

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE
STUDIES



NONVERBAL ELEMENTS OF TRAUMA IN
CRAVE AND TENDER NAPALM THROUGH AFFECT THEORY

MASTER'S THESIS

G lay KA AKER

Department of English Language and Literature
English Language and Literature Program

APRIL, 2026

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**Department of English Language and Literature
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APRIL, 2026

THESIS EXAM REPORT

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APPROVAL

Istanbul Aydın University Institute of Graduate Studies Board of Directors

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(*) Unanimity/Majority vote will be written in writing.

(**) Acceptance decision will be written in writing.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study “Nonverbal Elements of Trauma in Crave and Tender Napalm through Affect Theory”, which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the References. (06/04/2026)

Gülay KAÇAKER



FOREWORD

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NONVERBAL ELEMENTS OF TRAUMA IN CRAVE AND TENDER NAPALM THROUGH AFFECT THEORY

ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that trauma in Sarah Kane's *Crave* (1998) and Philip Ridley's *Tender Napalm* (2011) emerges through nonverbal and affective elements. This thesis considers trauma as an experience that resists stable meaning and linear representation taking both plays into consideration in the context of in-yer-face theatre movement. Instead, trauma becomes visible through concepts such as affective intensity, emotional excess and bodily manifestations. These function beyond the limits of language. The analysis brings trauma theory and affect theory together: nonverbal elements are first understood through trauma theory as signs of traumatic experience, and then read through affect theory to highlight the force and intensity of trauma at an affective level, primarily in line with the theoretical approaches of Silvan Tomkins and Brian Massumi. This perspective shows how affect makes the manifestations of trauma apparent through silence, fragmented speech, physical actions, emotional extremity, temporal shifts, and spatial disconnection in the selected plays. In this way, this thesis explores the limitations of language in conveying trauma and shows how Kane and Ridley use nonverbal strategies to emphasize affective dimension of trauma. The findings of the study present that nonverbal elements in the mentioned plays work as affective markers that make trauma visible beyond linear narrative and psychological realism.

Keywords: Affect Theory, Trauma Theory, Nonverbal Trauma Markers, Contemporary Theatre, *Crave*, *Tender Napalm*

AFFECT TEORİ ARACILIĞIYLA CRAVE VE TENDER NAPALM' DA TRAVMANIN SÖZSÜZ ÖĞELERİ

ÖZET

Bu tez, Sarah Kane'in Crave (1998) ve Philip Ridley'nin Tender Napalm (2011) adlı oyunlarında travmanın sözel olmayan duygulanımsal unsurlar aracılığıyla ortaya çıktığını savunmaktadır. Her iki oyunu da in-yer-face theatre (suratına tiyatro) akımı bağlamında ele alan tez, travmayı sabit bir anlam ve doğrusal bir temsil içinde çözümlenebilecek bir deneyim olarak değil; dilin sınırlarını aşan duygulanımsal yoğunluk, duygusal aşırılık ve bedensel göstergeler aracılığıyla görünür hale gelen bir deneyim olarak ele almaktadır. Bu analiz, travma kuramı ile duygulanım kuramını bir araya getirmektedir: sözsüz öğeler önce travma kuramı aracılığıyla travmatik deneyimin göstergeleri olarak anlaşılmakta, ardından Silvan Tomkins ve Brian Massumi'nin kuramsal yaklaşımları doğrultusunda duygulanım kuramı üzerinden okunarak travmanın duygulanımsal düzeydeki güç ve yoğunluğu vurgulanmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, seçilen oyunlarda duygulanımın travmanın belirtilerini sessizlik, parçalı konuşma, bedensel jestler, duygusal aşırılık, zamansal kaymalar ve mekansal kopukluk yoluyla nasıl ortaya çıkardığını göstermektedir. Bu şekilde tez, travmanın dil yoluyla aktarılmasındaki sınırlılıkları tartışmakta ve Kane ile Ridley'in travmanın duygulanımsal boyutunu vurgulamak için sözsüz stratejileri nasıl kullandıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışmanın bulguları, seçili oyunlardaki sözsüz unsurların travmayı doğrusal öykü ve psikolojik gerçekliğin ötesinde görünür kılan duygulanımsal işaretler olarak işlev gördüğünü ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Duygulanım Kuramı, Travma Kuramı, Travmanın Sözsüz Göstergeleri, Çağdaş Tiyatro, Crave, Tender Napalm

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I. INTRODUCTION

Trauma is an indispensable part of human existence, and literature plays a significant role in depicting it. Caruth argues that “[t]he texts of psychoanalysis, of literature, and of literary theory – both speak about and speak through the profound story of traumatic experience” (1996: 8). In this form of representation, the reader or viewer is not just a passive observer but becomes an engaged participant who connects with the emotional and physical pain of the characters. Likewise, Hamilton (2010) elaborates on this viewpoint by categorizing dramatic imagination into three primary archetypal conflicts: Greek tragedy, Renaissance (Elizabethan) drama, and modern drama (134–135). These three dramatic styles depict trauma in distinct manners and emphasize its psychological, existential, and social repercussions of an overpowering force. Therefore, theatre has served as a capable tool for addressing human suffering from the time of ancient Greek tragedy to the present, and its evolving forms and techniques reflect people’s ongoing need to communicate trauma outside of accepted norms and language.

According to Hamilton, ancient Greek tragedy is where trauma was first shown and is most closely associated with the concept of fate. Fate rules over both gods and men as an all-powerful force. People seem helpless and are compelled to do things that are out of their control. Therefore, the conflict between heavenly order and human desire leads to pain. Furthermore, suffering is often shown as a form of retribution for hubris, which makes it both inevitable and morally enlightening. Greek tragedy explores fate as an existential question and as a kind of divine retribution. According to Hamilton, the tragic hero’s battle against divine will highlights the potential and limits of human agency. As he describes, “The Greeks saw life as a thing to be lived greatly [...] Fate was a fact, but man was free” (2010: 181). The tragic hero ultimately suffers as a result of the relationship between human vulnerability and heavenly will. Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* is a great example of this. Oedipus’ rejection of his destiny ultimately leads to his death. Yet, his ultimate acceptance of fate serves as both a form

of retribution and a recognition of his ignorance and the helplessness of humans in the face of divine authority. His act of self-blinding, together with the line “What should I do with eyes/ Where all is ugliness?” (Sophocles, 1974: 63), can be read both as divine punishment and an expression of existential suffering. Similarly, a fully conscious moral decision in Antigone causes trauma. Because of her adherence to divine rule, Antigone gets into a conflict with Creon’s authority and faces a serious moral dilemma. Greek tragedy provides a crucial basis for subsequent theatrical investigations of pain through these depictions.

During the Renaissance, the focus of human suffering appears to change from heavenly retribution to internal conflict that arises within each person. The conflict between one’s own desires and outside limitations is the major cause of trauma in the 16th century (Hamilton, 2010: 135). Thus, it can be argued that trauma turns into a psychological experience that is influenced by political, religious and social frameworks. Renaissance playwrights investigate the ways in which these systems affect how people develop their identities. Shakespeare’s and Marlowe’s writings exemplify this shift. Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* (1604) presents how the protagonist’s quest for power and knowledge finally results in his tragic fall (Carter et al., 2002: 74-75). In addition to his ambition, the greater ideological framework that defines the limits of human understanding and sin are also responsible for Faustus’ suffering. Shakespeare’s plays also feature characters torn between their own weaknesses and external forces (Brodey et al., 2002). *Macbeth* (c. 1606) shows how the witches’ prophecy promotes ambition, which is then heightened by Lady Macbeth’s manipulation of her husband. Likewise, the central struggles in *Hamlet* (c. 1600–1601), *Othello* (c. 1603–1604) and *King Lear* (c. 1605–1606) cannot be understood as purely individual traits (Brodey et al., 2002). Hamlet’s hesitation, Othello’s jealousy, and Lear’s pride are all shaped by the corrupt social and political environments in which they exist. As in much Renaissance drama, trauma in these plays is represented as the outcome of both internal struggles and external forces. In this sense, trauma is presented as both a psychological and a social construct, closely connected to experiences of pain, fate, identity, and free will.

By implying that broader social, political and existential forces influence personal pain, contemporary theatre offers a fresh perspective on trauma. Modern

drama presents trauma as a result of conditions of alienation, repression and systemic inequity rather than as a simply human catastrophe (Hamilton, 2010: 135–136). Hamilton’s argument that “[t]he modern hero struggles with the world” (2010:137) suggests that pressures that go beyond personal experience often lead to trauma. The works of Ibsen, Shaw and Beckett, who were influential in moving theatrical storylines toward psychological realism and societal criticism, make this shift evident. For example, Ibsen frequently situates pain in the struggle between the forces of social denial and individual honesty. In *An Enemy of the People* (1882), Dr. Stockmann’s isolation is rooted in his inability to fit in with a corrupt majority rather than in an internal weakness. Shaw (1891) argues that Ibsen’s protagonists almost never suffer from flaws in themselves; rather, their suffering results from opposing society’s morals and hypocrisies. Shaw notes that Dr Stockmann is labelled an “enemy” for exposing an uncomfortable truth (1891: 96–97), and that he ultimately remains alone, because “[t]he strongest man is he who stands most alone” (1891: 98). According to this interpretation, the play suggests that trauma arises more powerfully from societal corruption than from internal struggle.

Shaw develops Ibsen’s ideas by exploring the ways in which political and ideological structures influence personal experiences. His plays often address societal issues including nationalism, gender inequality and exploitation (Carter et al., 2002). These plays serve as intellectual dramas that highlight moral struggle and institutional critique. For example, *Widowers’ Houses* (1892) shows how social and economic systems may shape, restrict and change individual experiences. As they argue, the play “[d]ealt with a slum landlord’s exploitation of the poor” (Carter et al., 2002: 382-383). Therefore, Shaw situates conflict within a social structure where exploitation is normalised. Thus, the drama shows how individual suffering is inseparably linked to larger ideological frameworks.

On the other hand, Beckett approaches trauma from an existential perspective. As Çameli argues, “Beckett creates a gloomy social landscape imbued with absurdity and existential crisis of man” (2022b: 9). His characters live in minimalist universes where time seems to stand still, language becomes erratic and action becomes less important. *Waiting for Godot* (1954) exemplifies this condition. Estragon and Vladimir’s repeated and fragmented conversation highlights a sense of suspended

agony and implies that their never-ending waiting are a metaphor for pain that escapes healing. Together, these writers suggest that understanding trauma in the contemporary era requires acknowledging the outside influences that shape it. Whether caused by institutional pressure, societal corruption or existential emptiness, trauma seems less like a singular personal experience and more like a reflection of a society where social and political circumstances have a significant impact on people's daily lives.

Trauma is notably represented in the contemporary era, particularly with the rise of in-yer-face theatre and the theatrical innovations of the 1990s. By presenting honest and aggressive depictions of human experience, this theatrical movement seems to push theatrical limits. It marks a significant shift in both subject matter and stylistic approaches, as trauma is not simply recounted but also actively performed and embodied on stage. The plays of the movement emphasise emotional intensity, confrontation and fragmentation by moving away from narrative conventions to address psychological trauma more directly. As a drama scholar, Sierz explains this form of theatre,

[t]akes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message. It is a theatre of sensation: it jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses, touching nerves and provoking alarm. Often such drama employs shock tactics or is shocking because it is new in tone or structure, or because it is bolder or more experimental than what audiences are used to. (2001: 4)

Considering the difficulties involved in representing trauma, in-yer-face theatre can be seen as an important turning point in the exploration of such experiences. Rather than depending on traditional narrative structures, this movement brings trauma directly to the surface through fragmented language, broken dialogue, repetitive rhythms and moments of physical collapse or silence. Its strength lies in its raw emotional immediacy, which does not allow distance between the performance and the audience; nor does it attempt to soften the experience. By refusing narrative resolution, this theatrical movement transformed the representation of pain, trauma and survival, instead privileging chaos and emotional intensity. Key figures of this movement, including Sarah Kane, Mark Ravenhill and Anthony Neilson openly use sex, violence, and direct raw language to express strong emotions (Sierz, 2011: 21). These are

important tools for presenting trauma not as a story that can be easily told, but as an experience that must be endured. They create a theatrical environment in their writings where pain is physically represented, and emotional power and physical presence are used to express ideas that cannot be easily expressed. These historical changes in how trauma is portrayed – from divine punishment in Greek tragedy to internal conflict in Renaissance drama to the individual's battle against external forces in contemporary theatre– show a growing understanding of the complexity of psychological suffering. This new understanding demonstrates how theatre has progressively changed its vocabulary and forms to adapt to evolving perspectives on trauma and the factors that influence human experience. Therefore, it has established a foundation for new approaches to trauma in contemporary drama.

The challenge of describing trauma became evident in the twentieth century although it has always been present in narrative forms. As Çameli points out, “[t]he belief in a traumatic experience’s exceeding people’s capacity for verbal accentuation is known to have become much stronger in the twentieth century” (2022a: 3). Scholars started to look at how literature not only presents trauma but also embodies its inexpressibility in response to this notion. Thanks to the significant contributions of Cathy Caruth, who is generally recognised as a key figure in the formation of modern trauma theory, these discussions reached a climax in the 1990s. According to Caruth’s broad definition of trauma, a traumatic experience is characterised by an overpowering incident that goes beyond the subject’s capacity for conscious comprehension and therefore defies assimilation into everyday memory or language. As she explains,

[t]he response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena. Traumatic experience, beyond the psychological dimension of suffering it involves, suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness. (1996: 74)

According to this viewpoint, trauma is described as an event that breaks temporal continuity and reappears later as uncontrollably fragmented repetitions rather than through coherent memory. In this way, anxiety, pain or emotional discomfort by

themselves are insufficient to describe trauma sufficiently. Rather, trauma involves a temporal and structural dimension that influences how the subject comprehends the event. The mind might not be able to grasp what is happening at the time of the traumatic incident. The individual is physically present and witnessing the event, yet unable to grasp it in a logical or conscious way. Because of this, the experience resists integration into memory and escapes narration or understanding at the moment it happens. As a result, trauma often reveals itself only after the event through delayed and involuntary returns, such as flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive images or sudden bodily responses. These manifestations can be interpreted as the mind's attempt to confront and work through an experience that could not be assimilated when it initially occurred.

Caruth also points out a related paradox: trauma seems at the same time resistant to speech and yet urgently needing expression. Because it is difficult to render traumatic experience in narrative form, its effects may appear outside normal ways of storytelling. As she notes, “[t]he truth of the event may reside not only in its brutal facts, but also in the way that their occurrence defies simple comprehension” (1995: 153). In this way, the “truth” of trauma may depend less on what can be factually recounted than on the very impossibility of fully grasping or articulating the event. At the same time, Caruth underscores that “[t]rauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (1995: 8). According to this theory, trauma is a wound that damages the ability to express experience while requiring nonverbal communication. According to the idea of a “wound that cries out” (Caruth, 1995: 8), trauma can express itself through nonverbal cues such as physiological sensations, sensory perceptions or involuntary reactions, especially when logical language is insufficient.

The somatic nature of traumatic experience is further highlighted by Caruth. She argues that trauma cannot be viewed as only psychological; rather, it changes the live body from the inside out. The “somatic sensations” and “behavioural reenactments” that trauma often resurfaces through make this embodiment apparent (1995: 172). In these cases, the body acts as the main register of traumatic impact, creating a way to connect Caruth's ideas with affect theory. When language is inadequate, affect shows itself in “[m]ostly somatic, un verbalized” forms that are “[i]ntense, threatening, and

painful” (1995: 87). In this sense, the body appears to contain emotions that are difficult to express consciously. This shows how trauma causes uncontrollable bodily reactions. These findings reveal that for Caruth, the body is an active site of inscription that expresses what words are unable to represent.

The embodied dimension of trauma is a significant problem in trauma studies and is also important for the study of trauma in theatre. Trauma is difficult to describe in words; instead, it is better communicated through body language, silences and disjoint tales. Conventional narrative, which emphasises what cannot be expressed, is challenged by this nonverbal communication. Theatre is an effective medium for presenting this conflict as trauma is both a narrative subject and an object of bodily experience. Bessel van der Kolk’s influential work *The Body Keeps the Score* (2014) demonstrates this link between trauma and the body. Van der Kolk emphasises the unspeakable nature of trauma. As he argues, “All trauma is preverbal” (2014: 45). According to this viewpoint, traumatic events frequently manifest in ways other than words. Moreover, he explains that trauma impacts the neurological system and the body most and it damages the brain’s capacity to transform traumatic events into comprehensible spoken language. As he notes, “[p]hysical postures, strange verbal utterances, terrified facial expressions, and tics—the physical, embodied expression of trauma: a memory that is inscribed simultaneously in the mind, as interior images and words, and on the body” (166). Therefore, the body serves as both the location and the storage of traumatic memories, including information that words cannot express. This concept is tightly linked to theatre’s ability to externalise inner experiences through presence, gesture and movement.

