

CIRCULATIONS OF AFFECTS: AFFECTIVE MEMORIES: THE SOLDIER IN SARAH KANE'S *BLASTED*

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ABSTRACT: Baby-eating, eye-gouging, rape, torture, "people packing into trucks like pigs" fleeing in fear of the war – Sarah Kane's first breathtaking play *Blasted* has been one of the most noted cultural events since the 1990s. Although Kane has shared that she wanted to attract attention to the war in Bosnia, to make people see the old woman from Srebrenica, and hear her plea for help (Sierz, 2001, pp.100-101), the name of Bosnia is never mentioned in the play. The playwright's intention to provoke reaction to the violence in the specific political context has not diminished the universality of her work. The following study explores the affective circulations within the fictional world of *Blasted* by analysing the Soldier's presence in terms of emotions. It offers three readings of the Soldier's brutal behaviour within the play and suggests that 'confession' is of vital importance for the process of traumatic emotional and physical healing. The play is mainly approached in the context of the works of the socio-political and socio-cultural affect theorists – Sara Ahmed and Margaret Wetherell as well as the trauma theorist Cathy Caruth. The paper further offers a close reading of the complex affective circulations of emotions in the play and analysis what affects do and how they move and act upon the characters. By contributing to the considerably new way of analysing literature through affect theory, this work sheds light on the important role of emotions in war context.

KEYWORDS: *Blasted*, the Soldier, affects, hate, memories, testimonies, trauma

Emotions show us how histories stay alive, even when they are not consciously remembered; how histories of colonialism, slavery, and violence shape lives and worlds in the present. The time of emotion is not always about the past, and how it sticks. Emotions also open up futures, in the ways they involve different orientations to others. (Sara Ahmed, 2004, p.202)

The following paper approaches the memories and gruesome actions of one of Sarah Kane's characters in the play – the Soldier. It analyses the Soldier's 'affective memory' of the savage torture and murder of the girl he loved as one of these histories that 'stays alive' and through the affective circulation and performativity of the emotion of 'hate' determines the Soldier's behavior. By applying Sara Ahmed's and Margaret Wetherell's theories of affect as well as some of the dominant approaches to trauma theory in psychoanalysis developed by the two influential names in the field - Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth, the study offers three readings of the armed man's brutal acts towards his victims and comments on the indispensable human need of confessing/sharing/telling the story of the crimes, of that which has happened. Instead of focusing on the origin of emotions, the paper pays attention to the questions of 'how' and 'what' of affects. Through the analysis of the Soldier's emotional presence in the play, the study provides insights into the utmost importance of understanding the performativity of affects in war context.

Kane's character the 'Soldier' is highly developed and complex. The directionality of the Soldier's hate is ambiguous and important for understanding his affective behavior in the play. The following paragraphs offer an interpretation of the reasons behind and the direction of his hatred. "Our town now" (Kane, 2001, Scene Two, p.39), states the Soldier by enforcing the 'we-they' hate narrative in the very first Scene he appears in the play and, like an animal urine-marking a territory, he "stands on the bed and urinates over the pillows" (Kane, 2001, Scene Two, p. 39). From his first appearance in *Blasted*, the Soldier's emotion of 'hate' seems to be initially directed towards the imagined 'they'/the others', who are not part of the 'we' narrative, of what is 'ours' and has to be protected, fought for and concurred for. Nevertheless, when the Soldier begins to tell the story of his girlfriend Col, of how she has been raped, her throat cut, her nose and ears hacked off and nailed "to the front door" (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p.47) by 'soldiers', it becomes apparent that the Soldier's negative emotion is directed towards the army men too. Consequently, his emotion of hate is both for the 'other' (the enemy, who imposes a danger to the nation/country) and for 'soldiers' like him (part of the unified 'we'), who humiliate and kill innocent people. It can be suggested that the Soldier's emotion of hate in *Blasted* is strongly linked with the emotion of love in the way Ahmed explains it - "[b]ecause we love, we hate" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 43). He hates the 'other', because of love for the nation and for everything the nation signifies (including the soldiers who protect it) and hates the soldiers, including himself, as ones who put an end to what is loved (part of 'we' and the nation).

