

sEnglish Literature – British Contemporary Theatre

Texts:

Caryl Churchill > *Far Away* and *Drunk Enough To say I Love You*

Martin Crimp > *Attempts on Her Life* and *In the Republic of Happiness*

Sarah Kane > *Blasted* and *4:48 Psychosis*

Tim Crouch > *An Oak Tree* and *The Author*

No class on April, 16th 2019

Exam: Oral. Importance of critics and reviews on theatre.

05/03/19

The word theatre comes from the Greek for “a place where to see”. You go there to see something, as well as to hear. When you study theatre, the paradox is that rather than to experience the performance that’s **multidimensional**, you only study the text. During a performance, the show could be disturbed by a cough; you participate in a way to the show. Novelists do not have this kind of problem. The dominant way of reception of theatre is its representation in a room in front of people. When we read the texts, we miss some dimensions. We can wonder who the author is: The writer, the director, or the performers? Just for *Hamlet*, there are a lot of interpretations. During the Romantic age, the few writers for theatre developed the **mental theatre** (Byron for example, who used to work in a theatre) in which it were easier to build possible stages in one zone mind of the text. It could be useful if the reader of the text have at least knowledge of what could be staging. When we read a play, we need to think of how it could be said on stage. **The performance is made in order to support the text**. Everyone have a different view on how a text could be staged, but these ideas need to find support in the text. The main thing about directing is to help and represent an interpretation of a text, if the interpretation is not rooted in the text then it is something I can apply to any text and it would not be great.

With the contemporary theatre, there are fewer and fewer stage directions. It’s always more difficult to find the traditional elements of the tram. In 1996, Samuel Book (*Post dramatic theatre*) tried to define what was to be presented on stage, what the new directions on plays were leading to. There are new dominant traits in theatre. There are **formal aspects**, such as the **bathing theatre** (“to the letter”, end of the 1990’s, official documents taken from trials or interviews which are edited by a playwright without changing the words). There are **thematic aspects** as well. The theatre of the 1990’s was a “*in your face*” type of theatre as called by Alex Seed (?) in his book. During the 1990’s there were many plays presented, and most of them had the characteristic of being very crude and very raw, with scenes of violence (physical but also sexual). *In Your Face* comes from the expression from the commentary of basketball; you cannot escape what’s presented on stage. It’s a kind of **experiential theatre**. Sarah Cain (?) was part of this type of theatre. We need to pay attention between the difference of **dramatist** and **playwright**. Eduardo di Filippo said “*Sono parole di voce, e non di chioistro quelle che si scrivono per il teatro*”.

Generally **Drama** is associated with 2 particular genres: **Naturalism** and **Realism**. According to their principles, most of the texts have been judged. Those two forms were the dominant ones during the 18th and the 19th century and also until WWII. Their characteristics are a clear presentation of the

characters that matches reality, a linear narrative, the action is usually driven by causality, sometimes there are time shifts, etc. Drama has an accessible story-telling. However some pragmatic features such as the plot or the resolution of conflicts have not disappeared after WWII. Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* was very controversial. After this, dramatist tried to discover other forms of the genre, they tried to articulate the absurdity of the human condition. They tried to go beyond what was taken for granted by realism and naturalism. *The Oak Tree* takes its name from a work of art that's a glass of water. You need to be aware of the **theatrical metaphors** and where they can take you when you're studying a play. Modern drama is probably born in Great Britain during Medieval times with public theatres. Drama is the second oldest form of writing (the first is poetry).

07/03/19

Visual images – Effects

The dramatic theatre was the **formation of the illusion** (active cosmos, fictional words, etc). **Brecht** broke the tradition with the Epic theatre. There is the alienation and there is no illusion of being part of something, of spying on someone's story. There is no 4th wall. The performance of art is about the **reality of a sequence of actions instead of the illusion of an event**. There is no pretending. What is true? Is theatre true? What is illusion? What does it create? There is a **misinterpreted perception of a sensory experience**. However, that's not exactly what happens in theatre. The dramatic theatre is representative; it's a representation more than an illusion. We know what's happening isn't real.

Both objects and actors are **not representing the reality**. We can't really imagine ourselves present in the fictional events, engulfed in this move-pretend because we can't ignore all the production behind it. We know we are not really there. We know that the theatrical text **will come alive and it will be an interpretation**. The images we form in our mind after and they won't remain the same throughout the course of the play. Drama has its own peculiarities.

12/03/19

The theatrical representation is part of the text. We are immersed into the performance once we are spectators. We can wonder about our identity during the performance (for example, who are we during *Hamlet*? Ghosts?). Mental images are indeterminate; a show is determinate and shows an interpretation. Some critics believe that mental images are better thought as ??? . **Some source of information are rather visual**, however when you are reading you don't get that kind of information (Gregory Currie). Some images are visually presented, which helps to understand. Even though they have no lines, some actors can do something or be dressed in a certain way, which is a narration. It **helps clarifying the text**. The problem is that if we analyze from a linguistic POV, we cannot see an image and at the same time imagining it. Therefore, the best way is knowing that the 2 objects are separate (the actor and the character), we manage to think of them as one because theatrical representation is mainly metaphorical.

Metaphors might be a good solution as they are not limited by any notion of resemblance, it is flexible. Performances can be metaphors of the fictional world they represent, or of the world itself. There can also be a metaphor of the play itself. This kind of approach is made so we never doubt that what's on stage is true, we don't get the impression that we are spying. We **never confuse the object of our attention**. If theatrical representation is metaphorical, we see that actors give performances that are metaphors. The stage can become a metaphor for an imaginary world or a determinate one; it depends on what the director chooses. This aspect can be useful while reading contemporary plays (most of them don't have a naturalistic setting). In Sara Kane's *Blasting*, there is a shift between a realistic setting and a more indeterminate one. Today, we find many new ways of innovation of theatre.

Churchill started writing for the radio. Since the 1970's she started to write for the theatre. Every time she writes a new text, she **experiments with a new form**. There's always something unexpected. In 1966 she said: "*We must find a balance that doesn't impose form and poetry unrelated to the details of life, nor pile up details without finding form and poetry. Form is itself a means of expression and a good play is like music [...] A good play is like music*". **Beckett wanted the actors to follow a music pattern**, as for him it was the most important element to carry meaning. The reappearance of several themes is important for the musical aspect in a play, as well as changes of pace or conflicts and harmonies. To explore possibilities of forms is a way for Churchill to be **more true to life**. Probably without being conscious of it, we follow that kind of patterns. Churchill was born in 1938, and she is **always exploring new paths**. She wrote for the radio, which helped her in developing her own characteristic way of writing (a lot of freedom). She chose a director (Steven D??) and they worked together for a long time.