Herman explores trauma and especially its embodied dimensions. As Herman argues, “Traumatized people relive the moment of trauma not only in their thoughts and dreams but also in their actions” (1992: 28), showing that trauma exceeds memory and instead affects behavioural and physical registers. She also notes that trauma survivors show growing awareness of unconscious and nonverbal communication (1992: 98). Herman supports the notion that traumatic experiences are enacted and inscribed on the body, as survivors “[r]elive in their bodies the moments of terror that they cannot describe in words” (1992: 172). This understanding highlights the importance of reading nonverbal clues as a representation of trauma.

In addition to changing dramatic forms, this focus on the bodily element of trauma representation requires different theoretical frameworks that may explain phenomena that cannot be expressed in language. Because traditional narrative and psychological models have difficulty capturing the pre-verbal and physiological impact of trauma, affect theory is a particularly helpful tool. As Gregg and Seigworth (2010, Atkinson et al., 2013: 1) argue, affect functions as a strong intensity that moves between bodies and worlds, as well as remains in constant interactions. Affect theory emphasises physical, sensory and relational reactions to trauma rather than simply considering it as something that is communicated verbally or intellectually. This is because “[a]ffective experience is itself constitutively distinct from language” (Richardson et al., 2019: 238). What words cannot express can be conveyed by gestures, silences, physical motions and sudden reactions. As Atkinson and Richardson argue, affect theory “[o]ffers productive possibilities for thinking differently about trauma” (2013: 6). Accordingly, this thesis uses affect theory as the main framework for examining how trauma emerges through nonverbal elements of theatre and how these affective forces shape the experience of characters. By moving attention away from what trauma cannot articulate and toward how it is felt, registered and transmitted, affect theory frames trauma as a living intensity rather than as a fixed event in the past. This approach is particularly effective in theatre because affective exchanges make trauma understandable through embodied responses, rather than verbal explanation.

By highlighting the shifting forces with which bodies engage into relationships, affect theory highlights the dynamic relationship between bodies and their surroundings (Truran, 2017: 26). The conceptual basis of this theory can be traced back to Baruch Spinoza, who reinterpreted affect as a shift in a body’s potential emotion. Spinoza (1985) defines affect as “[a]n affection of the body by which the body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained” (Ethics III, Def. 3). He understands the body not as a fixed matter but as having the potential to enter into “[r]elations of movement and rest,” a potential to affect and to be affected (Massumi, 2002: 15). Accordingly, affect describes how the body is receptive to outside experiences, which change its ability to behave by either increasing or decreasing its potential. Furthermore, according to Gilles Deleuze (1988), affect is a pre-personal intensity that predates conscious thinking and is not reducible to a representational

emotion. He understands affect (*affectus*) as a transition – “[t]he passage from one state to another” – which is marked by fluctuations in a body’s power to act (49). While Spinoza argues that an affect includes “the idea of the affection” (1988), Deleuze underlines that this idea does not yet act as an image or a concept and is neither aware nor reflective. Instead, affect happens before the mind translates sensation into meaning. It is a lived, immediate shift in intensity that happens prior to interpretation and captures how the body registers experience at the threshold of awareness (49–50). In addition to affect theory’s explanation on autonomous and complex movements of the body, it also explains the creation of atmosphere, coming together of ideas, mood shifts and situation transformations, in general (Richardson et al., 2019: 237).

Interest in affect gained momentum in the 1960s, particularly through Silvan Tomkins, who suggested that small changes in feeling can shape the texture of everyday interaction. Later scholars, such as Brian Massumi and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, built on Tomkins’ ideas to reconsider the traditional separation between mind and body. Affect theory argues that human experience can be better understood when both bodily and internal processes are considered together (Truran, 2022: 27). These scholars’ work seems to place the body as an active site of meaning, where affective intensities appear before conscious understanding. Taken together, this development shows that affect can be seen as a pre-verbal intensity that emerges through nonverbal forms of expression and renders trauma visible in the text. This view provides the theoretical basis for the approach used in this discussion, which relies primarily on the work of Tomkins and Massumi.

In order to clarify the theoretical framework, it is important to turn to the foundational theorists. Silvan Tomkins (2008) provides the psychological basis of affect theory, presents affect not as secondary to cognition, but as the main motivational force behind human behaviour. For Tomkins, emotional responses are not passive results of experience, nor are they secondary to rational thought. Instead, they actively shape experience itself, directing attention, memory, and behaviour. From his perspective, “The affect system provides the primary motives of human beings” (2008: 63), which represents a significant change from earlier psychological models that often prioritise reason or instinct over emotion. By placing affect at the centre of human

psychology, Tomkins offers a way to understand affect as an innate motivational force that organises basic human tendencies, as he explains:

The human being is equipped with innate affective responses which bias him to want to remain alive and to resist death, to want sexual experiences, to want to experience novelty and to resist boredom, to want to communicate, to be close to and in contact with others of his species and to resist the experience of head and face lowered in shame. (2008: 15)

Tomkins suggests that affect works as the basic motivational engine of human life. Rather than arising from thought or social learning, these responses seem to be built into the body from the beginning. He contends that innate affects steer people away from situations that are viewed as unpleasant or dangerous and toward other impulses, such as the need for safety, novelty, or connection. In this sense, affect can be viewed as a collection of biological inclinations that influence conduct prior to the influence of language or cognition. According to this concept, people's internal and external self-orientation is affected by emotion. It affects behaviour and wants through biologically predetermined inclinations. This also explains why trauma frequently reappears as a physical reaction rather than a fully developed idea.

As a result, affect can be viewed as a process that has deep roots in the body's own systems and a collection of tendencies that influence orientation. Tomkins emphasises the physiological aspect of affect and argues that the body itself carries its power. He puts it as follows:

Affects are sets of muscle and glandular responses located in the face and also widely distributed through the body, which generate sensory feedback which is either inherently "acceptable" or "unacceptable." [...] They are capable when activated of simultaneously capturing such widely distributed organs as the face, the heart, and the endocrines and imposing on them a specific pattern of correlated responses. (2008: 135)

Tomkins' formulation places affect firmly within bodily processes, suggesting that emotional experience is generated through patterned muscular, cardiac, and hormonal responses. In other words, affect unfolds through immediate physiological changes that register intensity before thought can act. From this perspective, affect links trauma

to the body: overwhelming experiences are first lived and expressed through these involuntary bodily responses. This leads to making the body the primary site where trauma is registered before it becomes available to conscious understanding.

Tomkins (2008) classifies these nine major affects as neutral (surprise), negative (fear, wrath, humiliation, distress, disgust and scent) and positive (interest, enjoyment) to broaden our understanding of the body and especially to show how trauma manifests itself. Tomkins presents them as biological processes that are represented through the body rather than as impersonal feelings. As he explains, “There are, I believe, only nine such responses: interest, enjoyment, surprise, fear, anger, distress, shame, dissmell and disgust. These are discriminable distinct *sets* of facial, vocal, respiratory, skin, and muscle responses” (2008: 647). This implies that emotion is not limited to the mind but manifests itself throughout the body via posture, gestures, breathing and tense muscles. This physical aspect highlights the importance of paying attention to nonverbal cues, because they frequently convey the severity of emotional distress especially when words alone are not adequate. These physical manifestations may make up the initial location of trauma; they are not only markers of emotions.

After explaining how the nine primary affects are expressed through the body, it is also important to note that Tomkins gives special importance to the negative affects. He considers them as having a central role in shaping human emotional life and close relationships. He notes that,

All the negative affects trouble human beings deeply. Indeed, they have evolved just to amplify and deepen suffering and to add insult to the injuries of the human condition in several different ways. Terror speaks to the threat of death to life. Distress is the affect of suffering, making of the world a vale of tears. Shame is the affect of indignity, of defeat, of transgression, and of alienation, striking deep into the heart of the human being and felt as an inner torment, a sickness of the soul. But anger is problematic above all other negative affects for its social consequences. (2008: 687)

According to Tomkins, negative emotions work with an ability and intensity that goes beyond typical emotional changes. Every emotion appears to leave a mark on the body and the mind: anger breaks social bonds, shame challenges the sense of self, distress fills perception with misery and panic removes the sense of safety. This understanding

is particularly important when it comes to trauma. It implies that traumatic events have the power to magnify these powerful emotions and cause them to take on more powerfully destructive forms. Therefore, negative affect is a physical force that influences how people react to others and to themselves, particularly during times of psychological stress. It is not only an emotion.

Tomkins emphasises how both innate and learned stimuli trigger affects. He describes affects as immediate, automatic responses that arise in reaction to stimuli. A key point he emphasises is that these responses can be influenced or even overridden by both innate tendencies and later learning. As he notes, “The affect system is [...] capable of responding to a broad spectrum of stimuli, learned and unlearned” (2008: 13). He shows that affect is both biologically rooted and open to social influence. Tomkins develops this flexibility further, suggesting that,

[t]he human being is born biased toward and away from a limited set of circumstances and is also capable of learning to acquire new objects of interest and disinterest. By means of a variety of inherited releasers of these wanted or unwanted responses and their feedback reports, the human being is urged to explore and attempt to control the circumstances which seem to evoke his positive and negative affective responses. (2008: 13)

Affect can function as a dynamic link between innate tendencies and lived experience. According to Tomkins, although people are “[b]orn biased,” they are “[c]apable of learning” (2008: 13) new emotional triggers. This shows how affect functions as a dynamic link between innate tendencies and life events. Traumatic events have the power to gradually change affective reactions. They have the power to fill previously neutral things with intense emotional significance. In this sense, Tomkins’ argument implies that emotive memory functions independently of the context. Even when the original incident is no longer happening, feelings can still be shaped by past experiences. Therefore, trauma does not only happen in one big event. It can also happen over many small experiences and social interactions. As an example, shame can result from different emotional experiences that gradually change how people interact with each other. On stage, this shows that traumatic pasts can appear not only through words but also through silences, small gestures or objects and spaces that carry emotional meaning. These examples show that affect is not only a reaction to the

present. Affect is connected to emotional memory and social learning, and it shapes how the body feels and shows distress.

Besides the important studies of Tomkins, Brian Massumi has also an important role in developing contemporary affect theory. He changes the focus from seeing emotion as something cognitive or representational to seeing affect as a separate, bodily intensity. Different from Tomkins, Massumi argues that affect is not the same as emotion. He highlights that affect comes before thinking or speaking. He explains that affect happens before conscious judgement and before verbal naming. As he quotes:

Affect is most often used loosely as a synonym for emotion. But [...] -if affect is intensity- follow different logics and pertain to different orders. An emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized. (2002: 30)

Massumi's ideas show that it is important to make a difference between affect and the emotion. If the two are mixed together, the special force of affect can be hidden by the more common idea of emotion. For Massumi, affect comes first, before thinking and naming. It is a sudden intensity that has not yet taken form. On the other hand, emotion is the same experience after it has been shaped, recognised and put into social and linguistic categories. At the same time, Massumi argues that affect is difficult to catch or control. It moves faster than the mind can follow and disappears before it can be studied easily. This is very important when we think about trauma because trauma often goes beyond language and stays in the body instead of being told in words. In this way, emotion is a fixed and nameable feeling, but affect is always moving, just beyond the point where it can be fully captured or understood.

This difference becomes clearer in Massumi's discussion of how affect can be partially captured. He argues that when intensity (affect) becomes formed, described,

or given a context, once it acquires meaning or a cognitive frame, it moves into the domain of emotion. He notes:

Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the capture and closure of affect. Emotion is the most intense (most contracted) expression of that capture—and of the fact that something has always and again escaped. Something remains unactualized, inseparable from but unassimilable to any particular, functionally anchored perspective. (2021: 35)

In this way, emotion can be understood as a narrower and more stable version of affect. It shows only what can be named or recognised within familiar social categories. It is the moment when intensity becomes settled enough to be called a feeling. However, Massumi also seems to argue that affect is never completely contained by this process. Even when intensity becomes an emotional label, some part of it stays free, escaping the frameworks that try to organise experience into clear states. What stays is a surplus, that is part of experience that resists being absorbed and continues to move beneath or beyond conscious awareness. This idea is very important for thinking about trauma. Traumatic experience often does not settle into emotion. Instead, it stays as bodily intensity or unprocessed sensation. It appears in the body's reactions rather than in words or named feelings. Accordingly, trauma can be viewed as a place where the excess of affect is shown. It shows the boundaries of emotion's capacity to contain and interpret what has happened.

It is important to examine Massumi's more comprehensive affect theory as a form of experience that goes beyond language. As he argues, affect is unqualified. Therefore, it cannot be owned or recognised, and is immune from criticism (2002: 28). This indicates that affect has not yet been defined or expressed in words. Before it can be categorised, it exists as intensity. Traumatic experiences often appear in an unformed pre-reflective state that are difficult to express immediately. Massumi also adds that affect includes "[t]he whole world: from the precise angle of its differential emergence," noting that it is at once "[p]ast or future, inside or outside, transcendent or immanent, sublime or abject, atomized or continuous—is in a way a matter of indifference. It is all of these things, differently in every actual case" (2002: 43). Accordingly, affect is not a single psychological experience but rather a dynamic

relational landscape. This implies that the intensity of trauma is not contained inside a single emotion. Instead, it traverses time, the body and relationships and returns repeatedly without having a clear end.

Examining how affect is rooted in the body clarifies another aspect of Massumi's story. As he explains, "With the body, the "walls" are the sensory surfaces. The intensity is experience. The emptiness or in-betweenness filled by experience is the incorporeal dimension of the body" (2002: 14). Therefore, the body is not just a physical container. According to the concept of sensory walls, the body interacts with the outside world through surfaces that experience feeling before thought occurs. Massumi also seems to blur the difference between bodily sensation and affective event. Affect is experienced directly in the body, appearing as intensity long before any interpretation or emotion forms. His idea of an incorporeal, in-between zone shows that experience happens in a virtual or not-yet-formed layer, where intensity moves freely before it becomes named emotion. This focus on intensity as lived experience connects his abstract ideas to the real material and sensory processes of the body. This focus on pre-reflective bodily intensity is very important for thinking about trauma. Traumatic intensity often appears first in the body, long before it can be labelled with emotion or put into words. Paying attention to intensity which Massumi sees as the movement of affect itself and "immediately embodied" (2002: 25) is important when words fail, as happens often in deep trauma. In these moments, the body's responses, tremors, freezes, sudden breaths, can show what affect is happening, in ways that words cannot capture. From this point of view, trauma is more than a psychological wound. It is a continuing pulse of affect that moves under normal narratives and shows what cannot be expressed in sentences.

Another part of Massumi's account appears in his description of affect as something that happens in the space between bodies and the forces that act on them. He writes that,

[w]hat happens between a body and what impinges on it, and between a feeling body and what the body feels to be its mind, affect is directly relational [...] The affective encounter registers a transformation, not only in the situation of encounter but in the body's ability to affect and be affected, which is carried through the encounter to a higher or lower power. (2021: 30)

This idea allows us to see affect not as something inside and separate, but as a relational event. It shows that affect appears in the moment of contact, when a body meets an outside force, another person, or even its own emerging thought. These encounters can change what the body can absorb, show, or resist. The focus on change is very important. It suggests that affective experience can alter a body's abilities. Sometimes it can make the body more open to the world. At other times, it can make it smaller or less able to respond. In this way, a body does not just receive an encounter. The body is quietly changed by it. When we look at this idea through trauma, it becomes very clear. Traumatic experiences can leave exactly these kinds of changes in the body's limits. They affect how a person feels, reacts or withdraws, often without thinking. These changes happen at the level of intensity, at the level of affect, long before they can be turned into thought or put into words or stories.

Building on the theoretical framework already explained, which shows that theatre can show trauma through the body, senses, and nonverbal ways, and which sees trauma as something that goes beyond thought but is still very connected to the body and its relations, this literature review first looks at scholarship about *Crave* and *Tender Napalm* in their theatrical contexts. It begins with important contributions from theatre critics and practitioners, including Clayton Hamilton, Aleks Sierz's work on in-yer-face theatre, Elizabeth Armstrong's analyses of contemporary performance, Çameli's study on Sarah Kane's drama, and the book edited by Martin Middeke, Peter Paul Schnierer, and Aleks Sierz. These works show how dramatic form and stage conventions shape the way affective and traumatic states are represented. The review then shifts to trauma theorists such as Judith Herman, Bessel van der Kolk and Cathy Caruth, whose research on broken language, disturbed memory and physical repercussions help us understand how trauma manifests and impacts individuals. Lastly, it examines affect theory from the perspectives of Brian Massumi and Silvan Tomkins, together with the contributions of Richardson and Allison (2019) and Atkinson and Richardson (2013), which form the theoretical foundation of this thesis.

Hamilton (2010) traces how representations of human suffering have changed across dramatic history. Hamilton's explanation of the three main types of tragic conflict – against fate, against social order and against the self – regards Greek tragedy, Renaissance drama and Modern theatre as a struggle which has become more internal. This framework is instrumental because it shows how the concept of suffering has

changed throughout history. In early tragedy, suffering is the result of outside forces. In later drama, it is more psychological and affective, as in contemporary works including *Crave* and *Tender Napalm*. Hamilton's ideas about structure give important background for understanding how modern trauma drama changes the older models of tragedy.

