

Tribhuvan University

**The Politics of Autobiography in Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* and
*Phaedra's Love***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U.
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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Letter of Recommendation

This thesis entitled “The Politics of Autobiography in Sarah Kane’s *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra’s Love*”, prepared by Rita Bhandari has been completed under my supervision. I hereby recommend her thesis to be submitted for *ViVa Voce*.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled, “The Politics of Autobiography in Sarah Kane’s *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra’s Love*,” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Rita Bhandari, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

This research closely examines Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love* as autobiographical plays that are based on Kane's own life experience. It tries to explore Kane's motive behind the inclusion of autobiographical elements in these plays. Her plays represent the condition of women in patriarchal society. Applying the theory of autobiography the researcher attempts to analyze the politics behind the use of Kane's own life story as a subject matter. In this plays she represents her as the representative of other females. In these plays Kane expresses her personal matters about her mental state, feelings and desires which should be supposed to remain secret with her. In fact, she wants to encourage those women who feel hesitant to express their feelings with others. In the same way she feels some relief by confessing her every feeling because sharing is best medium to reduce own's suffering. Similarly, in these plays, Kane shows the conflict between life force and death force. In fact, this is not only the condition of Sarah Kane's life but this is the condition of everybody. In this way, the concept of the eros and thanatos in these two plays become personal as well as political. Hence, this project explores into Sarah Kane's play *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love* as an amalgam of personal and political motives.

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I. Autobiographical Elements in Sarah Kane's Dramas

The researcher's main project in this thesis is to analyze *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love* by British playwright Sarah Kane and how her writing makes significance in the field of autobiographical writing. Therefore, the present research relies on Linda Anderson's theory of autobiography. Generally while writing any piece of art a writer can use his/her personal feelings, emotions or is guided by some others life or through imagination. In these plays Kane chooses her personal feelings, life history and emotion as her main subject matter which makes these plays as autobiographical. Every autobiographical writing reflect person so these plays reflects Sarah Kane herself. As a female how one can feel, experience own life, about emotions are presented in these plays. Every individual has their own view towards life or it differs from person to person. Here, the personal feelings and emotions of Sarah Kane illustrated by the concepts of feminists such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Sylvia Plath and Kate Millet etc.

Kane wrote many plays in her life and all of her plays and especially *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love* are being frequently interpreted in connection with her life and death. The theme of suicide is dominantly present in these plays. In *4.48 Psychosis*, Kane chooses a psychotic patient who narrates her feelings and emotions. The psychotic patient of this play is not other but the fictionalization of Sarah Kane herself. Here in this play, Kane directly says "I would like to kill myself" and "I have resigned myself to death this year" (5). Kane struggled against depression and anorexia. She suffered from mental disorder. Similarly, in *Phaedra's Love*, she raises same issue where central character Phaedra represents Sarah herself. In this play, Phaedra was psychologically disturbed and left alone by her husband and deliberately wished to close with her stepson Hippolytus but was afraid with people and society

because they were related with royal family. Her dignity of being high class makes her to commit suicide. In this way, in both plays, Kane raises the theme of life and death and in her real life too she committed suicide which hints us to take these play as her autobiographical play of Sarah Kane.

In *4.48 Psychosis* Kane chooses a psychotic patient as a central character. Through her Kane express her every feelings and emotions. Here, the writing of Sarah Kane is compared with writing of feminist poet Sylvia Plath. Plath in her poem confesses her feelings or she makes her personal emotions and feelings as the theme of poem. Sarah Kane also uses her feelings and emotions in her plays. Here both female writers wish for their death because they both feel frustration in their lives. Plath's well known fascination with death is made explicit in "Lady Lazarus." In "Lady Lazarus", Plath is critical to patriarchy on the one hand and on the other she concerns on identity of women in patriarchal society. When she is unable to continue her life, she chooses to commit suicide. Through her death, she wants to take revenge against patriarchy. In the same way, Kane in this play suffered from mental illness, she sees darkness everywhere so she directly confesses her wish to die and commit suicide in her early age. In this way, both Kane and Plath have their different experiences of life but they both wish to die. Plath clearly expresses her wish to die to take revenge against patriarchal society, whereas Kane wishes to die to stop her sufferings of life. In real life too they both commit suicide.

Many critics and reviewers have approached these plays from multiple view points. A renowned critic Ida Thomasdatter in her journal argues that this *4.48 Psychosis* is purely about the life of Kane herself:

It's not the words of victim. It's not a plea for sympathy or empathy or forgiveness or even to be understood. It's a farewell speech, it's a

declaration of love and hate and it's a statement. She is taking full responsibility of her own action, but she is not letting the others who share the blame for why this happened, she is not letting them off the hook either, she is brutal, she is desperate, she is honest, she is waving at us from the space in between or she could be flipping us off or she could be doing a peace sign, it does not matter. She was here, now she is gone, those are her parting words and they are what they are. (3)

In the passage above, Ida Thomasdotter shows that Kane herself was responsible for her action. This play is about her own life. She presents this play as a farewell speech because after finishing this play, she committed suicide. She is not blaming others, she clearly suggests that no one involves with her action. She speaks in innocent tone.

Similarly another critic Steve Earnest in a theoretical review of *4.48 Psychosis* talked about Kane being 'crazy' or psychotic while writing her play. He argues that "this play is an internal exploration of Kane's desperate state of being" (300). In the same another critic Sarah Hemming argues that "*4.48 Psychosis* is a difficult play to review because of the writer Sarah Kane killed herself not long after it was written... so you find yourself reacting to the piece... A seventy five minute suicide notes a disturbing experience in many ways" (1). In the same way, another critic Michael Conveney says that "not really a play, more an extended suicide note this is the disturbing last work of the late Sarah Kane who killed herself in February last year"(1).

Kane committed suicide suddenly after she finished this play but it has become injustice to take this play only as a suicide note. Kane was frustrated or depressed at the time while she was writing this play. Kane feels relief while she shares her feelings in the same way she is sharing her sufferings to women as her to

share their feelings. Without any hesitation she expresses her every feelings so at last of this play she feels better and she sees some light in her life. She finished her play with positive tone “please open the curtain” (35). It hints us that she express her every negative feelings and some positive changes she feels.

Kane in her another play *Phaedra's Love* presents herself through central character Phaedra. Here, Phaedra belongs to the royal class family. She was alone and deliberately thinks to make relation with her stepsons Hippolytus. She was in young age and had many wishes and desires. Her stepson too wants to make relation with her. Phaedra was psychologically disturbed. Her desire and wishes are on the one hand and on the other her class consciousness. She was bound with her morality. High class people are much more concerned with their dignity and their superiority. So, Phaedra feels better to commit suicide than charge of people.

