

國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士論文

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「以利！以利！拉馬撒巴各大尼？」：莎拉·肯恩劇作中的褻瀆與救贖

“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”: Profanation and Redemption in Sarah Kane’s Plays



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中華民國 107 年 07 月

July 2018



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in Sarah Kane’s Plays**



A Master Thesis
Presented to
Department of English,
National Chengchi University

In Particular Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Ying-mau Lin
July 2018



Acknowledgement

I cannot predict the future, but if I have to conclude my life right now, I would say that my graduate life is truly the most precious time in my life. The intellectual sea is so broad and deep, and I got the chance to dive into it and taste the freshness of knowledge, which all thanks to the guidance and support from many people. Please do forgive me that I cannot cover all, but still, do allow me to give my thanks to some special individuals for without them, it is really impossible for me to be what I am right now.

Dear Prof. Chin-yuan Hu, first I have to thank you with all my respect since it was you who introduced me the world of literary theory, and let me know what I really wanted to study. Besides, you kindly chose me to be your teaching assistant, and from that experience, I learned the attitude that one should always treat his job with seriousness as well as sincerity. Dear Prof. Han-yu Huang, Dr. Li-hsin Hsu and Dr. Yih-dau Wu, thank you for being willing to participate in the oral defense of my thesis, and giving me numerous valuable suggestions helping me to improve my work. My dear advisor, Dr. Yen-bin Chiou, the advice and support I received from you were really countless. You directed me to the right wave I should surf for me to

achieve what I really tried to deliver through my words, but not to get drowned in the abyss of misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the texts I studied. I have to apologize that I could not repay all the help I obtained from the members of the Department of English, but my memory would always remind me of your kindness.

Finally, my dear family, my parents and my siblings, I believe my mere thank can never deserve your devotion to me, and even the sacrifice for me. I can only promise with my limited life that, no matter what and where I will be, my heart will never turn away from you.

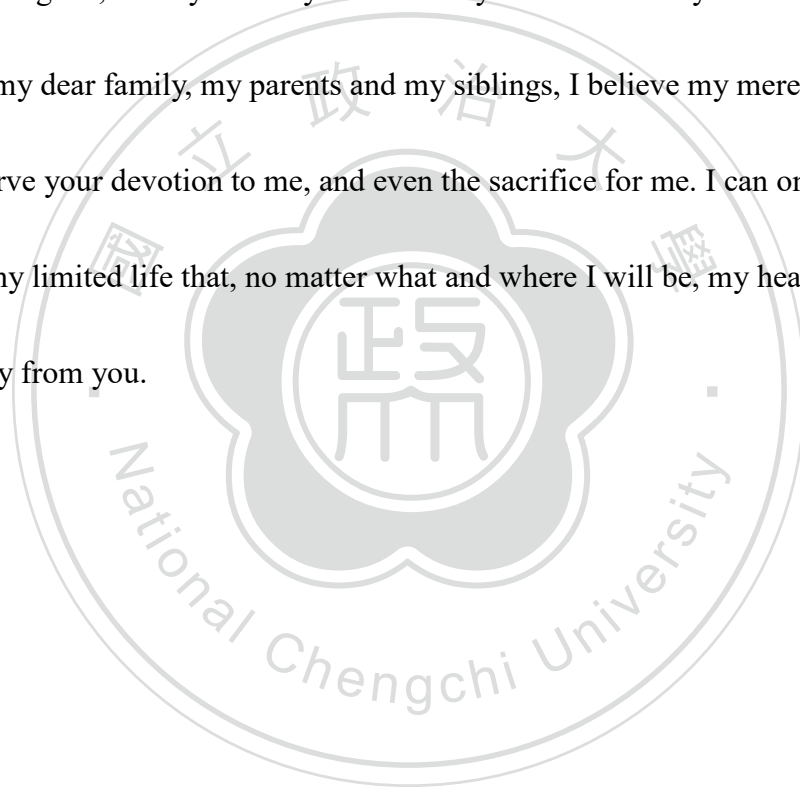


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國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士班
碩士論文提要

論文名稱：「以利！以利！拉馬撒巴各大尼？」：莎拉·肯恩劇作中的褻瀆與救贖

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論文提要內容：英國劇作家莎拉·肯恩（Sarah Kane, 1971-1999）的劇作中，人性的光輝往往被極端暴力殘酷地褻瀆，但於此同時，在她作品結尾卻也往往充盈著救贖的氣息。而這揉合褻瀆與救贖的特色，使肯恩的作品不只在劇場界留下不可抹滅的一筆，也留下了亟待解決的神秘。肯恩曾經表示她的個性與智識常在她童年的基督教信仰，以及成年後非基督教的思想中擺盪。一方面她意識到人類命定的逝去，另一方面她也無法拋棄人類得到救贖的可能性。而有鑑於肯恩與基督教的關係，以及在其作品行間不時出現的宗教指涉，此篇論文將嘗試指出肯恩作品中的殘酷褻瀆，事實是如同基督受難般，闡述並指出了人類救贖的路途。

而為求證明，此篇論文選擇了肯恩五部劇作中，最具原創性與最清楚展現肯恩思想特色的《驚爆》（*Blasted*, 1995）與《滌洗》（*Cleansed*, 1998）集中分析論述。研究方法上則是會使用阿岡本（Giorgio Agamben）的生命政治概念，因在

其著述中，不只指出當代人類社會對於人性必定的背離，也討論了人類該如何脫離這種人性的懸置狀態。因此阿岡本的概念將會用以分析肯恩的作品情節以及基督受難的過程，以指明兩者間的關係。論文首先會指出肯恩劇中角色受到的非人待遇，其實是源於人類存在本身必定踏入的非人性化過程。並會討論基督如何藉由放下對於人性的追求，讓自己不被人類世界包括，進而拾起另一種生命的可能性。最後通過將肯恩劇作與基督救贖納入阿岡本理論的脈絡中，發現兩者之間的對話關係。最終使論文能總結道肯恩文字中所展現的殘酷暴力，事實上指向與十字架上鮮血相同的結局。

關鍵字：神聖之人 (*homo sacer*)、人性／非人性、褻瀆／救贖、不去運作 (*inoperativity*)、不被包括 (*destitution*)

Abstract

The British playwright, Sarah Kane (1971-1999), makes her name for the extreme presentation of profaning violence in her plays, but at the same time, the redemptive air can always be felt at the end of her works. This fusion of profanation and redemption is not only the unique mark of Kane's words in the theatrical world, but also the key mystery waiting to be deciphered for her plays to be understood well. Kane once said that her characteristic and thought were always under the struggle between her childhood Christian belief, and her adult thinking beyond Christianity, and that is, the struggle between the belief that human beings are destined to be saved, and the thinking that human beings are doomed to face their hopeless decease. For Kane's relation with Christianity as well as some clear Christian allusions Kane makes in her plays, the thesis would aim to argue that through presenting the most profaning cruelty, Kane's works, as Christ's crucifixion, really aim to point out the way toward redemption of the human.

For proving the argument, the thesis would analyze two of Kane's five plays, *Blasted* (1995) and *Cleansed* (1998), in detail for they reveal Kane's original ideas more effectively and clearly than her other works. Besides, the thesis would use

Giorgio Agamben's biopolitical theory as the main approach since Agamben does not only argue that the human really live as the forsaken in the human society, but also talks about the way for the human to be freed from this forsakenness. Therefore, Agamben's theory would be applied to analyze both Kane's words, and Christ's crucifixion in order to build up the relation between them. The thesis would point out first that Kane's characters are treated inhumanly since being human itself is doomed to cause one's own dehumanization. Then, the thesis would discuss how Christ redeems his life by laying down his human existence, and destituting himself from the human world. Finally, the dialogues between Christ's journey toward redemption and Kane's lines would be built with the aid of Agamben's theory. So the thesis can conclude at the end that the merciless violence in Kane's words truly leads to the similar end as the bloodshed on the cross.

Keywords: *homo sacer*, human/inhuman, redemption/profanation, inoperativity,

destitution



Chapter One

Introduction

And about the ninth hour Christ cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli,
lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou
forsaken me?

——Matthew 27:46.

You'd have watched them crucify me.

——*Cleansed*, Sarah Kane 129.

