

# III. INTERNATIONAL BANDIRMA SCIENTIFIC STUDIES CONGRESS

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**EDITOR PROF. DR. YAGMUR AKKOYUNLU**

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AUTHORS	UNIVERSITY/INSTITUTION	TOPIC TITLE
Assoc. Prof. Osman AKTAN	Düzce Üniversitesi	EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TECHNOSTRESS, WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND LIFE SATISFACTION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN COVID-19 PROCESS
HATİCE NUR BAKKAL BOZTEPE Assoc. Prof. MUSTAFA ÇEVİK	MEB Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi	ETNOMATEMATİK ARAŞTIRMALARINA GENEL BAKIŞ: BİR META-SENTEZ ÇALIŞMASI
Lect. Esmâ MUSTAFA	Mudanya Üniversitesi	ISOLATION IN SARAH KANE'S CRAVE
TESLİME UYSAL Assoc. Prof. MUSTAFA ÇEVİK	MEB Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi	ERKEN ÇOCUKLUK DÖNEMİNDE GREEN STEM ETKİNLİKLERİNİN ÖĞRENCİLERİN STEM BECERİLERİNE, ÇEVRE TUTUM VE FARKINDALIKLARINA ETKİSİ
MURAT ÇETİNEL Assoc. Prof. MUSTAFA ÇEVİK	MEB Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi	STEM EĞİTİMİNDE PROBLEM TABANLI ÖĞRENME (PBL STEM) YAKLAŞIMININ KULLANILDIĞI TEZLER ÜZERİNE BİR DOKÜMAN ANALİZİ
Assoc. Prof. Selami Atakan ALTINÖRS	Galatasaray Üniversitesi	ITKONEN'S OBJECTION TO THE MENTALISTS PERSPECTIVE ON LINGUISTIC MEANING
Prof. Dr. Birsen ÇEKEN Res. Assist. Mustafa MERDİN	Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi	ARTISTIC CREATIVITY IN DIGITAL GAMES: INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES AND AESTHETIC PERCEPTION
Dr. Emine Ela ŞİMŞEK	Akdeniz Üniversitesi	AN EXAMINATION OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PERIOD
Prof. Dr. Birsen ÇEKEN Res. Assist. M. Furkan TERZİ	Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi	ADVERTISING ART AND BRANDING: CREATING MEANING WITH THE POWER OF VISUAL ARTS
Burak GÜL Prof. Dr. Oktay BAYKARA	Ali Kuşçu Bilim Ve Sanat Merkezi Fırat Üniversitesi	ÜSTÜN YETENEKLİ ÖĞRENCİLERDE FEN ÖĞRETİMİ
BİNNAZ DEMİRBAŞ Assoc. Prof. MUSTAFA ÇEVİK	Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi	TERSİNE MÜHENDİSLİK UYGULAMALARININ ORTAOKUL ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN MÜHENDİSLİK BİLGİLERİNE, STEM'E YÖNELİK TUTUMLARINA VE PROBLEM ÇÖZME BECERİLERİNE ETKİSİ