Different critics and researchers have read Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love* from different perspectives. Summer Neilson Moshy in the second chapter of his PHD dissertation entitled “The lack of Dramatic opportunity with in *Phaedra's Love*,” compares *Phaedra's Love* with her two other works; *Blasted* and *4.48 Psychosis* on the ground of dramaturgical and narrative choices. He finds her other works solely different in theme, style and techniques than *Phaedra's Love*. He finds something missing from *Phaedra's Love*. He opines as:

Phaedra's Love includes fundamental dramaturgical and narrative choices that separate it from the rest of Sarah Kane's work. *Blasted* and *4.48 Psychosis* both include opportunities for alliance with a variety of contributing narratives via the dramaturgical gaps within the texts, which allow these works to transcend the politics and theoretical conventions of their respective debut production. *Phaedra's Love* lacks this

dramaturgical strategy, resulting in a much more stagnant dramatic text that rather heavy-handedly pushes a specific late 1990s liberal British agenda. (92)

Similarly Elizabeth Klett in her article, “Performance review: *Phaedra’s Love*”, describes the differences that she has noticed in between the performance of the Greek play, *Hippolytus* and that of Sarah Kane’s play *Phaedra’s Love*. She finds Sarah Kane’s all plays difficult to perform on the stage because of the insertion of the extremely inhumane and violent events and incidents. Moreover, she makes a comparative study between Seneca’s version of Phaedra’s story and Kane’s version of Phaedra’s story regarding their performance. She writes:

Her five plays are known for being difficult to stage and even more challenging to watch; in Kane’s worlds, characters are raped, mutilated, dismembered and psychologically tortured. *Phaedra’s Love* draws on Seneca’s version of the Phaedra’s story, but with certain differences. Kane places the off-stage violence of the classical theatre front and centre, with a final blood path featuring the rape and murdered of Phaedra’s daughter Strophe, the castration and disembowelment of Hippolytus and the suicide of Theseus. (337)

As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in “Inflection in the sentence” argues that females cannot write any text because of self doubt in the same way Kane also suffered from the same problem. Phaedra wants relation with Hippolytus because there is no hope for her husband’s return. But she hesitates to make relation because of the class superiority. High class people are very sincere with their dignity. They become ready to sacrifice themselves. Here, Kane represents Phaedra as the representative of those types of people. Here Phaedra can make relation with Hippolytus because her

husband was not there or he left her but class consciousness stops her to do so. Her desire and wishes cannot fulfill so she chooses to commit suicide.

Phaedra's love is the contemporized version of Seneca's classical tragedy Phaedra. Here Kane wants to keep the classical concern of Greek theatre – love, hate, death, revenge, suicide but use a completely contemporary urban poetry. The play is about Phaedra's sexual obsession and obsessive love to her stepson Hippolytus.

Here in these two plays, Kane raises the issue of suicide where one feels hopelessness, depression and wish to die. Though the playwright wrote this play with the same intension but we can find some differences between these plays. In *4.48 Psychosis*, Kane clearly says how she is feeling and how and why she wants to die. She shares her every wishes and desires. She says she is fed up with her personal life and she wants relief from her suffering and problems so she wishes to die. Sharing can relief the pain or it can erases negative thoughts for a while. So after her sharing she feels some light of hope. She became reluctant whether to die or not. Similarly, she ends her play with positive tone 'please open the curtain' (35). This ending hints us that she valorizes life force here. At the beginning, she wants to die but at last she wants to live. This is what the ambivalent nature of psychotic person. On the other hand, Kane in *Phaedra's love* represents feelings of high class people through Phaedra. Phaedra belongs to the royal family so she hesitates to express her wishes and desires to make sexual relation with Hippolytus. Here, death force is highly valorized. Phaedra chooses to death with suicide note where she wrote Hippolytus raped her. She is afraid with others so she feels better to die.

Sarah Kane's plays are characterized by extreme violence, death and terror among the spectators and the readers. Almost in all plays, her characters are rapped,

killed and tortured brutally. Different critics and scholars have made different negative opinions regarding the extreme violence and bleakness inherent in her plays.

A British writer and theatre critic Aleks Sierz coined the phrase “In-Yer-Face Theatre” to describe the period in the late 1990s when onslaught of violent plays by young writers. According to Aleks Sierz “ In –Yer – Face Theatre is any drama that takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the massage. It is a theatre of sensation: it jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses, touching nerves and provoking alarm” (4). Sierz categorizes the play written by Kane under In-Yer-Face Theatre because of her presentation and organization of onstage violence. The authors of the plays do not shy away from the use of filthy language in order to create very graphic images of what they want to present to the reader and the audience.

Sierz says:

In-Year-Face Theater always forces us to look at ideas and feeling. We would normally avoid because they are too painful, too frightening, too unpleasant or too acute. We avoid them for good reason- what they have to tell us is bad news: they remind us of the awful things human beings are capable of and the limits of our self control. (6)

Kane’s plays are usually full of such tactics like rape, suicide, sex, war and violence. She always trying to do something new and different, engage people’s attention and accomplish some change through her plays.

Here in these two plays, Kane presents feelings of self. Where a writer uses his/her personal feelings and experiences such writings called as autobiographical writing. The purpose of every autobiographical writing is to reveal the person as he is to himself and either directly or indirectly to reveal some factors and forces which

entered into the making of his personality and his professional interests. William Spengeman in his book, *The Form of Autobiography* argues about self as “Without a self one cannot write about it but whatever one writes will be about the self it constructs. Autobiography thus becomes synonymous with symbolic action in any form and the word ceases to designate a particular kind of writing” (168).

Thus ‘self’ centers in such writing so Kane in her play wrote about that self.

In this way autobiography is a record of one’s own life in the form of literature where one can explore his/ her personal life/self. It is a sequence of events from birth to death during which he/she has many names and relation, joy and sorrow, success and failure, meeting and separation . which are the parts of every one’s life. Thus autobiography is the medium of expressing those personal things. It reveals the self of person so autobiography is a self written document.

The exact date of the origin of ‘autobiography’ cannot be traced. But most of the critics and scholars agree that the first autobiography was St. Augustine’s *The Confessions* of the 4th century which is an intensely personal account of spiritual experience and extraordinary instance of deep psychological self analysis of a kind. They have been many autobiographies and critical, journal writing over it, since the theoretical and practical foundation of the genre modeled by St. Augustine. Autobiography has come into existence from St. Augustine’s *The confessions*. The confession had become the model for many years. It is still taken as classic example and theoretical basis of this genre.

Linda Anderson in his text ‘Autobiography’ writes about the Roy Pascal’s view towards St. Augustine’s confession. He argues that *Confession* is first great autobiography has a decisive significance, it establishes a crucial representative moments in the growth of personality.

After the First World War, there was a kind of movement writing and publishing autobiographies. The readers of autobiographies surprisingly increased throughout the world, which made many journalists and scholars to think the reason behind it. So they began to ask questions like: why do people write autobiographies? Why do people read them? Are they better when personal or when anecdotal? Are they primarily factual or literary? What forms may they take? So and so. There were also some bitter criticisms. But the authors and scholars kept on their journey connecting the weaknesses and ignoring the false criticism.

The autobiographers have labored on the various things in response to the continuously changing ideas about the nature of self, the way of realizing and identifying the self and the appropriate methods to communicate these apprehensions. But the focus may change from person to person. If we observe an autobiography, written by any writer, we can find the writer's interest in many aspects as in the memory, recollection of the previous actions, religion, feelings, emotions, thoughts, dilemmas etc. According to his/her necessity and interest, uses different literary devices. So all autobiographies cannot be of the same nature, It differs from person to person.

Here, it would be better to point out a question: what should autobiography include, only factual or something else as well? According to Collier's *Encyclopedia*: 'It is a life narrative written by the author himself, a definition which can be held to include such other forms of literary self-revelation as memories, journals, diaries and letters.'(3) Autobiography is a merely record of the incidents of a man's life or it a picture of the man himself, his character and his soul.

From the above discussion it is clear that autobiography has two sides: one is factual narration of past events and experiences and the other is self revelation that is

mental picture. A good autobiography however includes both. But to reveal self is not easy task so autobiographer takes the help of symbols which refer to any aspect of the non-symbolic region.

Every autobiography is the experience of the author but it is almost impossible to include every experiences. So he/she is obliged to decide which one is the most important and most interesting. The autobiographer is not completely free to make choice because he is restricted as much to the aesthetic criteria as to the strict demands of truth. It gives the best account of the individual and reflects the self of the author during the time of creation rather than factual presentation of the history of the self.