The Soldier's complex emotion of love-hate towards 'army men' becomes defining for his relation with Ian, one of the main characters in *Blasted*. As Sara Ahmed states in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, "[i]t is not simply that anybody is hated: particular histories of association are reopened in each encounter, such that some bodies are already encountered as more hateful than other bodies. Histories are bound up with emotions" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 54). Ian is one of those 'more hateful bodies' for the soldier. Right after the blast, although the Soldier has found Ian's passport and learnt his job (a journalist) in Scene Two, he asks Ian again whether he is a soldier and Ian confirms that he is "[o]f sorts" (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 40). Ian's confirmation reopens certain histories of association for the Soldier and he not only insists on having his story reported by Ian (because Ian is a journalist and this is his job), but also at the same time re-performs some of the dreadful acts the *soldiers* have done to his girlfriend on him: he rapes her (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 49) and sucks her two eyes (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 50). The Soldier's emotion of hate (self-hate and self-love at the same time) is complex, intentional¹ and directed towards Ian, who is both a sort of 'soldier' and someone who can make his life-story heard. Ian is not just 'anybody' for the Soldier; the Soldier's particular relationship with him is characterised by Ian's journalist's past, occupation and emotions.

Kane's play genuinely demonstrates how the affective memory of Col's suffering and murder materialises itself in the constant infliction of physical harm. Along with bringing attention to the war in Bosnia, one of Kane's strong intentions seems to have been the demonstration that no place is immune to war and assaults. Being alert to and studying the circumstances which might have directly or/and indirectly caused the aggression in the play is thus of importance. When the crimes the Soldier commits are considered in the context of his affective past, it can be suggested that crimes are circumstantially inter-related with emotionally overwhelming past experiences. The repetitive alleviation of pain and suffering, which happens after an affective violent event, such as the murder of Col, is addressed as PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) in psychoanalysis, defined by Caruth as "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth, 1996, pp. 57-58). The PTSD helps to approach the possible causes behind the Soldier's actions from a psychoanalytic perspective by the very definition of the traumatic event, as something that has the potential to repeat itself because the person, who has experienced it, is unable to fully grasp it.² The first sequence of unbearably horrifying stories that the Soldier spews out and makes Ian listen to is in Scene Three:

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. Younger 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. (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p.43)

Following Caruth's definition, the Soldier's crimes, which are variations of the event he cannot leave behind, are attempts to control and master the traumatic experience (Col's murder). Once the pauses he makes and the emphasis he puts on the girl in the story are approached, attention should be drawn to his focus on the girl's condition – what did not make and what made her cry, and his act of 'thinking', which Kane, in order to highlight, has left in a separate line: "thought of –". The pauses in

¹ See Ahmed's "Introduction: Feel Your Way" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 7) for further information about the 'intentionality' of emotions.

² PTSD "reflects the direct imposition on the mind of the unavoidable reality of horrific events, the taking over of the mind, physically and neurobiologically, by an event that it cannot control" (Caruth, 1996, p. 58). Trauma is "experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and the repetitive actions of the survivor" (Caruth, 1996, p. 4).

this part of the play become tools which give time, both for the speaker (the Soldier) and the listener (Ian as well as the readers/audience), to respond emotionally to what they hear (and see). The playwright uses two 'dashes', instead of 'commas', when the Soldier describes the reactions of the twelve-year-old girl in order to produce a greater effect as the dash has a stronger impact than the comma and is used to set off an 'abrupt break' (Strunk, 2014, p. 9). The most appalling crime in the Soldier's narrative is the rape of the girl. Unlike the boy, the brothers and the father, there is no information about her (as well as the other two abused women) being killed. This particular element of his story can be approached as relational to his own survival in the past event, in which his beloved is murdered and he is a witness. Referring to Freud's study on traumatic neurosis, Caruth draws a particular attention to the question "*What does it mean to survive?*" (Caruth, 1996, p. 60) in a traumatic experience and she argues that "trauma is not simply an effect of destruction but also, fundamentally, an enigma of survival" (Caruth, 1996, p. 58), which, "paradoxically, [becomes] an endless testimony to the impossibility of living" (Caruth, 1996, p. 62). Through the repetitions of violent acts, and through leaving his female victims alive, in fact the Soldier tries to grasp what Col has experienced and what it means to survive. The women, similarly to him, are left to live with the traumatic wounds of a tremendously affective event.