The echo between the dying cry of Christ, and the line written by the British playwright, Sarah Kane (1971-1999), can be heard clearly in the epigraphs. Though Kane's plays make their name for the extreme presentation of profanation while violence, rape, incest, murder, and suicide haunting every corner in her scripts do not seem to promise any way toward redemption, she never fails to let the audience sense the redemptive air at the end of her plays. Even when the characters seem to end up in the most inhuman and forsaken condition, the audience can still see peace and harmony on their faces. With the fusion of these two paradoxical elements, profanation and redemption, Kane's plays leave their unique mark in the theatrical world, and this thesis would aim to decipher this unique fusion by building up the dialogues between Kane's plays and the most iconic redemptive moment in the

Western world, Christ's crucifixion.

There is a debate I constantly have with myself because I was brought up as a Christian, and for the first sixteen years of my life I was absolutely convinced that there was a God . . . I seriously believed that Jesus was going to come again in my lifetime and that I wouldn't have to die. So when I got to about eighteen and nineteen and it suddenly hit me that the thing I should have been dealing with at all. So there is a constant debate in my head of really not wanting to die—being terrified of it—and also having this constant thing that you can't really shake if you've believed it that hard and that long as a child—that there is a God, and somehow I'm going to be saved. So, I suppose in a way that split is a split in my own kind of personality and intellect. (Saunders 22)

In the interview by Graham Saunders, Kane reveals that the “split” between her childhood Christian belief and her adult thinking beyond Christianity greatly influences her life. The terror of grim human destiny with no prospect of salvation, and the hope of upcoming redemption are intertwined, and developed into the unique texture of her “personality and intellect.” And Kane's works do not leave out any phases of her ambiguous pondering over the fusion of the profane and redemptive elements in her words. Besides, the Christian ideas which are sometimes found in her

lines show that her plays do not only aim to display a series of violent crimes, but also try to show the way toward redemption as Christ's crucifixion demonstrates.

Christ's crucifixion should not be considered purely redemptive. It is also simultaneously profane since all "unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17), and Christ whose "own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

Paradoxically, as the blood of sinful life cleans "us from all sin" (1 John 1:7), his wounds save us from "being dead to sins" (1 Peter 2:24), and his crucifixion makes us "live unto righteousness." Paul preaches that "wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life" (Roman 6:23). Christ on the cross, therefore, receives both "the wages of sin" and "the gift of God." "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" cries Christ before his death (Matthew 27:46). Christ feels his forsakenness for he is crucified as a sinner against God. But his questioning tone reveals that his sacrifice cannot be just concluded by his being forsaken, but it must unveil some possibility of his life he cannot see or perceive if he does not lay down his earthly life. And his question is answered through his resurrection, and through the hope of redemption his life presents to the earth. Then, with her relation with Christianity, it is possible that the cruel plots Kane designs in her plays also aim to shed light on the new possibility of human life. In order to verify this assumption, this thesis would discuss first why the human need to be provided some new way to live, and that is, why the human need to

be redeemed. After specifying and clarifying the multifarious disasters devastating human life, the thesis would then point out how profanation plays a significant role in redemption, which will be demonstrated in the following chapters by connecting human sufferings with Christ's redemptive journey. Finally, the thesis would show how Kane displays the human disastrous condition through her words, and how the fusion of profanation and redemption in her works leads to the redemption Christ accomplishes on the cross.

I. Methodology

Talking about the human devastating condition, in his *Homo Sacer* series, Giorgio Agamben argues that the human being nowadays are destined to live as *homo sacer* (sacred man), an identity given to the convict in ancient Roman law, which means the human are always needed to be redeemed for existing always as the condemned. Agamben asserts that this ancient paradoxical concept of "*sacer*" (sacred) "before or beyond the religious, constitutes the first paradigm of the political realm of the West" (*Homo Sacer* 9). Like Christ introduces the most important moment of redemption, the concept of *homo sacer* also presents the most fundamental "paradigm" of the human society in the Western world. The concept of *homo sacer*, therefore, would be the main approach for the thesis to analyze both Kane's works

as well as Christ's crucifixion since Agamben's concept of *homo sacer* is really concerned about the present human condition, and at the same time, it contains its ancient root, so it would be used to bridge the distance between the modern plays and the archaic event.

Initially, *homo sacer* is used to designate someone who should devote his life to God in order to save the community from catastrophe, but still keeps alive. It then comes to connote an unusual form of punishment through which the culprit is judicially characterized as someone who "belongs to God in the form of unsacrificeability and is included in the community in the form of being able to be killed" with impunity (82). Designated as *homo sacer*, in other words, one's life is related to God by being forever forsaken by God insofar as *homo sacer* refers to someone who is being expelled at once from the divine order (unsacrificeability) and human community (can be killed with impunity). While being unable to reach God, *homo sacer* cannot be welcomed by his hometown as well for he is already being deemed as the sacrificed, so much so that everyone can kill him without fear of the charge of murder. "*Life that cannot be sacrificed and yet may be killed is sacred life*" (82). The sacred life of *homo sacer* is not accepted by heaven, and not protected by the human world. It is the life that should be dead in order to accomplish its sacredness. Therefore, it is the life profaning its own sacredness by simply being

alive. Bearing its sacred name, *homo sacer* is really nothing but the forsaken life.

The sacredness of life, which is invoked today as an absolutely fundamental right in opposition to sovereign power, in fact originally expresses precisely both life's subjection to a power over death and life's irreparable exposure in the relation of abandonment. (83)

In modern society, it is self-evident that every human life has its own singular value and its inherent sacredness should be protected by human rights from any form of violation. Agamben, however, challenges the idea of human sacredness by relating the concept of *homo sacer* to the present human condition. It is like even the Messiah would be lynched and killed. Human sacredness is really illusionary as "*sacer*" in the name of the condemned, and is destined to be profaned and forsaken. But even the forsaken can still achieve redemption as Kane's characters, who are in many ways reminiscent of Christ on the cross. In his *Homo Sacer* series, Agamben also discusses how the human being can be freed from his catastrophic condition. So Agamben's theory would not only be used to analyze the disastrous human condition, but would also be used to decipher the redemption happening on the cross as well as the redemption occurring in Kane's works in order to show how the human being can be redeemed, not in spite of, but because of his profaned sacredness.

II. Structure

Within Kane's five theatrical works, *Blasted* (1995) and *Cleansed* (1998) would be the main research materials of the thesis. The selection is made not because her other plays do not address the issue about profanation and redemption. On the contrary, it is exactly because Kane's concern about the issue can be seen in all her works, the selection has to be made, so the thesis can go deep into the core of the issue by focusing on the plays most strongly expressing the "split" of Kane's mind. First of all, *Blasted* and *Cleansed* are the original story unlike Kane's *Phaedra's Love* which is an adaptation of an ancient Roman tragedy, *Phaedra*, by Seneca. Secondly, both the plays have clear storylines which Kane's *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* do not have due to their experimental style which makes their redemptive and profane elements hard to be identified with certainty. Therefore, the third and fourth chapters of the thesis would be dedicated to analyzing Kane's *Blasted* and *Cleansed* respectively in order to decipher the unique topic of Kane's works.

Blasted is set in a hotel room, and *Cleansed* is set in a university. Both the plays are set in the places every human being can reach daily, but their daily quality does not prevent the characters from their inhuman sufferings, which shows how human life can be profaned even in the most normal circumstances. So the other reason for my selection is that Kane's *Blasted* and *Cleansed* are concerned respectively about

both the phases of human life, and that is the public and private phases. *Blasted* is about war, and since the declaration of war belongs to the power of State, the second chapter, “*Exile and the Kingdom*,” would aim to discuss the human condition in the human society in which the human are regulated by the law, and governed by the State for living as the human but not as unregulated beasts. On the other hand, *Cleansed* is about human body and love, the elements that are always regarded private and irreplaceable for each individual since no one can love the same as others, and no other species can use their bodies with reason as the human being. Therefore, the third chapter, ““You Were My Death,”” would be devoted to the discussion of the human condition shown by one’s own body and mind. Finally, the fourth chapter would conclude the thesis by showing the overall picture about Kane’s idea about how the human being is profaned, and how the human being can be redeemed in the society, and with himself alone.