In these two plays we can find the conflict between the concept of Eros and Thanatos. *4.48 Psychosis* with the concept of Eros and *Phaedra's Love* with the concept of Thanatos. This conflict is not only in Kane's mind but everybody of us. In this regard Sigmund Freud in his book, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* applied the concept of Eros and Thanatos to psychoanalysis. He referred to Eros as the life instinct, which includes sexual instincts, the drive to live and basic instinctual impulses. These elements are all necessary to preserve and prolong life both for the individual and for human race.

Similarly, Freud argues Thanatos as the death instincts it includes negative feelings like hate, anger and aggression. In this regard, Freud argues "as the counterpart to Eros, Thanatos associated with anti-social behaviours, such as sadism and violence and it serves to balance Eros by driving the individual towards death and extinction" (1). Freud theorized that Eros and Thanatos cannot exist without each other that both the life instinct and death instinct correspond and clash with each other in a life long struggle.

Here in these two play Kane her uses her personal feelings and emotions through which she raises theme of suicide which was heavily stroke in her mind.

This play *4.48 Psychosis* is also written for that purpose or this is just the Kane's personal life because she wrote this play without any caste and stage direction. This play is not in the format of play writing. As we know plays are for stage performance and playwright uses technique way of play where there is dialogue and conversation between characters, stage, scene but Kane just presents a patient and a doctor, there is no stage direction and conversation and is not in dialogic form. So this play is just about Kane's personal life. Kane did not write this play for the thought of publication. Thus the way of writing this play or technique that Kane uses also hints that it's an autobiographical writing of playwright's life and events.

'Self' is a center of such writing and symbol is the best instrument to reveal the 'self'. In this sense, symbol is an integral part of writing autobiography. The main concern of each and every autobiography is the realization of the absolute self and enterprising or enacting it symbolically. Almost all writers make use of symbols which express and ease their burden. It can appear in any form or in any kind of writing such as novel, poetry and drama. They are themselves the creations of facts and fiction. That is why autobiography is not a jumbling or gathering of all the factual aspects and incidents of him rather it is artistically filtered and coherently organized piece of art.

From the above mentioned lines, it is clear that autobiography, despite of its biographical nature is a matter of art. As a work of art it gives pleasure and at the same time it also gives message and information to the reader. Readers can perceive something through their writing because there is experience of some one's life.

In *4.48 Psychosis*, Kane share her feelings which helps her to feel some relief. She shares what she is feeling with mental doctor and at last she feels some hope or it develops her wish to live. After reading this play we understand about the feelings of psychotic patient or he/she perceive the world surrounding. At the same time it suggests us to share with others what you are feeling. It may help us to bring some positivity. In the same way in Phaedra's love, the central character became victim of self doubt. She wants physical contact with Hippolytus but she hesitates because of her class consciousness.

There are many possible interpretations of the plays of Sarah Kane because she killed herself in her early age. Many critics argued that it is unfair to connect text with one's personal life called autobiography. Kane was one of those; she wanted her work to be seen as something separate from her historical self. This, of course, becomes increasingly difficult when Kane herself made statement about her which rooted them in her own life. But the final factor which makes it difficult for audience to separate Kane and her work is 'suicide'. The knowledge of her suicide entices the audience into learning more about herself and what they find is hauntingly similar to what is described in work specially *4.48 Psychosis*, where there are passage that describes details the symptoms of someone suffering from suicidal depression.

In this way, critics tend to agree that to read a literary text as autobiography is to reduce it. Therefore few authors will admit to having used their own life in their work. However, to repeat and elaborate that this belief reduces the author, it reduces a person's life to something that is less important than art, something that has to be hidden for art's sake. They argued such tendency of analyzing text with author's personal life and call autobiography may kill the literary quality of author.

Kane committed suicide the early morning when she was admitted to the hospital. The title of the play *4.48 Psychosis* hints us the time when Kane committed suicide.

Kane was highly determined to commit suicide so in *Phaedra's Love* she shows the suicidal attempt of a Phaedra with suicide note blaming Hippolytus that he raped her. She was psychologically in disturbed mood. She blamed Hippolytus but through this she symbolically blames for patriarchy and so called their dignity of high class. If she had not belonged to royal family, she would have sexual relation with Hippolytus or she could have spent her life as her wishes but dignity of high class stops her to do so. So, she chooses to commit suicide that shows the inferiority of females in patriarchal society or their inability to defend themselves.

Here the purpose of autobiography may vary from author to author or it depends upon the life event of author or their perspective towards life. Thus the autobiography is the mirror of the artist. It shows the factual information of the self of author. It is a literary form which has a distinct and independent identity. It gives the best account of the individual and reflects the self of author during the time of creation rather than factual presentation of the history of the self. As a personal record of the author autobiography reaches nearer to the history and presents as a picture of ever-changing 'self' and mental interaction between two opposite forces of mind and heart, it reaches in the domain of psychology. As a work of art any autobiography consists of facts and fiction and can make use of literary devices.

From the above discussion and illustrations it can be concluded that autobiographical approach is one of the significant approaches to study and analyze literary work. Likewise, in *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love* Kane presents her feelings, experiences of life and her desire to death.

There is not enough research work on autobiographical aspects of these plays. Thus, the present research illustrates how these plays become as autobiography and its significance in the field autobiographical writing.

The first introduction chapter is about the play and its autobiographical elements in Kane's plays. It also includes research methodology and critics of the play. The second chapter deals with the implication of autobiographical elements of author in the play. Finally, the last chapter deals with the conclusion of this research.

II. The Politics of Autobiography in Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love*

This research mainly focuses on Sarah Kane's personal as well as political motive behind using autobiographical elements in *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love*. In these two plays on the one hand, Kane shares her every feelings and experiences to get some relief and on the other hand, she is encouraging those women who feel hesitated to express themselves.

Sarah Kane was born on 3 February, 1971. Her father was a journalist in *Daily Mirror* and mother was a teacher. Her parents raised her as Christian. Later she struggled with her faith and rejected it completely, but the topic of faith and god remained in these two plays *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love*.

At the early age of her life, she wrote poems and short stories but later she chose to study drama at Bristol University. During her years at the University, Kane acted, wrote and directed many plays. She also wrote few monologues and later decided to stop it. She saw it as a powerless profession and did not want to be "at the mercy of directors" (Sierz 92). Similarly her plays were criticized differently. She wanted to present one thing but readers perceived it differently so she became frustrated with her artistic life. In these two plays we find her depressed mind. At the age of her 28 years, she committed suicide. Here these plays are based on the personal life of Sarah Kane herself. The central characters of these plays are also suffering from mental disorder and they both committed suicide so we can say that these two plays are autobiographical plays of Sarah Kane.

The title of the play *4.48 Psychosis* is interpreted as time of early morning when Kane used to wake up and this is the exact time when she committed suicide. This play illustrates the playwright's struggle against tortures of Psychiatric therapy with a first person narration and this play thematically presents a patient who suffers

from psychological depression and decide to commit suicide to get free from sufferings of life.

At the time of writing *4.48 Psychosis*, Sarah Kane was suffering from mental illness from her artistic and personal life, but she did not stop her writing. She chooses a psychotic patient and expresses her feelings in narrative pronoun:

I am sad

I feel that the future is hopeless and that things can not improve

I am bored and dissatisfied with every thing

I am a complete failure as a person

I would like to kill myself

I cannot write

I cannot love

I am totally alone. (4)

Here without any hesitation she expresses her too personal matter which should keep secrete with her. Through these lines, she wants to say women can also express their personal feelings as men can. She wants some revolution in field of women's writing.