Several works have explored how modern British plays that examine trauma. Sierz's *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today* (2001) is central to defining the aesthetic and political contours of in-yer-face theatre. Together with *Rewriting the Nation: British Theatre Today* (2011) and *The Methuen Drama Guide to Contemporary British Playwrights: Landmark Playwrights from 1980 to the Present* (2011), these works provide the theoretical and contextual framework which is required to place Sarah Kane and Philip Ridley in the context of the in-yer-face theatre movement and to understand the confrontational and rebellious tendencies of their writing. Sierz's explanation of in-yer-face theatre provides an essential framework for analysing the severe forms of Kane and Ridley's productions. By focusing on confrontation, emotional intensity, and structural disturbance, he shows that fractured form, broken language, and heightened sensory consequences are not just creative options. They are part of a well-known theatrical language that prioritises emotional impact above direct narrative.

In addition to this framework, Çameli (2022) is particularly significant in explaining the relationship between traumatic experience and language in literary representation. Çameli also serves as a supportive resource in identifying the formal strategies that Sarah Kane employs in *Crave* in order to render the mental and emotional effects of trauma visible. Armstrong (2008) further sharpens this focus by examining how *Crave* operates within, and simultaneously disturbs, in-yer-face theatre conventions. She interprets the play as a work in which trauma is produced through formal tactics that confront the viewer with bodily and affective intensity, rather than as postmodern experimentation.

The idea that these nonverbal intensities reflect traumatic experience is supported by trauma theory. Caruth (1996) argues that trauma is an occurrence that cannot be adequately expressed. Caruth's concepts of belatedness and unspeakability show how trauma resurfaces as disruptions rather than as distinct memories. This helps interpret these nonverbal signs not simply as artistic choices but also as indications of

psychological disruption. Moreover, van der Kolk (2014) and Herman (1992) focus on the body side of trauma. They show how physical reactions that cannot be expressed through words are used to register trauma. Their research supports the claim that perceptual fragmentations, emotional instability, and physical tension in *Crave* and *Tender Napalm* create trauma patterns. This supports an affect-based reading, where trauma is felt and lived in the body rather than only told in words.

Serving as the main theoretical framework of this thesis, affect theory offers the conceptual tools to understand nonverbal manifestations of trauma as embodied intensities rather than as secondary effects of language or narrative. The works of Richardson and Allison (2019) and Atkinson and Richardson (2013) are used in this thesis to explain the relationship between affect and trauma. These authors emphasize that affect theory suggests that trauma can manifest not only through verbal narratives but also through bodily and sensory responses.

Tomkins (2008) gives the main foundation for this approach. It shows affect as the main organizing part of human experience. In Tomkins' model, affective change comes before thought and works as the primary motivational system. It guides perception, memory, and action through emotional responses that are based in the body. Affect is strongest when language cannot work, appearing in bodily responses such as muscle tension, changed breathing, or high physiological arousal. Massumi (2002) extends and refines Tomkins' account by emphasising the pre-conscious, intensive and relational dimensions of affect. He focuses on affect as pre-conscious, intensive, and relational.

For Massumi, affect moves through bodies as a field of intensity before it becomes emotion or thought. This makes experience dynamic and unstable. Together, the ideas of Tomkins and Massumi allow us to see trauma not as a finished event in the past, but as a continuing affective process. Trauma unfolds through movement, rhythm, and sensory force. Using this framework, *Crave* and *Tender Napalm* can be understood as performative texts where trauma is shown through affective registers that go beyond words. Suffering appears through sensation, not narrative. In this way, Tomkins and Massumi give a clear critical vocabulary to analyse how these plays convey trauma at a bodily and emotional level, using bodily intensity and strong emotion to show trauma that cannot be fully said in words. In this thesis, the term

affect is used to refer to emotional responses and embodied intensities that serve as manifestations of trauma.

This thesis starts from the idea that traumatic experiences often resist direct expression. Trauma theory has shown that speech and representation are limited for expressing these experiences. At this point, theatre gives a way to show trauma through other expressive forms. Silence, rhythm, bodily intensity, and broken form can be used as expressive tools on their own. Building on this, the study focuses on the representation of trauma in Sarah Kane's *Crave* (1998) and Philip Ridley's *Tender Napalm* (2011). Using mainly affect theory, especially the work of Silvan Tomkins and Brian Massumi, and supported by trauma studies, the thesis examines how nonverbal elements work as affective manifestations of trauma. This study addresses three main research questions. First, how can trauma theory and affect theory be approached together in order to understand the way modern drama present trauma? Second, how do nonverbal elements in *Crave* and *Tender Napalm* operate as markers of trauma? Third, if trauma cannot be fully narrated, how does it become understandable in the text through affective intensity? As a result, this thesis argues that trauma in both plays becomes visible through nonverbal intensities that signal its presence before speech instead of being explained in clear narration.

Against this theoretical background, this thesis studies Sarah Kane's *Crave* (1998) and Philip Ridley's *Tender Napalm* (2011) because both plays show trauma in ways that go beyond narrative explanation and enter the world of affective experience. Both plays explore trauma not by showing events directly, but by following how it moves through broken language, fragmented form, space, strong emotions, and bodily intensity. For this reason, they are good case studies for understanding trauma that cannot be said in words but appears through nonverbal and affective ways. This study reads *Crave* and *Tender Napalm* through trauma theory and affect theory, using Tomkins and Massumi to examine how trauma comes out through pre-verbal and affective processes. The intensities that flow through characters can be seen as traces of trauma felt before words appear and sometimes felt instead of words. Each play uses different but complementary ways to show the power of trauma. In *Crave*, trauma is internalised in the text itself. Fragmentation, broken rhythm and long pauses are used to show psychic states that do not make simple sense. On the other hand, *Tender Napalm* uses abstract imagery, abrupt tone shifts and heightened physicality to express

trauma. When words are not sufficient means of expression, gesture and movement function as a tool to convey emotion.

Chapter I explores *Crave* (1998) by examining its nonverbal cues as indicators of trauma. This chapter looks at these cues at different related levels. Repetition, silence, fragmentation, nonlinear time, staging, anonymous voices, emotional intensity, and bodily expressions are analysed as nonverbal affective dimensions of trauma. Using trauma theory and affect theory, *Crave* can be understood as a text where trauma is felt before it is understood.

Chapter II studies Philip Ridley's *Tender Napalm* (2011), a play where trauma appears through indirect expression, fantasy, unstable space, emotional instability, hyperaroused body, and repetition. In this way, suffering becomes visible and felt through nonverbal theatre techniques. This chapter employs trauma theory and affect theory to analyse these nonverbal elements as affective indicators of trauma. It therefore examines how Ridley stages trauma through affect rather than presenting it as a symbolic representation.

The conclusion brings together how Sarah Kane and Philip Ridley use nonverbal and affective theatrical strategies in *Crave* and *Tender Napalm* to present trauma beyond the limits of language. It emphasises that the strategies used in both plays render trauma visible within the text itself.

II. AFFECTIVE FRAGMENTATION AND NONVERBAL TRAUMA IN CRAVE

Sarah Kane (1971–1999) has an important but also debated place in British theatre of the 1990s, especially in the in-her-face theatre movement. Together with other playwrights such as Anthony Neilson and Mark Ravenhill, she is seen as part of the “[h]yped brat pack of young writers”, who introduced a new sensationalism to contemporary drama (Sierz, 2011: 21). She puts writer in the centre of theatrical creation and, by doing this, she changes both the structure and the “Britishness of British theatre” (Sierz, 2001: 11). Her first play *Blasted* (1995) exemplifies this impact through its “[e]xplicit scenes of sexual abuse and cannibalism,” “[b]latant language” and “[r]awness of its emotions,” that shocked critics and audiences alike, according to Sierz (2001: 12). In her dramatic journey from *Blasted* (1995) to *4.48 Psychosis* (1999), Kane progresses from classical-modernist approach to an unconventional experimental form of theatre (Bal, 2016: 33, translated by the author). Her brief five-play career is widely understood as a dramatic evolution in two distinct phases. Her early works, *Blasted* (1995), *Phaedra’s Love* (1996) and *Cleansed* (1998) exemplify features of 1990s in-her-face theatre. They present the body which is violated with the use of sexual violence, torture and mutilation. With her last two plays, *Crave* (1998) and *4.48 Psychosis* (1999), Kane introduces a radical shift, abandoning named characters, conventional plots, stage directions, and almost all physical action (Sierz, 2001: 59). This change moves pain from the body to the mind. Trauma is shown in a new way, through broken language, strong rhythm, and deep feelings of mental breakdown.

In *Crave*, Kane does not use shocking elements that appear in her earlier plays. But she continues the in-her-face style by showing strong emotions and difficult subjects, including abuse and mental suffering, using Sierz’s description of in-her-face theatre as drama that “[g]rabs the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it” (2001: 4). *Crave* brings the audience close to the stage, showing deep psychological pain in a very direct and personal way. Armstrong observes that “While the play may not contain graphic violence, the poetry is frequently violent, and at other moments tender, producing the effect of emotional ambiguity” (2008: 140). The absence of obvious violence does not make the play less intense. Instead, *Crave* moves violence

inside the text, placing it in the words and structure so that the feeling of trauma is sensed, not shown. It is important to note that Kane also used a second style called “postdramatic theatre” as described by German theatre scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann. Lehmann (2006) argues that this style treats the text as a guide for performance, not as a copy of real life. It does not have a linear story, a coherent plot and complex characters. Kane incorporates postdramatic aspects into the play instead of conventional stage restrictions. As Bal states, “*Crave* can be considered the most strongly postdramatic play that Kane added to her experimental theatrical aesthetic up to that point” (2016: 33, translated by the author).

Crave does not present trauma in a realist fashion. Armstrong argues that the play is a very personal confrontation with trauma. As he explains, the play “[d]eals with the individual’s awakening sensation of trauma located” (2008: 26-27). The play does not present trauma by recounting specific incidents. Rather, it expresses trauma within the text’s structure and emotional content. As Çameli argues, “Namely, the particular mode of writing that she employs with no identifiable characters, no stage directions, no physical setting and no coherent language facilitate witnessing the effect of trauma in the victim’s mind” (2022b: 105). The plot and characters of the play are not typical. Instead, the letters A, B, C and M are used for characters names. This choice helps avoid fixed identity and break the psychological unity of the text. The play does not progress in a coherent way. It is made of poetic monologues and overlapping as well as non-linear dialogues that interrupt, repeat and break each other. This style makes trauma seem more intense because it forces the reader to feel trauma as sensation, disruption and emotional pressure, not as a simple story. In this way, trauma appears through nonverbal expressions such as fragmentation, silence, emotional overflow, disembodiment, and collapse of time.

The chapter examines these elements at different related levels. Strong word patterns, repetition, stillness, and fragmentation disrupt natural expression at the linguistic level. Instead of using coherent language, this enables traumatic intensity to be conveyed through rhythm, pause and repetition. Structurally, the play has no stage directions, the voices have no names, and it is not in a simple order. This breaks the usual stability of drama and makes time and space feel confused, which mirrors how trauma breaks experience. Formally, unusual typography and changes in rhythm

increase emotional intensity. This makes trauma appear as a bodily experience, not only a meaning that can be read in words. Using trauma theory, these signals are identified as trauma markers and then they are examined in line with affect theory. Thus, this chapter looks at how Crave uses nonverbal elements to show trauma as an affective force moving between voices and shaping the text. Trauma is not in one character or one event only. Kane makes an emotional environment where trauma is felt, shared, and carried, showing how it shakes and disturbs a person's sense of self. In the original text of Crave, the characters are represented by the letters A, B, C, and M. In this thesis, a colon (:) is added after each letter to clearly distinguish the characters' speech.

A. Embodied and Emotional Registers of Trauma

Crave can be seen as showing trauma not mainly as a clear story, but as something felt in the body before it can become words. Instead of explaining suffering directly, the play often suggests it through physical pain, showing that trauma appears first as sensation and only later can be put into language. This focus on the body makes the limits of language visible because the emotional pain is expressed through gestures, strong images, and signs of discomfort, not by direct explanation, as demonstrated in the play: "C: I want to feel physically like I feel emotionally. / Starved. / M: Beaten. /A: Broken." (Kane, 2001: 179). Trauma theory helps comprehend this process. It holds that the body is the main site of expressing traumatic experience when words cannot express it. Herman observes that,

Chronically traumatized people no longer have any baseline state of physical calm or comfort. Over time, they perceive their bodies as having turned against them. They begin to complain, not only of insomnia and agitation, but also of numerous types of somatic symptoms. Tension headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances, and abdominal, back, or pelvic pain are extremely common. Survivors may complain of tremors, choking sensations, or rapid heartbeat. (1992: 62)

Her view helps to show how trauma can come back through bodily distress, pointing to a constant state of alert instead of recovery. When we read this together with Herman's ideas, the play's repeated mentions of pain, bleeding, and cutting can be seen

as signs of a body trapped in ongoing tension, where suffering is expressed through feelings rather than a clear story. In this way, Crave uses the body as the main way for trauma to be felt and passed on, allowing forms of expression that happen before, and sometimes instead of, language.

If trauma in Crave is shown through bodily disturbance rather than clear story, affect theory gives a way to think how these feelings work before they become meaning. From this point of view, these bodily responses do not only show pain, but also mark intensity at a pre-conscious level, where experience is felt first and not yet understood. Tomkins's account of affect is very useful here: "[e]ach innate affect is controlled by inherited programs, which in turn control facial muscle responses, autonomic responses, blood flow, respiratory and vocal responses" (2008: 647). In the play, this framework helps to clarify how trauma can appear through automatic bodily reactions, such as aching, tension, or sudden cries, before reflection. This is shown in the following lines: "B: My back aches. / C: My head aches. / A: My heart aches." (Kane, 2001: 166). Pain spreads across different parts of the body instead of staying with one speaker. Together, these lines seem to make a shared feeling of distress, focusing on sensation more than explanation. The pattern becomes stronger in the one-syllable screams with a "beat," where language breaks into rhythm and breath:

C: (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

A beat.

C: (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

B: (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

M: (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

B: (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

A: (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

M: (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

C: (Emits a short one syllable scream.)

A beat. (Kane, 2001: 186–187)

When words cannot express traumatic emotions, the body acts as the main means of expressing trauma through sound, pause and physical response. The brief, one-syllable shouts do not advance the plot. Instead, they function as abrupt emotional outbursts. This intensity is increased by the many pauses ("*A beat*"), which creates suspension

and breaks similar to the stop-start period which are often associated with trauma. The result is a shared emotional intensity rather than a coherent story. The cries alternate across voices, which suggests that trauma is not limited to one person but flows throughout the play. In this way, affect works like something contagious: passing through sound and rhythm rather than words or plot. This sequence shows the play's main logic: trauma is presented as force and sensation, resisting clear storytelling, and demanding to be felt in the body.

Extending this idea, Massumi's ideas help to show how affect often appears in the body before it can be explained. He describes intensity (affect) as an experience in the body that does not wait for language, and he calls the body "[a] relay between its corporeal and incorporeal dimensions" (2002: 14). From this view, sensation comes before thought, through automatic reactions that "[m]anifested in the skin – at the surface of the body" (2002: 25). Read alongside *Crave*, this framework enables it possible to see how trauma is first felt as sensation, not organised as meaning. This affective immediacy seems particularly evident in M's list of bodily problems: "Impaired judgement, sexual dysfunction, anxiety, headaches, nervousness, sleeplessness, restlessness, nausea, diarrhoea, itching, shaking, sweating, twitching," followed by C's response, "That's what I'm suffering from now" (Kane, 2001: 187). The long list, given without order or explanation, overwhelms with too much bodily detail. Trauma here is not a clear mental state but spread across the body in many sensations at once. Instead of moving toward insight or diagnosis, the repetition produces intensity, making trauma visible before thought or narrative can organise it.

The same logic appears in C's disturbing image of internal infestation by maggots: "I open my mouth and I too am full of them, crawling down my throat" (Kane, 2001: 175). Suffering is shown here as something that exists inside the body and is uncontrollable or unavoidable. Also, pain is experienced internally within the body and goes beyond the subject's control rather than coming from the outside. Similarly, B's statement, "Something inside me that kicks like a bastard" (Kane, 2001: 172), reduces trauma to an unexplained physical force. These moments express trauma directly through emotion and escape psychological explanations. They also show that affect moves faster than thought which creates physical intensity before cognition.

Crave presents trauma as something that is always felt, as a wordless presence in the body that must be felt but cannot be understood, rather than as a story or recollection.