What is the playwright for Churchill? For her, it's someone whose job is to provide the instrument for the actors who move and give life to the text. There is a **trip** from a certain part to another that the playwright needs to bring to the audience. She is one of the first of the new generation of playwrights to **successfully tailor the form of the play into the content she wants to deliver**. She manages to do so without losing the ability to depict vivid settings. This element of depicting made her into the **Picasso of theatre**; she once told a journalist that "*perhaps I feel the same about theatre that an artist feels about the paint*". This is why reading her plays we have definitions such as the abstract impressionism. These explorations from her in the still undiscovered lands of possibilities for theatre gave her the reputation as the most restless playwright, **always reinventing her style**. She's seen as a **pioneer**, it's possible for her as she never cared about the box office failure or ideological subjects. She's not someone who tries to be rude or bizarre, she doesn't want to impress or strike the imagination of her audience.

There were many reviews about *Far Away*. Many critics say that the setting of the play is not clear. Churchill chose another director from Stefan Clark in order to be reinventive. It was not staged to be on the Royal Court, but on the room upstairs (60 people). It was defined as a **compressed epic**. The Epic is a particular theatre that deeply influenced Churchill. The play became quickly very successful and ended up at the West End. When you open the text, there are 3 characters (Joan, Harper, Todd). There is a pirate scene in Act II. Before the play, as the spectators were waiting, there was the depiction of a countryside scene. It should represent what would happen in the first scene (calm, relax), however it is a contrast. The play begins during the night time, there is already the image that the scene before was questioned. The show starts with a little girl saying "I can't sleep". Harper tries to reassure her. It is a **contrast** with the calming curtain before the start of the play.

There is a conversation going up, quite normally. We only don't know why she is up at 2 AM. The aunt is ready to present with safe statements something that cannot apparently be put into discussion, that you won't say it's not true. She uses a **proverbial way of talking**, there is no way to discuss it. In this late night conversation, we don't know why Joan has recently arrived to her aunt's place. She's been outside and while being outside, something happened. Joan heard somebody screaming and went to see what happened. She saw her uncle outside, but he was not the one screaming.

14/03/19

Churchill could not find a perfect solution to cope with the social and political issues of her time. It took her a lot of time to find some way. FA is a turning point for her career. Playwrights don't give answers, they **give questions**, and they **don't force a point of view** however. We need to find new questions and **new ways to ask questions** when we read a play to answer to old questions or at least make them unimportant. Her theatre reflects her POV on the world, on her view on politics for

example. It's not just a question of politics; part of it is also a **politics of style**. She always states something political or social through an **experimental approach of dramatic form**. Churchill deforms the world and the word. We need to think of the fact that our **world is fragmented**, it's like the aftermath of an explosion.

The **form** and the **thematic content** are **not separated**; there is the necessity to find balance in theatre. Churchill reinvents the **sign system of words/language**, because it's through language that we mediate and make sense of the world. In doing this, she also shows her preoccupation. We live in an unstable and violent world; we need tools to understand it. This world is hard to understand and to have a critical approach of. In the dramatic world (the narration of the play), she **tries not to comply with conventional rules**. We can develop **our own critical approach** that way as she creates a reality that exists only on the stage, and Churchill develops her own way of doing so. It's not possible to describe a place in conventional terms, so for critics it's difficult to judge the play. She **challenges** the ways in which **we make sense of life and meaning**. This is why her style demands a **different reading**. FA was presented in 2000, before it the last plays Churchill wrote were also interested. In Great Britain and in the world during this time, things were changing. In 1997, Tony Blair was elected prime minister in GB and there were many changes in society. The crisis in politics gave a crisis for the arts (how do we adapt?). The traditional way of the Left was changing with Blair (Churchill was from the Left). Before, with Thatcher there was an individualistic way of life. Churchill needed a new way to present a story, and that's how she came up with FA.

FA is divided in **3 parts**. The time with these 3 parts are of chronological, there are 3 different time periods. The title is like the front clothe that was put with the beautiful scenery before the play. Then, you get inside a cottage at the beginning of the play, during the night. As the dialogue goes on, we perceive that there is a **tension increasing** between Joan and her aunt. The difference between the 2 is that Harper tells a story she is inventing whereas Joan presents her story as a witness of an event. Every time Joan comes up with a question, her aunt is ready to provide an explanation to bring everything back to normality. Harper is **corrupting reality to bring back normality**. Joan stepped on a puddle of blood and shows it to her aunt in order to confront her with evidence. Joan is like an investigating detective. She manages to corner her aunt talking about seeing children in the shed with blood. However, she has to conceal what she found. The aunt insists on the fact that the uncle is helping people. The sense of truth is broken by the lies the aunt said before, however Joan tries to trust her with the truth. There is the **corruption of a child's mind**. This is a 1984 like situation; the aunt is manipulating the vision of Joan.

Churchill makes a point about the difference between life and political discourse; she stresses the **failure to connect politically**. It's an urgent issue for her. FA shows us what we overlook and fail to see. Social responsibility is crucial to **avoid social global catastrophe**. "Far away" is usually used in **fables**, in the play it shows us the lies that politics try to impose on us. Illusions are not in fairytale books, there are outside in real life. The front clothe is a reminder of this, it blocked the view. It is easier to believe in fables. The idealistic illusion of the beginning of the play gets reversed. Joan is not innocent, she **looks for the truth**. She sees more than she should.

19/03/19

In the Second act, Joan is grown up in a Hat factory. She is with a man, Todd. For Joan, it is the first hat that she makes. There is the mention of a parade. Todd complains about the way they are forced to work and the ways to work. He is trying to care about the conditions of work (he's part of a Union=syndicat). In the 2nd part of the act, they are near completing a hat. What is apparently a workplace conversation as it happened in the 1st act **starts to reveal something else**. There are some political concerns. Todd is afraid of exposing the problems of the factory. Joan doesn't enjoy the same

things as Todd, who watches trials on the TV. In the next scene, the hats are becoming big and extravagant. All the preoccupations are **focused on the work conditions**. The next scene shows hats even bigger, the conversation is going in the same direction as before, but in a more dangerous form. They are preposterous and clearly exposed. Todd is about to complain about the conditions, however he never wondered what the hats were used for and what kind of parade it is. Todd and Joan appear to be close.

The fifth scene presents **rape, beating and other atrocities**. The hats are made for prisoners to wear before execution. Every week they need to start again making hats for prisoner. Joan says "*I still can't believe it*" about the fact that she **won a prize for the best hat**. She says it's sad to burn the hat with the bodies, she worries only about the hats she is making. Todd makes a metaphor about life being ephemeral, which can be addressed to the public of the play. They confirm **the idea of a terror state**, in which graduates find employment in this kind of factory. Joan has moved from the innocent kid she was at the beginning of the play when she was enrolled by Harper. She stopped asking questions. This way to make beauty disappear (the hats) is not just that of the art of making hats, but also of **performance itself**. The **parade is a metatheatrical parade** as well, it represents theatre itself. The audience needs to wonder if they make the same mistake as Joan. It's as if the hats were an objective of the horror that results when **esthetics loses all concerns for the material reality**. For example, us westerners look at the Third-Part countries' way of working, and realize it is unfair to be paid so little in order to work.

