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***Sarah Kane's Plays in the Context of the Czech Republic***

*Vedoucí práce: Mgr. David Livingstone, PhD.*

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## **1. Introduction**

The thesis focuses on the work of the renowned British playwright Sarah Kane. The five critically acclaimed plays by this remarkable writer have been translated into various languages and regularly performed all over the world with the Czech Republic being no exception. This thesis studies how the plays came to the attention of Czech theatres and Czech theatre audience. It follows their way from original English texts through translations into Czech to the final stage productions and their critical response.

Firstly, it describes how Sarah Kane was “discovered” for the Czech Republic and then concentrates on the first appearances of Kane's name and work in the theatre-oriented press. The following chapter provides an overview of the translations of Kane's plays. Not only the translators but mainly the focal points of the translations of these plays are presented to the readers. These are demonstrated with particular examples from the translated and original texts.

The greatest attention of this study is devoted to the actual productions and the response by both critics and non-professional audiences. The thesis maps out all the productions of the five Kane plays that were produced in this country. While describing the circumstances of staging these plays, it also highlights the features which most of them share, compares them or places them in opposition.

The reader of this thesis can see how the Czech productions of Kane's plays developed from the oldest one in 2000 to the newest ones still performed in Brno and Olomouc.

## 2. Sarah Kane Introduced to the Czech Republic

First of all, it is extremely important to answer the question of how Kane's work actually reached the attention of Czech theatre. Prior to the first Czech production of her play, Kane's work was not produced in the Czech Republic by any foreign theatre nor had her work been introduced to public in any theatre study or theatre focused press. In fact, there is one particular person who brought Kane to public notice. The path logically leads to the theatre that first staged a play written by Sarah Kane and that is the Činoherní studio in Ústí nad Labem namely Lenka Koliňová Havlíková who worked for the theatre as a dramatic adviser at the end of the 1990s. It is usually the dramatic adviser who is responsible for staging different plays since it is his or her job to choose a play and introduce it to the director. Fortunately, I managed to get into contact with her and actually meet her, so I can reproduce the information that she has provided me with. In 2000, Lenka Koliňová Havlíková found the text of *Crave* translated as *Túžim* published within an article in the Slovak theatre magazine called *Vlna* written by Ján Šimko. The magazine is issued four times per year and focuses on presenting the latest news in the field of literature, theatre, film, art, and culture as such. Lenka Koliňová Havlíková was captured by it and introduced the text to the creative team of the theatre where the director David Czesany decided to stage it. The Czech theatre audience thus had the chance to attend the first production of Sarah Kane's play in Činoherní studio at the end of 2000. It was translated by Jaroslav Achab Haidler, one of the actors and fellow translators of the theatre.

The Činoherní studio theatre had a quite unique position at the Czech theatre scene of that times. It is obvious that the creative team took a rather unusual path in their dramaturgy. At the turn of the century they focused on staging the so-called “coolness drama” of various young playwrights. This fact evokes the dramatic focus of the Royal Court Theatre which is renowned for the space it provides to new young dramatists and which also staged Kane's text for the first time.

It is extremely important to realize that the contemporary and shocking theatre had not been staged extensively at Czech theatres at the beginning of the millennium and therefore the Činoherní studio in this respect could be perceived as a forerunner that captured the waves coming from Europe and translated them onto the Czech scene. After this one era of the theatre, the creative team altered and the persons associated with it later came back to Sarah Kane and introduced her at various other theatres in different projects which are going to be studied in this thesis. Nevertheless, Lenka Koliňová Havlíková and the Činoherní studio theatre made the first steps to bring Kane's work to the attention of Czech audiences and enabled other theatres and drama groups to launch into various projects based on Kane's plays.

### 3. The First Reflections on Sarah Kane in the Czech Theatre Press

In 1995, the year of the famous London première of *Blasted*, the Czech theatre reviewer and translator, Jitka Sloupová in her article “London Theatre Lent” for *Svět a Divadlo* pointed out that there was not much going on at the stages of London theatres in the spring.<sup>1</sup> Obviously, there were quite interesting adaptations of famous plays (Carlo Goldoni – *Venetians Twins*, Tom Stoppard – *Indian Ink*, Edward Albee – *Three tall Women*), but none of them were actually new and shocking. Therefore, according to Jitka Sloupová, the title of her article was particularly appropriate.

It is quite clear that the journalist writing for this magazine could not have been aware of the Sarah Kane production of *Blasted* at the Royal Court Theatre while reflecting on the theatre situation in London of the mid 1990s. Perhaps it was due to its early première which occurred on 12 January 1995. Moreover, not many people saw this performance and even though there was a great deal of drama around it, Czech reviewers did not have the chance to see the production for themselves because it was played only for a short period of time. It is thus logical that they focused on different plays which they could have seen. Interestingly enough, it was actually the author of the article, Jitka Sloupová, who several years later translated two Sarah Kane plays and thus hugely contributed to her profile in this country.

Even over the following years, Czech reviewers writing about theatre in London did not pay much attention to Kane herself and her plays. Milan Lukeš even wrote an essay about the verbal approach to theatre in Britain<sup>2</sup> which he later placed in opposition with the typical Czech focus on act rather than word.

In 1998, an article entitled “Made in Britain 1998”<sup>3</sup> appeared in the Czech theatre press and reflected on the phenomenon of “Cool Britannia” theatre. Jitka Sloupová was once again the author of this article, nevertheless, she concentrated more on authors such as Butterworth and his play *Mojo*, Mark Ravenhill and his notorious

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<sup>1</sup>Jitka Sloupová, “Londýnský divadelní půst,” *Svět a divadlo* 6, no. 3 (1995): 76-84.

<sup>2</sup>Milan Lukeš, “Všechno je v textu,” *Svět a divadlo* 9, no. 1 (1998): 38-43.

<sup>3</sup>Jitka Sloupová, “Made in Britain 1998,” *Svět a divadlo* 9, no. 5 (1998): 126-133.

*Shopping and Fucking*, and Patrick Marber's *Closer*.<sup>4</sup> These playwrights were seen as the great representatives of cool theatre. Unfortunately, Kane was not even mentioned and thus still remained somewhat hidden for Czech theatre enthusiasts.

Finally in 1999, Milan Lukeš focused on British theatre of the end of the century and also put it into a greater context. He introduced a new wave of British, Irish and Scottish playwrights who had flooded the English theatre scene. He explained the main characteristic of the new generation and what is particularly interesting, pointed out that the themes and fears expressed in their plays were extremely familiar to this nation. However, they were not at all dramatized and staged at Czech theatres. He suggested that the willingness or readiness to confront these themes was somewhat missing in this culture.<sup>5</sup>

The new millennium seemed to awaken the world of theatre magazines and immediately in the first issue of the theatre magazine *Svět a Divadlo*, a thorough article called “Cool Britannia?” was published. In addition, the theorist Aleks Sierz was introduced, since the article was a Czech translation of his study. He highlighted the fact that reviews of theatre productions of plays such as Kane's *Blasted* had finally filled the headlines of daily newspapers in Britain. At the end of the study he points out an extremely important and relevant point when he compares the Czech theatre scene with the Irish one. He quoted the playwright Conor McPherson who admitted he had to work in London instead of Dublin to truly become successful. Even if Prague produced as many new dramatists as Dublin does, it would not be able to find a convenient theatre background to develop, because neither Dublin nor Prague are as large as London and as full of potential theatre goers as this big city.<sup>6</sup>

Again during the following year, another reviewer, Jiří Pokorný, agreed with Lukeš and complained that the Czech theatre scene is not creative enough and not able to absorb impulses from other countries.<sup>7</sup> The editors of the magazine, however, decided to allow another person express his ideas and chose the author of a Czech

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<sup>4</sup>Sloupová, “Made in Britain 1998,” 126-133.

<sup>5</sup>Milan Lukeš, “Specialisté,” *Svět a divadlo* 10, no. 5 (1999): 130-142.

<sup>6</sup>Aleks Sierz, “Cool Britannia? Drsná dramatika v dnešním britském divadle,” *Svět a divadlo* 11, no. 1 (2000): 8-17.

<sup>7</sup>Jiří Pokorný, “Hnus,” *Svět a divadlo* 12, no 4 (2001): 82-84.

contemporary play which was actually labelled “coolness drama” by most critics. It was the play *Vařený hlavy* by Marek Horoščák. This was a wise step because it revealed that there could be something new and fresh happening on the Czech theatre scene. Another article studied three plays that were performed in this country at that time (2000 – 2001) and those were Ravenhill's *Faust is Dead*, Kane's *Vyčištěno* and the already mentioned *Vařený hlavy* by Horoščák.

This was probably the milestone from which Kane's work and coolness drama in general began to appear a great deal in theatre magazines and therefore became introduced to a greater public. The date logically also corresponds with the first Czech productions of Kane's work. It could therefore be claimed that since the beginning of the new century, Sarah Kane began to meet with greater recognition amongst various people from the theatre business and from the public. It was probably slightly later in comparison with other countries but the situation has clearly developed since that time and as early as 2003, the annotation for a production of *Psychóza ve 4.48* at the National Theatre claims that Sarah Kane's play have been perceived as classic of the 1990s and should be produced by all prominent European theatres.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>National Theatre in Prague official website, accessed April 18, 2012, <http://archiv.narodni-divadlo.cz/default.aspx?jz=cs&dk=Inscenace.aspx&ic=413&pn=456affcc-f401-4000-aaff-c11223344aaa&sz=0&zz=OPR&fo=000>.

#### 4. The Czech Translations of Kane's Plays

There are five plays written by Sarah Kane with four different translators having translated them into the Czech language. The two plays *4. 48 Psychóza* and *Faidra (Z lásky)* are the only two translations that were published in printed form because they were both produced by the National Theatre which prints the texts it works with. However, only the text of *4.48 Psychóza* was published independently by Divadelní ústav in 2002 in the edition of contemporary plays. This of course resulted in greater general knowledge of this play among the Czech population.

The translators that worked on Kane's plays were Jaroslav Achab Haidler, David Drozd, Ondřej Formánek and Jitka Sloupová. The first and the last mentioned both translated more than one play, Jaroslav Achab Haidler worked on *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love*, and *Crave* and Jitka Sloupová actually worked on the two remaining – *Cleansed* and *4.48 Psychosis*. Both David Drozd and Ondřej Formánek translated only one Kane play – Drozd *Cleansed* and Formánek *Blasted*. It is thus obvious that only the two last mentioned plays have two different translations so the work on them will differ slightly. However, I contacted Aura-Pont agency which was responsible for the translations and they were not aware of any other translation of *Blasted* apart from the one by Formánek. I have consulted this with Jaroslav Achab Haidler and he confirmed having translated the play for the theatre Multiprostor Louny but he himself does not possess the text at present and admitted that it was actually only quite unofficial cooperation and he does not even know how his translation was used. This will be further studied in one of the following sub-chapters.

At this point the thesis will study each of Sarah Kane's plays in the order of their translation to Czech. As it is already mentioned above, there are two available translations of the second translated play *Cleansed*. They will be consequently studied together in comparison even though they were created in slightly different time periods.

#### 4.1 *Crave* Translated by Jaroslav Achab Haidler

The first translator who was commissioned to translate a Sarah Kane play was Jaroslav Achab Haidler who works as an actor and translator from various languages at the Činoherní studio in Ústí nad Labem. I managed to talk to him on the phone and consult some of the points that seemed important while translating such a play. As has already been mentioned, the translation was specially made for the purpose of David Czesany's production at Činoherní studio in Ústí nad Labem and therefore there is not any official translation available. The text that is possessed by Aura-Pont agency does not have the form of a revised finished text. Actually the pages are not even numbered and at some points of the text there are even misspellings. It is therefore obvious that the text needed proofreading and was only used by the creative team of the theatre. Even though it has not been printed, it was used at another occasion. This being several years later when the director Jan Nebeský staged the play at Pídivadlo with students of his drama classes. The text was not changed or revised for this new production and the translator has not even seen this particular performance of his translation of Kane's *Crave*. He also admitted that he did not translate any official printed version of Kane's play but rather a Xerox copy which might also explain certain other minor differences between the translation and the original text published in Kane's *Complete Plays*.

There are even certain points in the text where the translator provides two options of possible translations to be decided on later or even leaves the decision to the director or actors. For example, the character M says in the original: "Back to life."<sup>9</sup> and the translated versions are either: "Zpět k životu"<sup>10</sup> or "Vzhůru do života"<sup>11</sup>. This again shows the translation was not revised or made official. From this short example, it is also clearly visible that the translator did not follow the playwright in terms of punctuation, although this could be again attributed to the missing proofreading. Or the translator might have wanted to suggest the actual presentations of the lines to the actors.

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<sup>9</sup>Sarah Kane, *Complete Plays* (London: Methuen Drama, 2001), 189.

<sup>10</sup>Sarah Kane, *Puzení*, trans. Jaroslav Achab Haidler (working paper) 15.

<sup>11</sup>Kane, *Puzení*, 15.

In general it could be stated that the translator approached the play in a quite original way. The text itself is extremely complex, there are not many clear dialogues, it rather resembles four voices sharing their problems, concerns, ideas almost at the same time. There clearly are certain bonds in the text and between the characters, nevertheless, it was particularly challenging for the translator to begin to reveal them. He had to have a clear idea as to why each character pronounced what he did or at whom the speech might have been directed.

The situation is much more complicated in Czech because for example the pronoun “you” can in English mean both singular and plural and can refer to both genders. This is not possible in Czech, the translation therefore has to be much more specific and less ambiguous. In this respect, the translator's authorial input is much more relevant and present than in any other translations. Haidler was not hesitant and even adjusted certain minor parts or interpreted them to suit his needs. At one point he even changed the sex of one minor character that was briefly mentioned.<sup>12</sup> It by no means changed much in the running of the play but it does demonstrate his rather authorial approach to the play.

On the other hand, both he and the theatre approached the play with great respect and the creative team did not even cut much of the play because as Lenka Koliňová Havlíková said you cannot really cut such a unique text based on words. However, the text was sometimes reformulated on stage when the translation seemed artificial or just did not sound natural, which is a quite common practise and also a beneficial one for both the theatre and the translator. However, those were actually minor deviations from the primarily respectful approach to the translated play. This respect is also shown in the fact that the play was produced under the original title Kane gave it. The translation says *Puzení* but it was never staged under the Czech translation even in the years that followed the first production.

The greatest achievement of the translator and actually also, as he confessed, his biggest aim was the appropriate choice of style in Czech and all the individual expressions. He focused on a completely natural impression of the text in Czech and clearly achieved it. He did not hesitate to use common Czech and various spoken

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<sup>12</sup>Kane, *Puzení*, 11.

swear words. He did everything to make the play sound as natural in Czech as it sounds in English. This is the most significant element of his style and it will be also visible in his additional translations studied later.

As an example, we could take one of the first phrases uttered in the play. C: “He's following me.”<sup>13</sup> Of course the obvious Czech translation could be “Pořád mě sleduje” but Haidler chose the more suitable translation C: “Furt ho mám v patách”.<sup>14</sup> Not only does it demonstrate common everyday speech in the word “furt” but it also sounds extremely natural and emphasises the irritation of the speaker.