<b>Fatma Kübra TOMBULTÜRK</b>	<b>DEVELOPMENT OF DERMATOLOGICAL RESEARCH MODELS IN ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS: NEW APPROACHES AND OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Neriman ÖZBOY Emine ATICI Derya AZİM</b>	<b>COMPARISON OF CORE MUSCLE STRENGTH AND PELVIC TILT ANGLES IN WOMEN WITH AND WITHOUT PRIMARY DYSMENORRHEA</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Derya AZİM</b>	<b>THE IMPACT OF GENDER DIFFERENCES ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN INDIVIDUALS AGED 65 AND OVER</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Beşir Berhun POSTACI Hasan ATALAY</b>	<b>THE ROLE OF FEED ADDITIVES IN PROTECTION AGAINST ACIDOSIS IN RUMINANTS</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Muhammet Cihat MUMCU Gökçen Azize ERTÜRK Ata Rifat AKPINARLI Sude Gül ÇİMEN</b>	<b>ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BASED SMART IRRIGATION SYSTEM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Ercan AYKUT Kübra ERDOĞAN İzzet YAVUZ M.Cihat MUMCU Sena Nur BENLİ</b>	<b>ÜÇ FAZLI ASENKRON MOTORUN PLC VE HMI İLE MODBUS ÜZERİNDEN KONTROLÜ</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Özlem IŞIK Cüneyt ÖZAKIN</b>	<b>IN VITRO EVALUATION OF COLISTIN-MEROPENEM COMBINATION AGAINST RESISTANT K. PNEUMONIAE STRAINS</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Osman AKTAN</b>	<b>EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TECHNOSTRESS, WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND LIFE SATISFACTION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN COVID-19 PROCESS</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>HATİCE NUR BAKKAL BOZTEPE MUSTAFA ÇEVİK</b>	<b>AN OVERVIEW OF STUDIES ON ETHNOMATHEMATICS: A META-SYNTHESIS STUDY</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Esmâ MUSTAFA</b>	<b>ISOLATION IN SARAH KANE'S CRAVE</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>TESLİME UYSAL MUSTAFA ÇEVİK</b>	<b>THE EFFECT OF GREEN STEM ACTIVITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD ON STUDENTS' STEM SKILLS, ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>Selami Atakan ALTINÖRS</b>	<b>ITKONEN'S OBJECTION TO THE MENTALISTS PERSPECTIVE ON LINGUISTIC MEANING</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>MURAT ÇETİNEL MUSTAFA ÇEVİK</b>	<b>A DOCUMENT ANALYSIS ON THESES USING PROBLEM-BASED STEM EDUCATION</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Birsen ÇEKEN Mustafa MERDİN</b>	<b>ARTISTIC CREATIVITY IN DIGITAL GAMES: INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES AND AESTHETIC PERCEPTION</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Emine Ela ŞİMŞEK</b>	<b>AN EXAMINATION OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PERIOD</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>Birsen ÇEKEN M. Furkan TERZİ</b>	<b>ADVERTISING ART AND BRANDING: CREATING MEANING WITH THE POWER OF VISUAL ARTS</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Burak GÜL Oktay BAYKARA</b>	<b>ÜSTÜN YETENEKLİ ÖĞRENCİLERDE FEN ÖĞRETİMİ</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>BİNNAZ DEMİRBAŞ MUSTAFA ÇEVİK</b>	<b>THE EFFECT OF REVERSE ENGINEERING PRACTICES ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ENGINEERING KNOWLEDGE ATTITUDES TOWARDS STEM AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS</b>	<b>197</b>

ISOLATION IN SARAH KANE'S *Crave*  
SARAH KANE'İN *Crave*'İNDE İZOLASYON

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**Özet**

Sarah Kane'in yazdığı *Crave*, isimsiz dört karakterin, A, B, C ve M'nin hayatlarındaki izolasyonun dokunaklı bir incelemesidir. Bu tek perdelik oyun, her karakterin en derin düşüncelerini ve kırılma noktalarını ortaya çıkarmasına izin veren fragmanlı bir anlatı yaklaşımı kullanır. Anımsatıcı ve şiirsel bir dille dolu monologları, yoğun bir yalnızlık ve duygusal boşluk hissini açığa çıkarır. Bu analiz, eserde tasvir edilen iletişim kopukluğu temasını incelemekte ve karakterlerin çağdaş toplum bağlamında anlamlı bağlantılar kurma mücadelelerini vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma, Kane'in bireylerin tecrübe ettiği izolasyonun yaygın doğasını nasıl temsil ettiğini aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Karakterlerin toplumsal çevrelerinden kopma hissini arkasındaki nedenleri, izolasyonun onlar üzerindeki etkilerini ve maruz kaldıkları çeşitli izolasyon biçimlerini inceliyor. Bu unsurları mercek altına alan çalışma, Kane'in modern bağlamlarda izolasyonun yaygın ve çok yönlü doğasını nasıl gösterdiğine dair kapsamlı bir anlayış sunmayı amaçlıyor. *Crave*, kopukluğun damgasını vurduğu bir dünyada gerçek ilişkiler kurmanın zorluğuna dair ilgi çekici bir yorum olmayı sürdürüyor ve izolasyona karşı verilen asırlık mücadeleyi özetliyor. İzleyiciyi, evrensel izolasyon deneyimi ve insanların duygusal engelleri aşma ve gerçek bağlantıları keşfetme mücadelesi üzerine düşünmeye sevk ediyor.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Crave, izolasyon, yalnızlık, In-Yer-Face tiyatrosu, travma

**Abstract**

*Crave* by Sarah Kane is a moving examination of isolation in the lives of four unnamed characters, A, B, C, and M. This one-act play employs a fragmented narrative approach, allowing each character to reveal their deepest thoughts and vulnerabilities. Their monologues, filled with evocative and poetic language, disclose an intense isolation and emotional emptiness. This analysis delves into the theme of communication breakdown as portrayed in the work, highlighting the characters' struggles to establish meaningful connections within contemporary society. The study aims to elucidate how Kane represents the widespread nature of isolation experienced by individuals. It examines the reasons behind the characters' sense of detachment from their societal environment, the effects of isolation on them, and the various forms of isolation they endure. By scrutinising these elements, the work comprehensively explains how Kane illustrates isolation's pervasive and multifaceted nature in modern contexts. *Crave* remains a compelling commentary on the difficulty of establishing genuine relationships in a world marked by disconnection, encapsulating the age-old struggle against isolation. It prompts the audience to reflect on the universal experience of isolation and the human struggle to overcome emotional barriers and discover genuine connections.