In the third section of the play, there is a **dualistic opposition** (right/wrong). There is only Harper and Todd at the beginning of the act. Everyone can be your enemy, you don't know which side to take, and it's an absurd conflict. What's the meaning of saying "*the cats are coming on the side of the French/ Oh, I never liked the cats*"? They depict a nightmarish world. Harper insists again about the fact that she is on the good side. In a society where you turn a blind eye on trials or prisoners being executed, what are the consequences? You **don't control anything anymore as it is too late**. We think of a world where **allegiances are always shifting**. There are groups that you cannot control, there is no safe place. We should learn from fables that have a moral, like learning from FA. Joan left Todd and Harper to visit her husband. Once she comes into the scene, Harper gets worried about her. She deserted to go, she talked about the danger and reasons why she did so. The further she goes, the more apocalyptic gets her description. The river might purify or drown you, she doesn't know which side it is on. Joan crossed it anyway, and nothing happened to her. Is the play to be read as Churchill developing her respond to a political agenda? Is there even an answer to the play? The world is slipping through our finger, they cannot really grasp what is happening. Simon Stevens declared that FA is the strongest respond to 9/11. We can read the politics used to respond to the terrorist attack by the US. The enemies of the US kept changing. We are not far away however from such a world depicted in the play. The names we give to our enemies are not really accurate as they are in FA. Identity and categories are very slippery.

21/03/19

As reader, we should have been aware of what was going to happen in the end of FA. We need to be careful readers and we should consider the fact that such a play text is full of hints (when in act 2, there are 3 times in which they talk about the trials for example). We need to notice the contrast between **what is said and what is meant**. Moreover, our interest is taken by the way Todd and Joan are making the hats, the visual aspect is very important. It also **distracts our attention** from the lines delivered from the actors. The dialogue goes on with a good pace; it's quite easy to miss the words and their consequences. The only moment in which **normality is broken** is during the **only silent moment in the play**, when there is the **parade**. There is no sound during that moment; there are just images of people with chains, beaten down. It is crucial to understand what is going on in the text, as well as the

stage directions. How can you measure the silence of a play when you are reading it? After this silent procession, we see the fact that Joan and Todd don't comment about that scene, it's something normal for them, and the focus is on the hats. All the horror of this scene has no effect on them, the only thing that matters is the **ephemerality of art**. It's a **metatheatrical reflection**. The parade could be seen as a **performance** as well, for which the prisoners are dressed up to put on a show (shown on TV).

In the 3rd act, the **world is destroying itself**. Everyone could be an enemy to yourself. Joan and Todd are married, but don't live together. Joan deserted in order to go to see him. Everyone and everything is **engaged in a bloody war/slaughter**. There is no way now that you can turn your eyes away and don't see blood. There is **no way out**. How do they talk about that situation? They are not worried, it's **normal** for them. The matter is discussed with **calm tones**. What should be frightening is contrasted with the way things are said. Elements always play with our expectations; we are always **deceived** by the events. The reader needs to be aware of the theatrical moments in the text (silence, etc), and he needs to always know that Churchill wanted the play to be shown in a small room to produce an **effect of intimacy**. When Joan wakes up in the final speech of the play, she doesn't convey any strong emotion and she is very practical even though she talks about the horrors she saw. That final contrast shows us where the **real tragedy** is: Something that should prompt us to **wonder what is normality**. You do have you have to do in order to achieve what you want and to survive, even killing or betray. These images are delivered in a way that's without emotion. The characters accepted this reality. Churchill tells us that "*The imagination needn't have the same limits as factual knowledge; we may make cautious philosophical and scientific statements, but we do not have to feel, visualize and imagine cautiously*".

Drunk Enough to say I Love You (DETSILY) is another play by Churchill. That play is interesting for the **way it is written**. **Performance** is extremely important for the non-verbal elements suggested in the text but not in the reading of it. There is **almost no punctuation and stage directions** in the text, many lines are missing. It was also presented at the Royal Court, but downstairs this time, and directed by McDonald. The 2 characters are Sam and Jack, the notes from Churchill are extremely important. Sam was called like this because of Uncle Sam. Jack is a very common name in the UK, but when the play transferred to the USA, the name is transformed into Gary (a guy). She wants to address a target: The USA. If you read the text aloud, you can hear 2 voices and their dialogue. There are **2 parallel speeches**, rarely coming into contact.

At the beginning, they are sitting on a sofa (not written in the text, but performed as such) and the **light got reduced** on the two characters as the play goes by. The sofa got higher and higher as well. They are talking as if they are a **gay couple**. There are many **non-verbal elements** that the reader should be able to put into the lines in order to understand the play better. We should look for **dramatic meaning elsewhere from the plot**, maybe in a story that would come out during the performance for example. These 2 men are probably having a love affair and the dangers of feelings are exposed. This is a **critic of the American Dream**. Jack is everyone and anyone at the same time, but he's someone that is intoxicated by the close proximity of power of feelings. He has a family with a wife and children (traditional), however he is in love with someone else. His sentence ends with "but", without any punctuation. Sam is in the dominant position in the pairs; he's told he's loved.

When the lines "*and you could come with me if you*" "*I?*" are pronounced, we need to imagine it on stage. We can guess what they mean by these lines. This is a **situation that happens often**, when you know how the person is going to answer, but we ask anyway. You need to think while reading about the non-verbal elements. **Sam is dominant** also because he is the one leaving. He doesn't need to explain in details what he's doing, there is something that has to do with a comparison, **we should be aware about History** (he's speaking about Vietnam). Sometimes they both speak by **echoing each other** with associations, as if in psychotherapy. Jack is afraid is passing a line, of saying too much that could offend Sam. He's afraid Sam would leave not come back, he repeats and echoes what he says.

26/03/19

There are **differences** between the American/digital and the British editions: The name Jack/Guy, in the American/digital version there are some lines missing, etc. The changes don't interfere with the meaning; however it gives some clearance and nuances. The difference of the name doesn't really matter. The **relationship** of the characters shows the one between the **USA and the GB**. Jack is just a man who falls in love with America/Sam. He always tries to reconcile with the dominant figure to keep **balance with power**. "*Jack will do anything for Sam. Sam will do one thing*". Jack is ready to do anything for his lover and turns a blind eye to bad things, whereas Sam doesn't care about the others and cares about his own interest. The **frame of reference** is pretty clear in the play; it's the USA **inspiring activities of war** and power. Sam is a metaphor for the USA and Jack is anyone from the western world. It's a **metaphor** recognizable in these characters, it looks simple to interpret. However, it is not just that Churchill hates the USA; they are the most important military country in the world. They are the dominant country after the Cold War.

