78</sup> Twelve point font.

ARCHITECT. With a straw.

EMPEROR (*Laughing like a madman*). A straw! A straw!<sup>79</sup>

ARCHITECT. Why are you laughing, master?

EMPEROR. I never told you what the word “straw” means.

ARCHITECT. You said . . .

EMPEROR (*changing the subject*). My blind slave girls who taught me philosophy dressed only in pink bath towels! What a memory I have! I remember as if it were yesterday. How they caressed my divine body, how they cleansed its dirtiest corners such as . . . To horse!

ARCHITECT. Shall I be the horse?

EMPEROR. No, I will.

*He gets down on all fours. The ARCHITECT straddles him.*

Say to me: gee up!

ARCHITECT. Gee-up horsey!

EMPEROR. Beat me with a whip! (218-219)

Even the nearly inexpressible noise, such as what Metz describes (see above), such as David eating Laura’s flesh, which the stage directions denote as him “*swallow[ing] something*” (82). One can imagine the play having this done or shown in silence, but whether the sound is intimated through a speaker (as a sound effect) or whether the sound is merely implied but not “actually” heard, one experiences this dislocation of the sound, either way, as deafening. It is as if the eating has been taken off stage via sounds’ displacement. (I want the sound to own/be owned as the Author owns/is owned), making the power of the act all the more muddled.

---

<sup>79</sup> Please refer to Richard III’s plea for a horse, making more ‘hay’ out of the moment.

At the end of the play, which correlates with the sounds of a plane landing and hearing the Pilot exclaim:

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to San Diego, we hope you enjoyed flying with us today. The temperature outside is a rather warm 82 degrees and the local time is 3.37 p.m.

Thanks once again for flying with us and we hope you'll fly with us again soon.

80

...

Cabin crew, door to manual.

*The End.*

(116)

Presumably, the reader and the audience have been on the flight the entire time, perhaps. Or, the plane is just a metaphor for time. Or, it is through the dislocation of the sound of the plane's landing and seeing the plane that renders an interchangeability with the space of the auditorium and the place of reading, or, the outside. Earlier, the Pilot denotes (maps/marks) where one is, which defied/deifies place (?) in the play:

... It has just, at this precise moment—3.17 p.m. San Diego time, 11.17 p.m. London time<sup>81</sup>—occurred to me that America's Missing Children are perhaps drawn to San Diego because it is sufficiently large and emits a rhythmical sound ... in reality—time and place no longer exist in the world

There is no time in the city

There is no place on the high street

The safety of the ground is an illusion

Co-ordinated universal time—airplane time—is the only time we experience which never changes

The cabin of the aircraft is the only space where we can be certain that we belong—we have a ticket with our name on it

On the seat in front of us there is a map which shows us clearly where we are going

And we are going forwards

.....

---

<sup>80</sup> This elliptical notation is part of the text on the page.

<sup>81</sup> It is and is not that precise time.

We don't know how planes work  
 We don't want to know how planes work  
 We want to be part of the rhythm  
 We want to belong  
 We want to see familiar things  
 Ladies and gentlemen  
 82  
 . . .  
 The aircraft is your village  
 'Welcome home.'

*Laura starts sucking her thumb*<sup>83</sup>  
 (6, 78-79)

The play opens at 3.17 and ends at 3.17. The time of the traveling should sync with the sound of San Diego, constructing cadenced rhythms in the play. David states in the opening Prologue, "San Diego . . . is sufficiently large and emits rhythmical sound" (6). Simultaneously, there are no sounds that capture that rhythm, *per se*. Airplane noises/sound effects, gulping and swallowing, baby breathing sounds, none of these are site/sight specific. There is a cadence (but not) in the play, which, at first glance suggests the play works through a kind of representation. Examining the play further, though, reveals a series of simulations that have little to do with San Diego and everything to do with the construction of meaning via communication (or the lack thereof). The sounds are mapped, or at least, the characters continually attempt to find a way to map by using sound, but they cannot. The body, subsequently, cannot be identified via conventional means of identification.

### Exegesis

Reviews avoid this difficulty by explaining away the play as overtly didactic,<sup>84</sup> as a statement about American "rootlessness,"<sup>85</sup> or a manifestation of psychology on stage. Perhaps it

---

<sup>82</sup> The elliptical notation is part of the text on the page.

<sup>83</sup> Note Cate's thumb sucking in *Blasted*.

is because audiences have seen it all already before...it's familiar territory...because it is on a plane. Further, similar critics and dramatists can be found expressing Arrabal's biography (like with Kane's or Williams') as a means to understanding the play.

*(The dislocation of sound parallels the dislocation of origins of sight in the play.)*

## **[SOUND]**

The material loudness of the play on the page is not unlike hearing sound when one sees the word above. The word can become something more, a sound that is not a sound. This experience mutes these author function delusions that have been applied to Kane and Williams, looking for intent in the work; the SOUND dislocates them from the work entirely, which ironically enough, allows Sebastian, for example, through Catherine's talking, to meld with his.

This dislocated, aesthetic sense of mut-ation forces the Emperor to discover a way to re- and then un-mark himself. The (im)material loudness of the play forces him to look to the actual body for relief. For the Emperor, it is not just that the Architect (rather than the Emperor) had no mark or name before the Emperor came; it is not just that the Architect cannot speak. It is that the speaking sounds wrong. It sounds incongruent with what the Emperor images of sound via the signifier "s." As the characters discuss materiality (cannibalizing the body) in metaphorical and pragmatic ways (one must eat to survive), as neither represented, simulated or even "real" ways of understanding anthropophagi apply, the material, in the conventional sense, has less and less "to do with it." The aural sounds the Architect makes are not quite accurate enough. The Emperor's linguistic training of his pupil is to transform the Architect from a mere beast into a

---

<sup>84</sup> Recall Colin Thomas, "A major figure in one of his story lines is an airline pilot, who is also a screwup and the father of two other adult characters . . . I can figure that out for myself; by explaining everything, Greig makes it look like he doesn't trust his audience."

<sup>85</sup> Thomas, "The Scottish Greig uses his American setting to explore rootlessness."

Man. The lisp of the “s” does not emphasize the intended masculine essence of language (see Kristeva). Worse than becoming a beast, the Emperor must ensure that the Architect does not stray too terribly far from his masculinity. Otherwise, he may not be attractive to the Emperor, for it is not the set, the costume that makes one a woman and another man. The roles they play have little to do with whether a dress is donned or not. Although the tags of gender can be linked to clothing, the Architect’s doing is what “really” makes him a donkey, for example. Or, a cow:

EMPEROR. Today, I’ll play fiancée . . .

.....

ARCHITECT. The skirts!

EMPEROR. But aren’t we going to play priests today?

ARCHITECT. All right, I see you don’t want to.

.....

ARCHITECT. Moo! Moo!

*(Getting on all fours)*

You see! I’m a cow.

(222, 225)

There must be the proper sound to accompany the activity of cow-ness. The Architect in Act One seems to be unaware of this, so in Act Two, once the Emperor’s trial begins for his supposed and earlier murder of his wife, the Architect continues with this belief that prop (which is a double prop in this instance, for the character does not believe the dress or the judge’s wig are “real” but are ways for him to access a certain behavior) determines activity. The Emperor continually reiterates that it is as much the language that manifests activity. It is not that the characters put on a mask or wears hooves. It is because of the command that “it” is done. The Architect likes to be told to be ridden. The language not only performs, it must perform in particular ways, which are

in/of the body. The body manifests through language, which becomes conflated/overlapped with the manifested language that Sebastian in *Suddenly, Last Summer* hopes to enact, if only in his sacrifice.

