THE END:
THE APOCALYPTIC IN IN-YER-FACE DRAMA

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ABSTRACT

THE END:
THE APOCALYPTIC IN IN-YER-FACE DRAMA

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This thesis presents a close analysis of one of the ageless discourses of human life – apocalypse, or the End – within the highly controversial In-Yer-Face drama of the 1990s British stage. The study particularly argues that there is a strong apocalyptic sense in the plays of the decade, and it discovers that the apocalyptic representation within these plays varies. Five plays by three prominent playwrights of the decade are used to illustrate and expand the focus. After a detailed examination of the apocalyptic discourse, it is claimed that Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and F***ing* and *Faust is Dead* are based on certain philosophical ideas of the End, Anthony Neilson's *Normal* and *Penetrator* reveal the apocalyptic through an extreme use of violence, and Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* comingles representations of the apocalyptic and psychological trauma.

Keywords: apocalypse, End, In-Yer-Face drama, Mark Ravenhill, Anthony Neilson, Sarah Kane, *Shopping and F***ing*, *Faust is Dead*, *Normal*, *Penetrator*, *4.48 Psychosis*.

ÖZ

SON:
"IN-YER-FACE" TİYATROSUNDA APOKALİPS

Bal, Mustafa

Doktora, İngiliz Edebiyatı Programı

Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Margaret J-M Sönmez

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Bu tez 1990'larda İngiltere'de ortaya çıkan ihtilaflı tiyatro türü "In-Yer-Face" tiyatrosunda insanlığın eskimeyen konularından biri olan apokalips, diğer tabiriyle sonlanış söylevini incelemektedir. Çalışma özellikle bu oyunlarda güçlü bir apokaliptik anlam olduğunu ve apokaliptik betimlemenin oyundan oyuna farklılık gösterdiğini savunmaktadır. Konunun açıklanması ve örneklenmesinde dönemin önemli üç yazarı tarafından yazılan beş oyun ele alınmaktadır. Apokaliptik söylemin derin bir inceleme ve açıklamasının ardından tez Mark Ravenhill'in *Shopping and F***ing* ve *Faust is Dead* isimli iki oyununun sonlanış ile ilgili belli başlı felsefelere dayandığını, Anthony Neilson'ın *Normal* ve *Penetrator* isimli iki oyununun apokalipsi aşırı şiddet betimlemeleriyle ortaya koyduğunu, ve Sarah Kane'in *4.48 Psychosis* isimli oyununun apokaliptik betimlemeleri psikolojik travma ile birleştirdiğini öne sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: apokalips, son, In-Yer-Face tiyatrosu, Mark Ravenhill, Anthony Neilson, Sarah Kane, *Shopping and F***ing*, *Faust is Dead*, *Normal*, *Penetrator*, *4.48 Psychosis*.

To Truth

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> There are two sorts of dramatists. The first sort plays theatrical games with reality…The second sort of dramatists change reality. The Greeks and Shakespeare did it. Molière did it in his strangely modern, precariously balanced *Misanthrope*. Racine almost did it by confining rampaging passion in rigid structures - … Büchner did it by seeing justice from the point of view of the scaffold. Half-way through watching *Blasted* in a small, cramped theatre, in an adequate production, I realized that reality had changed. (Bond 189)

These words by Edward Bond, whose *Saved* (1965) once changed the perception of reality on the British stage, are noteworthy. They refer to a turning point in the course of British drama that occurred during the last decade of the twentieth century. In-Yer-Face[1] drama of the 1990s fits into Bond's "second sort" as it changed the representation and perception of reality on the stage. It introduced a challenge against social-realist representations and prioritized a quirky look at life. It presented a new perspective on reality because it had a tendency towards over/hyper-reality. Plays of traditional theatrical realism lacked adequate means to invite audiences of the last decade of the twentieth century to participate in the experience of the new reality of the age – a task left for the In-Yer-Face drama, which attempted to fill this gap by means of a new catharsis working through extremity, confrontation, and taboo-breaking.

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[1] "In-Yer-Face Theatre" is a term coined by Aleks Sierz in his book called *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today*.

The artificial conceptualizing of decades in history is a demonstration of *Endist* or apocalyptic discourse: each decade begins and ends in a period of ten years, and each harbors a peculiar character. We call them the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, and so on. The 1990s was a decade of personal computers, internet, mobile phones, digital cameras, genocides, economic productivity, capitalism, globalization, the rapid boom of AIDS in Africa, the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of Margaret Thatcher, the Gulf War, Generation X, developments in DNA technology and cloning, digital games, tattooing and body-piercing, expanded freedom and outspokenness of the culture of homosexuality, TV reality shows, extreme sports, hip-hop, techno and underground music, alternative rock, and the scandalous death of Lady Diana. It was also an apocalyptic age as the ideas of the End were intensified and revealed through these closing years of the second millennium. So was it for the British drama which, through the In-Yer-Face sensibility, produced an attempt to shape-shift projections of reality on the stage. In its idiosyncrasies for changing representations of reality, there was an underlying tone of *Endism* or apocalypticism in 1990s playwriting aesthetics.

Apocalypse, or the idea of the End, has been one of the oldest themes in British drama. Medieval morality and mystery plays (*Everyman*, *The Castle of Perseverance*, and so on) were mostly about the finitude of life. Much has changed in life up to the last decade of the twentieth century but the idea of the End, though now rather in a more unspiritual and secular tone, remained and appeared maybe even more strongly in the plays of the 1990s. Accordingly, the aim of this thesis is to put forth how and to what extent this claimed apocalypticism is

found in the plays of prominent In-Yer-Face playwrights Mark Ravenhill, Anthony Neilson, and Sarah Kane. After a theoretical background chapter which develops the ideas of the apocalyptic discourse, the analysis chapters of the thesis seek the philosophies behind the emergence of the apocalyptic spirit in the plays, while identifying the differences of approaches, and hence, claiming a diversity of representation in the revelation of the End and the apocalyptic within the plays. The plays used for the illustration of these arguments are *Shopping and F***ing* (1996) and *Faust is Dead* (1997) by Mark Ravenhill, *Normal* (1991) and *Penetrator* (1993) by Anthony Neilson, and *4.48 Psychosis* (1999) by Sarah Kane. It will be argued through close-readings of the plays that Ravenhill's plays are based on the twentieth century philosophical ideas about the End, that the apocalyptic is veiled behind an extreme use of violence in Neilson's plays, and that Kane's last play *4.48 Psychosis* can be seen as an example of traumatic apocalypse, due to its psychological aspects.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

> It has all been filed, boys, history has a trend,
> Each of us enisled, boys, waiting for the end. (32-33)
> (from "Just a Smack at Auden" by William Empson)

Within the course of known history, no society, with its culture, its language, its beliefs, and its customs, has been able to maintain its existence from the time of its beginning till up to the present. Therefore, from a historical point of view, it seems natural to claim that history has storylines of beginnings, openings, or introductions followed by conclusions, closings, or culminations. To see time in this way may lead to an acceptance of history, which naturally brings forth the idea that the course of time called by the term "history" - as a term that measures time - has an intrinsic quality of finitude. It is on this finitude that most of the structure of human history is based.

The notion by which the finitude of human time has been conceptualized is *Apocalypse* or the idea of *the End*[2]. It is the notion through which an end to the existence in the world within history is made perceptible to the human mind. As Northrop Frye points out "[man] creates what he calls history as a screen to conceal the workings of the apocalypse from himself" (1982: 136). In this sense, the notion of apocalypse can be called a *historical measurement unit* sizing up human history on an unknown temporal plane, just like a device used by space

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[2] In this study, terms *apocalypse* and *the End* will most of the time be used interchangeably with the only difference being that the End is a more secular term while apocalypse has religious overtones.

scientists to analyze what is too far for their grasp. Therefore, any endeavour relating to the study of human beings through apocalyptic vision might prove to be imaginative. In this sense, D. H. Lawrence's words are noteworthy: "What does Apocalypse matter, unless in so far as it gives us imaginative release into another imaginative world? Understanding or studying apocalypse can lead an individual to a rediscovery of energy to perceive his relation to cosmos" (qtd. in Seed 1). As Lawrence states, apocalypse seems to be a notion that gives a chance to the human imagination to make a bridge between its current time and the future of the world which is to be historically finite. Frank Kermode, in his *The Sense of an Ending*, similarly points out that "[apocalypse] depends on a concord of imaginatively recorded past and imaginatively predicted future, achieved on behalf of us, who remain 'in the middest'" (8), and that "the End is a fact of life and a fact of the imagination" (58), highlighting the importance of imagination within the notion. No one knows how the world began, but everyone wants to know how it will end. It is in this inquisitiveness that the power of apocalypse lies. In relation to this, Stephen R. L. Clark in his article "The End of the Ages" points out that

> [on] the one hand we wish to be part of something that will last forever. On the other, nothing is real to us that does not have an end. The contradiction is solved, it seems, by accepting the cyclical view of being that we impose on history. Every real entity must have an end…" (Clark in Seed 30-31).

Paradoxically enough, hidden in Clark's words is the idea that human beings, whose primary purpose is to live, need the finitude of time, in other words "ends," in order to make life more meaningful.

Frank Kermode, on the other hand, combines and correlates the imaginative and the historical vein of the apocalyptic with the idea of *crisis*. For Kermode, "crisis" is an element for people to make sense of the world, and time, therefore history, is thought to be "a slave of a mythical end" (1967: 94). He takes crisis as a bridge that ties the past to the future of people (95). However, he also detects a misconception in readily accepting some periods of history as periods of crises, claiming that

> our position in the middest, and our historical position, always at the end of an epoch, are determined…The moments we call crises are ends and beginnings. We are ready, therefore, to accept all manner of evidence that ours is a genuine end, a genuine beginning. We accept it, for instance, from the calendar. (96)

In this sense, Kermode ties the issue to the point that people's climactic expectations, especially at the ends of centuries, owe much to their imaginations, writing "that we project our existential anxieties on to history; there is a real correlation between the ends of centuries and the peculiarity of our imagination, that it chooses always to be at the end of an era" (97).

What, then, exactly is the nature of this imaginative notion that, while bringing history and life closer to human perception, makes life more meaningful? What is apocalypse? Etymologically, as the online *Oxford English Dictionary* reveals, the term derives from the Latin word *apocalypsis* which denotes uncovering or disclosing (*OED*). The definition obviously points to that part of a nature of the phenomenon that exposes what has not yet taken place. In this sense, the concept is

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highly prophetic in nature. As Stephen O'Leary also points in his *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* "[apocalypse], a Greek word meaning revelation or unveiling, is…discourse that reveals or makes manifest a vision of ultimate destiny, rendering immediate to human audiences the ultimate End of the cosmos" (5-6). Dissecting the word, James Aho points to an oxymoronic meaning of "birthing-at-death" hidden in the word as *apo* suggests reversal and *kalyptein* means "to uncover", therefore defining a beginning at the point of an end (65).

However, apocalypse is a much more complex term than this. Being a deep-rooted, centuries-old but always fresh concept, apocalypse has gained many associations from various fields of study, from politics to literature, and from theology to economics, thereby acquiring an interdisciplinary nature and today becoming what we might call a paradigm. This attributes a sort of elasticity to the term (Quinby xii). One of the reasons why the paradigm is used in such a popular way is that it provides, as in the words of Lee Quinby, "the kind of emotional drama we search for in trying to describe deep fear and widespread misery in the world today" (xiii). Therefore, apocalypse is an agent acting as the outlet for some of human feelings. Quinby continues defining it as a term of celebration as well as of destruction, as optimistic and pessimistic (xiii), therefore highlighting the duality of feelings that the term harbors. In its association with death and destruction apocalypse is pessimistic while it is optimistic in its relation to rebirth.

As for the modes of apocalypse, Quinby suggests three divisions. The first of these is called *divine apocalypse* which is "the apocalyptic discourse and vision of religious fundamentalists who think that divine

design will bring the end of the world and provide a heavenly home for the elect" (xv). The second one is called *technological apocalypse* which has two subcategories, *technological devastation* (due to nuclear crisis, environmental degradation, or mechanized dehumanization), and *technological salvation*. The third mode is called *ironic apocalypse* which is expressed through absurdist or nihilistic descriptions of existence. According to this mode, there is an end to time but no rebirth will follow. It is rather a dystopian view in that history has used itself up (xvi). Out of these three modes, two are in sharp contrast: Believers of divine apocalypse work as agents actively to bring about the end of time since, as the elect, they will be saved. In contrast, believers of ironic apocalypse are in total apathy. They know that the end is imminent and near, and that they are not a part of an elect but there as part of the unfortunate rest (xxi).

Frank Kermode in his article "Waiting for the End" attributes a dual nature to apocalypse referring to "transition with decadence on one side of it and renovation or renaissance on the other" (Kermode in Bull 258). With these remarks, once more, the dual nature of apocalypse is highlighted. This dichotomy has also been observed by Krishan Kumar, the author of the article "Apocalypse, Millennium, and Utopia Today" (205). Furthermore, Hans Magnus Enzensberger summarizes this dual nature within the discourse of apocalypse as he writes that "[the] idea of apocalypse has accompanied utopian thought since its first beginnings, pursuing it like a shadow, like a reverse side that cannot be left behind: without catastrophe, no millennium, without apocalypse, no paradise" (74). Therefore, in its binary nature, apocalypse proposes a *vision* of despair followed by hope, termination followed by start, and destruction followed by renewal. This vision

suggests that "there will be an End: somehow sometime, the world will be made new in a way that does not lead once again to ruin" (Clark 37).

Additionally, another term which should be clarified in this study is *apocalypticism*. Apocalypticism is a form of eschatology which is the idea that views historical events in the light of final events. In this sense, it is also referred to as *apocalyptic eschatology*. Characterization of apocalypticism would include firstly stating that it is a "deterministic" phenomenon. In other words, apocalyptic eschatology follows the principles of a linear and purposive model of history. Secondly, it is "catastrophic," meaning that life will reach an end through violent and retributive means. Next, it should be noted that apocalypticism is "historicist," by which is meant that redemption is bound to historical events, and such history deals not with individuals but with communities. And last but not the least to mention is that apocalypticism is "dualistic" in that apocalyptic vision works on a plane of "good and evil, the Lamb and the Beast" (Robbins and Palmer 4-6).

Furthermore, David Bromley clarifies apocalypticism in his article "Constructing Apocalypticism: Social and Cultural Elements of Radical Organization." He claims that apocalypticism is a term borrowed from theology, thus easily overlapping with other concepts like doomsday, utopianism, and millennialism (32). He takes apocalypticism from a religious perspective and claims that apocalypticism is built upon the *prophetic method*. More, he asserts that apocalyptic eschatology is a social form that finds historical outlets during times of crisis. Apocalyptic groups of these crises moments ambivalently refuse the social order they live in and carry their hopes and their identity to the formation of a new order which is to arrive imminently and inevitably. What comes out as the result of these

expectations is a life between the expected end of the old order, which is to come imminently, and the new one, which is to be born (32-33). Culturally and socially, apocalypticism involves denial of the founding principles of the dominant ideology; the idea behind this rejection being that the present order does not carry the qualities that will fulfill what is and must be but rather is in constant strife between what is and what must be. Seeing this weakness in the so-called present order the apocalyptic stance is to cast itself out from the existing social order and prepare an order of its own which designs a new social order conscious of the new world to come (34-35). That is to say that "apocalypticism deconstructs the symbolic order created and sustained by the dominant social order" (41). Therefore, apocalypticism as an idea is world-shattering; it is radically innovative in proposing a new system to the world. What is more, apocalypticism cannot be seen as a mere vision of doomsday. Although what it proposes has to come through an imminent catastrophe, what is promised in the end is rather new creation over the transitional destruction (34-35). In terms of its relation to time, on the other hand, Bromley observes that the distinguishing point of apocalypticism is in its primary focus on the future; both past and present are rendered less important. In some cases when an imminent date for the arrival of apocalypse is set, the present works only as a gateway to the future (36).

Eugen Weber's work *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages* provides further explanation to the nature of apocalypticism. Weber points out that "[if] apocalypticism is about judgments, accountings, and ends, millennialism (or millenarianism) is about new beginnings: restoration and regeneration" (31). The relation shows that apocalypticism and

millennialism are strongly related. In this sense, the latter is another term which should be briefly introduced in this study. Millennialism can briefly be summarized as a term which suggests the political side of apocalypticism. Catherine Wessinger, in her article called "Millennialism With and Without Mayhem," defines the term as being the "audacious human belief that suffering and death, i.e., evil, will be eliminated, so that collective (not simply individual) salvation is accomplished on earth" (48). She continues explaining that

> [the] term 'millennium' originally referred to a period of one thousand years foretold by the *New Testament Book of Revelation* (*Apocalypse*) to be the period of Christ's reign on earth. In scholarly use, 'millennialism' refers to belief in an earthly salvation, and no longer implies belief that the kingdom of God will last one thousand years…Millennialism in its most general definition refers to the expectation of an imminent and collective earthly salvation accomplished according to a divine or superhuman plan. (48)

Millennialism is divided into two branches of thought: *premillennialism* and *postmillennialism*. The former predicts a universal catastrophe from the divine being which will first destroy the world and then establish the millennial salvation. In contrast, *postmillennialism* is the expectation that the progress and reformation of human life to ever better standards will cause the advancement of the millennium. When compared, premillennialism is a more catastrophe-based view which sees an uncontrollable existence of evil that is at work worsening everything all the time unlike the optimistic approach of the postmillennialism. For the former, Wessinger suggests a new term: *catastrophic millennialism*. She goes on noting that the term

apocalypticism has most often been associated with catastrophic millennialism. Therefore, apocalypticism is a synonym for premillennialism. And for the latter, Wessinger suggests another new term: *progressive millennialism*. This belief was strengthened especially in the nineteenth century, with a belief that the world could be made ready through prosperity for the arrival of Christ (49-50).

Having seen apocalypse as a term and as a leading idea that is linked to several other fields of study, what would be the correct determiner or collocation to describe the term most correctly? Is it a phenomenon, a notion, a discourse, a paradigm, a scientific phrase, a sort of rhetoric, an experience, a theory, a doctrine, or a developing concept in the present age? Such a question, seeking a limitation to such an elastic term, embodies its own trap. Therefore, the idea of the End, or apocalypse, can be expressed in combinations of several of the words in the question. Frank Kermode, for example, in his *The Sense of an Ending*, uses *paradigm* to collocate with the term (93). Stephen O'Leary uses the term *discourse* while defining it (my emphasis 5), and chooses to call it a sort of *rhetoric* that

> occupies a unique position with regard to other disciplines or fields of inquiry. Since it is explicitly concerned with the relationship of texts and audiences, rhetoric enables the critic to view apocalypse as both literary text and social movement, and to incorporate insights from sociology, psychology, history, theology, and literary criticism without being bound by the limitations of these fields. (195)

Therefore, it would be wrong to attempt to restrict the range of meanings of apocalypse, and in this sense, this study will continue to collocate apocalypse with other terms in such a non-limiting principle.

Additionally, a brief look over the development or the history of apocalyptic discourse in the twentieth century - the peak century of apocalypse - might help to relate it better to the content of this study. In 1915, D. H. Lawrence, in a letter, wrote the following words:

> I am so sad for my country, for this great wave of civilization, years, which is now collapsing, that it is hard to live. So much beauty and pathos of old things passing away and no new things coming...the winter stretches ahead, where all vision is lost and all memory dies out. (378)

Lawrence's remarks pointed to the decline of the values life had been presenting as well as to the absence of any new tide of principles which would make up a fresh life for his time. These words reflected Lawrence's hopelessly apocalyptic anxieties of the First World War. In their harboring a sense of bleakness, the words recall Lee Quinby's afore-mentioned ironic apocalypse. Therefore, after the Great War, the seeds of modernism watered by the war would immediately sprout and try to revive the notion of life, though exhausted, and add a sense of novelty, connecting the present with the past, through literature and art.

However, during the period of modernist representation, despite the First World War, what gave the twentieth century its character as a century of apocalypse had not been awakened. The apocalyptic concerns had been put to sleep for a long time since the failure of the Millerite discourse which, through the end of the nineteenth century, had determined the end of the world by fixing a specific year for it (as 1843), and found lots of supporters who had no worse to face than a great disappointment (O'Leary 207-208). The First World War, despite

what it brought, would not be enough to give birth to apocalyptic expectations again. The twentieth century had to wait until the shock created by the use of the Atomic Bomb before the apocalyptic would be revived. In Eugen Weber's words "[apocalypse] had come back to its own, and it had done so...by liberating the energy of atoms" (200). However, there was another major development which caused a stirring and also a strengthening the apocalyptic tendency among people: the foundation of Israel in the Middle East (O'Leary 209). Later on, nuclear reactor disasters, like the one on Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania in 1979, or the one with greater destructive effects in Chernobyl in 1986, strengthened apocalyptic anxieties relating to nuclear energy issues. With probable disasters haunting people's minds came also the idea of the end through ecological disasters which paved the way to a more skeptical examination of such events as overpopulation, water pollution, global warming, the greenhouse effect, the hole in the ozone layer, meteors, cloning, nano-technology. Therefore, the more twentieth century science has discovered, the better apocalyptic feelings have been fed.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, in 1583, in his *Anatomy of Abuses*, Phillip Stubbs, interpreting the appearance of a comet in 1577, prophesied the advent of a rapidly approaching apocalypse with the following words:

> The day of the Lord cannot be farre of. For what wonderful portents, strong miracles, fearful signes, and dreadful Judgments hath he sente of late deis, as Preachers and foretllers of his wrath, due unto us for our impertinence and wickedness of life...have we not seene Comets, blasing stares, firie Drakes, men fighting in the ayre, most

> fearfully to behold? Hath not dame Nature herself denied unto us her operation in sending forth abortives, untimely births, ugglesome monsters and fearful/misshapen Cretaures both in man and beasts? So that it seemeth all the Creatures of God are angry with us, and threaten us with destruction, and yet we are nothing at all amended! (alas) what shal become of us! (qtd. in Fischer-Lichte 71)

Seeing the fear-inflicting tone of these words, it can be claimed that each century finds its own signs for apocalypse. The appearance of a comet, or seeing some shooting stars, premature births, and the birth of deformed newborns, which now would not even make news for local newspapers, were once taken as signs of the imminent End. The belief of the End through a comet strike and calculations on such a possibility continued throughout the nineteenth century as well (Weber 120). So far, so long, the present civilization of humanity has already managed to chase after comets, and after apocalypses, but never had the sense become as intense as it became in the twentieth century. Although Weber suggests an equal degree of apocalyptic spirit for each era when he writes

> [all] ages are marked by evils, lawlessness, social disorders and upheavals, breakdown of morality and family, perils, turbulence and troubles that can serve as signs and stimulate expectations. They are portents; and there are always portents, always apocalyptic apprehensions, (33)

it can still be claimed that the twentieth century can be distinguished as the most apocalyptic century of all in that it was in this century that

certain happenings in the world, which can clearly be associated with the End, reached a peak. Predominantly for the Western world, apocalyptic discussions never ceased to exist during the twentieth century. This was due to major global developments which took place during the century[3]. As a result, it can be argued that the End appeared more clearly than ever. As Quinby also suggests "[the] frequency and extent of warfare, urban decay, economic decline, increasing levels of personal violence all contributed to the idea of an end of the times" in this century (xix).

Another reason why the century was the most apocalyptic can be observed in the idea that in this century it became clear that human beings, themselves, could bring forth the end of everything, due to the use of nuclear power for destructive means. The idea of attempting to destroy everything through weapons of mass destruction was not new but it was strengthened by the use of nuclear technology. As Steven Goldsmith observes in his book *Unbuilding Jerusalem: Apocalypse and Romantic Representation* "[after] the turn of the nineteen century, European culture widely admired a jolting apocalyptic image, especially in those pictures of modern cities reduced to ruins, and such images have continued to exercise a fascination well into our nuclear era" (214). Likewise, Quinby detects the apocalyptic spirit of the century which gives way to the possibility of a man-made End with the following words:

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[3] These major global developments were the First World War, the Second World War, the emergence of a nuclear threat, the Cold War, genocides such as in Cambodia, Rwanda, or Bosnia, warnings of approaching climactic and ecological disasters like global warning, continuing warfare, terrorism, increase in crime, decreasing value given to human life, increase in violence and sexual exploitation, the emergence and spread of AIDS as an incurable disease, the rapid reach of computer technology to each part of human life, expectations or apprehensions centered around the year 2000, and so on.

Like the apocalypse of the first and second centuries and the apocalypse of Puritan colonization, the Revolutionary War, and the Civil War, twentieth century apocalypse is a system of logic that understands mundane and momentous events in relation to the belief that the end of time is near. Unlike these earlier versions of apocalyptic expression, there is one key characteristic of twentieth century apocalypse that was simply unthinkable in earlier eras: humanity's capacity to end the world. Although pre-twentieth-century forms of apocalypse have had any number of internal differences, they have all held the belief that God was the source of both revelation and destruction. (xx)

The idea of the likelihood of a man-made apocalypse has grown around the possibility of a huge war in which countries use nuclear weapons. The idea originated at the end of the Second World War, when the United States destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the Atomic Bomb. David Seed sees the use of the weapon as "a turning point in the natural and political order so radical as to be apocalyptic" (88). In addition, O'Leary labels the Atomic Bomb as one of the two factors which characterize the apocalyptic spirit of the twentieth century (209). From that day onwards, an irreversible suspicion arose and nuclear power has been seen as the possible catalysis of the End, if not only of anxieties relating to it.

The possibility of the use of nuclear power as a means of bringing an end to life also meant the transformation of the orthodox apocalyptic vision, which was based solely on religion, to more secular and scientific terms since it would be under human initiative to

produce and use nuclear means to destroy everything. During previous centuries the End was tied to mostly religious developments. Walter Klaassen in his work *Living at the End of the Ages: Apocalyptic Expectation in the Radical Reformation* observes this with the words below:

> The common European conviction in the 1520s that the End was near produced in some quarters a short-range view of how to respond to the future. If the End is near, there is no point in making long-range plans. Long-range plans and visions emerge when apocalyptic expectation wanes as happened in the fourth and fifth centuries C.E. when the conversion of Constantine came to be seen as the beginning of the Millennium. It happened again in the seventeenth century, for example through the work of Francis Bacon. But in the sixteenth century few Europeans expected a "brave new world"; rather they feared their world's final demise. The reformation was not seen as the beginning of the "modern" period of history but as the prelude to the End of all history. (117)

However, with the twentieth century, science became a new religion which could promise its own apocalypse. Secularization of thought, which had gained impetus during the nineteenth century – the so-called age of progress, continued throughout the twentieth century in which, instead of religion, "natural sciences offered…information in more convincing terms, while the social sciences questioned the essential truth of religions" (Weber 193). Nonetheless, although there has been a gradual and consistent secularization of viewpoints, the apocalyptic perspective has never been out of fashion. This might be partly because,

whether through religious doctrines or through science, people need to have a feeling of the End, as mentioned earlier.

On the other hand, it would be too limiting to claim that in the twentieth century the popularity of scientific knowledge erased the religious entirely. Marina Benjamin, in her book called *Living at the End of the World*, compares science and religion in the apocalyptic twentieth century context with the following words: "No: science cannot *replace* religious hope, it can only offer as an alternative the thrills, both exciting and terrifying, of possibility. And possibility is not the same as hope, just as heritage is not history and indefinite self-preservation is not immortality" (259). Therefore, to associate the scientific - the use of nuclear power - with the religious could be possible especially for the second half of the twentieth century, as the following words from the Bible seem to allude to the effects of the bomb: "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (Internet source 1, *The Holy Bible*, 2 Peter 3:10). Belief in religiously esoteric happenings was developing side by side with technological developments. Weber's researches show that

> [between] 1945 and 1952, some 2000 miracles were investigated in countries behind the Iron Curtain; between 1930 and 1950, the church in Western Europe investigated thirty series of Marial apparitions and some 3000 individual girls and boys who brushed against the sacred. (200)

Such religious interpretations found public interest especially in America. *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) by Hal Lindsey played an

important role in this. The book was a modern day prophecy book. Lindsey tied several major developments (like the use of the atom bomb and the foundation of Israel) to the imminently approaching apocalypse which the century would inescapably witness. His tone of narration tied the religious with the End. Paul Boyer in his book *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*, mentioned Lindsey and his book saying that

> Lindsey in this book of great popular effect turned the Bible into a manual of atomic age combat...For page after page, Lindsey systematically went through the apocalyptic scriptures, mechanically transcribing every phrase and image into the vocabulary of Pentagon strategists. (127)

Thus, what can be called *the Lindsey-effect* – the tying of world politics (as well as technological developments) to apocalyptic anxieties through religious sayings in a time of rapidly secularized global balances - captured attention, and became another factor to strengthen the idea of the End in the second half of the twentieth century.

Actually, at the core of all discussions relating to the End, whether they are through science or through religious sayings or through an alliance of both, has lain primarily the idea of the End of *Man*. If there will be an apocalypse, it will primarily be affecting mankind. For the twentieth century, science seems to be an important agent in the discussion of the End of man. Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things* (1966) announced the End of man and its relation to science with the following words:

> When natural history becomes biology, when the analysis of wealth becomes economics,

> when, above all, reflection upon language becomes philology, and Classical *discourse*, in which being and representation found their common locus, is eclipsed, then, in the profound upheaval of such an archeological mutation, man appears in his ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows. (312)

Therefore, science – man's own creation – was seen to have changed the order of things, and man as the subject turned out to be the object throughout the twentieth century. He was no longer seen as a supreme being who could define what he was able to produce. Quite the opposite, he would be defined by his own productions. For Foucault, Man was debased due to the density of the culture of productions he produced, and what he produced might have even told truth better. He explains this as he writes:

> In one sense, man is governed by labour, life, and language: his concrete existence finds its determinations in them; it is possible to have access to him only through his words, his organism, the object he makes – as though it is they who possess the truth in the first place (and they alone perhaps); and he, as soon as he thinks, merely unveils himself to his own eyes in the form of a being who is already, in a necessarily subjacent density, in an irreducible anteriority, a living being, an instrument of production, a vehicle for words which exist before him. (313)

Man was no longer Pico Della Mirandola's Renaissance dignified type, nor had he the seemliness that the Classical period had bequeathed. He had to face his finitude the process of which had already started. Foucault prophesied Man's erosion from history through science as

[all] these contents that [man's] knowledge
reveals to him as exterior to himself, and
older than his own birth, anticipate him,
overhang him with all their solidity, and
traverse him as though he were merely an
object of nature, a face doomed to be erased
in the course of history. (313)

Foucault was not the only researcher of the twentieth century who opened a discussion of the End of Man in the upcoming course of history. James A. Aho, for example, in his article "The Apocalypse of Modernity" shows the whole period of modernity as the cause of a future apocalypse for Man. For Aho, Man has become the center and unchanging component of modernity, yet he has experienced a structural collapse. Aho explains Man's demise by claiming that Man became the center of the modern world due to God's gradual death in Western civilizations. As God receded from the world, Man himself had to fill the void and become the center of the modern world. Man came to the foreground with his self or ego and this has brought forward the apocalypse of modernity. Later on, Man, the collapsed and fragmented center of modernity, otherwise called the apocalypse of modernity, gave way to two new revelations: these have been called the linguistic turn (or postmodernism) and fundamentalism (or millennialism) (62-63). The second line of argument James Aho maintains in relation to his modernity as the mother of apocalypse is developed through the idea of liberalism-born-plurality. The type of man lying at the foundation of modernity was an essential Euro-American man. This meant a kind of denial of humanity to non-Europeans. Yet, as liberalism progressed so did modernism's recognition of the non-Europeans. Liberalism meant that non-Europeans are seen as thinking and intelligible human-beings,

too. Therefore, they were worthy of freedom as well. Out of this claim was born a recognition of the plurality of man; there were now types of man, or "man selves" like Africans, Muslims, and Native Americans. Following the plurality of man, there arose Woman with her own herstory. The essential Woman at first was a woman with college education, middle class Caucasian Euro-American female. This type later shattered and new types, rather in lower-case, of women of different races and classes came out. Each new type wished to be recognized. Later, the course of this process got more complex as, for example, newer types, like homosexuals, arose and claimed rights for themselves (63-65). To sum up in Aho's words, "as modernity's imperial destiny has unfolded…the very triumph of modernity has occasioned apocalypticism" (65).

The plight of man between the two World Wars can further illustrate the twentieth century as an age of the End of Man. The period became a time of *de-individualization* of the individualized person. Erika Fischer-Lichte summarizes this process with the following words:

> It was science which first challenged man as an individual in that it explained man's behaviour by taking recourse to general laws – in psychoanalysis to basic human urges, in sociology to economic, social and political laws, in anthropology and ethnology to phylogenetic development. Next, the use of human life as fodder in the First World War degraded the individual to an interchangeable object, something to be replaced and reproduced at any time as well as a pure instrument of destruction. Ultimately, man was annulled by fascism and Stalinism into a no longer identifiable element of the great masses called people's community or communist society. Defined in

this way, the masses usurped the place of the individual and became the generally valid one, ultimately, the only recognized factor of identity; anyone who did not let himself be subsumed by this concept was mercilessly excluded – even if it meant physical destruction. The search towards a 'new', non-individual man had fallen on a dangerous, misguided path which led to the regressive annihilation of the self and total submersion in a faceless crowd, which released the individual's basest instincts, stimulated his childish fantasies of power in an irresponsible way and provoked his regression into unlimited barbarity. (298)

Therefore, the above-mentioned plurality of types of man who had grown a supra self in the absence of God was taken under control by the new supra powers like Science, or Fascism, or Communism, their common goal being de-individualization, hence the End, of conscious man. On the one hand, man's self-centeredness throughout modernity, on the other, the de-individualization process between the two world wars carried and paved the way for the idea of Man's End. Frederic Jameson also touches on this twentieth century erosion of the individual in his book *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* where he prefers to use term "subject" instead of Man and maintains that the issue is highly significant in contemporary theory:

Such terms inevitably recall one of the most fashionable themes in contemporary theory, that of the 'death' of the subject itself – the end of the autonomous bourgeois monad or ego or individual – and the accompanying stress, whether as some new moral ideal or as empirical description, on the *decentering*

of that formerly centered subject or psyche.
(14-15)

In addition to all this, James Berger's approach towards the twentieth century and its apocalyptic spirit deserves attention. Berger in his article "Twentieth Century Apocalypse: Forecasts and Aftermaths" states that the apocalyptic fervor that was there throughout the twentieth century lost its public interest right at the end of the century (387). There were mainly three causes for this evaporation of apocalyptic feeling: firstly, no great global crisis took place after the Cold War. There were no new Soviet Unions around to be addressed as an Anti-Christ. Secondly, the apparent prosperity brought forward by global capitalism thwarted apocalyptic expectations. And thirdly, there emerged a widespread apocalyptic fatigue which led to the idea that apocalypse had already occurred (388). Therefore, what Berger suggests is the idea that apocalypse had already occurred during the twentieth century and it was already a part of the history at the end of the century. That is also to say that apocalypse was then within history. This idea is apparent in his following words:

> We know what the end of the world looks like. We know because we've seen it, we've seen it because it's happened. The images of Nazi death camps, of mushroom clouds and human silhouettes burned onto pavements, of not just massacres but genocides in a dozen places, of urban wastelands and ecological devastation are all part of our cultural heritage. Apocalypse is our history, what difference does a change in the calendar make? (388)

Jean Baudrillard also shares the same vision as he writes in his "The Anorexic Ruins":

> The pole of reckoning, dénouement, and apocalypse (in the good and bad sense of the word), which we had been able to postpone until the infiniteness of the Day of Judgment, this pole has come infinitely closer, and…that we have already passed it unawares and now find ourselves in the situation of having overextended our own finalities, of having short-circuited our own perspectives, and of already being in the hereafter, that is, without horizon and without hope. (34)

The apocalypse has already taken place. What the world lives is the period of post-apocalypse. Berger stretches the history of post-apocalypse back to the French Revolution claiming that event as the first truly apocalyptic development of modern times (388-389). In the twentieth century, modernism became the first mouthpiece of apocalypse of the century. There were two groups of modernist apocalypticists. The first group involved those who wrote after the First World War and inaugurated the representations of post-apocalyptic literature. Berger points that

> [for] Yeats…the twentieth century marked the final days of his apocalyptic gyre, which then would turn, renewed, to begin again. Eliot's *The Waste Land* was placed between the material and cultural catastrophe of the First World War and an unnamable revelation that would culminate and redeem the world's devastation. (389)

Then, there was a second search for a greater catastrophe to reveal "the full meaning of civilization's failures" (389). This greater catastrophe arrived with the Second World War (389). The event sealed all, it was the final blow, and the End completed itself. After the Second World War, the expression of apocalypse became "a matter of retrospection" (390). "The world…was a ruin, a remnant….Nothing more could be revealed. All subsequent, post-apocalyptic destruction would be absolutely without meaning, mere repetition" (390).

For the postwar apocalyptic expression, Berger observes four areas of representation: nuclear war, Jewish Holocaust, apocalypses of liberation (feminist, postcolonial, African American), and postmodernity. Narratives of apocalypse through nuclear disaster were based on an inevitable progression of technology. This mode stresses the absurd nature of nuclear annihilation (390). Still other representations of this mode stressed that the post-apocalyptic condition was reflected through the representation of a mutated language whose referents have been "destroyed and forgotten" (ibid). Beckett's Clov in *Endgame* who says "I say to myself that the earth is extinguished, though I never saw it lit" (81) is an example for this. Michael Clifford also points out this relation between language and the apocalypse when he writes

> Man has been effected, produced, in the impact of language itself; and it will no doubt be in language that man is erased, displaced, dissolved. But it will not be in *a* language that this erasure will be accomplished. Rather, it will be in the *thinking* that emerges out of a language in which man is not the ground, foundation, or *telos* of philosophical reflection. (221)

The second line of narratives Berger mentions is those of the Jewish Holocaust which "is portrayed as the revelatory, traumatic, apocalyptic fulcrum of the twentieth century" (391). Apocalypses of liberation, on the other hand, meant the end of white, male, Euro-American colonial and heterosexist domination. These were the texts of Afro American, feminist, and postcolonial writers. These narratives destroy the old and create the new as in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (391). Berger sees postmodernity as the last area of post-apocalyptic representation. Frederick Jameson in his *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* supports Berger when he defines postmodernism as "an inverted millenarianism" informed by "senses of the end of this and that (the end of ideology, art, or social class...)" (1). Therefore, postmodernism is a form of apocalyptic discourse, and is born out of it as the last offspring of the twentieth century apocalyptic spirit.

The relationship between apocalypse and postmodernism – the shaping spirit of the age in which 1990s In-Yer-Face was born – should also be clarified. Apocalypse of the postmodernism or postmodern apocalypse is "a version of the apocalypse that dwells obsessively on the end, without any expectation of a new beginning" (Kumar in Bull 207). Therefore, postmodern apocalypse promises neither hope, nor regeneration, nor redemption, nor future. In this sense, postmodernism deconstructs apocalypse since it deprives apocalypse of its complementary half, the one that reveals, thereby obstructing its traditional meaning. An apocalypse that promises no hope afterwards can be seen as a deformed or incomplete apocalypse.