From the perspective of affect theory, the body in Crave can be seen as the first register of trauma, while emotion may be understood as a further intensification of this disturbance when it starts to enter language. Emotions in the play do not appear as stable psychological states. Instead, they tend to show unstable forces that resist control or organisation. Traumatic experience seems to erupt through heightened emotional states, shaping not only what is spoken but also how speech happens. When the mind cannot process experience, emotion becomes unstable, showing in sudden outbursts, bodily sensations, or bursts of affective intensity. As illustrated in the play: “C: My grief has nothing to do with men. I’m having a breakdown because I’m going to die.” (Kane, 2001:172). Herman gives a helpful explanation of this dynamic in the following passage:

Reliving a traumatic experience [...] carries with it the emotional intensity of the original event. The survivor is continually buffeted by terror and rage. These emotions are qualitatively different from ordinary fear and anger. They are outside the range of ordinary emotional experience, and they overwhelm the ordinary capacity to bear feelings. (1992: 29)

Trauma theory according to Herman, helps comprehend strong feelings in Crave. The protagonists live in a state of perpetual emotional crisis full of negative emotions such as fear, shame, disgust, and anger. As Tomkins observes, “All the negative affects trouble human beings deeply” (2008: 687). This reflects the play’s sense of ongoing pain. Tomkins’s explanation is very useful to show how emotions appear before clear thought. He identifies primary affects, “[i]nterest, enjoyment, surprise, fear, anger, distress, shame, dissmell, and disgust,” that shape emotional life and show themselves through bodily responses (2008: 647). These affects work at a pre-conscious level, giving the body a base from which emotion and thought can later develop.

Moments of very strong emotion in Crave often show less as expressions of stable mental states and more as affective eruptions that take control of the body and interrupt thought. Lines such as “B: It’s real, it’s real, dead real, dead real” (Kane, 2001: 183) and “C: I’m going to die” (Kane, 2001: 172) show panic directly rather

than reflection. What is communicated here is not a thought-out fear of something, but fear as sensation; an intensity that comes before it can be understood by the mind. In Tomkins's terms, this matches the affects of fear and distress, which push the body toward withdrawal or freezing instead of narration or explanation. This affective logic becomes especially strong in C's description of herself as "That violent terrified paralysed child" (Kane, 2001: 171), a phrase that contains aggression, terror, and immobility into a single image. The child figure shows not a remembered identity but an affective state that stays in the present, as if trauma keeps the subject fixed in a moment of overwhelming fear. Violence and paralysis exist together here, showing how traumatic affect overwhelms the person; the body is full of intensity but cannot act. This problem in containing fear through language is shown further in the following sequence:

A: A horror so deep only ritual can contain it,

M: Express it,

B: Explain it,

A: Maintain it. (Kane, 2001: 176)

The exchange can be read as an effort to manage affect by speaking, but each attempt does not succeed. Expression, explanation, and even trying to keep it under control are not able to hold the "horror." Instead of calming emotion, the scene shows that words cannot control it. Fear here is not something that can be clearly named or controlled; it appears as an intensity that resists speech, coming back in waves that overwhelm both language and the sense of self.

Alongside fear, shame appears to function as a persistent emotional force in *Crave*. It shows itself through repeated acts of self-condemnation, such as "B: I disgust myself" (Kane, 2001: 173), "A: My pain is nothing compared to hers" (Kane, 2001: 177), and "C: No one can hate me more than I hate myself" (Kane, 2001: 180). Seen through Tomkins's ideas, shame in *Crave* can be understood as an affect shaped by a felt sense of inferiority. As Tomkins argues, "shame is about inferiority" (2008: 85). It diverts focus inward, interrupts interest and reduces the ability to connect with others. As the characters' identity is defined by their moral failings, injury or worthlessness, this movement recurs in their self-criticisms. Shame appears as an experience that enters speech and cognition rather than as a straightforward emotion.

Moreover, Tomkins notes that when shame is triggered, “[m]emories of past shame scenes and shame-relevant thoughts flood consciousness” (2008: 715). In *Crave*, this process is expressed through repeated statements that convey self-hate. C’s assertion, “It is not acceptable for me to be me” (Kane, 2001: 185), and M’s admission, “Sometimes the shape of my head alarms me” (Kane, 2001: 160), exemplify instances in which the self is perceived as unsettling or strange. When C declares, “I’m evil, I’m damaged, and no one can save me” (Kane, 2001: 173), the consequences get worse and speaking turns into an emotional self-attack. The play’s characters get stuck in a cycle of self-hatred because shame never goes away. Therefore, shame in the play is a nonverbal indicator of trauma.

On the other hand, anger often manifests externally which causes fragmentation in language. According to Tomkins, anger is a negative emotion that arises when stimulations does not end which leads to stress (2008: 139). The characters’ exchanges, marked by characters’ imperative and heightened expressions appear to show this unresolved tension. The sharp commands, “C: LEAVE. / A: COME BACK. / All: STAY.” (Kane, 2001: 159), create an impression that emotional regulation breaks down under the pressure of anger. This mirrors Tomkins’ theory that anger develops when emotional regulation is overpowered by stimuli that does not stop. Anger manifests itself as a condition of instability, rather than as a demand. This instability is a reflection of how anger develops when stimulus persists without any emotional control. Anger is shown in the sentence, “A: HOW CAN YOU LEAVE ME LIKE THIS?” (Kane, 2001: 172), as both aggression and protest against abandonment. The capital letters suggest louder voice, as if the body tries to relieve pressure when words alone are not a sufficient means of expression. Rapid breathing, tense muscles and bodily excitement are translated into the text’s rhythm and visual shape throughout the play through instructions and capitalisation. Here, language finds it difficult to control the emotional energy. This is in line with Herman’s theory of hyperarousal, which argues that the body remains vigilant even in the absence of an immediate threat (1992: 26).

With feelings such as guilt and grief, Kane makes the affective disturbance worse. These emotions, as Tomkins (2008) defines compound or inhibited forms of basic affects, often emerge in *Crave*. Guilt usually appears without clear reason, for example in “A: Throbbing between shame and guilt” (Kane, 2001: 181), “A: Guilt

lingers like the smell of death, and nothing can free me from this cloud of blood” (Kane, 2001: 184), and “C: I have this guilt and I don’t know why” (Kane, 2001: 174). These lines do not show moral failure. Instead, they show guilt as a condition in mind and body. According to Tomkins, guilt is a kind of self-blame that comes from feeling worthless. As Tomkins states, guilt is “[t]he affect of indignity, of defeat, of transgression, and of alienation” (2008: 118). It moves attention inward and separates the person from self and others. Words like throbbing, smell, and cloud show that guilt is strong and felt as pressure, not just a conscious feeling. In the play, guilt continues even without clear cause or solution.

According to Tomkins, grief is also a form of affective intensity that is difficult to narrate. He says, “Both grief and anger work are explorations of possibilities superimposed on already magnified scenes of love or hate” (2008: 895). In *Crave*, grief returns to moments of loss again and again. In lines such as “A: I shudder with grief for that moment which I’ve been hurtling away from ever since” (Kane, 2001: 177). This shows grief stuck in the past, felt again not to solve it but to experience its weight. Likewise, the exchange “M: The loss. / C: The pain. / A: The loss” (Kane, 2001: 192) indicates that loss is remembered which is an indication of a cycle of affect. Characters investigate what is lost or what may have been instead. Therefore, *Crave* presents grief as a loss and powerful affective intensity that keeps the traumatic event alive.

B. Linguistic Disruption and Affective Pressure

Repetition is a key nonverbal indicator of trauma, similar to *Crave*’s exploration of emotional expression. It seems to be used as both a style and a formal tool, making the language a site of mental breakdowns. The play uses unconventional dialogue, including overlapping lines, repeated phrases, and circular patterns. The four voices repeatedly express longing, loss and blame. In the play, trauma is not told or resolved. It intensifies as the pattern repeats again, as evident in *Crave*: “C: No. / M: Yes. / B: No. / A: Yes. / B: No. / C: No. / A: Yes. [...]” (Kane, 2001: 186). Repetition aligns with trauma theory because it shows that the mind is attempting but failing to control traumatic experiences. As Caruth explains, “[t]he survival of trauma is not the fortunate passage beyond a violent event, a passage that is accidentally interrupted by reminders of it, but rather the endless inherent necessity of repetition, which ultimately may lead to destruction” (1996: 52). Repetition reveals the recurring nature of

unprocessed experiences. In *Crave*, these loops prioritise affective intensity and emotional overflow over rational explanations. This shows that trauma manifests as compulsive, emotional utterances and is not completely understood.

Looking deeper into the emotional aspects of these repeating patterns, Massumi's argument about repetition and intensity is very useful. He discusses the relationship between repetition and affect by using Ronald Reagan's political speeches. As he puts it:

The words were treated as a kind of incantation, as if they enveloped something of the desired event, contained its trace. Their repetition deposited a trace of the event in each of the contexts, gradually coloring the everyday world. Conversely, each context left its own trace in the words. (2002: 56)

Massumi believes that repetition does not simply convey message, but it builds and spreads intensity. It has the ability to transform words into actions that create emotional energy and affective feelings that go beyond the meaning of the words. The play's repetitive verbal patterns are physical indicators of emotion. They alter bodily intensity into rhythm, which demonstrates what cannot be thought or remembered precisely. In *Crave*, trauma moves through these cycles of repetition. This is evident in the voice of C, whose words show how repetition expresses pain and affective force:

What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me?

What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me?

What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me?

What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me?

What have they done to me? What have they done to me? What have they done to me?

What have they done to me? What have they done to me? (Kane, 2001: 191)

This repeated repetition implies insistence and an emotional cry. It shows how unprocessed experience persists. The pace of the words transforms speech into a physiological struggle. Instead of providing a clear meaning, these passages suggest an unrestrained release of emotional intensity in terms of affect theory. Therefore, language functions as an affective pulse. This mirrors Massumi's theory that repetition increases intensity and allows emotional traces of trauma to flow through the body and speech. B's, "Okay, I was, okay, I was, okay okay. I was, okay," (Kane, 2001: 163), A's "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry" (Kane, 2001: 164) and C's "This has to stop this has to stop this has to stop" (Kane, 2001: 170) highlight the same pattern. These repetitions seem like sudden eruptions and emphasise the mind that is struggling with trauma. Each repetition triggers memories of past pain and acts more as a physiological reaction than conventional conversation. As Massumi observes, these repeating forms express "[a] trace of the transformation, a spectre of an ungraspable, unthinkable event" (2002: 54) and increase intensity until the play is full of hidden tension. In doing so, Kane makes psychological conflict visible via rhythm and allows trauma to be experienced directly.

When the intense rhythm of repetition is combined with the play's fragmented structure, fragmentation becomes an essential nonverbal indicator of trauma. It manifests itself in fragmented phrases and sudden linguistic shifts. There are fragments at the structural, verbal and thematic levels of the play. The play does not tell a continuous, coherent story. Instead, it breaks up language into short, disjointed lines, sudden transitions, interrupted thoughts, and silences, as in "B: Let me. / M: Go." (Kane, 2001: 185). Normal dramatic flow is interrupted. This mirrors the mind which is struggling to digest traumatic event. As Bessel van der Kolk explains, "The overwhelming experience is split off and fragmented, so that the emotions, sounds, images, thoughts, and physical sensations related to the trauma take on a life of their own. The sensory fragments of memory intrude into the present, where they are literally relived" (2014: 68). The play's fragmented style reflects this division. Fragmentation here is more than just a stylistic choice; it demonstrates trauma's long-term impact on body and mind. When emotion is too strong for language, the characters get caught in their raw intensity. This can be observed in these lines: "M: Here and there. / C: Leave. / B: Where? / C: Now. / M: There." (Kane, 2001: 157).

This strong overflow of emotion can be best explained in terms of affect theory. Affect is an intensity that is outside conscious thought. As Brian Massumi argues, “Intensity is beside that loop, a nonconscious, never-to-conscious autonomic remainder. It is outside expectation and adaptation, as disconnected from meaningful sequencing, from narration, as it is from vital function. It is narratively de-localized” (2002: 25). The assertion that “intensity is beside that loop” (2002: 25) shows that affect does not pass through reasoning that normally changes experience into narrative. Instead, it remains a nonconscious force outside of rationality or story. In other words, intensity is a raw experience that cannot be fully described. Therefore, fragmentation in the play is more than just a broken story. It is a mark of affective force that resists order or ending. Broken lines, single words and incomplete sentences show the intensity that comes with language.

Kane’s take on punctuation is significant. As she argues, punctuation “[i]s used to indicate delivery, not to conform to the rules of grammar” (Kane, 2001: 153). This strengthens fragmentation at the structural level. Punctuation shows pauses, breaths, hesitations or abrupt stops in speech which are all disrupting the natural flow of speech. Because of this, words appear isolated, rather than appearing as whole sentences. The play has many examples of these breaks. Lines like B’s “Will. You. Make. Me. One.” (Kane, 2001: 161) and C’s “A field. A basement. A bed. A car” (Kane, 2001: 174) break the sentence into separate chunks. Each word is like a small pulse of emotion, as if the body is contracting. Fragmentation shows that affect comes first, before thought or understanding. Longer sequences strengthen this effect:

A: Beyond my comprehension,

C: Beyond my

A: Beyond

[...]

M: Empty.

A: Sickened.

C: White.

B: Love me. (Kane, 2001: 184)

The transition from entire sentences to single adjectives shows that the mind is unable to translate experience into thought. Each word functions as a little affective impact

which expresses emotion. Words such as “Empty,” “Sickened” and “White” show exhaustion, nausea and shock rather than formed meaning. This mirrors Massumi’s argument that intensity exists outside “meaningful sequencing” (2002: 25), where affect comes before and goes beyond story. The abrupt cry, “Love me,” breaks this pattern and shows the need for connection at the time when language breaks down. Trauma is not presented as a story but felt as intensity that moves across speech and breaks cognition and sense. A similar disruption occurs in C’s repeated incomplete phrases: “If she’d left –” (Kane, 2001: 157, 165, 175) and “When she left –” (Kane, 2001: 193). These fragmented lines convey a horrific experience that cannot be normally expressed. The statement ends where an explanation would normally end, which shows how affect interrupts discourse before it has finished. The dashes make the speech circular. In Massumi’s words, these moments exist outside of linear sequence and maintain intensity until it becomes a story. We see fragmentation acquiring a stronger effect in short exchanges: “M: Now. / B: Never. / C: No.” (161), “C: No. / M: Never. / C: Sorry.” (Kane, 2001: 173), and “C: No. / B: Never. / A: No.” (Kane, 2001: 187). Dialogue is reduced to single-word intensities that look like automatic reactions than a real communication. They create a closed loop and do not move forward, which demonstrates emotional stagnation. Because affect emerges before thought and interrupts the speech. In other words, fragmentation in *Crave* is much than just a style; it is an affective means of expressing trauma. The play frequently presents moments of intensity that extend beyond the story. In this way, fragmentation functions as an affective indicator of trauma, which is shaped by rhythm and breaks.

The introduction of anonymous, disembodied voices adds to the instability in the play. The four speakers, identified only as A, B, C and M, exist only as voices. They have no bodies, no histories and no established relationships. They talk ambiguously in a way that their identity cannot be fixed. According to Middeke et al. (2011: 313), “[t]he play’s appearance on the page makes the distinction between dialogue and direct address ambiguous; [...] no designations indicating whom the speaker is addressing.” This results in overlapping, interrupting and echoing words with no clear aim. Here, voice is distinct from personality, and communication circulates without creating a fixed self. This anonymity aligns with trauma’s effect on identity. Trauma often removes a sense of self which subsequently causes depersonalisation, numbness and

disconnection from real life. Herman argues that “Survivors of prolonged abuse develop characteristic personality changes, including deformations of relatedness and identity” (1992: 69). This indicates how trauma shatters a sense of stable self and relationships with others. Also, van der Kolk notes that many traumatised people “[l]ack a continuous sense of self” (2014: 281) and defines depersonalisation as a state of “[b]lank stares and absent minds,” where thought, memory and feeling seem to have been removed (2014: 68). Therefore, the disembodied voices in *Crave* are dramatic representations of traumatised self.

This loss of a stable self is better understood in light of affect theory which studies pre-personal intensities before identity formation. Massumi argues that affect “[e]scapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is” (2021: 35). This means that affect does not remain within one person. Instead, it extends beyond the body and into a broader network of relationships. Accordingly, trauma is an overflow of affect. It is too much sensation that the self cannot contain. Trauma transcends the ego and creates a shared intensity. This helps explain why the characters in *Crave* are unable to maintain fixed identities. Thereby, trauma in the play is shown as a pre-personal intensity that dissolves the borders of the self. This collapse of limits can be read as Massumi’s idea of affective overflow, where intensity leaves one body and moves in a shared field, making the line between self and other unclear. The opening sequence shows this scattering of affect very clearly:

C: You're dead to me.

B: My will reads, Fuck this up and I'll haunt you for the rest of your fucking life.

C: He's following me.

A: What do you want?

B: To die.

C: Somewhere outside the city, I told my mother, You're dead to me.

B: No that's not it.

C: If I could be free of you without having to lose you. (Kane, 2001: 173)

Here, it seems there is no clear connection from one line to the next. Voices overlap, interrupt, and even contradict each other, without staying attached to one speaker. At first, readers may try to make sense, for example thinking C talks to B or A answers

B, but this quickly fails. The voices feel like a collective, disembodied chorus that creates an affective intensity which reveals trauma's depersonalising effect. Psychological realism is not kept; instead, the text shows trauma as breaking both relationships and inner coherence, an identity that cannot hold itself. Also, the lines do not belong clearly to anyone. C's "You're dead to me," for instance, could be directed at B, at M, or turned inward toward the self. The utterance floats in a shared affective space. Instead of showing a stable subject, the words create a feeling of dissolution, where emotions lose clear borders and cannot be organised around a stable self, thought or story.