Churchill is always **criticizing those in power**. She wants to be supportive of those who suffer from the abuses of power. The 2 characters are very isolated (on a sofa, sitting almost during the entire play). This way of being **detached by any context** is also a way to show how they are not interested in anyone else's opinion. They're **self-referential**; they have their own way of thinking. Sam doesn't even listen to Jack and doesn't care about what he is thinking. Jack is implicated in the love affair. It means that he is also **involved in what Sam does**; he **replicates Sam's way of behaving** with others. The play doesn't accuse only the USA to be the enemy of everyone, but also the others that support the USA by turning a blind eye on what they do.

Jack is ready to leave his family. **Sam's world is depicted**: It's a brutal world in which he does whatever he wants and thinks is right. The way it's said and shows already says something, it's hard to be seduced by him as Jack is. Some lines are incomplete, it shows that they both have confidence in what they are doing and saying. Most of the time, it's **as if we could complete those sentences**, we know what should come after. That way, we could be seen as complicit of what they say and do. In the second scene, the characters evoke mostly propaganda and how it works. From the USA which is a free country, they depict a world full of war. They talk about how to build your own power. They say that voting should not be allowed sometimes as some people vote for the "bad" persons. At the end of the scene, we see **Sam's hunger for power** and the fact that he is convinced to be on the good side. We need to bring war to those that are not friends. Churchill shows us that we cannot turn a blind eye to that situation. You must always be aware of the strategies used to manipulate your opinion. Leaders convince you that they will take care of you and that you won't be a loser. Jack wants to be like Sam, who is the dominant/leader in the play.

Jack gets homesick in the 3rd scene, he wants to leave. If Jack leaves, Sam has no one to share with. He **depends on Jack's support**. Hence, he needs to bring him back on board, he bullies Jack into coming back. When Jack tries to find another perspective, Sam explodes with fury and calls it "*lack of commitment*". Sam always tries to promote and defend his own opinions, and Jack should have the same ones as him. He forces him into supporting him and having the same beliefs. Sometimes the **situation is slipping out of our hands** (USA trained the afghans, who turned against them). Sam is always paranoid, when he loses the feeling of power. The only explanation that Sam gives to tragedy is saying "*evil*".

The last scene opens with Sam alone after the crisis between the 2 characters. Sam is someone who **needs to be surrounded by people who blindly follow him**; there is no room for objections. There are the only 2 stage directions of the play in this scene (Sam alone and Jack who enters after). Sam makes a catalogue of torture techniques, it is not the antic of a crazy person but it is a lucid list. It sounds like

the reading of a manual. There is a practice in which you send a prisoner to be tortured in another country with less rigorous laws about mankind (**extraordinary rendition**), made particularly by the USA. Almost at the end of the scene, Sam talks about this. This is the moment in which the sofa is at its highest, it means that it is the further from reality. Jack has given up on Sam.

The last scene is about **climate change**. It says that the USA didn't sign the Tokyo Pact about environment. Sam says that climate change is not that important. He insists on **being loved** as well. At the end of the play, the characters are **left in the air**. There is no clear end. The plot is not really existent. As FA, there is nobody to tell us what to do. Churchill shows us what she thinks throughout the play, she shares her thoughts. You should have something more that you didn't receive from traditions and make your own conclusions.

28/03/19

Blasted went out on **January 1995** at the Royal Court. It really created a big fuss; everyone was talking about this young author: Sarah Kane. Her play was talking an "**atrocities**". The artistic director of the Royal Court, who was in the US for promotions, had to hurry to come back to the UK in order to defend the play. Theatre is not made to change the world, but to give the playwright's opinion. The 90's was a **period of transformation** and society was changing politically (not only). There were **controversial** music and expositions of art (Damion Hirst, Tracy Emin for the Sensation Exhibition). We need to investigate the **limits of representation**. It was a society in which the young people felt as they were constrained, they grew up with Thatcher's government. When **Tony Blair** arrived as the Prime Minister with his 3rd way and new ideas, there was a new vision. However, the expectations were frustrated. Kane's *Blasted* is a turning point for theatre's history (like John Osborne's in the 1950's).

There were not only local changes in the UK, but also internationally with the end of the Cold War. **Individualism** was the mantra of the **neo-liberalism**. It was hard during those times to find a cause to fight for. There was a feeling of being abandoned. There was the "**In-Yer-Face theatre**" during this time as well. It was used by some critics, who need labels. It was something to characterize those years: there was a strong and colloquial language and the subjects are particular of the period as they question what normality is. There is the **influence of the private sphere on the public life**. The playwrights also use **shock tactics** (when there is tension moments in order to make the public aware of something, it is mostly scandalous and violent). They also want to investigate **new theatrical forms**. A **small theatre** was an ideal for that kind of theatre. The audience sees something and participates to something; they are helping the performance as well.

02/04/19

Art and the product of art were sold during exhibitions (**Brit Art**). The marketing strategies were quite aggressive. The market wanted products to **rebrand Britain**, which is why artists like Sarah Kane emerged. *Blasted* was talked about for a very long time. In 1966, Eduard Bond (?) contributed to the end of censorship in Britain. He also wrote an article about Kane's play, in which he links the play to what theatre is and should be. He doesn't take the play seriously, and doesn't think that theatre is not a place for debate/discussion. He doesn't see any link between a series of actions and any other interpretations. There is a need for coherence for him. He says that Shakespeare needed a clear background as 400 years ago it was needed, and so Sarah Kane was not clear as it is another era.

The title of the play, 'blasted', seems already like a title looking for **some effects**. It starts with a journalist writing for a newspaper (**incapacity of media** to describe reality, you cannot just present a catalogue of things). There were some **shocking tactics** used by Kane as to put the audience in a

position of submission, in a position in which you attend the play only because you are terrified. Kane wrote “*a list of contents is not a review. I regret that the critics don't take their job as seriously as do the playwrights*”. The **stage directions** are given at the beginning of the play, they depict a specific setting and there is an **accurate description** of the characters as well: That way, the play appears as naturalistic and conventional as possible. **Everything has its importance** (like the small pile of newspapers that Ian chooses).

The protests at the images of *Blasted* weren't comparable to the **outcries of reality**, the places in which the events were really taking place. The **failure of the critical establishment** to make a language to discuss drama was something clearly shown after *Blasted*. It was the same with the play *Saved* 20 years before. If you don't have language, how can you discuss or analyze such a play? There are many details in the play. Cate is acting like a **naïve girl**. She enjoys being with a very much older guy with a gun. We don't know what character to trust. Ian is not well, he is slowly dying. They both have **problems**, it reflects their **mental** ones. The play starts with a series of actions that show its fragmented nature. Cate is a vegetarian; it's ironic for the play. Ian is actually terrified of death. There are many **contradictions** in the play.