Helene Cixous in her *The Laugh of the Medusa* says that:

I shall speak about women's writing about what it will do. Women must write her, must about women and bring women to writing from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies – for the same reason, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Women must herself into the text as into the world and into history – by her own movement. (875)

Here Cixous encourages to women to write themselves about their life because women are also capable as men.

Autobiographical writing is about the personal matter of authors through which we can read about their personal story. *Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines autobiography “as the story of person’s life written by that person’ (qtd. in Anderson 2). Similarly, Linda Anderson opines that “autobiographies are seen as providing proof of the validity and importance of a certain conception of authorship: authors who have authority over their own texts and whose writing can be read as forms of direct access to themselves” (3). Here, Kane in these plays also expresses her feelings.

Specially, in *4.48 Psychosis* Sarah Kane was not in good mood or she was directed by negative thoughts and wanted to kill her so we can find several negative terms throughout the play such as:

I cannot make decision

I cannot eat

I cannot sleep

I am fat

My hips are too big

I cannot make one

I dislike my genitals

I cannot fuck. (4)

These lines express the negative feelings and experiences of author about her personal life. She further says” My brother is dying, my lover is dying, I am killing them both, I am charging towards my death” (4). Through this line it comes clear that she wants to die and she is going to charge her brother and lover for her death. Similarly, in *Phaedra's Love* Phaedra charges Hippolytus that he raped her and with suicide note she committed suicide.

Kane's plays are usually full of tactics that in order to avoid misinterpretation or jumping to conclusions, it almost feels necessary to see or read them multiple times. Apart from the content of the plays Kane often uses typical dramatic form, always trying to do something new and different, engage people attention and accomplish some change through her plays, as she stated after seeing a production of Jeremy Weller's *Mad*. "[It] changed my life because it changed one, the way I think, the way I behave. If theatre can change lives, then it can change society" (Sierz 93). Kane wants to do something new and different than others. So she uses some different techniques and ways of writing plays.

As we know plays are for stage performance, there is setting, dialogue between characters stage but her play *4.48 Psychosis* designed differently from our concept of play. Kane chooses poetic style to write this play which seems something unique and odd. In this play Kane violates the general concept and come with something different. Here Kane gives no name to her psychotic patient. Patient only expresses her feelings in monologue form. Similarly, Kane leaves long gap in the play such as:

(A very long silence)

-But you have friend

(A very long silence)

-you have lot of friends

(A very long silence)

-what do you offer your friends to make them so supportive

(A very long silence) (3)

In the same way, the combinational uses of “I – am” and “I – cannot” sentences show the fractured mind of the patient. Similarly, Kane presents contrasting images and as unbalanced combination of texts:

A consolidated consciousness resides in a darkened banqueting hall
near the ceiling of mind whose floor shifts as ten thousand cockroaches
when a shaft light enters as all thoughts unite in an instant of accord
body no longer expellant as the cockroaches comprises a truth which
no one every alters

I had a night in which everything was revealed to me.

How can I speak again? (3)

Without marks of punctuation, this fragment is composed of a continuation of clauses, rather than a complete sentence. These contrasting images co-operating create a large space from normal logically.

This writing style of Kane’s shows she feels different than others. She wants some change in writing. Kane considered her plays *Blasted*, *Phaedra’s Love* and *Cleansed* to be very much about hope faith and love, while to the readers and critics said cleansed “was written by someone who believed utterly in the power of love” whereas when she wrote *Crave* she has completely lost those beliefs and thoughts the world was a pretty grim place” (Sierz 117). By contrast *Crave* was then by the theatre public somehow considered to be uplifting full of love and hope.

Kane here in these two plays also wrote about love, life, hope and deaths. In 4.48 *Psychosis*, she became reluctant whether to die or not. She begins 4.48 *Psychosis* with negative tone:

I do not want to live

I am jealous of my sleeping love and cover his induced
unconsciousness

When he wakes he will envy my sleepless night of thought and speech
unslurred by medication

I have resigned myself to death this year

Some will call this self – indulgence

(They are lucky not to know its truth)

Some will know the simple fact of pains

This is becoming my normality. (5)

Kane expresses her negative thoughts or she decides to commit suicide. But in the last part of the play she sees her life with positive mind. So she feels some hope for life and hesitates whether to die or not. She says: “I have no desire for death / No suicide ever had” (33).

It shows her reluctant mind. But she ends her play with positive tone “please open the curtains” (35). We can understand that Kane wrote this play with some hope or she is valorizing the hope of life although she committed suicide suddenly after finishing this play.

Phaedra's Love by Sarah Kane is a revised version of Euripide's *Hippolytus*. The play *Hippolytus* was written by male writer, Euripides. Being male writer he valorizes the role of male and he shows female as submissive and inferior to male. Sarah Kane was not satisfied with this because she was self depended and energetic woman so she changes the role of characters and rearranges the story of the play. In Euripide's *Hippolytus*, one of the nurses of Phaedra delivers the message of Phaedra's to Hippolytus. Phaedra confesses her love in front of the nurse as the nurse continuously insists to know the cause behind her sickness. Phaedra not only

confesses her love but she also orders her nurse to deliver her message to Hippolytus. But in *Phaedra's Love*, she presents life and feelings of high class royal people. Here in this play the central character Phaedra is alone. Her husband is not at home. She feels alone she wants to make sexual relation but her husband is not there, So, she deliberately takes Hippolytus, her step son as her sexual partner and she is in love with him and is attracted by his body. She directly says:

Hippolytus: Why don't you go and talk to Stroph, she's your child,
I'm not. Why all this concern for me?

Phaedra: I love you

Silence

Hippolytus why?

Phaedra You are difficult. Moody, cynical, bitter, fat, decadent,
spoilt. You stay in bed all day then watch TV all night,
you crash around this house with sleep in your eyes and
not thought for anyone. You are in pain. I adore you.

Hippolytus Not very logical

Phaedra Love isn't

Silence

Phaedra Have you ever thought about having sex with me? (16)

Phaedra herself confesses her love and clarifies the reason for loving him. She tries her best to possess him physically despite of his hatred but fails. This extract shows her desire for sex but Hippolytus hates her. So Phaedra feels hopeless because her desire cannot be fulfilled with Hippolytus. At last, Phaedra commits suicide.

In this way, Sarah Kane is a reader of male's representation of female in society. So, Kane wrote this play *Phaedra's Love* from reader's perspective. A male

cannot understand female's feelings and emotions. So, *Phaedra's Love* is the representative feelings of every woman. This shows females are also as capable as males. Helene Cixious in her "The Laugh of the Medusa" says:

I write this as a woman, toward woman. When I say "woman", I am speaking of woman in her inevitable struggle against conventional man and of a universal woman subject, who must bring woman to their sense and to their meaning in history. What strikes me is the infinite richness of their individual constitutions: you can not talk about a female sexuality, uniform, homogeneous, classifiable into codes-any more than u can woman's imaginary in inexhaustible, like music, painting, writing their stream of phantasm is incredible. (876)

Through these lines Cixious talks about the capacity of females. Females can do everything that males can. There should be equal treatment to male and female. Females are equally creative in many fields of art like music, writing and painting. Females can also write about the politics, literature, contemporary issues of society, history and so on. Woman's writing also can provide inspiration to women as Sarah Kane's writing becomes a model for female writers.