Deconstructed, deformed or incomplete or not, the convergence of the apocalyptic (revelation of the end) and the postmodern (the end of Order, Art, History, Truth, Religion, and so on) has been

strengthened through the critiques of postmodern theorists since the 1960s. Many theoreticians of postmodernism have adopted apocalyptic rhetoric in their studies. Jacques Derrida, for example, in his article "The Ends of Man" (1969) approaches apocalypse from the fundamental discussion point relating to the discourse: the End of Man. He writes that "[this] is the end of finite man, the end of the finitude of man, the unity of the finite and the infinite..." (41). He sees the existence of man as bound to the existence of the thought of man in metaphysics when he points out that "[the] idea of the end of man is...always already prescribed in metaphysics, in the thought of the truth of man" (42). Therefore, deconstruction of metaphysics where "[the] name of man has always been inscribed" (44) also brings the end of man. Michael Clifford, in his "Postmortem Thought and the End of Man," summarizes the relation of the End of Man to the end of metaphysics with the following words:

> The death of God means the end of man. The end of man requires the end of metaphysics. The end of man heralds the possibility of a space in which it is once more possible to think. To think requires thought's liberation from metaphysics. Thinking requires a language that can speak 'outside of/free from' the *arche* of metaphysical discourse. (219)

Nearly a decade later in 1978, Derrida would continue philosophizing with apocalyptic rhetoric when, for example, in his article "Structure, Sign, and Play," he would define the image of the birth of a form of an idea "under the species of the nonspecies, in the formless, mute, infant and terrifying form of monstrosity" (293). Then, in 1984, Derrida furthered his discussion of the End by appropriating an "apocalyptic

tone" into his argumentation. In his "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy" he claims a variety of fields of study for apocalypse from prophecy to eschatology, from Johannine vision[4] to mystagogy[5], from truth to unveiling of secrets. Derrida finds the meaning of apocalypse more in its nature of revealing, unveiling, or disclosing. Through apocalypse one "[reveals] the thing that can be a part of the body, the head or the eyes, a secret part, the sex or whatever might be hidden, a secret thing, the thing to be dissembled, a thing that is neither shown nor said…" (4). Therefore, it must be this revelatory nature of apocalypse that grants it a spacious zone of interpretation. An example of this is Derrida's seeing an apocalypse in circumcision when he writes "…the idea of laying bare, of specifically apocalyptic unveiling, of the disclosure that lets be seen what to then remained enveloped, secluded, held back, for example, the body when the clothes are removed or the glans when the foreskin is removed in circumcision" (5). Derrida sees "truth" as the ultimate outcome of apocalyptic signification. When apocalypse unveils anything hidden, truth is out. "No truth, no apocalypse" ("No Apocalypse, Not Now" 24). Therefore, what is revealed is truth; and the End is truth:

> Whoever takes on the apocalyptic tone comes to signify to, if not tell, you something. What? The truth, of course, and to signify to you that it reveals the truth to you; the tone is the revelatory of some unveiling in process…truth itself is the end, the destination, and that truth unveils itself is the advent of the end. Truth is the end and the

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[4] "Johannine vision" refers to St John's apocalyptic prophecises in the last book of the *New Testament*, also known as *Revelation*.

[5] "Mystagogy" refers to the doctrines and principles of mysticism.

instance of the last judgment. The structure of truth here would be apocalyptic. And that is why there would not be any truth of the apocalypse that is not the truth of truth. (Derrida 1984: 24)

Furthermore, it is in this article with the following words that Derrida makes his most true-to-the-postmodern claim about the End:

I tell you this in truth; this is not only the end of this here and but also and first of that there, the end of history, the end of the class struggle, the end of the reason of the death of God, the end of religions, the end of Christianity, and morals…the end of the subject, the end of man, the end of the West, the end of Oedipus, the end of the earth, *Apocalypse Now*, I tell you, in the cataclysm, the fire, the blood, the fundamental earthquake, the napalm descending from the sky by helicopters, like prostitutes, and also the end of literature, the end of painting, art as a thing of the past, the end of psychoanalysis, the end of the university, the end of phallocentrism and phallogocentrism, and I don't know what else? And whoever would come to refine, to say the finest fine [*le fin du fin*], namely the end of the end [*la fin de la fin*], the end of the ends… (21)

He denies the discourse of the End as it was known. This is where postmodern deconstruction and apocalypse as two phenomena come closest. Derrida equalizes two discourses by binding them with an intertwining affinity. Despite the fact that Derrida tries to demystify the discourse of apocalypse, and despite his disbelief in what apocalypse signifies, he cannot escape from the apocalyptic language in discussing

the discourse in his article. This paradoxical trap Derrida finds himself in is openly admitted when he writes the following words:

> That I have multiplied the distinctions between closure and end, that I was aware of speaking of discourses *on* the end rather than announcing the end, that I intended to analyse a genre rather than practice it, and even when I would practice it, to do so with this ironic genre clause wherein I tried to show that this clause never belonged to the genre itself; nevertheless, for the reasons I gave a few minutes ago, all language on apocalypse is also apocalyptic and cannot be excluded from its object. (30)

Derrida finalizes his points in this article by strengthening his "the end of the end" when he, one more time, ironically, uses a prophetic tone of announcement:

> I tell you this, I have come to tell you this, there is not, there has never been, there will never be apocalypse...There is the apocalypse *without* apocalypse...The *without* marks an internal and external catastrophe of the apocalypse...Here the catastrophe would perhaps be *of* the apocalypse itself, its fold and its end, a closure without end, an end without end. (35)

Therefore, Derridean apocalypse is an apocalypse without an end. It does not express the sense of an ending; rather, it gives the sense of a *pending* for apocalypse. It is not imminent because it is not there to be there for the imminence.

Derrida renews and resumes his discussion on apocalyptic terms in his article "No Apocalypse, Not Now" where he works on another

apocalyptic zone: the threat of a nuclear war. In this article, Derrida sees the existence of the nuclear weapons and the threat they emanate as another form of what he calls "speed races" (20). He then questions the phenomenon of "the nuclear age" and claims that "the phenomenon is fabulously textual…to the extent that, for the moment, a nuclear war has not taken place: one can only talk and write about it" (23). Therefore, since it did not occur and exists only in the textual level, it is "a non-event" and "a fable" (ibid.). By asking the following questions, Derrida hints that modern people deep down have a desire to render this apocalyptic fable real: "Who can swear that our unconscious is not expecting [a nuclear war]? dreaming of it, desiring it?" (ibid.). In this question is also implied a masochistic undercurrent Derrida can observe in people desirous of the End. He further asserts that it is this fable that shapes most of the culture of his time: it is only this fable that "motivates, structures not only the army, diplomacy, politics, but the whole of the human *socius* today, everything that is named by the old words culture, civilization…"(ibid.). Carrying his argumentation to the fields of literature and criticism, Derrida puts forth that the phenomenon exposes a quality of "being-for-the-first-time-and-perhaps-for-the-last-[timeness]" in minds in that it reminds one of "a possibility of an irreversible destruction, leaving no traces, of the juridico-literary archive – that is, total destruction of the basis of literature and criticism" (26). From this point Derrida derives his observation that postmodern deconstruction is a nuclear age discourse. Talking of a total destruction caused by a nuclear war, he says the following:

> Here we are dealing hypothetically with a
> total and remainderless destruction of the

archive. This destruction would take place for the first time and it would lack any common proportion with, for example, the burning of a library, even that of Alexandria, which occasioned so many written accounts and nourished so many literatures. The hypothesis of this total destruction watches over deconstruction, it guides its footsteps; it becomes possible to recognize, in the light, so to speak, of that hypothesis, of that fantasy, or phantasm, the characteristic structures and historicity of the discourses, strategies, texts, or institutions to be deconstructed. That is why deconstruction, at least what is being advanced today in its name, belongs to the nuclear age. (27)

All this that Derrida questions in his "No Apocalypse, Not Now" particularly expresses to what extent the phenomenon of a nuclear war, though only fabulous, is effective in shaping the culture of the second half of the century, is an intermediary concept that links apocalypse and deconstruction - the gist of postmodernism –, while it, in general, shows how Derrida furthered his problematizing apocalyptic discourse.

Derrida maintains his examination of apocalyptic discourse one more time in an interview called "The Rhetoric of Drugs" (1989). Here, Derrida mainly answers questions relating to the phenomenon of drugs in the modern era. Drug addiction and the user's easy repetition of the act "alone or otherwise, in private or in public" (5) leads Derrida to connect the issue to "one of the major events facing humanity, one of the most revealing and...one of the most "apocalyptic" in its most essential and "interior" history – that is AIDS" (5-6). After highlighting the apocalyptic spirit of his era through the non-event nuclear war in his "No Apocalypse, Not Now", Derrida brings forth the issue this time

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through an experienced reality - a reality of a disease that weakens and then kills human beings. Even to the best of the deconstructionist philosophers, the reality of the disease is too gross to deny the apocalypticism it inspires. In this sense, Derrida announces AIDS and its "virus (which belongs neither to life nor to death)" a reality of the modern era, and from which "considering its spatial and temporal dimensions, its structure of relays and delays, no human being is ever safe" (20), thereby underlining the apocalypticism of the period paving the path especially to the last decade of the century.

Steven Goldsmith sees the relation of apocalypse to postmodernism through the latter's association with aesthetization. Goldsmith maintains that with postmodernism apocalypse ascends from its historical zone of interpretation to "aesthetic surfaces" (2). He writes:

> The postmodern apocalypse belongs to an old habit of privileging aesthetic concerns over history and politics, an old habit of elevating form above content, that links it not only to some aspects of modernism and romanticism but even to tensions within the earliest apocalyptic texts themselves. (4)

Besides, he claims that postmodern apocalypse is a formal aesthetic also because "[apocalypse] uncontaminated by anything other than its own terms, apocalypse apocalyptically conceived, refers neither to mind nor to nature; apocalypse is linguistic and nothing but linguistic" (16). This strengthens James Aho's afore-mentioned observation of "the linguistic turn (postmodernism)" which emerged as a result of the apocalypse of modernity. As Goldsmith notes even the foremost text of Christian apocalypse, *John's Revelation* itself is linguistically

apocalyptic: it tells of a military victory, which is also a linguistic victory, preparing the formation of the New Jerusalem. The forces of Christ, the Logos or the Word defeat the forces of the Whore of Babylon, a linguistically-rooted figure as representing the fallen language derived from the tower of Babel (Goldsmith 20). Thus, Goldsmith believes that apocalypse has turned out to be a formal discourse, an aesthetic, which receives responses of study for its content. Northrop Frye strengthens the view that sees apocalypse as aesthetic in the postmodern period. For Frye, apocalypse suggests the "climactic literary achievement" (qtd. in Goldsmith 9). Frye explains the formal quality of this literary achievement with the following words in his *Anatomy of Criticism*:

> Nature is now inside the mind of an infinite man who builds his cities out of the Milky Way. This is not reality, but it is the conceivable or imaginative limit of desire, which is infinite, eternal, and hence apocalyptic. By an apocalypse I mean primarily the imaginative conception of the whole nature as the content of an infinite and eternal living body which, if not human, is closer to being human than to being inanimate. (119)

Therefore, for Frye apocalypse exists in the mind of a humanly being that is capable of seeing it as an "imaginative conception" in its unreality, which renders the concept aesthetic. That the postmodern apocalypse is a formal aesthetic also finds support from Derrida who, in his "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy," writes that "[if] the apocalypse reveals, it is first of all the revelation of the apocalypse, the self-presentation of the apocalyptic structure of

language, of writing, of the experience of presence, in other words of the text or mark in general" (27-28). The apocalyptic "designates the announcement itself and no longer what is announced, the discourse revealing the to-come or even the end of the world rather than what it says, the truth of the revelation rather than the revealed truth" (28). These remarks show that apocalyptic work firstly refers to its apocalyptic style, rendering itself primarily an aesthetic form of work over its content.

In addition, Herman Rapaport in his "Deconstructing Apocalyptic Rhetoric: Ashbery, Derrida, Blanchot" accounts for the reason why apocalypse is rendered rather aesthetic by postmodernism, when he writes that the postmodern writer does not

> make cataclysm or disaster climactic or apocalyptic in the sense we usually have of the word. He takes catastrophe as something pervasive and banal, so ubiquitous and monotonous, that we live this end of man to the end each day, exist against the backdrop of a deathwork…whose style we have become… [The] disaster is…tediously inhabited as a style of life whose oppression lacks a certain density or weight, whose oppression is even luminous and inviting, an enveloping disaster in whose end we are eternally suspended. (389)

These words suggest that during the postmodern period apocalypse was welcomed by a life which had already lost its energy to meet another ending through apocalypse. Contentwise, apocalypse had already proved itself by means of several groundbreaking catastrophes the world had experienced; for the postmodern era what was left of

apocalypse was on the formal level. Apocalypse had lost its own style and it became stylized itself.

Jean Baudrillard also contributes to the argument of postmodern apocalypse. Baudrillard, in his *The Illusion of the End*, firstly handles apocalypse from an economic point of view. He asserts a material end for most of the societies of the world, as he writes:

> No solution has been found to the dramatic situation of the under-developed, and none will be found since their drama has now been overtaken by that of the overdeveloped, of the rich nations. The psycho drama of congestion, saturation, super-abundance, neurosis and the breaking of blood vessels which haunts us – the drama of the excess of means over ends – calls more urgently for attention than that of penury, lack and poverty. That is where the most imminent danger of catastrophe resides, in the societies which have run out of emptiness. (71)

This approach is in accordance with Berger's afore-stated second cause for the lack of interest in the apocalypse at the end of the century: a deluding prosperity introduced by capitalist property. Here, the word "emptiness" seems to have a double meaning, referring both to a sensual and to a physical nullity. Baudrillard describes the contemporary Western society whose members try to get rid of the excess of life that puts heavy psychological burdens over them. In the material sense, Western societies seem to have satisfied the sense of possession, have come to the end of the journey of attainment and desire, in other words have reached the end point and are waiting there for a revolution, which may take them back to the bare necessities of life where life would gain more meaning. In this sense,

Baudrillard's contemporaries – people of the 1990s when he wrote his book - can be seen to be trying to bring an end by themselves, or at least to be in a search of it. "Because it is unable to escape it, humanity will pretend to be the author of its destiny. Because it cannot escape being confronted with an end which is uncertain or governed by fate, it will prefer to stage its own death as a species" (Baudrillard 71). Furthermore, Baudrillard claims that there is no more the feeling of the arrival of an End, the hope for an End has been exhausted. Seeing the beginning of the end of the End in nuclear threat, Baudrillard asserts that

> We had come close to this philosophy with the atomic age. Alas, the balance of terror suspended the ultimate event, then postponed it for ever and, now deterrence has succeeded, we have to get used to the idea that *there is no end any longer, there will no longer be any end*, that history itself has become interminable...there will be no end to anything. (116)

Taking his language into the medical sphere he continues "[because], at bottom, all these things are already dead and, rather than have a happy or tragic resolution, a destiny, we shall have a thwarted end, a homeopathic end, an end distilled into all the various metastases of the refusal of death" (ibid). In relation to his idea of the end of the End, Baudrillard observes a disbelief in Biblical apocalypse in the world of his day. He claims that the Apocalypse of the Bible is as theoretical as the Big Bang theory. Like the Big Bang, Biblical Apocalypse will never be made sure for people (119). "Even the idea of putting an end to our planet by an atomic clash is futile and superfluous" (ibid.). What Baudrillard claims is that the modern era has created its own "virtual"

apocalypse which denies the reality of Biblical Apocalypse and this virtual apocalypse will not take place in the future, "it is *here and now*" (ibid.). There was an attempt to end us all through bombs "manufactured by us, designed…the better to end it all," yet "we have now put that end into satellite form, like all those finalities which, once transcendent, have now become purely and simply orbital" (ibid.). This satellite of our end covers us continually. Therefore, people are "encircled by [their] own end and incapable of getting it to land, of bringing it back to earth" (ibid.). Therefore, people imagine an end which will bring no actual end. Yet this feeling that the end haunts us will always be present. Baudrillard finalizes his point with a play on words which suits the argument when he writes "[things] are in a state which is literally definitive – neither finished, nor infinite, nor definite, but de-finitive that is, deprived of its end" (120).

What has been stated so far shows that the idea of apocalypse or the End is a deep-rooted cultural element in the Western world. Besides being a sense, as has earlier been mentioned, that necessitates finals in the course of life, the End can also be seen as a mindset which has been unconsciously implanted into people's minds and by which many people see, perceive, believe, write, and read. As M. H. Abrams in his *Natural Supernaturalism* also notes "[over] the centuries the last act of drama of history has powerfully and insistently shaped the intellection and imagination of Western man" (37). Kermode also strengthens this idea when he asserts that "the notion of an End-dominated age of transition has passed into our consciousness, and modified our attitudes…" (1967: 13-14). Derrida agrees with this when he writes "the West has been dominated by a powerful program that was also an untransgressible contract among discourses of the end" ("Of an

Apocalyptic Tone" 20). So, how is this deep-rooted and in a sense esemplastic[6] discourse reflected in literature, particularly in drama, literature being an important element of the Western culture?

Before beginning with the relation between apocalypse and drama, the relation between the discourse of apocalypse and a book can be considered. Frank Kermode in the opening chapter of his book *The Sense of an Ending* asserts that human beings actually do need to be related to a beginning and to an end. Then he ties his idea to a literary aspect when he claims that it is through fictions of the End that humans satisfy their need to reach an apocalypse which "ends, transforms and is concordant" (5). He gives the Bible as a convenient example for his claim of concordance as the Bible starts with *Genesis* (the beginning) and ends with a chapter called *Apocalypse* (the end) (6). Later on enlarging his examples, he states that all books actually are structurally the grand plot of life incarnates, when he writes "we may call books fictive models of the temporal world" (54). Therefore, what is suggested through the discourse of apocalypse, and what is suggested by books in general share a common characteristic in their presentation of plot which most of the time follows a line of narration that starts and then ends.

How, then, does the relation of apocalypse with drama start? The following simple logic may work as an answer to the question: there is "reality" and there is "fiction". However, the line between reality and fiction is not sharply drawn when apocalypse becomes the parameter of the relation between the two. A storyline of real life events is called history while plot meets the definition for the sequence of events of a

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[6] The word "esemplastic" was coined by Samuel Taylor Coleridge as he used it in his *Biographia Literaria* (195), and means "having the function of moulding into unity; unifying" (*OED*).

literary work. Educated guesses or scientific predictions can help to unveil the future of reality while flash-forwards could help for the same in fiction. However, when the issue is the End these distinctions are blurred; reality and fiction move towards each other. History with its future of human beings is seen as a grand plot. David Ketterer in his book *New Worlds for Old: The Apocalyptic Imagination, Science Fiction, and American Literature* stresses that "apocalyptic literature is concerned with the creation of other worlds which exist, on the literal level, in a credible relationship (whether on the basis of rational extrapolation and analogy or of religious belief) with the "real" world, thereby casting a metaphorical destruction of that "real" world in the reader's head" (13). Furthermore, in relation to this interrelatedness of reality and fiction under apocalyptic expression, Jacques Derrida in his "No Apocalypse, Not Now" claims that "the 'reality' of the nuclear age and the fable of nuclear war are perhaps distinct, but they are not two separate things" (23). And since the world as the stage, human beings as its actors, and events as its action appeal more primarily to sight, the course of life in the world can better be seen as the plot of a play. Like a fictional plot, the plot for humans is thought to have a beginning and an end. Man can be seen as a player that expects to fulfill each stage of the plot which will culminate with the End. Curtains of theatre dramaturgically work to display this sense of apocalypse since both curtains and apocalypse unveil, disclose, and reveal what is to come. "Go, draw aside the curtains and discover" (II, vii, 1) says Portia in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, which can be read as words supporting the analogy between the End and theatre.

Therefore, as O'Leary suggests, a kind of dramatic pattern is imposed "onto historical time" by apocalyptic narratives "which view

events as part of a cosmic pattern" (63). In addition, Heiner Müller similarly stresses the relation between drama in the twentieth century and the End: "Mankind will only survive the total crash-test on the human collective in this perhaps our last century… The theatre stimulates this step, pleasure-den and torture-chamber of metamorphosis" (qtd. in Fischer-Lichte 341). Frank Kermode further explains the triangle of human life, plot, and the End with a "tick-tock" metaphor:

> Let us take a very simple example, the ticking of a clock. We ask what it *says*: and we agree that it says *tick-tock*…*tick* is our word for physical beginning, *tock* our word for an end…The clock's *tick-tock* I take to be a model of what we call a plot, an organization that humanizes time by giving it form; and the interval between tock and tick represents purely successive, disorganized time of the sort that we need to humanize… *Tick* is a humble genesis, *tock* a feeble apocalypse (1967: 44-45). [The] tick of birth and the tock of death. That is a way of speaking in temporal terms of literary form. (58)

Kermode explains well. However, a question arises: does the sound of a clock remain the same for all ages? Do people of different ages hear the sound and interpret it the same way? For Faustus or Hamlet, it would be right to claim chronicity, however today, in a time when even the concept of time is being distorted, it is not. For more than half a century, people have also taken up using digital watches, and digital watches do not produce tick-tock sound although people might still be trying to hear the sound in them; expectations of the End in the grand plot of human life have changed considerably. For example, after seeing

what an atom bomb can do, the orthodox idea of an apocalypse which will distribute divine providence has been replaced to a considerable extent with an idea of the End which will be far more difficult for everybody. Kermode also realizes this and comments that

> ...because times change the fictions by which we seek to find 'what will suffice' change also. They change because we no longer live in a world with an historical *tick* which will certainly be consummated by a definitive *tock*. Among all the other changing fictions literary fictions take their place. (64)

One of the most thorough and rarely found studies on the subject of the relation between the apocalyptic paradigm and drama belongs to Stephen O'Leary. Published in 1994, at the beginning of his book he states that there had never been a study of the apocalyptic with dramatistic theories, and he applies apocalyptic discourse to drama by juxtaposing the apocalyptic argument with the tragic and comic senses of drama. O'Leary claims that the dramatistic perspective rises from its relation to the problem of evil in the face of which one shapes his attitude to life (200). O'Leary distinguishes between the tragic and the comic in their approach to the problem of evil. He clarifies how differently each genre responds to the problem of evil:

> The tragic plot conceives of evil in terms of sin or guilt; its mechanism of redemption is victimage, and its plot moves towards the isolation of the evildoer in the 'cult of the kill'. The comic plot conceives of evil in terms of error, misunderstanding, or ignorance; its mechanism of redemption is recognition, and its plot moves toward exposure of the evildoer's fallibility and his incorporation

> into society. The tragic rhythm is progressive
> and cadential, while the rhythm of comedy is
> episodic; the tragic plot promotes a view of
> time and human action as predetermined,
> leading to an inevitable resolution that 'is
> always the turn to an absolute close,' while
> the comic plot portrays time as open-ended
> by depicting 'upset and recovery
> of...equilibrium'. (200-201)

O'Leary takes Biblical *Revelation* as a dramatic narrative and uses it in order to elaborate on the above-mentioned division between the tragic and the comic sense in their relation to the End. For Adela Yarbro Collins, to whom O'Leary gives references in his work, *Revelation* resembles an Aristotelian tragedy in that it displays conflicts on a universal setting and puts forward cathartic conclusions (qtd. in O'Leary 201). O'Leary expands this view, but suggests a comic sense as he writes:

> ...the heroes of this drama, the saints of the
> millennial kingdom who faithfully endure the
> persecutions of the beast, are comic in that
> their fortune changes from misery to
> happiness rather than from happiness to
> misery. Furthermore, the narrative structure
> of the drama is one that Aristotle classified as
> comic: the 'double plot', in which the virtuous
> are rewarded and the evil punished. (201)

He then points out that the comic and the tragic veins of drama are combined in *Revelation* due to "the sense of time moving to a predetermined conclusion, the catastrophic predictions of the destruction of earthly kingdoms presaged by signs and wonders in the heavens, and the radical duality that separates the servants of Christ from the servants of the beast" (201). At this point, it can be claimed

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that at the core of the difference between the tragic and the comic interpretation of the drama of *Revelation* lies the division between viewpoints which take the text as literal and those which see it as allegorical. During the early centuries of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, the predictions relating to the End prophesied by *Revelation* had failed to occur. Therefore, the drama of *Revelation* came to be understood as the Church's fights against its enemies in all ages. This idea was conceptualized by Augustine who changed the literal perception of *Revelation* to the allegorical. Augustine's novel approach, from a dramatistic perspective, brought to the interpretation of *Revelation* a comic sense. For example, he forbade the specifying of any date for the End. Augustine had his reasons for seeing *Revelation*'s message as no more than allegoric: he saw the apocalyptic signs – wars, apostasy, earthquakes, and the like – as unreliable since they had occurred in all ages. Therefore, the fulfillment of the millennium should not have been expected as the coming of Christ or the like, but as a parable for the historical Church. Based on these new perspectives, Augustine's comic perspective was integrated into a dramatistic interpretation of *Revelation*, and this comic perspective meant taking a skeptical stance in evaluating apocalypse so that people would not be laughed at by those who have seen more days in the future of history. All in all, it meant highlighting *Revelation*'s absolute dualities and neutralizing its traditional predictive function (O'Leary 202-203).

In the more modern world of drama, this combination of the two senses, the tragic with the comic (tragicomic), can also be observed in the highly thought-provoking play *Waiting for Godot*. The play is a synthesis and a combination of approaches of what O'Leary

conceptualizes as the comic and the tragic interpretation of the End in drama. O'Leary comments that "[it] would appear...that an adequate grasp of the human eschatological dilemma in the nuclear age requires a dialectical understanding, and perhaps a synthesis, of the tragic and comic perspectives," (222) and *Waiting for Godot,* being a play written a few years after the use of the nuclear bomb, accomplishes this dialectical understanding. The blend of the tragic and the comic perspectives are felt throughout the play. The play is seen as discussing the apocalyptic rhetoric not only because it was written just after the nuclear bomb but also because it can be suggested that the most controversial unknown of the play, the identity of Godot, can be interpreted as representing the End. Therefore, when viewed from this angle it can be named as *Waiting for the End*, whose "the End" never comes. The following dialogue can be seen as interpreting Godot as the End itself:

> VLADIMIR: We'll hang ourselves to-morrow.
> (Pause.) Unless Godot comes.
>
> ESTRAGON: And if he comes?
> VLADIMIR: We'll be saved. (*WFG*, 94)

From the beginning till the end of the play there is always a sense of postponing which does not lead to a resolution. Time does not guarantee a finale for happenings; bleakness is carried to oncoming times which promise neither a temporal nor a conceptual end for the estranged inhabitants of the stage. This is why Vladimir postpones the idea of hanging for "tomorrow", which is itself shattered with a "pause" with the despondent idea of Godot's coming. This idea intrinsically is started with a capitalized "Un-less", a combination of one negative

prefix and one negative suffix, which render the meanings of the words they are attached to downbeat. Still, on the whole, the setting implies that this is a period when there still is the idea of an End that would fulfill itself. There would be an End (Godot), unknown to anybody, yet it would come one day and save the poverty-stricken deforming humanity from its plight. It is only a matter of passing of time until the End's arrival; Godot has promised and it will come. The tramps pass time while anticipating hopefully the arrival of the End. They speak without conveying meaning, play games, and amuse themselves while waiting for the End. Yet the disappointment grows as the advent of the End is delayed continually. It must be because of this hopeful expectation that Beckett allows a green leaf to blossom on the tree in the second half of the play, which becomes the one and the only icon of positive thought in a setting of disappointment. The leading characters, the evident farce underlying their action, and the mental ignorance these characters blissfully display suggest the comic vein while the predetermined but never-appearing Godot, the bare stage filled with hardly integral characters, and the anesthetized feelings expressed through futilely repetitive dialogues remind the audience of the tragic strain in the play. References to the Christian Scripture reveal the predetermined tone of the approaching End, making it tragic. The speech Lucky gives when his master Pozzo asks him to think aloud to amuse the tramps illustrates this point:

> LUCKY: Given the existence...of a personal God quaquaquaqua with white beard quaquaquaqua outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell are plunged in

> torment plunged in fire whose fire flames if
> that continues and who can doubt it will fire
> the firmament that is to say blast hell to
> heaven. (*WFG*, 42-43)

In this sense, actually, not even these two strains are fully and properly functioning in the play; there is rather premature comedy and tragedy running through the structure of the play. O'Leary, on the other hand, finds that "[tragedy] and comedy collapse into each other as each attempt to stave off despair provokes laughter that dies away into the silence of the void. *Waiting for Godot* expresses a tragicomic vision in that it simultaneously asserts the necessity and futility of hope" (223). With its approach towards the End, therefore, the play sees the gravity of events with its tragic side and also furthers the interpretations of the End with the comic.

Therefore, it can be concluded that while tragic apocalypticism sees happenings from a literal point, the comic dramatistic perspective views occurrences on rather figurative terms. This idea recalls Frank Kermode's assertion that apocalypse is no more an *imminent* (literal) but an *immanent* (figurative) discourse (1967: 6). All in all, O'Leary summarizes his conceptualization of apocalypse within the context of tragic and comic interpretation saying that "apocalyptic argument in the tragic frame locates the cause of evil in supernatural forces and tends towards the establishment of a date that is fixed and imminent," and is therefore also deterministic, "while argument in the comic frame tends to locate the cause of evil in human error and to postpone the date or render it irrelevant" (205)[7]. He asserts that apocalyptic

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[7] There have been many attempts to specify dates for the End which fits into the tragic interpretation of apocalypse O'Leary mentions. Examples of the specifying of a certain time for the End are the followings: Paul Boyer in his

argument in the tragic frame is based on the authority of the Scripture, it is determined also in meaning and has one correct interpretation while the argument in the comic frame, in contrast with the tragic, works with the denial of authority of absolute knowledge, thereby refashioning the interpretations according to human needs. The prevalence of allegorical interpretations of the Christian apocalypse (like Augustine's) exemplifies the comic understanding (214).

In addition, Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the theory of fiction* provides another, earlier, perspective on the correlation between drama and the End. Kermode seeks the roots of the relation in tragedy. Observing the relation in history, Kermode claims that apocalypse succeeded prophecy (26), and was included in

work *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* mentions Edgar Whisenant's *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988* which sold two million copies. In the book the writer set a specific time for the End dating it between September 11 and 13, 1988 even by detailing his prediction with the breaking of a World War III which would start at this determined date with Russia's invasion of Israel, and Russia would be annihilated an hour following this event (130). Secondly, Eugen Weber in his book *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages* notes that "William Butler Yeats, the poet who predicted a Celtic Armageddon in 1899, seems to have expected the end of the Christian era in 2000" (28). Weber further reports that "Nostradamus appears to have expected the end, or the beginning of the end, in 1999 (the seventh month of 1999 to be precise), while numerological readings vary between 1999 and 2001" (28). "Joachim of Fiore, who died in 1202, was not the first Christian to calculate the end of the present age, only the first to place it in the year 1260" (Weber 36). As earlier mentioned in this study, Miller's arrangement of a certain time, as 1843, for the apocalypse to occur was another instance. Miller predicted 1843 as the year of the End. "The ultimate authority for Miller's apocalyptic claim that the world would end in 1843…" (O'Leary 207). Although specification of a certain time for the End was even clearly not advised in the Bible as "…of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Internet source 1, Matthew 24:36), even towards the end of the twentieth century new attempts could be observed. As Weber notes "[the] Socialist National Aryan Party predicted 1985. Elizabeth Claire Prophet, head of Church of Universal and Triumphant, predicted 1989" (209).

tragedy in the Middle Ages when "the terrors of apocalypse were absorbed by tragedy" (27). Later, "when tragedy established itself in England it did so in terms of plot and spectacle that had...to do with medieval apocalypse" (30). Furthermore, Kermode asserts that tragedy might be seen as the successor of apocalypse, which, he says, can be seen to be in accordance with the notion of an endless world. He gives *King Lear* as an example in which events try to reach a conclusion which does not come; even death for Lear is delayed. The end, thus, is a matter of immanence; tragedy, Kermode says, calls for death and judgment, heaven and hell, but the final end does not come: "the world goes forward in the hands of exhausted survivors" (82). In the world of tragedy, apocalypse is translated out of time into the concept of *aevum*[8]: no matter how the world shows all stages of decay and change, and all the terrors of an approaching end, the end does not finalize anything, making suffering and the need for patience perpetual. This can also be seen in *Macbeth* in which time can be labeled as equivocal (82-83). Therefore, in such tragedies we only have an image of an end, while the dignity of the final end survives through eternity. The endings of these tragedies are false endings in an eternal world. "They are researches into death in an age too late for apocalypse; too critical for prophecy; an age more aware that its fictions are themselves models of the human design on the world" (88). As Kermode accounts "[in] apocalypse there are two orders of time, and the earthly runs to a stop"

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[8] Kermode quotes Thomas Mann's words about the time concept of fiction in order to explain the concept of aevum: "...in their beginning exists their middle and their end, their past invades the present, and even the most extreme attention to the present is invaded by concern for the future" (71-72). Later, Aevum is briefly defined by Kermode as "...sempiternal moments that transcend the giddy successiveness of world time" (169). Therefore, what is meant by the term aevum is the integration of the past, present, and the future, which is also seen as the time of literary works.

(89), meaning that apocalyptic time concept consists of both a heavenly and an earthly time, the latter gradually counting down. Yet, the first type is eternal. Kermode further explains this as "…the cry of woe to the inhabitants of the earth means the end of their time," however, "[in] tragedy the cry of woe does not end succession; the great crises and ends of human life do not stop time" (89) since tragedy, being fictional, embodies the time of aevum, combining all three periods, past, present, and future.

O'Leary suggests that the correlation between tragedy or comedy and the idea of the End reveals itself in the genres' approaches to the concept of evil. Kermode, on the other hand, had found the correlation between apocalypse and tragedy, claiming a fictional timelessness, therefore also endlessness, for the latter in its reflection of apocalypse. Added to this critical heritage relating to the apocalyptic discourse within drama, what I will be studying throughout this thesis can very briefly be summarized: the English drama of the last decade of the twentieth century, or more particularly a group of plays categorized as "In-Yer-Face plays" embodies and displays ideas of the End. In-Yer-Face plays were written by a group of extremist, confrontational, and young playwrights among whom Sarah Kane, Mark Ravenhill, and Anthony Neilson can be named. It is claimed that apart from loading their plays with apocalyptic vision, each of these writers had a unique sense of representing the End. In this sense, Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and F***ing* (1996) and *Faust is Dead* (1997) are read as plays of *philosophical apocalypse*. Anthony Neilson's *Normal* (1991) and *Penetrator* (1993) are considered as plays of *violent apocalypse*, while Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (1999) is seen as a play of *traumatic apocalypse*. Each of these plays will be analyzed by close

reading and by means of helpful theories and perspectives that shed light on the philosophical, violent, and traumatic nature embodied in their apocalypticism. The thesis then will conclude that the 1990s British stage witnessed the plays of a group of young and radical English playwrights like Sarah Kane, Mark Ravenhill, and Anthony Neilson whose works embodied strong sense of apocalypse, and that each of these writers, although they were together in terms of the general playwriting aesthetics of their decade, was unique in representing the End on the stage.

CHAPTER 3

PHILOSOPHICAL APOCALYPSE: MARK RAVENHILL'S *SHOPPING AND F***ING* AND *FAUST IS DEAD*

A. 'I want it over. And there's only one ending': *Shopping and F***ing*

"Mark Ravenhill is, along with…Sarah Kane, probably the most well known and controversial of the new generation of young writers in British theatre from the mid-1990s on until the present" (Billingham 134). His *Shopping and F***ing* (1996) was considered to be the confirmation of the groundbreaking new awareness of the 1990s British drama. As Aleks Sierz points out "[if] Sarah Kane's *Blasted* publicized the effrontery of the new wave, Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking* proved that a new sensibility had well and truly arrived" (122)[9].

The scandalous title on its own has been successful in engendering curious meanings. As Peter Buse states "the deletion of the offending matter only attracted more attention to what was missing and further contributed to the success of one of the most important

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[9] The radical nature of the play started with its taboo-breaking title. Due to the Indecent Advertisement Act of 1899, which was later revised and endorsed by the Indecent Displays (Control) Act in 1981, the use and advertisement of words of obscenity was banned from public display. Therefore, the early posters of the play had to cover the third word of the title with the image of a splintered fork to disguise the offending word. Later, the solution was improved and the most of the letters of the word were replaced with asterisks to alleviate the shock it emanates. When the play started touring the country, even the asterisk version did not work in some towns and the play had to be announced as "Shopping and." (Sierz 125-126).

theatrical events of the 1990s" (Internet source 2). Dan Rebellato commented that "Ravenhill is very good at titles, and this one has entered the public consciousness in a way that no play has done since *Look Back in Anger* forty years before" (ix). However, it makes more sense when one turns back and rereads it after the play. Mainly, the title generates the idea that the world of its play is filled with the most primitive though the most modern needs of the characters: shopping and sex. Life is degraded to the most carnal side of the human organism. Closely read, the play displays a lot of examples of this. For example, being fat and eating too much are the criteria and standards of living happily as Mark points out after narrating one more time the story of his purchasing Robbie and Lulu: "And there's food. And it's warm. And we live out our days fat and content and happy" (5). Also, as Brian asserts: "For the right sum – life is easier, richer, more fulfilling" (10). The right sum is the primary standard for a happy life. The play under its framing title suggests a setting in which one finds only inexhaustible consumption, issues of money, transactions, shopping, forced and unnatural types of sexual intercourse, drug-dealing and drug-use which altogether result in a world of what the title openly signifies. Shopping is so crucially vital in the play that even a little misunderstanding during the act of shopping might cause the end of one's life. This is illustrated in the play with a man's fatal attack on a cashier girl, an event that Lulu witnessed while she was in the queue to buy a bar of chocolate from a store (28-29). This is only the world of the play's title; few sensations other than what shopping creates are allowed. Robbie, for example, feels "good" and "amazing" (38) only when he delivers the ecstasy tablets for free to people he does not even know. Life brings some sort of happiness only when no money is

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involved in the action and this is the first time that a character ever feels so good in the play. The title, moreover, suggests a degraded form of human action. All throughout the play, there is scarcely an issue which does not relate to either shopping or sexual intercourse. To be able to pay their debt to Brian, Lulu and Robbie even start selling sex-talk on the phone (50-51). In the highly commercial setting of the play where everything is fundamentally based on selling and buying, now even human beings are objects of trade in the sectors stated in the title. This is entirely parallel with Michel Foucault's observation, earlier stated in the theoretical background chapter of this study, that man has turned out to be "an instrument of production" (*The Order of Things* 313), and the world of *Shopping and F***ing* consumes man, too. On the other hand, Michelene Wandor's words also help summarize what the words of the title suggest:

> ...consumerism absorbs both shopping and fucking. No-one is really able to look after themselves. The former involves theft and ownership, the latter, continuous physical, homosexual violation. At the center are semi-homeless, parentless, unloved young people. The only older figure is the exploitative, cruel, emotionally hypocritical Brian, who represents the male-dominated society outside. (228)

Almost every act and event within the context of the play is strongly associated with "shopping". There are stories about, images of, icons from, and concepts relating to the act of shopping in *Shopping and F***ing*. To cite examples: take away food in the very beginning of the play (3), Mark's narration of a fat man's selling Robbie and Lulu to him (5), Robbie's wearing the uniform of a leading burger chain (14),

Mark's perception of his sexual intercourse with a man called Wayne in the treatment center as an issue of business transaction (18), Mark's leaving the flat to go and buy cheeseburger (21), the occasional distant sound of the clattering of coins (25, 34, 43), Lulu's buying a bar of chocolate and her mentioning of a TV guide (29), Robbie's giving away Es (ecstasy drugs) for free (38), money as the most important aspect of life (48), changing room (53), the credit cards Gary holds (53), Gary's relating male arousal to shopping (54), ready meals (65), and Brian's seeing the future in shopping and television (88) – and these may illustrate the point that under the title of *Shopping and F***ing* Ravenhill pictures a planet of shopping but nothing else. One is easily tempted to ask "whether there is anything left in our lives together that cannot be bought and sold" (Rebellato xi). This is a world selling productions where nobody seems to be producing anything. In this sense, the play draws a similar picture to what Jean Baudrillard puts forth in his "The Anorexic Ruins":

> We are no longer in a state of growth. We are living in a society of excrescence, meaning that which incessantly develops without being measurable against its own objectives...A lack is never dramatic; it is satiation that is disastrous, for it simultaneously leads to lockjaw and inertia...So many things are manufactured and piled up that they will simply never find more time to serve anyone. (29-30)

Peter Billington, too, recognizes the hegemony of "shopping" emphasized within the play in his following words: "With savage irony and a class A cutting-edge humor Ravenhill critiques a world and society where shopping has become a fetishized activity equivalent to a

good night out with the boys" (135). In addition, referring generally to Ravenhill's plays, Peter Buse points out that "[the] world of Ravenhill's plays is the underside of our modern culture of conspicuous consumption, where happiness awaits at the end of a commodity, where the logic of the marketplace is invincible" (Internet source 2). Mark Ravenhill himself explains, in an interview with Enric Monforte, why his play reflects so much of a commercial, economic, and highly materialized world:

> There were massive changes happening in Britain all the way during my education at university, with the country moving from being a society with a mixed economy and an anachronistic consensus about politics – a consensus about a form of state capitalism – to a free market economy. It was the first country in Europe to do that so aggressively and to do it very quickly. The whole fabric of the country was transformed, and that had a huge effect on everybody. Those kids in *Shopping and F***ing* are at the very tail end of that experience in terms of what that wild free market, that radical western capitalism does... (95)

What follows reveals the intrinsic apocalyptic discourse within *Shopping and F***ing*, in which "Ravenhill takes us on an after-hours journey into the lives of five principal characters centering upon three young people in a problematic but nevertheless ongoing relationship of mutual need and dependence" (Billingham 135). With frequent references to Baudrillardian over-consumerism and how it uses up human beings, to a strong sense of crisis that, as again the same philosopher says, "[brings] forth a catastrophe in slow motion" (1989: 33), to Baudrillardian emphasis on money as the center of the world

and how it materializes life, to Lyotard's postmodernist principle of the end of meta-narratives in the form of the end of stories in the play, and to Derridean emphasis on truth as a significant part of apocalyptic discourse, Ravenhill presents apocalypticism in *Shopping and F***ing* by means of a philosophical perspective. In this sense, this chapter will be a close-reading analysis and explanation of *Shopping and F***ing* in which the ideas of the End appear on the above-listed philosophical ideas.