The following paragraph approaches the brutalities the Soldier has done to innocent people, among whom women and children through Ahmed's study of emotions. For Ahmed, the "past is living rather than dead" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 33), "[i]n other words, harm has a history, even though that history is made up of a combination of often surprising elements that are unavailable in the form of a totality". Thus "[p]ain is not simply an effect of a history of harm; it is the *bodily life of that history*" (Ahmed, 2004, pp. 33-34). Overwhelmed with the emotion of hate and the feeling of pain, the Soldier becomes a weapon for torture, humiliation and murder (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 43). Despite the difference in approach³, Ahmed also acknowledges her 'debt to psychoanalysis' (Ahmed, 2004, p. 44) by using the concept of the 'unconscious'. Nevertheless, her use of the 'unconscious' differs from the Freudian concept; and this difference is what will allow this paper to discuss the Soldier's actions as effects of a hatred kept alive by the *not fully known*. According to Ahmed, Freud's 'unconscious emotion' should not be understood as the repression of the feeling from the consciousness, "but [as] the idea to which the feeling may have been first (but provisionally) connected" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 44), "hence, 'what sticks' is bound up with the absent presence of historicity" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 45). She gives an example of the way the 'unconscious' works with the emotion of hate "by reopening past associations, which allow for some bodies to be read as being the cause of 'our hate'" (Ahmed, 2004, p.45)⁴. In the Soldier's case the reason behind the crime repetitions is the not consciously remembered source of the affect(s). Similarly to the explanation in psychoanalysis, the person under the influence of an affective memory, tries to comprehend that, which he has been unable to grasp in the moment of the original experience. However, unlike the psychoanalytic approach, the Soldier's crime story in the context of Ahmed's affect theory suggests dissimilar reasons for the treatment of the victims, especially his sparing of the women's lives. According to Ahmed, "[t]he impossibility of reducing hate to a particular body allows hate to circulate in an economic sense" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 47). When the Soldier's absence of familiarity of the original 'idea' to which the emotion has been connected meets with an environment, in which the atmosphere is already angled⁵ in a way that intensifies the flow of the emotion of hate, the Soldier's potential to read

³ For more information see 'Inside Out and Outside In' of Ahmed's chapter "Introduction: Feel Your Way" (Ahmed, 2004, pp. 8-12) as well as Chapter Two: "The Organization of Hate" (Ahmed, 2004, pp. 42-62).

⁴ For more information see Ahmed's "The Organization of Hate" (Ahmed, 2004, pp. 44-45).

⁵ According to Ahmed, "[c]ontact involves the subject, as well as histories that come before the subject" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 6), and "[i]ndeed, attending to emotions might show us how all actions are reactions, in the sense that what we do is shaped by the contact we have with others" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 4). Thus the Soldier's actions within the play does not only depend on the Soldier's history, but also on Ian's past and on the very development of their first encounter. In their first encounter it is clear that Ian apparently performs the emotion of hate. Addressing the person behind the door "[s]peak the Queen's English fucking/nigger", changes the atmosphere of their first meeting and results in speeches about invasion, power and control (Kane, 2001, Scene Two, p. 36). Sara Ahmed, has further commented on the importance of the personal and public circumstances in relationships, in her work "Happy Objects", in which she herself uses the phrase "the atmosphere is always angled; it is always felt from a specific point" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 37), suggesting that the way one feels prior to any encounter shapes the person's 'readings' of and feelings about places and people.

bodies as the source of his hatred⁶ becomes higher. Although audience/readers are not told which the two sides in the war in the play are, Sarah Kane makes it explicit that there is a war going on and that troops have invaded the city. The war circumstance is by itself a plausible intensifier of negative emotions such as hate. The circulation of the emotion of hate, intensified by the war environment, in addition to the absence of the original idea of the source to which the emotion has been initially connected, makes the Soldier read people as 'hated' and kill them (such as the men in his narrative). However, having a closer look at the Soldier's story and his different treatment of the girl, suggests that, in contrast to the other victims, he is more interested in her. His interest in the twelve year old girl seems not to be guided only by hatred, but also by other feelings. Drawing upon Ahmed's thought that bodies are read through associations, it can be argued that the Soldier's reading of the girl is not merely as a hated body, but as a female whom he emotionally associates with his abused girlfriend from the past. His feelings towards her seem to be less determined. The broader emotional reading of the girl and the other two women, might have been the reason behind the Soldier's sparing their lives, or at least, not telling Ian about murdering them.

Lastly, the Soldier's crime story will be briefly discussed in the context of Margaret Wetherell's concept of affective meaning-making. In her chapter "Solidifying Affect: Structures of Feeling, Habitus an Emotional Capital", Wetherell cites Bourdieu, whose hypothesis about affects as conservative forces, she finds both interesting and "worth exploring" (Wetherell, 2012, pp. 106-107) for the development of her theory of affective meaning-making and affective practice. The conservatism of emotions is expressed, according to Bourdieu, in their power to "force the individual back into established practice, and reinforce the power of past practice" (Wetherell, p.107). Bourdieu approaches affects in the context of his idea of habitus, which can be simply defined as an interactive medium, through which "[p]eople display their social value" (Wetherell, p.108)⁷.