(/)<sup>86</sup>

If the Author's Note remaps *Blasted*, then so too does the Editor's note. With the conflation of the word and the body comes the dilemma of how one is to show that the body as a proveable entity. It cannot be mapped. In the face of the irrefutability of the body, one realizes that there must be more to the body than the material. The "Editor's Note" mentioned in Chapter 4, (which may or may not be Grieg's) also draws attention to the need of there being doubts about the material being "all that there is." However, in order to reaffirm that there is no doubt that there is *more* is a cover for the material, i.e., that "that is all that there is"; there is no ephemeral, non-quantifiable, especially when we say it is so, which reproduces a need for an origin, for an originating point, for someone to tell me what the play is about so that I can dismiss what she said and go about my business. The author . . . therein lies the "more than," which does not really matter.

[*Reconstitute!*]

For Peter Ives, there is, in *fact*, "more than" the language on the page/the body on the stage. He states that "immanent, spontaneous grammars . . . subconsciously guide our use of language and the normative grammar used to regulate speech in more formal ways" (41, 44,

---

<sup>86</sup> The more you see this, the less it denotes something different from other designations. As the symbol is commanded to be found, as the symbol is not found, as the symbol itself commands (but does not because it is not there, but does because its absence is presence), the argument is able to explicitly show how it contracts and expands in a paratextual, self-cannibalizing manner.

45).<sup>87</sup> If language and the body are inseparable, then one might understand Bell's comment about "the imaginary theatrical present" in his review of Andrew Sofer's *The Stage Life of Props* as a lightning rod, of sorts, to understand an inherent tension within the materialist perspective that Bell claims Sofer's argument cannot overcome, i.e., the inescapability of the symbolic. The actual and the symbolic overlap in Kane's *Blasted* for the reader, which renders a brief, singular experience. That aesthetic experience can be considered a cannibalistic, paratextual one. The actual and the symbolic overlap in Greig's *San Diego*, but for different reasons.

Laura's commands to eat her flesh, not unlike Christ's command to his disciples to eat his flesh and drink his blood (which was not a simulated practice in the early church; transubstantiation occurred via real flesh on stage to be consumed by the participants, which, if on stage, is still representation-?). Many of those commands, along with the speech patterns of a multitude of characters in *San Diego* challenge the idea that the written word and the spoken sound are necessarily always-already distant. The characters often speak in prose, and they often speak in what appears to be poetry, or shape poetry. One asks what these "moves" have on the reader.

Perhaps Bell is thinking of a more psychoanalytic or semiotic model to best understand how theatre works. In other words, the play cannot signify to its potential *sans* psychoanalysis, or at least, some other model (linguistic-?) that allows Bell to get to the audience "through the back door."<sup>88</sup> This perspective that literary criticism is somehow "safer" or more "certain" in an

---

<sup>87</sup> Ives uses Bakhtin's notions of the carnival and Gramsci's theories regarding language to make these claims.

<sup>88</sup> Courtesy of Dr. Lance Norman.



“imaginary theatrical present” strikes me as quite odd,<sup>89</sup> as most critics, if asked what the primary difference is, say, between theatre and film, it is the *liveness*, the present/presence of it, both literally and figuratively (see Kane’s note above), which serve to provide conditions for representation to falter. To be safe in an image-nary temporal, physical, and/or psychological space sounds rather like a disavowal of the language on the page in order to dismiss the symbolic limitations of the corporeal bodies on the stage. The body, the objects are either not manifested by the written, to-be-spoken language, or the body transcends language via its transgression of the body.

In other words, “Everything [that] is written in a map in God’s head” in *San Diego* is just as much “His” map as it is a map inside one’s own head, as Daniel suggests:

I know exactly where I’m going. I know exactly  
It’s in a map in my head” (84).

The map that the reader cannot help but note is how the words on the page are organized, and direct, not unlike the Author’s Note in *Blasted* directs and enacts, a consciousness for the reader that is paratextual and cannibalistic. What is not revealed is that despite what Daniel says, that is not necessarily what is shown to the reader, as he suggests. The arrangement of the words on the page (a poetic convention-?) defy the very thing Daniel says. One cannot prove the map in God’s head, just as one cannot prove “where” one is going in *San Diego*. Saunders calls this e/affect “peripatetic spatial shifts” (4).

---

<sup>89</sup> Please note that this study does not single out Bell’s review as necessarily unique, but rather, it considers his review as the most useful example to render a theoretical archaeology, of sorts, to consider Kane’s *Blasted*.

Christopher Wixson's incisive<sup>90</sup> study of *Blasted* suggests that the body cannot be mapped; which, it can-nibalistically hearing. For Wixson, the body can move beyond being marked; it can move through representation. Wixson states, "the limits of language[], the inability of theory [is that it cannot] [] manifest the material, or useful body [:] [in *Blasted*] the body is undeniable, when the body's material presence is a condition of the circumstance" (par. 15). And, physical pain is perhaps the primary way to acknowledge this fact. It's as if to say, "If I am sucking out your eyes, you will feel it, and any discourse you might like to have about 'God' or 'Father Christmas' is immaterial." The matter at hand is the matter of your body being put through the ringer. And, if Ian feels pain, then the rest of us do too. Wixson continues:

Elaine Scarry, in her introduction to *The Body in Pain*, writes that  
'physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it  
. . . .' Jeanie Forte argues that the theater's primary canvas is the body for  
articulating and crossing the limits of discourse . . . Scarry suggests that  
"apprehension of another's pain is in part the awakening to the existence of  
ulterior place." (web)

It is the image-nary canvas, the primal, primary, all-important body that is supposed to be the "end" because it can defy all forms of representation. Initiated through pain, it has the potential to render a consciousness about an "invisible geography" (Scarry qtd. in Wixson) that transcends the material, that transcends the theatre itself. However, one can reach a moment when pain is no longer pain. In the original Greek, "*theatron*" translates to "seeing place." It is what is seen that is supposed to be the most important element of the stage. Because Wixson has yet to really discover a "review or critical appraisal of the play that does not itself resort to spatial language

---

<sup>90</sup> The study does a violence to the work; it incises.

and metaphors” (par. 5), he considers the play in this way, too. I agree this metaphorical catch is quite nearly undeniable and unavoidable. Note the paratextual nature of this study, for example. And, in part, this is the danger that the image-nary world of the theatre holds. Through the use of simulated, image-nary presentation of cannibalism on stage, the very canvas of the play itself threatens to pull itself apart, threatens to cannibalize itself. It is in this moment, that language can manifest a more really represented body than the one that is actually seen. When the stage directions indicate that after Ian consumes the dead baby he gets under the floorboards with its clothing and sticks his head out. Then, he dies:

*Ian 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 poling out of the floor.*

*He dies with relief.*

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

*Eventually.*

IAN. Shit.

Ian does not die. It is just a word. At first glance, what is stated and what happens seems to dislocate the word from the body. However, upon closer examination this denotation is for the reader. Not for the performance. The performer understands this direction not as a command but as a state of being to pretend. This second level of representation, or simulation in the Platonic sense of the term, divides the art from the actual. “I’m not really to eat the baby or die...just as the audience knows I’m not.” The difference here is that the actor does not perform “real” death. He knows she is to “wake up” in just a bit. The curtain does not drop on him. He is not carried

off stage, a victim of the rape, of the lack of food, of a lack of a cure for cancer, of a broken heart.

[Repeat!]

The issue lies in Bell's last statement about Sofer's analysis of props. Actual productions are "messy"; the image, the object on stage is not really being considered, from Bell's point of view. The image falls back onto the symbolic in Sofer's argument, according to Bell. The word is safe; it is not dangerous; its spatial metaphors cannot touch the inexpressible that is expressed through the body in pain. However, because Bell refuses to consider present-ness/presence as an actual possibility, one wonders how he is sees the material in the first place. Wixson considers the body, in its present-ness, as, in part, the means to eschew representation. Bell implies there is no such thing. There appears to be an inherent link between temporality and *the word made flesh* that concerns Bell, and he should be afraid. There is a materialism that is unseen, a dark matter, if you will, which traditionally speaking, has not been the application of this model. Such an application will yield a new way of considering how representation works. Cannibalism on stage offers this opportunity. The stage is rendered image-less through the excess of the "violence" that is simulated on stage. Cannibalism, falling last in the order of violent acts: Ian penetrates (rapes) Cate. The Soldier penetrates (rapes) Ian. The Soldier penetrates himself (blows his brains out). Ian consumes a recently-deceased baby, functions differently than these other events. The Author's Note's penetration of the play on the page becomes inseparable from it. Violence gives way to wholeness, between object and subject.