At another point in the text, Haidler had to deal with Kane's quick exchange between the characters A and B – A: “Stunned.” B: “Stoned.”<sup>15</sup> Kane surely uses the word play of these two words with a similar sound which therefore have a clear link between them. Haidler did not use the alliteration or apply the similarity in sound but coped with the issue in a different and also suitable way. He used A: “Ubitej.” and B: “Ztřískanej.”<sup>16</sup> He thus used the two meanings of the latter word of being beaten up or being completely drunk. By putting this word right after a synonym of the first meaning, Haidler makes an interesting effect quite similar to the original even though reached by a completely different linguistic means.

However at certain points he lacks consistency. On page three he translated a phrase uttered by C: “We pass these messages.”<sup>17</sup> as C: Na tahle poselství kašlem.”<sup>18</sup> On the following pages the character develops her thoughts and in a longer speech pronounces: “We pass these messages faster than we think and in ways we don't think possible.”<sup>19</sup> As it was suggested, Haidler did not remain consistent and translated this phrase as: “Tahle poselství se přenáší rychleji a úplně jinými cestami, než se nám může zdát.”<sup>20</sup> This could be due to some of the internal

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<sup>13</sup>Kane, *Complete Plays*, 155.

<sup>14</sup>Kane, *Puzení*, 1.

<sup>15</sup>Kane, *Complete Plays*, 159-160.

<sup>16</sup>Kane, *Puzení*, 3.

<sup>17</sup>Kane, *Complete Plays*, 159.

<sup>18</sup>Kane, *Puzení*, 3.

<sup>19</sup>Kane, *Complete Plays*, 162.

<sup>20</sup>Kane, *Puzení*, 4.

meanings and relations between the characters that he wanted to preserve but otherwise it could just be a not particularly successful translation.

The translator admitted his main focus was to make the text sound Czech and therefore sacrificed other aspects to this aim of his. This might have had a major influence upon the overall result of the production and on the impression it left on the audience. Moreover, he received a great deal of positive reactions from other translators and theatre critics. However, it is quite easy to imagine that if the play was approached in a different way and translated rather literally, the final production would be completely different. This is logically connected with the fact that it is based on the language to such an extent.

#### **4.2 *Cleansed* Translated by David Drozd and Jitka Sloupová**

*Cleansed* was similarly to *Blasted* translated by two different translators. However, in the case of this play, both translations are available. To be honest I wanted to meet the translators themselves but, unfortunately, neither Sloupová nor Drozd replied to my requests so I could not ask them about their personal approach to the play.

Nevertheless, there are two translations of one Kane play so I had the opportunity to compare them to the original play and also confront the differences between the two Czech texts.

The first translator that worked with this text was David Drozd and it was as early as 2001. It was actually the second translated text after Haidler's *Crave* and Drozd translated it for the Theatre Na zábradlí in Prague. From his curriculum vitae<sup>21</sup>, it is evident that Kane's *Cleansed* was one of his early translations which, in my opinion, could be seen at several points in the translated text, which are going to be mentioned later.

The other translation was produced by Jitka Sloupová much later than the Drozd one. This translator was well-aware of the style of the theatre of Kane because she studied her works in her theatre reviews. Moreover, by the time she prepared this

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<sup>21</sup>David Drozd's publications, accessed February 8, 2012, <http://www.damu.cz/katedry-a-kabinety/katedra-teorie-a-kritiky/pedagogove/mga-david-drozd-ph-d-1976>.

translation of *Cleansed*, she had already produced another translation of Kane's play – 4. 48 *Psychosis* for the National Theatre in Prague. She was clearly familiar with Kane's quite straight-forward language and use of swear words and her poetics in general.

First of all, the title of the play will be in focus. Drozd translated it as “Vyčištěno” and the play was performed under this translation in the Theatre Na zábradlí and also at the Divadlo na cucky (Theatre to Shreds) in 2010 in Olomouc. This actually comes as a surprise, since the creators in Olomouc decided to mainly use Jitka Sloupová's version and even mentioned her as the translator of their production. Nevertheless, her translation was slightly different in the prefix – “Očištění”. This equally correct option could also highlight the purifying process of catharsis that the audience experiences while watching the play or it could be just the title as seen from the perspective of the “full-of-light” ending. The former title rather suggests the general perspective of an institution where a dictator (Tinker) banishes all the love from the world. This Czech title could also be considered much more negative since the word “očištění” has positive connotations.

When examining into the texts, one immediately perceives that both translators focused on keeping as close to the original as possible. They probably both realized Kane's emphasis on the form of her plays and tried to even convey the form and not merely the content of the play. For example, Kane, in the scene where Carl is beaten by Tinker, separates the words in his utterance as he is only crying out phrases because of the pain Tinker is inflicting on him<sup>22</sup>. The Czech text looks the same and contributes to the meaning and also hints to the actor how these phrases should be pronounced on stage. However, there were several points in the texts where this rule was not observed; most visible is an example from Drozd's version. In Scene 7, Robin wants to show Grace that he has been studying and he is now able to count on an abacus. Kane starts with one and then puts all the following numbers in a row up to fifty-two. Even if we are not sure why, the author wanted the numbers to be explicitly mentioned in the play. Drozd's translation states only:

“Jedna

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<sup>22</sup>Sarah Kane, *Cleansed* (London: Methuen Drama, 1998), 11.

...

...

... Padesát dva.”<sup>23</sup>

Why the translator decided not to enumerate all the numbers and make the passage of the text easier and less wordy can only be speculated upon. It could be, however, most probably imputed to the fact that the text was not aimed to be published since it was only a translation for the purpose of the theatre working on the production.

This is also related to the fact that there are actually quite a number of mistakes and typos. It is therefore clear that the text was not really edited or did not undergo a process of proofreading just as with the preceding translation of *Crave*.

Unfortunately, there are also some passages in the text from which it can be argued that the translator did not understand the original and thus altered the meaning of the utterance or dialogue. For example, in Scene Three Grace asks about the clothes of her dead brother, Tinker suggests two options these being that they were either recycled or incinerated. He then adds: “Most likely incinerated...”<sup>24</sup> Drozd changed the meaning and translated “Je to skoro jako zpopelnění”<sup>25</sup> instead of the correct translation that Sloupová used “Většinou pálíme...”<sup>26</sup> There are several more small misunderstandings in both translated versions which will not be studied here except for one case in which both the translators altered the meaning in the same way. While Tinker explains to Carl that after horrible torture which he is going to subject him to, he would “Die eventually of course,”<sup>27</sup> both Sloupová and Drozd used “Můžeš případně zemřít, samozřejmě.”<sup>28</sup> This clear example of false-friends of eventually and “eventuálně” would be surely spotted if the translations were edited and proofread by a third person.

The translations also share another important feature. Both translators decided not to follow the rules of punctuation in Czech. At the beginning of Kane's play, there is an author's note explaining that where there is punctuation missing, it is to indicate the

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<sup>23</sup>Sarah Kane, *Výčištěno*, trans. David Drozd (working paper) 27.

<sup>24</sup>Sarah Kane, *Cleansed* (London: Methuen Drama, 1998), 6.

<sup>25</sup>Kane, *Výčištěno* (trans. Drozd), 6.

<sup>26</sup>Sarah Kane, *Očištění*, trans. Sloupová (working paper) 7.

<sup>27</sup>Kane, *Cleansed*, 10.

<sup>28</sup>Kane, *Očištění* (trans. Sloupová), 11 and *Výčištěno* (trans. Drozd), 9.

delivery.<sup>29</sup> However, we must consider that the correct usage of commas and full stops is different in Czech and English. Kane does not use a comma in phrases such as “I went away but now I'm back...”<sup>30</sup> Both Drozd and Sloupová copy this and translate “Odešel jsem ale teď jsem zpátky...”<sup>31</sup> Since there can be, but does not necessarily have to be, a comma in the original, the translator had the chance to decide if the punctuation should be there or not. They could indicate to the actors how to deliver the phrase and so in fact they took the position of the playwrights as it was explained in the author's note.<sup>32</sup>

One of the shortcomings of both of the translations was their inconsistency in terms which should, however, be also assigned to a lack of a proofreader. Sloupová, unlike Kane, changed the object which Tinker uses to watch a woman in bathrooms from “žeton”<sup>33</sup> which she used towards the beginning to “mince”<sup>34</sup> at the end (the original version uses the word “token”). Drozd switches from using the word “univerzita”<sup>35</sup> to “universita”.<sup>36</sup> The latter word seemed to me as an interesting point. On a symposium called “Sarah Kane Now” (28 March 2012, Lincoln, UK), the majority of the literary critics studying Kane's work agreed on the fact that this play reflects the situation in Britain in the 1980s a great deal and this fact is, apart from other things, reflected in Kane's choice of words such as “sanatorium” and “university gymnasium” that are not used as much in current English as they were previously. With this idea in mind, Drozd's version of the word “universita” actually seems quite fitting since this writing of the word is also seen as rather archaic in the contemporary Czech language. Nevertheless, consistency of usage should definitely have been maintained throughout the entire translation.

Among the strong points of the translation by David Drozd, we could consider his ability to express aptly the swear words and the cruelty of the language. This

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<sup>29</sup> Sarah Kane, author's note to *Cleansed* (London: Methuen Drama, 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Kane, *Cleansed*, 14.

<sup>31</sup> Kane, *Vyčištěno* (trans. Drozd), 11.

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Kane, author's note to *Cleansed* (London: Methuen Drama, 1998).

<sup>33</sup> Kane, *Očištění* (trans. Sloupová), 14.

<sup>34</sup> Kane, *Očištění* (trans. Sloupová), 32.

<sup>35</sup> Kane, *Vyčištěno* (trans. Drozd), 1.

<sup>36</sup> Kane, *Vyčištěno* (trans. Drozd), 13.

could be due to his young age; he was actually only 25 years when translating this play, so it could be assumed that the “young” language was particularly natural to him.

Despite the fact that Drozd's translation of vulgarisms is much more suitable and precise, Sloupová succeeds in transmitting the colloquial sound of the phrases and in many cases, her translated phrases sound in Czech as natural and laid-back as they sound in the original masterpiece. For example, when Robin, who is a young teenage boy, gives a speech, Sloupová fittingly uses the colloquial spoken phrase “Tak bych změnil Grahama mrtvého na živýho Grahama.”<sup>37</sup> while Drozd makes use of the standard variant of the words – “mrtvého, živého”.<sup>38</sup> This brief example highlights Sloupová's ability to convey the style of speech which is again demonstrated by other points of her translation.

If the performed play should be taken into consideration, it should be noted that I have seen only one production of *Cleansed* but from this experience, I can say that the creators decided to use both of the translations and on particular points of the text chose the variant they liked better. This is a quite natural process and in this case, the creative team benefited from it because they could choose the best aspects of the two versions.

There is one more particular piece of text that will be studied in this chapter and that is an utterance of the Voices in Scene Ten. This short speech is one of the most challenging parts for translation due to its ambiguity. In the original, the Voices shout various insults at Grace, one of them is “Fucking user/All cracked up”<sup>39</sup> three lines later it is echoed in “Crack crack crack”.<sup>40</sup> Both translators coped with it in a completely different way, each expressing one of the possible meanings that together constitute the ambiguity of the passage. “Crack” in Drozd's translation means “herák” and so he logically translated the previous phrase as “Feťák zasranej/Všichni drogovali”.<sup>41</sup> Jitka Sloupová translated the studied word as “prásk”

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<sup>37</sup>Kane, *Očištění* (trans. Sloupová), 22.

<sup>38</sup>Kane, *Vyčištění* (trans. Drozd), 15.

<sup>39</sup>Kane, *Cleansed*, 25.

<sup>40</sup>Kane, *Cleansed*, 25.

<sup>41</sup>Kane, *Vyčištění* (trans. Drozd), 19.

and the initial phrase as “Zasranej fet’ák. Samej magor.”<sup>42</sup> The English language provided Kane with this kind of ambiguity and it is clear that this possibility is not present in the Czech language. Therefore the translators had to decide which aspect of the meaning they would choose and which one would remain unrecognisable for the Czech reader or audience.

### **4.3 Translation of *4.48 Psychosis* by Jitka Sloupová**

To begin with, it is essential to realize that *4.48 Psychosis* is not a usual play. It is rather unusual in the sense that, first of all, there are no characters assigned by the author and moreover there are not any strictly set dialogues or monologues. From the outline of the text, it is obvious that certain parts are more dialogical than others and some even resemble a poem. It is hard to tell, however, who pronounces the given line at certain points in the text.

This is also connected with the fact that there are not any characters assigned by the author, let alone their age or sex. This was probably one of the greatest challenges that the translator had to face. Jitka Sloupová decided to follow the example of the first production of the play at the Royal Court Theatre and assigned 3 characters. However, in a translator's note she explains that there is no place in the text that would somehow relate to the sex of the characters accompanying the female protagonist.<sup>43</sup> She also explains to the readers that the Czech language does not make it possible to “hide” the sex of characters and therefore she decided to assign the character of the protagonist doctor with the male sex. She adds: “This is, however, only one of the two possibilities.”<sup>44</sup> She basically tried to explain the typological difference between English and Czech which enables the ambiguity of sex of the characters.

At this point the title of the last Kane plays is going to be studied. From the Czech translation of Jitka Sloupová, it is obvious that she wanted to keep the format of

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<sup>42</sup>Kane, *Očistění* (trans. Sloupová), 29.

<sup>43</sup>Sarah Kane, translator's note in *4.48 Psychóza* trans. Jitka Sloupová (Praha: Divadelní ústav, 2002).

<sup>44</sup>Sarah Kane, translator's note in *4.48 Psychóza* trans. Jitka Sloupová (Praha: Divadelní ústav, 2002).

Kane's original as much as possible. She used *4.48 Psychóza*, this solution, in spite of titles of all the actual productions (*Psychóza ve 4.48*), does not immediately reveal what the title means and only hints at something. The more common way of translation – “Psychóza ve 4.48” suggests clearly that the numbers in the title represent time, while “4.48 Psychóza” could even hint at an ordinal number, an event in a sequence of others or an item on a list. However, the meaning of the title is so notorious that even if we read the original first translation by Sloupová, we most probably have in mind a certain notion of what the number means.

Another specific aspect of the play that Sloupová had to deal with is the rudeness of the language. One of the most used word is “fuck” or “fucking” that the translator translated as “zasraně, jdi do prdele” or “kurva” according to the particular meaning and the function of the swear word. The translated version therefore cannot have the same integrity and parallelism as the original but in this case, it is inevitable. Also Sloupová made use of common Czech instead of the standard version which would not be suitable for this type of text. In this way, she also enhanced the contemporary style of expression which went hand in hand with the swear words which would, surrounded by standard Czech, sound inappropriate.

Jitka Sloupová tried to maintain the form as close to the original as possible. This was definitely an excellent strategy because Kane's work and especially the latest one is based hugely on the form. She played with it and made use of various different formal presentations in her play and therefore it seems that every point or a blank line has a special meaning. While strictly following the form while translating, the actual content can easily lack behind and the language can in several places sound slightly odd. For Sloupová it is, however, characteristic that she was able to keep the format and at the same time paid enough attention to make the phrases sound natural to a Czech speaker.

At certain points in the text, it is even hard to tell if the passage of the text speaks in plural or singular. In speeches such as:

“Despair propels me to suicide  
Anguish for which doctors can find no cure  
Not care to understand

I hope you never understand  
Because I like you

I like you  
I like you<sup>45</sup>

It is possible to understand the “you” in both singular and plural in English and therefore the translator has to decide and thus constrain the translated version and provide it with a more specific meaning. However, the most logical solution would be to follow the meaning of the first line and thus understand the pronoun in the plural and translate the last two phrases as “mám vás ráda” – just as Jitka Sloupová did.