04/02/19

The settings and descriptions of the characters contribute to a sort of naturalistic definition of the play, especially in the first part. There is a difference between the first and the second part, it's a reason why the play was not really understood. The **fragmentary structure** (particularly the second part that's a sequence of actions) is stressed, and we can see the attempt **to make form expressing the content**. We find the same structure in the text as we experience. The play could be read as a **bleak illustration of brutal events**. In the second part, however, we need to refer to the first one as it's still rooted in real life but is not a naturalistic interpretation anymore. It's a **different way to deal with reality**. There are still the brutal elements of life (war, etc). It might be confusing for an European country, but for a country with war (Syria, etc), it is the perfect representation.

The form Kane chose was something that **puzzled the audience** (the play mirrors the content). It was not really clear for them. She chose this way probably because this aspect should help us visualize and understand the **shocking nature of violence**. If we're shocked in the theatre room, we can project this experience on the conception of reality we have. It's true that we experience violence daily (news, etc), but still it's something that we can ignore. The 'in yer face' theatre makes you unable to ignore this violence.

Ian is a very rude man, he behaves with no respect (for himself as well). He is also a nervous character. There is an article from a tabloid that Ian reads, the play itself is based on that idea of violent events in tabloids. The way Ian comments on the article shows his thoughts as well. Cate and Ian's relationship is quite old, it probably started when she was underage. He thinks of her mostly as a sexual object, he only cares about his own satisfaction. Ian is also quite racist. The **gun in the play represents the male genitals**. The **idea of death** is always put in front of us. There are many elements from their past. **Love** is also mentioned very often. Ian hates children and believes they will always hate their parents, there is no way out of it. Ian is hated because he does everything to be hated. Ian and Cate play a **perverse game**, with a bad man and a victim. The first scene is ending with the sound of 'spring rain'. It is a challenge for the directors to direct the play as Kane's directions are very particular.

Every scene ends with a different season; it represents a **cycle of violence**. There is a **unit of time** in the play, as the second scene starts with the morning after. It also starts with a very **long list of stage**

directions. Ian is under severe pain from the beginning of the scene. He also started to pay attention to the newspapers. We get references to death again 'don't worry, I'll be dead soon' is tragic irony. The only way to cope with reality is to **avoid it**. Cate destroys Ian's jacket, she wants to express her anger and frustration. She faints again when she gets very stressed, and Ian used this moment to unleash his sexual tension. She wakes up for a moment and faints again. As she comes back, he tries to convince her to stay at the hotel with her, he begs her to remain. He closes the door of the room and prevents her from leaving. There is a paradox moment in which Ian says that the outside is dangerous, but in reality he is the dangerous element. He gets scared of a car outside, it shows **his true nature** (anxious and scared of death). Ian said he signed a 'secret officials act' as Cate is trying to seduce him.

09/04/19

Dick McCaw's intervention > Bakhtin's bodies.

11/04/19

Many other playwrights supported Kane's play, they try to explain how violent plays make you question your values (shock tactics). She depicted the way she saw **Society, as a self-destructing one**. It is shown through Ian who doesn't care about anything as he is to die anyway. John Peter said "*theatre is only alive if it is kicking*". The media pretended to be more upset by the representation of violence than by violence itself. Cate is a very delicate character; she tends to faint and shows that she cares. We don't really know what happened between them before. She keeps getting stronger and stronger in the story. Ian and Cate have 2 contradicting views on the events. 'Joey' is a vulgar way to address a woman. Ian has a strange mixture of nationalism. There is a metaphor with killing in order to grow up, it means the end of innocence. "*Now you see me*" refers to the fact that now the truth is out. Cate is changing, it shows in her behavior. When there are 2 knocks on the door, it is the moment in which the situation will really change. It's the moment in which the soldier arrives in the room. He looks for elements of suspicion in the room. The scene ends on a 'summer rain'.

The Third scene starts with the hotel that has been blasted by a bomb. There are only the soldier and Ian in this scene, they start having a dialogue. Ian is trying to protect Cate in a way, he tries to impress the soldier. The soldier is a very cruel man, he describes the terrible acts he committed. Killing somebody is normal for him. Ian acts like the soldier tells him to do. He cannot stand the stories of the soldier. "*Now I'm here*", you cannot avoid reality. The soldier rapes Ian, this act of violence made by a soldier is a parallel to what Ian did to Cate. He then eat Ian's eyes, and the scene finishes on an autumn rain.

The fourth and last scene starts with the soldier who killed himself and Ian next to him. The soldier recreated the horror of what happened to his girlfriend to try to cope with the trauma, and he then committed suicide. The act of rape between Cate and Ian at the beginning showed their inner and outside world. Cate arrives into the scene, with a baby in her arms. The fragmentation is well presented in the play.

Presentation: Kane probably chose the use a lot of violence as it is something you can find everywhere in the world, it's a universal language. Many of the violent events were inspired by real life. There is a circle of violence in the sense that if you are exposed to it, you tend to reproduce it.

30/04/19

Form thinking is important, it's about the way form can put forwards something. *Blasted* may seem like a **conventional play** in its first act. A conventional play has recognizable characters in a recognizable space with a recognizable social situation. The subjects are also conventional. The flowing of time should also be linear. In *Blasted*, the events are organized in a non-linear way. This is why it is a in-yer-face theatre play. There is not just one way of judging a play. The play is textual. It's also representational. Kane tries to challenge the boundaries of socially realistic dramas. There is no clear political context, we don't know who's fighting who and why. Kane wants to show in theatre that it is still a place in which you can be shocked by violence.

The soldier represents war, chaos, and violence. The boundaries blur in the play. Kane gave a lot of importance to the story of the soldier, which is the 'bad guy' of the play. When we try to understand trauma the narrative is focused on the victims, here it is the opposite. He commits suicide at the beginning of the scene 4. The realistic set has been destroyed because as Peter Buse says, '*physical and psychological trauma does not just [...]*'. Extreme pain causes a reversion to pre-language usually. At the end of the play, Ian suffers so much that he cannot express himself properly anymore. The baby, that he eats, represents innocence or desperation or the horror. He doesn't really die, he is going to live a life of pain. Something is changed in both Ian and Cate. Kane references death in the play.