**Keywords:** Crave, isolation, loneliness, In-Yer-Face theatre, trauma

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social and political hardships arising in the years following wars has created an enhanced awareness and sensitivity to the pervasive sense of isolation of the time. The devastating consequences of the world wars forced youth to encounter feelings of loneliness and that were buried deep inside them. What originated was psychological disconnection and alienation, found in the expression in "in-yer-face" theatre and graphic displays of emotional distressing burnt into people's minds through relentless acting. In these plays, there are apparent messages regarding individual alienation and the breakdown of society. Aleks Sierz describes this type of theatre in his book *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today* as a theatre that "takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message" (2001: 4). Sierz emphasises that this kind of theatre arises from disillusion and dislocation, hence forcing the audience to confront repressed emotions and utilising the reality for authenticity, which awakens latent instincts and can cause tremendous emotional reactions.

In this regard, it would be proper to suggest that the objective of in-yer-face theatre is to generate a heightened awareness among its viewers. Characters in these plays often suffer from some sort of psychological instability, which manifests as outbreaks of violence, profound alienation, emotional numbness, or complete retreat from human relationships. Such a presentation of disconnection invites the audience to address a social environment that fosters isolation and disengagement. As noted by Sierz, the fundamental nature of in-yer-face theatre is clear: "Characters talk about unmentionable subjects, take their clothes off, humiliate each other, experience unpleasant emotions, and grapple with their isolation" (2001: 4-5). The playwrights exhibit shared characteristics, including provocative language, emotional disintegration, and an investigation of the human psyche like trauma.

How would most of the people explain trauma? It is common knowledge that a shocking experience "overwhelm[s] the ordinary human adaptations to life", as noted by Herman(1992: 33). She goes on to explain the difference between trauma and simply distressing life occurrences, stating that "in contrast to ordinary setbacks, traumatic experiences typically encompass dangers to life or physical safety, or violent and deadly experiences of a personal nature"(35). In an even more clinical perspective, one could say that a 'trauma event', or its more scientific counterpart 'traumatic Stressor', is that of a physiological overload of the certain sensory stimuli and similar excessive neural excitation. Any frontal assault to a brain, even where such violence takes place, is represented as cranial impact in a video game making it impossible for the brain to integrate the experience, so various defence mechanisms are employed, such as psychological numbing or a more general suppression of emotion.

Herman addresses the connection between trauma, self-mechanisms, and isolation. She states: "Traumatised people become isolated from others. Their trust in others is shattered, and they may become withdrawn, detached, and unable to establish or maintain close relationships. The mechanisms of self-protection that develop in response to trauma often lead to further isolation, as the survivor's attempts to shield themselves from harm create barriers to connection." (1992:54-55)

Herman stresses that the survivors of trauma almost invariably suffer from a decline in trusting relationships, thus leaving them further isolated. A traumatic experience, abuse, or violence shatters an individual's feeling of security; thus, one holds back from social contact as a protective measure against being further traumatised. This emotional withdrawal effectively offers protection against further injury but can be self-perpetuating. Individuals can cut

themselves off from intimate relationships and friendships and nourishing social networks, which would heighten their alienation.

Herman explains that avoidance is one of the common reactions to trauma, in which survivors tend to avoid those people, places, and things that trigger painful memories. This behaviour facilitates their isolation because it limits their opportunities for further contact and healing. In this context, avoidance might be practised even internally, where survivors suppress their own emotions and memories as a means of avoiding confrontation with their trauma. However, this emotional numbing impedes the recovery process because unresolved feelings have been buried. Isolation happens to be one of the biggest paradoxes: while it protects survivors from emotional pain, on the other side, it separates them from those very bonds that are crucial for healing. Long-term detachment is followed by chronic loneliness, depression, and problems with health. Lack of social support strengthens the difficulty in overcoming the challenge.