III. Literature Review

The studies of Sarah Kane still do not bloom into variety since her works might not stand long enough for scholars to explore with more diverse approaches, and her works are never regarded as canon by the public for their extreme quality. Most of the time, the researches of Kane’s plays are done from the perspectives of theater studies

while the symbolic and poetic language of Kane's theater is still attracting scholars to clarify the mysterious theatrical elements of Kane's works. And this kind of studies is mostly conducted in the following two ways. First, Kane's own words, the words of Kane's colleagues and friends, and the comments of critics and news are discussed in detail in order to piece together what Kane really want to say by her works. Graham Saunders' *'Love me or kill me'* and Aleks Sierz's *In-Yer-Face Theatre* are the two major works that provide the biographical information of Kane's life and its relation with her works as Saunder asserts that in his book he tries "as much as possible, to let [Kane's] own words provide the commentary on her own work" (x). And Sierz also introduces his work by the words as follows:

It is mainly concerned with conveying what plays are like when you see them in performance, what it feels like to see a whole rash of new work, how the shock of the new is discussed and how meaning is created from the experience of theatregoing. . . . One of this book's main sources is interviews with writers, as well as with other theatre workers. (xi)

The second major way to study Kane's works theatrically would be to analyze Kane's plays by theater theories, and in this case, Antonin Artaud's "Theater of Cruelty" is applied most frequently like Clare Wallace's "Sarah Kane, Experimental Theatre and the Revenant Avant-Garde" and Lauren De Vos's *Cruelty and Desire in*

the Modern Theater all showing the clear relation between Kane's and Artaud's works.

Renouncing psychological man, with his well-dissected character and feelings, and social man, submissive to laws and misshapen by religions and percepts, the Theater of Cruelty will address itself only to total man.

(Artaud 123)

Wallace compares Kane's theater with Artaud's idea of the "total theatre" since Kane like Artaud does not leave out the hideous elements of human life like "extremity, cruelty and madness" in her works (Wallace 95). Artaud desires the theater showing not only the humanistic man acting through his reason and under the regulation, but he wants the stage to unveil the human being's oppressed side which is always regarded simply as "imagination and dreams" though it weighs as "the reality" (Artaud 123). Artaud wishes to show what the human being truly is, to show what is kept veiled in humanity, and that is inevitably to be cruel for human

"consciousness . . . gives to the exercise of every act of life its blood-red color, its cruel nuance" (102). The cruel plots of Kane, therefore, really aim to uncover the sugarcoat of human society as De Vos argues, "Following Artaud, Kane regards this reality, which we consider normality, as sheer madness. To survive in our society is not possible unless we prepare to surrender to the madness of the lie" (*Cruelty* 141).

This thesis, however, tries to prove that the appeal of Kane's plays is exuded not only through the stage performance. The uncanny power of the playwright's texts is also the pull factor that motivates me to gauge their philosophical import through the lens of Agamben's theory. And the similar approach can be seen in Julia Boll's *The New War Plays* in which Kane's plays are discussed by Agamben's political ideas. She argues that Kane's works, especially *Blasted*, display the new kind of war of modern world in which "the dualisms that used to define the differences between war and peace, military and civil" are "increasingly blurred" (26). Like the thesis, Julia Boll also points out that Kane's words show the devastating human condition that sacred human rights and humanity are always profaned as peace is no more distinguishable from war. She puts her focus, however, mainly on the elements related to war, like "public trauma," "grief and mourning," "testimony and voyeurism of witness other people's suffering" (2). This thesis is distinguishable from Boll's book in that the main focus of the thesis is not on war, but on the human condition presented within the interactions between the individual and State, and between the individual and his body as well as his mind. Besides, Boll's book does not touch upon the redemptive phase of Kane's works, and that phase would be shown in the following chapters by building up the dialogues between Kane's plays and Christ's life with the aid of Agamben's words.

Chapter Two

Exile and the Kingdom: The State, Law and Human Rights in Blasted

“The orders? I’m not . . .” Daru hesitated, not wanting to hurt the old Corsican.

“I mean, that’s not my job.”

“What! What’s the meaning of that? In wartime people do all kinds of jobs.”

“Then I’ll wait for the declaration of war!”

Balducci nodded.

“O.K. But the orders exist and they concern you too. Things are brewing, it appears. There is talk of a forthcoming revolt. We are mobilized, in a way.”

——“The Guest,” Albert Camus 29-30.

In the short story collected in Camus’ *Exile and the Kingdom*, the protagonist believes that he has the rights to reject the order irrelevant to his duty while war is still on its way, and the situation is still normal but not exceptional. “But the orders exist and they concern you too.” The special order which should only be given during wartime by the State, however, has always already penetrated into the people’s normal life. So the special order is never special, and

war has always already arrived.

The special order always keeps its eye on the people not only when there is a war, but also when the society still looks peaceful. It is like when one slightly removes the sugarcoat of peace, the fire of war would blaze in our face, and one's normal life is never normal but only the veiled state of exception. Sarah Kane's *Blasted* is about war. In the play, the fire of war breaks out abruptly, and turns the normal life into hell. And the law which one believes to be the guardian of one's life is proven unable to preempt the catastrophe. One cannot help wondering if the law serves just to mesmerize the people with the delusion of peace thereby plunging them into the turmoil of war, into the state of exception without noticing it. If it is how the law works, one's life even in peace is inevitable as the life in war, as the life of *homo sacer* who can be killed with no need of assuming any juridical responsibility. This idea is vividly shown by Kane's *Blasted* in which war appears, and replaces peace in the smoothest style without being blocked by the law. The characters are tortured extremely cruelly by the unexpected war, and this intensity of violence makes peace nothing but a distant dream. Therefore, for understanding *Blasted* well, one first needs to know the somber reality of war. "The state of exception" is one of the most important concepts in Agamben's *Homo Sacer* series, and by discussing it, Agamben

unveils the fact that war always exists even when peace still prevails. The concept, therefore, would be introduced and used in this chapter as the key for dissolving the mystery of the abrupt war in *Blasted*.

It is expected that the State would declare the exceptional situation when the country encounters the emergency like catastrophe or war which cannot be readily managed. By declaring the exceptional situation, the State can activate the special order immediately without going through the normal time-consuming legislation process. In the circumstances, the law is suspended to give way to the new order. Agamben admits that, historically speaking, the exceptional situation is designed to deal with the emergency including war, and that is why Italian and French theories discuss it with the terms “*emergency degrees*” and “*state of siege*,” and Anglo-Saxon theory with the term, “*martial laws*” (*State of Exception* 4). Agamben, however, chooses to use the term used in German theory, “*state of exception*,” to discuss the concept as he asserts that the exceptional situation is not operated merely in the emergency situation like war, but its operation is inseparable from the use of daily law (4). It is because the state of exception is created with the suspension of daily law, and that is how the special order departing from the law, and sometimes even working against the law, can be activated. The state of exception, therefore, points to the “threshold

or limit concept” for the law (4). It hoops the law, and tells how far the law can go. And by being able to declare the state of exception, and suspend the law, the power of State is actually beyond the law. That is how the State is regarded as the sovereign power nowadays as Carl Schmitt argues in *Political Theology*, “Sovereign is he who decides on the exception” (5), and the “the existence of the state is undoubted proof of its superiority over the validity of the legal norm. The decision frees itself from all normative ties and becomes in the true sense absolute” (12). Then, if the State is sovereign for its being able to go beyond the law, why is the daily law needed in the first place?

The exception appears in its absolute form when a situation in which legal prescriptions can be valid must first be brought about. Every general norm demands a normal, everyday frame of life to which it can be factually applied and which is subjected to its regulations.

(Schmitt 13)

The law is needed because the law provides the stage for the State to activate its absolute authority. The law defines what normal life is, and in this way, the power of law influences everyone’s life. One can choose to follow the law or to break the law, but nobody can act beyond the law as the State does. And it is also by this regulation of law, one’s human rights can be defined since the law tells

everyone how one should or can act. For example, by telling the people that they should not kill, the sacred rights of human life are clearly shown. The State, however, is able to work beyond the law, and that is, is able to profane the sacred human rights defined by the law. “The exception reveals most clearly the essence of the state’s authority” (Schmitt 13). The law that binds all the people makes everyone’s life the stage where the State can activate its absolute power by being able to suspend the law. By being able to suspend the law, the State can ignore the wall built by the law, and dominate the people without one’s basic rights being the obstacle. The sovereign power of State is absolute for its domination penetrates into everyone’s everyday life.