To begin with, it will not be inconvenient to claim that the characters in *Shopping and F***ing* are experiencing a high level of crisis of life. The presentation of crisis is one of the components of apocalypticism that can be traced in a work. Crisis provides a background on which apocalyptic elements may spring. Also, as it has earlier been mentioned in the theoretical background chapter, crisis, for Frank Kermode, is an element which combines the historical and imaginative scales of apocalypticism (1967: 94), while for David Bromley it is during the times of crises that apocalypticism appears as a social form (32). In the play, the aura of crisis that forms the background of the play is even rendered more explicit through, for example, Robbie's speech that draws a picture of the world in crisis: "And I see this kid in Rwanda, crying, but he doesn't know why. And this granny in Kiev, selling everything she's ever owned. And this president in Bogota or...South America. And I see the suffering. And the wars. And the grab, grab, grab" (39). Brian's following words also display the harsh atmosphere of crisis: "...some give up. Some say there is nothing. There is chaos. We are born into chaos. But this is...no. this is too painful. This is too awful to contemplate. This we deny" (86). In

addition, Lulu's single question "Why is everything in a mess?" (65) further highlights the crisis present in Ravenhill's play.

I observe four layers which complement the idea of crisis in *Shopping and F***ing*: the first of these works through the absence of the happy days of the past; the second issue is character portrayals as members of an "end-generation", the third is the increasing decay and corruption within the whole society, and lastly is the characters' search for their concrete identities.

"We have seen the best of our time" declares the Earl of Gloster in Shakespeare's most apocalyptic play *King Lear* (I, ii, 114-115). Likewise, *Shopping and F***ing* initiates the theme of the happy days of the past, starting from its very beginning with the dialogue between Robbie and Mark where Robbie yearningly says to Mark that "Good times. The three of us. Parties. Falling into taxis, out of taxis. Bed" and is responded to with Mark's "That was years ago. That was the past" (4), as also Lulu much later summarizes: "The past past" (71). Robbie and Lulu explicitly display joy when the past is related while Mark holds his guard not to associate himself with the ties of the past. Nevertheless, for all three characters the past days were happier. Robbie and Lulu insist that Mark tell them the "shopping story" (4) which is about Mark's purchasing Robbie and Lulu from a "fat man" (5). They like to hear about their past. As for Mark alone, life was more ordered and simpler in the past as he says: "I used to know what I felt. I traded. I made money. Tic Tac. And when I made money I was happy, when I lost money I was unhappy. Then things got complicated" (33). At the present time, life does not follow with the same linearity for Mark, making it difficult for him to live. Another point which draws a sharp line between the happy days of the past and the present world of

predicament is made by Brain who gets very emotional and weeps while he is watching a video in which his son is playing the cello. The act of playing the cello and producing music creates emotional stimulation and hence feelings. The weeping Brian announces what he views as a "memory of what we've lost" (44), which is the loss of feelings. In the past, it was possible to experience feelings but now this possibility is lost. The music of life and the rhythm of the feelings of the past are no more with them in the present time as Brian cries: "Hear this and knew what you've l-l-l-ooost" (45). On the whole, one of the major factors why *Shopping and F***ing* is crisis-laden, the concept of crisis setting the background for apocalyptic representation, is the recognition that days similar to the joyful and more comfortable days of the past do not happen anymore.

Characters of the play, partly due to this detachment from a better past and partly to the highly materialist mood of their surrounding lives, display the features of what I would call an "end-generation" throughout the play, which is the second factor for the atmosphere of crisis in the play. Up to 1996, the year when *Shopping and F***ing* was first performed, the twentieth century gave birth to various self-consciously different generations: What Ernest Hemingway defined as the "lost generation" in the epigraph of his *The Sun Also Rises* signified the disillusioned youth of the post-World War I era. Then came the concept of "the greatest generation" which was coined by Tom Brokaw in his book *The Greatest Generation* where he depicts the citizens of the United States who fought during the Second World War and formed a group of veterans in the aftermath of the war (293). The following generation of the early 1950s would be called the "silent generation" referring to the American youth who would be

"waiting for the hand of faith to fall on its shoulders, meanwhile working fairly hard and saying almost nothing" (Internet Source 3). A later phenomenon was the people of Generation X which denoted "people born between the 1950s and early 1970s, who were anarchic and directionless" (Internet Source 4). Affects of such developing generational phenomena were felt throughout the West. Characters of *Shopping and F***ing* normally fall under what is called Generation Y, the cohort of people coming right after the X, born roughly between 1976 and 2000, and carrying the trends of the use of illegal drugs like ecstasy, marijuana, methamphetamine, cocaine, with the problem of obesity and the habit of junk food, and most of them living a computer-based life (Internet source 5); or, in Mark Zimmermann's words, a generation which is "co-dependent, victimized, and pathetic" (47). It is problematic to define this generation since no definition is fully correct and comprehensive enough. Therefore, I prefer to call the members of this age group, like the characters of *Shopping and F***ing*, the "end-generation".

Shopping and F***ing casts the individuals of this most problematic generation of the twentieth century, strengthening the atmosphere of crisis prevalent in the play. In Ravenhill's own view, his characters in *Shopping and F***ing* are deprived of a definitive structure of life, as he makes clear in the following words: "Certainly in *Shopping and F***ing* the young characters are in a world that's without politics, without religion, without family, without any kind of history, without structures or narratives, and as a consequence they have to build up their own structures" (qtd. in Monforte 93). There are illustrative events which parallel the prese nce of this structureless end-generation in the play. To begin with, Brian's statement that "So

many today are lost" (10) to Lulu during the interview may be an allusion to the state of life Lulu's generation is experiencing. More, the incident with a customer which Robbie experienced while he was working for a burger company is also noteworthy. In this event, Robbie asked a customer if he wanted cheese on his burger. The customer was mesmerized by the question and unable to come up with a decision, for which Robbie impatiently responded with the following words: "Look, here you have a choice. For once in your life you have a choice so for fuck's sake make the most of it" (14). As a reply, the customer attacked Robbie with a plastic fork and stabbed him with it. Although Robbie was wounded by a non-responsive and violent customer, he was fired from the job, all of which may be interpreted to mean that people sharing the world with Robbie, Robbie's generation in general, tend not think or reconsider situations in their lives, and are not able to make decisions, but rather prefer violent ways to communicate.

The crisis in the generation of the play's characters is also evident in immoral behavior. For example, Lulu, who poses as the most affectionate and the least degenerated character of the play, displays immoral behavior: she commits theft twice in the play; the first is confessed during her interview with Brian as the junk food she stole from a store drops out of her jacket on to the ground (12), and the second she commits by using the opportunity that a customer's attack on the cashier girl in the supermarket provides her with. But this second time leads her to question her humanity because she steals a bar of chocolate instead of trying to help the attacked cashier girl (30), leading her to question herself with: "What am I?" (30). A disrespectful attitude to religious values further adds to the features of the end-generation. Religious values have not been mentioned, and under the

circumstances and personality traits presented in this play it is hard to imagine that these characters could hold any notions of the sacred. On the contrary, it is clear that they do not respect piety, or even the highest concept of religion, God. Mark's attitude while narrating his "toilet story" demonstrates this moral lack of reverence: "I'm in and I kneel. I pay worship. My tongue is worshipping that pussy like it's God" (75).

Added to the indecisive and belligerent nature of the people presented in the play is the issue of the use of drugs and drug-dealing, which makes another feature of the end-generation. Mark represents the end-generation of 1990s in his being a drug addict, a "druggie", or "a recovering substance abuser" (24) in his own more politically correct words. Mark seems to be determined enough to get rid of his addiction and goes to a treatment center at the beginning of the play. While Mark is only a representative of the drug-users of his generation, there are in fact many others around with the same sort of addiction, which is observable in Robbie's giving away the entrusted three hundred "Es" for free to a lot of "guys" who are "asking", and Robbie is "giving" so that "everyone's dancing and smiling" (39). All these people are happy with the use of drugs. Gary, too, uses an illegal substance, like cocaine, as is shown in scene four. Robbie's depiction of people who are "dancing and smiling" is the only instance when some sort of happiness is imagined in the play, and it is only made possible for the members of this generation by the superficial effects of a chemical substance. Aleks Sierz observes the used-up characters of the play with the following words: "The scenes of overt sex or explicit violence [are] not as disturbing as the feeling that the characters [are] lost, somewhat clueless, prone to psychological collapse, vulnerable to exploitation"

(129). Overall, it may be claimed that *Shopping and F***ing* portrays characters of an end-generation whose characteristics aggravate the sense of crisis within and surrounding the play.

With the examples of people who use drugs and who sell drugs to other people, people buying and selling people, people attacking workers almost for no reason as in Robbie's case in the burger store and as in the case Lulu witnessed in the store, and people trying to detach themselves from other people, *Shopping and F***ing* exhibits a society which is growing increasingly violent, nonsensical, uncommunicative, libidinous, and treacherous. In a fantasy shared all by three, Mark buys Robbie and Lulu from a "fat man" (5). The man who attacks the cashier girl and wounds her fatally is depicted by Lulu as "A Bloke. Dirty, pissy sort of" (28). Robbie attributes another title to the same man calling him a "wino" (28), a homeless drunk person. Another portrayal which illustrates a society whose values are rotting is hinted at in the personage of the "rich bloke" who wants to own Gary and to keep him in his "big house" (26). This rich man who wants to have Gary in his house for sexual purposes is not the only one with such demands. The society is full of similar figures. The great popularity of Lulu and Robbie's sex-on-the-phone project proves this. Lulu and Robbie cannot catch up with the constantly ringing phones and the irregular fantasies of the callers throughout the tenth scene, about which situation Lulu at last concludes saying "Why are there so many sad people in this world?" (52). There is even a description of a highly perverted figure, one of Lulu's callers, who is "wanking to the video" (61) of what the store's security camera recorded while the cashier girl was assaulted and fatally wounded. The high rate of prostitution also indicates the degeneration of the society. In the play,

youngsters are forced to make money through prostitution, either on the telephone as Lulu and Robbie do, or performed in reality as Gary does because prostitution of all sorts seem to be selling well in the society. Furthermore, Gary's mother and step-father are also illustrations of people from a rapidly corrupting society. Gary's step-father countless times, and for two years, sexually abused Gary and an even a sadder situation is that his mother did not prevent this happening but consented, by advising Gary to pass a "leaflet" to his step father concerning using a condom during the act (41). "The disappearance of paternalism shows up codedly in many plays of the 1990s in the form of the absent, failing or abusive fathers" (xiii) says Dan Rebellato, and *Shopping and F***ing* illustrates this. The most important element of a society is the institution of family and, as is shown through Gary's case, the family is now not there to protect its members, to provide motherly and fatherly affection to the following generation. Apart from the very negative example of parenthood in Gary's family, there is no other mention of parenthood or family ties for the rest of the characters. More than this, poor parenthood may be considered as an implicit cause for the present disaffection of these youngsters. Michelene Wandor also observes this point as she writes: "Neither shopping nor fucking appear to bring anything desirable with them, and the focus appears to impute blame to inadequate earlier families, so that subsequent parenting becomes impossible" (229). Aleks Sierz also points out the antagonism between young ones and the older age group, and explains the older generation's inadequacy of care and its effects with the following observation:

> Here is a nation where the grown-ups,
> represented by Brian, have a vestige of old

values (the video of his son's playing the cello) but also advocate the most excessive spirit of capitalism, whose moral lesson is: 'Get the money first.' When Gary complains about being abused...another grown-up offers him a leaflet. Young people have been abandoned. However funky and uninhibited, they are dazed, confused and boiling over. With all adults corrupt, there is little to relieve the pain and the tedium except shopping and fucking. (132)

Furthermore, the dominant existence of gay characters throughout the play can be seen as demonstrating the decomposition of the society in general. Mark Ravenhill himself, in an interview with Enric Monforte, explains why he prefers gay characters in his drama, and particularly in *Shopping and F***ing*:

> There is a hedonistic, materialistic, selfish disposition in contemporary gay culture that all of contemporary Britain desires. Therefore, in many ways, the gay narrative is the narrative that everybody wants. That's why gay characters and contemporary gay men's lives could be useful to write about, because they're the ultimate definition of a hedonistic, materialistic society. They're metaphors for a wider society... (92)

Of the social perspective Ravenhill employs in his play, Dan Rebellato points out the following observation: "...Ravenhill is profoundly moral in his portraiture of contemporary society. His vision is elliptically but recognizably social, even socialist. He addresses not the fragments but the whole, offering us not just some explicit polaroids but the bigger picture" (x). All in all, the presentation of such a society with its most immoral and negative characteristics also makes a major contribution

to the crisis which forms the background and the setting for the apocalypticism of *Shopping and F***ing*.

Due to the above-mentioned debauchery in the society, to the hegemony of a growing end-generation, and to the fact that the happy days of the past cannot regenerate in the present, the characters of *Shopping and F***ing* are rendered definitionless, which, thus, leads them into an unconscious pursuit of real values of being and identity. The situation of the characters deprived of full knowledge of their own identities produces the last factor for the prevalent crisis in Ravenhill's work. The first instance of characters' search for their identities is noticeable when Lulu cries out to Mark: "You don't own us. We exist. We're people. We can get by" (7). Robbie and Lulu have been owned by Mark for a long time, and had been owned by somebody else before Mark bought them. Their personal identities have always been strongly tied to the existence of another person. Therefore, a sense of an instinct to try to continue to exist without a proprietor is detectable in Lulu's angry words. Later, Robbie continues to prove to Mark that he and Lulu can get by without Mark, as he tells Mark that Lulu is about to start a new job on TV, which is a lie told by Lulu. Robbie continues, saying: "You see, we're doing something? Aren't we?", "We're working. Providing" (21). On the other hand, Mark's decision to leave the house and to go to a treatment center "to sort [himself] out" (6) can be seen as the beginning of his quest to go and discover his real self. At the beginning of the play, Mark seems to be suffering a severe disorder. He cannot even feed himself but is spoon-fed by Robbie and Mark, to which Mark shows an unwilling consent that results in his vomiting the food back. Mark, who is aware that he needs to repair his life, declares this with the following expressions: "My head is a mess. I'm fucked" (4),

at the beginning of the play. Accordingly, Mark's decision to go to a treatment center is an indispensable start to learn his true self. Mark's biggest problem, though, relating to his disorderly state, is his inability to have a unified and individual identity of his own. He has no developed personality of his own but only defines himself through his relationship to others. In scene six, he makes this clear: "I have a tendency to define myself purely in terms of my relationship to others. I have no definition of myself you see. So I attach myself to others as a means of avoidance, of avoiding knowing the self. Which is actually potentially destructive" (33). His problem of identity is based on the fact that Mark has no ability to see what he is in his core, but uses the people with whom he has relationships in order to see himself. Rather, he is "dependent on people" and suffers from "emotional dependencies" (17). In this sense, Mark's primary mission becomes to change the state of his definitionlessness by detaching himself from all sort of relationships (sexual and emotional). This is the primary reason why he leaves his partner Robbie and why he puts his sexual contacts into the form of "transactions", believing that "when you're paying, you can't call that a personal relationship" (18). However, Mark's method of detachment from personal and emotional relationships to reach to a full sense of identity will fail, and, in fact, the opposite method – feeling like a complete person through emotional attachment - will prove right. Mark feels intact only when he loves Gary. He openly states to Gary his complete nature through love with the following words: "...I want to be with you, Now, here, when you're with me I feel like a person and if you're not with me I feel less like a person" (55-56). In this respect, Mark's confession "I love you" (56) to Gary entails "I am" or "I exist".

Another issue, the digitalization of lives through technological equipment, which also contributes to the issue of the characters' search for their identities, is brought forward with the appearance of Gary in the beginning of scene four. Gary and Mark have apparently been conversing about virtual technologies when Gary remarks: "Couple of years' time and we'll not even meet. We'll be like holograph things. We could look like whatever we wanted. And then we wouldn't want to meet 'cos we might not look like our holographs" (22). This shows that virtual reality, the internet, and the digital world are taking over during the 1990s and that these technologies are so very powerfully replacing the traditional physical ways of being that in "a couple years' time" (the play was written in 1994) people will turn out to be living lives through digital forms, thereby effectively becoming digital existences rather than flesh and blood organisms. The issue is also detectable in the case of Donny in Ravenhill's *Faust is Dead*, which will also be studied in this chapter. Imagination of such a digitalized world with its digital inhabitants is itself an apocalyptic phenomenon, in that the previously lived world needs to come to an end due to improved high technological developments, and thus gives way to the revelation of a new type of world with new people. The issue can further be illustrated, though in a less developed phase, with the sex-on-the-telephone business that Lulu and Robbie run, during which these people turn out to be no more than audio-sexual sound frequencies stimulating callers and "making love" with them in this way on the line (50-51).

The crisis-laden nature of *Shopping and F***ing*, with all the above-mentioned subjects of crisis, prepares the play for the exposition and interpretation of its apocalypticism. Baudrillard's observation in

"The Anorexic Ruins" exactly fits the situation of crisis giving way to apocalyptic narration within the context of Ravenhill's play: "It is as if the poles of our world were converging, and this merciless short circuit manifests both overproduction *and* the exhaustion of potential energies at the same time. It is no longer a matter of crisis but of disaster, a catastrophe in slow motion" (33). Demonstrating this, the play is filled with inexhaustible images and events of overproduction and at least four characters suffering from "the exhaustion of potential energies". The apocalyptic ambiance is observable right from the early parts of the play. For example, in scene two, when Brian asks Lulu to show her skill in acting, she roleplays Chekhov's Irina in *Three Sisters*: "One day people will know what all this was for. There'll be no more mysteries. But until then we have to carry on living" (13)[10]. These words, spoken one hundred years after their first utterance are still suggestive of and calling for the end of the present state of life and the revelation of truth behind mysteries. They are implicitly referring to a wished-for prophesy of the actualization of a line that ends the secrecy of this world, to open a new page for those who persevere. These words, early in the play, set the apocalyptic tone, in that revelation of truth is actually what the word apocalypse means.

The end of feelings is a sub-theme which works quite strongly under the meta-theme of apocalypticism in the play. Michelene Wandor, the author of *Post-war British Drama: Looking Back in Gender*, observes the haunting emotionlessness in the play right from the beginning when she writes: "The living room which places the opening

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[10] Actually, Irina speaks slightly differently in *Three Sisters*, Act IV, uttering the following words:
IRINA: "What is all this for? Why all this suffering? The answer will be known one day, and then there will be no more mysteries left, but till then life must go on, we must work and work and think of nothing else" (236-237).

scene is 'once stylish, now almost entirely stripped bare'. This descent from a secure, 'stylish' home to a bare space heralds the emotional barrenness which shapes these people's lives" (227). In fact, throughout this thesis I observe the theme of the end of feelings in several other plays as well, and in general it is a common theme used in most of the In-Yer-Face plays of the 1990s. In *Shopping and F***ing* it works especially through the personages of Mark, Robbie, Brian, and Gary. For Mark, there was a breaking point when "...things got complicated" (33) ending the simple and linear way of life he was leading. That complication of things seems to have crushed Mark so much that he appears in the play as a recent substance abuser with a self identity crisis and messy mind. Apparently, whatever it was that complicated things for Mark damaged him most in respect of his ability to experience genuine feelings. The end of feelings for Mark has put him into his present internal chaos and Mark seems decisive enough to take up the quest of discovering the real cause of his plight. This is why Mark goes to the treatment center at the beginning of the play, leaving Robbie and Lulu with whom he has not been leading fulfilling relationships. At a later time in the play, Mark will be maturing in his quest and will come closer to the gist of his problem by questioning the availability of feelings, when he states: "...are there any feelings left...? I want to find out, want to know if there are any feelings left" (34). An apocalypse for Mark only comes when he is able to feel love towards Gary. It is only then that he regains his wholeness, the suffocation of feelinglessness ends, disclosing the promise of a better life for Mark. Nevertheless, in the end the play denies Mark the fulfillment of this promise, which may imply that no refreshing End is possible within the world of *Shopping and F***ing*.

Mark is not the only character suffering from a loss of feelings: Robbie is also longing to be able "to feel". The high pressure, that materialistic rules of the surrounding world put on Robbie's shoulders, seem to be devastating Robbie's life, becoming the major cause of his emotional numbness. That is why Robbie "felt good" and "amazing" (38) when he delivered the illegal drugs for free to people he did not know. He can *feel* when he removes himself from the pressurizing regulations of money. For a while he creates a sort of alternative utopic world where there is no money, "everyone's dancing and smiling" (39), and Robbie is feeling. This act introduces a revelation of the ability to feel, awakening Robbie from impassiveness, as a result of which Robbie declares: "I felt" (39). The expression is terse, simple but strong. This event gives him an apocalyptic freshness of spirit, leading him to go into a trance, become a "spaceman over this earth" (39), and report "the suffering and the wars" going on all over the world in Rwanda, Kiev, Bogota, and South Africa (39). He turns into a man of peace. Michelene Wandor observes this instant change of perspective in Robbie's viewpoint with the following words: "…Robbie…has glimpses of an alternative – against wars and suffering in the world, he has a vision of living only in peace and beauty" (228).

The Brian of scene nine illustrates the issue of the loss of feelings, too. In this scene, he gets very emotional and weeps because of watching the video recording of his son's playing the cello. The music touches Brian's heart so much that it reminds Brian of the harsh and gross fact that it is not now possible to bring back what he had to leave as feelings of good memories, because the present world is feeling-proof. One side of Brian, the side he brings to the surface from his past, is keen on feelings, while the other side is the more dominant side that

makes today's Brian. This dichotomy is shown in Brian's insistent requests for Lulu who brings "toilet paper" (45) instead of a "handkerchief" (46) to help him wipe his tears. He, like a supermarket manager, gives specific instructions about the two products and their different usages. Even in the peak of his emotional state, Brian is still aware of the minutest details of the material world, thereby obscuring access to the zone of feelings, due to the materialistic viewpoint that dictates him all he sees. Thus, with Brian, the world of feelings is only virtual and only a piece of an experience that can be lived artificially and momentarily. Nevertheless, his feeling-self is sensitive enough to be so deeply touched with the melody and its reminding him of the happiness of the past that it leads him to make a critique of the whole of human history to the present from a religious perspective: "Because once it was paradise, you see? And you could hear it – heaven singing in your eyes. But we sinned, and God took it away, took away music until we forgot we even heard it but sometimes you get a sort of glimpse – music or a poem – and it reminds you of what it was like before all the sin" (46). The theological perspective Brian adopts here contributes to the apocalyptic tone of the play, since he is overtly alluding to the Biblical story of Original Sin which can be accepted as the first apocalyptic occurrence of human life in its closure of the pre-lapsarian period and opening of post-lapsarian times. Ravenhill strengthens the apocalyptic language of the Fall story one more time by using it in the following scene. The reference to this archetypal story appears again when Robbie, while sexually stimulating a man on the telephone, explicitly refers to Adam: "And you want me and I want you and it's man on man and I'm Adam and you're Adam...And you want to take it right up the...yes...oh yes.../up against the Tree of Knowledge" (51).

Concluding from what Brian points out, the system of the present world based fundamentally on money and excluding feelings is a post-apocalyptic presentation of an already ruined world. The whole play, in this sense, from its title to all the details of the plot, can be seen as a post-apocalyptic representation of a world which has already, somehow, experienced its End.

What is more, there is another character suffering from numbness of feelings. In fact, Gary suffers from this at its severest level. Gary is the darkest portrayal in the whole of Ravenhill's cast of *Shopping and F***ing*. He is only a fourteen year old boy (57) and his experiences are more than his youth can handle. As an even younger boy, he had to endure his step-father's abuse and was not saved from it by his mother, who knew the situation. The lack of motherly affection and fatherly protection leads him to say: "I want a dad. I want to be watched. All the time, someone watching me" (33). He is a neglected, pathetic boy with nobody to help him, and he tries to live by prostitution. As Robbie states, Gary is "trash" (83), a waste of a human being, and in Gary's own words he is "nothing" (57). Wounded so badly as an adolescent, Gary is the most devastated character in the play; he is not only sensationless but also anaesthetized against physical pain. His plight is heartrending, and especially poignant when he confesses to Mark that "[he] did not feel anything" (56) towards Mark, who has just confessed his love to Gary. Gary is too pessimistic about love, which could save him; he instead demands a consensual rape, an extreme way of pain, as a way to sort his whole life out. His pessimism is apparent in the following words: "I've got this unhappiness. This big sadness swelling like it's gonna burst. I'm sick and I'm never going to be well" (85). Gary's disappointment, psychological trauma and his

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hopelessness for the future leads him to desire an End which is to put a full stop to pain-inflicting life. It is because of this that he replies "It's what I want" (84) when Robbie warns him that his wish to be penetrated harshly with a knife or a screwdriver will "kill [him]" (84). The dialogue clearly shows that Gary is pursuing an End and he "want[s] it over" since "there's only one ending" (85) for his plight.

The next point which heightens the apocalypticism of *Shopping and F***ing* is detectable in one of the most meaning-laden speeches of the play, which is voiced by Robbie:

> ROBBIE: ...I think we all need stories, we make up stories so that we can get by. And I think a long time ago there were big stories. Stories so big you could live your whole life in them. The Powerful Hands of God and Fate. The Journey to Enlightenment. The March of Socialism. But they all died or the world grew up or grew senile or forgot them, so now we're all making up our own stories. Little stories. It comes out in different ways. But we've each got one. (66)

These words almost exactly echo Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) where he puts forth his groundbreaking theory of the end of metanarratives, the totalizing stories which shaped Western societies and cultures since the early days of modernity in the late eighteenth century (37), leaving their places to the plurality of smaller stories. On the other hand, Peter Billingham warns against a merely postmodernist perception of Robbie's words:

> Robbie's assertion that 'we all need stories so that we can get by' is more than some simplistic, postmodern mantra. It is more than an equation of story and narrative as

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being the only secure cultural rendition for individual and communal lives. In a montage world where all constituent cultures and identities amass in some value-free, valueless coalescence, the story is a limited lifebelt. (138)

In addition, still, Robbie's words convey the message that even the long-lasting elements, which he calls "big stories", which shape the structures of all life in the world, face the End. Particularly, there were times when people would live in these big stories which expired through time and came to their conclusions. Now is the time for the little stories of the dwarfed people represented through the characters of *Shopping and F***ing*. Mark's little story that the play presents is about his attempt to isolate himself from emotional relationships only to find that he cannot; Brian's little story is about his inability to get out of the role of being a fervent pawn within the game of money; Lulu's little story is about the impossibility of living a moral life in a world of deprivation and dishonesty; Robbie's little story is about forsakenness and pushing the limits to alternative ways of life, and finally Gary's little story is about contempt for and a challenge to life which is not worth living due to its continually pain-inflicting nature. All these little stories take place under the encompassing umbrella of the grand "little story" of shopping in a world where there seems to be no positive production. Among the productions shopped for are cocaine, ecstasy tablets, fast-food, microwave meals, and TV guides, as well as sexual stimulation over the telephone which is an ultimate example of consumption without production. Peter Buse observes this situation with the following words:

> In the seventies, left-wing playwrights such as David Edgar and Trevor Griffiths explored labour politics, dramatizing the worker's relation to the place of production. By the nineties, however, the British economy had moved inexorably away from manufacturing and towards service industries: the Indonesian or Thai worker makes the Nike trainers or Gap jeans; the smiling British 'worker' simply sells (and of course buys) them. This transformation of Britain into a retail economy is reflected in Ravenhill's plays, where his characters, if they do work, rarely produce or make anything. In *Shopping and Fucking*, Robbie works the till in an unnamed burger chain, Lulu tries to sell her image as a model, and Gary is a rentboy, selling himself as sex. (Internet source 2)

The lack of productions that secure the maintenance of healthy life conditions hints that the grand little story of shopping will also reach its end. Hence, the world of *Shopping and F***ing* is a world of consumption which itself is being consumed gradually, leading up to an impasse, an End.

After the problematization of "stories" in scene twelve, scene thirteen opens with Lulu, Robbie, Mark, and Gary playing a game in which Gary tries to dramatize a story of his mind and the rest help him stage it in return for money. Yet Gary cannot proceed with it, which results with the dissatisfaction of the rest – apart from Mark who proposes playing truth or dare in order to divert attention to another, substitute game. He starts answering a question of Lulu's about the most famous person he has ever been in a sexual relationship with. Mark narrates his experience, his story which took place sometime during 1984 or 1985 in a toilet, to which Lulu responds: "This is a toilet

story" (73). Lulu's statement about Mark's story may come to mean that the "little stories" of these modern day people are more or less toilet stories, a statement that degrades the dignity of modern day people's lives (stories), all of which adds up to the idea of little stories of the little people introduced in the previous scene.

Viewed through Derrida's emphasis on the concept of truth as an ultimate outcome of apocalyptic signification, the game of "truth and dare" gains an apocalyptic tone within the play. According to Derrida, whose view on the association of truth and apocalypse has also been discussed in the theoretical background chapter, truth is the outcome of the apocalyptic disclosure or unveiling of the unknown. In this respect, the game of truth and dare, which aims to lay secrets bare to the knowledge of the players, is apocalyptic. The concept of "truth" remains significant for the characters although they stop playing truth and dare and continue helping Gary act out his fantasy. Robbie and Lulu make up the whole story for Gary, who is rather inarticulate in wording his fantasy, and when Mark warns them that it is "getting heavy" on Gary's psychology they reply that they are "getting to the truth" (79) about Gary. Revelation of truth suddenly becomes the common mission of these characters and it remains so up to the end of the play. It is also because of this diligence in truth-seeking that Robbie, not finding Mark's toilet story plausible enough, scorns Mark saying that "We said the truth. It had to be the truth" (76).

By the end of the last scene, *Shopping and F***ing* is already dense with both direct and indirect apocalyptic overtones. The final scene of the play, scene fourteen, is also highly laden with apocalyptic discourse. It commences abruptly with Brian who talks about the end of meaning in life: "You know, life is hard. On this planet.

Intractable…We work, we struggle. And we find ourselves asking: what is this for? Is there meaning? I know you've…I can see this question in your eyes. You ask yourself these questions. Right now – yes?" (86). When meanings end, there is no understandable referent left in life. The absence of meaning, in this regard, is the end of perceivable life. Brian, becoming the mouthpiece of the apocalypse in the play as well as representing all the other characters, continues with the most apocalyptic speech of the play:

> BRIAN: We need something. A guide. A talisman. A set of rules. A compass to steer us through this everlasting night. Our youth is spent searching for this guide until we…some give up. Some say there is nothing. There is chaos. We are born into chaos. But this is…no. this is too painful. This is too awful to contemplate. This we deny. Am I right? (86)

In this speech, Brian touches upon several major aspects of apocalyptic thought: first, he says there is a need for a guide or a talisman or a set of rules or a compass, meaning that in the present state of life people are experiencing a harsh crisis which threatens the continuation and maintenance of a healthy and comfortable life, and people need one of these aids to revolutionize the present world and bring about a new life. Secondly, he resembles the present state of life to an "everlasting night" which comes to mean that the sun over life has already set and people have started to live in a sort of darkness. This, together with Brian's mentioning of his generation's youth being spent on searching for a saviour, brings forth the idea that the world represented in *Shopping and F***ing* may also be comprehended as a post-apocalyptic world, one which had long ago experienced an apocalyptic breaking

point only to bring less happiness and take away the taste of life, instead of promising a refreshed better life. Viewing the play as a post-apocalyptic representation requires a focus more on the present rather than on the future, which is the temporal focus of apocalyptic discourse. Brian is a character of this post-apocalyptic world and although he still is a bit sensitive about the things lost and remembered occasionally (as seen in the case of the music produced by his son), he cannot revolutionize the principles of the present world of materials which he represents. After all, this is a highly material world and Baudrillard's words may properly describe Brian's and all other characters' moods in such a world: "Everything is there. The heavens have come down to earth. We sense the fatal taste of material paradise. It drives one to despair, but what should one do? *No future*" (1989: 34). Therefore, for Brian, as he learned it from his father, his Bible in its opening lines commands "Get. The Money. First" (87), making money the most respected value of Brain's life. The present world is totally based on money and hence "Civilization is money" and "Money is civilization" (87), expressions alluding to and parodying the classical Keatsian lines "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" ("Ode on a Grecian Urn", lines 49-50). In the upside down world of the characters, "money" has replaced "beauty" and has been, thus, the source of "truth". Throughout the play, everything one way or the other is based on the characters' relation to money; and the play depicts a world "where everyone knows the price of everything but the value of nothing" (Billingham 137). Trying to obtain money gives all characters a painful life. All is a transaction, and transaction has ended dignified and free human action. Therefore, the "talisman", or the "guide", or the "compass" (86) Brain refers to turns out to be the concept of money, only it has built a poorer

world. Robbie, for example, who previously challenged the civilization of money in scene seven, here at the end of the play has to consent and obey the set of rules of the system, and agrees by uttering that civilization is "money" (87). Baudrillard's depiction is also noteworthy in understanding Brian's concept of "money" as the center of civilization in the modern world: "Money has become a pure artefact, an artefact of a celestial movement, of a momentary exchangeability. Money has finally found its proper place, one far more unusual than in the stock exchange: the earth orbit, in which it rises and falls like an artificial sun" (1989: 32-33). Thirdly, Brian's speech is also apocalyptic in its denial of mere nihilism and its acceptance of the possibility of a talisman unlike, for example, the general philosophy of an existential absurd play which would argue that there is nothing available to better life anymore but only an irreversible nothingness to which every human being is born.

Mark's speech, which is close to the end of the play, where he draws a post-apocalyptic picture of the future of the world, convincingly contributes to the post-apocalyptic representation within the play, too. This speech may be interpreted in two parts. The first part is where Mark says, "It's three thousand AD. Or something. It's the future. The Earth has died. Died or we killed it. The ozone, the bombs, a meteorite. It doesn't matter. But humanity has survived. A few of us…jumped ship. And on we go" (89). This clearly carries implications relating to the End, in that he mentions the end of the Earth, thereby the fulfillment of the expectations relating to the end of the planet due to natural (like the crash of a meteorite) or artificial (like the nuclear bombs or the damage given to the ozone layer due to the industrial gases) causes. The former cause relates to the religious while the latter

parallels the human-made apocalypse. It is post-apocalyptic also because humanity has survived and seen the aftermath of the apocalyptic break point. The rest of the speech may form the second part of the post-apocalyptic tone:

> MARK: So it's three thousand and blahdeblah and I'm standing in the market, some sort of bazaar. A little satellite circling Uranus. Market day. And I'm looking at this mutant. Some of them, the radiation, it's made them so ugly, twisted. But this one. Wow. It's made him...he's tanned and blond and there's pecs and his dick...I mean, his dick is three-foot long. This fat sort of ape thing comes up to me and says...See the mute with the three-foot dick? Yeah. I see him. Well, he's mine and I own him. I own him but I hate him. If he don't sell him today I'm gonna kill him. So...a deal is struck, a transaction, I take my mutant home and I get him home and I say: I'm freeing you. I'm setting you free. You can go now. And he starts to cry. I think it's gratitude. I mean, he should be grateful but it's...He says – well, he telepathises into my mind – he doesn't speak our language – he tells me: Please. I'll die. I don't know how to...I can't feed myself. I've been a slave all my life. I've never had a thought of my own. I'll be dead in a week" (89-90).

This story, representing the future post-apocalyptic condition of life, symbolically summarizes the state of life in the present world. The mutant may represent a Gary of the future who has been denied a full existence and identity of his own and wants to die soon. Or an even better parallel could be found in Mark's initial story about buying Lulu and Robbie in a store from a fat man. Alternatively, the mutant may

also be read as a future counterpart for all the characters, in having no choice of his own to freely lead a life under the unchanging hegemony of the world of money. And lastly but not least of all, the predicted future profile of the world may show that the already post-apocalyptic world the characters of the play are suffering in will continue to exist one thousand years later with its same set of governing principles, with the same talisman – money -, and that the activities of life will not change but remain restricted to shopping and sex, although with new, different and deformed participants in the system. Therefore, the end of the play underlines the idea that there is no way out, even in the future, from the present post-apocalyptic condition of life, and the prediction is strengthened as the play reveals with a cyclical plot structure in the end as Lulu and Robbie start feeding Mark, repeating the opening scene of the play. In the end, Gary has been vaporized, Mark has failed in his search for a new and independent identity, Lulu, whom Michelene Wandor calls "superfluous" in the play (228), has remained conformist to the system (of money or materialization), Robbie has lost the challenge he presented to the empire of money and has been forced to obey, and Brian who is an agent of the present system of life has remained unchanged.

In brief, with all its apocalyptic dynamics - the presentation of severe social and personal crises, occasional suggestions of a post-apocalyptic world, the announcement of the end of big stories, the end of feelings due to the hegemony of a highly materialistic conditions of life, a search after truth which is itself an apocalyptic revelation, characters' search for a concrete identity, and, especially, with its references to apocalyptic philosophies of Baudrillard, Derrida, and Lyotard, *Shopping and F***ing* by Mark Ravenhill is a play which

underscores the apocalypticism of 1990s British drama through a philosophical perspective.

B. 'Reality died. It ended. And we began to live this dream, this lie, this new simulated existence': *Faust is Dead*

Faust is Dead had its debut in 1997, a year after *Shopping and F***ing* introduced Mark Ravenhill and secured him a career as a promising playwright. Ravenhill's story of the writing of the play owes much to the first director of the play, Nick Philippou, who urged Ravenhill to write "a contemporary Faust to be based on the life of Michel Foucault" (Monforte 96). However, as Ravenhill continued searching, he "came to Jean Baudrillard, whom [he] found a more resonant writer than Foucault" (ibid.). In this sense, the play makes use of several of the most influential apocalyptic theories of the twentieth century like the End of History, Michel Foucault's the End of Man, the change of the order of the subject and object due to technological advances and progress in mass production, and Jean Baudrillard's the End of Reality and the beginning of a virtual world of the simulacra of hyperreality. The play blended these theories of postmodernism with a remaking of the classical Faust myth. Aleks Sierz observes the same when he writes in his *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today*: "Using his characteristic mix of postmodern ideas and traditional morality, Ravenhill's *Faust is Dead* is a good example of the decade's freedom in turning old myths into new sources of meaning" (138). Using a close reading of the play, what follows analyzes *Faust is Dead* in terms of its relation to these ideas of the End, and reveals how it accords with and reflects apocalyptic representation.