This paper draws on Herman's theory of trauma, itself founded upon Freud's view of isolation, to discuss Sarah Kane's *Crave* and offer insight into the dislocated psyches of her characters. It explores how unresolved trauma, repressed desire, and fractured identities assert themselves as defence mechanisms within the psyche, leading to a self-sustaining circle of isolation shielding and furthering emotional withdrawal in characters. In *Crave*, the fragmentation of the character's speech and the lack of a coherent narrative structure echo their inner fragmentation and inability to connect with others. Their speech becomes one of the aspects of their psychological isolation in which traumatic memories disrupt any possibility of coherence within selfhood. The omnipresent despair that pervades *Crave* echoes Herman's contention that trauma induces a type of psychic numbing whereby individuals retreat from human interaction and emotional attachment. In *Crave*, Kane dramatises the self-perpetuating nature of trauma via fragmented monologues, through which her characters become trapped in a vicious circle of desire and withdrawal, unable to transcend the consequences of their unresolved hurt.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This examination of *Crave* by Sarah Kane utilises a qualitative and interpretative framework to investigate the central themes of alienation, and the failure of communication as portrayed in the play. The methodological approach draws on psychological theories from Freud and Judith Herman to enhance comprehension of the characters' experiences and underlying motivations. It scrutinises the impact of trauma on the characters, highlighting their disconnection and the challenges associated with the healing process. Herman's emphasis on the relational nature of trauma stresses the inability of characters to connect meaningfully with others and feel isolated in a broader societal context.

It is essential to underline the fragments of narratives and poetic diction that Kane uses in the play, thereby realising themes of the feeling of isolation. Specific extractions show the characters' vulnerabilities and consequential impacts on their experiences. Detailed textual analysis exposes subtlety in their emotional landscape and explains how the manifestation of their isolation is expressed through interaction and monologues. Furthermore, the contextual analysis involves secondary materials such as critical essays and academic publications dealing with Kane's work and face-to-face theatre, offering an understanding of the cultural and social aspects that bring about characters' alienation, thus providing a broader context in explaining the themes expressed in the play.

The discussion is organised around three key themes: communication breakdown, emotional withdrawal, and the multi-faceted nature of loneliness. Each theme is explored through the analysis of the characters, locating the characters' experiences within the broad outlines of

contemporary society. In this manner, investigating these themes enables the research to explain precisely how Kane portrays the ubiquitous phenomenon of loneliness in contemporary society.

The approach herein has tried to engage *Crave's* contours in alienating complexities and searching for good, honest-to-goodness human contact. Applying psychological frameworks by placing the characters in their contemporary context and giving more profound meaning to their experiences evoked a prevalence of trauma in their lives.

### 3. ISOLATION IN *CRAVE*

Sarah Kane was an English playwright and screenwriter of some repute, known for her poetic and often wrenching works that dealt with themes like love, desire, mental health, violence, and isolation. She was born in 1971 in Brentwood, Essex, and was highly influenced by studying English at the University of Birmingham, where she encountered the avant-garde performance movement. Following the plays *Blasted* and *Phaedra's Love*, her status in London's theatre scene increased, making her one of the most provocative individuals in this cultural environment. However, the mental diseases that plagued her life, like the events that led to her premature death, were overshadowed by her contributions to the arts. Kane grappled with mental health issues, including depression and anxiety, and experienced two suicide attempts, all while articulating the complexities of the human experience through her exceptional theatrical language. On February 20, 1999, just months following the completion of her final play, *4:48 Psychosis*, Kane was discovered deceased in her apartment, marking the conclusion of an extraordinary existence. With her bold and unapologetic delve into the human psyche through the theatre world, she was bound to resonate with so many in the world in that they, too, were looking for identity and meaning in the desolate, black space that was freed from constraints in a material world (Bilal, 2020).

*Crave*, written in 1998, is an intensely captivating and intellectually challenging one-act play that weaves intricate details of love, loss, and the desire for real human connections. This powerful masterpiece takes its audience on an emotional journey into the four multidimensional psyches of the characters it covers. Combined, the unique perspectives and experiences of each merge into one enthralling exploration of their longings, obsessions, guilt, memories, and even unanswered prayers. Encased within the eerie confines of this unforgettable stage performance, one finds themselves in a place where an insatiable longing for another person fills a void that lacks real connection. As the characters struggle with their sustained yearning, the virginal craving for union can quickly become a condition of acute agony and torment. The unstoppable compulsion to possess the other intensifies, leading to a violent gesture that only increases their pain. However, in that pain, even a more profound and disturbing longing arises to pass into the other to escape the constraints of their single lives. *Crave* is a testimony to the remarkable ability of Kane to offer an audience something entirely different, firmly integrating the themes of longing, hopelessness, and the urgent quest for interpersonal connection.