02/05/19

Psychosis is Sarah Kane's **last play she wrote before committing suicide**. Some critics have read it as a suicide note. This play is one of the most debated texts in theatre. It has been staged almost a year and a half after her death. Its **form** has also been commented on a lot. There are **no characters** in the play, and there are few identifiable streams of dialogue introduced by dash to indicate different voices (but we don't know who's). It has a structure of conversation but we don't know who is speaking. We do not have a character we can study, we just have a speaker. This is why it has been identified as an iconic play as "**post-dramatic theatre**". Still, it has a textual quality; it's not just a text for performances. The fact that the death of the author is somehow in the text doesn't mean that she is the text as it happened in the **performative art form** (things happening for real on stage). The text is an **open one**, there are many different interpretations. James McDonald thought that this open form of text is very hard to stage. Post-dramatic theatre rejects text-based drama according to Leman (?). However, even if the author was suffering from depression she was still writing a fiction.

When McDonald thought about staging the text, he made a **workshop** about it in order to understand how to stage it perfectly. It could be seen as a conversation between a doctor and a patient, but it still would be too simple. There were groups of actors that needed to know the text by heart in order to work in an efficient way on the staging. He wanted to make an **atmosphere of collective imagination**, he found out the importance of this way of working thanks to *Psychosis*. In the end, he staged it with 3 performers. While rehearsing, Kane was in the room. One day, one of the actors came out with 6 different ways of performing a line and asked her what she thought was the best one. She answered 'all of them'. McDonald took 3 actors as it was the first time it was staged and it put the performance as one of the most important. He said that 3 is the perfect balance not to give the show biographical reading of the play. One thing that Kane wanted was a **mirror** up the stage to show everything and to 'trap' the action inside the frame of the mirror. There were different panels in which some scenes of everyday life were shown. There is a feeling of detachment/melancholy/sadness present on stage and in the text. There is a rough feeling, feelings come out from the very rigid writing, it is disciplined. Both form and content are very important. Kane: "*The form is the meaning.*"

Shavian is a form in which the author presents an issue, he makes a diagnosis of it and then offers a solution. This kind of system doesn't work anymore for many contemporary authors. When we try to

put in a dramatic form a culture or a society, which are really complex, then we need to work with fragments. A form composed in such a way could be a better vehicle for such content. K. Urban said that “*it’s not a collage, but a montage*” because separate fragments and reality are taken together to make up a work of art. *Psychosis* can be seen as a **theatrical montage**. It presents different types of languages and scenes. It gathers them according to Kane’s constructive principle, whose goal is to articulate an **experience of a psychotic breakdown**. Kane doesn’t represent or describe the experience of a psychosis but she presents us with the experience of what is a psychotic condition. **She doesn’t show but makes you part of it**. The number three for the actor is because McDonald found 3 characters: **The victim, the perpetrator and the bystander**.

Presentation by a student: Staging *Psychosis* in TR Warszawa (experimental theatre). It started to be on stage in 2002, at the same time as *Cleansed* (another play by Kane). 6 actors in this version, patient/doctors relations. The main character according to that director is Sarah Kane herself. Open ending.

14/05/19

Martin Crimp is a very **experimental writer**. His next play will be in September 2019. His last play was written in response to Henry Fielding’s *Pamela*. He brought around a new type of writing, the post-dramatic theatre. The audience had to participate in theatre, they are part of it. The **audience** needs to become an “**active co-writer**” of the [performance] text. Spectators are not just in the room to watch a show. They do not just have to fill in the gaps due to the text, they also need to be active witnesses. Crimp also inspired Kane a lot.

Attempts on Her Life was written in 1997. Before writing it, Martin Crimp wrote a play which marked a turning point (*The Treatment*, 1993). The names of both plays have **several meanings** (attempts to hurt or to understand, treatment as medicine or the way someone is treated by other). The last play is about a woman named Anne, who’s a victim of 2 film producers who want to make a movie out of her life. She tells them her story, which they manipulate and change radically. It is set in NYC. The core of the play is the reflection of commercial success. Everyone is measured by his or her success. “*The writer writes 2 images. I’m skeptical about writing about what you know [...]*” – Crimp. Art should be judged not by commercial success. Anne is someone who in the end is robbed of her own life.

Attempts of Her Life has 17 scenarios. It evokes the fact that the finishing product still needs to be polished. There has been **numerous staging of the play**, the first one was made at the Royal Court Theatre. There were mixed reviews of the play as it is a puzzling play. It has been translated in dozens of languages and staged all over the world, it’s an iconic play of the post dramatic theatre. It is not a traditional play as there are **17 scenarios**. Crimp quotes “*no one will have directly experienced the actual cause of such happening, but everyone will have received an image of them*”. Even though you didn’t experience something, you can easily get an image of it. Each scenario has its own title, as if they were chapters and were related. The scenarios are very different.

The **first one** (all messages deleted) is a voicemail box. According to Crimp it should reflect on the world beyond theatre. We don’t have characters or names, we just know we have different speakers. We don’t even know how many speakers there are. Dialogues are written to convey some meaning. There is a moment in which 3 scenes happen at the same time (common for operas). The messages are addressed to a character named Anne. She’s not present in the play, even though everyone talks about her. Her name changes too (Anne, Anny, Annoushka, etc). There are **different visions and images** of who that woman could be. We cannot be sure of whom she is. She receives many different messages, from short sentences to long messages. All the messages depict different visions of her, some of them must be mistaken then.

In the **scenario 5**, the title is “The camera loves you”. Crimp loved the song made by a Dutch artist for that scenario. It is not a conventional scene as it is a **song part of the narrative of the play**. The song is about Anne and everything she could be. In Crimp’s quest to make **form following the content**, he’s trying to reproduce all the different parts into which the narrative of this character that’s absent could be represented. Crimp thinks of himself as a **modernist** rather than a post dramatic writer. He is also a musician, and most of the tone is that of **art makers**. This scene is a sort of poem. It is about Anne being a movie star and how the camera loves her. The audience needs to feel that it is real and has to sympathize. We need to realize that it is all real, there is something more inside the scene. When it refers to “**3 dimensionality**”, it gives dimension to a character that we don’t even see. Anne is the **vehicle of meanings**. Her many different identities should be all accepted because of humanity and reality. The gap of her absence is what the play tries to fill.

The **second scenario** (tragedy of love and reality) is important. It describes Anne, but in **contradicting** way (different speakers say different things). The city depicted is not specified, it could be anywhere in Europe. It’s a way in which Crimp tries to depict mainstreamed places, it’s an effect of globalization.

The character of Anne is the **result between different views and interpretations**. It has a **transformative power** as it can enrich the potential of the character through different means. Anne could be many things depending on the person thinking about her. There is **no conventional naturalism** anymore, or at least it has been reinvented. We don’t reach reality directly anymore, so Crimp tries to reproduce all the complexities of reality. It’s an **experiment in forms** and a **critical questioning of audience expectations**. The attempts could be of trying to construct Anne’s life, or to destroy it.