Although evoking a consciousness of a violation, the play does not allow for the act of cannibalism to be considered as purely penetrative, like these other moments. If one wishes to consider these transgressions of the body as a means to see the primacy of the body over

consciousness, then cannibalism must be considered as the balm that heals all these wounds, and in so doing, collapses actuality and representation together. Wixson's study of *Blasted*, using Elaine Scarry's ideas about pain and the body, suggests that Ian's body, in pain, thwarts representation. However, there is no pain in Ian's actions. We are relieved he is not going to die, as Cate nurses him, not back to health, but to a different space, a temporal shift that "is a space where convention and language itself will collapse into non-iterability, to be replaced by Kane's poetics of corporeality and populated by bodies of pain" (Saunders 3).

**(not) Sarah Kane/the Archimperor**

However, because the Author and the Writer are not the same, because the Author serves a narrative function, because typical, grammatical encoding is re/uncoded, I cannot presume that the actions are as important as the words on the page, the words that are then interpreted, transcribed by the actors, and reinterpreted by the audience, following a somewhat Derridean premise, that the written word has gotten too much attention in the Western tradition and that the spoken word is just as powerful. Instead, through this un/recoding, the taboo of taboos at the very end of the play, when Ian consumes a dead baby, must seem/appear to be, not equally powerful, and they are, nor indistinguishable, which implies an "authentic" distinction at some point in the past. Cannibalism is not a marker for the uncivilized nor for the post-civilized (Jonathan Swift comes to mind). The two are the same. There is no difference between the (im/)material. Cannibalism on stage is a presentation of a representation of presentation that thwarts typical notions of not just bifurcation, and its destruction in the twentieth century, but implodes these notions upon one another. Cannibalism simulated on stage is immaterial. "I cannot see to see," as Emily Dickinson puts it, and the more I see, the more it appears off stage.

One need look no further than the work's consumption of the Foucauldian author function. The work places it on a Möbius strip. Foucault had every reason to be authorized/to be fearful of being authorized; it is an inevitable proceeding. It happens after you've "made it." Look at the name of this anthology: *SARAH KANE*. Boom. This designation gets consumed with the "Author's note" proceeding the title/preceding the play. Further, placing the "Editor's note" after the "Author's note" reifies the author function, first, and second, consumes it by the reiteration of this hierarchy. They are integrated, doubly-re-iterated author function statements which cancel each other out. Yet, the performance, going back to earlier, must also be considered an integral piece of the work, at least, insofar as the performers and the director are concerned. The audience can have no way of knowing that a / signifies an interruption, as opposed to an ambivalent action or state of mind; in point of fact, the audience won't know the difference because it won't see either. Or will it? The "Author's note" serves to do what it says it does. It interrupts the play, for as the first half of this chapter will show, the bifurcations between actor/audience, written text and spoken, acted language, a fictional author and the "real" one; interruption and conflation are revealed to be the same thing through the presentation of cannibalism on stage.

At first glance, it appears as though Kane's, or rather, the author's note, appears to echo a tension between the sign of the text and the signifieds of the performance, whatever they might be. The author's note seems to emphasize a gap between the written word and the to-be/already-spoken words of the actors, apparently valuing the aural, the immaterial, the liveness of the experience of the play. Why else would "the author" decide to use grammar in a way other than what is typically understood when one encounters the "/" or the "[ ]" or the "( )" signifiers? Typically, the "/" indicates ambivalence, unity, even dialectical understanding. Here, the

opposite concept is evoked. An “interruption” is what the author is after. One imagines a penetrative act. The backwards slash is literalized; it performs on the page for the actor in an un/familiar way. There is now interruption and conjoining, conflated. This kind of tension can and cannot last. The actor is forced into an awareness that transcends and/or reifies the material. When you ask, “Why not use notations previously used by playwrights, such as an elliptical mark, “. . .” or a dash, “—” or no notation at all, which can be found in 4.48 *Psychosis*, to indicate indications? Derrida suggests such a distance between the spoken and the written is a necessary illusion in order to maintain a sense of ontological and material certainty over one’s existence. In reality, there is no such assurance. “Undecidability” or an “irreducible difference” is what gets yielded in the end. What can never know due to the contextuality of meaning. Greig’s authorization of Kane’s work must be accounted for when considering his because of “his” preface or prologue or paratextual move that is the “Editor’s Note.” His work is situated between Kane’s and the script of the play. The Author’s Note and the script reconstitute the Editor’s note as bits and pieces of themselves. There is a w/hole-y (not holy), transubstantiated text for the consumer.

Further, one can see cannibalization at work in the irreducible sameness/difference that occurs at the very end of the play. The Soldier raping Ian roughly half-way through the play can serve to parallel the penetrative quality of marking, of the Symbolic. But Ian’s eating of the dead baby at the very end functions quite differently than any of the other excessive or violent acts that appear. According to Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier, this “grotesque excess . . . can be seen as an extreme attempt to hold on to life, as a grotesque body swallowing the product of the womb. Kane seems to argue that the process of renewal might never end in spite of death . . . swallowing the world and being swallowed by the world themselves” (83). This assessment,

though, falls short of accounting for, or not, how such a shift in symbolic coding will transfer onto the actors' performances. In an abstract sense, "delivery" includes just about "anything that works," apart from/a part of the written text. Thus, joining together, the typical coding of the symbol "/" is inverted to mean stopping before continuing. Very well. But how does the aural get produced? In a very pragmatic and material sense, how can one appear to do this while the audience has no concept of this symbolic change? The words on the page, through the acting, materialize in Ian's cannibalistic action.

Peter Buse in his *Drama + Theory: Critical Approaches to Modern British Drama* (2001) indicates that there is a kind of ambivalence in this act, which suggests a death-wish: Ian both wants and does not want to die. Using Shoshana Felman's theories about trauma,<sup>91</sup> he indicates that Ian "leaves the [witnesses, or,] audience feeling morally and ethically ambivalent" (178). He goes on to state that:

[t]he *actuality* of the range of distressing acts Ian carries out in Cate's *absence* . . . is called into doubt by the staging—the lights come up and then go down for each 'vignette'—but most of all by the final miniature scene: 'He dies with relief.' The death must be a wish fulfillment realized in Ian's imagination because he clearly does not die in the world of the play; it ends with his survival with Cate. (emphases mine, 179-80)

Of course, Buse moves the site of witnessing from the audience to the critic. He concludes that the reviewer is now "expected to be immediately eloquent . . . passing judgment on behalf of others (a *readership* whose expectations put even more limitations and pressures on the witness) . . . It is . . . no coincidence . . . that 'trauma theory' has arisen in the wake of the global triumph

---

<sup>91</sup> Specifically, from her 1992 work *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1992).



of the mass media, as a tentative attempt to *slow* them down” (187). Buse contends that to witness the play *Blasted* is to preclude abilities to digest and process “what it means,” and further, these abilities are even more elusive and pressurizing for the professional critic, encountering the play. Cannibalism heals trauma, serving as an impediment to materiality through a representation that defies its presentation.

The Emperor’s talking is talking too Long: Speed it Up

At the prospect of tapping into pure representation, the Emperor becomes desperate:

EMPEROR. (*after drinking*) What’s that? Now you talk to the birds in my language.

ARCHITECT. That doesn’t matter. What’s important is what I think: there’s a transmission of thought between us.

EMPEROR. (*thoroughly frightened*) Tell me seriously, do you read my thoughts too? Can you see into my mind?

ARCHITECT. I want to write. Teach me to be a writer. You must’ve been a great author.

EMPEROR. (*flattered*) I’ve written some famous sonnets! And what plays, with their monologues and their asides. No writer has succeeded in equaling me! Beethoven, d’Annunzio, James Joyce, Charles V, Shakespeare himself, and his nephew Bernstein.