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It may not be misleading to say that the play's apocalypticism starts with its title. The idea of the end of life is initiated with the word "dead" in the title. The title sounds doubly apocalyptic as it trumpets the end of one of the most well known stories, and of its representative character, Faust. The story of the legendary tale of Faust, a man who makes a pact with Satan to obtain the highest level of knowledge in return for his promise of allegiance to devil, has been used many times in literature and art[11], and Ravenhill's play brings out the legend more apocalyptically than ever in having its title announce the demise of the archetypal character. In this sense, the title points to a cultural loss as well.

"Who represents Faust in the play" is a question which needs an answer in relation to the title. Is it Pete or Alain? Pete appears as a character standing in for the legendary character as, paralleling the story of Faust, he holds the power of knowledge in the format of software which allows him to approach the position of a "God, God, God" (111) in each house. He is planning to sell the disc for a huge sum of money, with which he is planning to "buy so many totally real experiences" (112), which, again echoing Faust's conjured experiences all over the world, gives him the possibility of indulging in action and relations on a world scale: "I'm gonna keep the peace in Bosnia. I'm gonna take Saddam Hussein out for a pizza. I'm gonna shoot pool with the Pope and have Boris Yeltsin show me his collection of baseball stickers" (112). All his fantasies seem to involve mockery of world

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[11] In 1604 Christopher Marlowe wrote a play entitled *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe published the first part of his tragedy called *Faust* in 1806, Oscar Wilde used Faust as a theme in his *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in 1891; Thomas Mann wrote a novel in 1947 called *Doktor Faustus*; between 1916 and 1924 Ferruccio Busoni worked on an opera version of the legend called *Doktor Faust*; Richard Burton directed a film called "Doctor Faustus" in 1967 (Internet source 6).

leaders, one more time recalling Doctor Faustus' travels and relations to world leaders like the Pope, and the German Emperor Charles V. In pursuing such power, Pete poses as the Faust of the play. However, Alain will prove to be a better Faust than Pete as the play progresses. Alain does not represent Faust as a man of action and trickeries (unlike Pete) but rather is the philosophical Faust. If the play shows the death of Faust then it matches Alain's death at the end of the play, which is also the death of man "as an idea, as a construct" (98). Beeping sounds, each time "louder and shriller" (139) in the hospital scene at the end of *Faust is Dead*, correspond to the strikes of the clock at the end of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*; no less, Donny, coming from the abode of the dead, may be matching Mephistopheles or the devils who come to carry Doctor Faustus to hell at the end of that play. Alain, also represents the twentieth century knowledgeable man, and dies, marking the death of well-informed man whose archetype is found in the Faust myth. As is obvious, both Pete and Alain carry Faustian features which show that Ravenhill does not recreate an exact replica of the Faust in his play. His is rather a postmodern re-characterization of the figure. Instead of the meta-narrative of Faust, Ravenhill presents Fausts. Similarly, Aleks Sierz, in his *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today*, observes Alain as Faust and comes to the following conclusion: "Ravenhill's Alain keeps changing places, one moment being Faust, the next Mephistopheles, which not only underlines the idea that good and evil coexist, but also dramatizes postmodern ideas about the volatility of character and the indeterminacy of the subject" (136).

The apocalypticism of *Faust is Dead*, similar to Ravenhill's previous play *Shopping and F***ing*, carries a strong sense of crisis.

Crisis embraces the play from top to toe. As the play opens, a worldwide crisis is introduced with the speech of Chorus:

> CHORUS: See, a few years ago I couldn't sleep.
> I'd go to bed and then I got thinking about all
> this stuff in the world – about the riots and
> the fighting and all the angry people and all –
> and I just couldn't sleep. And sometimes I'd
> cry – partly because I really wanted to sleep
> and I was mad that I couldn't sleep but partly
> because of all those bad things going on" (97)

Chorus would cry and his mother would then come to sooth him, yet he would cry "for the world, because the world is such a bad place" (97). With this opening speech of the play, Chorus, which, according to the classical tradition of drama from where it comes, is supposed to represent the community, imposes a heavily critical tone to the play: the world is a bad place and life is unpleasant. More, the predicament of the world is an immediate one, lived here and now, as the setting suggests that it is "present day," (96) rather than a narration of a past emergency. With the crisis appealing to the moment, the apocalyptic mood is prepared as apocalyptic anxieties flourish during times of crises.

The immediacy of crisis is strengthened with the fact of the growing digitalization of the world. One example of this is found in scene thirteen where Chorus recounts one of his childhood memories, in which a church father leads a charity campaign to raise funds to buy computer terminals for the church, hoping that "young people" will be "online" inside the church and will spread religious doctrines from there (121). Nevertheless, the expectations of the church father and mothers who worked very hard to accomplish the project are not met,

as the response of the children is to become addicted to the internet and spend all their time with it. The church father interprets this worsening situation as the "Lord's mystery" (121) and seeks to raise even more money to buy access to more internet sources. The father may be taken as a premillennialist who wants to accelerate the path to the End in his pioneering of the world of simulations. The story shows the crisis of digitalization, or in other words the "digital crisis," which is an apocalyptic anxiety dynamically presented in the play. Pete's idea that shopping through regular physical means is not necessary as there is "a [TV] channel for groceries, a channel for meals…" (122) now available to shop through, confirms that digital means are replacing the regular ways of doing even daily activities. More examples of this digital crisis can be found in the play, paving one of the ways for the apocalyptic tone of the play. Pete's or Donny's means of communication through the internet (122), and Pete's creating a home-page for himself on the internet (123) are among such illustrations. Forming a virtual life and filtering and avoiding real life experiences through screens, as in the case of Pete, is also a symptom of personal internal crisis, which contributes more to the play's critical atmosphere after the external crisis of the world has been presented. Pete and Donny's competition in scarring their bodies, which immediately turns out to be a death- or an end-game, is an indicator of the internal crisis of the characters, too. A third indication of the same would be found in Pete's trying to rush Alain to leave the motel room and keep running throughout the country, to escape some sort of "they" (135-136). The instances that add up to the sense of crisis in the play are many. Even in the last seconds of the play, crisis remains active: the "beeping" sound (139) in the last scene, referring to the heart-beats and signaling the last

moments of Alain's life, radiates a no less critical tone than the highly crisis-laden opening speech of Chorus at the beginning of the play.

Apart from a severe sense of crisis which prepares the background for the apocalyptic rhetoric, a perception of chaos, the cessation of established systems of reality, the end of emotional life, the representation of life lived through a left-over body, and a sense of imminent catastrophe are other apocalyptic representations generally found in In-Yer-Face theater, and particularly present in *Faust is Dead*. This second successful play of Ravenhill, like his *Shopping and F***ing*, is entirely filled with apocalyptic resonances. The major character of the play, Alain, is based on Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard whose philosophies relating to the End of Man, and of Reality have been very influential. After the initial speech of Chorus, which may be seen as a prologue, the play opens with a TV show managed by a late-night talk-show figure, David Letterman, hosting both Madonna and Alain, the interest being on the former guest while the latter is treated ironically due to his book called *The Death of Man*..., throughout which Alain problematizes the death of man "as an idea, as a construct" (98). Therefore, the apocalyptic vein, right after Chorus' speech of a world in crisis, is triggered at the very beginning of the play through Alain's thought-provoking book. What is more, it is also made clear that the major character of the play, Alain – the author of *The Death of Man...* – is not independent of what he preaches in his book since he himself appears suicidal, as he is thinking of his own death. After being warned by "Ms. Brannigan – the Director of Studies" of his department – for telling a story offensive to a possible sponsor from Japan, and hence causing the candidate's dislike, Alain cannot help responding to Ms. Brannigan in a very rude way, after which he "decided that maybe I

should live a little" (99). Alain seems to be forlorn. His narration of the story which offends the Japanese candidate for sponsorship to some extent demonstrates why he writes a book of apocalyptic content and why he feels so suicidal: "In 1981 a Dutch woman was on business in Tokyo, when she met a Japanese businessman. He invited her to join him for a meal. She read him some of her poetry. While she was reading, he shot her. Several times. He then chopped her up, put her in his bowl and ate her" (99). This is Alain's first story (there will be several others) relating to the death of Man. Structurally speaking, the play starts immediately with Chorus' emphatic expression that "the world is such a bad place," (97) and what follows in the rest, with Alain's story exemplifying why he may be thinking that mankind is dead and also his depressive attitude, promises a sort of a revelation and a clarification of Chorus' initial idea about the wickedness in the world.

The next point to shed light on the apocalyptic spirit of the play arises with Alain's statements of comparison between two western continents, America and Europe. His major point of contrast between the two lands is related to the quality of liveliness of these lands. Alain considers America as a land of dynamism, a last stand for vivacity in the twentieth century as he says (in French): "For me, and for so many children of this twentieth century, it is only in America that we really believe that we are alive, that we are living within in our own century " (101). On the other hand, he sees Europe as a dead, departed, and lifeless terrain when he says (in French): "In Europe, we are ghosts, trapped in a museum, with the lights out and the last visitor long gone" (101). Besides, Alain's uttering of all these words in French contributes more to the notion of the End of Europe and the notion of America as

the land of life since French, according to Alain's observation, can be seen as an ancient language reminiscent of a time of civilization, which no longer has the vigor it used to have. That European civilization has come to its End, opening ways up to the new land of life in America, is obviously full of apocalyptic reverberations. Of course, the deceased Europe Alain mentions should not be understood as a total void and chaos with an entire barren land where nothing lives, grows, or regenerates. Life goes on in Europe, but the quality of life is the poorest ever, linking it to the idea that a post-apocalyptic phase of life has remained in Europe. What Chorus has stated in terms of crisis throughout the world at the beginning of the play, on the other hand, reveals that America should not be understood as a heavenly place but rather a location in crisis of the now and here, before its ultimate End. This may explain why the play is deliberately set in "the west coast of America" (96) and why Alain came to live in America - Europe has long ended and is in a post-apocalyptic state while the American west is still surviving, although it is right before its End. In scene seven, Chorus' narration of the event of the "whole city's blowing right apart," or Pete's eye-witnessing "[guys] looting shops, guys burning cars, guys burning guys" referring to a civil crisis of riots and vandalism due to the absence of food as one of the causes in one of the American cities (107), proves the feeling of the nearing End for America. More, the personification of America with Pete and of Europe with Alain is also notable. The pairs are perfect matches as the lively character of Pete with his singing, though in grunge style with words full of hatred, suits Alain's description of America as the land of life, while Alain fits into his depiction of Europe as a ghostly and forsaken land, in his drunkenness and with his constant studies and stories about the end of life.

Baudrillard in "The Anorexic Ruins" says:

> Something escapes us; we escape ourselves
> in a process of no return, we have missed a
> certain point for turning back, a certain point
> of the contradiction in things, and have
> entered a universe of noncontradiction alive,
> of blind rapture, of ecstasy, of amazement
> about the irreversible processes that
> nevertheless have no direction at all. (32)

What Baudrillard is defining above can be called the state of chaos. The perception of chaos as the oncoming state of life is, thus, another point to be mentioned. *Faust is Dead* is loaded with a sense of emerging chaos. Pete's father Bill (referring to Bill Gates), leading a big company in the production and marketing of software, created a new computer programme – "chaos" in Pete's words (110) – with which he is planning to take control of each household. Showing to Alain the only copy of this programme, which he stole from his father, Pete explains everything about "chaos" to him: "This is chaos. Only copy in the world. See, my dad's seen the future and he knows how to give his product the lead for like centuries into the new millennium. Chaos is the answer" (110). Chaos here implies the post-apocalyptic phase of life which will replace the present critical phase of life once an apocalyptic breakthrough occurs.

Faust is Dead premiered just four years before the end of the twentieth century and the advent of the next millennium which was historically been considered an apocalyptic overturning. Reflecting this historical mood in the real world, Pete's chaos software and its activation in "the new millennium" has entirely millennialist and apocalyptic overtones. Furthermore, Alain's lecture about the end of

history and the new phase of life is also remarkable in terms of the perception of chaos in *Faust is Dead*. Alain starts as a university professor:

> ALAIN: I call this moment the End of History because what we understood as history, this movement forward, has ended. And the words which have for so been our guides… Progress, for example. This now means nothing. We know this in our hearts. Every man, every woman, they know it, they feel, but they don't say it. So we have to ask ourselves this question: When will we embrace…(this is a word for you also, embrace?)…chaos…When will we live the End of History? When will we live in our time? And how will we live in this new age of chaos? Not as we lived in the old age. Not with the old language. Not by being more kind, more…enlightened. (120-121)

The speech mirrors Lee Quinby's "ironic apocalypse" which sees apocalypse as a phenomenon that will come after the history will have used up time, and not bring rebirth or refreshment (xvi). Alain proclaims the End of History, the end of the course of regular and linear times which have moved ever forward alongside human-made progress. More, he claims that people are actually aware of this fact but prefer to keep it unpublicized. In this speech his questions when to actualize the end of history point directly to the expected apocalyptic break which will steer mankind into a phase of life ruled, or rather *un*ruled, by chaos. Chaos is going to replace the present conditions of life and, hence, what follows will be a post-apocalyptic period of survival and existence. Chaos here may be perceived as a stage of life in a disorderly mess while it may also be understood as an abyss pregnant

with everything from the beginning. The first reading would be a modern day interpretation of chaos while the latter could be rooted in classical mythology whose myths of creation, whether Homeric, Pelasgian, or Olympian preach that in the beginning there was chaos (Graves 27-33). All in all, the use of chaos as the next phase of life, whether as in the contemporary use of 'disorderliness' or as in the mythological 'beginning', entirely matches the apocalyptic spirit of *Faust is Dead*.

The appearance of Donny in scene fourteen strengthens Alain's apocalyptic chaos theory. Alain completes his lecture to Pete about the End of History and the forthcoming period of chaos with the following words: "We must be cruel, we must follow our desires and be cruel to others, yes, but also we must be cruel to ourselves. We must embrace suffering, we must embrace cruelty" (121). According to Alain, embracing cruelty and suffering is the way to open up the gates of chaos. "Not with the old language" of the traditional regular times which consisted of the religious teachings, human-made laws, value and belief systems, pursuit after rights, waging wars and looking for peace, and so on, but with the new awareness that an internalization of cruelty and suffering is key to the new life of chaos. In this sense, Donny is the perfect anti-hero who embraces suffering. In his embracing suffering through his cutting his body, he even compares himself to Jesus Christ, turning the apocalyptic tone one step further: "Jesus had quite a few cuts too by the end and I reckon he understands why I do this to myself. I like Jesus, although I never met him. But I believe it's possible" (130). Donny is a character who leads his life on internet pages and tries to concretize his abstracted life through physical violence to himself. Donny's masochism (without sexual motives), thus,

is violently apocalyptic. Immediately after Alain sees Donny on the internet, he is spellbound by this live demonstration of his theories of the End of History, the death of Man and the inauguration of chaos, and he calls what he sees in Donny as "beautiful" (123). Further mesmerized, Alain sees what Donny has achieved by willfully cutting his body as "a testament of suffering upon the body" and announces the act as "an initiation rite for the end of the twentieth century" (124). Donny is Alain's theories incarnate, in his attempt to bring the end of the linear and traditional time by embracing suffering.

Another apocalyptic motif can be found in the use of the desert as a setting, where some parts of the play (starting with scene ten) take place. A desert, as a location, immediately recalls the notions of barrenness, drought, unproductiveness, sterility, isolation, inaccessibility and, in general, nothingness. It is easily associable with a place where decay is the natural law of order, turning even the objects of nature into minute particles. Therefore, the desert, where "[nothing] beside remains" as Shelley writes in his "Ozymandias", is, by its nature, an apocalyptic place (107). Alain and Pete set off on a trip escaping from the city and they end up near "Death Valley" (114) in the desert, where Alain wants to engage in homosexual relations with Pete. The name of the valley, too, contributes to the already apocalyptic atmosphere of the desert. Alain, despite all its nihility, finds the desert pleasant and says that "[this] is a very beautiful place," (113) – an indication which strengthens the idea of Alain's fascination with the End of things. Pete, on the other hand, is numbed to experiences of any kind, even of the sexual kind as he does not "feel a thing," (115) and is even unaware of his own orgasm at the end of Alain's homophile activity. The desert, hence, with all its nihility provides these two

characters of uneasy psychology with a new opportunity "to have an experience" (116) of reality, for which they try to "shape the experience" through the use of drugs. Theirs is an attempt to vitalize and regain their ability to feel real experiences. Ravenhill's use of the desert is not casual. Jean Baudrillard at the beginning of his *Simulacra and Simulation* uses a metaphor of the desert to explain the relation between the loss of the real and its replacement with hyperreality:

> Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it...It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges subsist here and there, in the deserts which are no longer those of the Empire, but our own. The desert of the real itself. (1)

The captivation of Alain's mind with the idea of the End of everything, combined with their search for real experiences in the middle of the desert, together with Pete's aloofness from sex prepares the mood in the play for one of the most apocalyptic speeches, which comes from Alain: "Man is dead, you know. And Progress. Progress also. Progress is dead. And Humanity. Yes. Humanity is dead" (117). With the repetition of the words, terseness of expression and the abrupt pauses that disperse meaning, the speech is as apocalyptic as it can be since it announces the End of the image of humankind as well as its civilization. By "Man" Alain signifies man "as an idea" (98) and by "Humanity" he means the gist of the idea, which have both met their demise. This also accords with Nietzschean prophecy in his *Thus Spoke*

Zarathustra, where it is claimed that "[the] human is something that shall be overcome" (11). The End of Man has killed the senses, and that of humanity has terminated feelings, thereby making it almost impossible for the left-over man of the end of the twentieth century to have either sensual or emotional experiences. Aware of this fact, Pete and Alain respond to Alain's apocalyptic manifesto by continuing their search for experience of reality through homosexual stimulation under the effect of narcotic drugs in the middle of a desert.

The End of Reality is no less problematized throughout *Faust is Dead* than the End of Humanity, or the End of History. The End of Reality is shown in two complementary veins: the end of real experiences and the beginning of a virtual world. Already Pete and Alain have been suffering from inability to attain real experiences, as we have seen. Again, already Pete's recording everything he sees or experiences on a camcorder, and the chaos software he held as the key power source for the next phase of life, implied the turn of the times into more digital spheres. Donny's appearance in scene fourteen, however, intensifies both issues. Communication between Donny and Pete as well as among many other users is made possible through digital means on the internet. Donny is an internet personage and expresses himself through it. Donny's way of digital expression, harboring the idea of the beginning of a digitalized world, is combined with the end of real experiences, as the way Donny expresses himself through the internet is by opening cuts and scars on his own body; it is a search, like Alain's and Pete's (and even Gary's in *Shopping and F***ing*), to find the taste of real experiences, or "a desperate way of making contact with reality" (Rebellato xvi). At some point Alain and Pete discuss even the reality of Donny as he appears on the screen:

ALAIN: Hello, Donny. Donny – you there?
PETE: Hey, listen. Listen, Donny is a fake.
ALAIN: I don't think so.
PETE: No. I don't...I don't believe this.
      Look at this guy. It's not for real.
ALAIN: He seems real. (125)

Donny, on the other hand, tries to express his reality when he says: "<I'M NO FAKE. I'M FOR REAL.>" (125). In order to prove that he exists in reality he even proposes that Alain and Pete meet him personally, which they accept. In the meantime, seeing Alain's infatuation with Donny, Pete grows jealous of Donny. That is why when Donny arrives, Pete offers him to have a "who's got the best" (130) cut competition for which Alain, who has been recording since Donny came in, to be judge. First Pete "*cuts across his chest*" (131) and he feels "Pure. Clear. True" (131) as a result. When it is Donny's turn, he suddenly "*cuts his jugular,*" (131) and dies on the spot. Donny ends his life because he "had enough of just communicating...in a virtual kind of way", as Chorus reports from Donny's earlier words (134). Donny's unexpected suicide leads Alain to a mental transcendence and he philosophizes on the End of Reality with the following words: "At some point, at a moment at the end of the twentieth century, reality ended. Reality finished and simulation began" (132). Therefore, what Alain openly declares points out that all examples in the play relating to the virtual quality of life suggest the fact that the traditional sense of reality has come to an end and is superseded by virtual reality. After the end of the traditional reality, it is now a post-mortem state of life in which sensual as well as emotional experiences are denied to people. It is a post-mortem state of reality since "Reality died. It ended" and the present virtual state of life is a "dream" or a "lie" or a "simulated existence"

(132) as Alain claims. All these claims relating to the End of Reality match Jean Baudrillard's philosophies in his book *Simulacra and Simulation*, where he maintains that the traditional sense of reality, in other words, the reality whose objects would match their signs and appeal to senses, has been replaced by a sense of hyperreality (1-2), "because," as Patricia Waugh sums up, "there is no longer anything real to reflect" (413).

More darkly apocalyptic compared to Foucault's ideas of the End, Baudrillard asserts that the phenomenon of reality has passed through a transition and died, leaving its place to hyperreal; and its dissolution occurred in four steps: in the first of these the image of reality reflects the basic reality. This is followed by a phase of the image of reality when it covers and shadows the basic reality. The third step occurred when the image masked the absence of basic reality, giving way to the last step and the inauguration of hyperreal when it has lost all contact with reality (6). Baudrillard comments on these four steps with the following words: "In the first case, the image is a *good* appearance - representation is of the sacramental order. In the second, it is an evil appearance – it is of the order of maleficence. In the third, it plays at being an appearance – it is of the order of sorcery. In the fourth, it is no longer of the order of appearances, but of simulation" (6). Alain understands all of this since he is a philosopher. Pete is a learner, Alain's student who realizes the transition only to escape to the safer side, to his father's hyperreal kingdom, instead of trying to challenge it. Donny is helplessly living in the fourth phase in a hyperreal world where the referents of life are only virtual, and it is surrounded by a cyber-atmosphere. It is impossible for him to free himself from the net

of hyperreality that tightens itself more and more, and turn back to the earlier phases of reality.

Chorus, who represents the community, has grown weary of the happenings of the present life and comes up with the most explicitly apocalyptic excerpt of the play, in scene eighteen:

> CHORUS: Looking back, now I'm an adult, I think I used to cry at night not because the world was such a bad place. Well, okay, not just because the world is such a bad place. But also because I wanted the world to come to an end. Like Armageddon or Hellfire or Total Meltdown or some such catastrophe. And I cried because I felt so guilty because it was gonna happen any day and it would be all my fault for wanting it so much. But the world hasn't ended. It's going on and on. And I keep on looking for signs that it's getting better like Momma told me. But I can't see them. So, it hasn't ended and it's not getting better. It's just going on, on and on and on. And I wonder if I should feel something about that. But – you want the truth? – I don't feel a thing. See, I'm the kind of person who can stand in the middle of an earthquake and I'm just like 'whoa, neat earthquake'. And I wonder what made me that way. (137)

This speech, which is uttered almost at the end of the play, finalizes all the apocalyptic echoes that the play has been reflecting since its beginning. The speech displays the gist of all the ideas issued in the play, like the Death of Man, the End of History, the End of Reality, the age of chaos, and the age of virtual reality. Chorus here unequivocally claims that the main reason why he would cry when he was a child was that he wished that the world would come to an end through some sort of catastrophic occurrences. Chorus's visions as a child render the

apocalypticism of his idea doubly apocalyptic as it is a child's imagining of the end of the world with a catastrophe, a child being presumably, or at least conventionally, the most innocent of human beings. Chorus' wish has not been actualized as he imagined, but it is possible that he has been experiencing the End of Man, of History, and of Reality for the most part of the twentieth century. Therefore, it is possible to claim also for Chorus' speech that the present world depicted in *Faust is Dead* is a post-apocalyptic world. The expectation of an apocalypse as prophesied by the religious books has proved a loss of time since the End has already come during the twentieth century, and what has been lived since then is a post-apocalyptic world of ends. Therefore, Chorus could not see his wish of a huge catastrophe smashing the world come true but, on the contrary, the world continued to deteriorate giving birth to people who cannot feel or are deprived of real life experiences. This is why the Chorus has turned numb, and cannot "feel a thing" (137) or care if there has been an earthquake. It is also possible to detect one part of Derridean apocalypticism hidden in this speech: "the end of the ends" or "la fin de la fin" ("Of an Apocalyptic Tone" 21) is observable in Chorus' assertion that the world is "just going on and on and on and on" (137).

"Because man is dead. For so many centuries, we have believed in his existence. This thing, this construct, this thing we called man. But one day, some day in the twentieth century, he went and died…God died and we trembled to live in a universe without him" (138). These words uttered by Pete are the opening expressions of the last scene of *Faust is Dead*. As well as confirming what the previous parts of the play thematised in relation to the End, this final section brings up an extra issue of the End of Man in the twentieth century: the transformation of

Man from subject to object. The theory again belongs to Michel Foucault, who philosophized on such a transformation in his 1966 book called *The Order of Things*. He claimed that Man, throughout the twentieth century, due to technological progress and high levels of production came to be defined by the objects he himself produced, turning into "an instrument of production" (313). Frederic Jameson also observes the dissolution of the subject, saying:

> ...today, from any number of distinct perspectives, the social theorists, the psychoanalysts, even the linguists, not to speak of those of us who work in the area of culture and cultural and formal change, are all exploring the notion that that kind of individualism and personal identity is a thing of the past; that the old individual or individualist subject is 'dead'... (2001: 1964)

These theories find their echo in Pete's words: "But now we see, we feel that we are no longer the subject but the object of forces, we are a confusion, a collision..." (138). Therefore, it is the time of the *postman*; a term which should be understood to signify the new form of Man as a confusion, or rather a fusion, and a collision of its self and its productions. In fact, what Pete has been practicing as behaviors are all excerpts from Alain's book. This recalls a master-pupil relation like the one between Socrates and Plato. Pete the Plato prophecies that "the next millennium will see the fight between those who embrace and those who deny the death of man," (138) for which Pete and his father would fall into the clique of the deniers whereas Alain, Chorus, and Donny would be listed in the embracing group. Although the majority of the people represented by Chorus seem to be on the side that confirms the death of Man, the fight will still be harsh since Bill and

Pete will be the power holders of society – as Donny predicts, speaking of Pete and his father: "Gone to his daddy and they're gonna take over the world" (140). Pete has decided to join his father and help him in his business, failing in his search for real life experiences, and choosing to go on living in the virtual world. He prefers living Baudrillard's depiction of simulated experiences of the digital world, as he heartily advertises his father's virtual solutions on the moods paintings send out to the viewers. Moreover, proving Foucault, he succumbs to the reversal of the phenomena of subject and object, in which the former representing the human being is not a defining party anymore, but is defined by the object which was originally the production of the subject. In conclusion, Pete proves two of the most apocalyptic philosophies of the play.

Alain's last words are "I don't want to get better" (140) meaning that he would rather die than live in the none-get-better world. The play comes to close with the appearance of Donny without eyes, hence making up a shocking ending that blends the verisimilitude of the play with the fantastic thriller mode. *Faust is Dead* is a play written as an imitation of any classical play and the very ending of it, as well as the presence of Chorus all throughout, is a reminiscent of classical plays; Donny here, and his reference to "the boat to heaven" (140), are derived from the classical myth of the Boatman Charon who, on his boat and in return for coins placed on each eye of the deceased, carries the dead to the other side of the underworld. The mythological underworld, still, suggests a new beginning for the deceased souls. However, *Faust is Dead* ends apocalyptically so darkly that Donny cannot find an End even after he is dead. Although, he commits suicide to bring the End of himself, and therefore find an existence in death, he

is denied a new beginning in the other life. Chorus's words "it hasn't ended and it's not getting better. It's just going on, on and on and on" (137) now resonate more emphatically at the end of the play. These words also signify that the end is not attainable, reminding one of and matching Baudrillard's following words in his "The Illusion of the End": "Things are in a state which is literally definitive – neither finished, nor infinite, nor definite, but de-finitive that is, deprived of its end" (120). At the end of the play all characters are deprived of the real experience of the End.

All things considered, *Faust is Dead*, like its predecessor *Shopping and F***ing*, is a play which makes a powerful contribution to the apocalypticism found in In-Yer-Face plays of the 1990s. The play is a dramaturgical rewriting of some of the most influential apocalyptic theories of the twentieth century like the End of History, the Baudrillardian End of Reality and the commencement of the virtual world of hyperreality, Foucault's Death of Man, and the change of the order of subject and object in the century due to the advances in technological world and progress in production. As such, *Faust is Dead*, too, by Mark Ravenhill harbors the ideas of the End which is reflected by means of certain philosophical ideas.

CHAPTER 4

VIOLENT APOCALYPSE: ANTHONY NEILSON'S *NORMAL* AND *PENETRATOR*

A. 'Brutality belongs to love': *Normal*

> When I would ask the students, for example, what ideas they had, they would almost always respond in themes. They wanted to write plays about racism, about homelessness, about the erosion of democracy. They wanted to 'say something' and this was seen as a fundamental requirement of a play: that it should 'say' something.
> Of course these same students were usually blocked and unproductive. They had their theme all right, but no idea of how to proceed, because they were unwilling to accept that a playwright is no more and no less than a *storyteller* – a direct descendant of that person that would sit in the village square and tell fairy tales to children. (Neilson ix)

These words belong to the writer of *Normal* (1991) who employs in his play an expressive narration of the story of a cruel serial killer and of the confused mind of his defense lawyer. Although *Normal* is not a fairy tale but, rather, a thrilling gothic tale, Anthony Neilson still is a storyteller whose story in *Normal* has reached many ears from the stage. It met success early after its premiere at "Edinburgh's Pleasance theatre in August 1991" from where it "transferred to London's Finborough, an Earl's Court pub theatre that was a small but crucial laboratory for new writing" (Sierz 68). The whole play is staged in a retrospective mode where Wehner the lawyer is also the narrator

telling to the audience, as he says in the opening speech, "only the memory of a memory," (3) inviting everyone to view "a waltz back through time" (5). What is more interesting about the story is that Neilson bases his play on the story of a real life character. Peter Kürten (1883-1931) originally was a German serial killer who was born as the third child of a family of thirteen children, experiencing an unhappy and violent childhood, and facing the improper deeds of his alcoholic father who was for a while imprisoned for abuse of his thirteen-year-old daughter. Kürten caused the death of two of his schoolmates before the age of ten. Later he committed numerous crimes and violent murders, turning out to be the ultimate sadist example. He was later convicted and finally punished with the death penalty (Internet source 7).

Normal, both structurally and content-wise, lays bare the nerve-racking character of Peter Kurten. It starts with the narration of Wehner Justus who was appointed as Kurten's defending advocate and who claimed that this criminal was actually not normal but insane, and that he should be treated accordingly during his lawsuit. The play casts three characters: Peter Kurten, Frau Kurten, and Wehner. Given through thirty-one scenes the play explores the emergence of a serial killer from a violent childhood, the emergence of the cruel nature of the killer, as well as the transformation of a decent advocate into a substitute Kurten. The play explores this general plotline with frequent incidents from the past: the most significant of these are violent and abusive scenes from Kurten's childhood like his father's alcoholic, violent, and sexually abusive nature; his incestuous relations with his mother and one of his sisters; his killing of two of his classmates by drowning them in a river; his befriending a dog-catcher as his first

teacher of violence; and then Wehner's unreplied letters to his parents; Kurten's poisoning many inmates in the prison; his pitiless molestation of a thirteen-year-old girl and how her uncle was wrongly accused with the crime; the love-story between Frau Kurten and Peter Kurten; Kurten's various merciless murder cases of Frau Kuhn, Rudolf Scheer, Rose Ohliger, Emma Gross, Frau Mantel, Louise – a child of fourteen – and five-year-old Gertrude, Maria Hahn, Ida Reuter, Elizabeth Dorrier, Frau Meurer, and Frau Wanders; and Wehner's romance with Frau Kurten and his later brutal mutilation of her. Therefore, rather than a linear chronological plot structure, the storyline runs on a retrospective flow of incidents from the past.

As has been discussed in the second chapter of this study, apocalypticism in two 1990s In-Yer-Face plays, *Shopping and F***ing* and *Faust is Dead* by Mark Ravenhill, is revealed through a set of ideas of the End which were theorized by several influential thinkers of the twentieth century. Therefore, it has been argued, the apocalypticism that these plays were expressive of is a philosophical one. On the other hand, for the two Neilson plays under scrutiny in this chapter, *Normal* (1991) and *Penetrator* (1993), it can be claimed that the apocalyptic still inhabits the stage, where, this time, it is violence that sets the apocalyptic tone. In other words, rather than the philosophical, the violent is fore-grounded to let apocalypticism appear in the plays. For this reason, this chapter analyses, through close reading, how violence conduces to and collaborates with the emergence of apocalyptic expression in Neilson's *Normal* and *Penetrator*.

The full title of the play is *Normal: The Düsseldorf Ripper*. As it is, it first signals the violence in the play with the word "Ripper". The subtitle recalls the notorious serial killer Jack the Ripper who "between

1888 and 1891, killed and eviscerated several prostitutes (at least five, possibly more) in the Whitechapel area of London" (Internet source 8). The unidentified Jack the Ripper is known as one of the cruelest of serial killers, whose mystery has always attracted the interest of curious minds. Peter Kurten in *Normal* admires Jack the Ripper and takes him as his leading example, as his super-model, and he makes this clear when he speaks about the success of one of his brutal murders, in an aside to the audience:

> KURTEN: Jack would have been proud of the letter.
> It showed them up for the idiots they were.
> It was my final satisfaction
> to know that I had beaten them
> for the world to see
> my taunting letter in print.
> Oh yes.
> Jack
> Would have been proud. (47)

Kurten had known about Jack the Ripper. He "had read of him avidly" (33) in prison and saw a resemblance between his own nature and that of the legendary figure, after which he decided to take Jack the Ripper as his model, and thus, as he himself relates "The Düsseldorf Ripper is born" (34).

With his blood-lustful nature Kurten is the foremost focus and item of violence in *Normal*. He is an archetypal figure of the sadist in the twentieth century. Almost all of the play is actually an examination of Kurten's violent character. Wehner's narration starts with references to Kurten's brutal nature and continues in the same way throughout the play. The first point about the violent nature of Kurten is related to his existence and obsession with posing as a super-human creature. The first time Wehner mentions Kurten, he uses the word "machine,"

(3) which is immediately followed with "the monster, the ripper" (4) to describe him. These words enhance the idea that Kurten is not a human being but a different creature. The first time he is seen on stage he poses like an inanimate object, holding "a pair of ludicrously-oversized scissors," (3) thereby strengthening this idea that Kurten, in fact, is a killing machine. Moreover, it is also observable that Kurten has no objection to be seen as something super-human, like a machine, like a powerful monster, or even like a God – an identification which he implicitly expresses as he tells Wehner in their first meeting when he says "Considering that I am who I am" (7)[12]. In reply, Wehner needs to remind him of his being a human: "You're still a human being, Mr. Kurten" (7). Although called to consciousness by Wehner, Kurten still insists on being a supra-, and almost an immortal, power figure, claiming his authority with the following words: "Why should I be afraid? I am what they fear" (8). From a mythological point of view it can be argued that Kurten wants to be sanctified as the God of Cruelty and Violence. At least he wants to have fame and a name to be remembered by as a legendary hero. His imaginary acquaintance with and admiration of Jack the Ripper is an indication of this. Additionally, his wish to be sung about and narrated by the future generations further exemplifies his obsession. He reveals this wish to Wehner just twelve hours before his execution:

> WEHNER: Twelve hours until you die, Peter.
> How do you feel?
>
> KURTEN: Quite full.
> Yet I do feel some sadness that I will not live
> to hear the children sing about me in the playgrounds,

---

[12] Kurten here sounds like YHWH in the Old Testament who responds to Moses' question of its name with "I am that I am" (*King James Bible* 68).

> as they sing about Jack in London.
> That is my one regret. (54-55)

There are several other points which help reveal the inhumanly savage nature of Peter Kurten. Kurten tells Wehner that during his childhood he was introduced to violent action by a dog-catcher who killed dogs brutally. They became good friends and the dog-catcher "taught [Kurten] many things" (14). As Kurten remembers "[it] was during this time that I made an astonishing discovery;/that the spilling of blood/its coppery smell, its deep color,/caused a pleasing sensation in my crotch" (14-15). Therefore, Kurten's motive for violent behavior is also erotic and most of Kurten's savagery is in the form of eroticized violence. Before starting with his human victims he confesses to Wehner that he was having sexual intercourse with "dogs and sheep and pigs whilst sticking them with knives" (16). On another occasion, in London, he witnesses an accident where a horse was also involved. Seeing the gore and the mutilation of the horse gives him an orgasmic discharge regardless of his position in the middle of a crowd (33). His disposition of violent eroticism with human beings was the same. Kurten remembers the last moments of the end of little Christine's life and how those moments gave him sexual ecstasy (33). On another occasion, he attempts to kill two ladies without success. However, the mere "sight of their blood on the cobblestones led me to a most powerful discharge" (25). He starts narrating some of his brutal memories by saying "I went out walking in the mood for love" (37) after which he lists the descriptions of several of his murders. In addition, it is clear that Kurten considers love as a violent act. He expresses that the reason why he committed violent murders was to "keep my love life fresh" (45). This is why, for example, he killed a

Maria Hahn, and later stuffed her genital organ "with earth and leaves" (45) – an act that finds meaning in Kurten's erotically violent and perverted nature. Kurten believes that "[brutality] belongs to love;" (12) he does not differentiate between the feelings that violence and love generate. In the scene called "The Art of Seduction" where there is a pantomime show of the memory of Kurten's wooing Frau Kurten, it is eventually violent gestures that win Frau Kurten's heart rather than romance. After trying to persuade her with flowers and romantic games to no avail, he finally "*smiles evilly and produces the scissors. Keeping them behind his back he advances on Frau Kurten. She refuses him again so he presents them to her. She is immediately more conducive. He makes stabbing gestures. She swoons and embraces him*" (30). For him, love is only mature when it reaches its consummation level through killing the beloved violently. It is because of this idea that he advises Wehner, after Wehner has made love with Frau Kurten, in the following way:

> KURTEN: Do you love her?
> WEHNER: I suppose I must.
> KURTEN: Then you can't stop there.
> You must see it through. (49)

To "see it through" means to taste killing the person loved. Therefore, by guiding Wehner in how to kill Frau Kurten, Kurten, in fact, actualizes the violent gestures, which can be seen now as promises, he had used while he seduced Frau Kurten, persuading her to get married. Furthermore, violence for Kurten also means fun as well as sexual pleasure. For instance, once, after he was released and returns home, he set a barn on fire "[so] I could watch people try to put it out / Their distress aroused me / And the flames were very beautiful" (20). Later,

he was put in prison for continuing such petty crimes and there he "managed to poison several of the inmates" (21). All in all, Kurten is violence incarnate and even his last wish just before his execution is entirely laden with an image of violence. Prompted to make a final wish by Wehner, Kurten wishes that "I should live just long enough / to hear my own blood gushing from my neck" (57).

Normal seems to have a naturalistic approach in its presentation of the devastated childhood Kurten had suffered, which supposedly had a considerable influence in his developing a violent personality. Kurten was "the third child of thirteen" all of whom, together with the parents "lived in one room" (8). Such a family structure where there is no privacy meant "an insufferable upbringing" (10) for Kurten. Neither of his parents was proper enough to hold responsibility for their family. Kurten's father was violent and an alcoholic. Actually, it ran in his family since also Kurten's "grandfather was a thief, a simpleton and a violent alcoholic" (8). There was no privacy at all in the house. Kurten defines his family atmosphere with the following words:

> KURTEN (*pause*): You see, Dr Wehner
> When my father wanted to
> take my mother he took her
> In that room
> In full view of us all.
> That was my family. (10)

This is why Kurten during his childhood never learned sexual privacy which, Wehner would like to believe, might have caused his later sexual perversity. The lack of privacy of any kind, of parental care and guidance, and the poor conditions he had to grow up in result in a disturbed childhood. Kurten was deprived of the proper and a happy childhood which should normally be the most innocent phase of a

human being. Rather than joyful and exciting memories, Kurten's recollections of his childhood are full of incestuous memories: his "mother's cunt" (9), his "mother and her daughter taking turns at sucking my prick," (16) his father and his own advances on another of his sisters with "the roundest of bottoms and the fullest of mouths" (9) as he describes her. Incest, therefore, was a natural part of his daily life. The sexual abnormalities in his early life trigger the killer instinct in Kurten and he turns out to be a murderer at the age of eight by killing two boys of his own age. He cannot help laughing sadistically when he recollects and narrates the memory of this first homicide to Wehner:

> KURTEN: Oh it was a fumbling, silly affair.
> I was playing with two boys my own age on the banks of the Rhine
> Their parents were picnicking nearby
> We had found a makeshift raft, and one of the boys and
> Myself floated out on it, not far
> I thought it might be funny to push him into the water, so
> I did. He got trapped under the raft and I found that, by shifting my weight, I could thwart his attempts to draw breath.
> …
> I hid in a nearby bush for nigh on an hour waiting for their parents to discover them
> And what a commotion they made trying to fish them out! (13)

All these point out that Kurten was never an innocent human being. His nature that lacks innocence has been shaped since his childhood. Therefore, he has never believed in the value of innocence. In the past, as he himself says "I was never an innocent", and in the present, as a grown up adult, he still believes that "[there] is no place for innocence in this world" (10).