What I actually did not understand in the translation is the fact that towards the end of the play, there is quite a major deviation from the original. Kane had an exact idea as to what she put in the text and made use of extensive pauses in the visual interpretation of the text. The Czech translation seemed to always follow this except for the very end. In the original, Kane had only two utterances on the last page, the first one being: “It is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the underside of my mind<sup>46</sup>”. This phrase is printed in the upper part and then at the bottom of the page there is the simple “please open the curtains<sup>47</sup>” which symbolizes the end of the show, the end of the life of the characters or even if we see the play as a circle, a new beginning. The fact that the whole page is blank apart from these two phrases certainly has a meaning that should be transferred to the readers of the play in a different language. It could be even argued that the pauses in between the lines are actually extremely important determinants of the play so such an aspect should not be ignored. However, the Czech translation lacks it and constricts the last two pages of the original onto one page.

Ironically, on the opposite page, there is a short profile of the author with a list of her dramatic works. This truly seems ironic because it looks as if a continuation of

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<sup>45</sup>Sarah Kane, *4.48 Psychosis* (London: Methuen Drama, 2000), 37.

<sup>46</sup>Kane, *4.48 Psychosis*, 43.

<sup>47</sup>Kane, *4.48 Psychosis*, 43.

the drama and does not leave space for the reader to somehow absorb the play, to let it resonate with him or her. Moreover, by placing information about the author right after the tragic end, the editor clearly made a link between the characters and Kane herself. Again, there is the typical notion of projecting Kane's fate on the play and thus not enabling it to stand on its own, but instead forcing it to be viewed in the light of Kane's suicide.

In all probability, the reason for the reduction of the ending of the play could be attributed to the publishers and editors that worked on the layout of the book and most likely wanted to save some space and also money.

However, this play is the only one that was published on its own and thus is accessible to any theatre enthusiast who cannot read it in English. *Phaedra's Love* was actually also published but it was only one part of the entire project Bouda published by the National Theatre in Prague. All the other plays were translated only for the needs of the theatres that staged the plays and can be reached only through the agency that administrates them.

#### **4.4 *Phaedra's Love* Translated by Jaroslav Achab Haidler**

After the translation of *Crave*, Jaroslav Achab Haidler was again asked to translate another of Sarah Kane's plays. He was commissioned by the dramatic adviser of the play that should be staged within a project at the National Theatre and it was once again Lenka Koliňová Havlíková who worked as the dramatic adviser. Since she had already worked with this translator before, she knew what to expect and what Haidler's work looked like. Koliňová also admitted that she closely cooperates with her translators and they consult the work in progress a great deal.

Haidler claimed that his work was actually quite similar to his first experience with Kane notwithstanding the fact that it was a slightly less demanding text compared with *Crave*. The plot is quite clear and he was not obliged to make up any maps of the relationships between the characters and their utterances because most of them are explicitly expressed in the play.

Again I would say that he approached this play in an original way which is somewhat specific for him. He deliberately chose quite bawdy language. He did not have any instruction from the director or dramatic adviser. Haidler was only given the space to approach the play as he wanted and was not constricted by the creative team; this creative freedom must have been extremely beneficial for both the translator and the client, in this case the theatre.

In general, the translation could be considered quite loose as compared with the other translations of Kane's plays. It is hard to compare in this way, since no second translation of *Phaedra's Love* exists, nevertheless, Jaroslav Achab Haidler approached the play quite innovatively. As in *Crave* he primarily focused on the truly Czech sound of the translation. He did not feel constricted by the form that Kane suggested and used very natural language and Czech expressions even if in some cases he was more explicit than Kane. This probably the biggest difference from Sloupová and Drozd's approach who tried to maintain the form of the text and at some points their texts sounded less natural and slightly artificial. For example, in Scene Three Strophe says about Hippolytus: "I live with him."<sup>48</sup> and Haidler is more explicit, changes the perspective and adds information which, however, contributes to the common spoken Czech: "Oni s ním nežijou pod jednou střechou."<sup>49</sup> Also it is apparent that the translator made use of colloquial Czech instead of the standard one which would again seem too artificial for the text.

It was actually the intention of the translator, as he admitted, to oppose the ancient theme of the tragic story which everyone knows and honours as a cultural icon and something we should all admire. He tried to understand Kane and decided to reflect this opposition of the old text approached in a new and shocking light by adding even more explicitly vulgar language. There are several points in the text where he could have easily left the utterance quite neutral but instead used a coarse version of the speech. For example, the dialogue between Phaedra and Doctor in Scene two

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<sup>48</sup>Kane, *Complete Plays*, 66.

<sup>49</sup>Heiner Müller, Sarah Kane and Werner Schwab, *Projekt Bouda: podoby současného dramatu: Hamlet-stroj; Faidra (z lásky); Faustus, můj hrudník, má přilba*, (Praha: Národní divadlo, 2003), 39.

ends in Phaedra: “I don't know what to do.” and Doctor replies: “Get over him”.<sup>50</sup> The translator translated the last phrase as “Srát na něj.”<sup>51</sup> which is obviously more vulgar than the original but the meaning is quite close. As he said, he just wanted to give the character a specific feel and he was consistent in this. At some points, however, I was not sure whether it was really his intention or only a misunderstanding as in the case of Hippolytus's phrase: “They think I must have a secret.”<sup>52</sup> in Haidler's translation as “Myslej si, že jsem plnej semene.”<sup>53</sup> At different places in the text, the translation was quite successful – Hippolytus: “Not very logical.” Phaedra: “Love isn't.”<sup>54</sup> Hippolytos: “To nemá logiku.” Faidra: Láska na logiku sere.”<sup>55</sup>

From this short dialogue it is also apparent that the translator quite logically used the Czech versions of the names of the characters that are quite spread and familiar to everyone. The only problem was with the character named Strophe. In the mythology, there is no such character but the word comes from this period. It denotes the “first part of a choral ode that was performed by the chorus while it moved from one side of the stage to the other. The strophe was followed by an antistrophe of the same metrical structure (performed while the chorus reversed its movement) and then by an epode of different structure that was chanted as the chorus stood still.”<sup>56</sup> In Czech the word is translated as “strofa” and it has the same meaning, however, there is a much more common meaning to this word denoting “a group of verses that form a distinct unit within a poem”<sup>57</sup> which obviously exists in English as well. Nevertheless, this could be the reason why Haidler decided not to

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<sup>50</sup>Kane, *Complete Plays*, 64.

<sup>51</sup>Heiner Müller, Sarah Kane and Werner Schwab, *Faidra (z lásky)*, 37.

<sup>52</sup>Kane. *Complete Plays*, 73.

<sup>53</sup>Heiner Müller, Sarah Kane and Werner Schwab, *Faidra (z lásky)*, 45.

<sup>54</sup>Kane, *Complete Plays*, 74.

<sup>55</sup>Heiner Müller, Sarah Kane and Werner Schwab, *Faidra (z lásky)*, 47.

<sup>56</sup>“strophe.” *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition.* Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 13 May. 2012.  
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/569542/strophe>>.

<sup>57</sup>“strophe.” *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition.* Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 13 May. 2012.  
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/569542/strophe>>.

translate the name as Strofa and kept Strophe. This was a good decision because otherwise the translated version would be rather misleading for a Czech reader.

The translator also worked well with terms from British culture and social life that were easily understandable for a native speaker of English but could pose a problem to a Czech reader not familiar with British culture. For example, in Scene Four Hippolytus wants to get rid of a present because he fears it could be something quite dangerous and so suggests that they “give it to Oxfam.”<sup>58</sup> Haidler translates this as: “Dej to, do prdele, Charitě třeba.”<sup>59</sup> This example not only shows that Haidler wisely chooses a more general term that is basically a hypernym to the more specific example of a charity organization but it also demonstrates his emphasis on spoken everyday Czech. Moreover, there is once again the example of his more vulgar approach to the text and on the top of that he also suggests how the utterance should be pronounced by using the commas. It might also be attributed to the fact that the translator himself is an actor and so can imagine how what he translated will sound on stage. This is also one of the strong points of his translations.

#### **4.5 *Blasted* Translated by Ondřej Formánek**

*Blasted* is the first of Kane's text but actually the least known in the Czech Republic even though it was translated twice. First of all, the translation was made by Jaroslav Achab Haidler but it is not available as has been already mentioned. The second translator that worked on the text was Ondřej Formánek and there was presumably only a small time gap between the first translation and the second because the productions were staged shortly one after another.

Regarding the title of Formánek's translation, it is quite interesting that he kept the original and only used the word *Blasted*. The productions were staged under this name however with a translation after a slash. It was translated the first time as *Zásah* then as *Zpustošení*. The first should therefore be the only example of Haidler's translation that was available.

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<sup>58</sup>Kane, *Complete Plays*, 71.

<sup>59</sup>Heiner Müller, Sarah Kane and Werner Schwab, *Faidra (z lásky)*, 43.

The text itself is full of questions and translations in bold and different versions of the same lines. This obviously shows the translation was not finished or aimed to be produced officially. It is possible that the theatre actually worked with the translation at this stage because it becomes apparent in later chapters that they changed the play a great deal and they might have used the translation only as the basis for their further theatre explorations and ideas.

However, the translation possesses a brilliant and extremely natural tone. Formánek uses everyday language with vulgarisms as a natural part of it. Towards the very beginning, Ian pronounces one of his many racially offensive phrases when Cate tries to defend the offended. Ian: “You a nigger-lover?”<sup>60</sup> As we can see, this phrase shows not only the racial discriminatory meaning but also the ungrammatical structure with a missing verb that is only to be found in spoken language. Formánek came up with a translation “Ty děláš do negrů?”<sup>61</sup> which contains the racial offence as well as the informal structure of the verb “dělat” with the preposition “do” which is equally only common in spoken Czech.

Again at another point, the loose spoken structure of Soldier's speech compels the translator to find the right solution in Czech. Soldier: “Your girlfriend did that, angry was she?”<sup>62</sup> Formánek used a condensed version of the verb “dělat” to somehow deal with the spoken syntax of the English phrase: “To udála tvoje hoka? Vytočená, co?”<sup>63</sup> This again is characteristic for spoken Czech and therefore particularly fitting for the translation.

One of the most important achievements of the translator, apart from the very suitable choice of word register, is the fact that he uses as many short utterances as possible. In my opinion this is an extremely important aspect of Kane's first play which is also a result of her cutting of the first (much longer) drafts to this final shape of sharp and brief dialogues. Formánek realized this and tried to follow this rule and did not explain too much maintaining the sharpness of the dialogues in his translations as well.

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<sup>60</sup>Sarah Kane, *Blasted* (London: Methuen Drama, 2001), 5.

<sup>61</sup>Sarah Kane, *Zpustošení*, trans. Ondřej Formánek (working paper) 3.

<sup>62</sup>Kane, *Blasted*, 41.

<sup>63</sup>Kane, *Zpustošení*, 32.

As with the other unofficial translations, there are certain utterances missing and even some typos. Nevertheless, it is clear that these mistakes would have been corrected if the text underwent proofreading. Formánek even left his own notes on how to translate in the text apart from a number of variations of some phrases, even asking if the character of Ian will “vykat nebo tykat”<sup>64</sup> to the Soldier. All these questions and uncertainties were surely tackled later when preparing the play in the theatre.

In Formánek's translation examples of both domestication and exoticisms are present. When Ian dictates a press report about a murder of a young female student, he says that she went for a trip “after finishing her A levels”.<sup>65</sup> Formánek decided to domesticate and used the collocation “složila maturitu”.<sup>66</sup> This solution keeps the meaning of a final school exam that teenagers pass, however, in the same paragraph the reader is informed that she was British which could be misleading for readers who might think that the British system of education also uses our term “maturita”. If he tried to describe it in more general terms though, he would probably lengthen the utterance and it would lose its brevity.

In another case when Ian talks about football fans and mentions the football stadium called Elland Road<sup>67</sup>, Formánek decided to leave the term as it is and does not look for a suitable equivalent. But it is not clear if this was the ultimate version of it or whether it was finally used in the actual play. Also it is important to say that he leaves the names of the characters as they are in English – Cate and Ian and translates only the character of Soldier as Voják.

One of the most controversial points of the original text can be found towards the end. Cate takes out all the bullets of the blinded Ian's gun and hands it to him when he asks her because he wants to kill himself. When he pulls the trigger and nothing happens he swears and Cate says: “Fate, see. You're not meant to do it. God –“ Ian replies: “The cunt.”<sup>68</sup> It is obvious that Ian blames God for not letting him do what

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<sup>64</sup>Kane, *Zpustošení*, 30.

<sup>65</sup>Kane, *Blasted*, 13.

<sup>66</sup>Kane, *Zpustošení*, 9.

<sup>67</sup>Kane, *Blasted*, 19.

<sup>68</sup>Kane, *Blasted*, 57.

he wanted. Formánek translated the swear word as: “Zmrd jeden”.<sup>69</sup> The short phrase in the original could, however, have another possible meaning which could be also Ian insulting the Soldier or even Cate with the swear word. Ian's utterance in the Czech translation leaves out the character of Cate because of the male gender of the four-letter word and the ending of the numeral. The translation actually sounds quite natural and that was probably the most important effect that the translator wanted to transmit to his translation. Even though his work was not finished, the text can be considered a successful translation.

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<sup>69</sup>Kane, *Zpustošení*, 45.

## 5. Productions of Sarah Kane's Work in the Czech Republic

After studying all the translations of Kane's texts into Czech, the focus will now be turned to mapping all the plays that were produced in the Czech Republic or other projects that were somehow connected with her work and were produced here. The theatre periodicals *Svět a Divadlo* and *Divadelní Noviny* served as a great source of background information. The website of Divadelní Ústav was also consulted as well as many other articles published on-line that provided various reviews and notes on her plays. I have also asked some theatres themselves to help me with the research but, to be honest, most of them did not respond to my questions and requests. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned media and certain personalities, who were already mentioned or will be further in the thesis, served as a great source of sufficient information about productions of Kane's work from the very first one in 2000 up to now.

First of all, it is important to state that all five plays of Sarah Kane were staged in the Czech Republic from the years following her death up to 2012. They were not produced in the order as the playwright wrote them, as was already mentioned, the first play produced on the Czech theatre scene was *Crave*. The play that was staged the most was Kane's last play *4.48 Psychosis* and in the context of the Czech Republic, this production probably received the greatest attention from the general public because it was staged at the National Theatre in Prague in 2003 and also eight years later at the critically acclaimed theatre HaDivadlo in Brno. The publication of the text obviously hugely contributed to the popularity of this play.

Overall, it can be argued that Sarah Kane's plays tended to be produced in experimental theatres and alternative-orientated theatre groups. This is quite obvious because it follows the style of producing Kane's work in Great Britain and also shows that her plays were not aimed at the typical Czech spectator who is a season ticket holder and attends the theatre to be only amused.

The productions staged in the Czech Republic will be studied according to the date of the première, starting with the first one of *Crave* from 16 December 2000 and

ending with the last première that occurred recently (2010), it was *Vyčištěno* on 11 May. Each section of this chapter will concentrate on one production, its creative team and primarily the critical reception that appeared in the press and other media.