For Bourdieu emotions more than anything seem to carry the unreflective or non-conscious aspects of habitus. They present the crunch point at which the social agents discover they cannot help themselves, and re-enact past practice without knowing why, or without necessarily being willing to do so. [...] Furthermore, those who transgress the boundaries set by habitus can provoke 'visceral, murderous horror, absolute disgust, metaphysical fury' (Wetherell, 2012, p.107)

Wetherell's meaning-making in relation to Bourdieu's definition of habitus suggests an alternative reading of the Soldier's crime practices. Similarly to the already discussed approaches, Bourdieu emphasizes that there is a moment in the re-enactment of the past, which is not known – either re-performing the "past practice is without knowing why, or without necessarily being willing to do so" (Wetherell, 2012, p. 107). The affective meaning-making, Wetherell has declared, is an active social process in which the present circumstances mix with past meanings – both personal and cultural – and determine (human) relations. An important role in the affective meaning-making is played by the past, which Wetherell describes as an "unconscious storehouse of possible personal associations and patterns colouring new experience" (Wetherell, 2012, p. 153). The memories of the Soldier's love towards Col and her savage murder reside in this 'unconscious storehouse' and exercise their power through associations in the present. The memory of his girlfriend's torture and homicide transgresses the boundaries of the accepted social norms. Drawing upon Bourdieu's thought, it can be suggested that this transgression provokes rage, disgust and 'murderous horror' in the Soldier's behavior. His different attitude to the little girl can be further explained through the possible associations he might be establishing between Col and her. The traumatic past, in addition to the present war circumstances reinforce the 're-enactment of past practice'. The Soldier is re-performing Col's rape assault on the twelve year old; however, different from what happened to his girlfriend, he spares the lives of the girl and the

⁶ I have referred to the Soldier's hatred, but it does not mean that this is the only negative affect he experiences. It can be further argued that, in addition to the emotion of hate, the Soldier is overwhelmed by fear, disgust, etc.

⁷ "[H]abitus [...] can be understood as an enactive way of the social production of meaning, referring to the whole body and including cognition, judgment and aesthetics. [...] For [Bourdieu] habitus stems from habituation with an environment. It is a fact of being inhabited by one's own habitat. Habitus is formed by and constitutes a ground for embodied interaction" (Flach, 2010, p. 9).

two women. When a closer look is taken at the way he introduces her for the first time, a plausible explanation for leaving the women alive, seems to be his wish to have *her* alive.

Soldier You got a girlfriend?

Ian (*doesn't answer*)

Soldier I have. Col. Fucking beautiful. (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 42)

He speaks of Col in the present tense as if she was not dead. His affective-meaning making of the situation and the little girl is what makes him rape her as well as spare her life. The use of affective-meaning making, in this particular context, is close to Ahmed's emotional reading of bodies. Though for Wetherell past feelings reside in an 'unconscious storehouse' and for Ahmed the unconscious is expressed in the initial idea to which the emotion has been connected, the reading of and the application of their approaches to the Soldier's affective memory in this study, has pointed to some possibly similar conclusions.

In her "Conclusion" of *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed gives attention to the importance 'of telling the story of injury'. She points out that the confessions of crimes have healing effects and demand recognition (Ahmed, 2004, pp. 200-201). This paper further argues that, in the Soldier's case, his urgent request to have his story told by Ian is expressed in his strong wish to expose his personal life, his 'wound' to the world.

Soldier Proving it happened. I'm here, got no choice. But
you. You should be telling people. (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 47)

After letting Ian know some of the gross details of Col's maltreatment, the Soldier asks him whether he has encountered anything of the kind in person or in photos, and asserts that it is Ian's job as a journalist to show the truth to the world. The Soldier indicates his presence ("I'm here") as the living testimony of the brutalities that have happened. He believes that the journalist is his last hope. The Soldier craves recognition, "Tell them /you saw me. Tell them...you saw me." (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 48). He meets with Ian's rejection, who claims that the story of the Soldier cannot interest people, "Your girlfriend, she's a story. Soft and clean. Not/ you. Filthy like the wogs. No joy in a story about blacks who/gives a shit? Why bring you to light?" (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 48). The Soldier tells Ian that he, Ian, does not know him:

Soldier You don't know fuck all about me.
I went to school.
I made love with Col.
Bastards killed her, now I'm here.
Now I'm here. (Kane, 2001, Scene Three p. 48-49)

Ian's racial hatred is further expressed through the use of the black/white color symbolism. His circulation of hate is reinforced via associations of sticky signs recalling histories of ethnic division with color dichotomy – he is not willing to bring what is 'black' to 'light'⁸. In reply to Ian's hatred, the Soldier repeatedly asserts his presence ("now I'm here./Now I'm here"), the 'blackness' does not make him invisible – he is there, and he had a 'normal' past – a school life and a love story before the murder. Ahmed says:

... telling the story of injury has become crucial. [...] This is not to say that 'telling' a story of pain and injury is necessarily therapeutic. [...] Recognition of injustice is not simply about others becoming visible (though this can be important). Recognition is also about claiming that an injustice did happen; the claim is a radical one in the face of the forgetting of such injustices.

⁸ Ahmed states that the "'doing' of emotions [...] is bound up with the sticky relation between signs and bodies: emotions work by working through signs and on bodies to materialise the surfaces and boundaries that are lived as worlds" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 191). For example, the word 'soldier' becomes one of the sticky signs within the play. The Soldier's actions, as well as the narratives about the brutalities performed by troops, boost the affective circulation of the 'sign' and its accumulation of other words such as violence, savagery, disgust, non-human, etc. 'Blackness', in this context, comes with the unsaid associations of –evil, base, undeserving, etc; whereas 'light' – with white race, good, righteous, etc.

Healing does not cover over, but exposes the wound to others: *the recovery is a form of exposure*.
(Ahmed, 2004, p. 200)

The Soldier recognizes the 'bastards' who killed Col as what has made him the person standing there with Ian at the present. This is his recognition of injustice. Though he does not formulate his stand clearly and does not provide detailed explanations⁹, the implied inter-relation between the experienced traumatic event and his new identity is suggested through the order of his sentence(s): "Bastards killed her, now I'm here" (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 49). As Ahmed states, his "claim is a radical one in the face of forgetting" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 200) that this has happened to him. The Soldier wants Ian to tell his story, he strongly demands recognition.

Ahmed, further points out that "telling one's story" can result in healing, in "feeling better"; however, she stresses that "[i]ndeed feeling better for some might involve expressing feelings of anger, rage and shame as feelings in the present about a past that persists in the present" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 201). Wetherell also emphasizes that "[a] central part of affective practices consists of accounts and narratives of affect past, present and future. [...] This 'talk about' might take place either as a practice in itself (in act of confession, teaching or disciplining), or it might be combined with affective displays" (Wetherell, 2012, p. 93); and she further gives an example how the 'talk about' is expressed through affective displays in group psychotherapy sessions. The two affect theorists point at a crucial characteristic of the way people, who have experienced intense emotions in the past, perform their affects in the present in their attempts to overcome the experience not only through language, but also through 'affective displays', which Ahmed claims, can enact 'anger', 'rage' and 'shame'. Thus, the Soldier's re-enactment of some of the brutalities done to his girlfriend Col on Ian can be read as an attempt to 'feel better', which eventually turns out not to serve its purpose. When the Soldier is convinced in his inability to get public recognition via the press, he tells Ian to "turn over", because he is "[g]oing to fuck" him (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 49). The Soldier's psychological and emotional state is highly complicated. His feelings of 'anger' and 'rage' coming from his "past that persists in the present" are turned towards those who have cruelly abused Col and "pulled the trigger on her". The fact that he is a soldier, like them and like Ian makes the situation increasingly complex. The Soldier is both the army man who victimises Col and the lover who becomes affected by the crime, the survived victim. Ian, in the Soldier's perspective, is the hated 'other', the army man, the reporter who verbally abused him and rejected his appeal for recognition, and at the same time, in this distorted affective display, Ian also represents the beloved Col. In his desperate attempt to "feel better", the Soldier performs the emotions of 'hate', 'rage', 'shame' and 'love' at the same time. It can be suggested that he expresses his 'love' with his 'tender kisses', 'looks', smelling of Ian's hair, which he likens to Col's. His hatred is performed by the act of rape; his shame – through his "crying his heart out"; and rage, after the shame – in his pushing "the revolver up Ian's anus". Multiple emotions felt towards multiple personalities in one single body.