The emergence of such a violent figure, Peter Kurten as an individual, is not independent of the social conditions which prepared him to be what he is. Kurten is only the best representative of a hardhearted society. Wehner frames the nature of the society as he is rehearsing his opening speech before the jury in the court:

> WEHNER: A society, members of the jury, where children can be abused in the most horrific of ways, with no ear to hear their screams. A society that locks away its failures with no counsel, no guidance, merely the reaffirmation of violence as the final solution. A society, members of the jury, with no foresight. And a society with no foresight has no future. (18)

The existence of such an uncaring society is a major factor of apocalyptic expression within the play. The society of Wehner's description is ready and responsible for its own apocalypse. It has given birth to Peter Kurten and it may open up the gates for the worse. Kurten is just the prototype production of the society; more and more are on the way for catastrophic outcomes, as Kurten prophecies: "I am not the only, Justus, nor will I be the last. Even as we speak they are being created, assembled; in the homes, in the prisons. In the playgrounds. And they are, all of them, normal men" (56). The society has turned almost senseless; Wehner was astonished when the parents of the deceased Christine who was "Kurten's first recorded victim" could eat at ease as "they recounted the events of eighteen years previous" (21) to him. Nor had Kurten's parents produced anything good for the well-being of their children and for the rest of the society. There seems to be a high sense of the end of unifying feelings within society, which gives way to the dissolving of the social structure.

Kurten, for example, does not believe that there is a society anymore when he asserts that "[there] is no such thing as society" (25).

From the most extremely unfitting character – Peter Kurten – to the best social production of the existing society – Wehner Justus as a lawyer – the phenomenon of the society is crumbling. Wehner's parents represent the institutionalized orderly society as they are "highly principled," (31) in contrast to Kurten's unmannerly parents. However, in effect, Wehner's parents prove as unsuccessful as Kurten's in contributing to the future well-being of the role of their son in society. Wehner's unrequited letters to his parents illustrate to what extent Wehner is forsaken and unsupported in forming a full relation with what he aims to become in the present society. In his "first letter home" (10) Wehner mentions to his "Mama" and "Papa" that he has recently been appointed as the defence lawyer of Peter Kurten who, as they guessed, had "endured an insufferable upbringing," (10) and that he counts on their influence on the people in the Humanitarian League who may be of help about the case. Furthermore, he states that he has missed them and asks them to come and visit him in Düsseldorf together with the delegation they are planning to send. Wehner's tone in this first letter to his parents is affectionate, mild and devoted. He is conscious of his position as a lawyer and a son of his parents. However, Wehner's second letter to his parents, a month later, displays a gradually growing impatience in tone, reflecting Wehner's confusion of mind due to what he has been hearing from Kurten since the time he has been with him. As Wehner confides to his parents, he is "not sleeping well, and as a result [he is] not thinking clearly" (34). He also asks about Eva – "the only girl [he] ever kissed…behind the rosebush" (34) losing the chance of a second time because his parents "called

[him] back to [his] books" (34). Although Wehner needed to communicate with his parents by sending two letters, neither of these are replied to. Therefore, due to the uncaring attitude of the parents, Wehner's letters have remained like his futile attempts of communication through a not-in-use line. The feeling of forsakenness leads Wehner to write a third letter which "is a scream of rage" as the stage direction states (39). The tone of this letter is bitter and laden with total disappointment, anger and disaffection towards the parents. In the letter Wehner scorns his parents because of their neglect of the suffering people. He seems to be drawing a line between the type of people like his parents and others living in pain within the society. Wehner's parents are much like a bourgeoisie family in having influence on institutions, being able to send delegations, paying attention to their son's education and leading him to become a lawyer, but neglecting the necessary care of those who are in need of emotional support. Wehner accuses them of lacking the necessary emotional empathy with people who experience loss in their lives. Having expressed his contempt and shown his parents' ignorance, Wehner closes his letter with the following words:

> WEHNER: Is that too sentimental for you, 'Papa'?
> Is that too 'emotive' for you, 'Mama'?
> Is that too *true* for you? What, are you
> *ashamed* of me?!
> Are you *proud* of me?!
>
> Well damn you and your morals!
> Left, right, it's all the same.
> What's true is that you
> USED me, Mama, you
> USED me, Papa, and where are you now, now that I need
> You, what am I to *do* (40)

"What am I to *do*?" is a sign of the radical transformation Wehner is about to undergo. Wehner is gradually transformed into a new Peter Kurten and this is the most immediate impact of the indifferent society in giving way to violent figures and violent occurrences. Wehner's transformation or rather transmutation to a "monster" (4) like Kurten follows several steps and signs in action. The first indication of this occurs right after Wehner's second letter to his parents as Kurten lists one after another his gory murders. The narration of the killings follows a pattern in which conversation between Kurten and Wehner moves forward rather like a duet in a rhythmic performance. It is because of this melodic quality of the words that "Kurten begins to tap his foot to the rhythm of the words" only immediately to be followed by Wehner who "too is beginning to tap his foot" (37). Thus starts Wehner's Kurtenization. Then, the next phase can be observed in the merging of the speeches of the two characters. This shows that Wehner does not only repeat Kurten's pace of narration in telling of his murders but also starts to think and speak simultaneously with Kurten:

> WEHNER: March 9th, little Rose Ohliger
> KURTEN: Eight years old and eyes like the night
> *Kurten has taken Wehner's arm and now they pivot around each other*
> WEHNER: Stabbed thirteen times in the body and head
> KURTEN & WEHNER: But I didn't tamper with her 'til after she was dead (37-38)

Wehner acts as if he is hypnotized by Kurten and "is aghast with himself for joining in" the articulation of the identical expressions with Kurten. The linguistic closeness between the two is carried to the physical action, in the next phase, as Wehner, under Kurten's spell, allows Kurten to grab him and start dancing together. "*He cannot help*

but smile" (38). Kurten now has full control over Wehner. "*They both laugh uproariously. Kurten holds his scissors aloft and they each take hold of separate ends and rotate, changing ends when they change direction*" (39). The scene ends with the word "Change" (39) uttered by the two simultaneously, which properly announces Wehner's change to Kurten. Then, it is not surprising that Wehner writes his third letter to his parents immediately after his change, which shows that those words directed against his parents are also against the Wehner of the previous month, a criticism on the late Wehner, who shared more or less the same culture with his parents.

Wehner's transformation follows another step with scene XXIV where Frau Kurten addresses Wehner as Peter all throughout their conversation. In addition, the change can also be seen in the subsequent scene in which "*though Kurten speaks the words, Wehner's lips move*," (50) implying that Wehner has now become a puppet for which Kurten is a ventriloquist. Eventually, Wehner's turn to the violent Kurten is completed with the next scene called "The art of murder" where Wehner by killing Frau Kurten, who will be, though, reanimated and will continue living in the unrealistic temporal and spatial diegesis of the play, practices what is Kurten best known for – merciless and cruel murder. This is also the scene where violence also reaches its peak. The whole scene is staged without words, like a pantomime, thereby causing the show of pure violence in action without the interference of words. The whole thrill is staged out with the following stage directions:

> *There follows a long murder sequence. It is quite relentless. Kurten never actually gets involved, but simply directs Wehner in the act. Frau Kurten totters around for a while. Her*

fingers touch her head, and it is only when she sees the blood that she realizes what has happened and falls. Wehner strikes her again. She lies still. Wehner stares at his handiwork with a mixture of horror and exhilaration. And then, suddenly, Frau Kurten escapes, invading the audience space. Wehner bolts after her, catches her and drags her kicking and screaming back to the stage. He strikes her again. Kurten indicates that Wehner should strangle her. He does this and she falls limp. Wehner backs away and she suddenly sits up, coughing and spluttering. Wehner strangles her again. She collapses. He backs off. She starts to crawl away. Wehner grabs her and Kurten directs him to break her legs, which he does. Wehner stares at the hammer in the moonlight. Frau Kurten, meanwhile has crawled away again. Kurten sends Wehner after her. Slowly he stalks her and strikes her again. He drops the hammer and drags her dead weight back to Kurten. Wehner is exhausted.

Kurten sends him back to retrieve the hammer, and in his absence, Frau Kurten comes round again. Wearily, Wehner walks to her and strikes her again and again and again. Wehner is like an animal, beating her head. He screams, a terrible, triumphant scream. Frau Kurten dies. Wehner collapses over her body.

(52)

Thus ends the old Wehner, breaking himself apart from the side of the society of his parents. He implies this in his final letter to his parents where he states that he should be considered dead as his parents' son and that he has now found "a new father" (54). On the more macrocosmic level this radical break may also suggest the procreation of the violent individuals by the decent and orderly society. While the last letter, on the one hand, seals the issue that uncaring and

ignorant society, represented by Wehner's parents in this case, to some extent, paves the ways for the emergence of the catastrophic events, on the other, lays bare the apocalyptic revelation of a new character which finds its expression through violent means. Wehner's transformation to and the replacement of the violent Kurten, at least in this period of his life, is entirely a core apocalyptic representation which is expressed through violence, thereby converging apocalypticism of the play with violence one more time.

It is important, here, to pay tribute to Edward Bond who both used and theorized violence in English drama. Bond, in his essay "On Violence" approaches the concept of violence from a naturalistic point of view, as he writes:

> We do not need to be violent. We need food and warmth, but we have only a capacity for violence. A dog has a capacity to swim the first time it goes into water, but it has no need to swim because it has no need to go into water. Human beings are violent animals only in the way that dogs are swimming animals. We need to eat; but only when we're starving does there have to be the possibility that we will use our capacity for violence to satisfy our need for food. Violence is a means not an end." (9)

Bond's words help shed a different light on Wehner's transformation from a decent lawyer to a perpetrator of violence: unlike what Bond suggests, Wehner does not turn to violence because of his physical needs. However, the biological motive seems to be a major reason behind Kurten's violence. With Kurten, it is more instinctual, while Wehner's case is rather social and cultural. Bond adds that while human beings harbor violence in their organisms, the real factor for the

presence of violence lies in social and cultural spheres: "the cause and solution of the problem of human violence lie not in our instincts but in our social relationships. Violence is not an instinct we must forever repress because it threatens civilized social relationships; we are violent because we have not yet made those relationships civilized" (12). *Normal* is a stark example for these remarks. Wehner, who, as a lawyer, could be considered to be representing civilized society realizes that, in essence, the society he has been living in does not act rationally and breeds violence by itself. Therefore, in order to see the other side of the coin, guided by Kurten, Wehner turns the dictum of "Violence is a means not an end" vice versa, and experiences the normality of the reverse.

Peter Shaffer's *Equus* (1973) and Neilson's *Normal* share a lot. Using one of their major characters – Dysart or Wehner - as a narrator for the dramatic performance is one common point. Other than this technical feature, I observe close parallelism between what happens to Wehner in *Normal* and what Dysart of Peter Shaffer's *Equus* undergoes throughout the play. Shaffer's *Equus*, much like Neilson's *Normal*, works through the meta-theme of normality. In *Equus*, Alan's normality in the society is questioned. Similarly, in *Normal* Kurten's sanity is problematized. Dysart is a psychiatrist who tries to turn Alan to normality; and Wehner is a lawyer who undertakes to prove that Kurten should not be considered normal. Alan finds relief through secretive violent rituals, so does Kurten. Wehner lets himself be transformed into the normal Kurten to see what it was like to be Kurten-normal enough in life, and Dysart has learned to challenge his life-long profession of turning people into normal, remarking ironically:

DYSART [*crying out*]: Let me tell you exactly what I'm going to do to him!

...

I'll heal the rash on his body. I'll erase the welts cut into his mind by flying manes. When that's done, I'll set him on a nice mini-scooter and send him puttering off into the Normal world where animals are treated *properly*: made extinct, or put into servitude, or tethered all their lives in dim light, just to feed it! I'll give him the good Normal world where we're tethered beside them – blinking our nights away in a non-stop drench of cathode-ray over our shriveling heads! I'll take away his field of Ha Ha, and give him Normal places for his ecstasy – multi-lane highways driven through the guts of cities, extinguishing Place altogether, *even the idea of Place*. (108-109)

Through the end of the plays both Dysart and Wehner go through some sort of realization and start to believe the reverse of what they used to believe at the beginning of the plays. In this sense, one should acknowledge what happens in *Equus* as a parallel source for the apocalyptic transformation of character in Wehner.

There is another point in the play where apocalypticism and violence are tied together: "The Reign of Terror" as a title of the scene XIX. "The reign of terror", in fact, usually refers to the "period of the French Revolution characterized by a wave of executions of presumed enemies of the state. Directed by the Committee of Public Safety, the Revolutionary government's Terror was essentially a war dictatorship, instituted to rule the country in a national emergency" (Internet source 9). During this period violence reached its peak in the country and under the rule of Robespierre "[a] huge number of suspects were arrested; thousands were executed" (Internet source

10). The implication behind the title of the scene as "the reign of terror" makes sense when it is perceived that Wehner's revolutionary, and hence apocalyptic, change has started, and that the title alludes to the beginning of the bloody aftermath of Wehner's revolution. Revolutions in general are, and specifically French Revolution is considered to be, apocalyptic events in history. To remember David Bromley, apocalypticism harbors a denial of the present assertive ideology, and therefore, a social movement, like a revolution, may introduce a new alternative order (34-35). The French Revolution had the same ideal. It was an apocalyptic event, as Hegel points out: "[the French Revolution] was a glorious mental dawn. All thinking beings shared in the jubilation of the epoch. Emotions of a lofty character stirred men's minds at that time; a spiritual enthusiasm thrilled through the world, as if reconciliation between the Divine and the Secular was now first accomplished" (447). In addition, James Berger, who theorizes on the concept of post-apocalypse, points out that the "French Revolution was the first truly apocalyptic development of the modern period" (388-389). Furthermore, M. H. Abrams in claiming that "Romantic apocalypse" was first initiated by the French Revolution once again ties revolution and apocalypse together: "Faith in an apocalypse by revelation had been replaced by faith in an apocalypse by revolution, and this now gave way to faith in an apocalypse by imagination or cognition" (334). Where this apocalyptic event converges with violence is the "Reign of Terror" which, as we have seen, is also the title of scene XIX in Neilson's *Normal*. Steven Goldsmith, in his *Unbuilding Jerusalem: Apocalypse and Romantic Representation* maintains that violence can be seen as a revolutionary concept (219), and if it is revolutionary, it is also apocalyptic; and hence, violence is apocalyptic.

Hannah Arendt has a classical book called *On Violence* first published in 1969. The book analyses the concept of violence especially as it appears in the political science, problematizes the nature of violent behavior, as well as differentiates the term from similar terms like power, strength, force, and authority. In this book, she writes:

> Moreover, if we inquire historically into the causes likely to transform *engagés* into *enragés*, it is not injustice that ranks first, but hypocrisy. Its momentous role in the later stages of the French Revolution, when Robespierre's war on hypocrisy transformed the "despotism of liberty" into the Reign of Terror, is too well known to be discussed here; but it is important to remember that this war had been declared long before by the French moralists who saw in hypocrisy the vice of all vices and found it ruling supreme in "good society," which somewhat later was called bourgeois society. Not many authors of rank glorified violence for violence's sake; but these few – Sorel, Pareto, Fanon – were motivated by a much deeper hatred of bourgeois society and were led to a much more radical break with its moral standards than the conventional Left, which was chiefly inspired by compassion and a burning desire for justice. To tear the mask of hypocrisy from the face of the enemy, to unmask him and the devious machinations and manipulations that permit him to rule without using violent means, that is, to provoke action even at the risk of annihilation so that the truth may come out – these are still among the strongest motives in today's violence... (65-66)

I observe a considerable amount of similarity between the points made in the extract above and in Neilson's *Normal*, specifically around "the

reign of terror". Arendt mentions the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror led by Robespierre. *Normal* alludes to these events[13] and Neilson even uses the Reign of Terror in titles of two of the scenes. More, Arendt briefly discusses hypocrisy as the disease of the society and the cause of the violent Reign of Terror which intended to purge the society from its evils. In a similar vein, the major reason why Wehner decides to break away from the society he belongs to is his realization of the hypocrisy in it, which gives place to Wehner's turn to violence. Arendt mentions that the society with hypocrisy had actually been a "good society" which was later called "bourgeois". Wehner also had believed that he was part of a decent society which, represented by his parents, proved to be no different than a bourgeois society with its vices. Wehner best shows this in his third letter to his parents where he openly declares his parents' hypocrisy in "using" their son and asserts his break with them by cursing "Well damn you and your morals!" (40). Thus, Wehner acts like Arendt's "Sorel, Pareto, Fanon" who "were motivated by a much deeper hatred of bourgeois society and were led to a much more radical break with its moral standards than the conventional Left," (65) and thus, Wehner's point in saying "Left, right, it's all the same" (40) poses like a further matching of the ideas. Last but not the least, Arendt's remarks that read "To tear the mask of hypocrisy from the face of the enemy, to unmask him and the devious machinations and manipulations that permit him to rule without using

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[13] From one perspective, the whole play in its documentary narration of Peter Kurten's execution may be seen as an allusion to any one of executions of the period of the reign of terror. Besides, Wehner's "A society that locks away its failures with no counsel, no guidance, merely the reaffirmation of violence as the final solution," (18) and "…these are uncertain days and the people are angry / It's the blood of our leaders they want," (27) and Frau Kurten's "These are dangerous days for decent men" (31) may be read as other allusions to the aura of the period.

violent means, that is, to provoke action even at the risk of annihilation so that the truth may come out" (66) almost exactly match Wehner's motives to turn violent and apocalyptic: Wehner, as a lawyer, is after the revelation of truth, which itself is an apocalyptic concept, and he takes this mission "even at the risk of annihilation".

Normal harbors one of the most apocalyptic expressions which could be found in a play in the last decade of the twentieth century. That is Kurten's articulation of "[the] annihilation of the self" (50). Kurten reveals that he and Frau Kurten feed an insatiable desire for the End, and hence, need total destruction. He tries to explain this so-called insane idea to Wehner in the dialogue below:

> KURTEN: She didn't turn me in for the reward.
> It was an act of love.
> She understood what it was that I wanted, needed.
> It could not be by my own hand.
> For it was the same thing that she wants and needs.
> WEHNER: And what *is* that???!
> KURTEN: Destruction, Justus.
> Destruction.
> ...
> KURTEN: Give her what she wants Justus.
> ...
> KURTEN: She senses that you can give her what she needs
> The annihilation of the self. (49-50)

Michel Foucault, in his *The Order of Things*, pictures Man as a being to be "erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (387). Such erasure, a complete removal of existence, is what Kurten is dreaming about. This seems to be similar to the masochist undercurrent Derrida points out when he asks "Who can swear that our unconscious is not expecting [a nuclear war]? dreaming of it, desiring it?" ("No Apocalypse, Not Now" 23). More, there is a close connection with

Kurten's "the annihilation of the sense" and Erika-Fischer Lichte's words, which have also been mentioned in the theoretical background chapter:

> The search towards a 'new', non-individual man had fallen on a dangerous, misguided path which led to the regressive annihilation of the self and total submersion in a faceless crowd, which released the individual's basest instincts, stimulated his childish fantasies of power in an irresponsible way and provoked his regression into unlimited barbarity. (298)

Kurten's case is a good illustration for this idea, in that his wish for the annihilation of the self goes side by side with his "unlimited barbarity." On the other hand, annihilation seems to be Kurten's only solace and goal in a world with whose rules he failed to comply. This is why he feels relieved after he learns the verdict of the court which decrees his death. He expresses his happiness to Wehner when he says: "Since the verdict my dreams have been peaceful, so very peaceful" (55). Kurten's desire for the End met with a desire for his own death and his learning of its immanence soothes his psyche. In this sense, the play recalls an unfinished search which stems from Beckett's 1957 play *Endgame* in which characters, or rather what is left of them, are denied the End and are stuck in a cyclical process of meaningless continuity. In addition, once again, throughout the scene, it is clear that the idea of the End is merged with violence, particularly with an object of violence – a hammer – which Kurten tries to hand in to Wehner to be used as a murder weapon during the annihilation process of his wife Maria, in other words Frau Kurten.

Kurten's violent apocalypticism is not confined with the period nearing the end of his life; he had been with violently apocalyptic thoughts all throughout his life. Left alone with Wehner in the dark because of a power-cut, Kurten exposes his most apocalyptic tendencies hidden deep down in the darkness of his mind: "I would sit in the blackness and dream of open wounds and carnage, of exploding bridges and poisoning reservoirs and feeding sharp sweets to children" (17). Kurten imagines violent mass destruction of people rather than his usual single murder cases. In total contrast to his nature, obvious in this and many other examples, the same Kurten also wishes to be the "Saviour" of people as he reveals in his following speech:

> KURTEN: Another fantasy of mine
> at the time of the killings
> was that of saving
> the city of Düsseldorf
> from its dreaded nemesis
> the vampire the werewolf the monster the ripper
> ...
> I would emerge triumphant from the long and bloody battle
> though severely wounded
> and the people would be so thankful to me
> would so admire me
> that they would throw a huge torchlit procession in my honour.
> In fact, so impressed would they be
> that they would storm police headquarters and demand
> the deposition of the commissioner
> and appoint me
> in his place
> and the name of
> Peter Kurten!
> Saviour of Düsseldorf!
> would be lauded
> throughout Germany
> and the world!! (44-45)

As the title of the scene, in which the speech takes place, conveys Kurten is *daydream*ing. His millennial ideas, which are almost resonating with the apocalyptic Second Coming, are incongruous considering his rather evil nature. He wishes to turn out to be a Saviour whereas his character better fits the shape of an Anti-Christ figure. He talks about saving the city from the monster, the ripper, and the vampire whereas these are the very images with which he is himself attributed: Wehner and Frau Kurten call him a "monster" many times (4, 17, 18, 34, 44, 45, 57); Wehner calls him a "ripper," (4, 57) and Frau Kurten calls him a "vampire" (45). Therefore, Kurten's violently apocalyptic battle is actually against his own self, the annihilation of which will render him "triumphant."

Eva is the name for Wehner's first love and Maria is Frau Kurten's first name. Both of the names carry direct religious overtones. In the same vein, it is also noteworthy to mention that the language used through the end of the play turns out to be slightly more religiously apocalyptic: Kurten imagines being a "Saviour;" (45) Frau Kurten uses the word "crucify" (45) while participating in the narration of one of Kurten's brutal homicides, Kurten gives words for Wehner's use one of which is "heavenly," (50) and Wehner's expression of "the day of judgment" in the Epilogue.

The Derridean concept of truth, as found in his "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy,[14]" as the ultimate

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[14] Derrida, as mentioned earlier, ties truth and apocalypse as the following: "Whoever takes on the apocalyptic tone comes to signify to, if not tell, you something. What? The truth, of course, and to signify to you that it reveals the truth to you; the tone is the revelatory of some unveiling in process...truth itself is the end, the destination, and that truth unveils itself is the advent of the end. Truth is the end and the instance of the last judgment. The structure

outcome of apocalyptic signification should also be mentioned in terms of its echoes in *Normal*. The whole play, in a sense, is based on the exposition of truth: truth that reveals that a whole nation of peoples once turned out to be killers; truth that displays that Kurten was helped to be a monster; truth that shows that Wehner, originally a decent lawyer, can only discover his own truth as he transforms into a mutant, stripping himself from traditionally imposed culture.

The end of the play, which is given a title reminiscent of the classical plays – "Epilogue" – seals the play by means of directly apocalyptic images and expressions. It provides a whole drama of apocalypse in a minimal way with a single character uttering no more than four sentences. The first person participant narrator of the play, Wehner, is now narrating the events of a nearer past when Kurten has long been executed and, historically speaking, one of the most apocalyptic events of the world, the Second World War has taken place. The play temporally turns to the time of the first scene – 1952 – seven years after the end of the war. During this period, "[before] [his] hands got too bloody" Wehner left his country, "found a woman [he] loves dearly", abandoned his profession as a lawyer, and "had two beautiful children" (58). The Epilogue also works as Wehner's confessions. Earlier than his fleeing to a more stable life, Wehner admits to have indulged in disturbing acts: "I and a great many 'normal' men were to do things we had never thought ourselves capable of" (58). Wehner must be referring to the times of the Second World War. This admission, on the one hand, proves that Wehner's transformation to Kurten had further effects, as well as exhibiting the fact that there were

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of truth here would be apocalyptic. And that is why there would not be any truth of the apocalypse that is not the truth of truth" ("Of an Apocalyptic Tone" 24).

"a great many 'normal' men" who had to go through the same experience with Wehner's. All those sane people turned out to be blood-thirsty, cruel and brutal Peter Kurtens, or even worse, killing machines. Therefore, Kurten's earlier prophecy which claimed "I am not the only, Justus, nor will I be the last. Even as we speak they are being created, assembled; in the homes, in the prisons, in the playgrounds. And they are, all of them, normal men" (56) came true. Kurten, then, from a metaphorical perspective, may best symbolize the Anti-Christ or the Beast figure whose spirit prepared from normal men an army of devils for violence in the world. From another perspective, at the end of the play Kurten, the character that has been at the center of the story, turns out to be only a microcosmic example compared to the more macrocosmic apocalyptic events the world was pregnant with. In this sense, the title of the play *Normal*, which word was the jury's decision about Peter Kurten's mental health, is now more strongly asking question: during the Second World War, were all those people, who killed as if they were solely programmed to be killing, "normal?"

Furthermore, Wehner's finalizing speech, with the Day of Judgment as its core image, contributes strongly to the apocalyptic tone of the end of the play:

> WEHNER: I do not know if there is a God.
> But if there is I know that
> come the day of judgment
> we will all go before him
> saints and sinners alike
> I can only hope that he will judge us
> not as the monsters we have become
> …
> but as the children
> we once were. (58)

Having stated his Nietzschean skepticism of the existence of God, Wehner expresses that if there is an apocalyptic judgment, it will be for everyone, "saints and sinners alike." "Saints and sinners" as used by Wehner may be replaced with "sane and insane" which is an underlying issue in the play. Wehner, as if he is a tragic character, reaches a realization of the fact that he has once become a monster. He now wishes for repentance, for all those multitudes that have experienced the same, claiming to be considered as children – the purest and the most innocent phase of human life. Therefore, an apocalyptic idea of a return to innocence is also stated by Wehner at the very end of the play. In order to clarify the apocalypticism of this last speech more, some of Frank Kermode's ideas from his *The Sense of an Ending*, which have also been stated in the theoretical background chapter, should be remembered. He maintains that "[apocalypse] depends on a concord of imaginatively recorded past and imaginatively predicted future, achieved on behalf of us, who remain 'in the middest'" (8). In this sense, Wehner's memories of the past, throughout the play, relating to his relation with Kurten and his case, as well as what he experienced afterwards, can be seen as an "imaginatively recorded past" while his prediction of the Day of Judgment at the very end completes the second step in Kermode's formula for the emergence of the apocalyptic.

The end of the play also helps the concepts of violence and apocalypse to converge, the former working as the method of expression for the latter all throughout the play. "All politics is a struggle for power; the ultimate kind of power is violence" (171) writes C. Wright Mills in his book called *The Power Elite.* The Second World War was one of the highest conflicts for obtaining power through

violence, and it, due to the use of the Atomic Bomb, was itself accepted as one of the greatest apocalyptic events. Thomas Robbins and Susan J. Palmer argue that "[persons] and groups who adhere to apocalyptic visions and are under stress may perceive scripted catastrophic scenarios being actualized and may themselves become volatile and prone to violence" (5). Therefore, at the end of the play the violence and apocalypse previously issued and displayed on the personal levels through situations relating either to Kurten or Wehner are carried to a more public sphere through creating the suggestive image of the Day of Judgment; it indicates that many people, having perceived the catastrophe as an apocalyptic happening, turned to killers during the Second World War. All acts of violence staged and narrated up to the end of the play have now given way to the expression of an end which is strongly apocalyptic. All considered, *Normal*, closely read and analysed, appears as a play with a high sense of apocalypticism whose major element of expression is violence. In this sense, it can be claimed that Anthony Neilson's apocalyptic rhetoric, unlike Mark Ravenhill's, does not follow philosophical premises to draw the apocalyptic lines, but rather uses a rhetoric of violence as its element of expression by means of which the ideas of the End find their representation.

B. 'I'm not scared of blood on my hands, hot blood pouring on my hands': *Penetrator*

Dominic Dromgoole in his book called *The Full Room: An A-Z of Contemporary Playwriting* mentions Neilson's drama with these words: "His work is scorchingly dark. A sense of threat, of potential violence, sexual and otherwise, hovers over all his work...There is no end of shocking incidents...As well as the violence, the fragility and the

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anarchy, there's an overwhelming feeling of sorrow" (215-216). Dromgoole's words perfectly depict the gist of Neilson's *Penetrator*: violence spilt all over the play, sorrow of the forsaken lives, fragility through memories of the past, and the anarchy of the present situation.

Staged in 1993 - two years after *Normal – Penetrator* considerably helped the flourishing of the so called In-Yer-Face sensibility in British drama. In conveying an extreme sense of violence, in shattering verbal taboos before an audience, and in its boundless portrayal of obscenity, *Penetrator* was unconventional, radical, and thus, In-Yer-Face.

Like his previous play *Normal* in which he presented a real-life serial killer, Neilson based *Penetrator* on real-life life instances. He himself expresses this in the appendix to his play: "*Penetrator* was a very personal project. Not only was it loosely based on real-life event, it was written for, and performed by, me and two long-lasting friends" (118). The playwright is an In-Yer-Face writer and writes true to what he lives. The play is based on a storyline of events which start with the depiction of casual and seemingly aimless routines of two housemates, Max and Alan, whose lives experience a huge threat with Tadge's unexpected appearance in their house. Tadge has been a soldier in the army, and poses as if he is in a delusional state of mind. However, Tadge, although he acts in a threatening manner, gradually turns out to be a keystone to decipher several important puzzles in their lives, dating back to the past and significantly affecting the present.

After this introductory information about the play, what follows, through a close reading of the play, shows that *Penetrator*, like Neilson's *Normal*, is a play of strongly apocalyptic character which is transparently veiled behind violence in action. In this sense, the action

of *Penetrator* flows through two layers: the first layer is the representation of violence which becomes a playground for the deeper second layer of the play, which is the apocalyptic expression. Sometimes these two layers crisscross in the play. I will show firstly how violence operates in the play, and secondly where apocalypticism, fed by violence, finds expression.

Aleks Sierz comments that "[few] plays illustrate the sheer danger of live performance as dramatically as Neilson's *Penetrator*" (74). *Penetrator* is truly a violence-inflicting play. The violence of the play starts with its title. "Penetrator" – a noun derived from the root verb "to penetrate" is based on a physical act of entering, breaking in, or piercing by force. The online *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word as: "To get into or through, gain entrance or access to, especially with force, effort, or difficulty; to pierce" (Internet source 11). Moreover, "bayonet, crack, drill, gore, impale, infiltrate, knife, perforate, puncture, spear, stab, thrust" are among synonyms of the verb (Internet source 12). Therefore, violence, rather a linguistic one, abruptly starts with the title even before the performance on the stage.

After the title gives the first impression of violence, the play opens with the shocking and highly eroticized words of a voice-over recording; a scene displaying mental images of extremely eroticized violence. The voice is "deep and subhuman" (61). The words uttered by this subhuman voice are easily associable with what the title of the play suggests in the sexual sense of the word. These filthy words of hatefully sexual relations are shocking and in-yer-face enough to break certain taboos of a public show. Although not stated in the stage directions, such expressions must be interpreted as reflecting the stained imagination of the hitchhiker whose "actions are slow and dreamlike,"

(61) standing alone on the stage. These words finish with the words "I want you to shoot me," (62) directly recalling the idea of the End as they suggest killing as a result of love-making, thereby being similar to Wehner's case in *Normal* when Kurten persuades Wehner to kill his wife, Frau Kurten, in order to complete their love affair. The voice-over is also heard at the beginning of scene "Two" and throughout the whole of scene "Three", full of indecent, pornographic expressions, which, each time, end violently with the word "shoot," (62, 73) twice more recalling the idea of the End.

Verbal violence is prolonged with the first words spoken by the two characters of the play. Max greets the entering Alan by calling him "Arsehole," (63) only to get the response of "Fuckface" (63). These words, right at the beginning of the play, sound offensive enough to imply indecency and degradation of human character, and contribute to the verbal violence already initiated with the words of the subhuman voice-over. The verbal coarseness will never cease throughout the play, helping subliminally to strengthen the other means of violence haunting the performance all the time. There are tens of examples from the play, however, the "crescendo" (116) of pornographic words of Tadge at the end of the play is enough to summarize the density of the presence of verbal violence.

The arrival of Tadge marks a defining moment in the play since it is with his appearance onwards that violence, gradually turning to a more serious level, integrates deeply with the narration in the play. Tadge rings the door-bell as Alan and Max have been in the middle of a discussion about how women behave in their relationships with men. The door-bell, both for Max and Alan, causes a sense of uneasiness, one that is reminiscent of Pinteresque characters' fear of an outside

menace. After a short quick discussion on who to answer the door, Alan goes to it, and returns with Tadge who carries to the stage one of the most physical symbols of violence, blood, on his jacket. Added to this is Tadge's response to Max who asks the reason for the blood on the jacket: "It's all right man. It's not mine" (77). If it is not Tadge's blood, then there must have been something so bloody, and hence violent, close enough to Tadge's jacket to be stained by it, all the way increasing the fancying of violence.

Tadge's being a soldier and wearing an army uniform further contributes to the growing sense of violence in the play. An army and its soldiers are necessary when a state is not able to have influential power, which should not ideally be accompanied by any means of violence. Power and violence, though they seem to be complementing each other, actually, and again ideally, negate each other; where there is violence, there is no power of the perpetrator of violence.[15] Tadge is a soldier and has been working for the army, which can be seen as a governmental institution of violence, for situations other than defensive. Thus, Tadge has been working as a perpetrator of violence. These ideas relating to the violent nature of Tadge's job find an expression in Max's ironic question to Tadge, the first part of which is actually a one-time motto the British army used in its posters to recruit soldiers: "So – how's the army life? See the world, meet new people, blow their brains out and all that?" (78). Alan also depicts the violent character of Tadge's work: "He's been out there learning to *kill* people!", "…he hasn't been learning how to love God and furry animals,

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[15] It should be distinguished that "power" is a more comprehensive and stronger concept than "force" which endorses use of violence. While power should be considered a unifying phenomenon, force is segregative. Power negates use of means of violence, while force makes use of them to be authoritative and ruling.

has he?... He's been learning how to hate niggers and queers and Irish people and Arabs! He's been learning how to *bayonet* people for Christ's sake!!" (81).

Paradoxically enough, though, in Tadge's case, the violence of the army is directed against its own soldier. A unit, which Tadge calls "The Penetrators," (84) is a secret group of perpetrators of extreme torture and violence. Tadge also later reveals that penetrators are not only in the army but omnipresent: "they're everywhere, not just the army, not just the...the Penetrators, they're every...you don't know..." (102). It is never going to be made clear, though, whether the penetrators really exist or are only images of Tadge's disturbed psychology. As Max ponders, "maybe there's some truth in this Penetrator thing," (91) but maybe not. No matter what, it is for sure that Tadge knows a lot about the terrifying character of these people. Tadge attributes an omniscient character to the penetrators: "They know everything about everybody," (80) and he knows that he should be afraid of them since "[they]'ll find me and they'll kill me so I can never tell. And then they'll destroy all my files like I was never here. They can do that. That's how powerful they are. They can make it so you were never here" (84). The unit of the penetrators, in their omniscience of information, omnipresence, and liquidation of persons, reminds readers of the secret organization of the party in George Orwell's novel *1984*. And the means through which these penetrators work is very violent. What they primarily do is simply to "penetrate" (85) as Tadge expresses. Penetrators tortured Tadge for a very long time before he managed to escape. He relates his fearsome experience to Max and Alan: "I found out about them and they kept me in this...black room, it was a...just a black room. They drugged me. I never saw their faces. They'd bring me round every now and then

so they could do more things to me. It must have been weeks. I don't know how long. Maybe months" (85).

Tadge's narration and dramatization of how he escaped from the penetrators, arriving at Max and Alan's flat is one of the most violence-inflicting parts of Neilson's *Penetrator*. Tadge relates the preparations of the penetrators for their new violent torture on himself, and how he escaped from the situation counteracting violently against them and leaving them mutilated. He grabs the wooden pole from the hands of the penetrators and uses it first to jab the eye of one of them, then to strike another's throat "three times", and then to break another penetrator's testicles repeating the hits many times until the man "stopped moving. Stopped breathing" (87). His narration of the scene is more mimed than verbally narrated, reminding one of the scenes called "the art of murder" in Neilson's previous play *Normal*. What has been reflected in the imagination so far is now acted, horrifying the viewers. There is another parallelism with *Normal*: Tadge is first a victim who then turns into a perpetrator of violence, just like Wehner the lawyer in *Normal* who turns from the so called sanity of the society to illegal violent action.

Neilson's use of objects of violence is also noteworthy to explain the violent tone of *Penetrator*. After the imaginary pole cruelly used by Tadge on the three penetrators, "a big, ugly hunting knife: a knife to end all knives" (101) appears in Tadge's hand. The knife is of massive size and was stolen from one of the penetrators who would use it to stab Tadge. Neilson's use of objects of violence in huge forms is also reminiscent of his style from *Normal* where a pair of huge scissors and a huge hammer are used to create effects of violence. "The Knife Sequence," (119) as Neilson calls it in the end-notes to his play,

involves a series of action in which the knife changes hands between Max, Alan, and Tadge, creating some of the most intense moments in the play. The knife, later, turns out to be menacing in Tadge's hand. Holding it, he starts acting in a disorderly and unpredictable fashion. First he points it towards Alan, and then, grabbing one of his toy teddies, starts threatening him. Tadge consummates his intention by tearing "the teddy to shreds" - "a vicious and a frightening action" (106). This is one of the most violent actions in the play as one of the most innocent objects, a teddy-bear, an inanimate object which has been personified since the beginning of the play, is brutally disemboweled with a huge knife. Considering his first play *Normal*, it can be claimed that using inanimate objects of innocent features for violent effects is typical of Neilson: in *Normal* there is a swan whose head is cut with a pair of huge scissors by Kurten. Both scenes from both plays, and especially the particular point of using objects of innocent qualities for the effects of violence, are reminiscent of the most violent scene, a turning point of English stage in 1965, the stoning of a baby in Edward Bond's play *Saved*.