### **5.1 Kane's First Première – *Crave* at Činoherní Studio in Ústí nad Labem**

The first production of a Kane play was *Crave* and it was created at Činoherní studio in Ústí nad Labem at the end of the year 2000. Precisely, it was on 16 December and the first Czech première occurred almost two years after the playwright's death. Quite interestingly, it was not her first play that was staged in this country but her penultimate one. The world première of this particular play dates back to 13 August in 1998. However, the play was not premièred at the London Royal Court Theatre but at the Edinburgh Festival. The production then toured Europe and in the Netherlands even Kane herself took part in it as character C. This might have also contributed to the fact that *Crave* was the first of the staged plays in Czech theatres because the play itself could have been brought to greater public notice at various festivals in several European countries and thus perhaps introduced to the theatre reviewer and translator Ján Šimko.

As has already been mentioned the dramatic adviser Lenka Koliňová Havlíková introduced this playwright to the theatre and also commissioned the translator Jaroslav Achab Haidler to translate the play.

The director of this production was David Czesany who has been associated with the theatre since 1995 when he started there as a director and two years later became the artistic director. It seems, he was captured by Kane's work because he returned to her plays later in his career and directed a production of *Psychóza ve 4.48* with a theatre group of students from the Prague Conservatory. This production will of course be further studied in a separate section of this chapter.

While studying the critical reviews and other texts connected with this production, I was surprised that the première was not mentioned in the *Divadelní Noviny*

magazine in the section called “Kronika”<sup>70</sup> describing the premières of the previous month. However, the event itself was reflected in the following issue of the theatre magazine and the production was also the subject to an article of the theatre magazine called *Svět a Divadlo*. It was also introduced at *Czech Radio* which produced a review in their broadcasting and on their web pages. The last critical piece of writing was published in *Mladá Fronta Dnes* which is a renowned newspaper read by a great variety of people. The fact that a review of this play was published there definitely indicates that the production stirred the Czech theatrical scene.

The reactions to this play are quite inconsistent. It is a controversial play and thus its production must also have raised quite an amount of stir and questions in the audience and critical reception.

All the reviews recall the fact that the production followed strictly the established line of the theatre's dramaturgy that concentrated on modern and quite controversial texts. The previous season at this theatre introduced several contemporary Czech texts and then in 2000, they focused on modern world theatre. Moreover, all the reviewers praised the decision to stage this play despite their criticism of certain aspects of the production.

The critics also gave credit to the translator who succeeded in transmitting the mood of the play and also appreciated the work of the musicians who improvised on stage and thus accompanied the production and provided it with an emotional background.

The text of the play is quite fragmented and the director of the play was reproached for the inability to hold it together and find a common language for the entire production.<sup>71</sup> Also the reviewer Martin Švejda added that even though the creators tried to loosen up the complicated text, it was not enough and the play probably could not meet with a great response from the spectators.<sup>72</sup>

Another critical piece of writing by Jan Kerbr for *Svět a Divadlo* saw the reception of the audience in a more positive light. He stated that the minority spectator will

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<sup>70</sup>“Kronika,” *Divadelní noviny 10*, no. 1 (2001): 2.

<sup>71</sup>Martin J. Švejda, “Crave, break,” *Divadelní noviny 10*, no. 2 (2001): 6.

<sup>72</sup>Švejda, “Crave, break,” 6.

find his or her way to this production even though a high number of performances of this production cannot be expected.<sup>73</sup> This his opinion was confirmed, moreover, the short period of staging is actually significant for all of Kane's productions produced within the Czech Republic.

The other two reviews from the *Czech Radio* and from *Mladá Fronta Dnes* were actually quite contradictory. Ivana Růžičková<sup>74</sup> for *Czech Radio* claimed the production did not make an authentic impression and rather ridiculed the text in places where violence or sex was presented on stage. Ondřej Černý for *MF Dnes*, actually highlighted the work of the actors and presented the production as an extremely interesting and attractive event for the audience.<sup>75</sup> The only critical comment was addressed concerning the ending of the play which, however, other reviewers found quite fitting for the play.

In view of these less than homogeneous ideas, it can be concluded that the play definitely raised a great deal of reaction and even though it was not staged in the capital city but in a rather smaller town, it attracted significant attention and revived the theatre world at the turn of the century in the Czech Republic.

## 5.2 Czech Première of *Vyčištění* at the Theatre Na zábradlí

Unlike the première of *Crave*, this first production of Kane's play *Cleansed* was announced in the *Divadelní Noviny* magazine.<sup>76</sup> However, it was described as a stage reading of Sarah Kane's play translated as *Vyčištění* and not a regular theatre production. Moreover, it was produced in the experimental premises of "Eliadova knihovna" which used to be a rehearsal studio for the Theatre Na zábradlí.

It is also interesting that some of the actors from the Theatre Na zábradlí refused to take part in the preparation of the production. This clearly shows that Czech culture was not really prepared for such a new kind of expression on stage. The play

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<sup>73</sup>Jan Kerbr, "Sama mezi lidmi," *Svět a divadlo* 12, no. 2 (2001): 164-166.

<sup>74</sup>Ivana Růžičková, "Sarah Kane: Crave," *Český rozhlas*, December 20, 2000, <http://www.rozhlas.cz/kultura/portal/zprava/3104>.

<sup>75</sup>Ondřej Černý, "Drsný a zoufalý výkřik po lásce," *Mladá Fronta Dnes* 12, no. 13 (2001): 18.

<sup>76</sup>"Premiéry 10.-27. ledna," *Divadelní noviny* 10, no. 1 (2001): 3.

originated in Britain and reflected the mood of the recent years and the basic atmosphere there. Nevertheless, it must have been shocking for the actors in the Royal Court Theatre as well when they read Kane's plays for the first time. Irregardless, my point is that if London as a centre of all British culture was ready to produce an author as provoking and original as Sarah Kane, it also must have been ready to accept her way of thinking and expression on stage. However, in the late 1990s, there were not any such provoking authors in the Czech Republic and so it is possible that even the actors, the creative teams and subsequently the audience were not yet prepared to appreciate this kind of theatre immediately. As the editor of the theatre magazine *Svět a Divadlo* Karel Král claims we might be missing something in our genetic code because plays such as *Titus Andronicus* by Shakespeare have never really become domesticated in Czech culture.<sup>77</sup>

This is obviously a slight exaggeration but in a way Czech audiences can be considered somewhat more conservative than in other European countries or at least in comparison with the western world. For example, the German theatre is considered much more daring in staging of various plays. Also they discovered Kane's work much sooner and immediately began to produce it with great success. The first première occurred there only a year after the British one.

However, interestingly enough, only one actress from the ensemble of Theatre Na zábradlí accepted the role of Grace; it was a young artist named Petra Špalková, while the rest of the crew were young guest actors. The director of the play was Pavel Baďura, also a young talent. The assemblage of the creative team clearly reflects that it was also mainly young people who were interested in Kane's work which is quite obvious for the young are always more susceptible to new and controversial impulses from the outer world.

From the reflections of the critics, however, it is clear that the production remained somewhere in between. On the one hand, it was a performance where all the actors held texts in their hands which should remind the spectator that it was only a stage reading. On the other hand, the director staged the play with the necessities of a

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<sup>77</sup>Karel Král, "Tvrdě a jemně," *Svět a divadlo* 12, no. 4 (2001): 87.

“normal stage production”.<sup>78</sup> In the same critical piece of writing, Mikulka suggested this paradox could have been a result of the creators' need to avoid potential responsibility.<sup>79</sup> This was probably the main point of criticism that the production received. The creative team was not certain how to approach Kane's work. They staged an extremely controversial text full of violence and taboos which were not normally depicted on Czech stages but still maintained a distance from it and did not want to fully exploit the creative potential of the play. By staying back from the play, they deprived it of its message.

The critics reprimanded a lack of courage and the distance from the text<sup>80</sup>, which is certainly not wanted in the theatre which Kane tried to convey to her readers and potential spectators. The play is full of violence that should be (according to Kane's stage descriptions) depicted on stage. One of the characters cuts the limbs off of another character in the story, rats are eating it, there is sexual intercourse between a brother and sister on the stage, etc. The creative team must adopt an attitude towards this aspect of Kane's play. Clearly the attitude of maintaining a distance cannot go hand in hand with the text and visual presentation of it, especially if it is produced in the Czech Republic for the first time. Probably no one in the audience could be familiar with the text except the reviewers who therefore criticised their approach. From another point of view, we can see that this restraint and guardedness could be considered part of the Czech cultural and national characteristics.

As a rather experimental project, the performance was not staged for a very long time. The production premiered on 14 January 2001 and the last performance occurred in May of the same year. However, it certainly helped to bring Kane's work to public notice since Theatre Na zábradlí definitely was and still is one of the most interesting and critically acclaimed theatre platforms in the Czech Republic. It is also certain that despite the criticism from reviewers, the decision to accept the challenge and stage such a controversial play was undoubtedly creditable. It was reviewed in respected theatre magazines such as *Divadelní Noviny* and *Svět a Divadlo*. Moreover, another reviewer and correspondent of theatrical magazines

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<sup>78</sup>Vladimír Mikulka, “Kdo se bojí Sarah Kane,” *Divadelní noviny* 10, no.4 (2001): 7.

<sup>79</sup>Mikulka, “Kdo se bojí Sarah Kane,” 7.

<sup>80</sup>Mikulka, “Kdo se bojí Sarah Kane,” 7.

published his article on this production on *Czech Radio*. His polemic basically agreed with the points already mentioned and he also pointed out that the Czech theatre scene was not prepared to accept such text but underlined the importance of staging it and thus introducing the play to other creative teams that would potentially approach it differently than Theatre Na zábradlí.<sup>81</sup>

Surprisingly, the review of this play found its way even to a regular daily press of that time which was the *Zemské noviny* newspaper. The review is not particularly professional and does not bring the readers closer to the experience<sup>82</sup> but all in all, it is positive that an article like this appeared in a daily newspaper and thus gave the production the opportunity to be presented even to mainstream readers that would normally not make an acquaintance with this kind of production.

### 5.3 Czech Première of *Psychóza ve 4.48* at the National Theatre

Two years passed from the première of Kane's *Cleansed* when the playwright met the attention of the creative team at the National Theatre in Prague. The credit can be again given to Lenka Kolihová Havlíková because she started working there together with the director Michal Dočekal and they both decided to stage Kane's play *4.48 Psychosis* that has not been produced before on the Czech theatre scene. The play, however, was not staged on the main stage but on the alternative scene called Kolowrat that was used for staging more intimate productions that were based on extremely intense and focused way of acting.<sup>83</sup>

It is quite logical that the play was staged on other premises than the main hall because it is truly an extremely intimate and lyrical confession which would not be suitable for the big and historical stage. Moreover, it was not aimed at the typical

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<sup>81</sup>Martin Švejda, "Vyčištěno," *Český rozhlas*, January 22, 2001, <http://www.rozhlas.cz/kultura/portal/zprava/vycisteno--4281>.

<sup>82</sup>Eva Jeníková, "Výkřik Sarah Kaneové budí na Zábradlí dojetí i soucit," *Zemské Noviny 11*, no. 15 (2001): 13.

<sup>83</sup>National Theatre in Prague official website, accessed March 2, 2012, <http://www.narodni-divadlo.cz/Default.aspx?jz=cz&dk=text.aspx&it=41&sb=0>.

mainstream audience and therefore the alternative space was the most suitable and convenient.

As concerns the critical approach, the production *Psychóza ve 4.48* premiered on 16 March 2003, and was certainly the most reviewed and most talked about. As has been already mentioned, it is not such a surprise because it was produced at the most famous and generally known Czech theatre. Also there is another reason that captured the attention of the public and media. This obviously is the story behind the play itself. The fact that the author wrote a play describing the state of mind drowning in deep depression that leads to a suicide and then the playwright herself committed suicide is particularly disturbing. It is shocking and attractive for the media and the general public as such. It is something that all the people talk about and are attracted to. For these two reasons, it is clear that the last play written by Kane received the most attention and helped to promote other works by Kane in the Czech Republic.

The variety of media where a review of her play (or at least some kind of commentary on it) appeared, is truly extensive. The theatre magazines *Divadelní Noviny* or *Svět a Divadlo* obviously devoted quite a great deal of space to review the play. However, other media that are read by the general public and not only by theatre enthusiasts, such as *Mladá Fronta Dnes*, *Lidové Noviny*, *Právo* and even *Hospodářské Noviny* included a review of the production in their culture section which is usually not particularly long (one or two pages). Also there was an interview with one of the actresses Tatjana Medvecká in the magazine *Reflex*.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, I found an article about this production in a magazine or rather monthly revue by students of Charles University in Prague called *Babylon*. This succinctly shows how the theme interested students and young people. The review resembles a deep psychological and philosophical study of the play, it presents it grippingly and thoroughly and actually contains only limited comments on the actual performance at Divadlo Kolowrat. It seems the reviewer instead wanted to invite the readers to read the play and introduce it to the young audience. The main point concerning the

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<sup>84</sup>Tatjana Medvecká, "Psychóza ve 4.48," *Reflex* 14, no. 3 (2003): 56.

production was basically the same as in other literary magazines and this will be dealt with further in this section.

First of all, it is important to at least briefly describe how the play was approached. Since there are no *dramatis personae* before the actual text of the play, the creators decided to follow the pattern set by the Royal Court Theatre and invited 2 actresses and one actor. The team also used quite a specific setting evoking a doctor's office, a room in a hospital and so on. This was however not a particularly typical approach. Since the play is so open and based on the text itself, the concretization can be undesirable.<sup>85</sup> The theatrical world was quite captured by a production from the Netherlands directed by Olivier Provily where there was only one actress standing almost still on the stage with no decoration or any other elements.<sup>86</sup> This performance focused on the literary and poetical aspects of the play and thus gave the dramatic language the opportunity to sound through the theatre hall.

However, as Milan Lukeš wisely points out in his essay for *Svět a Divadlo*, the Czech audience was believed not to be able to appreciate the minimalism of the text and so had to be supported by theatrical means such as concrete stage design and the division of roles. Also the fact that the main character was portrayed by a young actress Jana Janěková gave the audience a feeling that it was Kane herself and thus moved it closer to a typical play that was much more accessible for a normal Czech spectator.

On the other hand, this play was announced as an experiment so it is unfortunate that the creators somehow presented the play in an easily accessible way and thus actually deprived it of the adjective "experimental". Lukeš claims that the power of this play is in its minimalism which, however, was not present in the case of *Divadlo Kolowrat's* production<sup>87</sup>. The review by Marie Zdeňková in *Divadelní Noviny* also reproached the excessively realistic approach and explained the fact that the play is not "clinical" but "metaphorical".<sup>88</sup> Similar ideas were also expressed in another rather literary media – *Czech Radio*. Apart from other things, it studied the

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<sup>85</sup>Milan Lukeš, "Dvě dcery Augusta Strindberga," *Svět a divadlo* 14, no. 4 (2003): 41-53.

<sup>86</sup>Hana Bobková, "O touze, jazyku a smrti," *Svět a divadlo* 17, no. 2 (2006): 90-99.

<sup>87</sup>Lukeš, "Dvě dcery Augusta Strindberga," 41-53.