In modern democracy, when one is asked about what constitutes the State, one may not hesitate to answer that the people under the government of State form the State, and the State is unquestionably “a Commonwealth” (Hobbes 3) belonging to all the people. Then, to preserve the State, at the same time, is to protect the people for the State is united by the people to keep their “peace and defence” (109). The law is enforced to regulate the people for keeping everything peaceful, but the force of law cannot be unlimited. The people, therefore, unite one another as the State whose power is beyond the law in order to hoop the law with the hands of people. So the law may not go astray, but

keeps caring each individual. It is, therefore, each individual empowers the State to suspend the law “on the basis of its right of self-preservation” (Schmitt 12) because this empowerment, at the same time, is also for preserving everyone’s human rights. The paradox is that in order to live humanly, the people are left with no choice but only to accept the government of State whose power is beyond the law which defines human rights. Can the people, therefore, really live humanly by uniting themselves as the State when they are inevitably being governed by the State inhumanly?

Everything happens as if, along with the disciplinary process by which State power makes man as a living being into its own specific object, another process is set in motion that in large measure corresponds to the birth of modern democracy, in which man as a living being presents himself no longer as an object but as the subject of political power. These processes—which in many ways oppose and (at least apparently) bitterly conflict with each other—nevertheless converge insofar as both concern the bare life of the citizen, the new biopolitical body of humanity. (*Homo Sacer* 9)

I am the object under the regulation of law, so my rights of life are defined. But being the object of law kept in the hands of State which can work beyond the

law to benefit itself, I live as *homo sacer*, and my life is just “the bare life” whose rights can be violated anytime without causing any juridical responsibility. However, living in the modern democratic State, I am also the subject uniting the sovereign power, and the State is formed by the people like me who tries to keep the law protecting our rights of life. The State has the power to go beyond the law because the law needs to be under control by the hands of people. So in order to live humanly, I let myself be cast into the hands of the sovereign whose power is shown by being able to suspend the law and produce the state of exception where every human life lives as the bare life.

Life, which is thus obliged, can in the last instance be implicated in the sphere of law only through the presupposition of its inclusive exclusion, only in an *exceptio*. There is a limit-figure of life, a threshold in which life is both inside and outside the juridical order, and this threshold is the place of sovereignty. (*Homo Sacer* 27)

In order to live humanly under the protection of law, I first have to be governed by the sovereign power dominating people by being able to go beyond the law. That is, I am included by the law through being excluded by it. For being the subject of State, I let myself be devoured in the “sovereign sphere” (*Homo Sacer* 85) of State where the suspension of law, and the profanation of sacred human

rights become normal.

In the constitutional State, the mechanism suspending the law is built in the law itself. The law is designed to be suspendable as Agamben argues, “Law is made of nothing but what it manages to capture inside itself through the inclusive exclusion of the exceptio: it nourishes itself on this exception and is a dead letter without it” (*Homo Sacer* 27). The law is nothing if it is not given the form and limited by the state of exception. The law is responsible for caring everyone’s life by embracing the possibility of its being suspended by the State which is united by the people. The law is activated to protect human rights by witnessing the people to be governed as *homo sacer* whose life is naked under the power beyond the law.

Foucault in “*Society Must Be Defended.*” asserts that “we have to interpret the war that is going on beneath peace; peace itself is a coded war” (51). And the mechanism of the state of exception proves his statement well. The state of exception, that is originally created only in the emergency situation like war, is applied daily by the State for it to sustain its absolute domination of all the people. Peace, therefore, is sustained by the mechanism of war. And the people for keeping their human rights give themselves into hands of the sovereign in which human life is readily subject to violation just as the life rendered

precarious during wartime.

That the war in *Blasted* breaks out so suddenly indicates that peace, once its glossy façade is torn off, is nothing but “a coded war.” The characters are lynched cruelly since human life is always already devoured by the power without any mercy at all. The extreme desperate plots of the play seem to imply that for the human, there is no any way out, and there is no hope at all. However, in the interview by Aleks Sierz, Kane argues, “*Blasted* is a hopeful play” (Sierz 120). If in *Blasted*, Kane does not only talk about the hidden cruelty, but also reveals the gleam of hope, it would be essential for one to ask whether redemption is still possible under the shadow of the state of exception in order to properly understand the play. Therefore, in the next section, Christ’s crucifixion would be analyzed with the concept of the state of exception for one to see if redemption under the state of exception is still realizable. Finally, in the last section of the chapter, by seeing how Kane’s play echoing with Christ’s crucifixion and the concept of the state of exception, one may see the way toward hope disclosed.

I. “I Am Not Come to Destroy, but to Fulfill.”

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide
the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death:
and he was numbered with the transgressors

——Isaiah 53:12

In Ten Commandments, the law, “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13) is declared by God through Moses. Though the law is declared long after God creates the world, by seeing that God punishes Cain for his murder, it is clear that God’s law is operated even before the time of its declaration. Then, if God’s law always prohibits one from killing, how can God’s authority still be built when God orders Abraham to slay his only son for testing Abraham’s loyalty? If God should be always right, the righteousness of God must work beyond the law. And that is why Paul would assert that “the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Roman 3:21). So in God’s prophecy about the coming of Messiah, Christ is “numbered with the transgressors” because it is the righteousness of God that Christ aims to achieve through his sacrifice. Schmitt argues that the sovereign is someone who is able to decide on the exception, and that is, is someone whose power is beyond the law. Then, God should be undeniably the sovereign since his authority is inseparable

from the mechanism of the state of exception.

Through Christ's lifetime, he is not afraid to preach the new order different from the old law in the name of God. He challenges Hebrew temple, and calls "scribes and Pharisees" all "hypocrites" (Matthew 23:13). Christ seems to wage war on the land governed by God. Christ, however, asserts, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). He argues that he challenges the law not for damaging God's authority, but for fulfilling God's will. Christ is not like Cain who breaks the law in his own will. Like Abraham breaks the law for obeying God, Christ acts only in God's will as he asserts, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). So when Cain attacks God's authority by acting in himself alone, Christ embraces God's authority by forsaking his rights as an autonomous individual. The challenges Christ conducts unveil the mechanism of God's righteousness in order to let the people know that it is impossible to attain God's Kingdom by knowing only the law because to ignore the existence of the state of exception is to ignore the core of God's power.

Before his arrest, Christ tells his disciples, "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the

transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.” (Luke 22:37). Christ’s
wrestle with the Hebrew juridical system is a behavior to accept his fate as the
existence being inclusively excluded by the law under God’s authority. As
Abraham really intends to slay his son to show his being totally in God’s hands,
Christ devotes himself wholly to God by recognizing his destiny as *homo sacer*
included in the protection of law by being excluded by it. Christ’s challenge is an
action to let himself burned by the fire of war where God’s authority is shown.
He must be teased, lynched, and treated not as a human being in order to achieve
God’s righteousness. That is how the cross that used to punish the profane
criminal becomes the symbol of redemption after Christ’s crucifixion. The cross
where Christ sheds his blood shows the end of Christ’s challenges leading to
where his life aims to attain. Then, where does Christ’s life aim? If Christ’s death
shows the way toward redemption, what is exactly the redemption God
promises?

The idea of the arrival of God’s Kingdom after the end of the world is vital
in Christian belief. Christ promises the people that if they believe in him, they
should be resurrected after death (John 11:25). He preaches, “Whosoever will
come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For
whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my

sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." (Mark 8:34-35). One must follow Christ's way of life, and put one's whole self in God's hands without caring one's own rights in order to embrace the life God's redemption aims to achieve. One's life can be redeemed only when one is willing to lay down his earthly life. Then, what is the difference between the earthly life and afterlife? Paul articulates the concept about the world after resurrection by saying, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:24). According to Paul, the resurrected people would inhabit in God's Kingdom where the law as well as every mechanism of power would all be "put down," as Agamben explains in *The Kingdom and the Glory*, insofar as God's Kingdom is with "every providential operation exhausted and with all administration of salvation coming to an end" (162). It does not mean that the law and government are totally destroyed, but they are only "put down," and that is, they exist, but simply act "inoperatively." Then, why is redemption achieved not by destroying the law and governing power, but by putting them down?