The Soldier's ambiguous emotional performativity related to the representation of multiple personalities in one body, is further displayed in the second gross re-enactment:

*The Soldier grips Ian's head in his hands.
He puts his mouth over one of Ian's eyes, sucks it out, bites it off and
eats it.
He does the same to the other eye.
Soldier He ate her eyes.
Poor bastard.
Poor love.
Poor fucking bastard. (Kane, 2001, Scene Three, p. 50)*

Having tried to 'feel better', to 'heal', by first telling his story and then re-enacting the sexual assault – both attempts unsuccessful, the Soldier performs his emotions, by imagining how the 'bastard' army man ate Col's eyes and physically re-enacting the gruesome act of sucking and eating the reporter's

⁹ In psychology trauma victims are often considered as unable to clearly put the experienced horrific events in speech. "For Caruth, trauma is therefore a crisis of representation, of history and truth, and of narrative time. Repeatedly, there is the claim that psychoanalysis and literature are particularly privileged forms of writing that can attend to these perplexing paradoxes of trauma" (Luckhurst, 2008, p. 5).

eyes. After the description of the affective display in the stage directions, the Soldier first utters that he feels sorry for the 'bastard', who similarly to what he has just done to Ian, "ate [Col's] eyes". The 'bastard', is not only the man who committed the physical violence in the past; the 'poor bastard' is both the Soldier, who has now sucked Ian's eyes, and Ian, who presents a pitiful sight. Second, the Soldier pities his love; and at the end, once again, he expresses sympathy for the 'bastard'; however, this time, the Soldier himself is the "[p]oor fucking bastard". The offensive adjective 'fucking' emphasizes the Soldier's anger and annoyance in addition to his feeling of pity for the man. The adjective 'poor' further defines the 'bastard' and shows a more personal and emotional attachment. Unlike the first feeling of pity, in the last sentence, the 'bastard', for whom the Soldier is feeling sorry, is himself and not anymore Ian or Col's abuser from the past.

Ahmed says that "the failure of hate to be located in a given object or figure [...] allows it to generate the effects that it does" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 49) and "allows hate to circulate in an economic sense" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 47). Once the Soldier is able to "reduce hate [as well as the other discussed emotions] to a particular body" (Ahmed, 2004, p.47), to himself, he is able to put an end to the circulation of affects, and right after his last sentence ("Poor fucking bastard"), puts an end to his life. It can be argued that his encounter with Ian has allowed him to tell what he has endured, confess his crimes and display past affective practices, which made him face the truth, re-live the past and become more conscious of the blurred source of his anger. Although the process of realisation does not bring any positive outcomes, it is a kind of completion, which by itself is an act of accomplishment to come to terms with his anger, his past and present; and consequently, by locating his emotions – put an end to his life.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, it can be further argued, that 'death' has been the desired outcome by the Soldier from the very beginning. Cathy Caruth, drawing upon Freud's work, approaches the suicides in PTSDs as 'death drives' (Caruth, 1996, pp. 64-65). "[T]he survival of trauma is [...]the endless *inherent necessity* of repetition, which ultimately may lead to destruction", Caruth explains that "repetition of the traumatic experience [...] can itself be retraumatizing" and that "traumatic disorder is indeed the apparent struggle to die" (Caruth, 1996, pp. 62-63). Despite the difference in the perspectives¹⁰, Ahmed's study of emotions and the psychoanalytic approach applied together provide further explanation of how the 'death drive' functions in the Soldier's case. Caruth emphasizes that the recurrence of the traumatic experience can be 'retraumatizing'. It is possible to explain how this happens through feelings. "The impossibility of feeling the pain of the others does not mean that the pain is simply theirs, or that their pain has nothing to do with me" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 30), changes the approach towards the Soldier. It suggests that the multiple re-enactments of the traumatizing event have produced also effects on him and that these repetitions have been also emotionally destructive and eventually have led to his suicide.

To sum up, Kane's *Blasted* is one of those works in theatre history that puts on stage a spectacular display of emotions. By applying Sarah Ahmed's and Margaret Wetherell's theories of emotions as well as Cathy Caruth's psychoanalytic approach to affects, this study has offered a detailed analysis of the Soldier's emotions, affective memories, need to tell his story and suicide. Although Kane is not considered a moral playwright, through the affective circuits of emotions in her play, she succeeds in forcing the audience and readers to think critically about contemporary moral and ethical questions regarding the brutal often circumstantial and deeply affective nature of wars.

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¹⁰ Different from Ahmed's and also Wetherell's explanations of the healing reasons behind the verbal and physical affective displays, Caruth links the repetitions of the affective crimes with the "attempt to master what was never fully grasped in the first place" (Caruth, 1996, p. 62).

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