<sup>88</sup>Marie Zdeňková, "Rozsudek: 4.48-6.00," *Divadelní noviny* 12, no. 7 (2003): 4.

abilities of the actors and the stage design that was also viewed as too specific and limiting for the imagination of the spectators.<sup>89</sup> The review in student's *Babylon* adds that due to the adaptation of Kane's play to resemble a normal and regular production with characters, plot and action, the creative team weakened the power of the text.<sup>90</sup> Milan Lukeš, writing for *Svět a Divadlo*, was actually more negative towards this production. He generalized the problem and put in opposition to the British theatre which is governed by verbal action while the Czech is governed by physical action.<sup>91</sup> The Czech audience is used to it and expects it when they come to the theatre and this production offered them this experience and was consequently able to satisfy their feelings even though it moved the play somewhere far away from the text itself<sup>92</sup>. The word minimalism best describes what the reviewer saw in the text but lacked in the production.

Another shortcoming of this type of presentation is exchanging the author with the character or rather the voice in the play. I have already studied this in my bachelor thesis and as shown in the critique, the National Theatre was most probably one of the theatres that followed this line and was not able to deflect the sensational and journalistic view of Kane's piece of writing. The actors were also subjects of the critique or rather the way of acting that, according to Lukeš, missed the authenticity that was praised by Kane and even performed by her when she took the role of C in *Crave*.<sup>93</sup>

Overall, this critique quite sharply commented on other aspects but we should not neglect to mention that this review was actually aimed at theatre experts. Nevertheless, additional media brought similar ideas even though they accepted the play with more enthusiasm.

The first articles appeared in *Mladá Fronta Dnes* and *Lidové Noviny* on the day of the première and thus did not really review the production yet but basically just explained the play and invited the audience to come and also introduced some of the

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<sup>89</sup>Bronislav Pražan, "Scénické evokace osamělosti, úzkosti a sebezáhuby," *Týdeník Rozhlas* 13, no. 17 (2003): 4.

<sup>90</sup>Jiří Erml, "Jak uhlídat dítě negace," *Babylon* 12, no. 8 (2003): 6.

<sup>91</sup>Lukeš, "Dvě dcery Augusta Strindberga," 49.

<sup>92</sup>Lukeš, "Dvě dcery Augusta Strindberga," 48.

<sup>93</sup>Lukeš, "Dvě dcery Augusta Strindberga," 49.

ideas of the creators.<sup>94</sup> The dramatic adviser Lenka Koliňová Havlíková described Kane in *MF Dnes* as one of the greatest poets of her generation<sup>95</sup> which again in the entire context raised a question as to why this quality was not further developed in the production as such.

The article in *Lidové Noviny* pointed out how hard it was to see the play staged after reading it because we all have specific images and concepts in our mind which can or cannot be fulfilled in the production.<sup>96</sup> This is obviously a general idea but with this kind of play, which rather resembles a lyrical poem full of metaphors, the notion is even more topical.

After the première, *MF Dnes* and *Lidové Noviny* published their reviews about it written by reviewers that are also correspondents for theatre magazines. This is logically reflected in their review, with both of them highlighting the importance of staging such a play but at the same time criticizing the interpretation and distance from the text.<sup>97</sup> Again in the review from *Právo*, Radmila Hrdinová had similar critical comments but this time the editors decided to incorporate quite an extensive excerpt from the play<sup>98</sup> to demonstrate the style and the language which to them seemed more valuable than the production itself. However, as Jana Paterová in her review wisely pointed out, “what one person finds artificial and fake can seem real and amazing to another person”<sup>99</sup> – which certainly is the case for this particular production.

For example, Ivan Matějka writing for *Hospodářské Noviny* presented the play as a must-see production and only for the thick-skinned.<sup>100</sup> As was already stated above, this kind of opinion was not shared by other critics, nevertheless, the play undeniably received a great deal of attention. It was nominated for the Alfréd Radok

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<sup>94</sup>Kateřina Kolářová, “Psychóza ve 4.48 vypovídá o mučivé duševní trýzni,” *Mladá fronta Dnes* 14, no. 55 (2003): C/7.

<sup>95</sup>Kolářová, “Psychóza ve 4.48 vypovídá o mučivé duševní trýzni,” C/7.

<sup>96</sup>Jana Paterová, “Zpráva o depresi a jejích důsledcích,” *Lidové noviny* 16, no. 71 (2003): 10.

<sup>97</sup>Vladimír Hulec, “Národní divadlo zatím svou ‘šťastnou hodinu’ hledá,” *Mladá fronta Dnes* 14, no. 71 (2003): C/9.

<sup>98</sup>Radmila Hrdinová, “Sarah Kane zbavená zoufalých hlubin” *Právo* 13, no. 60 (2003): 14.

<sup>99</sup>Paterová, “Zpráva o depresi a jejích důsledcích,” 10.

<sup>100</sup>Ivan Matějka, “Hra Sarah Kaneové nabízí ‘divadlo přímé zkušenosti’,” *Hospodářské noviny* 47, no. 48 (2003): 9.

Awards in 2003 in the category of Best Play (the play that finally won was a play by another young playwright Martin McDonagh – *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*). The nomination only reflected what most of the critics expressed in their reviews. It is an excellent play but the National Theatre did not produce a very good production of it. This is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that it was not nominated for the Best Production.

Certainly, there were numerous spectators that were captured by the production and the playwright found her way into the general knowledge of people interested in culture. The production must have been a genuine success since only a few months later, the National Theatre decided to stage another Kane's play.

#### **5.4 Czech Première of *Faidra / Z lásky* at the National Theatre**

Only several months after the première of *Psychóza ve 4.48* at the National Theatre, the institution hosted a production of another Kane play. It was *Phaedra's Love*, translated into Czech as *Faidra / Z lásky*. It was not produced as a regular production but was a part of a project called Projekt Bouda which presented three contemporary plays over three weeks on a special stage designed for this particular occasion. This project ended the season in June 2003 and raised a lot of mixed feelings. The production was played as the second of the three and did not actually meet with positive critical response. An article in *Divadelní Noviny* claims the production was too hysterical and that the great play would deserve much more understated acting so that the quite bawdy language would sound more “cool”.<sup>101</sup> The excessive tenseness of the theatre expression was also reproached in another review<sup>102</sup> this time from *Lidové Noviny*. The director did not make use of any stylization of motion but chose to present all the ticklish passages with false pretending.<sup>103</sup> This is not a very plausible way of presenting Kane's work as we have already seen and will see throughout reviews of the other presentations of her plays

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<sup>101</sup> Jan Kerbr, “Ohyzdnost a její zdělnost,” *Divadelní noviny* 12, no. 14 (2003): 5.

<sup>102</sup> Jana Paterová, “Moderních dramatiků se nikdo bát nemusí,” *Lidové noviny* 16, no. 153 (2003): 25.

<sup>103</sup> Paterová, “Moderních dramatiků se nikdo bát nemusí,” 25.

in the Czech context. The review also pointed out that the director Petr Tyc probably relied on the fact that the play itself would shock the audience and thus did not imply any metaphorical level to the production. This might have contributed to the fact that the main and particularly important message of the play became lost.<sup>104</sup>

I also found two articles in *Večerník Praha* and hoped to find there more relevant information but the articles proved to be rather yellow journalism and so only mentioned the fact that Saša Rašilov became ill and had to be replaced in the role of Hippolytus by Marek Igonda. Two days later, the issue included an interview with Eva Salzmannová who portrayed the leading female role. However, the interview was really quite sensationalist focused which even made the actress confess that all the journalists asked her about violence and portrayal of sex on stage and no one asked whether she thought Kane was a great writer and poet.<sup>105</sup> This again is quite significant for the Czech media and it is related to the fact that a shocking and outrageous piece of information sells well.

Overall, the Projekt Bouda project was quite successful but the two other productions – adaptation of Heiner Müller *Hamletmaschine* and Werner Schwab's *Faust* – won much more critical acclaim than the production of Kane's play staged by Petr Tyc.

From the list of all performances of Kane's work, it is clear that this is the only production of the whole text of this her play in the Czech Republic. Two other theatres were inspired by her text but did not produce it but rather took it as an inspiration for a different outlook on the ancient theme. These two productions will be studied further in the chapter.

## 5.5 *Crave at Pdivadlo in Prague*

Right after these three quite large productions, director Jan Nebeský immersed himself in work on the first of Kane's play to have been produced in the Czech

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<sup>104</sup>Paterová, “Moderních dramatiků se nikdo bát nemusí,” 25.

<sup>105</sup>Eva Salzmannová, “Salzmannová se nebojí provokovat: O moderní Faidře od Sarah Kane, kde se vše důležité, včetně sexuálních scén, neodehrává za kulisami, ale přímo na jevišti,” *Večerník Praha* 13, no. 139 (2003): 17.

Republic – *Crave*. For the first time, we have an example of a professional director and lecturer working with his students of acting, actually not yet professional actors. Jan Nebeský chose four students from Vyšší odborná škola herecká which is an institution preparing young talented students for their future career of actors. The director asked Jaroslav Haidler for his translation which the translator obviously agreed to. However, he did not revise it for this purpose or change anything, he just let the students work on the text he prepared several years earlier.

I managed to get into contact with one of them named Tomáš Kout who provided me with his own outlook on the production and with some additional information as well.

*Crave* was a graduation production and became a project of the heart for all the people involved in it. There were two premières on 19 and 20 December in 2003 at Pídivadlo which is the home theatre of the school. There were consequently several performances until the end of the season when the production had its closing night. However, it was so successful and the team had such support from the audience and fans that they reopened the production and continued playing it for two entire seasons at A studio Rubín in Prague. The final performance then occurred in spring 2006.

From these particular pieces of information, it can be deduced that the production was actually extremely popular with the audience and introduced Kane's play to many spectators. The most astonishing is the enthusiasm behind it; the creators deeply plunged into the play as well as the audience.

Tomáš Kout highlighted that the play was truly amusing to watch as a whole because on stage there were four separate booths with four characters inside them doing their own things. The usual depiction of the stage design is that the four characters sit on four chairs but this director's idea of four booths with only an audience-facing-side transparent, was extremely provocative. It was also demanding on the actors since they could not see what the others were doing. It was mainly, however, a symbol of complete isolation from others. There were four little worlds of four characters that the audience could gain insight into.

According to Vlasta Smoláková, a reviewer for *Svět a Divadlo*, the symbolism of the stage design had one more level and it was the actor's dressing room. The director was thus able to draw emotions and personal experience right from the four actors and from their own personal lives which definitely contributed to the expressiveness of the production.<sup>106</sup>

Tomáš Kout even noted that once they played the production to Danish students who obviously could not understand a word but still were truly captured by it and did not hide their enthusiasm after the production. This shows that the theatre language that Nebeský chose was universal and this is extremely fitting for the work of Sarah Kane because the themes she expressed are truly general and universal and every culture understands them.

From my own personal experience, I can confirm this point because I have seen a production of *Crave* at the Sarah Kane Festival in Lincoln, England. There were quite a number of non-native speakers of English but the audience undeniably seemed to enjoy the production. It was produced by the Actors Touring Company and the creative team decided to keep the focus on the language itself and therefore the stage design was minimal with only the four actors standing still on the stage for the entire duration of the play. This again shows the importance of word and language on the stage in British theatre. Jan Nebeský and his students, although with a more complex stage design, were able to draw closer to the British style and as it was demonstrated above, it was also highly appreciated by both critics and the general audience.

In the years following this performance there were various student presentations but, in my opinion, none of them received as much attention and such positive critical reactions as this one.

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<sup>106</sup>Vlasta Smoláková, "Puzení v Pídivadle," *Svět a Divadlo* 15, no. 3 (2004): 157-160.

## 5.6 Czech Première of *Blasted* / *Zásah* at Multiprostor Louny

*Blasted* is a play which received major attention from the media and the general public in Britain; a number of critics even say it changed the entire outlook on the theatre of the end of the 20th century. Edward Bond in an article called “Sarah Kane and Theatre” expressed his opinion that her play *Blasted* “changed the reality because it changed the means we have of understanding ourselves.”<sup>107</sup>

It is thus quite strange that this début play by Kane received the least attention in the context of the Czech Republic. It had only two theatre productions – one of them in Louny and the other at A studio Rubín in Prague – but it really was and still is quite a neglected play in comparison with the four other plays written by Kane. The première occurred in a quite unusual place, on premises called Multiprostor in Louny which is a town in the north-west of the Czech Republic.

As far as the information available goes, the theatre no longer exists because the ten year lease agreement expired and the contract was not renewed. The premises used to be the boiler room of the municipality in Louny and it was well-known for its industrial look that added a specific atmosphere to the productions organized there. The main figures connected with this theatre were Miroslav and Tomáš Bambušek who together with other artists organized several successful theatre seasons there. Two successive ones were entirely inspired by Balkan culture and tradition. The very last project of this east-focused concept was a production of Kane's *Blasted*. A short article<sup>108</sup> inviting readers to attend the première on 27 March in 2004 appeared in *Lidové Noviny*. It did not say much about the adaptation but rather introduced the author and the play and spoke about the stir it made in London right after its première in 1995.

Miroslav Bambušek in an interview for *Divadelní Noviny* which was copied in a local newspaper called *Lounský Press*, spoke about the project of the Balkan season that was in preparation even as early as September 2002<sup>109</sup>, the production, however,

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<sup>107</sup>Edward Bond, afterword to *‘Love me or kill me’ Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes*, by Graham Saunders (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

<sup>108</sup>“Britská hra v lounském Multiprostoru,” *Lidové noviny* 18, no. 48 (2005): 28.

<sup>109</sup>Jana Bohutínská, “Balkánská sezóna v Multiprostoru,” *Lounský press* 7, no. 39 (2002): 6.

occurred in the following season in 2004. The connection between Kane's text and Balkan is obvious since *Blasted* is based on Kane's views about the war in Yugoslavia.

The text was translated by Jaroslav Achab Haidler who up until then translated all the other plays with the exception of *Psychóza ve 4.48* which was translated by Jitka Sloupová. However, this Haidler's translation was never made official, the agency does not know about it and the text was only used by the creative team around Bambušek. As was stated at the beginning of this study, Haidler himself was unsure how his text was used since it is likely that the creative team only used several aspects of it considering the fact that the play was so different from Kane's original concept.

The *Divadelní Noviny* magazine reviewed this production in May and showed that this project was quite different from what we are used to seeing on theatre stages in the Czech Republic at least at that time<sup>110</sup>. In view of this fact, I am particularly sorry that I did not succeed in getting in contact with the theatre but since the institution no longer exists, it is no surprise.

The review, however, offered great insight into the production and at the same time presented particular examples of the style of direction and stage ideas. First of all, it commented on the setting in the former boiler room which fitted the rawness of Kane's plays.<sup>111</sup>

The director Bambušek did not work with the text with reverence, he added two characters of policemen and one waiter and also left out the fifth and sixth scenes completely. He thus stripped the play of its potentially positive ending and thus created the frame of the play and concentrated on depicting the power of one person over another one connected with both violence and sex.<sup>112</sup> The director even decided to put the play into an Asian-style setting and moreover, assigned the role of Cate to a male actor.

The biggest contribution should be probably seen in the naturalistic portrayal of violence because, as Jana Bohutínská states in her review: "The rape happens with

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<sup>110</sup>Jana Bohutínská, "Láska je noční můra," *Divadelní noviny* 13, no. 10 (2004): 4

<sup>111</sup>Bohutínská, "Láska je noční můra," 4.

<sup>112</sup>Bohutínská, "Láska je noční můra," 4.

dropped trousers and naked bottoms.”<sup>113</sup> Basically, the creators wanted to really portray the text as it is written, not to omit any brutal scenes just because the audience is not prepared to see them. This courage should be appreciated since this was really the only production that tried to fully capture the aspect of cruelty on stage as written by Kane. The review also highlights the fact that “the actors are on stage able to get beyond of what we feel as possible”<sup>114</sup> and this might be another high point of the production that makes this project an exceptional one. Still, it has to be remembered that this unusual project was created on a quite small scene far from the centre of all the cultural events in Prague. A project of this stature could have actually brought a great number of theatre lovers to Louny to see this unique production.