This dissolution appears even more apparent in C's repeated statements about losing the self, throughout the play. Lines such as "Where's my personality gone?" (Kane, 2001: 194), "My mind's a blank" (Kane, 2001: 168) and "Lost" (Kane, 2001: 188) show moments when identity seems to collapse under the weight of intensity. These lines do not work as clear statements about identity. Instead, they show a sense of absence, like the normal structures that organise thought, memory, and desire are gone. The language is short and direct, giving no story or explanation, as if the mind cannot stay continuous. Therefore, feeling is too strong for the self to hold. Also, C's attempt in defining itself in "If I was / If I / If I was" (Kane, 2001: 162) suggests a self that is fragmented and split between saying and erasing. Identity is not stable. But it is a process that is broken and disturbed. These broken lines demonstrate a time when affect stops the process of identity formation. Language functions as an expressive eruption that the self cannot control. Since affect moves beyond the boundaries of any single body or subject.

The play uses silence to overcome the strong flow of words, which is evidenced by the uncertainty of the anonymous, overlapping voices. During these instances, communication stops completely, and the absence itself is traumatic, as illustrated in "*A Pause*." (Kane, 2001: 189) and "*A silence*." (Kane, 2001: 191). Characters in Crave frequently use pauses, ellipses or incomplete lines. Breaks indicate intense emotions that are almost impossible to express. Through these silences, the characters cannot turn their pain into meaningful language, giving only fragments instead of full expression. Silence in the play is therefore an important nonverbal sign of trauma. It

is not just nothing; it is an affective break. Trauma theory often identifies silence as a clear sign of psychic injury.

Herman observes that “[f]ar too often secrecy prevails, and the story of the traumatic event surfaces not as a verbal narrative but as a symptom” (1992: 1), emphasising how trauma resists linguistic expression. Caruth similarly suggests that trauma’s “delayed appearance” and “belated address” (1996: 8), belong not only to what can be spoken but also to “[w]hat remains unknown in our very actions and our language” (1996: 8). With these ideas, the pauses in *Crave* can be read not as empty space but as moments where trauma stops speech. Silence becomes a sign of grief, fear, despair, or shame that stays in the body.

Therefore, silence in *Crave* can be examined by drawing on Massumi’s notion of affect as “autonomous” and “unqualified” (2002: 35). This helps understand why speech breaks down. Moreover, as he explains, “An emotional qualification breaks narrative continuity for a moment to register a state—actually to re-register an already felt state, for the skin is faster than the word” (2002: 25). As Massumi suggests, naming an emotion, such as “I am afraid” or “I feel pain,” disrupts the flow of experience in order to resolve a feeling. However, the body’s response is always faster than words. Thus, emotion is similar to a second step; it is a conscious marking of what the body has already experienced. Massumi’s words that “[t]he skin is faster than the word” (2002: 25) highlight how sensation precedes thought and language. Affect operates outside of conventional thought or language. It appears first as a raw sensation that is difficult to translate into emotion. This is important for understanding silence. Trauma frequently manifests itself physically before it can be expressed verbally. Accordingly, the silences in *Crave* are instances when intensity overpowers communication which disrupts dialogue in ways that feel lived rather than expressed.

In the play, silence, as an affective expression of trauma, is evident in *C*. The phrase “Silence or violence” (Kane, 2001: 187) presents silence as having bodily force, which implies that when affect cannot be expressed, it builds up as pressure. Silence is more than just absence; it is a compacted intensity that might either turn inward or erupt violently. Silence does not remove traumatic surges, therefore they continue to be felt in the body. Similarly, lines such as “(when am I ‘perfectly honest?’)” (Kane, 2001: 194) and “Lie low, provoke nothing” (Kane, 2001: 198) suggest an inner state

marked by fear and self-control. Affect dominates words, and silence is a protective tactic. Affect registers in the very act of withholding speech, when intensity is felt but stays unspoken. Moreover, C's hesitant attempt to speak, "I need to... remember" (Kane, 2001: 171), and M's line, "No, I... mustn't get attached" (Kane, 2001: 167), illustrate how affect can surface in the very gaps of language. The ellipses and fragmented phrases create a sense of pause, which indicates that intensity interrupts words rather than producing coherent emotion.

According to Massumi, hesitation indicates a felt state that precedes emotion. The pause itself is a source of affective transmission which allows the reader to feel the struggle. In this play, silence occurs not just in pauses or ellipses, but also when words transform into music, rhythm or empty noise. B's repeated "no no no no no no no/ no no no no no no no no no no," spoken "quietly, continuously" (Kane, 2001: 199), shows language collapsing into rhythm, expressing distress without naming it. The character speaks but cannot fully say what is felt; the words stay between speech and silence, showing affect stronger than meaning:

C: Ha ha ha

B: Ho ho ho

M: He he he (Kane, 2001: 184-5)

This can be understood as another moment where speaking replaces communication. The sounds do not show meaning or amusement, but show traces of affective charge, marked by dissociation and repeated patterns. What appears is not a story, but a sign of unprocessed experience breaking through attempts at speech. These expressions reflect Massumi's idea of affect as intensity that comes before and goes beyond language: the body speaks when words fail. The broken vocal sounds let the reader feel traumatised subjectivities whose voices are silenced. The characters cannot explain their experiences, but their quiet suffering appears through the failure of their speech, showing emotions felt before they can be spoken.

C. Structural and Performative Dislocation

Building on the emptiness created by silence, nonlinear structure of *Crave* makes the disruption of time even stronger, showing trauma not as a clear story but as

repeated, achronological return. The play gives no temporal markers, no scene divisions, and no clear cause-and-effect. Instead, the four voices loop, overlap, and break in a continuous, associative flow. This arrangement confuses the reader, which implies that trauma is more of a present emotional experience than a previous event. Caruth argues that flashback constitutes “[a] history that literally has no place, neither in the past, in which it was not fully experienced, nor in the present, in which its precise images and enactments are not fully understood” (1995: 153). This points to a paradox in traumatic memory. Such memory exists between remembering and forgetting. Because the incident cannot be fully digested when it occurs, it returns as non-linear flashbacks that contain past and present. Accordingly, the fragmented time in *Crave* shows this paradox. The confusion between temporal points suggests that the characters are locked in loops. The past presses into the present; yet it is never forming a coherent plot. As it is seen in the lines: “C: I didn’t / A: I don’t / C: Understand” (Kane, 2001: 171).

The abrupt transitions between past and present in the play suggest that memory is affected more by emotional pressure than by a defined narrative. Its nonlinear form emphasises memory through intensity rather than order and presents trauma as an unstable, repeated “now” that cannot be contained in time. These pauses exemplify Massumi’s concept of intensity as a preconscious, affective state. As he puts it,

[n]onlinear processes: resonance and feedback that momentarily suspend the linear progress of the narrative present from past to future. Intensity is qualifiable as an emotional state, and that state is static— temporal and narrative noise. It is a state of suspense, potentially of disruption. It is like a temporal sink, a hole in time, as we conceive of it and narrativize it. (2002: 26)

Therefore, intensity can stop the normal flow of story and create moments of time that do not follow a clear order. This is consistent with Caruth's (1996) description of traumatic time as late, invasive and difficult to locate in a linear timeline. *Crave* presents trauma in a state of “affective suspension” (Massumi, 2002: 26). Throughout the play, intensity combines past, present and future and allows unresolved pain to continue as an ongoing force rather than a finished, historical event.

This sense of timelessness is expressed in C's broken memory: "I have children, the men come, I am fighting but they take them, I realise, the men, they came, they said, in the night, they said." (Kane, 2001: 178). The sudden changes between present, present continuous and past tense in one line suggest that memory is driven by affective pressure. This feeling is similar to what Massumi calls intensity, that goes beyond story order and returns as a felt shock. A's long speech which moves suddenly from a future that might happen to a present which has already been lost shows a similar affect: "I will lie to you from day one and use you and screw you and break your heart [...] you will love me more each day until the weight is unbearable and your life is mine and you'll die alone because I will take what I want then walk away and owe you nothing [...] I have lost you now" (Kane, 2001: 178). The imagined betrayals feel certain, as if the harm has already happened. The future here feels full of grief before it happens. This mix of past and future creates one affective field instead of a straight timeline. The imagined violence repeats feeling of loss, as if the speaker is stuck in an affect that cannot be fully felt or resolved. Saying "I have lost you now" shows that the future is already emotionally used up, giving a strong sense of overflowing feeling. Language cannot organise experience here; it only carries grief. In this way, the future becomes a space filled with unprocessed affect, shaped more by intensity than by story.

In C's memories of the assault, the text makes the reader witness trauma not as a complete memory, but as something emerging in a broken, felt way, outside normal story order:

A bubble of blood,

[...]

Gurgling blood,

[...]

Thick yellow blood [...] (Kane, 2001: 177)

The repeated images look like strong sensory flashes, not like details of story. They seem to come suddenly in the moment of speaking, and maybe C feels again the bodily intensity of the event, not only remembers it. The following line "I keep coming back" (Kane, 2001: 177) shows this impression. It does not tell of a completed return, but a

pull still going, like the traumatic affect always pulls her back to same emotional state, and the past is happening again in present. Later line seems to make this point clear by naming the assault directly: “A fourteen year old to steal my virginity on the moor and rape me till I come” (Kane, 2001: 178). This is the point where source of the earlier blood imagery becomes momentarily visible. Taken together, these lines show an affective break where past and present collapse, and the emotional ruins of trauma come into speech. This resonates with Massumi’s idea of affect that returns outside the linear progression of time, by reactivating bodily intensity before cognition can organise it. Overall, Crave presents temporality not as a linear narrative but as an affective field. Time expands, contracts, or stalls according to the intensity of unresolved feeling. Kane’s nonlinear structure therefore allows the reader to experience trauma not as a memory stored in chronological time but as an affective force that continues to shape perception.

This temporal dislocation seems to have its counterpart in Crave’s minimalist staging, where very few physical and visual elements carry the nonverbal registers of body, emotion, and silence. Kane shows the collapse of spatial grounding with strong dramatic force on stage. There are no stage directions for movement, setting or action in the play. As Middeke, Schnierer, and Sierz note, “[t]here are no stage directions except for silences and beats” (2011: 313). This creates a vacuum atmosphere which mirrors characters’ dissociation from their bodies and their environment. This void is an important marker of trauma and shows a sense of existential dislocation. Studies often notice that trauma can make people feel detached from their environment, as if ordinary spatial coordinates, where one is, how one moves, become unstable. For people who have trauma “[t]he world is experienced with a different nervous system that has an altered perception of risk and safety” (van der Kolk, 2014: 81). This perception might affect the body’s experience and movement in space. As Casey notes, “[p]lace and embodiment are both essential to the possibility of agency” (2018: x). In this view, subjectivity appears through the body’s movement in space. If trauma disrupts this grounding, then the self that depends on embodied presence and orientation also becomes fractured.

Instead of giving a clear dramatic environment, Crave seems to stage trauma through spatial disorientation, with empty stage, lack of setting, and a sense of nowhere. The characters live in a world without clear representation, which seems to

show their difficulty to place themselves physically and psychologically after overwhelming experience. Seen in this way, the collapse of place in the play can evoke an affective mode of experience. This instability connects to Massumi's idea of affect, especially his notion of "proprioception" (2002: 58), which shows the body's internal sense of position and movement. Massumi explains that "The spatiality of the body without an image can be understood even more immediately as an effect of proprioception [...] because it opens exclusively onto that space and registers qualities directly and continuously as movement" (2002: 58-59). He explains that the body's space is felt directly through proprioception, which registers movement without needing visual points of reference. Space, then, is not fixed from outside but felt as a kinetic process continuing from within. Seen in this way, the unstable spatial environment in *Crave* can be understood as reflecting the proprioceptive dimension of trauma. Its emptiness and feeling of nowhere seem to show deep disorientation, where characters cannot place themselves reliably physically or psychologically after traumatic experience. Therefore, the play does not only show trauma but creates an affective environment, where space itself becomes a subtle sign of distressed bodily sensation.

The four anonymous voices, A, B, C and M, speak over each other without direct interaction or clear spatial relation, leaving it uncertain whether they share the same environment or exist in isolation. This uncertainty makes a feeling of disembodied space, where spatial boundaries seem to fall down and the stage becomes something felt not seen. What appears is a terrain of sensations, memories and emotional reflections, an affective landscape that is close to Massumi's idea of proprioception, where space is felt inside the body and not mapped outside. This affective terrain can be seen in the fragmented, overlapping sequence:

M: Move on.

A: I look at her breast,

C: A balloon of milk,

M: Sooner or later,

C: A bubble of blood,

B: One way or another,

C: Gurgling blood,

B: That is going into my mouth,

C: Thick yellow blood,

A: My pain is nothing compared to hers.

C: but but but

A: (and this is crucial) (Kane, 2001: 177)

No one speaker seems to have the body which is described; breast, milk, and blood move between voices like pieces of sensation that are felt but not belonging to one source. This break of “proprioception” (Massumi, 2002: 58), can show suffering working as an affective flow without clear origin or destination. In this way, the disembodied voices seem to move inside an internal, affective space made by trauma’s signs like repetitions, breaks, and dislocations. The traumatised body then can be seen as a place of spatial confusion, not able to find safe position in the world or in itself. In the end, trauma seems to change the empty stage of the play into an affective environment, where feeling of pain, longing, and fear echo in ways that make the line between self and space unclear.

The character A’s repeated references to place signal a persistent struggle to establish orientation: “I have to be where I want to be” (Kane, 2001: 179), “I have to be where I’m meant to be” (Kane, 2001: 189), and “Has it ever occurred to you you’re looking in the wrong place?” (Kane, 2001: 160). Place becomes something he cannot fully locate, name or inhabit. This indicates a traumatised need for grounding or belonging that is not solved. The repeated return to words about space suggests a disturbance in proprioception, where the character feels movement and displacement without making a clear sense of location. In this way, the stage can be seen like an affective map of loss, a space where bodies move but do not have a secure internal orientation to guide them. A similar form of spatial disorientation can be traced in C’s lines such as “Everywhere I go, I see him” (Kane, 2001: 158) and “Maggots everywhere” (Kane, 2001: 175), as well as in M’s utterances, “Nowhere to hide” (Kane, 2001: 184) and “Someone somewhere is crying for me” (Kane, 2001: 159). The changing between “everywhere” and “nowhere” makes a world where spatial limits collapse under the weight of strong experience. Location is felt but never held safely,

as if space is experienced through feeling more than through certainty. These lines suggest that trauma changes spatial experience into an unsettled ground where presence, safety, and orientation cannot stay. Space works like an emotional map marked by isolation, not by real places. The inability to escape trauma becomes shown in space, where helplessness is being “everywhere” and “nowhere” at the same time. In this way, these moments show what Massumi says about a body without a stable image, where affect moves without fixed coordinates. Overall, *Crave* shows trauma as breaking space and time, leaving characters suspended in an unstable affective field, not in fixed settings.

This chapter has demonstrated how *Crave* portrays trauma as something initially experienced as emotive intensity rather than as a cohesive story. A variety of nonverbal and affective components, such as the body, emotion, repetition, fragmentation, anonymous voices and stillness, can reveal trauma. These elements allow pain to be felt through an emotional power that transcends language.

Trauma first manifests as affective intensity in the body, as seen by physical reactions including tightness, vocal eruptions, abrupt cries and physical pain. This shows how trauma reveals in the body before it can be completely understood or expressed. Fear, humiliation, sadness and rage are examples of emotions that manifest as unstable affective forces that shape speech and silence while maintaining trauma’s persistent presence. Repetition highlights unresolved emotional intensity, which evokes memories and bodily reactions. Coherent cognition is disrupted by fragmented lines, broken language and overlapping speech. This emphasizes the importance of affect over meaning and signifies trauma beyond a defined narrative. A sense of depersonalisation that cannot be contained within a single character is produced by trauma through anonymous, disembodied voices that disrupt identity and create a shared affective intensity. Trauma is shown as a raw affective presence before it is expressed in words through pauses, silences and incomplete lines that indicate feelings that cannot yet be expressed. Unresolved trauma continues to exist as an ongoing affective force because the nonlinear structure blends the past, present and future. Ultimately, the play’s environment makes trauma visible by transforming space into a landscape where memories, emotional reflections and sensations flow. When

combined, these affective and nonverbal components make trauma seem more like a lived, ongoing, and embodied reality than a simple narrative.