16/05/19

Anne could be anyone and everyone; it’s hard to give her a precise identity. The language used in the first scenario is a parallel of the language used by the media. The way language is mediated and the way that the **forms of communication changed** are represented. In particular, we get **field images**. The play is made to **make the audience’s mind work**. The speakers are not characters; they are presenting a situation and asking questions. It’s an **object for interpretation**. Critics took the play too seriously, just as something with a post-dramatic influence. They thought that Crimp was presenting something as he firmly believed in different forms.

We can try to identify the speakers in the first scene: A husband/friend, a colleague, etc. Some of them are in another language, but it doesn’t matter if we don’t understand them, we understand that Anne has **influence everywhere**. Her parents also made her a voicemail, as well as potential partners in a criminal organization. The **last one puts forwards the many questions the text is asking** (“what are you hiding from?” Etc). We don’t know what her true identity is (Anne, Annie, etc). It’s a text linked to *The Treatment*. One of the interpretations is that Anne is already dead during the voicemails. All the messages get deleted in the end of the scene.

Speakers use the **indirect speech, as to find the interpretations of the play themselves**. It is as if they were talking to each other, but not really. The main question is: Can we [always] represent reality? In *The Treatment*, Anne’s story in the media is absolutely different from her real story. It shows exhibition and voyeurism. There is also the eagerness to have commercial success. The expanses of speech are also very important for Crimp. There is a surrounding voice at all times in the play. Some critic said “*the play is a polylock of consensus*”. The performance gives out the impression of chaos. The search of new media and new ways of communication is a show that society is looking for changes in communication.

21/05/19

AOHL is considered as a **land mark for theatre in the 20th century** as it is extremely innovative. There is a reflection on theatre as well within the play. Crimp is influenced a lot by modernism. Anne is presented in the play as if she were unfinished by the author. One of the scenarios is called “mom and dad”, her parents talk about Anne. They say “*she’s not a real character, like you get in a book or on TV, but a lack of character. An absence she calls it.*”. We don’t know what time the voices are talking about, if it is recent events or not. We don’t know if they are fictional voices or Anne’s parents. It’s also a metagrammatical play as well as a metatheatrical one.

Anne is a victim as she is **the object of observation**. She has been questioned in *The Treatment*. After being the object of observation, she’s the **object of conceptions** and also used since people talk about her. She’s an absence character but the object of attack by people. They speak of her and about her. The play is made of repetitions, usually a speaker used a part of what the speaker before said. It’s as if they were the waves adding and bringing things using the same words and rhythms. This is how usually children learn how to speak (through repetition). It could be seen as a **discourse recycling**. It’s a type of **endocannibalism** (words eat themselves) as called by a French critic called Elisabeth Perez.

The Republic of Happiness was staged in 2012 for the first time and it was the last play Crimp wrote until January 2019. The **theme of recycling** can be found in the play. The theme of the **media world** is more explicit. Carol Anne Daphi (?), a female poet, said: “*the poem is a form of texting. It’s the original text. It’s a perfecting of a feeling in language. It’s a way of saying more with less, just as texting is. We’ve got to realize that the FB generation is the future and poetry is the perfect form for them.*” There is a search of new media for new conversation ways. Language itself engenders the form. The **text is the result of a process of transformation**. This strategy of narration applied/explored in AOHL as well. There’s no obvious connections between the different elements.

23/05/19

Crimp said about AOHL “*The play has a love-hate relationship with consumer culture. I think it’s a fact that we deem consumer culture, the woman as an image [...] The figure of Anne is polymorphous*”. Crimp also re wrote some classical plays. He criticized a lot the image of the woman in society, and the way it is used in the media. He didn’t like being called part of the “post-dramatic”, he doesn’t want to be part of a “post” movement. Maybe we could use the term “**post-characterization**”. In this kind of play, character is a **flux of signs and meanings** depending on the context. The characters cannot be analyzed or individualized, they are also constantly changing. The signs and meanings according to the actions, emotions, etc are also changing. **This search for form of content** is extremely central for Martin Crimp.

In TROH there are 3 titles. The first part is about family (?). There is a feeling of common creation done on the moment during the representations. The second part is about fragments and ruins. In the third part, we are taken to what should be the republic of happiness, and Crimp quotes **Dante** from *The Paradise*. The play can be seen as **Hell, the Purgatory and Heaven**. A **quotation way of speaking** allows putting distance, it is as if the speakers don’t believe in what they say. The **process of transaction** is very important for the play. You need to first think and then speak, but here it is a reverse process in which you speak and then think. It reveals the absurdity with the **obsession with certain lifestyle choices** for instance. It can be taken as tokens of success.

In the first part there is a family gathered for Christmas night. It is a conventional family. The parents do not have names. Over this dinner, the family talks about their secrets and their lives. They **lay bare in front of each other**. Right from the beginning, one of the daughters speaks: “*I wasn’t trying to upset people.*” There is a reference to *King Lear* as a young woman is confessing her true love and not her

rhetoric one to her family. The scene can be seen as a kind of trash TV show as it is a family exposing their lives. There is a **reference to Beckett** as the characters realize that time is passing since they decay. **Happiness is shown as exclusive**, it is not for everyone. There are many repetitions. **Success is different** for all of the family members: Sexual power for the granddad, or how to buy things for the grandmother. Rape is seen as “fashionable” by the grandfather.

In the second part, still during the dinner, there are 2 girls singing. “*You going to carry a gun*”, they announce a future situation. They have a radical feminist pov of what a relation with a man should be. A child’s mind is floating, as to leave earthly bad things on the ground. The moment when the song, that’s full of **references taken from a shared way of presenting episodes of life**, is occurring, Uncle Paul silently appears when they talk about having a husband. He is kind of a threat for the peace in the family. He appears almost like a ghost, he is **reminiscence of the past or of something unpleasant**. He is creepy. There are many **parallels in dialogue**, characters speak at the same time. There are even 3 dialogues at the same time at some point. After these collective scenes in which everyone speaks at the same time, granddad is able to speak and refers to things from the past.

28/05/19

There is a movie called *The Pursuit of Happyness*. They used the “y” to mean that it is up to you to be happy. Happy is a succession of steps of the mind, which can be built by our will. Everything is designed by our own will to be happy. You first need to take of yourself, you need to be a bit individualist. If you don’t manage on your own to be happy, you need to seek help. **This positive way of life has been sold as a science**, it is as if you were suffering if you could not follow the steps given. The American society is built on the principle of the pursuit of happiness. Moral consequences are important, as if you are happy you will produce more.

There are 3 parts in the play, the first one is the Christmas dinner. Madeleine and Paul are characters presenting themselves as characters. The **realistic scene shown in that part has to be questioned**: Is it really realistic? Isn’t what is presented too much? The Uncle Paul senses that: “*What are you doing here?/ Well, to be frank I have no idea*”.