In the play, ideas of the End flourish alongside the seriously violent tone on the foreground. To begin with, it can be asserted that "a return to innocence" is what is being thematized in the play as one of the apocalyptic ideas. Remembering Derrida who finds apocalypticism even in the act of circumcision ("Of an Apocalyptic Tone" 5), masturbation and its outcome ejaculation can also be interpreted as an apocalyptic event. Masturbation and ejaculation frequently occur in In-Yer-Face plays like in the opening scene of Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love* where Hippolytus "masturbates until he comes without a flicker of pleasure," (65) or like Ian from her *Blasted* who is seen masturbating

three times in the play (14, 15, 59). The complete act of masturbation can be translated as an experience of intensive moments and feelings mixed with excitement, which all together reach up a point of a powerful end which is followed by a sense and a revelation of calmness and tranquility. Likewise, Max is found masturbating at the beginning of *Penetrator*. No sooner than he is done, "[he] assumes an almost foetal position" which leads him to "a moment of peace" (62) of mind and body eventually. His taking a "foetal position," which is the position of the first phase of the life of a human being, implies a return to innocence. The idea of the return to innocence as such is an underlying principle of the apocalyptic rhetoric, which suggests an end to everything present in the world and the beginning of a new, unstained, pure and innocent phase of life. The idea is also strengthened at the end of the play where Tadge and Max try to regain their innocence by starting to act as if they are the children of their past after all the contamination, shame, and decay they have been experiencing in their present lives. It is because of this wish to return to innocence that at the very end of the play "[they] munch on the Rolos. Tadge's foot starts to swing. Softly, perhaps unconsciously, they start to hum a tune, lost in their own worlds" (116) of the good old days.

Another apocalyptic insight can be detected in Max's and Tadge's perceptions of their childhood past, since various events from their past mark certain ends and beginnings in their lives. In this sense, it can be claimed that the past has played an important role in shaping the present for both of the characters. However, there is a stark difference in their understanding of the past. Tadge keenly yearns for an attachment with the past whereas Max shows a sheer wish for a detachment from the same. For example, he hates the TV programs of

his childhood: he considers popular and cultural elements of his childhood years "shite," as is clear in his conversation with Alan at the beginning of the play:

> MAX (*off*): *Rrrriiinnngg*!! This Is Your Wake-Up Call. It was *shite*. It was shite *then* and it's shite *now*. It was all shite. *The Persuaders, The Protectors, The Invaders, The Avengers*, *The* fucking *Waltons*, *Thunder*-fucking-*birds*, *The Man from Bollocks, The Hair-Bear Fucks, Mary Mungo and* fucking *Midge*, *all* of it – *shite*.
> ALAN (*pause*): *Dr Who* was good. The Jon Pertwee ones.
> MAX: *Dr Who* was *shite*, for buck-toothed *fucks* in parkas. (66)

On the other hand, Tadge clings to his childhood days and gets happy when he recollects his memories from the period. It is because of this that he frequently and insistently asks Max to tell him about the memories of their childhood days, and repeats his dictum "[it] was better before" (108, 109, 112). As an example, Max reminds him of how "Shite Hawkins" "bust [his] lip open" and Tadge went and beat the boy badly to give him a lesson for messing with his best-friend Max (108-109).

As the play progresses, the reasons why Max escapes from the past and is happy with the present and why Tadge wants to enliven his childhood days and remove the reality of the present from his life become to some extent apparent. Their adventure in the woods may be the cause for their present attitudes to their childhood past. No matter how hard Max tries not to relate the event before Alan, Tadge forces him to do so by threatening to stab him. According to the story, when they were only children, they once got lost in a wood from which they

could not turn get back in the daylight. There they built a bivouac and in it "huddled together [to] keep warm" (111). Then, Tadge asked Max who his best friend was, to which Max responded with "Tadge." It was after this that they promised each other that they would always remain best friends for ever. After confirming this, they played a "doctor-patient" game during which Max let Tadge touch all his private parts. Then the people who had been looking for them came and found them. "The Woods" memory explains much why Tadge feels so close to Max, and thus to his rather happy childhood, whereas Max wants to forget the time. Although implicitly suggested with Tadge's "I remember the smell of you," (112) it is highly probable that Max and Tadge half-consciously experienced a childishly sexual deed during their doctor-patient game. This may have left an unforgettable scene in Max's mind, which gives him pain in the recollection of the past, while, for Tadge, the moment might have meant that he would never feel incomplete again as he had found the right partner for the following days of his life. After all, as Tadge always believed, "[Max was] the brains, I was the brawn;" (108) Tadge sees himself as complemented with Max's presence.

The apocalyptic breaking point, however, the event that caused the end of the past and the beginning of a gradually worsening aftermath, was the time when Max opted to go to a college, thereby cutting his presence with Tadge and leaving him deserted. Max's departure for college, therefore, fragments Tadge's personality, as his brain leaves the body. The event leaves Tadge in a continual state of disappointment which lasts till the present. His joining the military forces may even have been caused by Max's going away as, without

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him, the best for him to do with his brawn would be to take it somewhere like the army.

As another effect, Tadge's disjointedness fuels a problem of loss of identity. Tadge's name, as it is used throughout the play, in reality, is not a proper name given to him by his parents, but a nickname attributed to him by his schoolmates during primary school days. The story has roots back in the aftermath of a swimming course when Tadge, Max, and all their class-mates were having a shower. The students from upper classes found Tadge in the shower to tease with him. While "they were all dancing round him like twats, gobbing and slapping him with towels, snapping the elastic on his trunks" (92) Tadge suddenly got an erection. It was after this event that "people started calling him Tadger, behind his back at first, because he tried to beat up anyone who did, but sheer weight of numbers won out, and it just stuck through secondary until nobody remembered how it had ever started" (92). Therefore, Tadge was just a nickname which overtook the place of his real name. As for now, the loss of identity has grown so deep that even Tadge himself does not know if he has a name when asked by Max to tell him what his name is: "I don't know, *do* I? I don't *have* a name!" (98). What contributes even more to his lack of identity is his ideas relating to the identity of his father. As is known to Max, Tadge's father was a person called Ronnie. However, Tadge denies what was known to Max for years since their childhood, claiming that Ronnie is not his father since "[he] saw it written in [his] file" (80). Later, he proposes that "Norman Schwarzkopf" – one time Commander in Chief of the United States Army Central Command and the Commander of the Coalition Forces during 1991 Gulf War against Iraq (Internet source 13) - is his real father. His terrible sufferings in the

hands of the penetrators add another point to his detachment from his own identity as he repeatedly asserts that penetrators "can make you disappear," (98) turning one into a non-person. Although ambiguity haunts the existence of such penetrators, it looks they have had considerable success in creating "a black hole" (98) out of Tadge. All in all, it is obvious that Max's leaving Tadge has opened incurable wounds in his personality, which is why Tadge one day, on the verge of total annihilation, finds Max in his house and takes refuge near him to heal himself as much as can be done.

Intertwined to these above-mentioned points, there are certain references to the ideas of the end of childhood and the end of innocence throughout the play. Tadge presently questions the end of the better days of their past: "But what about *us*? It was *better* before! You were the brains, I was the brawn! We were friends, we were *real* friends, tell me about *that*, tell me what you remember about *that*!" (108). These remarks clearly show the pain of a lost childhood when life felt better. Afterwards, Tadge has been stuck in a seemingly irreversible state of life with bad experiences. As for Max, on the other hand, the end of the past has been celebrative. He expresses his content about this several times when he says "I *used* to like Creomola Foam, but when I walk into a *pub* I expect *beer*," (66) or "When I became a man, I put away childish things" (74)[16]. Unlike Max, who has lost contact with his childhood and prefers to live in the moment of now, Tadge feels more intact when he relates himself to the past: he is more intact and whole in the past than he is in the present. This is clear in his mentioning of one of their

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[16] Bearing in mind that Neilson here makes an intertextual reference to the Bible, the meaning is even stronger. The complete form of the verse is: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (Internet source 1, *The Holy Bible*, 1 Corinthians 13: 11).

childhood adventures: "And we both had a wank, eh?… He'd never had a wank before. I showed him what to do…You almost shit yourself when you saw your spunk, eh?" (100). In spite of his unpredictably frightening presence, Tadge, sometimes even poses as a child in the play. With the knife he is holding in his hand *"[he] starts going into exaggerated poses with it, Bruce Lee-style…like a thirteen-year-old*" (104-105). In this sense, as far as the present time of the play is concerned, it is true for Tadge when Alan remarks that those were the "[best] days of your life" (92).

This memory also shows the end of innocence in these characters' lives, a theme which was also used in Neilson's previous play *Normal* where Kurten's mind had been stained with sexual perversity from his childhood days. "The Woods" memory, when Max and Tadge played a doctor-patient game of a rather mature nature additionally conduces to the idea of the end of innocence dating back to childhood times. Additionally, Max's mentioning of the beginning and the end of his relationship with his ex-girlfriend Laura is also illustrative of the easy retreat of innocence from the nature and life of these human-beings: "She knew *nothing* about sex when I met her. *Nothing*. She was Mary-fucking-Poppins when I met her and Mary-fucking-Millington when she *left* me" (76).

The play's end relating to the past, the crisis of the characters as adults, and the end of the play where Tadge and Max are reunited for the future remind us of Frank Kermode's assertion that "[apocalypse] depends on a concord of imaginatively recorded past and imaginatively predicted future, achieved on behalf of us, who remain 'in the middest'" (1967: 8). Tadge and Max, and – to some extent – Alan frequently recollect their past days throughout the play. At the very end, Tadge

and Max are united and experience an imaginative journey back to their childhood days as they start eating Rolos together, which signals that the two, now that Alan is kicked out of the house, may have a future together. Therefore, the play is also apocalyptic in the Kermodean sense of the imaginatively predicted past and future.

Another compelling subject of Endism in *Penetrator* is the idea of the end of masculinity. Masculinity can basically be defined as the state of being a male human being. The term, secondly, denotes to "something traditionally considered to be characteristic of a male" (Internet source 14). Cultural theorists have worked the term from both angles and have further branched the term. Mike Donaldson, for example, helps with the definition of "hegemonic masculinity":

> What is hegemonic masculinity as it is presented in this growing literature? Hegemonic masculinity…involves a specific strategy for the subordination of women… A culturally idealised form, it is both personal and a collective project, and is the common sense about breadwinning and manhood. It is exclusive, anxiety-provoking, internally and hierarchically differentiated, brutal and violent. It is pseudo-natural, tough, contradictory, crisis-prone, rich and socially sustained. While centrally connected with the institutions of male dominance, not all men practice it, though most benefit from it. Although cross-class, it often excludes working-class, gay and black-men. It is a lived experience, and an economic and cultural force, and dependent on social arrangements. It is constructed through difficult negotiation over a life-time. Fragile it may be, but it constructs the most dangerous things we live with. Resilient, it incorporates its own

critiques, but it is, nonetheless, 'unravelling'.
(645–646)

It is this culturally and traditionally difficult side of masculinity that makes relations hard to cope with for both sexes. It is primarily destructive for the male kind. Sam Shepard's 1991 play *States of Shock* extensively problematizes the question of what happens when a son, Stubbs, cannot conform to the jingoistically masculine wishes of his father, Colonel. Stubbs expresses how both physically and emotionally he lost his manhood: "When I was hit I could no longer get my 'thing' up. It just hangs there now. Like dead meat. Like road kill", no matter how hard Colonel, who symbolizes the strong and masculine power of his nation, tries to pass Stubbs off to others as a brave *manly* man: "This is the man who attempted to save my son's life by placing his body in the way of incoming artillery" (Shepard 12). As in this literary example, a male human being is almost forced to conform to the traditional masculine personality that the society has already dressed up for himself. Therefore, as John Stoltenberg argues, the concept of masculinity has totally hazardous effects for the male, who can scarcely develop his true personality in society. He sees manhood as an obstacle for being a free human being, as he asserts that "the very manhood act we embrace is inimical to intimacy and trust. And so long as we keep up the manhood act, we miss the point of being human," (11) and that "the beginning of selfhood means the end of manhood" (308). Thus, would it be possible to conclude that the loss of masculinity for Tadge in *Penetrator* may come to mean a turn to his true sex-self? Is Tadge unconsciously after his wholeness as a free man?

As well as its effects at the personal level, there is no doubt that such a categorization of men has negative social consequences. Among

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its many side effects, holding a hegemonic masculinity that promotes a *testosterone culture* above all, is also one of the major factors of violence. Stephen Andrew Sherblom, reviewing Stoltenberg's *The End of Manhood*, presents the following analysis: "The ideology of manhood is only one of several ideologies that embodies and contributes to disrespect, domination, exploitation, and violence in society, or, put differently, perhaps manhood should be seen as one site among many in which a domination-oriented, violence-prone ideology is acted out" (Internet source 15). Therefore, the need to look masculine is one breeder of violence in a society.

The ideology of manhood, which has been announced as a major problem-maker in societies as well as being a continually problematised concept, has created a crisis for its own members of maledom. Roger Horrocks, writing about this crisis of the male in 1994 (a year after the first show of Neilson's *Penetrator*) in his book *Masculinity in Crisis: Myths, Fantasies, Realities* pointed out that "in fact many men are haunted by feelings of emptiness, impotence and rage. They feel abused, unrecognized by modern society. While manhood offers compensations and prizes, it can also bring with it emotional autism, emptiness and despair" (1). Tadge in *Penetrator* certainly falls under this category of manhood in crisis. "Emptiness," "impotence," and "rage" seem to be the building blocks of his characterization. Most of his life has been emptied out and he feels as if he has been put in "[a] black hole where a person was;" (98) and this emptying increases the further he is distanced in time from his comforting childhood. I take Horrock's "impotence" with its definition as "weakness," and claim that the only potent level of action for Tadge is through his violence against others; and violence starts where unifying power is lacking. It is

obvious that Tadge experiences a high level of rage. Besides, he certainly feels "abused," even if he has not been abused in the 'reality' of the play, and has been almost vaporized by those he calls Penetrators. George L. Mosse, writing two years after the play was written, in his 1996 book *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, expressed the crisis of masculinity with these words: "Masculinity was regarded as of one piece from its very beginning: body and soul, outward appearance and inward virtue were supposed to form one harmonious whole, a perfect construct where every part was in its place" (5). With Tadge masculinity seems to have been fragmented and it has lost the wholeness that Mosse mentions. Tadge has been damaged both physically and emotionally, losing the integrity of his masculinity. Another observation on the crisis of masculinity comes from Tim Edwards who remarks in his *Cultures of Masculinity* the following:

> Evidence for the masculinity in crisis thesis tends to come from two inter-linked sets of concerns. The first I call the crisis from without. This includes some partially empirically documented concerns relating to the position of men within such institutions as the family, education and work. A specific concern here is the perception that men have lost, or are losing, power or privilege relative to their prior status in these institutions. The second I call the crisis from within. This is far less easily documented as it centres precisely on a perceived shift in men's *experiences* of their position *as* men, their maleness, and what it means. Most importantly, this often refers to a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness or uncertainty. (6)

Both versions of Edwards' theory are well-documented in *Penetrator*. "Crisis from without" is in the play as none of these youngsters, Alan, Max, and Tadge, seem able to take the responsibility of forming a family of their own. Max had a failure of a relation with Laura who has been secretly taken up by Alan now. As for Tadge, he is scarcely able to form an identity of his own, let alone trying to find the right partner to form a family for himself. Tim Edwards considers the lack of family as "the most complex arena within which the greatest sense of concern relating to a perceived crisis of masculinity resides" (9). As for education, it can be said that it does not hold much place in these people's lives. Max went to college, which was the point of departure from Tadge, and is more refined only compared to Tadge who, without proper education, ended up killing people around the world with the army. As for work, on the other hand, it can be stated that Tadge tried to make a living in the army by killing people while the occupations of the other two are not specified. There is a striking example of the lack of a decent job in theses youngsters' lives, though, with one of Max's and Alan's close friends, Pete, who makes a living by selling his sperms (68). This is also noteworthy in illustrating the crisis of the dignity of the male characters in the play. Edwards' components which build up the crisis from within also have reflections in *Penetrator*. Such a "crisis from within" is felt in the powerlessness of each character, as they can only feel powerful when they hold an object of violence (for example Tadge's knife). As has been earlier stated, power negates the use of objects of violence, and hence, such situations present dramatic irony and the "crisis from within." Tadge's frequently uncertain behaviour is also an indication of Edwards' crisis of masculinity as reflected in *Penetrator*.

Another point relating to the end of masculinity in *Penetrator* can be detected in a related branch to the concept sadomasochism. Geoff Mains ties sadomasochism with masculinity, and further describes the concept with these remarks: "[Sadomasochism] takes images of masculinity, the use and abuse of power, and the values of creativity, and it pits them against the perils of human arrogance and the realities of human limits. It creates from all of this an experience that is cathartic, ecstatic and spiritual" (21). Seeing Mains' last three adjectives attributed to the nature of sadomasochism, I would claim that it is, in other words, apocalyptic since the fundamental principles of the apocalyptic, as an umbrella term, embody "cathartic, ecstatic, and spiritual". I find sadomasochism at the beginning of the play with the subhuman voice-over recordings which are full of words of extreme obscenity mixed with violent connotations. Therefore, the problematization of masculinity starts at the beginning of the play with its sadomasochistic overtones, where, using Mains' remarks, an apocalyptic expression can be seen as well. However, the rest of the play gradually dissolves the tough masculine tone of the first scenes to prove the idea of the end of masculinity. The last scene, for instance, is a scene of childish innocence, and it poses a stark difference when compared to the sadomasochistic desire of the opening parts of the play. Tim Edwards, in his *Erotics and Politics: Gay Male Sexuality, Masculinity, and Feminism*, points out that "[sado]-masochism is simultaneously a damned desire and a desire for damnation" (75). There is a certain amount of "damned desire" at the beginning of *Penetrator*, however, the rest of the play develops more towards finding a safe place to escape from the atmosphere of such a damnation.

A closer focus on several points of the play would further help expose the idea of the end of masculinity in *Penetrator*. To begin with, it should be noted that *Penetrator* is a play which mainly and above all focuses on the phenomenon of the male sex. There is no female character; beyond even the absence of the female characters, they are scarcely even talked of or mentioned. The absence of female characters and the emphasis on male problems may also be expressing the erosion of the masculine. George L. Mosse observes this struggle of the masculine against its opponent, the feminine, during 1990s:

> To be sure, insecurity and fear remained as some men faced the new woman, and by the 1990s a so-called men's literature had come into being that tried to reassure men through attempting to locate a virile masculine essence that solely men could claim as their own. The masculine stereotype was under greater pressure now than it had been at the turn of the century, and the much milder reaction demonstrates that it was already being eroded and not just by the challenge of a revitalized women's movement but by men themselves. This was a change through erosion, not confrontation, and it seems of equal if not of greater symbolic importance for the fate of the masculine stereotype at the end of the twentieth century than the increased presence of liberated women. (183)

Besides, all objects like the army uniform Tadge is wearing, the porn magazine Max hastily hides when Alan enters in the first scene, the huge knife Tadge brings out from his sack, and even the title of the play are closely associated with the male sex. Additionally, several strong misogynistic ideas conduce to the growth of the idea of the male

in the play. The mouthpiece of misogyny is Max. Talking of relations with women in general, Max says:

> MAX: ...I'm sick of these fuckers. What do they *want*? Because you can't *win* with these people. (*Pause.*) All men are bastards. Well I know plenty of men who were *nice* men, who were *good* men, until they got fucked over by *women*. *I* used to be a nice guy. Seriously. Where did it get me? *Nowhere*. (*Pause.*) Nowhere. (*Pause.*) I'll tell you something: Women will *always* get what they want. If they haven't *got* it yet, it's because not enough of them *want* it. (70)

In another of his dialogues with Alan, Max again bursts out with his misogynist viewpoints about women: "Women, you see, I'll tell you something: They use men – we use *them* too but in a different way – *They* use men to *learn*. I know how that sounds but they *do*. To *learn*. And when they've learnt as much as they can from you, they move on to the *next* sorry idiot" (75).

Therefore, it is obvious that *Penetrator* highlights the issue of masculinity in general, and particularly explores the concept of its end. The play is apocalyptic in its deconstructive view of hegemonic masculinity and the male psyche. It depicts, through the character of Tadge, the diseased world of shattered manhood. In his smashing the testicles of one of the Penetrators while he was escaping in the fourth act (87), Tadge is brutally trying to revenge the defeat of his own manhood at the hands of the Penetrators. The deformed masculinity roots back to the past of the characters. Upper-class pupils' teasing of Tadge because of his erection in the shower may have remained as a painful memory or a reminder that has haunted him in the rest of his

life, causing him to suppress masculine feelings. The nickname "Tadger," which later transfigures to "Tadge" and remains his name, is also another example for the repression and devaluation of masculinity, as the word means "a small penis" (Internet Source 16). In addition to these is the child homoeroticism between Max and Tadge which may have negatively affected the future nature of the masculine feelings of these two characters. The event most fatally related to the idea of the end of manhood is Tadge's alleged torturous penetration, in other words rape, by the Penetrators, which occurred, both physically and psychologically, in a very painful way. Tadge relates it in these words:

> TADGE: You don't know what it was like. In the dark. All shrivelled up. Just my hatred keeping me alive. Their hands all over me. And you never came for me. Their dirty cocks in my mouth, up my arse. I know how to kill a man. I'm not afraid. I've seen guys get their ears cut off. I've seen lassies with their cunts shot out. I'm not scared of blood on my hands, hot blood pouring on my hands. (109)

It is only after the loss of his trust in his masculinity - in the traditionally expected features of manhood - that Tadge succeeds in escaping and takes refuge where he feels safer. Apart from the characters in the foreground, one of Max's friend's, Pete's, selling his sperm to make a living (68), or Tadge's mentioning of one of the soldiers in his dorm, who, for three months, used a liver compressed in his flask to stimulate sexual intercourse and eventually got sick (82), are like snapshots from other areas of life which further illustrate the incapacitation of the male in the play. All in all, it can be claimed that *Penetrator*, with its voice-over recordings in the beginning, starts with

the utmost sense of masculinity, and gradually develops to expose and reveal the idea of its end.

The revelation of truth is another powerfully apocalyptic aspect of Neilson's *Penetrator*. The storyline of the play runs towards several examples of the disclosure of truth. The abrupt arrival of Tadge at Max and Alan's house starts the exposition of a series of truths relating to each character's life: truth about Tadge's real identity is sought for, as well as the truth of what really happened to him. Above all, the most significant disclosure of truth is that of Alan as the Penetrator. The first hint that Alan may be a Penetrator in Max's life is given by Tadge's capture of one of Alan's teddies with his huge knife and forcing him to "[confess]" (105). Alan refuses to say anything, claiming that "I'm innocent" (106), which results in Tadge's disemboweling the teddy. Afterwards, Tadge captures Alan himself, and wants him to confess that he was one of the Penetrators who tortured him in the black-room: "He was in the black room. I remember him. His voice. The smell of his cock" (106). Tadge further accuses Alan of "[turning] Max against me" and "tear[ing] us apart" (106). While, on the one hand, this may be seen as one of Tadge's unpredictable and violent acts, through the end of the play it will be proven that Tadge has actually been right about Alan. Whether Alan was also one of the torturous Penetrators in the black room is disputable but he certainly has been exposed as Laura's lover, having started seeing her after the end of her relationship with Max. Max's crucial question to Alan initiates the greatest revelation of all in the play: "How did you know that Laura set my giraffe on fire?" (113). In response, Alan gives a series of inconsistent answers which are enough for Max to understand truth that Alan must have slept with Laura. This deception is enough to label Alan as a Penetrator to Max's

life. Tadge, having sensed that Alan is a Penetrator, one of those who can be found everywhere, has been struggling to send him out from Max's life and to take his place. At the end of the play, Max asks Alan to "get out" (115) of the house, which he does. Although Tadge poses as a real Penetrator in coming to the house and threatening their lives by brute force, in the end, it is made clear that true penetration is not physical but emotional, as Alan has secretly penetrated Max's relation with Laura. Eventually, the Penetrator Alan is sent out and "Anti-Penetrator Unit One" (106) consisting of Max as the brains and Tadge as the brawn is reunited, "[munching] on the Rolos" (116) as they used to do in their childhood period. Furthermore, the calmness of this last scene demonstrates that "[the] violence", haunting almost all the preceding scenes, "is what the audience have to go through to get to this tender, even sentimental, moment" (Sierz 78).

In conclusion, it can be claimed that Anthony Neilson's *Penetrator*, like his previous play *Normal*, has apocalyptic overtones. The play releases its apocalypticism with an overt current of violence in the foreground which becomes the expository tint for the representation of ideas of the End which are found in the play. In other words, while violent action forms the body of the play, apocalypticism is the spirit that moves it. Consequently, both *Normal* and *Penetrator*, as two examples of 1990s British, or the so-called In-Yer-Face, plays harbor apocalyptic overtones expressed alongside an emphasized sense of violence.

CHAPTER 5

TRAUMATIC APOCALYPSE: SARAH KANE'S *4.48 PSYCHOSIS*

"And my mind is the subject of these bewildered fragments"

Although Sarah Kane's *Blasted* (1995) was not the first shocking example of In-Yer-Face theatre, it was certainly acclaimed as the best inaugurating play of the 1990s British drama: "comparisons were made with the fuss Edward Bond's *Saved* caused thirty years earlier" (Sierz 93). "[With] *Blasted* the Royal Court directorate could argue that they had discovered a 1990s version of Bond" (Luckhurst 2005: 111). Bond himself confirms that "*Blasted* changed reality because it changed the means we have of understanding ourselves. It showed us a new way in which to see reality, and when we do that reality is changed," (Bond's "Afterword" in *Love me or Kill Me* 190) pronouncing the radical direction Kane gave to theatre during the 1990s. Ken Urban wrote that "Kane's *Blasted* remains the defining moment of British theatre in the 1990s, not because of the media brouhaha, but because it was a wake-up call: the critics had to recognize changes occurring in British playwriting" (37). Just as Kane's opening play *Blasted* had an incredible effect, *4.48 Psychosis* (1999)[17] presented an incredible close to a career for the then dead Kane. Since apocalypse, the central discourse in this study, deals with ends more than it does with beginnings, this chapter focuses on the last of Kane's plays, *4.48 Psychosis*, and analyses how the play contributes to the apocalyptic diegesis of the 1990s British playwriting. In studying the play and examining the apocalyptic

[17] It should be kept in mind that although the play was completed by Kane in 1999, it was first performed after her death in 2000.

discourse in it, I observe that Kane uses trauma, more particularly psychological trauma, as a catalyst and a conducive discourse to create the apocalyptic effect in her *4.48 Psychosis*. Therefore, this chapter will study first the traumatic nature of *4.48 Psychosis,* which combines with the apocalyptic eventually, and hence what I call the traumatic apocalypse in *4.48 Psychosis*.

In order to lead the way into a study of the traumatic apocalypse in her *4.48 Psychosis*, a brief overview of Kane's dramaturgy should primarily be explored. Radical, extreme, unconventional, shocking, traumatic, apocalyptic, avant-garde, violent, alarming, and obscene: no matter how diversely Kane's theatre may be labeled, one feature is indisputably definite: it is experiential. She was continuously in search of a new aesthetic, a different representation style throughout her five plays. A start with realism and then the shattering of it in her *Blasted*, a remaking of and a visit to the Classics in her *Phaedra's Love* (1996), a composition of a cruel, perverted, and nightmarish romance in her *Cleansed* (1998), an addition of absurd colors in her *Crave* (1998), and a complete removal of the form and a welcoming of the postdramatic in her *4.48 Psychosis*, Kane was truly an experiential playwright. As Graham Saunders also observes, "Kane was a writer who never stood still, and from *Blasted* onwards made bold new experimental inroads into dramatic form" (2002: 117).

Ken Urban in his "An Ethics of Catastrophe" mentions that "[of] all [these British Writers of the 1990s]…Sarah Kane emerges as the most far-reaching experimentalist" (40). Graham Saunders, additionally, in his "'Just a Word on a Page and there is the Drama.' Sarah Kane's Theatrical Legacy," remarks that "[whereas] at times it seemed that the most onerous stylistic task for a director working on

new plays in the 1990s was where to place the sofa or arrange the detritus of the urban squat, Kane's work seemed to concern itself with breaking down theatrical boundaries" (106). Kane surely wanted to break away from the conventional social realist style and introduce a new aesthetic which was apolitical but powerful. Therefore, "[her] plays seek not to persuade but to present," and "the extremity of Kane's writing speaks of the gulf between her and both her notional audience and the theatre establishment of the day" (Waters 374). Kane was different from the cohort of playwrights she was involved in. Unlike others who wrote in line with the new features of the New Writing, she was extreme and after aesthetic terrorism in drama (377-378). *Blasted* was definitely a breaking point and the opening play for Kane's experientialism:

> That struggle bore fruit in the rage of *Blasted* – here sex in all its dangerous pain is staged; here the tact of what was dubbed 'political correctness' is gleefully broken; here masculinity re-enters the stage in the wounded form of Ian, anatomized, even celebrated before being brutally punished; here the theatre of humanism and consensus is abandoned for ceaseless confrontation. (Waters 381)

Kane herself recounts her inclination for an experiential theatre with the following anecdote:

> [*Mad*][18] was a project that brought together professional and non-professional actors who all had some personal experience of mental illness. It was an unusual piece of theatre because it was totally experiential as opposed

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[18] *Mad* was a 1992 play by Jeremy Weller.

to speculatory. As an audience member, I was taken to a place of extreme mental discomfort and distress and then popped out the other end. What I did not do was sit in the theatre considering as an intellectual conceit what it might be like to be mentally ill. It was a bit like being given a vaccine. I was mildly ill for a few days afterwards but the jab of sickness protected me from a far more serious illness later in life. *Mad* took me to hell, and the night I saw it I made a decision about the kind of theatre I wanted to make – experiential. (qtd. in Saunders 2003: 99)

Later on, Kane wrote accordingly and in tandem with what she calls a "personal experience of mental illness" which is most particularly obvious in *4.48 Psychosis*.

The archetypal conflict observable in all artistic styles between what Nietzsche called in his *The Birth of Tragedy* the Dionysian, that is emotional, instinctive, impulsive, and spontaneous, and the Apollonian, that is rational, conscious, cautious, and planned was also a stylistic issue for Kane. Viewed through this dichotomy, Kane's plays certainly give signs of the Dionysian modes. Both Hippolytus and Phaedra in her *Phaedra's Love* are imprisoned in the loops of impulsive action; the form of the text as well as the decomposing character of the patient in her *4.48 Psychosis* are direct indications of the irrational; and the hysterical Cate who cannot choose between alternating laughing and crying in her *Blasted* is no less a concretization of the emotional in Kane's dramaturgy. Alyson Campbell in her "Experiencing Kane: an affective analysis of Sarah Kane's 'experiential' theatre in performance" detects the same vein of playwriting in Kane and claims that hers is theatre that makes us ask not "what is the play about?" but "what did

this theatre feel like?" (81). She clarifies the difference lying between the two questions:

> The images and 'image structures' Kane develops throughout her work are an attempt to connect with the spectator at a physical level and the effectiveness – or affectiveness – of this imagery lies less in a request for the audience to make meaning, but in its demand for the audience to set active meaning-making aside; to allow the asignifying power of the work to take over. As such the work resists an analysis based only on 'what is this play about?' and demands instead one that asks 'what did this theatre *feel* like?'. (80-81)

Therefore, Kane's theatre develops strong ties with spectators. The diegesis of Kane's plays construct so powerful an affinity with their spectators that the audience and the play almost share the same spatial zone. In this illusion lies the power of Kane's theatre in making or rather forcing the viewers to feel the experience created on her stage. Especially with the usual show of extremities in her plays, the so-called voluntary suspension of disbelief is so forced to its extremes that the spectator needs either to leave the building and turn back to the regular reality outside or opt for perceiving what is very difficult to experience by sight and internalize the show by this feeling. If it was not for this curious taste, spectators would not wish to participate in a performance, of *Blasted* for example, where Ian whose eyes have just been sucked out from their holes by the Soldier, digs the killed baby out from where it was buried and eats it. Compared to Bond's agro-effect with the stoning of the baby in *Saved*, the scene Kane presents is purely cannibalistic and shocking, and is only bearable for those spectators who can survive in the same spatial and temporal zone which the play

constructs. In this respect, what Gay McAuley writes – "the specificity of theatre is not to be found in its relationship to the dramatic, as film and television have shown through their appropriation and massive exploitation of the latter, but in that it consists essentially of the interaction between performers and spectators in a given space" (5) – is an entirely valid observation for Kane's plays.

However, although the performance is so effective on the emotional intelligence of the viewers inside the theatre, it would be misleading not to mention that Kane's plays do appeal to and trigger spectators' critical faculty outside the theatre, too. The interior emotional density created during the play gives way to an exterior appraisal. Campbell emphasizes that Kane's theatre follows a pattern of perception that starts with emotional reaction and turns to critical contemplation (85). Once the initial shock is over, one cannot help thinking over the question of why Kane in her *Cleansed* creates a character like Tinker who acts like a cruel terminator and a fiend conducting all sorts of torture on the people around him.

Kane's plays feature scenes of dismembering of bodies, rape, masturbation, defecation, cannibalism, and extreme brutality. Such scenes immediately create shock-effects, and Kane's theatre aesthetic embraces the creation of shock-effects. Campbell notes that "shock, it's fairly clear, is Kane's first technique in attempting to break down familiar perceptions. Whether it is the shock of the early blood, shit and mutilation variety, or the shocking lack of 'shocking' graphic images later on, it is certainly the most obvious form taken by her attempts to create affect" (85). Therefore, shocking the viewer is a way of leading them into the participation in the act of critical thinking. However, it should also be noted that Kane does not use scenes merely to create

shock-effects, in other words, she does not attempt a mere shock-for-shock's sake. Hers is rather a subtle use of shock. For example, the blast that destroys all the setting of the hotel room as well as the lives of Ian and Cate in *Blasted* comes right in the middle of the play, suggesting a breaking point from the old to the new phase of life for the characters. It is not intended to be a visual show.

Despite all its shocking quality, absurdist implications, and its attempt to break away from recognizable and traditional theatrical styles, Ken Urban could still discover comic overtones in Kane's theatre (2008: 149-170). Although this may seem unlikely at first sight, it is not entirely erroneous to claim a comedic character for Kane's plays. After all, the mask of comedy poses an unfitting smile for the ugliness and stupidity - two deformations of the human structure - of human beings. Kane shows human ugliness through her Soldier in *Blasted* who admits, for example, that "[he] broke a woman's neck. Stabbed up between her legs, on the fifth stab snapped her spine," (46) or through Ian in the same play who defecates and tries to clean it with a newspaper (59). Kane manifests human stupidity when Ian tries to "[strangle] himself with his bare hands" (59) or when the Priest in *Phaedra's Love* starts suddenly to fellate on Hippolytus for whom the Priest has been there to ask for confession and forgiveness from God right before the execution (95-97). As these examples show the comedic character of Kane's plays are revealed through disturbing ugliness, something human nature is capable of displaying.

Next to be pointed out about Kane's theatre is its embracing of a conscious expression of trauma, more precisely psychological trauma. Steve Waters observes that "[a] central concern in Kane's work…is a passionate, almost pathological identification with pain and trauma and

a concomitant desire to communicate the horror of pain in its own idiom" (373). From a biographical perspective, Kane's own career from its start to its end is considered to be highly traumatic, too. "The opening of *Blasted* on 17 January 1995 in the Theatre Upstairs at the Royal Court has achieved a secure place in theatre mythology. It is tragically mirrored by an answering mythical moment, the suicide of the author of the play, aged 28, in February 1999. These events and what lies between them continue to bear a traumatic force" (371). The dramatic end of Kane's life combined with her traumatic condition was almost a reflection of her traumatic drama. With Kane's suicide, her pitiable death, "Bosnia, horror, shock were…deemed secondary to the drama of private pain, of states of love, of obsession; Kane's own narrative – from incendiary origins to her terrible end – had blotted out the question her work had earlier raised" (372). Kane had been experiencing depression throughout her career. She was personally involved in psychological trauma. "Those close to her had known of her struggle with clinical depression throughout her twenties and had observed that each bout was worse than the last" (Luckhurst 2005: 118).

Psychological trauma "represents events that are emotionally shocking or horrifying, which threaten or actually involve death(s) or a violation of bodily integrity (such as sexual violation or torture) or that render the affected person(s) helpless to prevent or stop the resultant psychological and physical harm" (Reyes, Elhai, and Ford 10). A close analysis of Kane's plays demonstrates that they carry such traces of psychological trauma. Especially her first play *Blasted* and her last play *4.48 Psychosis* are of highly traumatic character. The blast that comes in the middle of *Blasted* is like the symbol event of the traumatic events

and their impacts described in the definition above. It cuts the reality into two for Ian and Cate, shocking and horrifying them, followed by complementary events of the violation of bodily integrity (as with Soldier's raping of Ian). The hysterical Cate with unpredictable behaviors poses as another traumatic element in *Blasted*. Her sudden losses of consciousness followed by awakenings or hysterical laughter show to what extent she has been psychologically traumatized. Occasionally, stage directions indicate similar notes to the following: "Cate bursts into laughing, unnaturally, hysterically, uncontrollably" (9). She again bursts into a laughing fit when she realizes that the baby is dead, and the stage directions read: "Cate bursts out laughing, unnaturally, hysterically, uncontrollably. She laughs and laughs and laughs and laughs and laughs" (57). Transporting one of Ken Urban's remarks to the event "[this] is the laughter laughing at the world's futility, laughter laughing at the revelation of life's finitude" (2008: 166).

Blasted was labeled by Roger Foss as "the prurient psycho-fantasies of a profoundly disturbed mind" (qtd. in Luckhurst 2005: 109). Therefore, Kane's psychology was seen as disturbed from the beginning of her career; "her mental health was stigmatized" (Luckhurst 2005: 109). These remarks find support in Peter Buse's *Drama + Theory: Critical Approaches to Modern British Drama*. Buse starts by stressing that "[trauma] is a kind of brutalizing shock, and it is for submitting her audiences to exactly this, in heavy doses, that Kane has been both applauded and dismissed" (173). Therefore, it should be accepted that one of Kane's extremes in the theatre of extremes of her time was the underlying traumatic expression in the tone of her plays. Scenes of rape forced either on the opposite or the same sex, sucking of

eyes and eating them, eating of a baby's corpse are, among many similar other scenes, enough to inflict the negative energy of trauma onto the playgoers. In *Blasted*, none of the characters is exempt from traumatic conditions. Buse's remarks are noteworthy:

> The soldier has both suffered and inflicted horrific violence during the course of whatever war is taking place, and he continues to reenact these crimes in their full brutality. Ian, it appears, has also been involved as a perpetrator in some sort of atrocities, but he revisits his possible war crimes as phantasms, or, rather, they revisit him…Finally, Cate, as a victim, is thrust into a compulsive repetition[19] of her previous scenes of abuse and yet, at the same time, resists the pattern of repetition and attempts to halt it. (176-177)

Compulsive repetition, as a severe aftereffect of a traumatic situation, also visits Soldier, although he is the perpetrator but not the victim of the three characters. Apparently, the event that traumatized Soldier is the horrifying murder of his girlfriend. He briefs the event as: "…they buggered her. Cut her throat. Hacked her ears and nose off, nailed them to the front door" (47). The event must have caused Soldier's compulsive repetition of the same or similar enactments both during the war outside and during the time he is inside the flat with Ian and Cate. He rapes Ian, and sucks his eyes out inside, and beforehand, when outside, he indulges in the following bloodcurdling event (Buse 177-178):

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[19] "Compulsive repetition" or "repetitive compulsion" is a term coined by Sigmund Freud in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). Briefly, it refers to a patient's observable repetition of an action which caused his/her traumatic condition.

Soldier: Went to a house just outside town. All gone. Apart from a small boy hiding in the corner. One of the others took him outside. Lay him on the ground and shot him through the legs. Heard crying in the basement. Went down. Three men and four women. Called the others. They held the men while I fucked the women. Youngest was twelve. Didn't cry, just lay there. Turned her over and – Then she cried. Made her lick me clean. Closed my eyes and thought of –

Shot her father in the mouth. Brothers shouted. Hung them from the ceiling by their testicles. (43)

David Greig in his "Introduction" to *Sarah Kane: Complete Plays* portrays *4.48 Psychosis* with the following words: "*4.48 Psychosis* is a report from a region of the mind that most of us hope never to visit but from which many people cannot escape" (xvii). Then, how about *4.48 Psychosis*, the major Kane play within the scope of this study? How does trauma appear in the last of Kane's plays? Does she close her career as traumatically as she began with *Blasted*? The answer is: yes, and even more. It may not be an exaggeration to claim that *4.48 Psychosis* is filled with trauma from top to toe; trauma is an intrinsic feature and is what runs the whole show. Jolene L. Armstrong argues in a double entendre that "[*4.48 Psychosis*] is not a narrative that attempts to relate the experience of trauma. It is trauma in *media res*" (219). Unlike Kane's earlier work, which features episodes of trauma such as rape, mutilation, war, and suicide, this play is trauma itself" (246).