III. EMBODIED INTENSITY AND NONVERBAL TRAUMA IN TENDER NAPALM

Philip Ridley (b. 1964) has a central and enduring place in in-*yer-face* theatre. He is often placed by critics next to Sarah Kane, Mark Ravenhill, and Anthony Neilson, as his plays demonstrate many “*in-yer-face* characteristics” (Güven, 2019: 105). As Sierz notes, “[a]t the start of the decade, Ridley was almost alone in exploring ideas no one else dared to touch” (2001: 47), developing an aesthetic based on “[v]iolent stage images, blatant language, [and] pop culture references” (2001: 47), long before these methods became widely used. Since his first play *The Pitchfork Disney* (1991), Ridley has written around thirty plays for adults and children, which makes him one of the most productive British dramatists of his generation. Ridley’s dramatic development is often described as moving from explicitly fantastic styles toward more realistic settings, a pattern identified by critics such as Sierz, Middeke and Schnierer (2011). His early “East End Gothic” trilogy, *The Pitchfork Disney* (1991), *The Fastest Clock in the Universe* (1992) and *Ghost from a Perfect Place* (1994), is characterised by claustrophobic, myth-like fantasy and highly stylised, often excessive monologue. However, from *Mercury Fur* (2005) onwards, Ridley’s plays more often use contemporary settings, familiar character names and a clearer psychological focus, while still keeping surreal and metaphorical elements (426–27). In his later works, he combines fantasy with realism (AbdulAzeem, 2024: 20), as evident in *Tender Napalm*. Moreover, Ridley regularly uses imaginative to express what he calls “wordless meaning”, stating, “I’ve always seen images as engines of emotion” (Sierz, 2001: 43). Thus, Ridley’s vivid imaginative imagery aligns closely with affect theory, since it allows trauma to be experienced as raw intensity before it settles into language.

In many of his plays, Ridley uses “[v]iolence, sexuality, and/or repelling similar events” (Güven, 2019: 106). With *Tender Napalm* (2011), he moves away from overtly graphic violence that marked early in-*yer-face* theatre, yet he retains the movement’s confrontational impulse by shifting it into a more internalised and performative register. Rather than relying on physical brutality, the play unsettles through its relentless psychological intensity and its use of obscene language, explicit sexual imagery and anatomical detail. These elements expose taboo emotions and collapse

the boundaries between intimacy and aggression, generating a visceral experience that is as disturbing as it is tender. Ridley's work is deeply connected to the tradition of in-er-face theatre, which is "[c]haracterised by omnipresent incidents of verbal, physical and structural violence which [...] blend with the surreal and grotesque in order to produce [...] effects that range from an emotional allurement to an abject distancing" (Middeke et al., 2011: 20-21). Ridley makes the characters' bodies, voices and fantasies into sites of conflict pushing the reader to engage with trauma, desire and rage. In his Theatre Blog post "Whatever happened to in-er-face theatre?" Sierz (2016) describes Ridley as "[s]till shocking after all these years." He highlights *Tender Napalm* as a key example. As he argues, the play explores new theatrical and psychological territories while maintaining Ridley's distinctive dramaturgical style, where beauty and brutality, menace and magic exist in dynamic tension.

In his plays, Ridley often creates stories in which characters retell their past experiences in order to "[n]arrate traumatic events" (AbdulAzeem, 2024: 19). *Tender Napalm* is a play with two characters, an unnamed Man and Woman, who meet in an intimate, confrontational place shaped by imagination. Rather than presenting a logical or sequential narrative, he uses surreal imagery that imitates traumatic experiences in memory, particularly as fragmented, intrusive mental images, and strong sensory impressions. Throughout the play, the pair regularly enters violent fantasy scenarios which involve apocalyptic visions and sexual aggression. These fantasies help the couple deal with "[t]raumatic loss, the death of a child" (Rebellato, 2013). In these moments, tenderness transforms into aggression, calm into terror and intimacy into withdrawal, as if the characters are carried by affective currents beyond their control. Although the dialogue never directly mentions a traumatic incident, it frequently refers to a shared loss, which points to the death of the couple's kid. The characters never explain particular circumstances of the death. However, motifs of water, engulfment, shipwreck and tsunami suggest the kid died by drowning. This unspoken catastrophe appears to underpin and intensify the emotional dynamics of the couple's interactions.

From this perspective, trauma in *Tender Napalm* is shown less through story or explanation than through the play's form and affective methods: indirect expression, fantasy, shifting spatial arrangements, heightened physicality, emotional surges and recurring patterns. This chapter analyses these elements at different levels. At the level

of mediation, fantasy, indirect revelation, and repetition replace direct telling. This allows trauma to appear through affective pressure rather than clear explanation. At the level of the body, trauma shows in strong physical arousal, gestures, rhythm, and changes in emotional intensity. The play often mixes tenderness with brutality. Structurally and in space, the unstable settings and repeated movements create a relational world where trauma is lived in the present, not only remembered from the past. Using trauma theory and affect theory, *Tender Napalm* presents trauma not as a story that can be told, but as an ongoing affective process. Firstly, nonverbal elements are identified as trauma markers, using trauma theory, and then through affect theory, these elements are analysed as affective registers of trauma. In the original text of *Tender Napalm*, the characters are identified as Man and Woman. In this thesis, a colon (:) is added after each name in order to distinguish the characters' speech.

A. Affective Indirection and Imaginative Mediation

Ridley seems to use indirect expression as a main way of showing trauma in *Tender Napalm*. The couple's central wound, the loss of their child, is never stated openly, but its presence slowly becomes impossible to ignore. Instead of being told directly as a story, the event appears in short fragments that interrupt moments of fantasy or closeness. In this way, trauma is both present and unreachable, remaining at the edges of speech without becoming a complete account. This indirect way of revealing trauma reflects an idea commonly discussed in trauma theory. Traumatic experience does not follow a linear narrative. Instead, it appears as fragmented images, disruptions or unexpected moments that hint to an event whose significance cannot be fully understood. Caruth explains this by arguing that "What returns to haunt the victim, these stories tell us, is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known" (1996: 10). Therefore, what returns is not just the memory of loss, but the feeling of something unfinished and unresolved. Because the meaning of the event remains incomplete, trauma returns indirectly, as if the mind can only move around the experience and is not able to directly face it.

Tomkins helps explain why trauma is expressed indirectly in *Tender Napalm* and not through direct narration. He proposes that traumatic experiences can resurface as

a considerable surge of affects that distress the individual. As he elaborates, “The truly traumatic defeat [...] may flood consciousness and appear to overwhelm the individual” (2008: 504). When affect reaches this degree of intensity, it can overpower consciousness and disrupt the regular mechanisms that organise vision, memory and speech. Consequently, affect does not necessarily correspond to a clear object. Tomkins explains this condition as “free-floating objectless anxiety,” a pressure on awareness that resists coherent meaning (2008: 136). In these moments, affect exceeds the mind’s ability to form it into coherent thought. In a traumatic situation, this type of flooding makes narrative control either difficult or impossible. Instead, fragmented language appears in the form of brief images, broken words or displaced remarks that refer to an event but do not fully explain it. This explains why and how *Tender Napalm* presents trauma indirectly. The wound returns as subjective intensity rather than a full story.

This tendency implies that the traumatic loss carries an affective weight that is too strong to be expressed or fixed in a specific narrative object. When overwhelming feelings overpower awareness without attaching to a specific object, they interrupt the narrative and fragment it into little, indirect signs through which trauma becomes perceptible. This is what Tomkins calls “free-floating objectless anxiety” (2008: 136), when affect moves without a clear origin or target. In *Tender Napalm*, this process explains how the child’s death returns to the stage, especially in the moment when the Woman begins a soft, almost hypnotic lullaby:

Woman: (singing)	Man: (overlapping Woman)
Fade and float.	No!
Float and fade.	Stop it!
The world	Look at you!
I knew	You’re becoming a ghost.
has gone,	I won’t let that happen.
has gone.	You hear me?
Don’t try to save.	I won’t!
Don’t send a boat	

I'm happy remote

in fade and float.

Man: I'm here to rescue you!

Woman: What -? No. (Ridley, 2011: 27)

The lullaby's soft melody evokes ideas of fading, vanishing and movement beyond reach. Rather than remembering the child's drowning directly, at this moment sadness enters the present without building a coherent narrative. The way that trauma reappears as an emotive presence in the present rather than as a structured memory is reflected in this indirect mode of communication. Frequent usage of the phrase "fade and float" causes language to lose its coherent meaning. Because of this, the repetition suggests more an evocative rhythm that expresses emotional intensity without providing a full explanation than as narrative communication. Perception weakens, and any organising story starts to break down. Therefore, the scene shows how affect prevents the creation of a coherent narrative, enabling the terrible loss to be revealed through ambience and feeling rather than overt narration. What emerges is a sense of release or surrender rather than a recollection being recounted. As a result, rather than appearing as a single episode, the drowning trauma becomes obvious indirectly as a circulating intensity.

Man's overlapping interruptions express a different affect. His urgent line, "I'm here to rescue you!" (Ridley, 2011: 27), signals panic and powerlessness, suggesting that he is also overwhelmed by an affective intensity he cannot name. This moment reflects Tomkins's idea that affect can exceed individual control when trauma is overwhelming. Man attempts to steady the situation, yet his speech also fragments and fails to turn intensity into shared meaning. Here, the inability to continue speaking further shows how affective pressure undermines narrative coherence. In this exchange, affect seems to detach from its original source and shift between the two characters, remaining as an uncontained force that overwhelms them both. Consequently, rather than appearing as a completed story, the traumatic event manifests as a common affective disturbance that spreads across the speakers.

The traumatic experience appears to be driven by strong feeling rather than by clear meaning. Affect seems to overwhelm the systems that would usually organise experience into a simple story, such as "we lost our child in tsunami." For this reason,

the child's sudden and violent death is never stated in ordinary language. Instead, grief and fear emerge as circulating affects that flood awareness and pull expression away from the event itself. In the following scene, Man shifts the child's death into a cosmic fantasy, describing it as if the child were killed in a massive bombing:

My only child was one of the first to be killed by one of the Things That Go Boom. It happened in your equivalent of the school playground. The day it happened my cry of grief was so powerful it created a black hole in the universe [...] 'It's sucking everything into it, as you can see. Very soon our own galaxy will disappear into this endless dark. (Ridley, 2011: 32)

Here, loss is not told directly but shown through a strange, hallucinatory image. The play's use of indirect expression, in which the affective intensity of loss is revealed through the visual rather than direct narration, is reflected in this relocation. There is more to the black hole than merely a metaphor. It serves as an emotive image that intensifies feelings. It acts like a thing of fear which pulls everything into itself. This growing picture makes grief seem less like a concrete feeling and more like an emotive force that warps language and vision. The loss is present but not fully understood. It overwhelms feeling and appears as a scene of cosmic destruction instead of a clear story of mourning. In this sense, rather than presenting the trauma as a structured account of the child's death, the dream image permits it to emerge indirectly as affective excess.

Woman's later speech seems to deepen this sense of affective detachment when she says: "The only thing that we cannot cope with is when a parent loses a child. Only that is too much for us. Only that can drive us into madness. Everything else ... somehow ... we cope" (Ridley, 2011: 56). Here, affect feels almost abstract. No single child or event is named. The words go around the general idea of parental loss. This generalisation separates the speech from a particular recollection and transforms the loss from a personal story into an affective state. The intensity is still strong, but it is not tied to personal detail. What appears is not a clear story of grief, but a heavy feeling that cannot be fixed. The reference to "madness" (Ridley, 2011: 56) also explains how overpowering affect defies explanation and pushes expression outside the boundary of coherent language. It moves toward the madness she mentions, but she cannot explain

it fully. Therefore, the incident reveals once more how indirect expression, as opposed to direct narration, enables trauma to become apparent through circulating affect.

If trauma shows itself indirectly by oblique revelation, then fantasy seems to give another way for feeling its pressure in *Tender Napalm*. In this play, fantasy can be seen as the main way to work with trauma that is not fully handled. The couple tell “[s]tories of battles enacted on a ruined island; they tell heroic deeds of daring and they boast, brag, mock and taunt” (Rebellato, 2013). They make extreme, strange scenes, wars in galaxies, tsunamis, explosions, fights with serpents, erotic changes, as seen in the following lines: “Man: [...] I am a fearless warrior King and this is my island and I’ll destroy anyone or anything that threatens my shores. ‘DIE, SERPENT, DIE!’ I strike at the neck of the beast.” (Ridley, 2011: 16). These scenes are not only playful imagination. They act like containers for trauma. Because they cannot face the truth of their child’s death, the couple changes that helplessness into stories of destruction. This way, the trauma stays alive but also protects them from feeling it completely.

Fantasy has important role in trauma mind. It helps people to manage too strong experiences. When normal ways to make meaning do not work, fantasy becomes place where traumatic feeling can be changed into images or other forms. Herman argues that people who survive trauma often “[r]eenact the traumatic moment with a fantasy of changing the outcome of the dangerous encounter” (1992: 28). Fantasy gives short control: the person can imagine changing the harm that they could not stop before. It does not fix the wound, but it gives feeling of power for short time. Also, fantasy can help to escape from hard work of mourning. Herman writes that “Resistance to mourning can take on numerous disguises. Most frequently it appears as a fantasy of magical resolution through revenge, forgiveness, or compensation” (1992: 135). Fantasy works like protection. It stops survivor from facing grief fully by giving unreal but comforting alternative. Mind makes version of reality where trauma is undone or balanced, and this delays real process of accepting loss.

In Tomkins’s ideas, fantasy often becomes way for affects that are blocked or punished to grow, change, or move into stories of control. As he explains, “Grief especially reflects a desire for reality to be other than it is” (2008: 840). From this perspective, fantasy does not simply escape reality but provides a space where affective intensity can take another form. In *Tender Napalm*, therefore, rather than

telling a literal plot, the fantasy scenes might be understood as spaces where intense affects, especially grief and fear, circulate through creative imagery. Tomkins explains this process through the example of “Nailson,” who remembers his father being cruel, and then imagines himself as a surgeon who saves people. This is what Tomkins calls a “[r]escue fantasy derived from the primal scene” (2008: 107). By transforming helplessness into imagined power, these imaginations reorganise affect. Similarly, in *Tender Napalm* the couple make exaggerated fantasy stories to control powerful feelings of grief. Instead of using explicit narration, their stories of rescue, strength and total control allow intense affects to arise indirectly, making trauma apparent through imaginative and affective intensities. This is evident in Man’s repeated role as saviour as in the following lines: “I’m not just your King, my monkeys! I am your Messiah. / I saved an entire fucking race!” (Ridley, 2011: 34), and “I’m here to rescue you!” (Ridley, 2011: 27). These rescue scenes turn helplessness into fantasies of control, making affect visible through the saviour image.

Furthermore, Tomkins argues that fantasy can be placed where painful or forbidden feelings are acted again, but with different result than before. Therefore, fantasy turns into a place where strong affects might resurface in different ways. He describes instances where “[t]he aggressive act [...] is committed again, but the crying now goes unpunished” (2008: 342). This implies that in fantasy, actions that before caused punishment, like anger, forbidden desire, or uncontrolled crying, can happen again but change meaning: tears can become sexual, the one who was aggressor can suffer instead, or shared pain can feel like victory not shame. As a result, Tomkins presents fantasy as a place where affective scripts can be rewritten rather than just as imagination. In *Tender Napalm*, something similar happens. The violent, sexual and destructive fantasies between couple let grief, anger, and shame happen again but in changed, sometimes stronger ways. This is an affective re-staging of the emotional intensity of the experience rather than a cohesive memory of it. This is very clear in the scene about drowning:

Woman: The explosion.

Man: No, no, there’s nothing.

Woman: Don’t fucking tell me it’s all in my head again.

Man: It’s alright, it’s alright.

Woman: I can hear her screaming - There's no air! I can't breathe!

Man: Shush, shush.

Woman: No! Don't touch me! If you touch me I'll - Just don't! ... My lungs are being crushed ... Help me! ... Help me!

[...]

Woman: I'm going to drown.

[...]

Man: You breathe water.

[...]

Man: And you're calm ... so calm ...

Woman: Yes ... calm ... (singing). Fade and float. (Ridley, 2011: 25-26)

This scene shows clearly how Tender Napalm mixes traumatic memory, body panic, and fantasy allowing affective intensity to surface and reveal feelings that are too strong. Woman is suddenly taken by strong sensation: lungs crushed, hard to breathe, scream like drowning. Instead of a distinct memory of the previous experience, this reaction initially manifests as a physical affective rush. Trauma comes as a surge of feeling in the body. In this way, the trauma is registered by the body before language can structure it into a story. Almost at once, Man changes the scene by starting a shared rescue fantasy, turning helplessness into kind of supernatural power. This change causes fantasy to start acting as a nonverbal area where intense traumatic affect can be diverted and momentarily rearranged.

According to Tomkins, when action is not possible at the real moment of loss, fantasy becomes way to change emotional story and get short control. The original "aggressive act" (Tomkins, 2008: 342), meaning their failure to protect the child, is relived as a moment of terror, marked by explosion, suffocation and scream. Here, the traumatic event reappears as an affective environment formed by physical terror and sensory imagery rather than as a solid memory. Yet, instead of guilt or punishment, the fantasy gives reward. Woman's deepest fear of drowning becomes opposite. Suffocation turns into calm water breathing, destruction turns into gentle peace. Terror changes to quietness, and ability to breathe underwater replaces danger of death

(Ridley, 2011: 26). This reversal is consistent with Tomkins' hypothesis that unbearable affect can be changed into a different emotional situation where the initial helplessness is temporarily replaced by imagined control. In this change, tears that could be shame turn into lullaby of happiness, letting couple hurt and be hurt inside safe space. Therefore, in *Tender Napalm* trauma is not simply remembered or told clearly. Instead, it is felt again and changed through fantasy. Because fantasy absorbs and reshapes affective intensity, the scene demonstrates how the characters might deal with the devastating loss without specifically narrating it. It allows the couple to keep their strong feelings but protect themselves from complete grief through moments of strange, imagined control. Thus, without turning the tragedy into a coherent narrative, fantasy serves as a nonverbal mechanism that distributes affect.