(240)

A few points: First, ESP is horrifying for him. “You can read my mind?” Pure(er), or at least, less mediated representation rears its head. Second, the means by which the Architect gets the Emperor to calm down is to refer to writing, to the Emperor’s Authorship. He needs that delusion, that mask; he hides in one kind of representation to escape another. Third, he moves to music, perhaps as an attempt to escape representation, not unlike how Barthes refers to Beethoven’s work. However, we hear no music. He only mentions Beethoven with himself, as Author. Fourth, it is the asides, the paratextual that marks a good writer. Fifth, by marking

himself as a good writer, he precludes the paratextual, cannibalistic, transubstantiation that Catherine affords Sebastian. Fifth, the only way to be like him is to be him, for copying just will not cut it. You may just have to cut him and eat him to do it, Architect.

**Conclusion**  
**The Paraleptical/the Paratext:**  
***Titus Andronicus*, Artaud, and a Theatre of Cannibalism**

**Prologue**

For whatever Shakespeare wrote was meant from the start to be *supplemented* by an *invisible* “*paratext*” consisting of words spoken by Shakespeare to the actors and by the actors to each other concerning emphasis, stage business, tone, pacing, possible cuts, and so forth.

To the extent that this *paratext* was ever written down, it was recorded in the promptbook.<sup>92</sup> . . . [Oxford editors upon which this Norton text is based] choose the text immersed in *history*—that is, in the *theatrical embodiment* for which it was *intended* by its author—*over the text unstained by the messy, collaborative demands of the playhouse. The closest we can get to Shakespeare’s “final” version of a play performed by his company during his professional life—that is, during the time in which he could still oversee and participate in any cuts and revisions . . .*

“*Writing*” for the theatre, at least for Shakespeare, is not simply a matter of setting words to paper and letting the pages drift away; it is a social process as well as an individual act. . . . Is there a tension between the Oxford editors’ preference for the performed, fully socialized text and their continued commitment to recovering the text as Shakespeare himself intended it? Yes. The *tension* is most visible in their determination to strip away textual changes arising from circumstances, such as government censorship, over which Shakespeare had no control.

*(“We have, wherever possible,” they write, put “profanities back in Shakespeare’s mouth.”)*

It can be glimpsed as well in the editors’ belief, *almost a leap of faith*, that there was little revision of Shakespeare’s plays in his company’s revivals between the time of his death and the publication of the Folio. *But the tension is mainly a creative one.*

Stephen Greenblatt (emphases mine, 76-77).

In Stephen Greenblatt’s “The Dream of the Master Text,” which is one of his three introductions to the *Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition* (2008), the idea of the “invisible paratext” and its connection to Shakespeare as a Reconstituted Author<sup>93</sup> exhibits much

---

<sup>92</sup> The promptbook is the text that emerges from earlier drafts (fair and foul copies), which makes its way to the Master of the Revels for approval. This text “belongs” to the theatre company, in this instance, to the Lord Chamberlain’s Men or the King’s Men.

<sup>93</sup> Greenblatt argues that the notion of Shakespeare, as a singular author, must be reconceived vis-à-vis the cultural practices that have gone into the production of “Shakespeare.” Shakespeare must be many writers, performers, readers, practices of production and consumption, et al. Such a concept further drives the cannibal’s appetite. Greenblatt only

of what this project maintains: The search for the Author(ized Text) is a desire to lose the self in the Author who has been collided with a text that never existed in the first place and which must be consumed, eaten in order to effect transubstantiation. Greenblatt wants to eat some Shakespeare via his consumption of other Shakespeare texts (Quartos, Folios, the history of the making of the Quartos and Folios, the history of the Oxford editing that went into the making of the official, Oxford text), taking bits of one text, chopping the lines up or out, to get to a re-mastered text that does proper homage to the Master, the “real” Master who swears. The historical Shakespeare is one in a steady state of consumption and reconstitution, but not with Greenblatt (thank God).

Greenblatt’s paratextualized (asides) Shakespeare allows him, he hopes, to make a name for himself. To reconstitute Shakespeare, to cannibalize Shakespeare includes the processes of production and consumption of the text Shakespeare composed, as Shakespeare *intended*, according to Greenblatt. Note that these social processes he articulates most poignantly refer to writing, publishing, and owning, not reading, and perhaps to a slightly larger extent, the performing, which he treats historically.

In other words, for Greenblatt the authorial figure of Shakespeare is a (dis)embodied one, who speaks with many voices, all of which are in tension with each other. These other voices, which include past ones, not unlike the Emperor’s past which manifests in a myriad of (dis)embodied performances, collide and consume one another. The past processes that went into the construction of a text collides with other versions of a text collides with an idea or ideas about Shakespeare, and not unlike Mrs. Venable, it appears Greenblatt’s act of re-authorizing Shakespeare is to put his own name in with Shakespeare’s. (In academia, that’s how you make a

---

reiterates the Author by reconstituting the notion to include more of his own newly reconstituted self, with Shakespeare, and the rest.

name for yourself, off of someone else's.) The creative tension that he refers to is a tension between the paraleptical and the paratextual. Paratextually, Greenblatt includes himself with all the other renditions of Shakespeare's plays. Paraleptically, Greenblatt passes over the idea that there is "a" Shakespeare in order to reemphasize that there is one, but only through him, "Destroy the notion of the 'Master Text,' and I will show you the correct way to understand the 'real' Shakespeare." The editors find themselves in a paradox of their own making, and the tension this paradox offers insight as to how Titus achieves transubstantiation for Tamora: A reunion with her sacrificed and dismembered son, Alarbus.

### **Titus Andronicus Minces Meat and Words**

TAMORA. . . . Thrice noble Titus, spare my firstborn son.

TITUS. Patient yourself, madam, and pardon me.

These are the brethren, whom your Goths beheld  
Alive and dead, and for their brethren slain  
Religiously they ask a sacrifice.  
To this your son is marked, and die he must  
T'appease their groaning shadows that are gone.

*from Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus 1.1.120-26.*

.....

SATURNINUS. What hast thou done, unnatural and unkind?

TITUS. Killed her [Lavinia] for whom my tears have made me blind.

.....

SATURNINUS. What, was she ravished? Tell who did the deed.

TITUS. Will't please you eat? Will't please Your Highness  
feed?

TAMORA. Why hast thou slain thine only daughter thus?

TITUS. Not I; 'twas Chiron and Demetrius.

They ravished her and cut away her tongue,  
And they, 'twas they that did her all this wrong.

SATURNINUS. Go fetch them hither to us presently.

TITUS. Why, there they are, both bakèd in this pie,  
Whereof their mother daintily hath fed,  
Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred.  
'Tis true, 'tis true; witness my knife's sharp point.  
(5.3.48-49, 53-63)

I cannot help but laugh during the exchange among Titus, Tamora, and Saturninus while Titus serves his guests some people-pie at the end of the play. Perhaps in this proto-play of Shakespeare's,<sup>94</sup> cannibalism's power might reveal itself more clearly, as the "rigid rhetoric"<sup>95</sup> and Marcus's over-the-top monologues,<sup>96</sup> and the two-dimensionality of the characters preclude the master's genius from shining through the page.<sup>97</sup> We will not be disturbed by the "serious" tragic conventions found in Othello's Song, for example, with the more elevated, high-poetry kinds of verse. The play is just too straight-forward and inelegant to be from Shakespeare. Rather than Othello's beautiful use of anaphora:

---

<sup>94</sup> *Riverside Shakespeare* claims *Titus Andronicus* is "the earliest of Shakespeare's tragedies" (1065). Other scholars, such as Sylvan Barnet, claim it is one of his first, with *The Comedy of Errors* being his first. Scholars note Titus's speeches serve as the first draft of later speeches heard from Brutus or Marc Antony, for example.

<sup>95</sup> *Riverside Shakespeare*, 1068.