### **5.7 *Blasted / Zpustošení* at A studio Rubín**

Probably one of the most outrageous productions of Kane's text was prepared in A Studio Rubín. Within the entire context of the Czech productions of Kane's work, there were only two productions of *Blasted* and both were extremely unusual and daring and “outside the box”. This one was actually completely different from the text and from the presentation at Multiprostor in Louny. It even seems that the director and his team did not leave much of Kane's ideas and took only several aspects of the play and some text and created a completely new production that was only based on Kane's play *Blasted*. The title of a critical article in *Divadelní Noviny* said a great deal about the entire production; it is called “Pohádka jménem *Blasted*”<sup>115</sup>. Further in the article, the reader was informed that the production actually resembled a fairy-tale. The director decided to completely redo the play and through the high level of stylization probably succeeded in presenting an extremely outrageous and unusual interpretation of the text. But as Kateřina Rathouská pointed out in the article, the director tried to lighten it and make it more approachable for

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<sup>113</sup>Bohutínská, “Láska je noční můra,” 4.

<sup>114</sup>Bohutínská, “Láska je noční můra,” 4.

<sup>115</sup>Kateřina Rathouská, “Pohádka jménem *Blasted*,” *Divadelní noviny* 13, no. 13 (2004): 5.

the audience.<sup>116</sup> He staged a compact production that followed the same line from the beginning to the end but his interpretation was too far from Kane's narration.<sup>117</sup>

At the beginning of the production, there was no hostile and expensive hotel room with a man and a woman who had an indefinite relationship but there was a cosy-looking house with a narrator, an older version of the character of Cate. When the characters appeared they aroused a reaction of smiles because they were dressed as children.<sup>118</sup> Also the character of Ian was approached from a completely different point of view and was portrayed as more of a harmless scribbler than a cruel man capable of physical violence and rape.<sup>119</sup> The character of Cate was divided into three female characters played by actresses of different ages so it would represent various stages of Cate's life.

For all the reasons enumerated above, it is obvious that the director took a different path and approached the text from a completely different perspective. There is no reason why the director Tomáš Svoboda should not have the right to stage the play as he wanted but as the review said the production did not succeed in transmitting the “shivers” that Kane's play provided while reading it.<sup>120</sup>

As is quite usual in the world of experimental drama, what someone criticizes, others praise. I found another review of this production on a theatre website called *divadlo.cz* written by Alice Kliková. According to her, the production was a truly original exploit because the director was able to find his way to the centre of the play and turn it completely inside out.<sup>121</sup> The author of the review even stated that the traditional portrayal of the play evokes either ignorance in the audience or offends them which has a similar effect.<sup>122</sup> This Svoboda's innovative presentation should have thus been appreciated. Through the stylization, the characters revealed their weaknesses and fears. The stylization also described the typical roles assigned to male and female role in society – the woman is pretty but dull, while the man is

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<sup>116</sup>Rathouská, “Pohádka jménem Blasted,” 5.

<sup>117</sup>Rathouská, “Pohádka jménem Blasted,” 5.

<sup>118</sup>Rathouská, “Pohádka jménem Blasted,” 5.

<sup>119</sup>Rathouská, “Pohádka jménem Blasted,” 5.

<sup>120</sup>Rathouská, “Pohádka jménem Blasted,” 5.

<sup>121</sup>Alice Kliková, “Recenze na hru Srah kaneové Blasted,” *divadlo.cz*, April 28, 2005, <http://host.divadlo.cz/art/clanek.asp?id=8047>.

<sup>122</sup>Kliková, “Recenze na hru Srah kaneové Blasted,” *divadlo.cz*.

macho but frustrated deep inside and their fates also correspond with the prototypical point of view. The woman weakens and basically dies of hunger and exhaustion while the man strengthens his power, rapes, expands and finally dies due to his aggression towards himself.<sup>123</sup>

Obviously, both these reviews were quite different and presented the production in a completely different light. However, since it was probably the most courageous interpretation, its importance should not be forgotten.

To conclude this sub-chapter, a few interesting pieces of information should be added. The production was played at A Studio Rubín for a season and then was reopened on 12 March 2005 in other premises – at Rokoko theatre. It also defies other production because the text was translated by a different translator even though the first translation of *Blasted* already existed. The theatre chose Ondřej Formánek to translate the play anew.

What is also interesting is the fact that the one role of Cate was played by Eva Salzmánová who previously appeared in the role of Faidra in the production at the National Theatre.

## **5.8 *Faidra* by Depresivní děti touží po penězích Theatre**

Depresivní děti touží po penězích is a theatre organization which organizes numerous cultural projects especially theatre ones. They produce extremely innovative and progressive projects of contemporary art which blur the traditional borders between theatre, film, literature and art as such. On 11 September 2006 they produced a project called *Faidra* under the direction of Jakub Čermák who has been at the centre of the organization since 2004 when he founded it with his friend Martin Faláš.

Čermák was also author of the entire concept called *Noci v mauzoleu* and its director as well. The aim of this project was to bring back to life a National Memorial on Vítkov Hill in Prague. The artist therefore focused on the genius loci of this place

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<sup>123</sup>Klíková, “Recenze na hru Srah kaneové *Blasted*,” *divadlo.cz*.

and in various halls and rooms staged a performance called *Faidra*. It related the story of the main character as portrayed by several writers throughout history. This happening thus used excerpts from plays and ideas presented by an ancient Rome poet Publius Ovidius Naso, a 20th century Swedish writer Per Olov Enquist and finally the very contemporary view of Sarah Kane.

*Faidra* was not the only project, the concept was comprised of various other cultural events. It originally started in May and June with three other staged readings but was so successful that the creative team continued in the concept even in September and so had the chance to add a production about Phaedra.

I tried to make contact with the creators of this project from the theatre but I did not succeed so I cannot claim how much of Kane's work was introduced in the project but it is undoubtedly a good thing that when thinking of Phaedra as a mythological character, the authors of the project did not consider only the most renowned adaptations of Euripides, Racine and Seneca but also worked with a less known adaptation such as Sarah Kane's twist on the ancient story.

For this performance, it is also significant that the theatre was rather alternative, Jakub Čermák in an interview for *Respekt* magazine stated that they never wanted to have a permanent stage, they preferred staying “underground” and performing their productions in particular places that inspired them.<sup>124</sup> Again, there is an example of an alternative theatre group that worked with Kane's text and brought it to greater public recognition.

## **5.9 A Production Called *JOHANKA 008* by Evrybáby**

Another of the rather small projects that did not gain much attention from the media was a project by a theatre group from Plzeň called Evrybáby. It is a creative group of mostly girls and young women who bring their personal outlook on various themes studied in their productions. They usually use dramatic texts only as an inspiration and focus on their own adaptations of the themes explored. The

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<sup>124</sup> “S J. Čermákem a M. Falářem o podzemním divadle,” *Reflex*, May 19, 2009, <http://respekt.ihned.cz/rozhovory/c1-37144570-s-j-cermakem-a-m-falarem-o-podzemnim-divadle>.

production called *JOHANKA 008* is no exception. This production was premièred on 22 March 2008 and its subtitle explains it is an authorial production that is, beside other things, based on Sarah Kane's texts.<sup>125</sup> Also the French writer Jean Anouilh is mentioned as an inspiration. The production looked for a definition of who is a real heroine and studied the story of Joan of Arc. The project was directed by Roman Černík with the contribution of the entire female ensemble of the theatre. It was last performed at the beginning of 2010 in Prague in a club called “Underground” that focuses on presenting alternative cultural events.

### **5.10 *Psychóza ve 4.48* by the Theatre of Prague Conservatory**

The director David Czesany was the first Czech director to work with a text written by Sarah Kane. He created a production of *Crave* at Činoherní studio in Ústí na Labem and was so interested in Kane's work that he decided to stage another of her plays *4.48 Psychosis*. He worked with students of Prague Conservatory and the production in Jitka Sloupová's translation was staged at the Jára Cimrman Žižkovské Theatre in Prague. Its premièredates back to 14 December 2009 and brought a completely new light on the play since there were 8 actors on the stage.

The production, however, did not receive much critical reaction in the media. This could be attributed to the fact that it was actually a student theatre and irregardless if the production was good or not, it is quite logical that it does not receive as much notice as other productions by a well-known professional theatre. In my opinion, this is quite a shame because I could not find much information about it. Nevertheless, I came across a video of some acted sequences of the production and also an interview with the actors.<sup>126</sup> This was quite helpful and interesting. It is only disappointing that it is no longer performed so I could not go and see the entire production. From the sequences, I could see that the number of eight performers (as opposed to the “usual” staging of three actors) suited the mood of the play quite

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<sup>125</sup> Evrybáby theatre group official website, accessed December 12, 2011, <http://www.johancentrum.cz/cz/evrybaby/>.

<sup>126</sup> “Psychóza ve 4.48, Divadlo konzervatoře,” video at *Alternativa TV*. 8:07, posted April 21, 2010, <http://www.alternativatv.cz/encyklopedie/play/11629/>.

well. It brought a completely new outlook and it felt more urgent and more alive than the quite stereotypical presentation. Kane herself did not assigned any strict number of the characters in her last play; some presentations changed the pattern such as for example the already mentioned one from the Netherlands where there was only one actress standing on the stage and performing for an hour and a half. Also the fact that all the actors were around the same age contributed to the connectedness of the performance and made it more personal. Moreover, the short pieces that I saw were full of inventive metaphors and staging ideas and the actors themselves agreed they really enjoyed playing the production and loved working on it.<sup>127</sup>

This production was performed quite often and it even found its way to the Mezi ploty theatre and music festival held at Bohnice mental hospital near Prague. It is no longer performed at present.

### **5.11 Staged Reading of *Psychóza ve 4.48* by Oldstars**

The following year was opened by a production of *Psychóza ve 4.48* and again it was a rather alternative theatre project. The dramatic adviser for this performance was Adam Rut from a theatre group called Oldstars from Prague. This theatre group comprises professional actors as well as amateur theatre lovers and has members across all age groups. They perform in a basement theatre hall called HarOLD in Prague.

As the director announced on their website, they decided to organize nights of staged reading and Kane's *4. 48 Psychosis* was the first play to be performed. He added they wanted to stage plays that were not easily staged but still very interesting.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> “Psychóza ve 4.48, Divadlo konzervatoře” Alternativa TV video. 8:07, posted April 21, 2010, <http://www.alternativatv.cz/encyklopedie/play/11629/>.

<sup>128</sup> Oldstars theatre group official website, accessed December 4, 2011, <http://www.oldstars.cz/>.

The first performance was at the same time the last and the audience could see it on 31 January 2010. Since it was only a one-night event at a not well-known theatre there are not any reviews written about it.

### **5.12 *Očištění / Depurados* by Institut del Teatre and DAMU**

In spring 2010, a quite unusual project was created. Veronika Riedlbauchová, a director from DAMU Academy, invited several artists from the Institut del Teatre from Barcelona and together they created a project called *Očištění / Depurados* that was premiered on 28 April. As shown in the title, the production was bilingual but probably the most important language for the creators was the language of the human body. The production was very much based on contemporary dance techniques and dance expression on theatre stage. The Institut del Teatre focuses primarily on theatre dance and the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theatre at DAMU also studies various alternative approaches to theatre expression and thus the cooperation of these two institutions on this kind of project was not accidental. Moreover, the Damúza studio which is a promoting and production platform from Prague also took part in the promotion of this dance production.

The synthesis of the Czech approach to Sarah Kane's play and the stage dance was confronted with the Spanish view on these two aspects. There were plenty of visual and dance metaphors that enabled the audience to understand the play on a specific level. The dance was accompanied by speeches and dialogues in both Czech and Spanish which could provide a completely new outlook on the play when one imagines that the people spoke different languages but were still able to understand each other. The main theme of the play is universal and thus it is not important whether it is explained in Czech or Spanish or even by a dance sequence or some visual image or mise-en-scene.

Unfortunately, I did not manage to see the production performed but I have seen a four-minute video sequence that provided me with a brief overview of the style of work that the theatre groups together produced. I must admit I was captured by it. Since I am familiar with the text, I could quite easily match the visual adaptation

with the particular lines in the text. However, I found a review of a critic named Roman Sikora who probably had not read it and found it rather confusing.

As the main problem, he highlighted the fact that the spectator could not understand what was going on unless he or she wanted to perceive the performance only as some abstract presentation of certain thoughts that they themselves had to make an effort to somehow understand.<sup>129</sup> He also reproached the authors for being scared by the cruelty of the language, and softening the text itself and basically blurring it by the Spanish and by incomprehensible dance symbols and signs.<sup>130</sup>

Another review was published online at the website of *Divadelní Noviny* and it approached the performance from a completely different point of view, actually the complete opposite one. It highlighted the fact that the play was divided into twenty images that corresponded with the scenes and thus the spectator could create a mosaic from the little stories and rituals and thus understand the major feelings that the play wanted to convey to him or her.<sup>131</sup> It also praised the unity of all the means of expression – dance, symbols, languages, etc. According to Dana Jará, the audience did not need to understand the language at all, the language spoken by the production was universal.<sup>132</sup>

The contrast between the two approaches of the two theatre reviewers is more than obvious. We can thus easily divine that the reaction of the audience could have corresponded with the contradictory reviews. As in many other plays especially contemporary ones, the audience forms two parts, one that hates it and one that praises it. This is particularly true for Kane's work and there again we have a specific example.

However, as with most of the other reviews on different Kane plays, the reviewers presented the play itself in a very positive light and highlighted the qualities of the text.

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<sup>129</sup>Roman Sikora, "Očištění v síti nedorozumění," review on *Český rozhlas*, 4:24, [www.rozhlas.cz/mozaika/recenze/zprava/731430](http://www.rozhlas.cz/mozaika/recenze/zprava/731430).

<sup>130</sup>Roman Sikora, "Očištění v síti nedorozumění," review on *Český rozhlas*, 4:24, [www.rozhlas.cz/mozaika/recenze/zprava/731430](http://www.rozhlas.cz/mozaika/recenze/zprava/731430).

<sup>131</sup>Dana Jará, "Neopakovatelné návraty," *iDivadelní noviny* 9 (2010), [www.divadelni-noviny.cz/neopakovatelnne-navraty/](http://www.divadelni-noviny.cz/neopakovatelnne-navraty/).

<sup>132</sup>Dana Jará, "Neopakovatelné návraty," *iDivadelní noviny* 9 (2010), [www.divadelni-noviny.cz/neopakovatelnne-navraty/](http://www.divadelni-noviny.cz/neopakovatelnne-navraty/).

This Czecho-Espagnol production was not played for a long time. Due to the fact that some of the actors and artists were from Barcelona, it had only around five performances in 2010 and then it had several performances in March 2011. However, the uniqueness of this project should be pointed out because before and even after this production, the Czech theatre scene had not experienced a project that would try to capture Kane's work as a dance theatre and at the same time offer a foreign perspective on the theme.

### **5.13 *Psychóza ve 4:48* at HaDivadlo in Brno**

In May 2010 Sarah Kane was also presented to spectators in Brno. The première of *Psychóza ve 4:48* occurred at HaDivadlo and since it is still performed, I had the chance to see it and form my own opinion about it.