B. Spatial Dynamics and Emotional Intensification

After we see how fantasy works to manage strong feelings, it is good to look at how place shapes the play's trauma. In *Tender Napalm*, place comes from what the characters feel, not from real geography. It is unstable like their emotions. The play has no fixed set, furniture, or normal props. The stage is open and can change with the couple's feelings. As the play goes, the couple move through many unstable places, an island, a jungle, a garden, a palace of bone, a galaxy, a sea, and a wilderness. These appear and disappear without clear change, as the following line shows: "Man: I'm up on the back of the monstrous creature. Its skin is scaly and smooth and it's difficult to get a grip. It's like climbing a mountain covered in ice" (Ridley, 2011: 16). These places are not real locations but "traumatised landscape[s] of grief" (Rebellato, 2013), that the stage shows a mind where fantasy, memory and imagined future are together without clear limits.

For Casey, place operates as the centre of lived experience, bringing together human actions and the unity between past and present (2018: ix). Human experience, therefore, cannot be separated from the spatial environment in which it takes place. Trauma comes into this feeling of space in an important way. Strong experiences often stay not only in memory but also in the body and its sense of place. This makes the present strange, because the person is in one place but feels the pressure of another. Van der Kolk explains this pull: "One reason that traumatic memories become dominant in PTSD is that it's so difficult to feel truly alive right now. When you can't

be fully here, you go to the places where you did feel alive—even if those places are filled with horror and misery” (2014: 69). Trauma can change how someone feels about space. When a person cannot feel fully present, the current moment may feel unreal or far away. The mind goes back to the places where feelings were strong. Traumatic space does not disappear; it stays hidden but can appear in the present. The person is physically here but feels like he/she is in the place of the original shock. Place then becomes a nonverbal sign of trauma: a spatial trace where trauma is felt as body sensation and displaced presence. In *Tender Napalm*, the constantly changing spaces may be read this way, as showing the traces of unresolved affect (Ridley, 2011: 16).

Seen together with this, Massumi gives another way to think about place that makes it unstable. Instead of place being a fixed location with clear edges, he describes it through affect and the body before thought. In this view, place may not be outside at all. It can appear as changing intensity inside the body before the self and the environment are separate. This idea of bodily space connects well with the unstable spaces that trauma creates. Massumi explains this as follows:

In its spatial aspect, the body without an image is the involution of subject-object relations into the body of the observer and of that body into itself [...] an interlocking of overlaid perspectives that nevertheless remain distinct. The involution of space renders these relative perspectives absolute: it registers movement as included disjunction. (2002: 57)

This idea shows that when affect is very strong, space can fold inside. It is not felt outside but from the body itself, like the body carries a changing inner world. The borders that usually separate self and world become thin, and perception goes more inward than outward. He refers to this kind of space as “quasi-corporeal” (Massumi, 2002: 62), a space felt in the body but not fully material, between physical feeling and imagination. It feels immediate and full of affect, but it cannot be mapped or made stable. Similarly, in *Tender Napalm* the spaces that change are not real but parts of the characters’ inner world. These spaces blend inner feeling with the external world and create an affective environment that reveals the effect of trauma.

Both the island scene and the galaxy scene (Ridley, 2011: 9, 15) show that space in *Tender Napalm* is not an outside place but something that turns inside with strong affects. The couple first imagine calm places, a quiet tropical island and a flower-

smelling galaxy, that seem like stable outer worlds. However, each place quickly changes into violent or dangerous scenes. This fast change shows that the landscapes are made less by real geography and more by the strong affects that guide the couple's perception. Therefore, space does not change because the outside world changes; it changes because affect goes inward and reshapes what they feel around them. In this sense, the spatial instability in the play becomes a trauma marker that emerges through affective force. In the island scene, the peaceful beach stays like a fantasy until it suddenly breaks into a serpent fight:

Woman: Tell me, have you ever seen such a glorious day? [...] Have you ever seen it so clear and calm and tropically island perfect? [...] Have you ever seen the sky so blue and the sea so calm and the beach so smooth and the palm trees. - oh, the palm trees! So full of coconuts and parrots. (Ridley, 2011: 9)

[...]

Man: The Serpent roars so loud the wreckage shifts and shakes from one end of the island to the other [...] I swing my mighty sword and - SLASH! - I slit the eye open. Green jelly erupts from the eye and splashes all over me. The Serpent roars out in pain and throws its head back. RAAAHHH!" [...] It's trying to swot me away as if I'm a pesky fly. WHOOSH! But I am no fly. I am a fearless warrior King and this is my island and I'll destroy anyone or anything that threatens my shores. 'DIE, SERPENT, DIE!' (Ridley, 2011: 15-16)

The sudden change from calm to danger shows a body where opposite feelings like safety and fear, tenderness and anger exist together without resolving. Such coexistence implies that the scene is arranged more by the movement of affect within the body than by the external geography. The island feels less like a real place and more like an inner space that shows and lets out changing feelings. In Massumi's idea, this is a quasi-corporeal (2002: 62) space, made inside the sensing body, not fixed outside. Therefore, the environment functions as an emotional extension of the protagonists' bodily consciousness. When the island becomes a battlefield, it can be seen as many affects stacked together—calm, fear, longing, grief and anger—existing at the same time without cancelling each other. Without specifically describing the incident that produced it, the location uses this layering of affects to portray the horrifying intensity. Therefore, rather than providing a precise narrative of the past,

the island's abrupt metamorphosis shows how trauma manifests itself through an unstable affective context.

In the same way, in the galaxy scene, a peaceful world of starlight and flowers quickly changes into a story of war, loss and cosmic destruction:

Man: I see auroras shimmering.

Woman: I see trees with magical lights.

Man: Asteroids near the sirens of Titan.

Woman: Oh, smell of flowers!

Man: [...] 'We are a peaceful civilization [...] We have been attacked by another race from another planet [...] Fight back! Drop bombs on them! 'We tried. We made many Things That Go Boom.' The alien waves his three-fingered hand and a door slide opens - Visshhh! Bombs! Rows and rows of silver, gleaming bombs. Atom bombs. (Ridley, 2011: 31)

The change feels very fast, like one feeling mixes into another without warning. This quick change implies that the area reacts to changes in emotional intensity right away. This shows that space is not made by a stable outside world, but by the couple's changing emotions shaped by grief. The galaxy becomes a small field of feelings like wonder, horror, memory, and fantasy that stay separate but cannot be divided. In this way, the imagined environment functions as an affective field where many emotional energies simultaneously circulate. This scene exemplifies what Massumi calls "inclusive disjunction" (2002: 57): multiple and opposing spatial viewpoints coexist in one emotive instant. Space folds inward, which indicates how powerful affects can blur the line between inner sensations and the outside world. Therefore, the moving galaxy emphasises the affective strain of trauma, which changes perception and removes geographical boundaries.

In *Tender Napalm*, the function of feelings is to space. It is unstable and shifting. Emotions are subject to the same instability that moves space. Feelings occur as abrupt waves rather than controlled reactions. Love and violence are frequently associated. The couple often develop from intimacy to devastation, which shows how desire is mixed with anger, fear and frustration. Frequently sensitivity changes into violence,

and then back again. This creates an emotional space in which love and violence are not clear. They sometimes experience deep longing, as evident in the following lines: “Man: Oh, my love. / Woman: ... My love” (Ridley, 2011: 59). They also cause imaginary harm: “Man: I punch your fucking face. / Woman: I claw your fucking face” (Ridley, 2011: 40). Through these transformations, the play reveals a world of emotions which is shaped by trauma, where affection is a threat and disguises anger.

Emotional instability is often recognised as a sign of psychological trauma. Trauma can make it more difficult for the mind to regulate emotions. According to Herman (1992), trauma has long-term effects on physiological reactions, feelings, cognition and memory. It can also disrupt the relationship between these elements. She adds that, “The traumatised person may experience intense emotion but without clear memory of the event or may remember everything in detail but without emotion” (25). This demonstrates that trauma can cause emotional instability. Feelings might appear unexpectedly, intensely or without any explanation. People may switch between different emotions or express feelings that do not correspond to reality.

Tomkins argues that when feelings like “[d]istress, terror, shame, disgust, and dissmell” become too strong and cannot be relieved, they may come out as anger or aggression. Anger then can feel both calming and explosive at the same time. It works as a response to suffering that feels too much to bear (2008: 781). This sudden change comes from how affects enter the mind through patterns in brain. Tomkins explains that the type and strength of affect depend on whether stimulation goes up, stays high, or drops quickly. When these changes happen, they can make emotions very strong and create sudden outbursts. As he describes it as follows:

If internal or external sources of neural firing suddenly increase, [individual] will startle, or become afraid or become interested, [...] If internal or external sources of neural firing reach and maintain a high constant level of stimulation, he will respond with anger or distress, depending on the level of stimulation. If internal or external sources of neural firing suddenly decrease, he will laugh or smile with enjoyment, depending on the suddenness of decrease of stimulation. (2008: 139)

Tomkins’s idea shows that affect is not a stable emotion, but a fast change in the body caused by brain activity. When stimulation rises quickly, it can make fear, shock or

strong attention. If it stays high, it can make anger or distress. When it drops fast, it can make enjoyment or laughter. Because trauma often gives very strong spikes and long high activation, this idea is very useful for understanding trauma. It explains why a person suddenly switches between fear, wrath, numbness and short periods of pleasure. These variations show that trauma is experienced as a sequence of quickly shifting affective states that the person finds difficult to control rather than as a single, consistent emotion. The neurological system undergoes significant changes that the person cannot regulate.

In *Tender Napalm*, the couple's feelings are most of the time unstable. They switch fast between sensitivity, anger, desire and sadness. These changes are the result of rapid changes in unstable interior stimulus. The play depicts trauma as outbursts of affect. The dialogue continues this pattern: moments of destruction occur immediately after moments of affection. These abrupt changes are similar to the rapid increases or decreases in affect that Tomkins associates with brain activity. The characters' speech starts to reflect the rhythm of emotional outbursts as a result of this instability. In this approach, trauma manifests as abrupt affective changes rather than a consistent story. From the very opening of the play, a gentle, intimate sentence shifts in seconds into a violent fantasy, which shows how love rapidly turns into anger:

Man: Your mouth.

Woman: What about it?

Man: It's such a ... wet thing.

Slight pause.

I could squeeze a bullet between those lips. Point first. Press it between those rosebud lips. Prise it between your pearly whites. Gently. I wouldn't break a single tooth. Your tongue would feel something cold and hard. Taste of metal and gunpowder. (Ridley, 2011: 8)

Because it is sudden and uneven, this moment triggers traumatic thoughts. The change from focussing on "Your mouth" to a violent vision has no logical explanation. Nothing in the scene triggers it. The transformation is rapid and almost mechanical, as if the mind is taken over by a powerful feeling that cannot be controlled. This shift points to an abrupt increase in an affective urge. This is similar to what Tomkins says

as a quick rise in brain activity. Thus, the emotional system seems to be under enormous pressure. The scene is developed by the physical rhythm of affect rather than gradually evolving as a logical narrative. What begins as a normal outburst of desire gradually turns into uncontrollable excitement, which drives feelings toward fear, anger or distress. This type of escalation shows how affect may quickly intensify and change perception. The bullet dream is more than just a desire for violence. It is an overflow of affect, a state in which strong brain activity causes excessive perception. This sudden emotional need makes the painful intensity clear even if the actual traumatic event is not mentioned.

Moreover, the play shows moments during which strong feelings do not grow. This causes rapid decrease in affect that breaks the flow of feeling. One example is during a scene that is both erotic and violent. The rhythm of commands builds to a strong release, but then changes quickly into a calm tone. While Man stays in a violent fantasy, Woman moves at the same time into a normal memory from her past, after the scene's big release. The scene therefore jumps fast between high and low affective states, without stable emotional progression:

Man: [...] I would push deeper, deeper, deeper, and, gradually, you would learn to love this gunpowder egg nestled dynamite in your womb.

Slight pause.

Woman: I remember ... when I was seventeen -

Man: The pin's still showing.

[...]

Man: I pull the pin.

Woman: *continues to moan.*

She reaches orgasm as –

Man: BOOOM!

Pause.

Woman: I remember - when I was seventeen - I was invited to this party. It was an eighteenth birthday party but - oh, it was special. It was given for a friend of a friend. Janis, that was my friend, she'd left school the year before me and got a job in some gift shop down [...]. (Riley, 2011: 13)

This sudden fall from strong bodily feeling to quiet memory shows what Tomkins says happens when neural activity drops fast. It can make affects of calm, detachment, or short relief. A detached memory takes the place of the affective increase in this moment due to the decrease in stimulation. When affect drops too quickly, it does not turn into meaning but changes into another kind of feeling. The change feels sudden and without warning, following a neutral memory that does not connect clearly to what came before. This gap demonstrates how affect advances more quickly than story structure. Meaning cannot stay stable because feeling rises and falls too fast, making intimacy fragile, short and always open to the next shift of feeling. The work shows emotional instability as a bodily expression of affective flow when angry or severe periods abruptly give way to tenderness or sensual warmth. These abrupt oscillations present trauma as emotional pressure which affects the characters' words and perspective.

C. Physical Arousal and Rhythmic Relationality

After looking at how emotions are unstable, it makes sense to see another sign of trauma: hyperaroused body movement. In *Tender Napalm*, the body often shows that shock is still inside and keeps moving. This hyper-arousal shows in strong actions and movements that feel almost automatic. The couple's fantasies, which include fighting snakes, leading monkey armies and riding unicorns, manifest in large bodily gestures. They hop, turn, climb, roll and move as if performing a battle dance. This physical activity is evident in Man's fight scene: "I jump off the rock. CHOMP! [...] I swing my mighty sword and - SLASH! - I slit the eye open [...] RAAHHH! I jump from television to tumble-drier to cocktail cabinet [...] I strike at the neck of the beast [...] I start climbing up its neck [...] I'm spinning. Spinning and falling [...] HACK! HACK! I'm cutting my way up [...]" (Ridley, 2011: 15- 16). Through these restless movements, their bodies create a never-ending rhythm. It is as if the neurological system is still active after the child's death and is making the body restless.

In trauma studies, very strong physical activity is an important indicator. Hyperarousal is presented when the person is quickly surprised, always monitoring, and having strong physical reactions even when there is no danger. Herman describes this as follows: "[Patients] have an elevated baseline of arousal: their bodies are always

on the alert for danger. They also have an extreme startle response to unexpected stimuli, as well as an intense reaction to specific stimuli associated with the traumatic event” (1992: 26). This demonstrates that trauma affects not just the mind but also the body. The nervous system can remain in alert mode and reacts to cues such as smells, noises, voices, seasons or persons who seem to be familiar. In *Tender Napalm*, the couple’s restless movement represent the body’s inability to relax.

Affect theory helps us understand strong body activity as something larger than words or control. These body movements do not resemble typical emotions with meaning. They unconsciously move through the body as raw intensity. Massumi defines this as follows: “[Intensity] is not exactly passivity, because it is filled with motion, vibratory motion, resonance. And it is not yet activity, because the motion is not of the kind that can be directed (if only symbolically) toward practical ends in a world of constituted objects and aims” (2002: 26). Massumi explains that intensity affects the body before awareness or speech. It is not passive since it moves and expresses spontaneous emotions which cannot be controlled. However, it is not completely active because the movement cannot be directed toward practical goals or fixed objects. In *Tender Napalm*, the restless body is as intensity which bursts through emotional restraint. It bursts into motion that the characters cannot hold or guide. Through this affective force, trauma becomes visible not as a clear narrative but as embodied intensity. This is evident in the scene where the couple chase each other across the “palace of bone” (Ridley, 2011: 37):

Man: I rush into jungle.

Woman: I chase after you.

Man: Sword - cutting through jungle! Hack! Hack!

Woman: Tentacles - knocking down trees! Smash! Smash!

Man: I climb tree!

Woman: Smash! Smash!

Man: Jump on your back. (Ridley, 2011: 39)

Instead of being a symbolic conflict or a plot, their strong body gestures indicate too much raw passion. Quick acts such as running, hitting, breaking, climbing and jumping

occur without thought. These movements suggest that the body's response is mostly caused by affective pressure rather than conscious intention. These behaviours do not resolve grief or give it meaning. The movement itself becomes the event. It is a chaotic overflow of affect. In this sense, trauma reveals itself in the body. Massumi describes affect as "filled with motion" (2002: 26), a force that exists before thinking or symbols. The couple chasing and colliding with each other show an energy that acts before intellect can control it. When read through Massumi, this scene is an example of intensity acting prior to conscious cognition. The chase is not playful but an overflow of the body, a reaction where intensity goes beyond what can be said. Their movements are powerful but have no clear purpose, which shows intensity instead of meaning. Through this physical activity, the play presents trauma as an affective force.