Amidst the stark and unrefined nature of the text and the intricate paradoxes that emerge, this remarkable play exemplifies Kane's brilliance. Its intellectually engaging narrative and profoundly nuanced characters make it one of her most compelling and thought-provoking creations thus far (Metin, 2022). The play *Crave* does not include any setting, stage instructions, or specific description of the protagonists A, B, C, and M. On the other hand, in an interview, Kane explained the idea behind naming the characters with such significance:

A, B, C and M have precise meanings, which I am prepared to tell you: A was (A is many things), which is the Author, Abuser (because they are the same thing: author and abuser). As

in Aleister Crowley, who wrote some interesting books that some of you might like to read. Antichrist. My brother came up with Arsehole, which I thought was quite good. Moreover, there was also the actor who I originally wrote it for who was called Andrew. So that was how A came about. M was simply Mother. B was Boy. Moreover, C was a Child. However, I did n't want to write those things down because I thought they'd get fixed in those things forever and never ever change. (Rebellato, 1998: 35)

Kane's reluctance to limit or pin down the characters highlights her need for precision and a lack of restraint in her art. Characters are not static tags attached to a particular idea; they are fluid and can change meaning. Given the narrative that evokes a fluidity of identity and the roles one takes on, Kane offers the names in the most stripped down, barest form- i.e in letters with a lot left to the imagination in terms of the context bearing out her overarching creative perspective that is, difficult to pinpoint and often creates more puzzles than it solves. The Derogatory names that Kane provides for her characters show the duality of one's positionality in terms of the arguments of her narrative and the refusal to accept absolutes.

Kane's technique of inclusiveness enables her to take into consideration characterising roles – inscribed, relational, individual, as well as the distanced and abstract ones – hence making it possible for her to maintain the sophisticated and blurry region intact for the spectators. This, however, most discouraged or angered, is an author's invitation to the reader, asking him to participate much more in the work, to understand the viewer's identity, and to understand how blurry and shifting the roles and relationships are. For this reason, her unifying statements that correlate all these identities, blurring the edges of who is the victim and who is the aggressor, love and hate, are not present. So much faith does, however, situate itself in realms of fantasy that it is no overstatement to claim that, for Kane, the correspondence between the writer and the torturer is a triumph. One could, therefore, contend that composing can be viewed as a form of violence as it involves bringing forth characters, devising plots for them, and ultimately inflicting pain on them. Such a statement is rather radical and possibly reveals Kane's difficulties in conforming to rules.

In *Crave*, each character grapples with their painful past, and it is this shared sense of trauma that binds them together. Character C, in particular, struggles with haunting flashbacks, openly admitting that she is on the verge of breaking down due to the weight of her past experiences:

**A:** A small dark girl sits in the passenger seat of a parked car. Her elderly grandfather undoes his trousers, and it pops out of his pants, big and purple.

**A:** And when she cries, her father in the back seat says I 'm sorry: she's not normally like this" (Kane, 2001:157-58).

This incident distinctly demonstrates the significant effect of trauma on C's mind, shaping her identity and mental condition. The disconnected discourse exemplifies the fragmented identities of the individuals, each grappling with their anguish. Their collective anguish cultivates a bond amidst their solitude and psychological distress. C's psychological anguish escalates, manifesting in self-harming behaviours and declarations of self-loathing: "And has been hurtling away from that moment" (158). Her trust in the guardian has waned into a vague memory, as has her affection for her family. The connection becomes frigid and bleak, rendering her exposed and defenceless instead of providing warmth or solace. C asserts that "No one to assist [her], not[her] damn mother either. (179).

Freud elucidates that specific domestic traumas may distort memory, modify self-perception, and disrupt homeostasis, resulting in a traumatic event that eclipses cognition and hinders the

understanding of current reality (Mollon, 2001.p. 8). This approach underscores the profound and widespread influence of trauma on C's disjointed identity and emotional condition.

Kane observes that "the boundaries that separate the actual world from other worlds of reality, as well as all forms of fantasies, are non-existent" (Saunders, 2002, p. 111). The confluence of reality and fantasy fundamentally defines M's experience, as she encounters difficulty in establishing a connection between the past and the present, compensating for memory lapses with fabricated narratives. The unresolved trauma that fragments M's sense of time and identity is suggested by the rapid fluctuations in her mood, which include apathy, despondency, and irritation.

The psychological defence mechanism behind the disturbing imagery of M's grandparents engaged in sexual acts conceals a deep, unexpressed anguish. This fabrication illustrates how traumatic experiences distort memory, compelling the mind to construct exaggerated narratives as a defence mechanism. M's story illustrates the thematic concerns of Kane's work, where trauma blurs the distinction between reality and illusion, leading to a persistent state of psychological disorientation and instability. The merging of reality and imagination illustrates how trauma skews perception and obstructs the formation of a coherent identity.