The reason why the law and governing power are needed lies in the fact that the people desire for peace and to defend their lives against chaos and war. If the society is lawless and unregulated, war and chaos cannot be prevented, and

the people's lives are always under the threat of violence and death. However, insofar as the law and governing power are themselves sustained by the mechanism of war, people are still exposed to the imminent threat of violence and death. The destruction of the law and governing power cannot achieve peace and harmony. But if they are maintained as they stand today, there is ironically little prospect of peace and harmony. Rendering them inoperative, therefore, could be the possible way to dissolve this dilemma. It is because when their "work is deactivated and rendered inoperative," they would be "restored to possibility, opened to the new possible use" (*The Use of Body*, Agamben 247). So when the law works inoperatively, the possibility that the law does not include the people by excluding them is revealed. And as the governing power works inoperatively, the possibility that the people are not governed through being turned into *homo sacer* is also shown. Then, there is still hope, and it is revealed only when one treads on the way of Christ who is willing to be treated inhumanly because he accepts that he is in the fire of war. If one believes that he has already gained the harmony of life, how can he still strive to redeem his life? "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:24-25). I hope for what is not owned, but

not what is already in my possession. If I hold the thing I hope for in my hands, why and how can I still hope for the thing? Only when one senses that he is not in peace but war, redemption would be hoped for, and the possibility of different life can be shown. Redemption and cruelty, therefore, have to be inseparable from each other, which is clearly displayed by Christ crucifixion as well as Kane's *Blasted*.

II. The Writing of the Disaster

Before it is there, no one awaits it; when it is there, no one recognizes it: for it is not there — the disaster.

—*The Writing of the Disaster*, Maurice Blanchot 36.

Kane's *Blasted* lets war show through peace. The war in the story makes its appearance so suddenly and so unexpectedly since the mechanism of war is never separable from the human society like lava flooding beneath the earth is always at hand to devour the city with its infernal heat.

The play begins in a “*very expensive hotel room in Leeds —the kind is so expensive it could be anywhere in the world*” (3). The high price of the room implies that not everybody can afford it. This expensiveness, however, does not result in its uniqueness, and everyone everywhere can try to pay for it. So why would anyone like

to pay the high price for the space existing everywhere? It is because a space belonging to oneself is the place where one's human rights are affirmed. In my space, I can claim that my human rights are under the protection of law, and no one should easily trespass without my permission. But at the same time, I know that everyone has the same rights to have a room as mine because everyone is under the government of State, and the room as the protection of law is provided for each individual. So one would be willing to pay more for one's own space as its high price seems to imply that the wall of law protecting one's rights is built higher and stronger. It seems that higher price I pay, more precious my life is.

Ian comes in, throws a small pile of newspapers on the bed, goes straight to the mini-bar and pours himself a large gin.

He looks briefly out of the window at the street, then turns back to the room.

Ian I've shat in better places than this.

.....

Cate comes further into the room.

She puts her bag down and bounces on the bed.

She goes around the room, looking in every drawer, touching everything.

She smells the flowers and smiles.

Cate Lovely. (3-4).

Ian, a middle-aged Welsh man, is a journalist ostensibly. But the gun always carried by him indicates that his identity is not as what he claims to be. It may be why he wants to pay the high price in exchange for the high-leveled security. Cate is a young woman around twenty, jobless, living with her mother. Ian invites Cate to spend a night with him. Ian enters the room in the way that the value of his life is higher than everything and even everyone in the room, and everything and everyone exist in the space he pays for only to emphasize how precious his life is. On the other hand, the way Cate enters the room shows her unfamiliarity with the room, but she still enjoys herself well in the room as she believes the wall of room would also protect her well. Ian “*looks briefly out of the window*” as he cannot stop worrying that he might not be protected well enough. Cate “*smells the flowers and smiles,*” through which one feels the joy resulting from peace.

The joy of Cate withers soon. Cate accepts Ian’s invitation because Ian sounds “unhappy,” and she is “worried” about him (4). Cate’s worry and Ian’s invitation suggest that they used to be a couple. The lost relationship brings them together, but it is not a touching reunion at all. Ian’s days are numbered because of the lung disease, which makes him act cruelly without compunction, and speak sarcastically without

being concerned about any harms.

Cate You're horrible.

Ian Cate, love, I'm trying to look after you. Stop you getting hurt.

Cate You hurt me.

Ian No, I love you.

Cate Stopped loving me. (17)

The way he loves Cate is to force Cate to love him. He constantly tries to have sex with Cate, but Cate always rejects his request, saying, "I'm not your girlfriend any more" (15). Still, he kisses her by force several times (12, 14, 17, 22), and forces her to do the hand-job for him (15). "Make me happy." says Ian (23) in the way like he is talking to a subordinate being. Cate is raped by Ian at that night. Though the rape is not shown on stage, the fact is clearly exhibited through their quarrels occurring next morning. Cate takes Ian's gun, and points it at him. But she starts trembling and faints. When she wakes up, she says she wants to go home. Ian locks the door and says, "It's too dangerous" (28). He confesses to Cate, "I / AM / A / Killer" (30). He is hired by the State, and the job asks him to sign "the Official Secrets Act" to promise to keep everything in secret. That is why he always carries a gun since he is afraid that someone like him would kill him (29). So the wall of the protection is always too thin for Ian since no one knows the fact better than him that for living humanly, human

rights can be offended.

Cate I used to love you.

Ian What's changed?

Cate You.

Ian No. Now you see me. That all.

Cate You're a nightmare. (33)

It is not Ian becoming a nightmare, but he is always a nightmare because his existence reveals how far the State would go in order to preserve its absolute power. "It's my job. I love this country." says Ian (32). Being the subject uniting the State, Ian believes sometimes it is essential for the State to ignore the law in order to achieve the righteousness beyond the law. But when the State can present itself as a totality in the name of people, the individual can never compare himself to the State for being merely the governed object of State. So even when the righteousness beyond the law is claimed to be applied for the people, it can never be the righteousness of the individual. The righteousness Ian believes, therefore, is always a stranger to him, and that is why Ian is always afraid of his being killed.

The door of room is knocked four times in the play. At the first time, Ian "*takes his gun from the holster and goes to the door,*" he asks Cate to open the door, and there is only "*a tray of sandwiches on the floor*" (6). At the second and the third

time, he asks the waiter to leave the things he orders on the floor (17, 34). The curious thing is that, at the first three times, when the door is opened, nobody stands behind the door. But it turns all different when the door is knocked again. Before Cate goes into the bathroom, she looks out of the window, “Look like there’s a war on.” says she casually as seeing a bird flying across the sky (33). When Ian stays alone, the door is knocked at its fourth time. Ian “*draws the gun, goes to the door and listens,*” then he decides to open the door, and the ignored war shows itself in flesh. “*Outside is a Soldier with a sniper’s rifle,*” and he “*takes Ian’s gun easily*” (36). A war suddenly and quietly breaks out. Even Ian who works for the State does not expect it to happen. The space symbolizing the protection of law is easily ruined. No matter how much one pays for it, it would be thrown into chaos whenever it needs to be.

The unveiled war forces the nakedness of human life to appear. In the fire of war, the audience would see how extreme the State can go because, as Jean Luc Nancy argues, “[w]ar is the monument, the festival, the somber and pure sign of the community in its sovereignty” (120). The soldier asks Ian to show his passport (37). The request seems to suggest that the soldier would act in the law. But when he knows there is a woman in the bathroom, he shows his strong interest in raping her. He asks Ian, “What’s she like?” and “Is she soft?” (38). The soldier breaks the door after Cate runs away through the window. Seeing nobody there, the soldier says, “Gone. Taking

a risk. Lots of bastard soldiers out there” (38). It is impossible for anyone to run away from the nightmare, from the original exclusion embodied in the human society. The scene ends by the destruction of the room. “*There is a blinding light, then a huge explosion*” (39). Even when one is inside the wall, the mechanism of war leaves no one alone.