A similar moment happens later in the play during a fast, almost combat-like exchange:

Man: Pull!

Woman: Run!

Man: Throw!

Woman: BOOM!

[...]

Man: Stab.

Woman: Lash!

Man: Hack!

Woman: Kick.

Man: Punch! (Ridley, 2011: 44)

Each fast movement is a spontaneous release of energy. The quick commands and sudden hits create a fast rhythm, which indicate that the bodies are pushed into rapid movement. This speed implies that intensity moves through the body more quickly than thought can organise it. In other words, action occurs before thought or planning can influence it. Massumi describes affect as a charge that takes over the body. The couple's continued pounding and quick movements show this concept of intensity:

Their body react to affective stimuli instantly, generating motion that is difficult to translate into a cohesive feeling or story. Fantasy and physical activity collapse into one another and form a chaotic language of conflict. The play therefore depicts not only a fight, but also a system of intense affects that never truly ends. Thus, as affective intensity drives the characters into uncontrollable activity, trauma manifests itself through the restless body itself.

In *Tender Napalm*, while these bursts of physical intensity show how trauma moves through the body, repetition reveals what is not yet resolved. It does not feel like a premeditated reappearance, but it is as if their unfinished pain resurfacing. The play expresses this through repeated actions, pictures and phrases. Scenes do not progress but return to the same affective scenario. The two characters travel through the same imaginary realms, because their unprocessed experiences keep drawing them back. They keep entering the same exchanges, and even though the visuals change, the structure remains the same. The sea, monsters, explosions and serpents appear frequently. They do not develop the story forwards.

This type of looping is often a sign of trauma when the mind gets stuck in a pattern it cannot easily escape. Caruth explains this clearly: “[t]he experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will [...] the repetition at the heart of catastrophe [...] emerges as the unwitting reenactment of an event that one cannot simply leave behind” (1996: 6). She contends that repetition rarely involves conscious remembering. Instead, it occurs as an involuntary return of the event, which manifests not as a complete memory but as fragments that the mind needs to absorb. Caruth adds that these returns are frequently “against the will” (1996: 6), which emphasise their intrusive nature. They come back into the present without permission and full understanding. The repeated images and gestures in *Tender Napalm* are signs of a shock that is still not settled.

This repeating movement can be seen as the mind trying to reach an experience it cannot fully understand, not as a deliberate act of remembering. Tomkins (2008) explains that unprocessed grief, as a form of affect, can come back through sudden subtle signals that go around conscious control, bringing the unresolved experience back before it can be managed. He notes that,

[t]he individual who suffers the death of a loved one without grief is thereafter vulnerable to sudden intrusions of painful longing when confronted by fragments of reminders that are so inconspicuous that they do not arouse defensive strategies until it is too late. He is continually subject to the delayed sustained grief reaction that has only been postponed. (1128)

In this explanation, Tomkins shows that when someone loses a loved one but does not fully feel or show deep grief, the feeling stays inside them unfinished. Because mourning is not complete, the mind keeps trying to finish what was left undone in sudden, repeated bursts. These strong bursts can happen repeatedly. They make the person feel waves of grief that are even stronger because they were never fully faced or calmed. These affective loops appear suddenly and without warning, before the person is aware of them. In this way, the looping structure in *Tender Napalm* can be seen as the same process. The couple's grief returns in flashes of feeling, not as conscious memory, but as affective traces moving below awareness, through which trauma becomes visible.

Across *Tender Napalm*, repetition works as a pattern of not a story but affect, making trauma perceptible. The couple's changing emotions move in cycles of tenderness, anger, erotic play, grief and violence, then return to tenderness again, without showing emotional progress or resolution. This looping is shown by repeated references to loss, expressed in phrases such as "parent loses a child," "losing a husband and a son" (Ridley, 2011: 56) and "if you lose everything" (Ridley, 2011: 24), alongside variations such as "My only child was one of the first to be killed" (Ridley, 2011: 32), "You might get yourself killed" (Ridley, 2011: 56) and "I might get killed crossing the road" (Ridley, 2011: 56). Even if the context changes, all these words show the same feeling: a constant sense of loss and death that is not resolved. From Tomkins' view, these repetitions show an affective process that was never finished. Grief that is not fully felt or released does not go away but stays under the surface, returning repeatedly as a trace of trauma.

One of the clearest signs of affective looping in the play is how the child is repeated. The child is not a fixed character in a story but acts like a trace through which the play makes unresolved trauma perceptible. Man's vision, "I see a child. [...] She's over there. See her? She's four and a half years old" (Ridley, 2011: 18), later, re-emerges in Woman's similar image, "I see a child. [...] She's sitting at the kitchen

table. She's drawing. She's using the big wax crayons I bought her" (Ridley, 2011: 24), before shifting again when Man speaks of something "about the size of a seven-year-old child" that "smiles" at him and unexpectedly brings a sense of peace (Ridley, 2011: 29). These changes show that the child is not literal but comes back as an affect. Each time, the couple is drawn to the same unresolved emotion, even though the details change. In this sense, the repetition reveals the emotional aftermath of loss rather than just bringing up a previous incident. Using Tomkins' idea of ungrieved loss (2008: 1128), these repetitions show that small reminders can bring back old grief. The suffering from the child's death returns again and again, never exactly the same, each time carrying different intensity instead of a clear story. The play permits trauma to appear indirectly as varying affect rather than as a fully expressed recollection through these recurrent pictures.

A similar looping pattern is the bullet-in-the-mouth story. It reappears again and again but with the roles which are reversed. First, the Man recounts the scene, and then the Woman responds:

Man: Your mouth.

Woman: What about it?

Man: It's such a ... wet thing.

Slight pause.

I could squeeze a bullet between those lips [...] (Ridley, 2011: 8)

Later, the Woman delivers the same monologue, and the Man mirrors her reactions:

Woman: Your mouth.

Man: What about it?

Woman: It's such a ... wet thing.

Slight pause.

I could squeeze a bullet between those lips [...] (Ridley, 2011: 58-59)

The exchange uses the same phrases and rhythm, and the other partner replies in the same way. This risky fantasy is repeated. This implies that the action is more than just a story game between the protagonists. This scene reappears because there is unresolved vulnerability that pushes both characters into an imagined dangerous moment. The scene reappears as an affective drive that draws the protagonists back into the same emotional intensity rather than being deliberately selected. Changing the roles makes this stronger, showing that the affect of trauma does not belong to only

one character, but moves between both. Therefore, rather than via personal memory, the repetition illustrates how trauma spreads across the characters through shared emotional intensity. Together, the repeated emotional cycles, the images of loss, the child and the mirrored fantasies come back again with the same force and appear suddenly before any clear story can form. *Tender Napalm* does not show trauma directly. Instead, it depicts the emotional aftermath, in which unresolved grief manifests itself through words and deeds. In this way, trauma manifests itself through recurring affective patterns that consistently obstruct the development of a coherent story rather than through explicit narration.

This chapter has demonstrated how *Tender Napalm* portrays trauma as an affective experience that arises through a variety of nonverbal cues rather than as a cohesive story. According to the study, the couple's unresolved grief shows itself in a number of ways, such as indirect expression, imagination, unstable locations, emotional instability, hyper-aroused body activity and repetition.

Indirect expression happens when the loss is transferred from being openly expressed into images, repeated words and symbolic contexts. In this process, affect functions as a mediating factor which allows trauma to appear indirectly through fragmented and displaced forms. Fantasy, which briefly transforms helplessness into imagined control, is another emotional strategy that permits overwhelming feelings to reappear in different forms. This shift causes trauma to manifest as varying affective intensities. The play's setting is still unstable. Locations such as islands, galaxies or private settings are constantly shifting. This mirrors the individuals' interior emotional instability. In this instability, affect reorganises space itself and reveals trauma as a changing spatial experience. Another way that emotional instability shows how trauma works is through sudden changes in affect. The couple's rapid oscillations between tenderness and aggression without transitions suggest that their emotional states are assigned by sudden shifts in affect. Furthermore, the body becomes a significant place where trauma manifest itself. The characters physically express their feelings through restless actions such as chasing, rolling or climbing before they can put their feelings into words. Here, affect makes trauma visible without the use of words by using embodied intensity. Repetition strengthens this affective framework. Images of the child, references to loss and violent thoughts keep coming up throughout the interview.

Instead of moving the story forward, these repetitions become affective loops that bring unresolved sadness back into the present. These nonverbal clues show how the play's affective dynamics lead to trauma. Even when trauma cannot be clearly communicated, strong emotions enter language, space and bodily movement and makes it clear.



IV. CONCLUSION

This thesis examines how trauma manifests through affective and nonverbal components in *Crave* and *Tender Napalm*. Trauma has become an increasingly relevant subject in contemporary theatre where traditional narration and straightforward explanation are abandoned in favour of alternative methods of representation. In this sense, these plays are notable examples of modern drama. They present trauma not as an explicit story but as an embodied and affective experience. This thesis demonstrates that trauma cannot be easily represented through a linear narrative yet it emerges through rhythm, movement, space, and dramatic structure. To examine this, the study draws on insights from trauma theory, specifically the work of Cathy Caruth, Bessel van der Kolk and Judith Herman, and affect theory, specifically the work of Silvan Tomkins and Brian Massumi. Trauma theory helps interpret nonverbal parts as signs of trauma, while affect theory provides a framework for understanding how these elements work as traumatic intensities beyond narrative explanation. The findings of this thesis utilized in *Crave* and *Tender Napalm* will be mentioned in the following parts.

In *Crave*, trauma is presented different from conventional storytelling. Instead of directly explaining it, the play shows it indirectly through affective and nonverbal forms, where sensation precedes explanation. The analysis shows that these forms function as the main signs of psychic break. These elements reveal trauma as an affective experience that resists coherent narration. The body functions as a key element where affect manifests through physiological processes such as pain, voice eruptions, and other autonomic reactions, making trauma visible. This reflects Tomkins' idea that affect operates mainly through the body, producing sudden and involuntary responses before experience can be organised into language. Emotions in this theatre space do not appear as normal and stable psychological states. They move as shifting intensities marked by negative affects such as fear, shame, distress and rage which reinforces trauma's embodied presence. As Tomkins argues, negative affects are particularly important since they intensify perceptions of suffering and in the context of trauma, they disrupt normal processing of cognition and storytelling. These disruptions appear in form by repetition and fragmentation, when language loops, breaks, and stops, turning bodily pressure into rhythmic expression instead of clear

meaning. In this way, the play reflects Massumi's argument that affect appears before verbal naming and cognitive evaluation, appearing first as unqualified intensity that has not yet been recognised or articulated. Thus, repetition and fragmentation function not as merely formal tools but as intensities that reveal traumatic force before thought and clear memory.

The anonymous voices make affective framework stronger by presenting trauma as a force that moves between voices, rather than remaining within one clear character. This characteristic is in line with Massumi's theory that affect functions at a pre-personal level which shifts across bodies before becoming fixed in an individual's identity. Silence, likewise, is not simple absence. It works as moment of high intensity, where speech breaks down and bodily reaction becomes faster than language. Because affect comes before and blocks vocal articulation, these quiet moments are locations where traumatic force manifests as affective surge. The nonlinear organisation of the play completes this affective logic by breaking the linear progression of time and space. In line with Massumi, affect suspends the linear progression of storytelling and space is experienced internally, rather than real geography. The voices exist in confusing field, without fixed time or place, showing structurally how trauma emerges as an affective disruption in time and space. Through this structure, Crave portrays that trauma persists as an ongoing affective condition that interferes with narrative continuity, language, and identity rather than as a past occurrence that may be recovered.

About *Tender Napalm*, trauma is also shown not as one event that can be recovered or solved. Instead, it appears as a continuing affective state that resists clear words and is felt by intensity, movement and body excess. The play does not give stable or looking-back story of the main wound. Loss is never told directly, but it stays implied, appearing indirectly as constant affective pressure rather than coherent recollection. This reflects Tomkins' understanding of affect as an intensity that can overwhelm consciousness and resist to attach to a clear object. As a result, trauma is not resolved through memory or explanation. Instead it appears as affective overflow which disrupts the couple's attempts to make their emotional environment clear or stable. Fantasy plays a significant role as an affective tool. It is a retreat and a temporary means of channelling intense emotions into control, power or rescuing. In Tomkins' view, fantasy becomes a space where overpowering affects are reshaped into

imagined control. In these imaginative moments, helplessness changes into a sense of mastery. This change allows overpowering and unmanageable affect to be turned into fantasy narratives, making trauma visible not through direct memory but through imagined forms.

The space of the play also becomes unstable as a nonverbal sign of trauma. The play does not provide a fixed or obvious location. Place is expressed through sensation and movement, shaped by characters' changing emotional states. This reflects Massumi's view that affect reshapes perception of space where it is experienced internally rather than external location. Because the borders between inner life and external space blur, affect creates an environment where trauma manifests as spatial disorientation. In this fragile environment, love and violence, tenderness and anger coexist without a boundary. As Tomkins argues, affect is not a stable emotional state but is shaped by abrupt changes in arousal, which get worse in traumatic experiences and cause quick emotional shifts. Therefore, trauma occurs not as a coherent emotion but as unstable affective states that are difficult to regulate. This instability is further expressed in the body, where continual movement and intense physicality reveal trauma as bodily force before conscious control. In line with Massumi's definition of affect, body is driven by motions that emerge before conscious awareness and cannot be directed toward purposeful action. These involuntary reactions suggest that trauma initially manifests in bodily intensity before it can be expressed in language. Repetition also sustains this affective structure, as recurring movements, images and lines become a loop around the traumatic experience. Repetition does not resolve the painful intensity into a completed story because affect resists closure. As Tomkins argues, unprocessed grief, as a form of negative affect, continues to circulate as emotional return. In this sense, trauma remains incomplete and rejects narrative mastery. It returns through recurring affective forms, where meaning is returned to unresolved moments.

Both plays use affective and nonverbal patterns to address trauma, but they organise these forces differently. The breakdown of linguistic and narrative coherence in *Crave*, where the collapse of identity and language produces intense intensity that surpasses verbal articulation, makes trauma apparent. In *Tender Napalm*, trauma is instead expressed through shifting embodied and imaginative intensities that traverse

bodies, space, and fantasy, creating an ongoing flow of affect. Read together, the plays demonstrate that contemporary theatre engages with trauma through forms that exceed narrative explanation. In both plays, limits of speech do not mean no meaning; instead, they show other ways to render trauma perceptible through affective and nonverbal elements. The plays emphasize experiences that arrive before thought and are difficult to articulate, rather than expressing trauma through logical events or explanatory narration. Seen through the lens of affect theory, these intensities show that trauma stays not only in memory or representation, but as affective forces that continue to shape seeing, relating, and embodiment which cannot be articulated in narrative. In this way, theatre becomes a place where trauma is felt by the body, detected by rhythm and movement and experienced as force rather than being largely expressed in words.

The results of the analysis can now be used to address the research issues that guided this investigation. This study shows a complementary relationship between affect theory and trauma theory. It indicates that traumatic experience is not merely a narrative representation but an embodied intensity. Affect theory emphasises how traumatic experiences endure as intensities and pre-linguistic sensations that circulate through bodies, emotional states and dramatic space, whereas trauma theory emphasises how difficult it is to depict such experiences in narrative form. When combined, these frameworks enable the interpretation of trauma as an affective and embodied phenomena in addition to a narrative break. The analysis further shows that nonverbal elements are significant indicators of trauma across both plays. They work as affective surges rather than explicit representation. These components express the text's affective intensity which implies that trauma endures as an experience that comes before articulation and cannot be completely arranged into a cohesive story.

Responding to the lack of study about pre-cognitive and bodily sides of trauma in theatre research, the thesis focuses on how nonverbal and affective elements function as main places where trauma becomes perceptible. Drawing mainly on Tomkins and Massumi, the study approaches traumatic experience not like an event that can be explained clearly but like an affective process that emerges in intensity, relations, and bodily reaction, often before conscious thought or words appear. Overall, the analysis shows that trauma in modern theatre can be viewed as an affective process that endures as intensity across bodies, space and dramatic form rather than as

a narrative closure. According to this viewpoint, affect theory foregrounds how trauma is experienced, registered and transmitted within the text itself rather than what trauma cannot be fully expressed. Instead of framing trauma as a fixed event that happened in the past, it frames it as a living intensity that continues to shape experience. Ultimately, the thesis argues that trauma becomes understandable in theatre not through direct explanation but through nonverbal affective forces such as silence, fragmentation, repetition, and embodied intensity, which go beyond linguistic representation.



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2021-2022, Final Ispartakule Okulları/ ESL Teacher

PUBLICATIONS:

01-02. 06. 2025, Nonverbal Markers of Trauma in Sarah Kane's Blasted in Line With Affect Theory/ In Oral And Technical Presentation, Recognition And Appreciation Of Research. 6. Bilsel International Gordion Science Researches Congress, Ankara/ Türkiye

CERTIFICATES:

TESOL Certification/ TESOL International Association

Teaching Practice Certification/ TESOL International Association