<sup>96</sup> For example, after seeing Lavinia for the first time after Tamora's sons Demetrius and Chiron rape and dismember her, Marcus's infamous monologue in response is seen as extremely verbose and long-winded and unnecessary. Typically, this speech is altered, condensed, or cut entirely from productions. See Stephen Greenblatt's "The Dream of the Master Text" for further elaboration on this topic.

<sup>97</sup> Francis Meres's *Palladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury* (1598), which is the source for knowing of the lost plays *Cardenio* and *Love's Labour's Won*, indicates, along with 1590's theatre owner Philip Henslowe's assessment of the plays he produced, that the (1592-1594) play was popular. Meres writes, "... for tragedy, [witness] his *Richard the Second*, *Richard the Third*, *Henry the Fourth*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*" (Bryson 129). Despite its vast popularity during Shakespeare's lifetime, *Titus* has a long history of derision and judgment. T.S. Eliot famously called the play "uninspired" and "filth." George Bernard Shaw indicated that the play is so bad that Shakespeare could not possibly have written it. George Peele may have helped with the construction of the text, which must explain why the play is so terrible.

Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
Of hairbreadth scapes i'th'imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe  
And sold to slavery . . .  
(1.3.137-40)

Not to mention the enjambment, alliteration, and assonance in these lines alone, note Titus's use of anaphora, which has a much blunter performative quality:

I am not mad; I know thee well enough.  
Witness this wretched stump, witness these crimson  
    lines,  
Witness these trenches made by grief and care,  
Witness the tiring day and heavy night,  
Witness all sorrow, that I know thee well  
For our proud empress, mighty Tamora.  
Is not thy coming for my other hand?

"Of being" done things to, Othello is put upon by others. He is not the acting agent in that instance of being taken into slavery, for example. Paratextually, Othello adds and subtracts and hones his narrative to persuade the Venetian city-patriarchs. To "Witness" sorrow and a tiring day, Titus distances Tamora from the events at hand: She is about to eat her children. Paraleptically, Titus's "other hand" passes over the smell just under her nose. Othello does not command. He reflects. Titus commands, and he does so as a soldier does, with a staccato delivery. Othello, a general too, adopts a more scholarly, poetic, sonnet-like persona via his speech. Titus's rhyming is more repetitive than poetic. The language does not employ rhetorical devices to the extent Othello's speech does. This project contends that the text and the body are the same. If this is the case, then the violence Chiron and Demetrius visit upon Lavinia, that Titus visits upon Chiron and Demetrius, that Titus visits upon Tamora and Saturninus, is as much a violence of language, then, as it is to the body. Note Titus's paraleptical retort after killing his daughter Lavinia.

It produces an absurd, laughable reaction; and, Titus's rhyme scheme makes my chuckling all the more gregarious. Maybe it is the bizarre manner in which Titus acts, wearing a cook's outfit, all the better "[t]o entertain Your Highness [Saturninus] and your empress [Tamora]" with (Titus, 5.3.32). More than anything, it is the paraleptical response<sup>98</sup> he gives to Saturninus that focuses my laughter. "What happened to Lavinia to elicit such an act, slitting your own daughter's throat?" "Anyone want some more pie?" The pie becomes the emphasis, and for the characters, it seems Titus has gone quite mad, not because he killed his daughter, but rather, because he does not directly answer Saturninus's question. "How dare you kill your own daughter and not explain yourself afterwards; what a *faux pas*."

In Act One, Titus's men's religiously asking for revenge transforms into a ritualized religious ceremony at the opening of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. The Goths have killed sons of Rome. Balance, payment must be made in blood "t'appease their [the slain's] groaning shadows that are gone." The shadows groan while being gone? These disembodied and a-figured (there is no figure, but merely a shadow) guttural expressions appear to haunt Titus, so much so that Titus speaks of them as if they apply to everyone there, despite the silence he boasts of his family's tomb, his "[s]weet cell of virtue and nobility" (1.1.93): "here are no storms,/No noise, but silence and eternal sleep" (1.1.154-55). The eternal sleep, the so-called silence Titus refers to is for him honor; one no longer has to bother with it, as it is silently secured in death.

Only true servants of Rome reside within the tomb. After Titus commits infanticide, killing his son Mutius who refused to allow Emperor Saturninus to marry his (Mutius's) sister

---

<sup>98</sup> Curiously, in Julie Taymor's *Titus* (1999), Titus does not speak the line "Will't please you eat?" immediately after Saturninus's question. The *paralepsis* does not occur. The film's focus shifts away from the pies and onto an overtly didactic epilogue Taymor included, which parallels her prologue, both of which are additions to the First Folio script.



Lavinia, he bars his other sons from burying Mutius in the tomb because he has “dishonored all our family . . . /Traitors, away! He rests not in this tomb . . . Bury him where you can, he comes not here” (1.1.343, 350, 355). The noise that might disrupt the repose of the tomb is betrayal. The noise of betrayal gets conflated with the noise of revenge. The two are interchangeable, unidentifiable (the noise has no “real” source); they eat each other, as Titus and Tamora nibble away at each other’s families, piece by piece.

Metonymic gestures do not prevail here. Titus’s severed hand is not synecdoche, and its chopping is all the more absurd for it:

AARON. Titus Andronicus, [Saturninus] my lord the Emperor  
Sends thee this word: that if thou love thy sons,  
Let Marcus, Lucius, or thyself, old Titus,  
Or any of you, chop off your hand  
And send it to the King. He for the same  
Will send thee hither both thy sons alive,  
And that shall be the ransom for their fault.

TITUS. . . . With all my heart I’ll send the Emperor my hand.  
Good Aaron, wilt thou help chop it off?

LUCIUS. Stay, father, for that noble hand of thine,  
.....  
Shall not be sent. My hand will serve the turn.  
.....

MARCUS. ....  
My hand hath been but idle; let it serve  
To ransom my two nephews from their death.  
.....

My hand shall go.

LUCIUS. By heaven, it shall not go!

.....

TITUS. Agree between you. I will spare my hand.

LUCIUS. Then I’ll go fetch an ax.

MARCUS. But I will use the ax.  
*Exeunt Lucius and Marcus*

TITUS. Come hither, Aaron. I'll deceive them both.  
Lend me thy hand, and I will give thee mine.

AARON. (*aside*) If that be called deceit, I will be honest.  
(3.1.150-185)

The stichomythic exchange draws attention to Aaron's last remark, a punchline, an aside. This kind of paratextual remark reflects back onto Titus's paraleptic reply. When Titus refers to Lavinia through the legend of Philomel, this is not just a metaphorical allusion; it is a not just a metonymic one.

Titus adopts a rather paraleptical way of behaving; from the chopping off of his own hand to his feigned madness that begins at the end of Act 4, Titus shifts the focus of the matter away from the issue at hand, pun intended. As the madness focuses the characters' attention away from the meat pies in Act 5, so does the severing of his hand direct Marcus's and Lucius's attention towards the search for an ax.

The tension between passing over (paralepsis) and re-emphasizing to re-constitute (paratextuality) resolves in the cannibalization of Chiron and Demetrius. Paraleptically, he saves his sons by chopping off his hand, and paratextually, he re-emphasizes his daughter's innocence. Titus does not mimetically enforce a punishment akin to Lavinia's rape and disfigurement, nor is cannibalizing one's own children necessarily an amplified version of her traumatic experience.

Titus paraleptically emphasizes the fate of the characters in Acts 4 and 5; he paratextualizes Demetrius, Chiron, Saturninus and especially, Tamora. *Titus Andronicus* is a paratextual play and paraleptical play, in a persistent tension throughout draws attention to that which is being consumed: The play itself. The cultural conventions to which everyone appeals,

i.e., honor can only be maintained with the spilling of someone else's blood, which obfuscates the activity that occurs meta-textually. The play eats itself.