The second section is called “The five essential freedoms of individuals”. It can make us remember of the **Declaration of human rights**. There is the **fascination with the individual self-improvement**. The moralistic settings fall apart, the characters are presented with microphones in their hands. The speech of the characters is based on **repetitions and anaphora**. There is the principle of involving and learning through repetitions. It’s a way of making people unconsciously part of what you are saying. They keep saying “I”, they are very **individualistic**.

In the third section, there is what should be the **state of happiness**, what Madeleine tells us is happiness. There is an intention of **parody** in the play. It’s a **vehicle to build a satyr** of the family, of the self and of society. Society is fragmented. The individual is central and more important than anything else. It means that all the sufferings are on the same level (Head ache/Starving). There is a **self-dramatizing** of the characters. Language is important as there are **many jargons** (computers, etc). Crimp shows clearly that he takes distance from the play even though he still is part of it.

30/05/19

Madeleine can be seen as a **leader of a political party or of a sect**, especially through her song. The trailer of the play for the Royal Court is very explicit: All the signs of happiness are collapsing. The

republic of happiness is very fragile and unstable. In the 3rd part, there is the proof that even though Madeleine is so assertive about what she said, she still cannot convince. **Songs are very important** for the show, they show a mood/feeling. They go deeper in the issues presented. The 3rd part is supposed to show idyllic happiness, but how can happiness be measured or imposed on everyone? The play ends with Madeleine suggesting words through her song to the uncle.

Michael-Craig Martin made an installation of a glass of water on a shelf with a text on the side and called it "An Oak Tree" in 1973. Tim Crouch took inspiration from this installation to write his own play, he said that for him "*this is the most important theatre text I know*". The text is a dialogue in the form of a Q&A. The questions represent the skeptic bystander. Here, he is trying to understand the artist's pov and in the end he follows it logically. It is a philosophical reflection on the piece of art. Tim Crouch was interested in that piece of art as every night it happens in the theatre: someone tries to **make the audience believe something** else every night in the theatre (Magritte's *The Treachery of Images* ?). All of this applies to language in theatre as you **create reality through language**. **Skepticism and faith in the transformative aspect of art** is represented. It's a theatrical representation in a way, without actors.

This work of art was Crouch's inspiration for his play made in 2012. He wanted to develop the ideas of Martin as well as **challenge the conventions** in theatre. He started his career as an actor before becoming a writer. At some point in his acting career, he realized that he was not satisfied by what he was acting and wanted to **go deeper in the exploration of theatre**. He acted himself in AOT, and invited a different actor or actress every night to act as the second character without knowing the text or anything about it. Crouch describes the actor in a different way than he really is and by doing so he **creates another reality**. He goes from the past, to the present and to the future. He also interacts with the audience, there is no fourth wall at all. It is a show about the transformative act that the theatre is, through which every night the actor deconstruct on stage the process.

By talking about the suffering of a father losing a daughter, he decides that the conventional way of showing it is not enough. Crouch tries to **convey this feeling in the structure of the text itself** (disorientating, you don't know what to expect). It's supposed to be the same sensation you feel when you're asked to act a role you're not expected to act (you are not supposed to lose someone in a car accident). Every moment in which you might realize you are at theatre (music, props etc) is shown and **laid bare**.

04/06/19

All of the texts are about the **limits of theatre** and the **satyr of conventions**. All the authors could be seen as part of the same movement. They bring about something new to theatre. Caryl Churchill chose *An Oak Tree* as her favorite play of the decade as it is a "*play about theatre*". Crouch's strategy of narration is different from the other writers. The main difference would be the fact that the person acting with him doesn't know the text beforehand, and so the acting is changed a lot. The audience is aware of that, so for them what is **changing is the experience/view of reality**. They trust the actor more because he's not completely into a character (no costume, no feelings rehearsed, etc). The audience and the actor **share the same knowledge and conditions**.

Anybody could become the actor, anyone can deceive. The accident could happen to anyone as well. **Crouch's plays are adventures in storytelling**: He lays bare the conventions of theatre and the creation of the text. That way, only the **core/main function of theatre remains** (place to tell stories). Crouch wrote for kids as well. He also developed the **Method for authorial actor**. He talks a lot about the artistic needs. Images are taken as guide for the sense of experience. Conceptual art could work as a way to find correspondences/a common language. For the father, the daughter did not die but became an oak tree (represented by a piano stool).

Crouch chose to be a hypnotist in his play for a reason; he wants to bring people to a trance like state. In scene 3, him and the father have scripts in front of them and try to react what happened during the accident. The way it's retold is important; it's **as neutral as possible**. It's a recollection of a past event. There is an **importance given to colors**. Every feeling and emotion has their own color. The description of feeling is conveyed through the palette of colors. At some point the father addresses the audience as if he were the hypnotist. He asks the audience's participation. All the emotional moments are always followed by a very neutral interaction.

06/06/19

In *The Author*, there is a **further explanation of what theatre is**. It was presented at the Royal Court and commissioned by it. Right from the note at the beginning, Crouch states the importance of the Room upstairs of the RC for the play. The RC has been important for theatre from its founding in 1956. Many important plays were first shown there (Sarah Kane, etc). It has been defined as a lighthouse for contemporary British theatre. The main character in TA is the audience, which is very peculiar. There are no particular settings. The **main character is to always be called Tim Crouch/The Author** whereas all the other names can change. In the first scene, the characters are sited around the audience. Adrian, the first to speak, describes the place he is in (RC). He addresses the audience, who is not aware of the fact that he is an actor. His function is to prompt the audience to have answers or to be alive.

While he is making acquaintances with the audience, he gives out some thought such as "*we are more realistic*". *The Death of the Author* is an essay by a French philosopher, in which he reflects on what is the figure of the author and its role. Adrian is also commenting on AOT (**meta reference**). There is also a reference to the fact that there are many walkouts at the RC. The scene is as if the audience had just seen a show and was to comment on it. There are many references to people killed by terrorists. The characters have a realistic dimension (abusing father and abused daughter, etc). The author explains why he wanted to write a play that in reality doesn't exist. He makes **references to contemporary theatre** that way. Crouch presents himself on a stage presented by himself, as realistically as possible (**mise en abyme**). Vic says that the actors even went to see the war-zones in order to be more realistic. Theatre is the safest place because nothing is ever real. A lot of **references to Kane's Blasted**.

At the end of the play, a member of the audience approaches the author. He reacts as violently as the character he has been playing, there is a **mixture between acting and reality**. At the very end, the author goes back to the trunk because they had dinner with the company and after everyone leaves he is alone. He watches pedophile porn on his computer, which is very shocking. He describes the action of masturbating. He tells us of the fact that his wife has discovered it and he knows he will never be forgotten and commits suicide by cutting his throat. "*The writing is leaving the writer*" is said at the very end. It is literally the death of the author.