B's internal state of violence and illness is manifested through his profound distress and shattered identity, characterized by Balaev as a "speechless void, unrepresentable, inherently pathologic, timeless, and repetitious" (2012: 3). Initially, his speech was disjointed: "Okay, I was, okay, I was, okay, okay." I was, indeed, two persons, correct (170)? The incoherent wording emphasizes his inner struggle and the fragmentation of his personality. B's rejection of M's desire to have a child signifies his disloyalty and hostility. Despite this, he is then ascribed the metaphorical capacity for gestation when he anxiously proclaims, "There is something within me that kicks like a bastard" (Kane,2001:172). B's internalized anguish and self-contempt are underscored by his yearning for retribution and punishment, highlighting the profundity of his guilt for his acts. His inability to construct meaningful narratives on his past exemplifies the disintegration of his memories and awareness. He cannot form a cohesive identity due to his multitude of personas, indicating a fragmented consciousness. The influence of trauma, presumably rooted in domestic discord, is evidenced by his fluctuation between tranquillity and vengefulness. B's compulsion for self-harm and his yearning for intense suffering signify his need to externalize his interior torment. This detrimental behaviour reflects the extent of his psychological instability, stemming from unresolved trauma manifested in self-destructive tendencies and emotional volatility.

The characters' daily experiences of alienation and suffering establish Crave's isolation motif. The development of meaningful relationships is impeded by their histories, which in turn exacerbates their loneliness, as evidenced by their struggles to survive single traumas. The portrayal of isolation is particularly pronounced as the four unnamed characters express their internal torment through monologues and dialogues that parallel their external alienation from others. These extensive and intricate conversations serve as a prime example of the obstacles that frequently arise in pursuing profound interpersonal relationships, which emphasize the inherent difficulties of attempting to establish connections and communicate effectively with one another. The play opens with a sequence of powerful lines that establish the context for this investigation of isolation and its impact on human connection. The characters state:

**C:** You're dead to me.

**B** My will reads, Fuck this up, and I'll haunt you for the rest of your fucking life.

**C** He's following me.

**A** What do you want?

**B** To die.

**C** Somewhere outside the city, I told my mother, You're dead to me.

**B** No, that's not it.

**C** If I could be free of you without having to lose you.

**A** Sometimes that's not possible.

**M** I keep telling people I'm pregnant. They say How did you do it, what are you taking? I say I drank a bottle of port, smoked some fags and fucked a stranger. (Kane,2001:1)

*Crave's* opening lines immediately establish a tone of emotional intensity and existential despair, indicative of the critical themes of human relationships, isolation, and trauma. The profound emotional rift and the challenge of navigating personal relationships marked by betrayal and loss are exemplified by C's proclamation, "You are dead to me," as evidenced by the characters' interactions. This declaration evokes a profound sense of alienation and the anguish of severed connections. B's response simultaneously embodies an element of dark humour, bitterness, and unresolved conflict. The concept of haunting emphasizes the inescapable influence of past catastrophes and their persistent impact on the characters' lives, reinforcing the notion that emotional legacies persist long after relationships have ended. The characters' dialogues reveal their struggles to express their desires and anxieties in a world of emotional turmoil, illustrating the challenge of pursuing connection and understanding. For instance, C's claim that she is being pursued suggests that trauma is inescapable, implying that the past persistently infiltrates the present.

In contrast, A's inquiry into desire encapsulates the pursuit of clarity in the presence of ambiguity. The themes of denial and reckless behaviour as coping mechanisms in response to deep-seated emotional anguish are emphasized by M's startling admission regarding her pregnancy. The characters' efforts to reconcile their identities with the backdrop of trauma and disconnection are exemplified by this vulnerable moment. The opening lines effectively lay the groundwork for a narrative that delves into the characters' fractured selves, their yearning for connection, and the ominous presence of their unresolved traumas. Kane's emotionally charged exchanges and pointed dialogue encapsulate the complexities of human relationships and the ubiquitous impact of pain and alienation, inviting the audience to engage with the characters' profound struggles.

The experience of emotional and psychological disconnection from the world is frequently a poignant metaphor for one's condition rather than merely physical isolation. This dissociation not only indicates an external state but also underscores the internal conflicts of the characters, who, despite their physical proximity, cannot establish genuine connections with one another. The articulated profound alienation reveals the complexities of the characters' relationships and the impediments that prevent meaningful connection. The characters state:

**C:** Alone. (Kane, 2001:160)

**A:** I am so lonely, so fucking lonely. (174)

**A:** My hollow heart is a whole of darkness. (171)

**C:** I can't hear you. (7)

**M:** I am always alone. ( 12)

**B:** You're just a shadow." (15)

B: You don't have to touch me. (14)

When applying Freudian theory to the characters in *Crave*, isolation can be understood as a defence mechanism, specifically repression. Freud posited that individuals often protect themselves from overwhelming emotional pain by severing themselves from feelings that are too intense to confront. In this context, physical and emotional isolation shields the mind from distress. The characters do not merely avoid external engagement—such as conversation or physical touch—but also evade the confrontation of their repressed emotions and psychological turmoil. This dynamic reflects Freud's theory of repression, where emotional isolation operates as a subconscious effort to avoid painful truths, even in the face of physical proximity.