Cultural conventions dictate blood be spilt, after all. Lucius states, "Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths,/That we may hew his limbs, and on a pile/*Ad manes fratrum*<sup>99</sup> sacrifice his flesh/Before this earthy prison of their bones,/That so the shadows be not unappeased" (1.1.96-100). Alarbus's blood sacrifice must occur in order to redeem the Romans' fallen brethren: "T'appease their groaning shadows." The blood, then, shuts them up, in other words. Lucius confirms their appeasement:

See, lord and father, how we have performed  
Our Roman rites. Alarbus's limbs are lopped,  
And entrails feed the sacrificing fire,  
Whose smoke, like incense, doth perfume the sky.  
Remaineth naught but to inter our brethren  
And with loud 'larums welcome them to Rome. (1.1.142-47)

This affirmation is a late addition to the script that comes from the First Folio (1623), which comes from Quarto Three, which transcribes Quarto Two, which many Shakespearean scholars claim as a "bad" quarto. The now-official text comes from the discovery of Quarto One in the early twentieth century, which appears to be closer to the prompt text that the Master of the Revels approves prior to the play's first performance. This declaration, then, apparently needed to be included as the play evolved because Alarbus's dismemberment did not come across with the sounds of Tamora's unearthly, nearly disassociated or disembodied screams. It is as if it is her ancestors, or some primal force, some uncivilized, guttural expression takes control of her body, yet, that possession of sorts must be illuminated by linguistic articulation. It is as if the words somehow will represent more powerfully than the inexpressible, understood through her screams.

---

<sup>99</sup> To the Departed Spirits of our brothers.

However, these spirits, someone's spirits, these screams do not shut up. So, maybe, the words will do the trick. The screams may hush, but they are not silenced. These screams which emanate from the violence Andronicus inflicts upon Tamora's first sons hush, but they are not silenced and are, instead, eventually transubstantiated via the cannibalization of her own children. Her guttural moans turn back inwards upon the chewed, material bodies of her two sons. J.D. Palmer indicates that it is the excesses of violence which prove Shakespeare's attempts to stretch the limits of the "material" at hand (320), attempts that may or may not fail. The unheard, but referenced, groans proliferate exponentially throughout the play, as Tamora continuously hears Alarbus's hacked limbs speak the tune of revenge of her own echoed, ghosted scream in her ear. Thus, she demands that her two sons, Chiron and Demetrius, not to forget her cries and their brother's:

Remember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain  
To save your brother from the sacrifice,  
But fierce Andronicus would not relent.  
Therefore away with her, and use her as you will—  
The worse to her, the better loved me. (2.3.163-167)

Rather than a metonymic or ghost-like limb appearing before her eyes<sup>100</sup> with a wagging finger of disapproval, "Shame on you mother for letting them put my guts on a fire—they do smell good, though—Make them hear me through you!" Alarbus transubstantiates via Tamora's chewing.

Since *Titus*, like all of Shakespeare's revenge tragedies, stems from the Senecan revenge formula, let us evoke Seneca's own words on the matter, "An act is not revenged unless it is surpassed." Transubstantiation does not occur because the taboo of cannibalism exceeds all others, *per se*; cannibalism becomes the means by which Tamora rejoins her son. Revenge stops

---

<sup>100</sup> In Taymor's film adaptation, she literalizes what she sees as metonymic: Six-foot large, hacked-off limbs proliferate the film, as sculpture, perhaps.

at this moment, granted everyone is dead, but, rather than the more familiar Senecan ending in other Shakespearean tragedies, the play does not portend a story of resolution that continues on after the play is over. For example, in *Hamlet*, Fortinbras takes over the dysfunctional house in Denmark, which Horatio announces at the end of the play. There is always a herald or chorus member who speaks on behalf of the audience, back to the audience, which assures from this kind of formulaic move, catharsis might occur at the end. *Titus* does not offer such relief.

The last lines of the play, Lucius's monologue, do not offer catharsis:

Some loving friends convey the Emperor hence,  
And give him burial in his father's grave.  
My father and Lavinia shall forthwith  
Be closed in our household's monument.  
As for that ravenous tiger, Tamora,  
No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weed,  
No mournful bell shall ring her burial;  
But throw her forth to beasts and birds to prey.  
Her life was beastly and devoid of pity,  
And being dead, let birds on her take pity. (5.3.191-200)

Unlike the promise of peace Fortinbras brings, at the expense of Denmark's sovereignty, the peace Lucius appears to find is in the supposed further, excessive degradation of Tamora's body, an act not unlike Achilles's attempt to punish Hector in *The Iliad* by dragging Hector's dead body around Troy's walls. Lucius decrees such an insult is a more excessive act than eating one's own children. It is as if once the body is gone, her presence goes with it. It is as if the absence of the body's matter matters at this point. Cannibalization precludes Tamora's absence, as her kin are now reconstituted, not just with Tamora, but with the city as well. The paratextual nature of her eating Chiron and Demetrius echoes the paratextuality of Greenblatt's fascination with Shakespeare mirrors a new kind of theatrical language for theatre. It is the language of the cannibal. It is the language of *paralepsis* and the paratextual.

## The Cannibal, Artaud, and Para-leptical/textual Eating

For the theatre, cannibalism reveals itself in its absent presence; the theatre reveals itself to be that where there was “nothing” there to begin with. Titus’s words re-constitute the flesh of Tamora’s sons in her mouth, not in her mouth, in her throat, now in her belly. Gone. But (t)here. “You’re eating your sons.” The saying is the (un/re)doing; the saying that does, does via these two rhetorical devices, paralespsis and paratextuality, which cannibalize each other in the overlapping that occurs.

Sebastian in *Suddenly, Last Summer*, like Tamora’s sons, transubstantiates; he does so through Catherine’s talking, a paratextual, reconstituting kind of talking which continuously cannibalizes vis-à-vis Dr. Sugar’s, Mrs. Venable’s, and even Catherine’s interruptions. Interruptions which are not always heard.

In Sarah Kane’s *Blasted*, for example, the “Author’s Note” directs that certain grammatical symbols signify certain activities, moods, tones, etc. The “/” indicates overlapping, interrupting dialogue between characters, like Ian and Cate. The “/” never appears in the 2001, authorized and official copy of the play. In his “Editor’s Note,” David Greig, Kane’s friend and fellow playwright, presents the play as that at least. In this indisputable version of the play, the absent “/” becomes more present in its absence. *Blasted*’s use (or not) of grammatical symbols results in an activity that eats itself, and Ian’s consumption of the dead baby at the end of the play serves as a sign of this activity’s nature: It is cannibalistic. By exciting signification to its maximum capacities, instead of writing a new kind of visual code, *Blasted* un-writes ones pertaining to linguistic signs. The “Author’s Note” that precedes the script of the play recodes and ultimately reconstitutes the play. The code formerly known as a mark in textual space, the unspeakable, becomes a code of space, i.e., the performance on the stage.

The performance of David Greig's "Editor's Note" on the page enacts a paratextual cannibalism, in that, as an aside, placed in between the "Author's Note" and the script of the play, it is the thing that signals itself as "not that important." However, rather than deemphasizing itself, it reconstitutes itself into the play *Blasted*.

In Greig's *San Diego*, it is as if it is almost aware of this point: The play includes at least five little-David-Greig's, characters which attempt to de-authorize the status of the play as authorial, i.e., the status of Greig as Author, (de)emphasized, in the play, and in *Blasted*. The play succeeds. The characters cannibalize each other; each version of David Greig pushes itself in/onto the other.

The Emperor's other, his Architect, or so the Emperor labels him, is a version of the Emperor, or so he hopes. The Architect seems to be on board with this plan, at least from time to time, as he begs to trade places with the Emperor, to act as he is commanded. The Emperor hopes to enact his interpretation of the Architect's interpretation of what the Emperor commands the Architect to do before the Architect is able. For example, after commanding him to "be a donkey," the Emperor interrupts the Architect, over and over again, to the extent that, in the end, he begins to perform his interpretation of what he thinks the Architect's interpretation of what a performance might look like of being a donkey. The Emperor, through this performance of interrupting, speaking the act, "EEEHAAawwww," enacts the act...it does not precede it. The saying is the re-constituting, hoping to at least, the Architect with the Emperor.