When closely read, trauma in *4.48 Psychosis* starts with the title. The two indicators of the title – '4.48' and the word 'psychosis' - conduce to the traumatic complexity the play undertakes to emphasize.

These two parts of the title, through a dichotomy of meanings, give way to a clash of meanings, in other words to an oxymoron. As Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines, the word "psychosis" means "fundamental mental derangement (as paranoia) characterized by defective or lost contact with reality" (Woolf 931). 'Psychosis' signifies a loss of contact with the real world whereas '4.48', as an indicator of a specific and conscious temporal point in the real world, signifies a conscious attachment to reality. Therefore, hidden in the title of the play is the clash of reality and the lost reality, or is the forced presence of the conscious with the lost consciousness, creating a traumatic syndrome. This contrast in the title may also be seen as an analepsis that parallels the traumatic and the complex mode of representation that the form and the content of the play display throughout. After all "[the] events of the play take place outside of the ordinary time/space continuum of life, and yet they represent events that occurred within the regular space/time continuum of ordinary existence" (Armstrong 226). Therefore, when closely read, it can be claimed that the title of the play, in a nutshell, also gives a reflection of the traumatic experience Kane attaches the viewers with throughout *4.48 Psychosis*.

Peter Buse remarks that "[trauma] is not just a crisis in the memory of the traumatized subject but a crisis in representation and narration" (182). The first example that demonstrates this observation takes place with the title. There are other examples where the veracity of Buse's remark can be studied. The abundance of forms Kane applies within the narration also refers to a representational trauma. "[This] is the rhythm of madness" says the patient (227). Assuming that Kane with this expression is referring to the many-formed-ness of her play, it is noticeable that this rhythm is one of irregularity, imbalance, and

randomness in form. The form of expressions is so volatile that it occasionally takes the form of lyric, dialogue, monologue, fragmented and scattered words, medical documents, stream of consciousness, abbreviations, counting-down of numbers, prose, a list, a mere repetition of certain words following one another, Biblical language, and even the form of haiku (as in 213 or 227). The rhythm of the madness loses its pace as the play is about to come to an end, as indicated with the patients' very sparsely put last expressions. All considered, in *4.48 Psychosis*, there is surely a reflection in form of the crisis of the traumatised subject at the representational level.

The second line of trauma in the representational level manifests itself in the use of language, more particularly the role of silences used in the language of the play. The play starts with a silence, "[a] very long [one]" (205). Kane, to her short play, put 47 moments of "silence," alternating among plain silence, long ones, or very long ones. This can be considered a high rate of silences in a play in which expressions uttered would convey more meanings than those paused through silences. However, a close analysis of the use of silences as they are placed in the text of *4.48 Psychosis* reveals an additional interpretation, one that subliminally contributes to the color of trauma in the play. Examining the text holistically, it is obvious that Kane uses silences peculiarly: the indication of the first consecutive five silences on the first page of the text is followed by a series of monologues of approximately five pages in length. Then the second series of silences (eight in number) can be found in the text, which gives way to two and a half pages of sayings. The next density of silences consists of thirteen moments followed by two pages of a monologue. The oncoming group of silences in the text is indicated with seven moments after which

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there is no sign of any silences for fourteen pages in the text. By the way, these fourteen pages present the severest points of trauma, detailing symptoms, diagnosis, psychiatric drugs, sanity, and death as if they represent and reflect a long paroxysm of the patient. These textualized symptoms then lead up to some moments of tranquility, the last sequence made up of fourteen silences, after which the succession of uttered words are unbroken until the end, for seven pages. All this irregularity of a pattern in the use of silences from the beginning until the end of the play exhibits the text of *4.48 Psychosis* as itself self-consciously experiencing a syndrome of psychological trauma (maybe a compulsive repetition) in reflecting uninterrupted moments of speeches for a while, which is then followed by moments of speeches cut by a series of silences.

Apart from this representational level, trauma in *4.48 Psychosis* is best manifested through the characterization of the patient. This unnamed patient character is surely in a traumatized condition, and the play is almost a documentary of the post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) the patient is suffering. "PTSD involves four general types of symptoms that include unwanted memories (or reminders) of past traumatic experiences, attempts to avoid those memories or reminders, a reduction in the ability to feel positive emotions, and an increase in physical tension, sleeplessness, watchfulness for danger, and negative emotions (particularly anger, frustration, and anxiety)" (Reyes, Elhai, and Ford xi). The patient harbors most of these symptoms: Her "I have become so depressed by the fact of my mortality that I have decided to commit suicide" (207) can be taken as a reduction in the ability to feel positive emotions while her "When he wakes he will envy my sleepless night of thought" (208) is indicatory of sleeplessness. "This is not a

world in which I wish to live" (210) demonstrates negative emotions while her cry "DON'T LET THIS KILL ME / THIS WILL KILL ME AND CRUSH ME AND / SEND ME TO HELL / I beg you to save me from this madness that eats me," (226) makes plain watchfulness for danger. However, it is also worth mentioning that the play does not reveal what the exact traumatic event that has left the patient in her present situation is. This may be a reflection of yet another PTSD symptom, the so-called "psychogenic amnesia" which is "avoidance of activities or situations arousing recollections of the trauma, the inability to recall trauma events" (Tran 7).

Most of PTSD effects in the patient's life are revealed in her listing of how she feels about certain points in her life:

> I am sad
> I feel that the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve
> I am bored and dissatisfied with everything
> I am a complete failure as a person
> I am guilty, I am being punished
> I would like to kill myself
> I used to be able to cry but now I am beyond tears
> I have lost interest in other people
> I can't make decisions
> I can't eat
> I can't sleep
> I can't think
> I cannot overcome my loneliness, my fear, my disgust
> I am fat
> I cannot write
> I cannot love
> My brother is dying, my lover is dying, I am killing them both
> I am charging towards my death
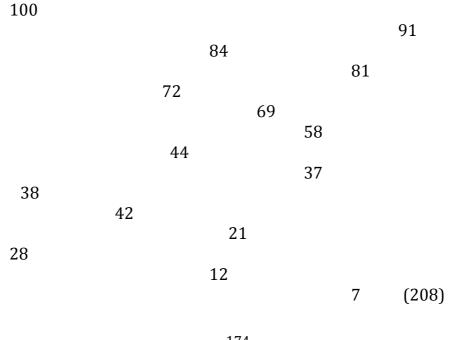> I am terrified of medication
> I cannot make love
> I cannot fuck

> I cannot be alone
> I cannot be with others
> My hips are too big
> I dislike my genitals (205-206)

These remarks of the evaluation of one's self signal that the person is in a psychological crisis. It shows that the patient is on the verge of a psychological collapse; it seems that her mental faculties as well as her organic systems have stopped functioning properly and self-destruction is deemed necessary. The patient ostensibly hates herself, has a guilty consciousness, feels isolated from other people, feels fragmented and dissatisfied with everything that makes a life for her, and has a suicidal tendency. She is utterly in a psychosis.

The patient's psychosis is also evident in the irregular, chaotic, and disorderly operation of her mind. Peter Buse asserts that "It is in the very nature of trauma to resist being accounted for in a completely coherent or easily comprehensible way" (181). An illustration of this point in the text of the play is the irregularly placed numbers:

100

                                                91

                  84

                              81

              72

                    69

                        58

              44

                      37

38

        42

              21

28

        12

                7   (208)

        174

The patient undoubtedly goes through a mental, personal, and temporal fragmentation phase. "[Her] mind is the subject of" the play's "bewildered fragments" (210). The irregularity of forms used as her expressions reflect her mental fragmentation. The personal fragmentation, on the other hand, is revealed in the unbridgeable breach between her body and soul. As she admits "Body and soul can never be married" (212). She thinks that her character does not actually fit into her body, claiming an improper match of the creation: "Do you think it's possible for a person to be born in the wrong body?" (215). If they can never be married, why force them to live in the same house? The easiest way to depart them is through death, which the patient is determined-mindedly seeking. On the temporal level, her fragmentation is manifested in her obsession with the exact self-promised time of the day: 4.48. The patient is "in [her] right mind," that is fully conscious of herself, for "one hour and twelve minutes" (229) starting with 4.48 in the morning. However, after six o'clock she turns to her usual psychotic state becoming a "fragmented puppet" (229). 4.48 is, therefore, the exact time when she temporarily regains her consciousness and she wants to use it as an opportunity to end the greater rest of the time of the day when she acts more or less unconsciously. Therefore, the dichotomy between the consciousness of 4.48 until 6.00 and the rest of the day leaves her torn with a temporal fragmentation.

Under such fragmentation that surrounds all aspects of her life, the patient cannot help but fall into disturbing negations and irreconcilable opposites. She calls herself "the child of negation," (239) and gives a list of negatives which signal her vetoes against life:

unpleasant
unacceptable
uninspiring
impenetrable

irrelevant
irreverent
irreligious
unrepentant (221)

dislike
dislocate
disembody
deconstruct

...

irrespective

...

irrational
irreducible
irredeemable
unrecognisable (222)

...

derailed
deranged
deform (223)

Besides, her life is divided between stark opposites: she needs to choose either life or death. There is no middle way between the two, like living with what the world can give next: "a black and white film of yes or no yes or no yes or no yes or no yes or no yes or no," (240) repeating itself monotonously. Even the best and the worst of the most

powerful feelings are experienced in opposite extremes, as she says: "I've always loved you / even when I hated you" (240).

What happened to her and what exactly caused the trauma are not revealed within the play. Dominic LaCapra writes that "numbingly traumatic event does not register at the time of its occurrence but only after a temporal gap or period of latency, at which time it is immediately repressed, split off, or disavowed" (174). Maybe the patient in *4.48 Psychosis* is still in this period of dormancy that she does not remember the event. Nevertheless, there are many moments in the play where certain expressions are repeated, reflecting a condition of compulsive repetition in the linguistic level. However, the fact that there is no mentioning of the event that caused the trauma means that the event is deliberately forgotten to be mentioned and the patient forgot the event. As Cathy Caruth observes, the "power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting," (as in the case of compulsive repetition) "but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is experienced at all" (17). Therefore, by forgetting the traumatizing event, the patient experiences a powerful post-traumatic condition.

Added to these above-mentioned critical opinions on Kane's theatre, I would like to set the stage by claiming that traumatic character of Kane's theatre is strongly associated with the apocalyptic nature of her style. Therefore, a sense of traumatic apocalypse is an intrinsic quality of hers, and *4.48 Psychosis* is a play where it appears more brightly than ever. In *4.48 Psychosis*, trauma gradually reflects the ideas of the End, and apocalypse begins to surface as a dominant rhetoric. Hereafter, the extent to which Kane's theatre is apocalyptic and how trauma and the End are intertwined and develop in tandem

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with each other will be studied by giving references to closely-read *4.48 Psychosis*.

In almost a documentary way, *4.48 Psychosis* gives the prognosis of the patient's psychologically traumatic condition. Symptoms, diagnosis, and medication applied are noted as if they are notes taken by the patient's doctors and nurses dealing with the case (223-224). Among symptoms are seen "[not] eating, not sleeping, not speaking, no sex drive, in despair, wants to die" (223). Symptoms clearly refer to the most basic human needs, and the character is deprived even of these rudimentary necessities of life. Traumatic symptoms openly lead the patient to a wish for her end through death, bringing forth the apocalyptic idea of the End through self-destruction. The minute cataloguing of medicines together with the prognosis notes of the patient's condition enhance the patient's judgement of her situation's hopelessness as it gives the idea that hers is a worsening situation: "[insomnia] worsened, severe anxiety, anorexia, (weight loss 17kgs,), increase in suicidal thoughts, plans and intention" (223). What further improves the trauma's parallel issuing of apocalypse is the direct reference to the Biblical apocalypse in the prognosis notes of the care unit: "Delusional ideas – believes consultant is the antichrist" (224). Such a reference contributes considerably to setting the tone of the play in the apocalyptic. Paradoxically, the consultant who is there to help her is perceived by the patient as the apocalyptic character the "antichrist", the satanic character of the End days. These prognosis notes also change the point of view of the narration; now the patient is entirely dormant and cannot recount anymore, narration is taken over by doctors or nurses. The patient is now only a medical object to be cured, and since she has brain dysfunctions she cannot speak and tell

her own situation, which she has been doing since the beginning of the play. The next time she is able to speak for herself, she will be begging for help to be saved from her traumatic condition that leads to her End: "I beg you to save me from this madness that eats me a sub-intentional death" (226).

Apocalypticism is not unique to Kane's last play; it lurks on her stage throughout all her career. For example, her preference for killing her own characters is also an indication of her theatre's apocalypticism. She does not let her characters live long; in *Blasted* Ian dies after being the subject of awful tortures, again Cate and even the baby die, Hippolytus in *Phaedra's Love* finds a cruel death while Phaedra herself commits suicide and dies, Rod in *Cleansed* is killed by Tinker who subjects Carl to a gradual dismembering, and the patient in *4.48 Psychosis* goes through a slow dissolving period while she is obsessed with death. In relation to this apocalyptic tone in her plays, Ken Urban argues that "[in] the face of catastrophe, Kane renders her characters devoid of options; they are doomed…" (2008: 152). Kane herself reveals her own apocalyptic viewpoint when she says "I'd rather risk defensive screams than passively become part of a civilization that has committed suicide" (qtd. in Stephenson and Langridge 133).

Apocalypse means revelation and it is mostly and primarily concerned with the revelation of truth. Kane is an adamantly truth-seeking playwright. Her commitment to truth is obvious in her following ideas: "There isn't anything you can't represent on stage. If you are saying that you can't represent something, you are saying you can't talk about it, you are denying its existence. My responsibility is to the truth, however difficult that truth happens to be" (qtd. in Urban 2001: 39). Her revelatory stance starts early at the beginning of *4.48*

Psychosis and continues until the end of the play. With "as the cockroaches comprise a truth which no one ever utters," (205) right on the first page of the play, she hints that truth will be sought throughout the performance. These expressions are immediately followed by another expression that enhances her truth-seeking, revelatory, and thus apocalyptic, temperament: "I had a night in which everything was revealed to me" (205). Truth is sought through the lost character of the patient who is trying futilely to (re)integrate her self. She expresses her disbelief in the so-called truth of the surrounding world with her angry cry: "Your truth, your lies, not mine" (210). Therefore, the majority of the play, where she suffers from a severely traumatic condition, poses like her suffocation with the helplessness she feels in reaching out for truth about her self, which, as the play progresses, leads to more negatively apocalyptic ideas through the end of the play.

4.48 Psychosis is even more apocalyptic when it is realized that the play is actually a postdramatic performance text rather than a play in the conventional sense. Hans-Thies Lehmann in his *Postdramatic Theatre* remarks the following:

> When the progression of a story with its internal logic no longer forms the centre, when composition is no longer experienced as an organizing quality but as an artificially imposed 'manufacture', as a mere sham of a logic of action that only serves clichés…, then theatre is confronted with the question of possibilities beyond drama. (26)

4.48 Psychosis definitely mirrors the type of drama Lehmann mentions here: in the play, there is no linear flow of a story easily discernible to the audience, and each of the expressions of the play is surely

artificially annexed to the text. Therefore, *4.48 Psychosis* goes *beyond* the traditional dramatic boundaries and can be labeled as a play of Lehmann's postdramatic theatre, which argues in a sense the end of traditional play-writing. Peter Morris forms a parallel between the Punk movement of 1970s, "which was a kind of anti-music" with Kane's "anti-literary drama" (145) of the 1990s.

Postdramatic theatre is a theatre of 'performance', the greater aim of a play being viewers' self-conscious awareness of themselves rather than their being there to know more of human nature. Malgorzata Sugiera, in relation to this, asserts the following ideas:

> Nowadays the basic structural principle of texts written for the theatre increasingly often turns out to be their immanent theatricality, which is, however, no longer understood as a reflection upon theatre as a domain of artistic activity or as an extensive metaphor of human life, but rather as a means of inducing the audience to watch themselves as subjects which perceive, acquire knowledge and partly create the objects of their cognition. (qtd. in Lehmann 6)

In this sense, what takes place throughout *4.48 Psychosis* constitutes some sort of a mirror to viewer's minds where they can see images and representations about and from themselves as the play belongs to "what could be called 'open' or 'writerly' texts for performance," which "require the spectators to become co-writers of the (performance) text" (6). The spectators are no longer just filling in the predictable gaps in a dramatic narrative but are asked to become active witnesses who reflect on their own meaning-making and who are also willing to tolerate gaps and suspend the assignment of meaning" (6). In this

sense, Kane's theatre also appropriates Howard Barker's theatre premise which argues that theatre "must locate its creative tension not between characters and arguments on the stage but between the audience and the stage itself" (52). Jolene L. Armstrong's experience in a performance of *4.48 Psychosis* and her observations regarding the audience-play interrelation, hence, are noteworthy:

> An interesting twist in the theatrical experience of *4.48 Psychosis* as staged in the original production occurs with the use of mirror as a design element. When the audience is required to look into the mirror…the first five or six rows of the audience can see themselves as well as the actors in the reflection. This produces a very disorienting feeling as one sees oneself alongside the actors, transfixed in the character's gaze, and at times appearing to return the gaze. The individual members of the audience experience the intensity of being confronted by the highly suicidal character, as if that character were about to implicate them in the action. I was seated in the third row and at least once I experienced an impulse to flee the theatre due to the intensity of this effect. That impulse arises from the experience of becoming implicated in the action of suicide. In this scenario it is no longer possible that a member of the audience can simply be an anonymous, passive observer. Yet another traditional role of the theatre space itself has been subverted: the division between stage and audience has been amalgamated in the mirror, encouraging the audience to consider its responsibility, perhaps as members of society, as witnesses to the events that occur on the stage, and as participants in the play itself. (232-233)

Drama is three dimensional; here I am not referring to the spatial or physical facts but focusing on the literary aspect. As an art form and as a genre of literature, it solely brings together three dimensions of the earliest and pristine elements of literary narration: the acoustic element through the spoken word, the visual element through its appeal to sight, and the verbal element through its text. Kane's *4.48 Psychosis*, however, is a challenge to reduce these dimensions of drama through a denial of the visual and the acoustic as much as possible from the fabric of the play. It is dumb without didascalia[20] (stage directions), inactive without scene or act divisions, lethargic without character specifications, uncommunicative without authorly notes to guide the performance, deaf without music, blind without dramatic unities, and soulless without a discernible and followable plot. As Kane puts it in the play, it is as if "[just] a word on a page and there is the drama" (213). Drama is stripped of all secondary aspects of a play, and what is left is the barest necessity, words. Therefore, *4.48 Psychosis* is a negation of drama as an art form. It dispenses with the acoustic element to a great extent, forces the visual element to its lowest points, and barely continues with the verbal element. Kane's last play surely calls for an End that ends the very art of its own being, which is the End of traditional boundaries of drama.

More, *4.48 Psychosis* also harbors an abstraction of time, in other words, a removal of temporal element from the play. The storyline (which is not a solid one) of the play does not progress on a linear and chronological temporal line. There is no indication of what happens when, and after or before what; no flashbacks or foreshadowings to indicate time. It is as if time has been paused or is itself also fragmented

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[20] There are occassional and very rare exceptions to this: these are where the text refers to 'silences'.

just like the mental dividedness of the patient. Just like one's mind which, when anesthetised, would not realize the passing of time, the expressions of the play, which belong to the patient's mind, lack a regular sense of time. A stark example of the lack of a regular sense of time is that the play repeats a series of the expressions of the opening part on page 236. The abstraction of time, thus, contributes to the postdramatic nature of the play.

"This is not a world in which I wish to live" (210) says the patient in *4.48 Psychosis*. A biographical reading of the text also leads up to the apocalyptic interpretation of it. As Graham Saunders notes "[it] is also undeniable that this last work was also the most clearly biographical and personally driven" (2002: 110). *4.48 Psychosis* can be considered as Kane's suicide note. "Because it is the play that, Kane joked, 'killed' her to write…it is hard to read the play outside of biography" (Urban 2001: 44). "Given the brutality, bleakness and despair manifest in her plays, it was predictable that her suicide would be retrospectively used to interpret her work" (Luckhurst 2005: 118). Harold Pinter once noted that "[Kane] was her work. It was one thing," (qtd. in Luckhurst 2005: 120) an idea that strengthens the biographical reading of the play. In relation to her suicidal tendency that is reflected in the play, a common apocalyptic theme found in many of 1990s British plays – a desire for the annihilation of the self – is also a central topic in *4.48 Psychosis*. The patient's suicidal tendency in the play may be read as a parallel to Kane's own suicidal condition during her last months. The patient wishes to vanish, and she has already made her plans for this. She exposes her determination several times during the play:

At 4.48
when desperation visits
I shall hang myself
to the sound of my lover's breathing

...

I have become so depressed by the fact of my
mortality that I have decided to commit
suicide (207)

Or with "I have resigned myself to death this year" (208) (and Kane
committed suicide five months after she wrote this line). Or once again
the patient's self-imperatives to "[take] an overdose, slash my wrists
then hang myself" (210) conduces to the biographical reading of the
play. After all, "[only] a few days before, [Kane] had been resuscitated
after an overdose," and then in the following days committed suicide by
"hanging herself on a toilet door with her shoelaces" (Luckhurst 2005:
118). Kane put it in the play by detailing the act:

Please don't cut me up to find out how I died
I'll tell you how I died

One hundred Lofepramine, forty five Zopiclone,
twenty five Temazepam, and twenty Melleril

Everything I had

Swallowed

Slit

Hung

It is done (241-242)

The death through suicide of the patient, biographically recalling the actual suicide of its author, opens up another apocalyptic issue recurrently observable in *4.48 Psychosis*: the death of Character. This part of the study will display how and to what extent the dramatic Character gradually disperses and dissolves throughout Kane's *4.48 Psychosis*, forming another step of the apocalyptic rhetoric of the play. Character has always been known as one of the greatest elements of drama. Rooting back to the foremost drama critic Aristotle, Character was considered as one of the two elements that characterize the construction of a play. However, it is surprising to review today Aristotle's dicta relating to the issue of preeminence of Plot over Character, and see that what Aristotle stated back then, in fact, foresaw the mission of the dispersal of Character undertaken especially by twentieth century drama. Aristotle in *Poetics* argued:

> For Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of action and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality. Now character determines men's qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or the reverse. Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of character: character comes in as subsidiary to the actions. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of a tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all. Again, without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character. The tragedies of most of our modern poets fail in the rendering of character… Again, if you string together a set of speeches expressive of character, and well finished in point of diction and thought, you will not produce the essential tragic effect nearly so well as with a play which, however deficient in these respects, yet has a plot and

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artistically constructed incidents…The Plot then, is the first principle, and, as it were, the soul of a tragedy: Character holds the second place. (72-73)

Aristotle's premise which claims that there may be a tragedy (a play) without a character is strong, and the dispersal from or the end of Character in drama needs to be associated with this strong premise. After all, all dramaturgical ends, challenges or reversals actually are one way or another attempted against Aristotle's archetypal dramatic theories which dominated the field for centuries. Aristotle's primacy of plot, for example, was shaken during Renaissance when plays foregrounding characters came to the fore. Shakespeare's tragedies such as *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear* or Moliére's comedy *The Miser* are examples. Elinor Fuchs in *The Death of Character* analyses this shift and adds her observations on twentieth century drama:

In Aristotelian terms, if once Plot was the "soul" of the tragic play, and later Character moved into that place of preeminence, in twentieth-century non-realist theater, Thought began to assume a newly dominant dramaturgical position, shadowed by the slighted Aristotelian category of Spectacle as ideas became manifest through a quasi-allegorical use of space. I do not, of course, mean merely that I within the dramatic fiction characters were represented as being overpowered by forces beyond their control. Rather, I am pointing to the emergence of dramaturgical and performance strategies that deliberately undermined the illusion of autonomous character. (31)

Any threat to the autonomy of Character is a serious ontological issue as dramatic character represents human beings and their acts on the stage: "'Character' is a word that stands in for the entire human chain of representation and reception that theater links together" (Fuchs 8).

Kane dispenses with the Character as much as possible in her *4.48 Psychosis*. She gradually kills the phenomenal Character of drama (as she likes killing her characters), bringing its end. The play, both in terms of content and form, displays a gradual removal and annihilation of the Character. For one thing, there is no discernible character that can be recognized in the traditionally defined ways. The character of *4.48 Psychosis* is one that is absorbed within the text.

4.48 Psychosis is not only a play, in which Kane undertakes the mission of the dissolution of Character, but the last one in which she was to do this. The death of Character in Kane's theatre also takes place in her other plays, in different forms. In *Crave*, for example, there are four "speakers" A, B, C, and M who are "not characters per se" (Urban 2001: 43). If Kane's characters in general can be seen as forming the flesh and blood of one Character, then her plays follow a path that gradually liquidates her Character. Kane first attempts physical fragmentation and dismemberment of her characters. It starts with *Blasted* where Character starts to lose the first pieces of its nature with Ian whose eyes are plucked out and who is buried into the ground after having eaten the baby. In *Cleansed*, Carl is further dismembered each time he attempts to confess his betrayal to Rod. Kane also plays with the creative nature of her Character; as Tinker in *Cleansed* cuts off Carl's penis and stitches it to his sister Grace's body, losing the individuality of both characters, and hence, (de)forming a new Carl in Grace. *Phaedra's Love* looks like a last elegiac attempt to remember the

Character in its most traditional sense; hence the imitation of a Classical play, but even in that Hippolytus is dismembered at the end of the play. Then with *Crave*, the Character is now deprived even of a proper name and is reduced to mere alphabetical signs like A or B. This was a signal for the non-addressed Character of *4.48 Psychosis*. With *4.48 Psychosis*, the last blow comes to the Character and Kane uses all she can do with a dramatic text to express the annihilation of her Character.

Carolina Sánchez and Palencia Carazo make similar observations on the process of the dissipation of Character in Kane's plays:

> This process began with *Blasted* (1995), with the reduction of the main character, Ian, to his basest essence at the end of the play; it continued in *Cleansed* (1998), where Kane plays radically with the performative and precarious status of identity by making characters wear fragments of someone else's identity; and it was pushed further in *Crave* (1998) a lyrical piece about the needs and memories of love recited by four voices identified only as A, B, C, and M. (3)

Not only the patient but also the other figures are left without even names in *4.48 Psychosis*. The patient mentions from them as "Dr This and Dr That and Dr Whatsit" (209). This can be called the deindividualization of characters as well as a lack of characterization in general. As Mary Luckhurst also points out "[the] play dispenses with characterization altogether" (2005: 118). It is not clear how many characters are voiced, how many patients, and how many doctors. Who utters certain words? Who do the viewers view or the readers read are

not clear. Characters are minimized, lost to unaddressed sounds throughout the play.

4.48 Psychosis in one way differs greatly from Kane's previous annulment of Character in her plays: language. The language of this play, unlike in the others, is expressively used to indicate the erasure of Character. In the play, "[in] the place of remembering there is dismembering, but unlike the physical amputations of…*Cleansed*, the fragmentation of the self is not enacted on the body, but on language" (McEvoy 18). The patient poses like a figure whose language ability is taken from her and what are left are only some dull repetitions, mental stutterings and tragic hiccups. In her inability to express herself, the character of *4.48 Psychosis* can be resembled to Echo, the mythological nymph. Echo was punished by Zeus' wife Hera who took her voice away from her so that she could only dully repeat the nonsense-making last words of a shouted expression. Therefore, the words she could utter would never belong to her mind. She falls in love with beautiful but self-obsessed Narcissus who rejects Echo's pure love and leaves her to desolation and despair. Later, Narcissus sees his own image reflected in water, falls passionately in love with it, and drowns himself in his endeavors to consummate his love. Struck heavily by her rejection and Narcissus' death, Echo wanders in dejection through mountains and woods, unable to utter her own words until she vanishes completely. What is left of her is but her repetitions of others' last words. Similarly, the character of *4.48 Psychosis* uses repetitions, even of her own words. Just as Hera's punishing Echo by taking away her voice, the character of *4.48 Psychosis* seems to have been punished with a traumatic event which caused her lose some parts of her mind including her ability to speak "unslurred" (208). She repeats her words quite frequently. For

example, the opening words of the play are repeated by the patient once again through the end of the play (on page 236-237), or "Hatch opens" is repeated four separate times. Both Echo and the character of *4.48 Psychosis* want to find repose in love. The patient expects to be saved by her love but to no avail, sharing Echo's destiny. She vainly asks "My love, my love, why have you forsaken me?" (219). Apart from rejection, she, like Echo's losing of her beloved through his unusual death, apparently loses her love as it can be seen in the self-sacrificing tone of her following words:

> Cut out my tongue
> tear out my hair
> cut off my limbs
> but leave me my love
> I would rather have lost my legs
> pulled out my teeth
> gouged out my eyes
> than lost my love (230)

Kane, maybe unwillingly and unaware, in her attempt to dissolve her Character in *4.48 Psychosis* creates a reflection of Echo. In relation to the whole issue of the death of the character in *4.48 Psychosis*, thus, it is good to note Foucault's following remarks in his "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History": "The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration" (83). These remarks almost exactly echo the process of the dissolution of the character in Kane's *4.48 Psychosis*.

      Apart from what is stressed in terms of the use of language in the death of Character, the language of the play in general is indicative of apocalyptic discourse. The language of the play is actually the only

lively aspect of the whole play. Although the play is deprived of the major traditionally dramatic components like a regular, followable and logical plot, well-characterized and properly defined characters, music, stage directions, plot structure, and so on, it is "driven by language" (Urban 2008: 150). On the formal level, what draws one's attention is the breaks, blank spaces, and sometimes irregularly placed crowds of words on the pages. There is certainly a character in this deliberate use of the language. Alyson Campbell, speaking of Kane's theatre in general, similarly remarks that "[even] the layout of the words on the page, particularly in *4.48 Psychosis*, gives them a sort of tangible, corporeal life of their own that places challenging demands on the director or performer who is placing those blank spaces on the stage" (88). Campbell mentions of an emerging corporeality in the language of the play. The language of the play, for her, emerges as an entity that can speak by itself. She emphasizes the idea, saying "Kane in the end puts her faith in the theatre-makers to allow the corporeality of language to produce its own disclosure," (91) and the word "disclosure" is clearly related with apocalypse as it is a denotation for the Latin "apocalypsis" (*OED*).

Kane's highly corporeal language in *4.48 Psychosis* speaks in many forms. Its corporeality emerges in its hetero-formedness. Its many accents reflect postmodernist pastiche. As earlier mentioned in this study, among the forms and modes of writing used as means of expression in the play are lyric verse, dialogue, monologue, fragmented and scattered words, medical documents, stream of consciousness, abbreviations, counting-down numbers, prose, lists, mere repetition of certain words following one another, Biblical language, and even the form of Japanese poetic form haiku (as in 213 or 227). Jolene L.

Armstrong calls the play a "prose poem" (204) and draws attention to Kane's "emotional mono/dia/trio/logues" (207). Modernist stream of consciousness or free association can be seen in the very beginning of the play. The patient's words early in the play are almost allusive to T. S. Eliott's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock":

> It wasn't for long, I wasn't there long. But drinking bitter black coffee I catch that medicinal smell in a cloud of ancient tobacco and something touches me in that still place and a wound form two years ago opens like a cadaver and a long buried shame roars its foul decaying grief.
>
> A room of expressionless faces string blankly at my pain, so devoid of meaning there must be evil intent. (208-209)

Irregularly placed words are also abundant in the text:

> I'll die
>   not yet
>   but it's there (226)

Ken Urban notes this randomness of form with his following remarks:

> [*4.48 Psychosis*] is the equivalent of a textual collage; there is a citational quality to the language, as if it were culled from disparate sources. The play has passages of poetic language juxtaposed with moments of naturalistic dialogue, intercut with lists of numbers of unknown significance, all placed in specific ways on the page to indicate possible delivery and meaning. (2001: 44)

The language is sometimes self-reflexive, and in its self-reflexivity it refers to a language whose referents do not make any sense, like a language that seeks creation of meaning in its own structural modal auxiliaries. The following extract from the play is illustrative of this point:

> –No ifs or buts.
>
> –I didn't say if or but, I said no.
>
> –Can't must never have-to always won't should shan't. (220)

It is also noteworthy that certain words in *4.48 Psychosis* have heavily apocalyptic meanings. Kane's use of the word "light" is an example. I would like to argue that Kane uses "light" as a synonym for "apocalypse". Considering the following dialogue among A, B, C, and M in her previous play *Crave*, "light" may be interpreted as the wishful outcome through the End of things:

> B: Kill me.
> *A beat.*
> A: Free-falling
> B: Into the light
> C: Bright white light
> A: World without end
> C: You're dead to me
> M: Glorious. Glorious.
> B: And ever shall be
> A: Happy
> B: So happy
> C: Happy and free (Kane 200)

Kane carries light's symbolism into her next play *4.48 Psychosis*, where, in her use of the word "light," she is certainly referring to the same

concept of the End. However, while the "light" at the end of *Crave* is a promising expression that is used as a motto by those characters who believe in the forthcoming glory, happiness, and freedom, in *4.48 Psychosis* the "light" (the End) is bleak and may be referring to only a last resort "before eternal night" (206). Therefore, despite the "light," *4.48 Psychosis* is *darkly* apocalyptic from the very beginning of the play:

Remember the light and believe the light

An instant of clarity before eternal night (206)

Repeated in full three times, "Remember the light and believe the light" is a refrain in the play. "Remember the light and believe the light/Nothing matters more" (229).

There is also a post-apocalyptic strain in *4.48 Psychosis*. The patient describes her present state of life from a post-apocalyptic point of view:

I have reached the end of this dreary and
repugnant tale of a sense interned in an alien
carcass and lumpen by the malignant spirit of
the moral majority

I have been dead for a long time

Back to my roots

I sing without hope on the boundary
(214)

The patient once again emphasises that there is an unbridgeable gap between her mind and her body ("carcass"). Besides, she claims that death has already been with her for a long time. If she has felt dead for

a long time, her present state of life is a post-apocalyptic life, the remaining rest of which has continually been worsened. Life is considered bleak and is defined as a "dreary and repugnant tale of a sense;" that is, as a state of existence is nothing more than a sense, and is probably a distasteful period of time forced into her life. Such a depiction of life carries a covert criticism against the creation of God, who must have written the "tale" and forced the patient to live in "an alien carcass." The patient not only hates her own existence but also strongly detests the society which carries a "malignant spirit" that is harmful for its members. Therefore, the character has "been dead for a long time" and "[sings] without hope on the boundary," just like the mythological character Echo who, though vanished for a long time, still wanders among the rocks and in woods without hope of uniting with Narcissus.

The patient moves from the personal to the more public state of post-apocalyptic crisis. In a sense, she poses as the embodiment of humanity which has itself contributed to the formation of the post-apocalyptic world with its acts pointed out as:

> – I gassed the Jews, I killed the Kurds, I bombed the Arabs, I fucked small children while they begged for mercy, the killing fields are mine, everyone left the party because of me, I'll suck your fucking eyes out send them to your mother in a box and when I die I'm going to be reincarnated as your child only fifty times worse and as mad as all fuck I'm going to make your life a living fucking hell I REFUSE I REFUSE I REFUSE LOOK AWAY FROM ME (227)

Gassing the Jews is a clear reference to one of the apocalyptic events of the twentieth century – the Holocaust. The killing of the Kurds refers to Saddam Hussein's 1988 massacre of thousands of Kurds in Halabja, Iraq using chemical weapons, which was also entirely an apocalyptic event. Bombing the Arabs may refer to Israel's long-lasting and systematic invasion of the Palestinian territories by killing people regardless of civilians and children. "The killing fields," which the patient claims to own, is a reference to the mass graves filled with hundreds of Bosnian civilians by the Serbs' attempts of genocide on Bosnian people. By inheriting the responsibility of all these twentieth century apocalyptic events and confessing them, the patient demonstrates that the world is not a liveable place anymore. On the more personal level, the patient feels that she is a great contribution to the already stained nature of the world, and that she is going to get much worse, to transform life into a hell. Her screams of refusal of these facts and asking her audience to "look away from [her]" suggest that she is ashamed of the present conditions of life no less than of herself, and it is better for her to put an end to all these.

Ironic apocalypse on the personal level is another dimension in the representation of the idea of the End in *4.48 Psychosis*. As has been earlier mentioned in the theoretical background of this study, Lee Quinby argues that ironic apocalypse is one of the three modes of apocalypse (divine, technological, and ironic), and is expressed through absurdist and nihilistic descriptions of existence (xvi). Unlike divine apocalypse, which is its direct opposite, the discourse of ironic apocalypse necessitates a feeling of apathy for those who live by it (xxi). In this play, the patient obviously displays nihilistic attitudes like despair and hopelessness. She fosters a deep hatred against God, who,

for her, has set up everything badly for her. There seems to be nothing around her, no parents nor God, to invest her hopes in:

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

Neither does she find love to give her a promising future. Composed in the form of a poem with an elegiac tone for the loss of her love, she reinstates that she has no hope in life and nothing that remains around her is worth for living:

> Everything passes
> Everything perishes
> Everything palls
> ...
>
> No hope No hope No hope No hope No hope No hope No
> hope (218)

A deep sense of "futile despair" (219) haunts her mind. Her beloved is dead, she will remain dead, and everything is over. Loneliness surrounds her in its severest sense. She feels

> Built to be lonely
> to love the absent (219)

Love is what she desperately needs but sadly lacks:

> I can fill my space
> fill my time
> but nothing can fill this void in my heart
>
> The vital need for which I would die (219)

She can get by in the spatial and temporal dimensions of life. However, without the metaphysical romantic dimension of love she feels abandoned. For her, love is indispensable; she can make do without a full body, but not without love:

> Cut out my tongue
> tear out my hair
> cut of my limbs
> but leave me my love
> I would rather have lost my legs
> pulled out my teeth
> gouged out my eyes
> than lost my love (230)

Another tie to the ironic apocalypse of the play can be seen in the interpretation of the insistently referred to "opening of a hatch". The patient keeps referring to the opening of a "hatch" (225, 230, 239, 240) out of which emanates "stark light" (239). The opening of the hatch and the emergence of stark light once again culminate in a nihilistic End:

> Hatch opens
> Stark light
> and Nothing
> Nothing
> see Nothing (239)

As has been earlier touched upon, "light" in *4.48 Psychosis* may be understood as a synonym for "apocalypse." The beginning of the End is given through a metaphor of opening of a hatch which has concealed it so far. The patient's perception is once again related to ironic apocalypse as the opening of the hatch and the arrival of the light culminates only in "Nothing"ness. This foreshadows another apocalyptic term in the play, "rapture", which stands for Christ's coming back. However, first, "the rupture begins" (240) as a result of the emergence of the stark light from the opening of the hatch. "Rupture" here may be seen as the cracking of the self on the microcosmic level. On the other hand, on the macrocosmic level, it may refer to the breaking apart of the world in a pre-apocalyptic phase, and hence the realization of the apocalyptic fact that "the only thing that is permanent is destruction / we're all going to disappear" (241). It is because of this belated realization that the patient may be allusively sounding like Dr. Faustus when she asks: "Dear God, dear God, what shall I do?" (241). Actually, Kane subtly creates a parallel between her character and the classical Dr. Faustus also in their expectations of their Ends at a specific time, which is 24 years later at midnight for Dr. Faustus and exactly at 4.48 a.m. for the patient. After all, she knows, just like Faustus, that the same sort of incongruity of life "has committed [her] to hell" (212). With these remarks, through the end, *4.48 Psychosis* resonates with more and more apocalyptic rhetoric.