Freud's idea of repression aligns with how the characters' isolation manifests: although they share the same space, their emotional distance reveals a more profound disconnection (1966). The chastisement of their internal suffering results in visible pain, underscoring their unwillingness to confront their buried emotions, particularly the most painful ones. Freud believed that individuals repress emotions and memories and unconsciously bury them, leading to isolation as they withdraw from others. The characters' behaviours serve as a coping mechanism, allowing them to avoid being overwhelmed by repressed feelings, but this also prevents them from achieving deeper emotional fulfilment. In this way, isolation becomes an adaptive response, but it also perpetuates a cycle where the characters remain trapped in emotional seclusion, unable to heal from their traumas fully.

Kane masterfully uses space as a narrative device to depict the interaction between characters and the inner conflicts of their minds. She highlights the difficulties inherent in modern relationships, emphasizing how the characters' interactions are marked by such emotional distance that it evokes a profound loneliness. This emotional and physical separation keeps the characters from embracing intimacy, which would make them vulnerable. By focusing on this distance, Kane explores the theme of loneliness as an intrinsic part of the human condition, especially in a world scarred by trauma and emotional wounds that prevent authentic connection. The play raises questions about the internal and external causes of isolation and whether the characters consciously or unconsciously maintain their detachment from one another.

The characters in *Crave* are each waging individual battles, consumed by their inner turmoil, guilt, trauma, and unfulfilled desires. This internal chaos prevents them from relating to one another, creating barriers to connection and leading to prolonged emotional suffering. Drawing on Judith Herman's framework for trauma and healing, the isolation experienced by the characters can be viewed as reflective of broader societal trauma. Their emotional seclusion, even in the presence of others, underscores a collective experience of alienation, where personal trauma mirrors the disconnection of the community at large. Thus, Kane's work captures individual suffering and illustrates how trauma reverberates within the social fabric, isolating individuals within their shared environments. Herman states that:

In order to avoid pain, it is common for victims to separate or dissociate themselves from physical and emotional self-awareness. This dissociation creates a protective barrier, allowing individuals to cope with trauma but ultimately leads to profound emotional isolation. (1997: 51)

Herman highlights the role of dissociation as a coping mechanism for trauma survivors. By separating from their emotions and physical sensations, individuals seek to shield themselves from overwhelming pain. While this detachment provides temporary relief, it ultimately leads to profound emotional isolation. The protective barrier that allows them to cope also hinders

their ability to connect with others and process their feelings. Consequently, trauma survivors may find themselves feeling increasingly alone, as their coping strategy creates distance in relationships and prevents meaningful engagement. Overall, the quotation emphasises the paradox of dissociation: it protects in the short term but can perpetuate suffering in the long run.

Sarah Kane skillfully illustrates the characters' emotional blankness and alienation as the critical elements of trauma's impact on the human psyche. These very characters seem to develop features which, in Herman's work on trauma, would be classified as the rather pronounced trait of withdrawal and dissociation. The focus on the characters' incapacity to feel or engage with others speaks to a common trauma strategy of emotional withdrawal, where people numbly resort to feeling nothing to protect themselves from the tormenting pain of specific experiences. This withdrawal, this disconnection, is out of necessity to ensure that there is no emotional pain. However, this comes at the price of emotion and the warmth of relationships. The character expresses their feelings:

I can't feel anything. (Kane, 2001: 15)

B I am numb. ( 29)

B You don't understand me. (10)

B No one can know what I feel. (11)

A I'm trapped in my mind. ( 18)

B My thoughts are my prison. (20)

Despite wanting to bond with others, they are equally unable to express their feelings. They live in a world of pain in which their internal suffering cannot be put into the external world and vice versa; this, in turn, creates a sense of isolation since they do not believe that anyone can understand how deeply rooted the pain is. As a result of the lack of this understanding, the surrounding people also contribute to their alienation and difficulty in attachment, cementing their dissociation.

Furthermore, the characters' constant statements of being stuck inside their heads speak to the trauma-induced cognitive imprisonment. Kane sees trauma as the one that pushes an individual away from others as well as from oneself. The very things these subjects deploy to make everything okay, such as emotional blanking, banning all possible summoning of others, and so forth, instead ensnare them deeper in isolation. Thus, while their instincts are to prevent suffering due to their history, they see that healing is also impossible, resulting in the individual feeling even more detached from others, even with other people.

"Traumatised people feel utterly abandoned, utterly alone, cast out of the human and divine systems of care and protection that sustain life. The violated person may develop a sense of a void or abyss, often described in suicidal imagery" (Herman, 1997:49). 'In *Crave*, the characters reveal extreme mental agony and at times, they tend towards suicidal images, just like the void Herman elaborates. The disjointed, incohesive speech of the characters and the observational nature of the play indicate the traumas experienced by the characters, accompanied by a strong desire to die, which is often tempted.