Transubstantiation occurs only when the Architect cannibalizes the Emperor...or, does he?

The absent consumption of the Emperor paraleptically paratextualizes, that is, it eats, and its eating makes this project's point (There is no difference between the actual and representation) Both ideas eat each other. When the Emperor appears from under the table that

the Architect just sopped up his (the Emperor's) remains from, with a meaty morsel or two, the notion of cause and effect, and, effect, then, cause (what Frederick Jameson headlines as the "Postmodern") no longer matters. The matter of the Emperor, hop-hop-hopping out from under room-service's table, after the Architect ate him, a supposed reconstitution of the two characters, the Emperor pops out from under a tablecloth.

Cannibalism, on the st/page, enacts a Theatre of Cannibalism, which pleases our newly dismembered and consumed Artaud *vis-à-vis The Theatre and Its Double vis-à-vis* this project. The constant need to reinvoke the nothing, and reinitiate the cannibalism that is "never there" enacts the conflation of both absent body and absent art, both present symbol and performative presence. The threat of death, alleviated, the imaginary joinder of anthropophagy lends the delusion I never had in the first place. "*Eat Me.*"



## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arens, W. *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Arrabal, Fernando. *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria. Guernica and Other Plays*. Trans. Evererard D'Harnoncourt and Adele Shank. NY: Grove Press. 1994.
- Artaud, Antonin. *Antonin Artaud: Anthology*. Ed. Jack Hirschman. San Francisco: City Light Books, 1965.
- -- -. *The Theater and Its Double*. Trans. Mary Caroline Richards. NY: Grove Press, 1958.
- Askenasy, Hans. *Cannibalism: From Sacrifice to Survival*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1994.
- Aston, Elaine. "Reviewing the Fabric of Blasted." *Sarah Kane in Context*. Ed. Laurens De Vos and Graham Saunders. Manchester University Press, 2010.
- Auslander, Philip. "Liveness: Performance and the Anxiety of Simulation." *Performance and Cultural Politics*. Ed. Elin Diamond. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Avigail, Shoshana and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan. "What Do Brook's Bricks Mean? Toward a Theory of the 'Mobility' of Objects in Theatrical Discourse." *Poetics Today*. 2 (1981): 13-34.
- Avramescu, Catalin. *Cannibalism: An Intellectual History*. Trans. Alistair Ian Blyth. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Baker-White, Robert. *The Text in Play: Representations of Rehearsal in Modern Drama*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1999.
- Barnes, Clive. Review of *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*, by Fernando Arrabal. *The New York Times* Sunday, May 30, 1976.
- Barker, Francis, ed., et al. *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Barthes, Roland. *Critical Essays*. Trans. Richard Howard. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972.
- -- -. *Image—Music—Text*. "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein." Trans. Stephen Heath. NY: Hill and Wang. 1977.

- -- --. *Mythologies*. Trans. Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972.
- Blau, Herbert. *The Audience*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- -- --. "Flat-out Vision." *Performance and Cultural Politics*. Ed. Elin Diamond. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Blurton, Heather. *Cannibalism in High Medieval Literature*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Boehmer, Elleke. "Eating (dis)order: From Metaphoric Cannibalism to Cannibalistic Metaphors." *J.M. Coetzee in Context and Theory*. Ed. Katy Iddiols, et al. London: Continuum, 2009.
- Bond, Edward. *Early Morning. Plays: One*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1977.
- Boyer, Allen D. "Drama, Law, and Rhetoric in the Age of Coke and Shakespeare." *The Law in Shakespeare*. Ed. Constance Jordan and Karen Cunningham. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Brennan, Teresa. *History After Lacan*. Routledge, 1993.
- Bryson, Bill. *Shakespeare: The Illustrated and Updated Edition*. NY: Atlas Books-Harper Collins, 2009.
- Buchan, Mark. "Food for Thought." *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity*. Ed. Kristen Guest. Forward. Maggie Kilgour. Albany: State University of NY Press, 2001.
- Buse, Peter. *Drama + Theory: Critical Approaches to Modern British Drama*. Manchester University Press, 2002.
- Carlson, Marvin. *The Haunted Stage: Theatre as Memory Machine*. University of Michigan, 2003.
- -- --. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- -- --. *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present*. Expanded Edition. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Cavendish, Dominic. "Review of San Diego." *The Telegraph*. 18 August 2003.
- Chadwich, Henry. *The Early Church*. Revised Edition. Penguin Books, 1993.

chicagotheatre. <chicagotheatre.com>

Christensen, Matthew J. "Cannibals in the Postcolony: Sierra Leone's Intersecting Hegemonies in Charlie Haffner's Slave Revolt Drama *Amistad Kata-Kata*." *Research in African Literatures*. 36.1 (Spring 2005): 1-19.

Columbus, Christopher. *Select Letters of Christopher Columbus*. Ed. Richard Henry Major. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Constantine, Nathan. *A History of Cannibalism: From Ancient Cultures to Survival Stories and Modern Psychopaths*. Edison, New Jersey: Chartwell Books, Inc., 2006.

Covino, Deborah Caslav. *Amending the Abject: Aesthetic Makeovers in Medicine and Culture*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2004.

Croxton *Play of the Sacrament. Medieval Drama*. Ed. David Bevington. Wadsworth Publishing, 1975.

Davies, Reginald Thorne, ed. *The Corpus Christi Play of the English Middle Ages*. New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972.

Derrida, Jacques. "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*. Ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser. NY: Columbia University Press, 1989.

-- -- --. *Limited Inc*. Northwestern University Press, 1988.

-- -- --. "The Theatre of Cruelty: The Closure of Representation." *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

-- -- --. "The Voice That Keeps Silence." *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*. Trans. David B. Allison. Northwestern University Press, 1973.

Dollimore, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*. Reissued Third Edition. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Dox, Donnalee. "Medieval Drama as Documentation: 'Real Presence' in the Croxton *Conversion of Ser Jonathas the Jewe by the Myracle of the Blissed Sacrament*." *Theatre Survey* 38 (1997): 97-115.

Dunn, Geoffrey. *Tertullian*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Edgar, David. Introduction. *State of Play: Playwrights on Playwriting*. Ed. David Edgar. Faber and Faber, 1999.

- Ehrman, B.D. *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scriptures and Faiths We Never Knew*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Ellis, Lorena Balensifer. "In the Jungle of the 'Antropófagos.'" *Modern Drama*. 42.1 (1999): 269-279.
- Foster, Susan Leigh. "Pygmalion's No-Body and the Body of Dance." *Performance and Cultural Politics*. Ed. Elin Diamond. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Garner, Jr., Stanton B. *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Georgia Straight: Vancouver's Online Source*. <<https://www.straight.com>>
- Goldstein, David B. "The Cook and the Cannibal: *Titus Andronicus* and the New World." *Shakespeare Studies*. 37 (2009): 99-133.
- Goodall, Jane. *Artaud and the Gnostic Drama*. Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. "The Dream of the Master Text." *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Ed. Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus. NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2008.
- Greig, David. Introduction to *Sarah Kane: Complete Plays*. London: Menthuen, 2001.
- -- --. *San Diego*. NY: Faber and Faber. 2003.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1994.
- Guest, Kristen. "Introduction." *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity*. Ed. Kristen Guest. Foreward. Maggie Kilgour. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001.
- Hardison, O.B. *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages: Essays in the Origin and Early History of Modern Drama*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965.
- Harrill, J. Albert. "Cannibalistic Language in the Fourth Gospel and Greco-Roman Polemics of Factionalism." *Journal of Biblical Literature*. 127.1 (Spring 2008): 133-158.
- Hawes, Charlie, Daniel Korn, and Mark Radice. *Cannibal: The History of the People-Eaters*. Channel 4 Publishing, 2002.
- Homer. *The Iliad*. Trans. Robert Fagles. NY: Penguin Books, 1991.