First of all, it is important to mention the director of the play who was actually not from HaDivadlo but from Činoherní Studio in Ústí nad Labem, where he works as a director and artistic director. It should be recalled that this theatre was actually the first that introduced Kane to Czech stages but by 2010 her texts were quite well-known in the context of the Czech theatrical scene. Nevertheless, the role of Činoherní Studio in presenting Kane to a Czech audience is unquestionable.

Filip Nuckolls decided not to follow the pattern of casting two women and one man, as it was first staged in the Royal Court Theatre and then copied at the stage of Divadlo Kolowrat at the National Theatre in Prague. He assigned three roles as well, but this time all women. This interpretation suggests that all the characters are basically just voices of the one and only central character. The production started a bit unusually with one of the characters singing arias on the staircase and falling off it right before the production in the hallway to the theatre as such. This scene led the audience to the hall and there the production full of bawling tongue-lash and quiet minimalist confession began. Nuckolls' interpretation stressed the grotesque and clownish feel of some of the passages of the text and the theme of a smiling but utterly sad clown pervaded the whole play; the production even portrayed the equestrian dressage on the stage. The entire production had elements of crazy and

strict functioning of circus mixed with understated acting which could resemble the two phases of manic depressive disorder. This illness was also explained in the leaflet for this production and it was therefore obvious that the creators based their interpretation on a disease that Kane herself had. With regards to this, it is apparent once again that the presentation played upon the knowledge of Kane's fate and did not try to separate her work from her private life.

In this production, the spectators can see many interesting stage metaphors; what I personally appreciated the most, were probably the voices of the doctors that sounded through the gas masks of the characters. The doctors were then put in a broader historical context, it showed who they represented for the main character. What was actually missing in the production was humour and more space to clearly present Kane's language. Certain utterances were just shouted out and thus fell flat. It even seemed that the director did not know what to do with a certain phrase, he just let it be shouted out. However, in places that were well-portrayed the presentation of Kane's text was mesmerizing and extremely intimate. In my personal opinion, this is the way to present this particular Kane's play. The text itself is shocking and outrageous and therefore the acting should be humble and understated so the message can get through to the audience.

The invitations to this production appeared in various media but mainly periodicals of the Brno region. However, reviews on this work could be read in the usual set of magazines which were *Svět a Divadlo*, *Divadelní Noviny* and even *Mladá Fronta Dnes* and a literary magazine issued in Brno called *Host*.

In *Divadelní noviny*, Marcel Sladkowski highlighted the fact that the director and actors had to somehow deal with the plot of the play and the real story of Kane's life and he admired HaDivadlo's interpretation as well as the cabaret theme that ran through the production.<sup>133</sup>

He also praised the end that formed a cycle by repetition of certain phrases from the beginning and also using a similar circus metaphor.<sup>134</sup> I dare to disagree because I think that the production would need a much calmer ending. In the text, it is

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<sup>133</sup> Marcel Sladkowski, "Vítejte v psychotickém kabaretu," *Divadelní noviny* 19, no. 11 (2010): 13.

<sup>134</sup> Sladkowski, "Vítejte v psychotickém kabaretu," 13.

explained that 4.48 is the time of quietness when the ill person realizes everything and has distance from his or her own illness and suffering.<sup>135</sup> Both the themes of circus or cycle are not suitable, in my opinion, because they evoke an ill state of mind and not the clear distant view on it at the moment of revelation.

The review from *Mladá Fronta Dnes* was even more positive about the presentation than the one from *Divadelní Noviny* and also praised the forceful acting of all three actresses – Simona Peková, Sára Venclovská and Petra Bučková.

The review that appeared in *Host* was quite different because the author admitted that he did not actually see the literary qualities of the play itself. However, he added that the director was able to find a story to narrate and dealt with the text quite well and used an interesting set of theatre signs and symbols.<sup>136</sup>

The review in *Svět a Divadlo* written by Dobroslava Vilhanová also recalled the motif of puppet theatre that pervaded the entire production and worked there very well. It highlighted Kane's theme of power over another person<sup>137</sup> and the power above that plays with every one of us as if it held our fates on strings.

To conclude, it can be stated that according to the critical reviews, this production of the last of Kane's text at HaDivadlo was much better accepted by the critics and probably also by the public than the production at the National Theatre.

#### **5.14 *Vyčištěno* by Divadlo na cucky in Olomouc**

The last of Kane's play that was staged on Czech stages was *Vyčištěno* by Divadlo na cucky (Theatre to Shreds). This is an Olomouc based independent theatre group of professional and amateur actors focused on experimental theatre. One of the dramaturgical lines concentrates on contemporary theatre which is the reason why Kane's *Cleansed* was chosen to be staged there. The direction of the play was assumed by another young and talented artist Anna Petrželková. Her work is highly appreciated by the critical academy; she was even nominated for the Dosky theatre

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<sup>135</sup>Kane, *4.48 Psychosis*, 22.

<sup>136</sup>Josef Dubec, "Smršť endorfinů," *Host* 28, no. 2 (2011): 84.

<sup>137</sup>Dobroslava Vilhanová, "Psychóza v troch," *Svět a divadlo* 21, no. 4 (2010): 68-70.

award in Slovakia for her production of *Nora* in the category of Best Newcomer in Direction and was also nominated for the Alfréd Radok Awards for talent of the year.

*Vyčištěno* is one of the most successful productions of Theatre to Shreds and was premièred on 11 May 2010 at the opening of the 14th Flora Theatre Festival in Olomouc. Even though it was described as a supra regional event, it did not get much attention from the theatrical media. The reviews appeared in the local media and there was also an article in the theatre news server called *Divá báze* and also a review appeared in the student version of *Svět a Divadlo* called *Studentský SAD* which is an online magazine where young reviewers and students of theatre studies write their comments and reviews on various productions. Again the amount of young people associated with this production or with the reception of the production is particularly essential and significant for most of Kane's work.

Towards the beginning of this chapter, *Vyčištěno* by Theatre Na zábradlí was studied and the main point reproached by critics was the distance and undetermined approach to the text itself. In the case of Theatre to Shreds and Anna Petrželková, the approach and the entire adaptation was in contrast praised.

The director was said to highlight the poetical aspect of the text<sup>138</sup> and introduced many theatrical metaphors that worked extremely well in the production. Also another review written by Martina Pavlunová highlighted the director's ability to create innovative theatrical metaphors and dilute the dense depressing atmosphere with images of pure beauty, peace and love.<sup>139</sup> This review also recalled that the director succeeded in the portrayal of the most important aspects of the play which are the hope and love which could have got lost in the images of violence and cruelty. The absence of real violence in the form of blood was praised because it gave the spectators the chance to imagine what hid behind the theatrical metaphors. However, some might have suggested that the creative team did not sufficiently dealt with the portrayal of violence but while watching the metaphorical

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<sup>138</sup>Ondřej Čížek, "A je vyčištěno. Svůdná a nemilosrdná jevištní báseň v podání Divadla na cucky," *olomouc.cz*, June 12, 2010, <http://zpravodajstvi.olomouc.cz/clanky/A-je-Vycisteno-Svudna-a-nemilosrdna-jevistni-basen-v-podani-Divadla-na-cucky-13977>.

<sup>139</sup>Martina Pavlunová, "Krvěprostá jatka," *Rozrazil Online*, May 12, 2010, <http://www.rozrazilonline.cz/clanky/332-Flora-den-prvy-Sarah-Kane-na-cucky>.

presentation of the cruelty, one could really understand the symbolism and see what brutal images lie beneath the visual production. Personally, I think that the production truly captured the main themes and the poetic language of the play and even managed to portray the violence in such a way that the spectators felt the power of the play as written by Kane and had the chance to experience the pure theatre expressions that Petrželková used. I saw this play performed many times and I also noticed some of the reactions of the spectators who seemed deeply captured by the play.

Moreover, it actually proved as a rule that most of the people in the audience are from the age group of 15 to 25 years of age which is even intensified by the fact that the creators are all up to 27 years of age. Also the theme that can be quite shocking and unexpected for Czech theatre scenes brought many new young people to the theatre that would have never wanted to go there if it was not talking about themes that interested them.

## 6. Conclusion

Sarah Kane's work has become well established on the stages of the Czech Republic since 2000 when her first play was produced in Ústí nad Labem. It actually took five years to introduce her work to this country considering the fact that her first play was staged in London as early as 1995. However, since then her plays have been staged at 11 theatres in 14 individual projects. Apart from the productions of the actual Kane plays, there have also been two other productions that were somehow connected with her work or were just based on it.

Throughout the study of reviews and translations it became apparent that there are several features common for most of the productions and works with her plays as such.

One of the most obvious and already mentioned is the fact that Kane's work has always attracted younger people the most. The translators, the actors, and mainly the creative teams working with her oeuvre were all rather young. Younger people are usually drawn to more shocking and daring projects and usually approach texts in quite an innovative way. It is thus understandable why this phenomenon is visible in the broader overview of Kane's works in the Czech Republic. Moreover, it is also important to realize that this kind of theatre attracts rather younger audiences as well. This is a positive aspect since it can arouse passion for theatre in young spectators who can later maintain their interest in culture and theatre in particular.

Concerning the translations, we were able to see that most of them were unofficial versions serving only as a textual base for the creative teams of theatres that then produced its stage projects. The word project is quite fitting here since the productions were rather non-traditional and to some extent could even be considered experimental. This also corresponds with the fact that the plays were always produced on small premises, which suits the needs of the author well, aiming the plays directly at people, pulling them inside the play, shouting emotions at them, which would logically not be possible in a hall with the capacity of 650 seats. The smaller premises with restricted capacity thus go hand in hand with the actual outcome of the production and correspond with the needs of the theatre group. On

the top of that, the productions were usually only staged for a limited period of time and in most cases had only several reruns.

The text of the play, properly speaking its translation to Czech was always highlighted as successful and well-done. Even if some critics did not enjoy the play, they all formulated their positive opinion about the text.

It could also be observed that two of the texts were translated twice and three plays only once. Two translators worked on more than one Kane plays and they all were asked to do the translation by those theatres that wanted to stage the particular play. Later some of the translations were used by other theatres again and it is possible that they will also be used in the future. However, for example in the case of *4. 48 Psychosis*, it can occur that a theatre and its director will have a completely different approach to the play and will want to highlight different points in the play and therefore will need a new translation which would suit their view of the topic better.

Overall, it is apparent that over the course of 12 years, the Czech theatre scene has created a certain interest in Kane's work. The boom was probably right after the first staging of *Crave* because other theatres wanted to present their own view of Kane's plays that were not staged yet; to have the chance to stage a production as a the Czech première is always an amazing opportunity for the theatre.

One of the common features that were criticized in most of the productions was, however, a not very strong and convincing approach to the plays. The critics reproached the timid treatment of the strong themes and motifs. In several cases, the theatres wanted to approach the text daringly and present a shocking theatre production but in the end remained rather traditional. This paradox is, however, also understandable since the Czech theatre scene was, and to some extent still is, rather conservative in comparison with other European theatres. Even the more traditional and less courageous presentations of Kane's plays can thus be considered theatre experiments in the context of the Czech theatre scene.

One of the most interesting features binding all Kane's productions together are the actual people that worked on her plays and introduced it to Czech theatres. It is quite logical that from the beginning the group of people who were interested in Kane's work was rather small. Actually, there were only a few people that promoted her

work and they were obviously connected. Only later when her work became more generally known and accepted, did more Czech theatres start to concentrate on her plays and present them to the Czech audience.

It all began around people such as Lenka Koliňová Havlíková and David Czesany, who were both associated with the Činoherní studio. Michal Dočekal was also connected with them since they met in the theatre A studio Rubín several years before that. Tomáš Bambušek was another important figure, working on Kane's *Blasted* at Multiprostor Louny and then also with David Czesany on his production of *Psychóza ve 4.48* with the Prague Conservatory students. Michal Dočekal also chose Lenka Koliňová Havlíková as his dramatic adviser at the National Theatre because he wanted to focus on Kane's texts and used the previous experience of Koliňová from other staging of her plays. One of the last productions created in Brno was directed by Filip Nuckolls who is also associated with the Činoherní studio in Ústí nad Labem which only demonstrates the theory of connectedness between the creative teams staging Kane in this country. It is obvious that not all the directors and dramatic advisers are from the same groups and are interconnected, nevertheless, quite a high number of them worked together or somehow influenced one another.

To conclude, I would like to express my belief that more theatres will have the urge to capture Sarah Kane's texts in some manner and express their opinions through the plays of this incredible author. A thesis like this one will consequently have the chance to be expanded and further developed.

## 7. Resumé

Hlavním tématem magisterské diplomové práce je zmapovat tvorbu britské dramatičky Sarah Kane na území České republiky. Tato autorka napsala za svůj krátký život pět divadelních her, které se od premiéry první z nich – *Blasted* v roce 1995 – hrají nejen ve Velké Británii, ale po celém světě. Její tvorba byla také přeložena do několika jazyků a tvoří základ repertoáru velkého množství dnešních divadel.

První kapitola diplomové práce sleduje, jak se vůbec práce této autorky dostala do českých divadel. Byla to tehdejší dramaturgyně Činoherního studia v Ústí nad Labem, Lenka Koliňová Havlíková, která objevila text *Crave* ve slovenském časopise *Vlna*, který se zabývá moderní kulturou. Představila jej tedy režiséru Czesanymu a na konci roku 2000 již byla připravena premiéra českého textu uváděného pod originálním názvem.

Další kapitola studuje divadelní tisk z konce devadesátých let, ve kterém hledá první zmínky o této autorce. Přestože se množství publicistů vyjadřuje k Londýnské divadelní scéně od roku 1995, žádný z nich zatím nezmiňuje slavnou premiéru *Blasted* Sarah Kaneové, která vzbudila neobvyklý rozruch a doslova otrásla divadelním světem a zaplavila titulky britských novin. První zmínky se v českém tisku nachází až při příležitosti uvedení první hry, a to *Crave* v Činoherním studiu v Ústí nad Labem.

Následující větší část diplomové práce se zabývá jednotlivými českými překlady děl Sarah Kaneové. Studuje je v pořadí, v jakém byly zhotoveny, které ovšem neodpovídá skutečnému pořadí, v jakém je autorka psala.

První proto studuje překlad hry *Crave* pořízený Jaroslavem Achabem Haidlerem, překladatelem a hercem z Činoherního studia v Ústí nad Labem. Popisuje překladatelův přístup k obtížnému textu, který se jeví jako propletené monology čtveřice postav. Tyto postavy A, B, C a M mají mezi sebou ale vazby, které musel překladatel odhalit a vhodně je přenést do českého překladu. Práci měl ale ztíženou tím, že angličtina na rozdíl od češtiny nabízí více interpretačních možností jednotlivých promluv. Jde totiž o to, že například u slova „you“ čtenář

nepozná, jedná-li se o význam „ty“ nebo „vy“, ani na jaké pohlaví toto zájmeno může být orientováno. V češtině musel být tedy Haidler daleko specifičtější a explicitnější než originál. Přesto je jeho překlad vysoce ceněný, neboť se mu podařilo převést jazyk Kaneové ve své přirozené každodenní formě a podává tak divákovi podobný zážitek jako originální text. Jeho překlad nevyšel oficiálně, je ovšem k dispozici divadlům či teoretikům v agentuře Aura-Pont.