Sarah Kane's text allows for deeply personal and emotional expression of love, hate and fear. Her Almost all of her plays include the theme of love, hatred, fear, violence and death. As Anderson argues, "The intention of authors signals the belief that the author is behind the text. Controlling its meaning, the author becomes the guarantor of intentional meaning and reading a text therefore leads back to the author as origin" (2). The sole motive behind bringing everything right on the stage is her challenge to traditional and conventional dramaturgy and inauguration of a new trend in writing play. In this respect, Summer Neilson Moshy argues as:

Kane's texts became simultaneously accountable for the world where she found herself in and the one she knew she could only imagine. By creating works laden with an invitation to infiltrate the texts themselves with new agendas and points of view, Kane solicits a commitment from future theatre practitioners to continue to question and prove the societies in which they live; thus, pushing Kane's work to the forefront of revolutionary theatre. (19)

Sarah Kane in her play *Phaedra's Love* adapts the classical myth of a royal family and presents it as a story of a modern British Royal Family. Whenever a text is created or adapted, the writer or the adapter is always influenced by his/her socio-cultural scenario. This means to say that the text does not exist in vacuum. It shares so many elements with the society.

Sarah Kane's play *Phaedra's Love* is a revised version of Euripides's *Hippolytus*. Kane changes theme and style of this play into in her own technique and style. Before adapting any text, the adapter always keeps different motives in his/ her mind. The adapter also establishes his / her own stance while adapting the text. Regarding the adapter's mind and stance, Linda Hutcheon argues, "It is obvious that adapters must have their own personal reasons for deciding first to do an adapting and then choosing which adapted work and what medium to do it in. They not only interpret that work but in so doing they also take a position on it" (92). The choice of medium of adaptation, insertion of themes and shape of a text is always determined by the writer's personal interest and position in his/ her text as soon as it is completed.

Taking this argument into consideration, it can be said that Kane must have her own reasons and stance in the play. Her personal stance and reason behind the adaptation of the particular myth can be discovered by relating her play with her

personal life. Moreover, the adaptor decides to adapt those texts which can be appropriate to the society in which he/she is living in. The adapter brings different changes in order to make appropriate to his /her socio-cultural scenario. The adapter being a part of the society always tries to locate the text within his/her own society. Linda Hutcheon has similar views regarding this as she opines. “Whether an adapted story is told, shown or interacted with it always happens in a particular time and space in a society” (144). According to her, a text borrows some of the features from the society as the writers and the text do not exist in vacuum. Every text is originated out of the social condition and circumstance.

There can be different motives behind the adaption of a particular text. Among them economical, personal, political, social, cultural decides to write with an intention and a motive in his/her mind and there are different factors that shape their writing.

Regarding the constraints for adapting, Hutcheon opines as:

In the act of adapting, choices are made based on many factors, as we have seen including genre or medium conventions political engagement and personal as well as public history. These decisions are made in a creative as well as interpretive context that ideological, social, historical, cultural, personal and aesthetic. (118)

Taking Hutcheon’s remark into consideration, it can be asserted that Kane must have a motive behind using Euripide’s *Hippolytus* story into her own. Through this play Kane wants to show how females are treated as inferior beings in patriarchal society.

Being a female writer Kane uses female character in the centre of her plays. Because female only can expose female feelings or a male never feels a female’s feelings and sentiments or a male character cannot give expression of female’s experiences.

Sarah Kane, Sylvia Plath and Virginia Woolf are kept in the same list because all these writers committed suicide. These three writers were psychologically depressed and ill patients. “Dearest, I feel certain that I am going mad again: I feel we cannot go through another of those terrible times. And I cannot recover this time” (Woolf 122). This is the beginning of Virginia Woolf’s last letter to her husband, which she wrote shortly before committing suicide. She had been ill for a long time and committed suicide. Virginia Woolf is only one example of how artist seen more exposed to mental illness and how they learn more towards suicidal tendencies than others. However, one can also wonder if perhaps the illness does not always derive from artistry, but that the artistry from the illness and that there are certain kinds of people who become artists.

The similarity between Woolf, Plath and Sexton, besides the fact that they are women writers, is their dominant view of death in their texts. Sylvia Plath in her poem *Lady Lazarus* says, “Dying is an art” and “I do it exceptionally well” (124). Here she considers death as an art and herself as an artist as she performs the art of death what connects the speaker with death is her suicidal attempt. For her, suicide functions as a bridge between the artist and the art. Using an image of theatre, she compares her act of dying with theatricality. As she is the manager of her own death, she is free to make an exit from the theatre of her life at any time she wants. Similarly, another writer Anne Sexton in her *Flee on you Donkey* illustrates her own experience as a suicidal pattern:

Because there is no other place
To flee to,
I came back last at mid night,
Arriving in the thick June night

Without language or defenses,
 Giving up my car, keys and my cash,
 Keeping only a pack of salem cigarettes
 The way a child holds on to toy.
 I signed myself in where a stranger
 Puts in the inked – in X's-
 For this a mental hospital,
 Not a child's game. (125)

In this poem, Sexton says that she is now without “language or defenses” since language is the last thing that a person loses and losing it really means losing what connects us to the human race. This can be compared to Kane’s life. First of all, Kane also admitted to a mental institution. Similarly we can see the language and way of writing used in her last play *4.48 Psychosis*, which portrays a woman’s suffering from depression, the language is fragmented as if illustrating someone who is about to lose it altogether.

There are however, differences between Woolf, Plath, Sexton and Kane because they represent three quite different genres. Woolf was a novelist, Plath and Sexton were poets and Kane was a playwright. But they all ended up with suicide. In their writing and real life too they committed suicide. Generally a reader can read any author’s piece of work continually because of the senses of identification that the author has been able to produce in the reader. This identification may either be to the character or the author.

Feminist theorists Gilbert and Gubar in their *Mad Woman in the Attic* particularly analyze the portrayal of woman’s identity in female author’s works. A woman could either engage in the kind of writing that was accepted within the female

domestic sphere. Such as daily diary writing or she could model her writing after that of male authors. In this regard, they argue:

Whether she becomes an object of the art or a saint now ever, it is the surrender of herself – of her personal comfort, her personal desires or both – that is the beautiful angel woman’s key act, while it is precisely this sacrifice which dooms her both to death and to haven. For to be selfless is not only to be noble, it is to be dead. For the female artist the essential process of self definition is complicated by all those patriarchal definition hath are intervene between herself and herself.

(602)

Patriarchal society treats female as inferior to male. There is no respect and value of woman’s feelings. Woman can also create literary text but they limit their creativity only in daily diary because of the fear of patriarchy. But Sarah Kane is a strong woman who neglects the boundary made by patriarchy and comes in the literary field. Kane uses her life story as her subject of writing through which she wants to be model for other female author. As Gilbert and Gubar say, “ whether she becomes an object of the art or a saint now ever it is the surrender herself – of her personal comfort, her personal desires or both” (602). Really, Sarah Kane sacrifices her life. Her writings were badly criticized and this patriarchal society made her psychotic patient so she committed suicide in her early age. So, Sarah Kane uses her personal life story of her subject of writing in these two plays, *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra’s Lovethrough* which she wants to be model for other female writers.

Gilbert and Gubar argue, “I wished that the woman would write and proclaim this unique empire so that other woman, other unacknowledged sovereign, might exclaim: my desires have invented new desires, my body knows unheard – of song” (

876). Kane in her two plays presents herself as representative of all women who are unable to express their feelings towards others. Every woman has different experience of life and they have many wishes and desire. Some wants to express them with other and some wants to keep secrete with themselves. Some express their feelings freely with others as Sarah Kane expresses herself and some feel hesitation or cannot express because of many problems such as love for their dignity and many others. So here, Kane's plays becomes as a guideline for those woman who feels hesitates themselves. These plays of Kane fill energy for others.