“*The hotel has been blasted by a mortar bomb / . . . and everything is covered in dust which is still falling*” (39). In embers, Ian and the soldier both lose consciousness for a while. Ian wakes up first, but the soldier “*wakes and turns his eyes and rifle on Ian with the minimum possible movement*” (39), like a well-programmed killing machine, always keeping his eyes on Ian.

Soldier Never met an Englishman with a gun before, most of them don't know what gun is. You a soldier?

Ian Of sorts.

Soldier Which side, if you can remember.

Ian Don't know what the sides are here.

Don't know where . . .

(He trails off confused, and look at the Soldier.)

Think I might be drunk

Soldier No. It's real. (40)

Disastrous war should be blocked out of the human world since there is nothing like war that tramples on human rights so thoroughly. In the human society, war is acceptable only when it appears on the newspaper or in the TV show, and that is, war is acceptable only when it is presented as the absent in front of the people. So when the veiled war is shown in front of Ian, he is unable to recognize it. In the UK, the modern democratic State, a gun cannot be used normally as a fork. Though Ian carries a gun because he knows well that the state of exception works even when the law is still effective, but he does not expect the state of exception happens at the scale of war, at the scale that no one can run away from, and that is, at the scale of reality.

Soldier . . . I broke a woman's neck. Stabbed up between her legs, on the fifth stab snapped her spine.

Ian (*Looks sick.*)

Soldier You couldn't do that.

Ian No.

Soldier You never killed. (46)

Talking about killing, Ian says, "I wouldn't forget" (43). The soldier replies, "You would." Ian still believes that human life is sacred as he still believes in the value of his own life. He never thinks that the human exist only to be killed. So he cannot forget his killing, and cannot kill any others as cruelly as the soldier does. The

soldier's extreme cruelty, however, tells the story that human beings can be always killed in spite of human dignity because the State, by being able to suspend the law for its own preservation, is itself "a killing machine" (*State of Exception* 86). So one's loss of life is forgettable as breakfast bacon eaten yesterday morning.

Knowing Ian works as a journalist, the soldier asks Ian to send his story out, to let others know that his lover is cruelly slaughtered during war. "Proving it happened. I'm here, got no choice. But you. You should be telling people" (47). Ian rejects his request, telling him, "This isn't a story anyone wants to know" (48) because it is not "personal," and it supplies no "joy" at all. Like disaster is never regarded personal, under the regulation of law, the state of exception and war are related with everyday life by being considered unrelated to it, so peace is peaceful and human life is inviolable. In "Reviewing the Fabric of *Blasted*," Elaine Aston argues, "Kane's image-infused writing aims to make us see and to feel the affects of violence not as a world outside of ourselves, othered and neutralized, but as inside our lives, value systems, choices and behaviours" (19). The violence happens later in the story would be too extreme for one to ignore. And seeing characters, who are as human as everyone else, being treated in the most inhuman way, one would be provoked to ask if human life itself is a container welcoming all the cruelty to inhabit in it.

"Going to fuck you." says the soldier (49). The soldier rapes Ian, and, at the

same time, the “**Soldier** *is crying his heart out.*” After the sex and breakdown, the soldier asks Ian, “Sure you haven’t got any food, I’m fucking starving” (50). Then, he holds Ian head, and “*puts his mouth over one of Ian’s eyes, sucks it out, bites it off and eats it. / He does the same to the other eye.*” And the soldier breaks down again, saying “He ate her eyes. / Poor bastard. Poor love. Poor fucking bastard.” One would never be sure if his lover is also raped, and if her eyes are also eaten because later he blows his head off with his rifle. It seems that the only mercy one being *homo sacer* can perceive is death as Agamben declares, “The very body of *homo sacer* is . . . a living pledge to his subjection to a power of death” (*Homo Sacer* 99). Coming back and seeing the dead soldier and Ian lying aside, Cate curses again, “You’re a nightmare” (51). She carries a crying infant given by a stranger from the war zone. She witnesses the city is “taken over,” and the people lose their hope. Ian welcomes Cate excitedly, saying, “You come for me, Catie? Punish me or rescue me makes no difference I love you Cate . . . touch me Cate” (51). In his extreme insecurity resulting from his blindness, Ian wants to know if Cate is really beside him, so she can help him by punishing him. He wants Cate to help him to end his life. “Be dead soon anyway, Cate. / And it hurts. / Help me to — / Help me — / Finish / It.” begs Ian (53), and he asks Cate to find his gun. Instead of finding Ian’s gun, Cate “*takes the revolver from the Soldier,*” and takes out all the bullets from it (54). Holding the rifle, Cate

still refuses to give Ian the weapon for she thinks it is immoral to commit suicide. Ian shouts angrily, “No God. No Father Christmas. No fairies. No Narnia. No fucking nothing” (55), and accuses Cate, “I know you want to punish me, trying to make me live.” Cate denies the accusation. She gives Ian the unloaded rifle after knowing she is unable to persuade him. “*He pulls the trigger. The gun clicks, empty*” (56). Cate says it is God stopping him to kill himself, and Ian calls God the “cunt” (57). Cate looks down at the baby, and says “It’s dead” (57). So even the symbol of hope fades away.

Cate buries the dead infant, “*binds the wood together in a cross which she sticks into the floor*” (57), and she prays for the baby for she believes the baby dies innocently (58). During the praying, Ian asks Cate, “Can’t you forgive me?” (58). But his question is left unanswered, and Cate decides to leave Ian to find some food outside. Left alone within ruin, Ian cannot maintain himself anymore. He masturbates, strangles himself, shits on the floor, laughs insanely, sleeps with bad dream, cries while holding the soldier’s body, and finally he lies “very still, weak with hunger” (59-60). He pulls out the hand-made cross, digs out the infant’s corpse, eats it and puts his whole body into the tomb hole with only his head shown (60). “*He dies with relief.*” Rain comes down on dead Ian, and then this dead man resurrects and curses, “Shit.” Cate comes back from the war zone with some food and drink, and there “*is blood seeping from between her legs.*” She sees Ian bury himself in the hole, and get

wet. She calls him, “Stupid bastard,” and sits beside him. She shares what she gets with Ian, and they eat and drink together. “*She finishes feeding Ian and sits apart from him, huddle for warmth*” (61). In the silence with rain, Ian ends the play by saying, “Thank you.” The characters seem to reach some kind of reconciliation when the smell of death is still thick.

That most paradoxical, most fleeting hope finally emerges from the semblance of reconciliation, just as, at twilight, as the sun is extinguished, rises the evening star which outlasts the night. Its glimmer, of course, is imparted by Venus. And upon the slightest such glimmer all hope rests; even the richest hope comes only from it. (“Goethe’s *Elective Affinities*,” Benjamin 355)

In Goethe’s *Elective Affinities*, the distance between the lovers is never shortened for them to achieve reconciliation when they are alive because of the restriction of law. But when they are dead, they finally can wait “side by side” for the “happy moment . . . when one day they awaken again together” (*Elective Affinity*, Goethe 300). The “richest hope” shines, therefore, only when the light of life withers. Strictly speaking, Cate and Ian never achieve reconciliation between each other as Ian is never forgiven. When Ian asks for Cate’s help to end his suffering, she does not show her mercy but unloads the rifle, and lies to him that God does not want him to die. She

keeps silent as Ian asks for her forgiveness. And she decides to leave Ian while her companionship for Ian is so vital. Even when Cate comes back and feeds Ian, no emotional intimacy can be found in their interactions. In the end, Cate sits aside from Ian to keep her own warmth. It is not the reconciliation between the perpetrator and victim brings up the hope since forgiveness is never given, and their distance is never shortened. However, when forgiveness is not shown in the end, revenge is not seen as well. When the fact that human beings can only live as *homo sacer* becomes crystal clear, how can human rights be still considered sacred and inviolable? Cate and Ian both know it well, so one does not forgive nor revenge, and the other does not ask for forgiveness again. Going through all the sufferings, and soaked in the cold rain together, they are forced to acknowledge the fragility of peace by their own bodies. Then, when they can all cry as Christ, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” (Matthew 27:46) for experiencing the forsakenness of the law, they know what should be hoped. Living as the living dead, Ian and Cate achieve “the semblance of reconciliation” for they both perceive what should be waited for.