The density of the apocalyptic tone reaches its peak towards the end of the play where there are overt references to Biblical apocalypse. This most explicitly apocalyptic part of the play starts with terms of a guilty consciousness tailored for "We" unlike the responsible and criminal "I" of the preceding parts:

We are anathema
　　　　the pariahs of the reason (228)

Now the human-beings are all seen as cursed and outcast beings whose fates are sealed by God's words:

　　　　Gird yourselves:
　　　　for ye shall be broken in pieces
　　　　it shall come to pass

　　　　Behold the light of despair
　　　　the glare of anguish
　　　　and ye shall be driven to darkness

　　　　If there is blasting
　　　　　　　(there shall be blasting)
　　　　the names of offenders shall be shouted form the rooftops

　　　　Fear God
　　　　　　　and his wicked convocation

　　　　…

　　　　All this shall come to pass
　　　　all the words of my noisome breath (228)

God's speech is openly fearful. It starts with a direct imperative for all to get ready for all the following. Here God is foreseeing some details of His own plan of apocalypse. God's plan will bring forth people's shattering, the darkening of space, and blasting which are reminiscent of human-made attempts of apocalyptic "convocation[s]" in the twentieth century: the genocides, the effects of the use of the Atom Bomb, the use of chemical weapons mentioned previously in the play. With the inclusion of God, who speaks directly, the tone of the apocalyptic in the play is now entirely religious. God's words are

soothing; actually the very presence of God is hope-inflicting. However, right after the animation of God with His words comes "Christ is dead" (229) implying a shift to the ironic apocalypse of hopelessness. Between the two moods, however, is placed "Remember the light and believe the light" (228) as a bridge between the two opposite senses of apocalypse. Considering these, the "light" can be interpreted as referring to an unequivocal concept of the End, either indicating a threatening nature or a promising and refreshing one, making it hard to guess whether a new world and a new heaven or a doom is there for all after the End. Therefore, under these conditions, "We are the abjects,"[21] (229) neither subjects nor objects, but a collision of the two, making the new human-being miserable and despicable, is the message at the end of the play.

The tone of religious apocalypticism through the end of the play is also felt in the use of language. After God's speech and mention of the death of Christ comes a reference to "Eunuch":

> behold the Eunuch
> of castrated thought (242)

Eunuchs are frequently mentioned in the Biblical stories as in 2 Kings 20: 18, Isaiah 56: 4, Jeremiah 38: 7-13, Jeremiah 41: 16, Matthew 19: 12, and Acts 8: 27-38 (Internet source 17). The religiously apocalyptic ambiance is strengthened more with a reference to "Rapture", which can be described as one of the phases of Christ's Second Coming.

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[21] Julia Kristeva works on the conceptualization of *abject* in her book *Powers of Horror* where she formulates a meaning for the word that denotes that the self is not attached anymore either to object or subject. Abject for her represents the condition of a challenge against the self whose "'I' spit out myself," (3) of a removal of object or subject and the emergence of "[a] 'something' that I do not recognize as a thing" (2).

"According to this doctrine, when Christ returns, all of the elect who have died will be raised and transformed into a glorious state, along with the living elect, and then be caught up to be with Christ" (Internet source 18):

> the capture
>   the rapture
>   the rupture
>   of a soul (242)

On a more personal level, "the rapture" may be referring to the departing soul of the patient who has just committed suicide and whose soul had already been suffering "the rupture."

With the rupture and the rapture completed, the death of the character is also completed; the body has been lost in the suicide and the soul has left during the rapture. At the end of the play, all traumatic syndromes have culminated in the dense apocalypticism. There are no more traces of the psychological trauma of the early and middle parts of the play at the end. All psychological dilemmas resulted in the end of the character. Even the last remnants of the character are now in a process of disappearance as implied both in form and content:

> My final stand
> ...
>
>   my final submission
>   my final defeat
> ...
>
> the final period
> the final full stop (243)

There are big and irregular spaces left between expressions on the last two pages (244-245). Finitude is at hand, and it is only the "finals" expressed. These finals announce the End of the character. There is even a message at the end relating to the postdramatic experience of the performance:

> watch me vanish
> watch me
>
>
> vanish
>
>
> watch me
>
>
> watch me
>
>
>
> watch (244)

These words are direct addresses to the viewers who are asked, eventually openly, to experience the show of the vanishing of the character. The vanishing of the character on the personal level is reflected on the textual level as well, as the play starts giving less and less in terms of words. With the end of the play comes also the end of the process that has brought the end of the major archetypal elements of drama as an art form, the visual element and the verbal element. The last proper sentence – and proper sentences are rare from this speaker - that the character utters right before the very end of the play is a demonstration of the new state of life she is in now as a *nonebody*: "It is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the underside of my mind" (245). *4.48 Psychosis* ends no less apocalyptically with "please

open the curtains," (245) in which I observe an allusion to Portia's "Go, draw aside the curtains, and discover" in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (II, vii, 1), as opening of the curtains suggests a revelation, apocalypse, of what is hidden, maybe of truth. As with Portia's lawyer who seeks after truth in a lawsuit, it is truth, and the most difficult truth to obtain – truth about one's self – that the character of *4.48 Psychosis* has actually been seeking throughout the play. Viewed from this perspective, her expression about not knowing herself makes more sense.

In conclusion, in *4.48 Psychosis*, Kane uses psychological trauma as a catalyst concept to trigger and pave the way for the play's apocalypticism. The play is filled with details of a traumatic condition, which are given in a documentary as well as in a surreal style (through hallucinations, dreams, and paroxysms). Being Kane's last play and with its Biblical resonances towards the end, *4.48 Psychosis*, moreover, poses like a parallel to the *Book of Revelation*, contributing to its apocalyptic nature. All in all, it can be argued that Kane's last play *4.48 Psychosis* is a play of Ends. Chronologically, with the play, the decade comes to its End; historically, the whole twentieth century Ends; allegorically, the journey of the In-Yer-Face character, one that is always presented suffering some sort of bleakness in a dark-modern era, comes to an End; artistically, the drama as a form of literary representation turns to post-dramatic and is signalled with its End; and biographically, the playwright commits suicide and finds the End which has been sought for a while. All considered, the apocalyptic quality of the play is so strong, labelling the play as one that closes the curtains of a decade to an aesthetic of theatre.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Drama, as one of the oldest forms of art, is a field of human studies, rather like a research center that works on the peculiarities of the human being. It plays its emotions, *lobotomizes* its mind, materializes its soul, dissects its manners, analyses its reason, and *autopsies* its life. It has carried out these *actions* on the stage differently in different times: actors have changed, characters have remained; ideas have changed, stories have remained; theatres have changed, spectators have remained; settings have changed, stage has remained; times have changed, space has remained; and people have changed, human nature has remained. British drama has carried a long tradition of the genre, and has been one of the richest and most durable in the face of these changes. 1990s British drama with In-Yer-Face sensibility introduced a new wave of differences in the representation of the human being on the stage.

Apocalypse, or the End, on the other hand, is one of the oldest discourses that has shaped the ideas of the human being. It stands in the middle of a variety of ideas, and thus, is an interdisciplinary link: it finds echoes in philosophy, cultural studies, theology, music, visual arts, history, science and technology, and literature. Its impacts have been felt more strongly in the twentieth century, which can certainly be considered as the most apocalyptic century in world history, when its new-found abilities to destroy the whole world is taken into consideration. It is an umbrella term for many ideas that emerged during the century, even for postmodernism. Apocalypse, by the end of

the twentieth century, came to be used as a paradigm, a discourse, a rhetoric, and a mode in the arts, popular culture, cinema, music, and literature.

This thesis argues that In-Yer-Face theatre of the 1990s British drama carries a strong sense of the apocalyptic which can be seen in the plays of three representative playwrights of the decade. After this initial claim, it concludes that the ideas of the End are represented differently each time. It is claimed that Mark Ravenhill in his plays *Shopping and F***ing* (1996) and *Faust is Dead* (1997) display the philosophies of the twentieth century apocalyptic views, hence the philosophical apocalypse, Anthony Neilson in his plays *Normal* (1991) and *Penetrator* (1993) combines the recipes of violence – one of the nightmares of the human-being at its most dangerous phase in the century – with the ideas of the End, hence the violent apocalypse, while Sarah Kane, certainly the most sensational playwright of the period, in her last play *4.48 Psychosis* (1999) uses psychological trauma – the gradually growing malady of the modern times – to show how it helps the End surface, hence the traumatic apocalypse.

After an introduction chapter which aims to lead the reader into the study, a theoretical background chapter on the discourse of the End, or apocalypse, is deemed necessary. The theoretical background chapter is built on an examination of predominantly western perspectives of apocalypse as a discourse that has been influential in shaping the intellectual world. Significant characteristics of the discourse, how it is related to time and life in general, definitions, explanations, and modes relating with it, other related terms such as apocalypticism and millennialism, the correlations between apocalypse and the twentieth century, apocalypse and its secular and religious

visions, apocalypse and postmodernism, and the ties between apocalypse and drama are studied and explained in this chapter. Therefore, the chapter works as an integral element of the thesis in explaining in detail the various aspects, correlations and points of the apocalyptic that are sometimes referred to and used in the analysis chapters.

The following part, chapter three, of the thesis focuses on Mark Ravenhill's two plays, *Shopping and F***ing* and *Faust is Dead*. In accordance with the general thesis of this work, a strong sense of the apocalyptic is revealed in both of the plays. It is also observed that the apocalyptic in Ravenhill's plays is structured along philosophical layers. The chapter, thus, particularly analyzes how certain philosophies of the End of the twentieth century are absorbed by Ravenhill who reflected these in *Shopping and F***ing* and *Faust is Dead*. *Shopping and F***ing* particularly features ideas of postmodern thinkers: Michel Foucault's idea of Man as the instrument of production, Jean Baudrillard's ideas on over-consumerism and how it uses up human beings and his idea of "money" as the center of the world, Francois Lyotard's idea of the end of meta-narratives, Jacques Derrida's idea on the concept of truth as a significant component of the apocalyptic discourse, again Baudrillard's idea of crisis bringing forth a catastrophe in slow motion and his idea of "no future", which are observed as the apocalyptic philosophies with direct reflections and projections within the play. Ravenhill continues with the philosophies of the End in his *Faust is Dead*. It is observed that the play mirrors Michel Foucault's idea of the end of Man, Frederick Jameson's points on the same, Foucault's ideas on the change in the order of subject and object, and finally Jean Baudrillard's idea of the end of reality and the commencement of the age of virtual/hyper

reality, and his conceptualization of chaos. Therefore, it is concluded that these two plays by Mark Ravenhill display predominantly a philosophical approach towards the reflection of the ideas of the End.

Chapter four moves the argument to two plays by Anthony Neilson – *Normal* and *Penetrator* – which are considered to make use of the concept of violence to sharpen the color of the apocalyptic in his plays. Therefore, unlike Ravenhill's philosophy-based approach to apocalypticism, Neilson's apocalyptic discourse in his *Normal* and *Penetrator* is revealed through an expressive use and show of violence within the core of his plays. Illustrated with one of the most violent and brutal characters of the twentieth century, the serial killer Peter Kurten, Neilson in *Normal* examines the violent spirit of the century's individuals as well as criticizing the societies that manufacture such persons as Kurten, and Wehner, the forsaken civilized bourgeoisie lawyer who once shared Kurten's violent spirit. Alongside the nerve-racking personal story of Kurten, Neilson uses more public and historical references to tell of the horror of violence and how it becomes a catalyst in apocalyptic representation. In this sense, Neilson alludes to the French Revolution, which is believed by many to be one of the greatest apocalyptic events in history, and to its Reign of Terror as well as referring to the Second World War, which is considered as one of the two greatest apocalyptic events of the twentieth century. In addition, the annihilation of the self is one of the most important apocalyptic dynamics seen in the play as the play thematizes the situation of the non-individualized masses during and after the War. Neilson's next play *Penetrator* keeps the violence-based apocalyptic mode of *Normal*. Violence, in this play too, is personal, social, verbal, and eroticized. *Penetrator* criticizes the army as an institution of

violence, and its liquidation of human-beings through secret units of penetrators is reminiscent of George Orwell's vision in *1984*. Among the play's apocalyptic dynamics which emerge from behind the foregrounded violence are the idea of a return to and end of innocence, emotional comfort found in childhood past, Frank Kermode's idea of apocalypse as the combination of imaginatively recorded past and imaginatively predicted future, the end of masculinity, sadomasochism as an apocalyptic act, and the revelation of truth. Based on the analyses of these two plays, it is concluded that Neilson's approach towards the representation of the apocalyptic is through the use of excessive violence, and hence the violent apocalypse in his plays.

Sarah Kane may be considered as the playwright who literally *set the stage* for In-Yer-Face aesthetics. Therefore, the analysis parts of the thesis end with one of her most apocalyptic plays, her last play *4.48 Psychosis*. Alongside being a play that marks the end of Kane's career, the play can also be seen as ending the In-Yer-Face decade of the 1990s. Therefore, *4.48 Psychosis* is certainly a play of Ends. The chapter accordingly examines in what sense Kane, and particularly *4.48 Psychosis*, conduces to the apocalyptic spirit of the In-Yer-Face plays. Kane's experiential theatre is examined and it is seen that her plays consist of Dionysian perception, emotional inclusion of spectators within the diegesis of the play, a deliberate use of shock-effects to stimulate critical thinking, comedy – to some extent, in the darkest sense of the genre where it belittles the human organism –, and psychological trauma. Psychological trauma as an intrinsic quality of Kane's theatre and how it features in her plays are studied briefly in her first play *Blasted* and extensively in her last *4.48 Psychosis*. It is observed that *4.48 Psychosis* harbors psychological trauma within its

title, at the representational level through its linguistic heterogeneity and a special use of silences, through psychological characterization of the patient who displays obvious psychotic symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder and psychological amnesia, mental chaos, compulsive repetition and post-traumatic condition. It is also noted that the apocalyptic is born out of this strong sense of trauma in the play. Among the apocalyptic dynamics of the play are the patient's wish for her self-destruction, references to Anti-Christ, a search for truth, the death of Character, the presence of a language without meaningful referents, and the play being an example of the postdramatic theatre as it dispenses with a central story to move action, gets rid of two major elements of drama – the visual and the acoustic elements, and obscures time, setting, and characterization. The biographical strain within the play, as there is an undeniable correlation between Kane's own depressed mental condition and suicide in reality and what she wrote in *4.48 Psychosis*, is also seen as according with the desire for the annihilation of the self – another apocalyptic foundation within the structure of the play. It is also noticed that there are points of post-apocalyptic representation, especially when the focus becomes more public than personal, that sometimes Biblical apocalypse is fore-grounded through direct references to Anti-Christ, Rapture, and God's speech, and that the play generally moves on the mode of ironic apocalypse. At the end of the play, the conclusion arrived at is that *4.48 Psychosis* carries a strong sense of the ideas of the End, that the apocalyptic within it is diversified, and that all the points of psychological trauma previously issued in the play are conducive to the emergence of the play's apocalyptic essence.

All in all, *The End: The Apocalyptic in In-Yer-Face Drama* is a study that tries to shed more light on the controversial In-Yer-Face drama of the 1990s British stage. The study shows that the aura of the decade, in which playwrights like Mark Ravenhill, Anthony Neilson, and Sarah Kane wrote, carries a high sense of Endist and apocalyptic characteristics which are consciously or not reflected in the works of these writers. It is also found that although these playwrights share a lot in the formation of the general spirit of the In-Yer-Face aesthetics, their plays embody unique and distinguishing styles relating to the representation of the apocalyptic. Ravenhill's approach is one that lectures on the philosophies of the End while Neilson veils it behind violence, and Kane *drives it traumatized*. Ravenhill has an academic tone in structuring his plays on a collage of apocalyptic theories, Neilson follows a physician's precision in touching vital points such as violence, and Kane is a dervish in her creative frenzy that leads to catastrophic ends.

Scholarly works both on In-Yer-Face plays and apocalyptic discourse in drama are very rare. This study, for example, is the first thesis up to now that covers the entire phrase of "In-Yer-Face Drama" in its title, and that explores the details of the apocalyptic in dramatic works. As a contribution to the relation of the apocalyptic with the dramatic, it also diversifies the apocalyptic and introduces three novel terms such as the philosophical, violent, and traumatic apocalypse, enriching the depth of the discourse as well as the elucidation of In-Yer-Face plays. Hence, based on the points of analysis used in this work, similar and further analysis of the apocalyptic may also be observed in the other plays of the decade which are out of the focus of this study. In addition, it is also worth mentioning that this thesis has

an interdisciplinary nature in working apocalyptic discourse in In-Yer-Face plays, thereby combining literature with cultural studies and philosophies that foster the field. Merging the apocalyptic with In-Yer-Face drama, the thesis creates a vast ground for intellectual thinking, and hence, may appeal to philologists, dramatists, players, historians, eschatologists, performance artists, sociologists, psychologists, and so on. Therefore, it is hoped that this thesis contributes to the scholarly discussions that cluster around the apocalyptic theories and their relations in dramatic literature. It is further hoped that *The End: The Apocalyptic in In-Yer-Face Drama* sets the stage for further arguments and studies on the apocalyptic and In-Yer-Face drama, and that future studies on similar or related subjects may develop by referring dialectically to the work.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Bal, Mustafa
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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
PhD	Middle East Technical University, English Literature	2009
MA	Hacettepe University, English Literature	2004
BA	Hacettepe University, English Language and Literature	2001

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2006 (Feb)-Present	International University of Sarajevo	Lecturer
2004 (Jan)-2005 (Sep)	Kocaeli University	Lecturer
2003 (Oct-Dec)	The Turco-British Association	English Teacher

PUBLICATIONS

1. Bal, Mustafa. "Romance in Peril: A Survey of the Genre in Seventeenth Century English Literature", *epiphany*, Vol. 1, 35-50 (Fall 2008).

2. Bal, Mustafa. "Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*: The United States of the Untied Tastes of Reality and Imagination", *epiphany*, Vol. 2, 43-58 (Spring 2009).

3. Bal, Mustafa. "A Generic Analysis of Seamus Heaney's *North* as a Poetry Book", *The Problems of Literary Genres*, Vol. 52 (in press for Fall 2009).

4. Bal, Mustafa. "The Boat Named Romance and 'The Lady of Shalott'" as the Boat's Sailor", *Parnassus: An Innovative Journal of Literary Criticism*, Vol. 1, 83-95, (2009).

5. Bal, Mustafa. "Romantic Piers of *The Bridge on the Drina*", *Serbian Studies*, (in press for Fall 2009).

6. Bal, Mustafa. "Character Depictions: *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett and *States of Shock* by Sam Shepard" in *The Dictionary of Literary Characters* by Michael D. Sollars (General Editor), Facts on File Series (in press).

7. Bal, Mustafa. "Examples from Turkish Nonsense Literature" in *The Anthology of World Nonsense Literature* by Michael Heyman and Kevin Shortsleeve (General Editors), (forthcoming).

APPENDIX B

TURKISH SUMMARY

SON:
"IN-YER-FACE" TİYATROSUNDA APOKALİPS

"Son: 'In-Yer-Face' Tiyatrosunda Apokalips" başlıklı bu tez genel olarak 1990'larda İngiltere'de ortaya çıkan ihtilaflı tiyatro türü "In-Yer-Face" tiyatrosunda insanlığın eskimeyen konularından biri olan apokalips, diğer tabiriyle sonlanış söylevini incelemektedir. Çalışma, özellikle bu oyunlarda güçlü bir apokaliptik anlam olduğunu ve apokaliptik betimlemenin oyundan oyuna farklılık gösterdiğini savunmaktadır. Konunun açıklanması ve örneklenmesinde dönemin önemli üç yazarı tarafından yazılan beş oyun ele alınmaktadır. Apokaliptik söylemin derin bir inceleme ve açıklamasının ardından tez Mark Ravenhill'in *Shopping and F***ing* ve *Faust is Dead* isimli iki oyununun sonlanış ile ilgili belli başlı felsefelere dayandığını, Anthony Neilson'ın *Normal* ve *Penetrator* isimli iki oyununun apokalipsi aşırı şiddet betimlemeleriyle ortaya koyduğunu, ve Sarah Kane'in *4.48 Psychosis* isimli oyununun apokaliptik betimlemeleri psikolojik travma ile birleştirdiğini öne sürmektedir.

"In-Yer-Face tiyatorosu" terimi Aleks Sierz'in yazdığı *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today* (2001) başlıklı kitap ile entellektuel dünyaya yerleşmiştir. Sierz kitabında 1990'lar İngiliz tiyatrosunda hakim olan In-Yer-Face tiyatro estetiğini dönemin önde gelen yazarlarının önemli eserlerini inceleyerek anlatır. Öte yandan 1965'te sahnelenen oyunu *Saved* ile bir dönem İngiliz tiyatrosunda gerçeklik

algısında değişime neden olan Edward Bond'un şu sözleri In-Yer-Face tiyatro estetiğinin önemi ve edebiyat tarihindeki yeri ile ilgili önemli bir açıklamadır:

> İki tür oyun yazarı vardır. Birinci tür gerçek ile tiyatroya has oyunlar oynar… İkinci tür oyun yazarları ise gerçeği değiştirir. Yunanlılar ve Shakespeare başarmıştır bunu. Molière bunu şaşırtıcı şekilde modern ve kıl payı dengeye oturtulmuş *İnsandan Kaçan*'ında gerçekleştirmiştir. Racine kabına sığmayan bir ihtirası sert yapıların içine hapsederek bunu neredeyse başarmıştır… Büchner adalete darağacından bakarak yapmıştır bunu. *Blasted*'ı küçük, sıkışık bir salonda münasip bir sahnelemeyle izlerken, oyunun ortalarına doğru bir yerde farkına vardım: gerçek değişmişti. (189)

Bu sözler yirminci yüzyılın son on yılında İngiliz tiyatrosunun seyrinde meydana gelen bir dönüm noktasına işaret etmektedir. 1990'ların In-Yer-Face tiyatrosu, sahnedeki gerçeğin temsilini ve algılanmasını değiştirdiğinden Bond'un "ikinci tür" şeklinde nitelendirdiği oyun yazarlarının ortaya koyduğu bir tiyatro estetiğidir. In-Yer-Face toplumsal-gerçekçi prensiple yazılan ve sahnelenen oyunlara karşı gelmiş ve hayata acayip, alışılagelmedik noktalardan bakmaya öncelik vermiştir. Sanal, dijital gerçeklik ve gerçek ötesini vurgulama yönünde bir eyilimi olduğundan gerçeğe bakışta yeni bir perspektif sunmuştur. Geleneksel teatral gerçekçiliğin oyunları yirminci yüzyılın son on yılının izleyicilerini değişmekte olan yeni gerçekliği izlemeye davet edebilmek için gereken yeterli özelliklere sahip değildiler. Bu iş, insanları yeni gerçekliği tecrübe etmeye tiyatroya davet edebilmek için aşırılık, meydan okuma ve tabuları

yıkma ile sahnede yeni bir katarsis anlayışı ortaya koyan In-Yer-Face oyunları tarafından üstlenildi.

Tarihin her on yılda bir sunduğu dönemler, diğer bir tabirle zamanın onar yıl şeklinde kavramsallaşması, *soncu* veya apokaliptik söylevin bir delili niteliğindedir: her on yıl, on yıllık bir süre içinde başlar ve biter ve her biri kendine has özellikler muhteva eder. Biz bu zaman dilimlerine 50'ler, 60'lar, 70'ler, 80'ler gibi isimler veriyoruz. 1990'lar kişisel bilgisayarların, internetin, cep telefonlarının, dijital kameraların, soykırımların, ekonomik üretkenliğin, kaptalizmin, küreselleşmenin, AIDS'in Afrika'da hızla yayılışının, Berlin Duvarı'nın yıkılışının ve Sovyetlerin dağılmasıyla Soğuk Savaş'ın sonlanışının, Margaret Thatcher'in iktidardan düşüşünün, Körfez Savaşının, X Neslinin, DNA ve klonlama teknolojilerindeki gelişmelerin, bilgisayar oyunlarının, dövme ve vücut deldirme (piercing) yaptırmanın, eşcinsel kültürün özgürlüklerinin genişlemesinin, hip-hop, tekno, underground, alternatif rak müzik kültürlerinin yaygınlaşmasının ve Prenses Diana'nın ses getiren esrarengiz ölümünün on yılıydı. Sonlanış ile ilgili felsefelerin ve sonlanışa olan ilginin artması nedenleriyle 1990'lar aynı zamanda apokaliptik de bir dönemdi. Sonlanış ile ilgili bu durum, sahnede gerçekliğin izdüşümlerinde değişimler meydana getiren In-Yer-Face duyarlılığıyla birlikte İngiliz tiyatrosu için de farklı değildi. Gerçeğin değiştirilmesi için özünde varolan tüm ayrıksılığıyla 1990'lar oyun yazımının temelinde sonlanış veya apokalips yatmakyadı.

Apokalips söylevi insanlığın ortaya koyduğu düşünceleri şekillendiren en eski söylevlerden biridir. Çeşitli düşünce disiplinlerinin ortasında bir yerde durur ve bu nedenle disiplinler arası bir bağ görevi görür: felsefe, kültür çalışmaları, ilahiyat, müzik, görsel sanatlar, tarih, bilim ve teknoloji ve de edebiyat apokalipsin

yansımalarının bulunduğu alanlardır. Dünya tarihinde apokaliptik söylevin etkilerinin daha güçlü hissedildiği çağ, şüphesiz içerisinde insanlığın tümününün sonunu getirebilecek özelliklerin geliştirildiği yirminci yüzyıldır. Apokalips yirminci yüzyılda gelişen çoğu felsefe ve estetik anlayış için (postmodernism için bile) bir çatı görevindedir. Apokalips yirminci yüzyılın sonlarına doğru sanat dallarında, popüler kültürde, sinemada, müzikte ve edebiyatta bir paradigma, güçlü bir söylev, retorik ve bir mod olarak kullanılmaya başlanır.

Apokalips veya sonlanış düşüncesi İngiliz tiyatrosunun en eski temalarından birisidir. Ortaçağ İngiliz tiyatrosundaki din ve ahlak üzerinde şekillenen oyunlar (*Everyman*, *The Castle of Perseverance* gibi) çoğunlukla hayatın sonluluğu ile ilgiliydiler. Ortaçağ'dan yirminci yüzyıla değin çok şey değişti ancak sonlanış düşüncesi (artık din temelli anlamından uzaklaşmış bir şekilde) hep varoldu ve de 1990'ların oyunlarında belki çok daha güçlü bir şekilde ortaya çıktı.

Dolayısıyla, bu tezin amacı öne sürülen bu apokalips söyleviniin Mark Ravenhill, Anthony Neilson ve Sarah Kane gibi başlıca In-Yer-Face tiyatrosu yazarlarının oyunlarında nasıl ve ne denli ortaya çıktığını incelemektir. Apokalips söyleviniin arkasındaki düşünceleri ve fikirleri inceleyen bir kuramsal arkaplan bölümünden sonra, tezin analiz bölümleri oyunlarda ortaya çıkan apokaliptik özün arkasındaki felsefeleri araştırmakta ve bir yandan da farklı yaklaşımları belirleyerek oyunlarda sonlanış ve apokalipsin betimleniş biçimlerindeki çeşitliliği ortaya koymaktadır. Bu argümanların örneklendirilmesi ve açıklanması için Mark Ravenhill'in *Shopping and F***ing* (1996) ve *Faust is Dead* (1997) oyunları, Anthony Neilson'ın *Normal* (1991) ve *Penetrator* (1993) oyunları ve Sarah Kane'in *4.48 Psychosis* (1999) oyunu kullanılmaktadır. Oyunların yakından

incelemeleri yapılarak Mark Ravenhill'in *Shopping and F***ing* ve *Faust is Dead* isimli iki oyununun yirminci yüzyılda ortaya çıkan belli başlı sonlanış felsefelerine dayandığı, Anthony Neilson'ın *Normal* ve *Penetrator* isimli iki oyununda apokalipsin aşırı şiddetin arkasında saklandığı, ve Sarah Kane'in *4.48 Psychosis* isimli oyununun yoğun psikolojik öğelerinden dolayı travmatik apokalipse örnek gösterilebileceği öne sürülmektedir.

Okuyucuyu konuyla tanıştıracak olan bir giriş bölümünün ardından gelen kuramsal altyapı bölümü, sonlanış veya apokalips söylevini açıklar ve inceler. Kuramsal altyapı bölümü ağırlıklı olarak batı perspektifinden ele aldığı apokalips söylevinin entellektüel dünya üzerindeki güçlü etkisini tartışır. Bölüm, bu söylevin belirgin özelliklerini, zaman ve hayatla olan bağlantısını, tanımlarını, açıklamalarını, ilintili modları, apokaliptisizm ve millennializm gibi ilişkili terimleri, apokalips ile yirminci yüzyıl arasındaki bağlantıyı, apokalipsin dini ve seküler imgelemlerini, postmodernizmle olan ilişkisini ve apokalips ile tiyatro arasındaki bağlantıları inceler ve açıklar. Dolayısıyla kuramsal altyapı bölümü, analiz bölümlerinde bahsedilen ve kullanılan kuramsal noktaları, terimleri, bağlantıları açıklayarak tezin önemli bir bölümü olarak iş görmektedir.

Tezin bir sonraki bölümü (üçüncü bölüm), Mark Ravenhill'in *Shopping and F***ing* ve *Faust is Dead* isimli iki oyununun üstünde durmaktadır. Tezin genel savı doğrultusunda bu iki oyundaki güçlü apokaliptik özellikler ortaya konulmaktadır. Ayrıca Ravenhill'in oyunlarındaki apokaliptik söylevin felesefi katmanlar üzerinde biçimlendiği gözlemlenmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu bölüm, yirminci yüzyılın bazı sonlanış felsefelerinin Ravenhill tarafından ayrıntılı olarak nasıl özümsendiğini ve yazarın bunları *Shopping and F***ing* ve *Faust is*

Dead oyunlarında nasıl yansıttığını ele alır. *Shopping and F***ing* oyunu özellikle bazı postmodern düşünürlerinin fikirlerini yansıtmaktadır. Michel Foucault'nun insanı üretim aracı olarak görme düşüncesi, Jean Baurillard'ın aşırı-tüketicilik ve bunun insanları nasıl tükettiği düşüncesi ile parayı dünyanın merkezi olarak görme düşüncesi, Jean-François Lyotard'ın büyük anlatıların sonu ile ilgili düşüncesi, Jacques Derrida'nın hakikat kavramını apokaliptik söylevin önemli bir bileşeni olarak görme düşüncesi, yine Baudrillard'ın krizin yavaş çekimde felakete neden olma düşüncesi ile "gelecek yok" düşüncesi oyunda doğrudan yansıtılan apokaliptik felsefeler olarak öne sürülmektedir. Ravenhill, *Faust is Dead* oyunuyla sonlanış felsefelerini sürdürmektedir. Oyunun Michel Foucault'nun ve Frederick Jameson'ın insanın sonu düşüncelerini, Foucault'nun özne (subje) ile nesne (obje) arasındaki sıralamanın değiştiğine dair düşüncesini ve Jean Baudrillard'ın gerçekliğin sonu ve sanal/hiper gerçekliğin başlangıcı konusundaki düşüncesi ve kaos kavramsallaştırmasını yansıttığı gözlemlenmektedir. Dolayısıyla, Mark Ravenhill'in bu iki oyununda sonlanış düşüncesini ve söylevini ağırlıklı olarak felsefi bir açıdan ele aldığı sonucuna varılmaktadır.

Dördüncü bölüm Anthony Neilson'ı ve *Normal* ila *Penetrator* isimli iki oyununu ele almaktadır. Yazarın bu oyunlarında apokalips söylevine şiddet unsuru ve kavramıyla vurgu yaptığı ortaya konulmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, Ravenhill'in felesefe-esaslı yaklaşımından farklı olarak Neilson, apokaliptik söylevi oyunlarının özüne yerleştirdiği belirgin bir şiddet kullanımı ve gösterimi ile dile getirmektedir. Neilson *Normal* isimli oyununda yirminci yüzyılın en şiddetli ve vahşi simalarından biri olan seri katil Peter Kurten'i kullanarak yüzyılın bireylerinin vahşi doğalarını inceliyor. Yazar bunu

yaparken aynı zamanda, bir dönemler Kurten'in etkisine kapılıp Kurten gibi vahşileşen ve de yalnızlaşmış medeni burjuva avukat Wehner gibi bireyleri üreten toplumları ve acımasızlıklarını gözler önüne seriyor. Kurten'in sinir bozucu hayat hikayesinin yanında Neilson başka tarihi olaylara atıflarda bulunarak şiddetin dehşetini anlatıyor ve şiddetin apokalipsin ifadesinde ne şekilde bir katalizör rolü üstlendiğini gösteriyor. Bu bağlamda Neilson pek çok insan tarafından tarihteki en apokaliptik olaylardan biri olarak düşünülen Fransız İhtilali'ne ve ardından gelen Terör Devri'ne, ayrıca yirminci yüzyılın en apokaliptik iki olayından biri olarak görülen İkinci Dünya Savaşı'na atıflarda bulunuyor. Savaş sırasında ve sonrasında oluşan kişilikleri yokedilmiş kitleleri de tema edinen oyundaki en önemli apokaliptik dinamiklerden biri ise benliğin yokoluşu olarak ortaya konuluyor. Neilson'ın diğer oyunu *Penetrator*, *Normal*'ın şiddet-merkezli apokaliptik modunu sürdürüyor. Şiddet, bu oyunda da kişisel, sosyal, sözel ve erotik düzlemlerde ifade ediliyor. *Penetrator* orduyu bir şiddet kurumu olarak eleştiriyor ve ordunun insanları gizli "delici" ekipler vasıtasıyla hiçleştirmesi George Orwell'in *1984* isimli romanını anımsatıyor. Oyunda, önplandaki şiddetin arkasından beliren apokaliptik dinamiklerin arasında masumiyete dönüş ve masumiyetin sonu düşüncesi, çocukluk geçmişinde bulunan huzur duygusu, Frank Kermode'nin apokalipsi hayal gücünde kaydedilmiş geçmiş ile hayal gücünde tahmin edilen geleceğin karışımı olduğuna dair düşüncesi, maskülinitenin sonu, apokaliptik eylem olarak sadomazoşizm ve hakikatın açığa çıkması bulunmaktadır. Bu iki oyunun analizine dayanarak varılan sonuç, Neilson'ın oyunlarında bulunan apokaliptik tonun aşırı şiddet tasvirleriyle ortaya çıktığıdır.

Sarah Kane In-Yer-Face estetiğini sahneye tümüyle kazandıran oyun yazarı olarak görülebilir. Bu nedenle tezin analiz bölümleri Sarah Kane'in en apokaliptik oyunlarından olan son oyunu *4.48 Psychosis* ile sonlanıyor. Kane'in yazarlık kariyerini sonlandıran bir oyun olmasının yanı sıra bu oyun 1990'lar In-Yer-Face dönemini kapatan bir oyun olarak da görülebilir. Bu nedenle *4.48 Psychosis* sonların oyunu olarak nitelendirilebilir. Buna paralel olarak tezin bu bölümü Kane ve özellikle onun *4.48 Psychosis* oyununun ne denli In-Yer-Face apokaliptik ruhuna katkıda bulunduğunu incelemektedir. Kane'in deneysel tiyatrosu irdelenir ve oyunlarında bulunan Dionezyan algı, izleyicilerin oyunun mekan-zaman boyutlarına duygusal dahli, eleştirel düşünmeyi tetiklemesi için bilinçli bir şekilde kullanılan şok-uyarılar, insanın küçülebileceği noktaları sahneleyen tarafı ile komedi ve psikolojik travma özelliklerine değinilir. Bu bölümün ilerleyen kısımlarında Kane tiyatrosunun asli özelliklerinden birisi olarak psikolojik travma ele alınır ve bu olgunun Kane'in oyunlarında ne şekilde ortaya çıktığı ilk oyunu *Blasted*'ta kısaca ve ardından *4.48 Psychosis*'te derinlemesine incelenmesi ile ortaya konulur. İnceleme sonucunda *4.48 Psychosis*'in başlığında, anlatımsal düzlemde dildeki çok biçimli yapıda ve sessizliklerin itinalı bir şekilde kullanılmasında, psikolojik bellek kaybı ve trama sonrası stres rahatsızlığı gibi belirgin psikoz semptomlar gözlenen hasta karakterinin tarifinde, zihinsel kaosta ve travmaya neden olan olayın tekrarlanmasını mecbur eden psikolojik davranışlarda oyundaki psikolojik travma olgusu derinlemesine incelenir. Ayrıca oyundaki apokalips söylevinin bu güçlü travma algısından doğduğu belirtilir. Oyundaki apokaliptik dinamikler arasında hastanın benliğini imha etme arzusu, Deccal'e yapılan göndermeler, hakikati arayış, (tiyatro sanatındaki) Karakter'in ölümü,

anlamlı imlemleri olmayan bir dilin varlığı ve asıl bileşenlerinden uzaklaşmış haliyle (ki oyun merkezi bir hikayesi olan olaylar dizisinden yoksun, görsel ve akustik elementleri en aza indirgeyen, zaman, mekan ve karakter oluşumunu belirtmeyen bir şekilde sunuluyor) oyunun post-dramatik tiyatro örneği olması bulunuyor. Ayrıca Kane'in kendi hayatında tecrübe ettiği ve intiharı ile sonlanan psikolojik travmatik durumuna da değinilmekte ve oyunun apokaliptik yapısında biyografik bir tarafın olduğu da söylenmektedir. Bunlara ek olarak bazan (özellikle odak noktasının kişiselden toplumsala kaydığı yerlerde) post-apokaliptik ifadelerin olduğu, bazan Deccal'e, İsa peygamberin yeryüzüne ineceği güne ve de Tanrı'nın konuşmalarına ayrılan kısımlarla İncil temelli apokalipsin öne çıkarıldığı ve de oyunun genel olarak ironik apokalips düzleminde ilerlediği de belirtilmiştir. Bölümün sonunda ulaşılan sonuç *4.48 Psychosis*'in güçlü bir şekilde sonlanış ile ilgili fikirler içerdiği, oyunun içinde bulunan apokaliptik damarın çeşitli olduğu ve oyunun başından itibaren vurgulanan psikolojik travmanın oyundaki apokaliptik özün ortaya çıkmasına katkıda bulunduğudur.

Sonuç olarak "Son: 'In-Yer-Face' Tiyatrosunda Apokalips" 1990'lar İngiltere'sinde sahnelenen ihtilaflı In-Yer-Face tiyatrosu oyunlarına ışık tutmayı amaçlayan bir çalışmadır. Çalışma göstermektedir ki Mark Ravenhill, Anthony Neilson ve Sarah Kane gibi oyun yazarlarının yazdığı bu yılların havası derin sonlanış ve apokalips özellikleri taşımaktadır ve bu özellikler bilinçli ya da bilinçsiz bir şekilde bu yazarların oyunlarına yansımaktadır. Bu yazarlar In-Yer-Face estetiğinin özünün oluşumunda pek çok ortak özelliği paylaşsalar da her birinin oyunları apokaliptik söylevin tasfiri ve temsili açısından kendine özgü ve belirgin üsluplar geliştirmektedir. Ravenhill'in yaklaşımı sonlanış felesefelerini anlatırken Neilson'ın oyunları

sonlanışı şiddetin arkasında gizler, Kane ise travmatize eder. Ravenhill oyunlarını apokaliptik teorilerin kolajı üzerine biçimlendirirken akademik bir ton benimser, Neilson şiddet gibi canalıcı noktalara bir hekim hassasiyetiyle parmak basar, Kane ise felaketle sonuçlanan yaratıcı coşkunluklarında bir derviş gibi döner. O dönemde yazılan ancak bu çalışmanın içinde yer almayan başka oyunlarda da benzer apokaliptik tonlar gözlenebilir. Dolayısıyla bu tezin In-Yer-Face tiyatrosuyla ilgili başkaca argümanlara ve çalışmalara sahneyi hazırlamış olması umulur.