In this regard, Elaine Showalter in her *The Literature Their Own* argues:

When woman get to be energetic, strong characters, with literary reputations of their own, and live in the world, with business to attend to, they all do get in the habit of making use of people, and of taking care of themselves in a way that is startling! And yet how are they to help it? If they are thrown into the world, they must swim for their life.

(52)

As Showalter's believes, Sarah Kane is also a self dependent woman. She spent her life according to her desires and wishes. She lived her life as her wish and indeed with her own wish, no one is responsible for life and death. Although Sarah Kane committed suicide in her early age, she was a strong and energetic woman. Sarah Kane is a strong writer in the sense that she uses her personal life as a subject matter for writing which is quite difficult for everyone. Here, her politics or motives behind her autobiographical elements in her plays are to encourage others or she wants her readers should perceive her life as a lesson because there are many ups and downs in her life. These two plays are closely connected with Sarah Kane's personal life.

The knowledge of her suicide entices the audiences into learning more about her life and what they find is hauntingly similar to what is described in her last work *4.48 Psychosis*, where there are passages that describe in detail the symptoms of someone suffering from suicidal depression. In this text she says:

At 4.48

When depression visits

I shall hang myself

To the sound of my lover's breathing

I do not want to die

I have become so depressed by the fact of mortality

That I have decided

To commit suicide. (4)

From the above lines we clearly understand that she was in a depressed mood. She says "I shall hang myself" at the same time "I do not want to die" this is what the ambivalent condition of a psychotic person.

The undeniable fact is that Plath and Kane's mental states did contribute to the popularity. They both are still popular for their work of art. The author, who removes her or himself from the world, is reborn in his or her work. Because when the author is no longer available to talk about their work, about their intention to write, there is no limit to where the imagination can go. Therefore, suicide is not an end; it is a beginning. This may be the reason for Kane to end her last play with a positive tone "please open the curtain" (35). Kane is determined to commit suicide after this play but she wants to be alive forever through her works.

Most of the plays of Sarah Kane's are about life and death. In some cases, she loves her life and at the same time, she hates her life. This is not only happened in

Sarah Kane's life in fact this is the condition of everyone. If anyone feels positive changes in their life they want to live and if he /she sees no hope for life or guided by negative thoughts, they wants to stop their life. In the sense everyone have Eros (life instinct) and Thanatos (death instinct. Here, Sarah Kane's two plays are the responsible about of the concept of Eros and Thanatos. Such conflict of life and death is not only in Sarah Kane's mind in fact everybody have such feelings in their life.

We can find the conflict between of Eros and Thanatos in Marsha Narman's play, *night Mother*. Here, the title itself says about the death and life. Symbolically, Night suggests death and Mother is the source of love and light for life. In this play mainly there are two characters, a mother Thelma Cates in her late fifties or early sixties and a daughter Jessie Cates in her late thirties or early forties. Here, in this play Jessie wants to commit suicide but her mother is trying to stop her to do so:

MAMA: If you have got the guts to kill yourself. Jessie, you have got the guts to stay alive.

JASSIE: I know that. So it's really just a matter of I would rather be.

MAMA: I can't think of what you should do, but does not mean there isn't something that would help you. You can keep trying. You can get brave and try some more.

JESSIE: No, Mama! We wouldn't have more talks like tonight, because it's this next part that's made this last part so good, Mama. (911)

In the above lines, mother is trying to stop her daughter because she wants to commit suicide. There are both negative and positive aspects of everything. There is a reason why we hate something and why we love something. So, here in this play, mother is

trying to make strong to her daughter to fight against the suffering and problems of life. Mother is source of love and life. She sees life in positive way so she says, “If you have got the guts to kill yourself. Jessie, you have got the guts to stay alive”.

(911)

Through this play we can understand that Marsha Norman has also the conflict between life and death in her mind. So she presents her feelings of love for life through mother and hate for life through daughter. This is what the exact condition of human beings because life is full of sufferings, problems, joy and happiness.

Sarah Kane wrote this plays based on her own life. In these two plays she expresses her both negative and positive feelings towards life. In *Phaedra's love*, she only sees darkness in life in fact she guided by negative feelings so we can say that Kane wrote this play with the concept of thanatos. She ends this play with suicide but in *4.48 Psychosis*, she feels some positive aspects of life although she commits suicide after this play but she ended this play with positive tone “please open the curtain” (35). This play is about eros life drive. Here, we can say that Kane wrote this play with the concept of Eros where she valorizes the feelings of love for life.

In this way, the feelings of love for life and hate for life are not only the problems of Sarah Kane but of everybody. Everybody who reads these two plays they may feel as their own story. After reading these plays readers can understand that everybody has suffering and problems in their life. Sarah Kane committed suicide after these plays but anyone who are in suicidal mood, can change their mind because they can realize that suicide is not ultimate solution for every problems. We should be strong and should fight against the problems because this is the same condition of everybody.

The patient of the play, *4.48 Psychosis* was taken to the mental hospital. So here Kane dedicated to the portrayal of a patient's perception of hospitalization and doctor-patient's interaction and communication throughout the play. Here Kane is trying to show the relation of doctor-patient, their communication and interaction in course of patient's treatment. Through this it is possible to identify the admission, case history and establishment of various diagnoses. This part of *4.48 Psychosis* is in fact "a solo symphony" about a battle against a mental illness, about a patient's journey through hospitalization, may be even a little about Sarah Kane's own journey but within the play it also functions as a strong critique of mental health care system and a fairly accurate description of the mistakes that are often made by both doctors and patients in mental institutions. Through the interaction and behavior of doctor to the patient, Kane shows her strong dissatisfaction with such mental institute and doctor. Here in the play we can find long silence at the interaction of doctor and patient.

-you are not eighty years old.

(Silence)

Are you?

(A silence)

Are you?

(A silence)

Or are you?

(A long silence)

-Do you despise all unhappy people or is it me specifically?

-I don't despise you. It's not your fault. You are ill.

-I don't think so. (8)

Here the patient is at hospital and she is suffering from mental illness. After analyzing this conversation we come to know that patient is feeling irritation with doctor's questions. When the doctor asked her questions she denied to answer.

In the course of time the patient cuts her arm and is repeatedly asked if she had done it "to relieve the tension" (11) instead of simply being asked why she does it, this shows the relationship between a doctor and a patient. The doctor is reluctant to pose the question in a non-polar way, instead he insists on his yes or no question. "Did it relieve the tension"? (11). The patient's own question is ignored for quite some time, may be because the therapist does not really want to know the patients truth and prefers to stick to a set of universally applicable questions, thus de-individualizing the patient. This could again be the Kane's way of showing how in the course of treatment the doctor usually only focuses on identifying and eliminating the symptoms rather than finding and dealing with the cause of the illness, the cause of the patient's actions.

Kane talks about love, friendship and sex in her both plays *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love*. In these two plays, the theme of love talks differently and in different situation but it hints us that Kan is hungry in love. She wants love, affection and sex.

In *4.48 Psychosis*, she talks about her unseen lover. She is in relation with a person whom she never meets. For this she charges God. She says, "Fuck you God for making me love a person who does not exist?" (10). This line is quite funny for us because how it is possible to love with unseen person. In fact, her lover is only in her imagination not in reality. In one reason this may be the condition of a psychotic person and in other a psychotic person also needs and wants love from other.

Similarly, in *Phaedra's Love*, the central character Phaedra is alone her husband is not there. She feels alone and sees no possibility her husband returns so

she wants love and affection from Hippolytus her step son. She deliberately talks about the sex with Hippolytus:

Phaedra Have you ever thought about having sex with me?

Hippolytus I think about having sex with everone

Phaedra Would it make you happy?

Hippolytus That's not the word exactly.

Phaedra No, but –

Would you enjoy it?