Besides the consensus between Ian and Cate, the “semblance of reconciliation” can also be explained in the other way because it can also refer to an unusual kind of reconciliation happening between the suffering human life and the hoped different life as in Goethe’s story, the life promised in God’s Kingdom awaits the dead. When Ian’s

life is used to reveal the nakedness of human life as he is alive, by his resurrection, the possibility of different life is shown. Though what Ian does when he is alive all look profane, these profanations he commits against the law make his being forsaken by the law undeniable because as the law does not stop him from being profane, it does not save him from all the outlaw violence as well. Ian rapes Cate, curses God, desires to commit suicide, acts as a crazy man and commits cannibalism in the end, but on the other hand, Ian is also raped, tortured, and even has his eyes eaten for the appearance of war. Though there are no strong grounds to argue that Ian, just like Christ, acts without caring his own rights, it is undeniable that Ian's whole being is christlike insofar as it is exposed to the threat of the power which is sustained not by its full enforcement, but by its own suspension. The hope of redemption, therefore, must be shown in front of him as well. Ian's resurrection is designed by Kane as the reminder of something deserving to be waited for. Paul argues that "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain" (1 Corinthians 15:17), and Ian's afterlife is also the first note delivering the melody of the life realized in the Kingdom of inoperativity since his afterlife is accompanied with the silence in which his gratitude can be clearly heard and perceived without being diluted by the violence carried out by the State power and the suspension of law.

When the sovereign power works inoperatively, it would not point the knife

named as the righteousness beyond the law at each individual, so the individual would not always under the threat to be killed by the knife, or be forced to take the knife to kill. When the law is rendered inoperative, though the law would not take care of the people by defining their human rights as before, it would not include the people by excluding them from its protection as well. In this case, the law becomes more human than before. At the last moment of the play, when Ian and Cate sit together, when the law and sovereign power seem to bother them no more, Kane ends the play with Ian's simple gratitude as this simplicity is the answer, is what is always waited for. Ian's simple gratitude presents an obvious turn of Ian's attitude. It shows how he changes himself from a man grasping his rights of life tightly but choosing to ignore others' human rights into a person treating others without sophisticated calculation but with simplicity that presents what he really feels. And this simplicity is achieved by being detached from the sovereign power and law, and by being unrelated to humanity asking the people to revenge or to forgive for the belief in justice. When the law and sovereign power work inoperatively, and when human rights are not being bestowed just for their suspension, the Kingdom quietly arrives between these most exiled beings.

Chapter Three

“You Were My Death”: Reason, Body and Humanity in *Cleansed*

You were my death:

you I could hold

when all fell away from me.

——“You Were,” Paul Celan 261.

When I am alive, I know I have to control my body well, so I can live with reason as well as health. I was taught that is how one can live humanly because the undirected body does not only result in inhumanity, but also deace. I am always considering how to move my body correctly in order to make it look human and lively. Consequently, I know my body no more, but only recognizes my body as my death I try to conquer or evade by controlling it as healthily and reasonably as possible.

In the previous chapter, through the analysis of Kane’s *Blasted*, I discuss that human rights are deprived, not in spite of, but because of the protection of law. And this deprivation results exactly from the people’s pursuit of human rights because this pursuit requires the people unite themselves in the leviathan of State whose domination on each individual is in turn achieved not by the law’s effective enforcement, but by its suspension. Then, if human life is impossible to be treated

humanly by the union of people under the State, can the human being lives humanly through his own humanity? Or is it doomed to be disastrous as well? The story of Kane's *Cleansed* occurs "inside the perimeter fence of a university" (107), a place staked out for preserving and propagating the idea of human dignity to the world, supposedly. But in *Cleansed*, no characters are treated in a way that they deserve for the university in the play serves only as a concentration camp. The characters are severely beaten, raped, and even dismembered as their bodies are simply treated as disposable things. The most inhuman sufferings happen under the lighthouse of humanity. Does this paradox imply that one's being human itself is never separable from its own deprivation? And if humanity is something possible to be deprived, it means humanity is not an inalienable feature we are born with, but a privilege bestowed for some reasons. Then, how do the human obtain their unique humanity distinguishing themselves from other species?

As the father of modern Western philosophy, Descartes compares bodies of the human and animals to "a machine . . . made by the hands of God" (34) since they can all move automatically without being controlled or manipulated. But the difference is that animals cannot act "in the same way as our reason causes us to act" (35). Human body by nature can be directed by reason, so one can be willing to stop drinking or eating for some reasons like for health even when his body is thirsty or hungry.

Animals, however, do “not act from knowledge, but only from the disposition of their organs.” They do not have reason to direct their bodies to deal with the situations which the nature of their bodies cannot deal with. Animals, like well-programmed machines, only act as how their body organs are designed to act. When animals are hungry, they eat, and when they are thirsty, they drink. For the deficit in reason, an animal cannot even be compared to “the lowest type of man” since it is “morally impossible that there should be sufficient diversity . . . to allow it to act in all the events of life” when “reason is a universal instrument which can serve for all contingencies,” and “organs have need of some special adaptation for every particular action.” And since reason accords human body with singular adaptability to the living environment—for the hands of painter, for example, can be used to accomplish a piece of art apart from collecting food—human beings can enjoy their unique humanity superior to other species.

Descartes famously declares, “*I think, therefore I am*” (21), which strongly indicates how vital human reason is for human existence. So he believes that “the rational soul” of the human should not only “be lodged in the human body like the pilot in his ship, unless perhaps for the moving of its members, but that it is necessary that it should also be joined and united more closely to the body in order to have sensations and appetites to our own, and thus to form a true man” (36). According to

Descartes' argument, it seems that by uniting one's body and reason together, one can truly achieve his humanity, and can truly live as a human being. But what Descartes does not unveil is that this continuous attempt to unite human body and reason is accomplished by the confirmation of their unamendable division because it is only when one keeps intact the distinction between body and reason, we would feel the necessity to unite them in order to live humanly. But this unification does not ask body to act on its own. Instead, body has to act according to the dictations of reason in order to live humanly. But when the supremacy of reason is affirmed, the life of human body is relegated to the sideline. Body, in order to become human, can only be used by reason as its tool. To use body humanly, however, is to use it instrumentally, and that is, inhumanly. So the process of humanization is never distinguishable from the process of dehumanization, and that it, to live humanly is never separable from to live inhumanly.

Agamben considers the concentration camp, where the boundary between the human and inhuman is blurred, to be "the very paradigm of daily life" (49) since being human itself inevitably dehumanizes one's own life, and no one can really sit on the sacred throne of humanity.

The human being can survive the human being, the human being is what remains after the destruction of the human being, not because somewhere

there is a human essence to be destroyed or saved, but because the place of the human is divided, because the human being exists in the fracture between the living being and the speaking being, the inhuman and the human. That is: *the human being exists in the human being's non-place, in the missing articulation between the living being and logos. (Remnants of Auschwitz 134)*

Existing in the division between body and reason, the human being cannot live by his body alone, or, without reason, he can only be considered inhuman. But in order to live humanly, he has to project his life into reason outside of body, and has to let his body used instrumentally, and that is, inhumanly as a lifeless tool. In the pursuit of humanity, the human being is doomed to be neither human nor inhuman, and his human existence can only be trapped on the threshold between being and non-being.

This disastrous human condition can be easily proven after one observes the medical system. Though the medical system is always regarded as the most important guardian of human dignity, the smell of concentration camp, where life and death are no more distinguishable, can be clearly sensed. During medical treatments, human body can be opened and analyzed as a machine which can be assembled and disassembled because to use body in reasonable ways is to make body as instrumental as possible, and that is, as dead as possible as Foucault argues that doctors “watch

over men's lives communicate with their death in the fine, rigorous form of the gaze”

(The Birth of the Clinic 166).

. . . the absolute eye of knowledge has already confiscated, and reabsorbed into its geometry of lines, surfaces, and volumes, raucous or shrill voices, whistlings, palpitations, rough, tender skin, cries — a suzerainty of the visible, and one all the more imperious in that it associates with it power and death. That which hides and envelops, the curtain of night over truth, is, paradoxically, life; and death, on the contrary, opens up to the light of day the black coffer of the body

(The Birth of the Clinic 166)

It is not the glamorous life, and the shadowy death, but “the obscure life, limpid death” (166) in the doctor's observation. Body would be anesthetized before surgery, so it can be tamed as a corpse. Then, surgical marks can be drawn rightly, and scalpels can cut correctly in order to direct body to its health. Body with jumping heart should be cared reasonable, and at this moment, the heart does not jump for life, but for the knowledge concerned about the dehumanized body, and that is, the corpse-like body as a tool. Therefore, while the medical system takes the responsibility to safeguard human dignity, it paradoxically makes manifest human beings' disastrous destiny that human body has to be used as the dead in order to live humanly, and no human being

can be freed from living as *homo sacer* who “exits on a threshold that belongs neither to the world of the living nor to the world of the dead: he is a living dead man” (*Homo Sacer* 99).