Dalším textem v pořadí, který byl přeložen a posléze uveden na česká jeviště, byl *Cleansed*. Tuto hru přeložil David Drozd a poté ještě Jitka Sloupová. Spolu s *Blasted* to jsou jediné dvě hry, jež mají dva různé překlady. Na rozdíl od *Blasted*, jsou ale oba překlady *Cleansed* k dispozici rovněž v agentuře. Naskytla se tedy možnost tyto překlady porovnat s originálem a navíc i mezi sebou. Oba překladatelé k textu přistoupili se záměrem zachovat formu, která byla pro Kaneovou velmi podstatná. Na konkrétních příkladech může čtenář sledovat, jak se oběma podařilo vypořádat se s určitými aspekty překladu. Davidu Drozdovi, v té době začínajícímu překladateli, se dařilo především v pasážích, kde byla třeba použít hrubší jazyk. Jitce Sloupové se jako zkušené překladatelce podařilo podat hovorovou češtinu velice přirozeně a zachovat tak tón, který použila sama autorka hry.

Není tedy divu, že k dalšímu překladu byla opět přizvána ona. Jednalo se o *4.48 Psychosis*, na kterém pracovala pro dramaturgyni Koliňovou Havlíkovou pod Národním divadlem v Praze. Zde také později překlad vyšel v rámci uvedení této premiéry na komorní scéně divadla. Nicméně tato hra vyšla ještě jednou, a to v edici „Současná hra“ publikované Divadelním ústavem v roce 2002. Při překladu se musela Jitka Sloupová vypořádat s faktem, že tento text nemá postavy a funguje spíše jako jakási jevištní báseň. V anglickém textu navíc není jediná zmínka o pohlaví spoluhráčů hlavní postavy, Sloupová se tedy v češtině musela pro jejich pohlaví rozhodnout, jelikož čeština toto „utajení“ neumožňuje. Následovala premiérové uvedení v Londýnském Royal Court Theatre a určila jednu z postav rodu mužského a druhou ženského. Překlad je přesto nutně limitující, protože nenabízí tolik možností vyznění jako v originálním jazyce.

Předposledním textem byla *Phaedra's Love* přeložená opět Jaroslavem Achabem Haidlerem jako *Faidra (Z lásky)*. Jelikož se i v tomto případě jednalo

o zakázku pro Národní divadlo v Praze, byl překlad také vydán, tentokrát spolu s dalšími dvěma hrami, které byly uvedeny v rámci Projektu Bouda. Jak Haidler sám uvedl, práce to byla o něco snadnější, neboť se jedná o asi nejtradičnější hru po formální i významové stránce. Je to totiž hra na antické téma lásky Faidry ke svému nevlastnímu synovi Hippolytovi. Překladatel přesto přistoupil k textu poněkud odvážně a v některých pasážích byl dokonce explicitnější, co se týkalo užití hrubých výrazů než Kaneová. Povedlo se mu tak ještě zdůraznit paradox mezi honosnou antickou tematikou a vlastní ryzostí základního příběhu.

Poslední hra přeložená do češtiny je vlastně první hrou, kterou Kaneová za svou krátkou autorskou kariéru napsala. *Blasted* byla do češtiny přeloženo dvakrát pro potřeby dvou divadel. První překlad Ondřeje Formánka je k dispozici v agentuře, druhý překlad byl vypracován opět Haidlerem, ale k dispozici není, neboť byl ještě méně oficiální než ty ostatní a sám překladatel si není jistý, kde skončil a do jaké míry vůbec použit byl. V úvahu byl tedy brán pouze dostupný překlad Ondřeje Formánka. Na tomto textu, stejně jako obou překladech *Cleansed*, je jasně viditelné, že nebyly určeny publikaci, ale byly pořízeny pouze pro potřeby divadla. Nachází se tu spousta otazníků, vět přeložených dvakrát, u kterých Formánek ještě zvažoval lepší variantu a také překlepů a drobných chyb. Je jasné, že pokud by text prošel korekturou, vypadal by jinak, přesto je v této podobě srozumitelný pro divadelníky, kteří by tuto hru rádi uvedli ve svém divadle. Jedná se o velmi zdařilý překlad, tato hra však na českých scénách příliš nefigurovala.

Dostáváme se tedy k další hlavní kapitole, která se věnuje jednotlivým uvedením her Sarah Kaneové na území České republiky. Při hledání materiálu o těchto představeních byly brány v potaz veškeré možné zdroje, především divadelní tisk – *Divadelní Noviny* a *Svět a Divadlo*, dále publikace *Českého Rozhlasu* či hlavního denního tisku jako je například *Mladá Fronta Dnes* nebo *Lidové Noviny*.

První byla již zmíněná premiéra Činoherního studia v Ústí nad Labem v prosinci roku 2000. Ze soudobého divadelního tisku můžeme soudit, že přestože byla inscenace uvedena mimo Prahu, tedy centrum kulturního dění v naší zemi, vyvolala poněkud silné reakce a jistým způsobem oživila divadelní scénu v Čechách.

Reakce na tuto inscenaci se totiž velmi liší, čímž dokazují jistou kontroverznost celého nastudování této hry. To také samozřejmě upozornilo na tvorbu Sarah Kaneové a umožnilo tak dalším divadlům věnovat se ostatním hrám, které ještě nebyly v Česku uvedeny.

Další premiérou bylo, jak pořadí překladu napovídá, představení s názvem *Vyčištěno*, tedy *Cleansed*, a to v Divadle Na zábradlí hned v lednu roku 2001. Tato hra byla uvedena jako scénické čtení (herci tedy drželi texty v ruce), ale přesto obsahovala spoustu prvků obvyklého jevištního uvedení běžné hry (vytvářeli jevištní akci). Tento paradox a jakási nejasnost v přístupu k textu byla inscenací nejvíce vyčítána. Jako u většiny ostatních představení se jednalo o projekt realizovaný v nestandardních prostorách, v tomto případě v místnosti bývalé zkušebny divadla. Dalším jevem pozorovaným při průběhu uvedení hry je například také fakt, že text byl pro některé členy divadelního ansámblu příliš kontroverzní, a proto velká část z nich odmítla se na přípravě inscenace podílet. Poetika Kaneové tedy pro některé umělce i veřejnost nebyla v těchto letech přístupná a jistě by se takoví jedinci našli i dnes, kdy už její tvorba v naší zemi do jisté míry zdomácněla.

V roce 2003 se Kaneové v České republice dostalo asi nejvíce pozornosti. Její poslední hra *4. 48 Psychosis* byla totiž uvedena v Národním divadle v Praze. Bylo to sice na komorní scéně v Divadle Kolowrat, ale přesto je jasné, že pokud je hra uvedena pod Národním divadlem, dostane se do povědomí široké veřejnosti. Hru režíroval Michal Dočekal pod dramaturgickým dohledem Lenky Kolihové Havlíkové, která Kaneovou představila i Činohernímu studiu o 3 roky dříve. Toto uvedení se ale nesetkalo s příliš příznivou kritikou. Bylo mu vyčítáno, že příliš jasně vyložilo hru, která díky své poetičnosti nabízí více než jen pouhý záznam toho, jak se její autorka dostala k rozhodnutí ukončit svůj život sebevraždou. Na druhou stranu je ale možné, že právě tímto přístupem zaujala širší veřejnost, která tak měla šanci se o této autorce a jejím životě vůbec dozvědět.

Další inscenací v pořadí byla v těsném zástupu *Faidra (Z lásky)* inscenovaná opět v Národním divadle, tentokrát v rámci Projektu Bouda. Byly zde uvedeny další dvě hry současných dramatiků na venkovní scéně vytvořené speciálně pro tuto příležitost. Hra byla reprízována ale velmi málo (asi jen 3krát), a tak se o ní v tisku

příliš nepsalo. Z několika málo recenzí se dá vyvozovat, že to nebyla příliš zdařilá inscenace, což koneckonců uznala i sama dramaturgyně, kterou byla opět Lenka Koliňová Havlíková, tentokrát pracující s režisérem Petrem Tycem.

V prosinci téhož roku byla poprvé uvedena hra Sarah Kaneové jako nepremiérový titul. Bylo to představení *Crave* opět v překladu Jaroslava Achaba Haidlera. Jednalo se tentokrát o práci režiséra-kantora s jeho žáky, tedy Jana Nebeského a studenty pražské konzervatoře. Toto představení, přestože nebylo ještě „profesionální“, sklidilo úspěch kritiky nevídaný vzhledem k typu souboru. Recenze byla otištěna v měsíčníku *Svět a divadlo*, který se většinou věnuje větším divadlům a profesionálním projektům, které u nás vznikají. Toto představení dosáhlo také úspěchu u veřejnosti, neboť bylo po derniéře na scéně konzervatoře s názvem Pidivadlo přesunuto ještě do divadla A studio Rubín, kde bylo další dvě sezóny úspěšně reprízováno.

Následující rok se konečně v České republice představila také první hra britské autorky, *Blasted*. Hrál se v Lounském Multiprostoru, tedy opět mimo Prahu a hlavní pozornost kritiků. Představení se hrálo pod názvem *Blasted / Zásah* a režie se ujal Miroslav Bambušek. Režisér přistoupil k této hře poněkud nepietně a originálně. Vyškrtl několik hlavních scén z konce hry, přidal postavy policistů, do hlavní role dívky Cate obsadil muže a celou hru situoval do asijského prostředí. Dá se tedy uvažovat, že z Kaneové pouze vycházel, nechal se jí inspirovat a zřejmě použil části textu jejího autorského debutu. Tato hra byla ale výjimečná svým autentickým přístupem k násilí v textu, a proto se do povědomí kritiky dostala, přestože nebyla uvedena na mimopražské scéně.

Dalším projektem bylo opět *Blasted*, tentokrát se však za lomítkem vyskytovalo slovo *Zpustošení*, což jasně odkazuje na to, že byl pro inscenaci pořízen nový překlad. Hra ale také nedosáhla velkého zájmu kritiky, a proto není příliš mnoho materiálů, které by popisovaly, jak hra působila a jak na ní inscenátoři pracovali. Přesto bylo možné zjistit alespoň základní informace, a to například fakt, že byla celé hra opět pojata velmi inovativně, byly přidány další postavy Cate, které ji zachycovaly ve starším věku a celé představení mělo působit jako pohádka, ve které postavy jednají jako figurky či loutky.

Po dvou inscenacích *Blasted* přišly na řadu dva projekty, které nebyly přímo inscenací některé z her Sarah Kaneové, ale šlo spíše o projekty, které z její tvorby vycházely. Jednalo se o představení *Faidra* divadelní skupiny Depresivní děti touží po penězích, které logicky vycházelo z hry *Phaedra's Love* a inscenace *JOHANKA 008*, ve kterém se dívčí soubor Evrybáby odkazuje ke tvorbě Kaneové nejspíše také pouze okrajově (soubor totiž pracuje velmi autorsky).

Další inscenací celé hry Sarah Kaneové bylo představení *Psychózy ve 4.48* opět v nastudování studentů a profesionálního režiséra. Zde se k tématice britské autorky opět vrátil David Czesany, který režíroval první českou premiéru *Crave*. Představení nevyvolalo velké reakce u kritiky, nicméně je na internetu k dispozici krátký sestřih z tohoto představení s rozhovorem s protagonisty, takže bylo možné alespoň nahlédnout na jeho přípravu. Posledním z menších projektů bylo scénické čtení téže hry v uvedení divadelní skupiny s názvem Oldstars. Jednalo se ale pouze o jeden večer.

Velmi neobvyklým projektem, který u nás vznikl v roce 2010, bylo představení s názvem *Očištění / Depurados*, které spolu se španělským Institutem del Teatre připravila pražská DAMU. Jednalo se o první taneční představení u nás, které reflektovalo tvorbu Kaneové, konkrétně hru *Cleansed*. Spíše než ryze taneční představení připomínal tento španělsko-český projekt jakousi koláž prvků a forem, jako například právě tanečního nebo alternativního či symbolického divadla, ve kterém ovšem zazněl i samotný text hry v obou jazycích. Tato neobvyklá forma jistě nabízela nespočet inovativních přístupů a nápadů, dá se čekat, že byla u diváků pro svou mnoho vrstevnatost velice ceněna. Někteří recenzenti však tento nový přístup inscenátorům vyčítali pro jeho nejasnost.

Další z větších projektů je uvedení *Psychózy ve 4.48* v Brně v HaDivadle. Toto představení je od premiéry v květnu roku 2010 ještě stále na repertoáru HaDivadla a poprvé je u této hry ansámble ryze ženský. U inscenace se nabízí srovnání s představením v Národním Divadle v Praze z roku 2003. Tentokrát tvůrci přistoupili k tématu poněkud volněji a nesnažili se za každou cenu vytvořit dějovou linii. Jedná spíše o jakési obrazy, které jsou propojeny jednou tematikou, které byla pro inscenátory hlavní, a to je deprese. Z recenzí vyplývá, že byla přijata s větším

nadšením než pražská inscenace, přesto se nestala kultovním představením HaDivadla.

Za poslední nastudování hry Kaneové v Česku můžeme považovat inscenaci *Vyčištěno* olomouckého Divadla na cucky. Přestože se jedná o menší divadlo, dostalo se této hře poměrně výrazné pozornosti, k čemuž jistě přispělo to, že byla uvedena v rámci prvního dne festivalu Divadelní Flora a že byla režírována Annou Petrželkovou, která je považovaná za jeden z největších mladých režijních talentů u nás. Toto představení je podobně jako brněnská *Psychóza* uváděné i v této sezóně. Stejně jako u ostatních představení her Sarah Kaneové je tým tvůrců i herců velmi mladého věku a stejně jako u ostatních přitahuje do divadel víc a víc mladších diváků, což je bezesporu pozitivní jev.

Nezbývá než doufat, že se tak bude dít i nadále a také že budou mít v budoucnu další divadla potřebu vyjádřit se k tvorbě Sarah Kaneové a tradice uvádění her této autorky v České republice se bude dále rozvíjet.

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## **9. Anotace**

Diplomová práce se věnuje hrám britské dramatičky Sarah Kaneové, konkrétně jejich inscenační tradici v České republice. Popisuje proces, jímž byla autorka na české divadelní scéně představena a krátce zmiňuje, jak divadelní tisk hovořil o její tvorbě ještě předtím, než byly tyto hry uvedeny na česká pódia.

Hlavní kapitola se zabývá překlady her Kaneové do češtiny. Soustřeďuje se na nejdůležitější aspekty překladu a zmiňuje detaily spojené s jejich vznikem.

Druhá část práce studuje samotná uvedení těchto překladů na scénu jedenácti českých divadel ve čtrnácti různých projektech. Zabývá se především kritickým přijetím těchto inscenací v českém tisku a jejich významem v kontextu českého divadla od premiéry první z nich na konci roku 2000 až k té poslední v roce 2010.

### **Annotation**

The thesis deals with the productions of plays by the British playwright Sarah Kane in the Czech Republic. It describes the process of introducing the author to the Czech theatre scene and briefly mentions how the theatrical press viewed her work before the plays were brought to Czech stages.

The main chapter studies Czech translations of Sarah Kane's plays. It focuses on the most important points of the translated texts and mentions relevant details of formation of each of the translations.

The second part of the thesis focuses on the actual presentations of these translations on the stages of 11 Czech theatres in 14 different theatre projects. It primarily studies the critical reception of these productions in the Czech press and their importance in the context of the Czech theatre from the first production in 2000 to the last one in 2010.