Hippolytus No. I never do.

Phaedra Then why do it?

Hippolytus life's too long.

Phaedra I think you'd enjoy it with me. (17)

From above lines it is clear that Phaedra wants love and sex from Hippolytus because these things are necessary for everyone. This is what one of the reasons for Sarah Kane to commit suicide. She is fed up with her life, she wants love but never get so she became depressed and frustrated and committed suicide in her early age.

The following lines are taken from an interview between Kane's agent Mel Kenyon and Graham Saunders, where they discuss last play *4.48 Psychosis* of Sarah Kane and her final touches of her play. It exemplifies how difficult it is to disregard the biographical aspect of the work of art when the artist has such a strong life story that is almost over shadows his/her creation.

GS:And finally *4.48 Psychosis*.....

MK:Yes, what can I say? She gave me a first draft shortly before she died. She rang and rang the same afternoon and was desperate for notes. It was unlike her to be like that so I read it overnight and we

talked next day, on a Sunday afternoon. She actually demanded close reading of *4.48 Psychosis*. She wanted notes in a way that she hadn't before. It now makes perfect sense. We looked at some particular passage and then we discussed the role of the doctor and lovers and the music of the play and whether the play was for three voices and the sex or sense of sex of character. And how oblique and obscure she could afford to be and still rendered the play meaningful to people in general. Within days she had made her first suicide attempt it was on Tuesday. She left a package and the play revised was in the package. I was asked to go see her in the hospital and I did and we laughed about everything at that she was very calm and serene. Two days later she was dead. Then I received *4.48* and couldn't read it for while. When I did it was very difficult to be objective. (*Love Me or Kill Me* 153)

From the above mentioned interview we come to know that Kane wrote this play with the intention of the suicide. Kane is no longer around to incorporate her last play therefore it's the hand of director.

There are probably different possible interpretations of *4.48* and many ways of staging it. As one read it, one must necessarily make up one's own mind regarding how many voices or characters are present in order to make some sense of it. Moreover in the early stage of writing *Psychosis 4.48* the author herself reveals not only that it was supposed to have a strong emphasis on language but also an uncertainty regarding how many voices the play had:

It was strange when I finished *Crave* I thought I don't know where to go now because it seemed to me, this has become so minimal and so much about language. Where could my writing go? But I stated this

new one 4.48 *Psychosis* just a few weeks ago I suddenly realized that it goes further. I mean the new one all the moment does not even how many people there is language and image. I don't know how many people there are. (Love Me or kill me 111)

This shows that even the author of the play expressed an uncertainty about certain aspects of play.

Phaedra, the central character of the play *Phaedra's Love* belongs to the royal family. Phaedra being a part of the royal family has no right to have any relation with other people and even not allowed to leave the palace in the absence of her husband. And she is supposed to be royal towards her husband. She has never been unfaithful towards her husband but her uncontrolled last towards her stepson does not allow her to be the same forever. So her desire of possessing the stepson physically is nothing more than the result of social bondage.

After performing oral sex with Hippolytus she says:

Phaedra: Will you get jealous?
 Hippolytus: of what?
 Phaedra: When your father comes back.
 Hippolytus: What's it got to do with me?
 Phaedra: I've never been unfaithful before
 Hippolytus: That much was obvious.
 Phaedra: I'm sorry. (18)

In the above mentioned conversation, Phaedra is expressing her remorse after performing oral sex with her stepson, Hippolytus. She even asks him if he gets jealous when his father returns or not. Here, we can find a glimpse of Oedipus complex. According to psychoanalysis, Oedipus complex is the repressed but continuing

presence in the adult's unconscious of the male infant's desire to possess his mother and to have his rival father out of the way. But, the situation seems quite opposite in the play. In the play, the mother figure tries to possess her stepson physically in the absence of her husband but he denies. In addition to this, Phaedra becomes jealous when she knows about the secret relationship between her own daughter, Strophe and her stepson Hippolytus.

4.48 Psychosis offers a different view of love as the voice clearly longing for a love that she has already lost. The patient of the play expresses her love with her unseen lover and wants love from him. She wants such love which is almost impossible to achieve. The voices realizing of this fact leads to a slow resignation to loneliness and a flirtation with death. This play conveys the author's genuine sense of disappointment in people in the world and necessity of loving herself than anything. To get love from others, it is necessary to love one. In both of the plays central characters want love from other but they never get because of their hatred towards own life.

In fact, Sarah Kane was psychotic patient because she lost her positive thinking of life. Everywhere she sees frustration. She hates her life and she doesn't like anything of her life. Her mind is negatively guided, so in the opening lines she says:

I am sad

I used to be able to cry but now I am beyond tears

I have lost interest in other people

I dislike my genitals

I cannot overcome my loneliness, my fear, my disgust. (4)

She dislikes everything of her life but she wants love. It forms the basis for every other form of love because to be able to love anyone else you have to love yourself first.

Kane through these two plays satirizes the different nature of governmental institutions, mental health care institution department of law and justice, plight and sufferings of people. Kane creates a situation in which Hippolytus watches news on television and delivers everything that he knows from the news to his readers and spectators through his conversation with Phaedra.

Phaedra: What are you watching?

Hippolytus: News. Another rape. Child murdered. War somewhere. Few thousand jobs gone. But none of this matters cause it's a royal birthday. (4)

This conversation satirizes the governmental institutions and their personalities who are busy in their personal works and celebration by forgetting their duties and responsibilities towards the public. To be protected by government is public's rights and their right should be protected by the government and it is its responsibility to create employment opportunity for the people.

Similarly, when Phaedra calls doctor for Hippolytus's treatment, the doctor asks her several unrelated questions to Phaedra as:

Doctor: Who looks after things while your husband is away?

Phaedra: Me. My daughter.

Doctor: When is he coming back?

Phaedra: I have no idea.

Doctor: Are you still in love with him?

Phaedra: Of course. I haven't seen him since we married.

Doctor: You must be very lonely.

Phaedra: I didn't ask you to speculate. I asked for a diagnosis.

And treatment. (6)

From the above lines we can understand the intention of the doctor. He had called there for treatment of Hippolytus but he is trying to possess Phaedra or he is misbehaving with Phaedra. Here, doctor is trying to attract Phaedra towards him. Phaedra is alone and there is no hope for husband's return but the doctor is playing with her emotions and feelings. Through this, Kane is trying to show the condition of a single woman and how a male can play with feeling of such woman.

Through this play Kane wants to show the hierarchy between high class people and low class people. Sarah Kane, here, means to say that while rich and aristocrats are enjoying their life with celebration and sophisticated life but marginal and lower class people are being raped, killed and fighting in warfare. Low class people are in bad condition but monarch and high class people are enjoying their life happily.

Autobiographical writing is about the personal matter and interest of the author. It differs from person to person. If we analyze anybody from their outer appearance it becomes false because we have to present ourselves in front of others according to the situation and condition. In this regard, Linda Anderson argues:

What the author of an autobiography does is to try to endow his inscription within the text with all the attributes of a face in order to mask or conceal his fictionalization or displacement by writing.

Autobiography thus produces fiction or figure in place of the self knowledge they seek on which both the subjects and autobiography's identity had dependent. (9)

As autobiographical writing reflects the personality of authors, these plays also reflect Sarah Kane's life. Here, we can say that her depression is the hopeless perspective of human existence. Kane finds writing as the best medium to express feelings and emotions. She finds her life as a drama which she wants to show to others. She directly performs her life through characters. Her depression is existentially anchored in hopeless cruel world. It is possible to think that she found her meaning of life in death, and that therefore suicide appeared to her as a meaningful exit from the vicious circle.