The characters' anguish and distress reach such depths that they are sometimes convinced that death is the only option. The idea of dying appears throughout the characters' conversations, alluding to their deep characterisation in dealing with fundamental issues such as loneliness and search for purpose in a universe where everything appears unresponsive. The characters try to

corner me and make a series of statements illustrating how they feel they have no hope and yearn to break free from their inner nightmare. The characters state:

**C:** Why did I not die at birth? (Kane, 2001: 193)

**A:** What do you want?

**C:** To die. (158)

**C:** I'm having a breakdown because I am going to die. (182).

**C:** I'm not ill. I just know that life is not worth living. (191)

**A:** Death is my lover and he wants to move in. (180)

**A:** I'm going to die. (173)

**M:** I would have to get on a plane which seemed to crash. (176)

**M:** Someone somewhere is crying for me, crying for my death. (159)

Death as a means of relieving oneself of emotional distress is reflected in Judith Herman's statement that helplessness in trauma may provoke a desire for disconnection or a sense of being cut off. In *Crave*, the characters are emotionally barren, stuck in an existential void like the ones Herman postulates, and feel exiled from the help systems in place that are supposed to rehabilitate them as survivors of trauma. The chaos theory of ascribed structure in the play also signifies the disruption of the characters' conception of time and reality and, more so, how trauma has imprisoned them psychically. The psychological entrapment of their physical being along with their environment arises from their incapacity to heal from the past hurts.

The character's yearning for death becomes a coping mechanism as they battle against emotional and psychological trauma so intense that it leaves no room for recovery or reconnection. The characters' urge to end their life comes off as a more straightforward and powerful disturbance than some internalised imagery that the characters struggle against. The depth of trauma makes death look like the most realistic solution to suffering, and that depression is why nihilism of such profundity is in the very midst of Kane's creations.

Herman has a positive approach by providing a model of therapy and reconnection through which trauma survivors may be able to recover. Kane, on the other hand, does not hold such optimistic views. The characters in *Crave* appear incapable of imagining any healing, resigning instead to death as the only possible form of relief. Spanning continents and several generations, Kane's understanding of trauma breeds utter desolation where help is no longer available, and people have to face their pain alone.

Kane illustrates the influence of emotional deterrence in a vicious circle. The echoes of suicidal tendencies that characterise the characters' emotions, time and again, is their inability to come to terms with the split within themselves that craves an end to the pain. Death, in this case, is not merely the end of breathing and being alive but rather the desire to be liberated from the pain which incessantly torments every minute of their lives.

In essence, *Crave* is a thorough examination of trauma and suicidal thoughts. The way Kane depicts her characters' emotional suffering reflects the lived experience of someone carrying unresolved trauma and the alienation from the self and the world that this can cause. The structure of the play is fragmented, and the themes explored are so deeply nihilistic that one cannot overlook the effects of trauma when ignored, stressing the importance of care and treatment in averting such dangerous outcomes.

## Conclusion

In the context of the play *Crave*, Kane deftly examines the notion of isolation through a nonlinear structure, creating a pattern reflecting her characters' broken spirits. A, B, C and M are multiple persons, labouring roles of an abused child and a boy who suffers domestic violence, a mother with so many faces marred by the scars due to emotional struggles that never got resolved.

The patchy arrangement of the play is a literal representation of the scattered minds of the characters, or figuratively, they both have the same meaning. Kane goes further in allowing the audience any sort of finality in a resolution of the action, even more than when such logic is absent in the sufferers of trauma, time, and memory. The characters' communicational deficiency not only isolates them from other people but also from the possibility of the healing process or of connecting with themselves.

In *Crave*, the emotional isolation is emphasised rather than the physical one, as the characters repeatedly claim to be numb and unable to feel anything. Some examples show how the characters are traumatised and cannot function normally in the world. Death stands out as a dark, oppressive and ever-present entity because it offers a concrete solution to their mental distress, a means of alleviating their pain when the existence itself provides no other option.

Kane, too, questions the dominant meanings of love and intimacy and suggests that trauma affects one's ability to connect. The characters' interactions suggest another destructive aspect of desire: one longs to engulf and be enveloped entirely in the other person, only to create more distance between them. Therefore, in such contexts, intimacy is considered pain-inducing *instead of offering comfort since love and violence are indistinguishable*.

*Crave* depicts, without any apologies, the disorientation and the incapacitation of human relationships as a result of trauma. Kane sees things in a very dark manner, constructing characters bound in the dungeons of their minds, suffocated by a lack of perceptible human connection and wishing to die because it seems to be the only way out. The play encourages the viewer to embrace the awful effects of trauma – emotional implosion – while also invoking a troubling consideration of how much people can bear and if it is possible to recover.

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