- Hook, Brian S. "Oedipus and Thyestes Among the Philosophers: Incest and Cannibalism in Plato, Diogenes, and Zeno." *Classical Philology*. 100.1 (Jan 2005): 17-40.
- Ives, Peter. *Gramsci's Politics of Language: Engaging the Bakhtin Circle and the Frankfurt School*. Toronto: UP Toronto. 2004.
- Intellect Books. <<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/page/index,name=about/>>
- Jones, Amelia. *Body Art/Performing the Subject*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Jones, Lois. *Cannibal: The True Story of the Maneater of Rotenburg*. Berkeley Publishing Company-Penguin Group, 2005.
- Kane, Sarah. *Complete Plays*. Intro. David Greig. London: Methuen, 2001.
- Kilgour, Maggie, ed. *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity*. Albany: State University of NY Press, 2001.
- -- --. *From Communion to Cannibalism*. Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. Columbia University Press, 1982.
- -- --. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Columbia University Press, 1984.
- Kubiak, Anthony. *Agitated States: Performance in the American Theater of Cruelty*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.
- Lindenbaum, Shirley. "Thinking About Cannibalism." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 33 (2004): 475-498.
- Lobanov-Rostovsky, Sergei. *The Cannibal Banquet: Violence, Enactment, Tragedy in the English Renaissance*. Diss. Harvard University, 1993.
- Margaroni, Maria. "'The Lost Foundation': Kristeva's Semiotic *Chora* and Its Ambiguous Legacy." *Hypatia* 20.1 (2005): 78-98.
- Mauro, Lucia. Review of *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*, by Fernando Arrabal. [chicagotheater.com](http://www.chicagotheater.com/revArchEmp.html) <<http://www.chicagotheater.com/revArchEmp.html>>
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. Colin Smith. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1962.
- Metz, Christian. "Aural Objects." *Yale French Studies* 60 (1980): web.

- Mills, Liz. "When the Voice Itself is the Image." *Modern Drama*. University of Toronto Press. 52.4 (2009): web.
- Montaigne, Michel de. *Essays of Michel de Montaigne*. Trans. Charles Cotton. Ed. William Carew. Project Gutenberg. Web.
- Moshy, Summer Neilson. *The Empty Center: Acting Out Theatrical Alliance in Three Texts by Sarah Kane*. Diss. The University of California, San Diego and Irvine, 2008.
- Norman, Lance. "Metatheatrically Speaking: Dismembering Sights and Classical Messages." *Dismemberment in Drama/Dismemberment of Drama*. Ed. Lance Norman. Cambridge Scholars, 2008.
- O'Dell, Kathy. "Fluxus Feminus." *TDR* 41.1 (Spring 1997): 43-60.
- Ohi, Kevin. "Devouring Creation: Cannibalism, Sodomy, and the Scene of Analysis in *Suddenly, Last Summer*." *Cinema Journal*. 38.3 (1999).
- Owens, Craig. "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism." *Beyond Representation, Power and Culture*. Ed. Scott Bryson, et al. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Palmer, J.D. "The Unspeakable in Pursuit of the Uneatable: Language and Action in *Titus Andronicus*." *Critical Quarterly*. 14 (1972): 320-339.
- Pankrantz, Annette. "Neither Here Nor There: Theatrical Space in Kane's Work." *Sarah Kane in Context*. Ed. Lauren de Vos and Graham Saunders. Manchester University Press, 2011.
- Parilla, Catherine Arturi. *A Theory for Reading Dramatic Texts*. NY: Peter Lang, 1995.
- Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Pinter, Harold. Interview with Hallam Tennyson, Aug. 7, 1960. Martin Esslin. *The Theatre of the Absurd*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961.
- Plato. *Timaeus*. Trans. Donald J. Zeyl. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000.
- Poggioli, Renato. *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Trans. Gerald Fitzgerald. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Rasmussen, Eric. *The Shakespeare Thefts: In Search of the First Folios*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Rayner, Alice. "Presenting Objects, Presenting Things." *Staging Philosophy: Intersections of Theater, Performance, and Philosophy*. Ed. David Krasner and David Z. Saltz. University of Michigan Press, 2009.

- -- --. *To Act, To Do, To Perform: Drama and the Phenomenology of Action*. University of Michigan Press, 1994.
- Read, Piers Paul. *Alive*. NY: Harper-Perennial, 1974.
- Rice, Raymond J. "Cannibalism and the Act of Revenge in Tudor-Stuart Drama." *Studies in English Literature*. 44.2 (Spring 2004): 297-316.
- Rodosthenous, George. "'I Let the Language Lead the Dance': Politics, Musicality, and Voyeurism." *New Theatre Quarterly*. 27 (Feb 2011): 3-13.
- Roof, Judith. *Pinter Et Cetera*. Ed. Craig N. Owens. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009.
- Saddick, Annette J. "The (Un)Represented Fragmentation of the Body in Tennessee Williams's 'Desire and the Black Masseur' and *Suddenly, Last Summer*. *Modern Drama* 41:3 1998.
- Sagan, Eli. *Human Aggression and Cultural Form*. NY: Harper and Row, 1974.
- Sagnon, Eric W. "Theater Blows [*Coups de théâtre*]." Trans. Craig N. Owens. *Dismemberment in Drama/Dismemberment of Drama*. Ed. Lance Norman. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008.
- Sanday, Peggy Reeves. *Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System*. Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Saunders, Graham. *'Love me, or kill me': Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes*. Manchester University Press, 2002.
- -- --. "'Out Vile Jelly': Sarah Kane's *Blasted* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*." *New Theatre Quarterly*. 20.1. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Schechner, Richard. "Drama, Script, Theatre, and Performance." *Drama Review*. 17.3 (Sept. 1973): 9
- -- --. *Between Theater and Anthropology*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.
- Seltzer, Mark. *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture*. NY: Routledge, 1998.
- Shakespeare, William. *Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*. Ed. Richard Proudfoot, Ann



- Thompson, David Scott Kastan. Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1998.
- -- --. *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*. Ed. Sylvan Barnet. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1972.
- -- --. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. G. Blakemore Evans, *et al.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.
- -- --. *Titus Andronicus. The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. David Bevington. New York: Pearson-Longman, 2009.
- -- --. *The Stage Life of Props*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- Skeggs, Beverly. "The Making of Class and Gender Through Visualizing Moral Subject Formation." *Sociology* 39.5 (2005): 965-82.
- Staniforth, Maxwell. *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*. Revised Edition. Penguin Books, 1987.
- Steinsemble: A Performance Group. Web. Jan. 2012.
- Sugg, Richard. *Mummies, Cannibals, and Vampires: The History of Corpse Medicine from the Renaissance to the Victorians*. NY: Routledge, 2012.
- Svich, Caridad. "Physical Poetry: David Greig in Conversation with Caridad Svich." *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*. 29.2 (May 2007): 51-58.
- Sofer, Andrew. "Self-consuming artifacts: Power, performance and the body in Tennessee Williams' *Suddenly Last Summer*." *Modern Drama* 38.3 (Fall 1998).
- theatreSCOTLAND. <theatrescotland.com>
- Thomas, Colin. "Review of San Diego." *Straight.com*. 13 October 2005.
- Travis-Henikoff, Carole. *Dinner with a Cannibal: The Complete History of Mankind's Oldest Taboo*. Santa Monica Press, 2008.
- Turner, Victor. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. PAJ Publications, 2001.
- Urban, Ken. "An Ethics of Catastrophe." *PAJ* 69 (2001): 56-66.
- Veltruský, Jiri. *Drama as Literature*. Lisse: The Peter De Ridder Press, 1977.
- -- --. "Man and Object in the Theatre." *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Studies, and Style*. American University Language Center, 1958.

Weber, Samuel. *Theatricality as Medium*. NY: Fordham University Press, 2004.

Williams, Tennessee. *Suddenly, Last Summer*. *Tennessee Williams: Four Plays*. Signet Classic, 1978.

Wixson, Christopher. “‘In Better Places’: Space, Identity, and Alienation in Sarah Kane’s *Blasted*.” *Comparative Drama* 39.1 (Spring 2005): web.