Sarah Kane committed suicide in the early morning when she was admitted to the hospital. The title of the play *4.48 Psychosis* hints us the time when Kane committed suicide. In the play Kane comments about the difficult time night ends and day is just about to break:

At 4.48

When sanity visits

For one hour twelve minutes I am in right mood

When it has passed I shall be gone again

Now I am here I can see myself

But when I am charmed by vile delusions of happiness

The foul magic of this engine of sorcery

I cannot touch my essential self. (21)

In these above lines, Kane says about her psychotic mood. Similarly, Kane in her play *4.48 Psychosis* clearly expresses her suicidal intention:

I know myself

I see myself

My life is caught in a web of reason

Spun by a doctor to argument the sane

At 4.48

I shall sleep

I came to you hoping to be healed

You are my doctor, my saviour, my omnipotent judge, my god, the
surgeon of my soul. (24)

In the mentioned lines, we come to know that Kane wrote this play as her last one. Her intention of suicide is seen in these lines. She knows that after her suicide, she will not there to speak about herself; anyone can interpret her with their own perspective so she says, “My life is caught in a web reason” (4). Similarly, “at 4.48, I shall sleep” (4). The 4.48 is the exact time when she hangs herself, so her suicide is her preplan action. She titled the play with 4.48, exact times when she committed suicide.

Every play of Sarah Kane is linked with her personal life. Linda Anderson says, “The writer had a vocation which was not to be determined or valued in terms of the market place, but only with reference to the self” (*Autobiography* 3). So, by this time, most people recognize that Kane’s work is about her life. Perhaps the tension in the audience is due to curiosity that needs to be fed; perhaps it comes out of an admiration for some who dare to make an example of her because it is not easy task to express everything of self to others. However, it must have been quite a powerful experience, probably also a bit uncomfortable to sit through a performance of *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra’s Love* knowing that the recently dead author who closely links experience of life on stage.

Most of the plays of Sarah Kane are difficult to perform on the stage. So her plays are categorized under ‘In – yer – face Theatre’. *4.48 Psychosis* is difficult to

perform on stage because characters are replaced by voices; it is too difficult to find out how many characters there are because there is no name of character. Similarly, *Phaedra's Love* is also quite difficult to perform. Characters perform the action like masturbation, having sex and committing suicide. These actions are not easy to perform on stage. So, these plays also invite problems in terms of interpretation and reception. These actions are not easy to perform on stage. So, these plays also invite problems in terms of interpretation and reception.

In the final scene of these two plays, main characters committed suicide. In *Phaedra's Love*, Hippolytus is dead, Strophe is raped and killed. Theseus commits suicide like Sylvia Plath's poetry, Sarah Kane's almost all plays end with suicide and death. This shows her dissatisfaction towards life. Kane killed her every characters of the play and she too committed suicide in her real life. When we analyze her life, we come to know that about her depressed and frustrated life. As she was totally fed up and frustrated with her life, and even took into the mental institution for her recovery from depression. Kane was highly determined to commit suicide so she says how she is going to die:

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

I will tell you how I died

One hundred Lofepamine, forty five Zopiclone, twenty five

Temazepam and twenty Melleril

Everything I had

Swallowed

Slit

Hung

It's done. (30)

She clearly says she will die with overdose of medicine. She is requesting not to cut her body for postmortem. Once she was taken to the hospital because of the heavy dose of medicine and she recovered but she is highly determined to commit suicide and again she was hospitalized because of her mental illness at that time she achieved her success to commit suicide. She was found at the hospital's laboratory hanging herself with her shoelaces. The exact time of her suicide was 4.48. As she says:

This is the sickness of becoming great

The vital need for which I would die

To be loved

I am dying for one who doesn't

I am dying for one who does not know. (31)

After 4.48, I shall not speak again. (9)

In the above lines, Kane says why she committed suicide. She says she was dying for her unseen lover. It shows love is the basic thing that everybody needs. She was treated as only a psychotic patient. No one cares about her feelings. She becomes totally frustrated so she chooses death. Here, death functions for her as a medicine to feel relief from pain of life. So at last, she says "After 4.48 *Psychosis* I shall not speak again" (9).

Similarly, Kane in her another play *Phaedra's Love* raises the theme of suicide and death. Every character is committed to suicide and dies at last. Through this point, it becomes clear that Kane, being totally frustrated and depressed with her life, is waiting for death and she might have thought death as the most pleasant and ultimate solution for her depression. Here Kane feels death as an ultimate solution to preserve what she has already achieved. She does not want her life to be aggravated. As psychoanalysis says one's repressed desire always seeks a way for its outlet.

Sometimes, it comes out through slips of the tongue, pen, and dream and through other different mediums. To me more precise, Sarah Kane might have expressed her repressed desires for suicide and death through her play, *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love*. She is mirroring her own sentiments through her characters. So, the motive behind the insertion of the theme of death and suicide is personal cum political.

III. Personal as Political Motive in Kane's Autobiographical Plays: A Study of

Phaedra's Love and *4.48 Psychosis*

This research seeks to locate Sarah Kane's politics behind her use of autobiographical elements in these plays, *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's Love*. Her personal life story in these plays hints us that she wants to express herself in front of others. In these plays Kane expresses about her every desire, wishes and mental state. She is confessing her every feelings means she is feeling some relief herself because sharing is best medium to feel some relief and positive thinking own self. In particular, her primary politics is to encourage other women who feel hesitated to express feelings with others.

To write everything about personal life is not easy. Here Sarah Kane wrote these plays with certain political and personal motives which can only be understood by relating it to the writer's biography and to his/ her society. To discover Sarah Kane's motive behind autobiographical writing, we have to link or relate it to her private life to the society in which she is living.

Patriarchal society dominants female and treats as inferior beings. There is no respect for female's feelings. Male thoughts that female cannot write and their writings never meet the standard of male writings. But Sarah Kane's these plays prove that females are also capable as male. There is nothing that female cannot do. People feels hesitates to express about own life with others but Sarah Kane is a strong and brave women who wrote everything about owns life about love, mental state, feelings and desires. So these plays of Kane's are model writings for other writers.

Similarly, these texts having political motives can only be understood by relating them with the political affairs of the society from which it is originated. In *4.48 Psychosis*, she satirizes the system and condition of mental health institution. In

fact she is not satisfied with the behavior of mental doctor at hospital. She is badly treated by doctor. Similarly in *Phaedra's Love*, Kane satirizes the representation of the monarch, religious institutions. She personally hates the monarchy and abuses the monarchy and other institutions functioning under it through her play. In order to show her deep repulsion towards monarchy and the myths valorizing monarchy, her eves bring changes in the end of the play. Hence, she leaves all the members of the royal family to be dead.

Here, Kane wrote these two plays with the concept of eros and thanatos. *4.48 Psychosis* is with the concept of eros where she sees her life with positive mind and ends with valorization of life force but *Phaedra's Love* is based on the thanatos where the play ended with the death of all characters. Here the same person guided by two different intention. This is not only the condition of Sarah Kane but it is the condition of every human beings. If anyone feels positive changes in their life they want to live and if he/she lost hope for life they want to stop their life. So, these two plays of Sarah Kane's are the real experiences of her own life. In *Phaedra's Love*, she sees no hope for life but in *4.48 Psychosis* she feels some changes and started to love her life although she committed suicide of her these play.

To wrap up, these two plays of Sarah Kane's are the personal life stories of Sarah Kane where she clearly expresses her every feelings, experiences, wishes and desires. Through this, she wants to encourage those women who feel hesitant to express themselves. Hence, Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* and *Phaedra's love* are the amalgam of personal and political motives.

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