In humanity, the mechanism of concentration camp works on every individual as human beings can only be human by embracing their being instrumental. This paradox of humanity paves the path toward the resolution of the paradox taking place in Kane’s play. In fact, when Kane talks about *Cleansed*, she also points out its relation with the concentration camp, and says she uses this idea to talk about love.

When you love obsessively, you do lose yourself. And when you lose the object of your love, you have none of the normal resources to fall back on. It can completely destroy you. And very obviously concentration camps are about dehumanizing people before they are killed. I wanted to raise some questions about these two extreme and apparently different situations. (qtd. in Saunders 93)

Like in his pursuit of humanity, one is destined to be dehumanized, Kane argues that when one pursues his lover, he is doomed to be dehumanized as well. And when love is so highly valued in the human world, it may not be unrealistic to find out that when one loves, one would also give away his life. Then, can love still be as valuable as how it is always believed? Being an important element in the Bible, love always plays

a key role in Christ's journey. Is it possible that love is still redemptive as human beings are doomed to inhabit "in the human being's non-place" (*Remnants of Auschwitz* 134)? Latter, by analyzing Christ's life and love with the concept of the human's paradoxical existence, the thesis would try to point out that even in this seemingly hopeless human condition, one can still see the flower of redemption blossom. And in the last section of the chapter, when *Cleansed* is analyzed through the lens of the paradoxical condition of human existence, and is compared with the redemption brought by Christ's love and crucifixion, the sound of redemption may also be heard under the abyss filled with all the profane images.

I. "I Am That Bread of Life."

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

——Matthew 10:34-36

What Christ preaches here seems to work against his former lesson in which he teaches the people that they should not only love their neighbors, but also love their

enemies (Matthew 5:44). However, if Christ insists that one should love others unselectively, why does he also preach that one should stop loving one another, and treat their loved ones as enemies? Why does Christ give such a paradoxical answer about how to love? So, in order to decipher Christ's paradoxical idea about love, it is necessary to discuss what love is first.

Is it not indecent to compare the situation of the love-sick subject to that of an inmate of Dachau? Can one of the most unimaginable insults of History be compared with a trivial, childish, sophisticated, obscure incident occurring to a comfortable subject who is merely the victim of his own Image-repertoire? Yet these two situations have this in common: they are, literally, panic situations: situations without remainder, without return: I have projected myself into the other with such power that when I am without the other I cannot recover myself, regain myself: I am lost, forever. (Barthes 48-49)

When I love you, I cannot tolerate the thought that I may lose you for I know when I lose you, I would also lose myself. How can I survive in the world without you when my whole life is projected into you, and you become "the unsurpassable" and "the absolute end" for my being (Sartre 481)? You live, so I live. My love to you makes myself realized by you. At this moment, my love to you seems to free me from my

divided self existing on the threshold between the human and inhuman, and between being and non-being because I am no more myself when you become my life. And that is why love is always desired in the human society. But can love really make the difference to the human condition when this freedom is really accomplished by the self-abandonment? Is one's lover not like one's reason always existing outside of one's own body? Therefore, when one projects his life into his lover as he projects his life into his reason, the life of his body is destined to be ignored. In the end, even with love, I am doomed to live as a prisoner in the concentration camp because there is always the unamendable distance between you and I, and I have to love you as I am dead.

Though the pursuit of love seems to free one from the difficulties occurring during the pursuit of humanity, it ends up that they are conducted for the same reason, and that is, one desires to achieve his complete existence by being with reason or being with love. Living for humanity, and living for love object aim at the same dream, but as humanity and love object always depart from oneself, the condition of concentration camp is doomed to occupy one's life. And in order to free the human from the desperate earthly life, Christ points out another way to go through his sacrifice. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to

lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” says Christ (John 10:17-18). Christ does not achieve redemption by holding tightly the earthly life sustained by humanity or love. He pursues neither of them, and even being hated, lynched and crucified, Christ knows he walks on the path toward redemption. He does not suggest the people to destroy their lives and jam the mechanism of reason or love, but asks the people to “lay down” their lives suffering for being divided. And when one follows what Christ preaches, and stops pursuing to live as a human, or to live as a lover, one would stop bestowing himself on something or someone outside of himself, and the threshold between being and non-being would, therefore, dissolve. Then, one would surprisingly embrace his complete existence by being no longer divided. If love is desired for one to complete his existence, the inoperative way of love must introduce a new way of love. And since this love is not realized by the object outside one’s life, one does not need to live as the dead for projecting himself into his love object. One’s life can be kept intact as it is while still embraced by love. Before his arrest, Christ tells his disciples “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (John 15:9-10). So when one lays down his earthly life, and stops giving himself away, one would finally feel himself in love leading toward God’s Kingdom.

When one lays down his life pursuing love, one takes up his life in love. One stops perceiving the distinction between enemies and neighbors since one can always get along with them while being inseparable from love. Christ's ideas about love are, therefore, not paradoxical. In the same way, when one makes the mechanism of human existence inoperative by laying down his life pursuing humanity, he would find himself in the more human condition than ever. Humanity becomes the object of desire for it tells the people what they are, and bestow them with the irreplaceable uniqueness, but it inevitably dehumanizes one's body by requiring reason to use it. But when body is not used for the knowledge treating body as a corpse, body would not move for achieving any other ends than satisfaction of its own demeaning need. The completeness of one's being would, therefore, emerge in the inoperative way of using one's body when all the movements of body aim only at oneself alone. When body organs stop being used reasonably and stay "away from their psychological meaning," they actually step "toward a new and more human operation" (*Nudities* 103) for aiming at no other ends tearing one's being apart.

The naked, simple human body is not displaced here into a higher and nobler reality; instead, liberated from the witchcraft that once separated it from itself, it is as if this body were now able to gain access to its own truth for the first time. In this way the mouth truly becomes a mouth only

as it is about to be kissed (*Nudities* 103)

Agamben in *Nudities* discusses “the naked,” and that is “the body itself” (103).

Agamben argues that one should “render inoperativity of any activity directed toward an end, in order to then dispose it toward a new use” (102). My use of my body is activated inoperatively. My lively body is no more a tool used for achieving something beyond itself, but all its movements aim at itself alone. Then, my mouth may not kiss for love, nor for humanity, but it would be an irreplaceable kiss completed only by itself and aiming only at itself.

I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:47-51)

Facing the people asking for food, Christ compares his body to the bread which is itself redemption promising not death but life. In the Last Supper, when Christ gives his disciples the drink, he compares the drink to his “blood of the new testament, which is shed for many” (Mark 14:24). Christ lays down the uniqueness promised by humanity. As the bread which is eaten, and the drink which is taken as what they are,

Christ argues that his life can also be taken as what it is. God creates the human in his own image (Genesis 1:26), and the people do everything they can to keep this sacred throne of humanity. However, when Christ is crucified, when his deity is profaned severely, and when he is forsaken by the glory God bestows on human beings, his life is redeemed by being no more fragmented, and his blood sheds as redemption as Paul declares, Christ “having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Colossians 1:20).

In the following analysis of Kane’s *Cleansed*, one would see how the characters suffer from the merciless ways of using their bodies, how they struggle to pursue humanity and love for achieving the perfection of their existence, and how they get stuck on the threshold between being and non-being. But as one of the characters decides to realize her humanity and her love in the inoperative way, her life welcomes its completeness, and that is what her pursuit of her love and humanity cannot accomplish. Though her body in the end is far from being used reasonably and healthily, though her love in the end becomes so impossible that she cannot even kiss or embrace her lover, and though humanity and love which are carefully protected by human beings are both deeply profaned in the end, this character does smile as being redeemed.

II. Tomorrow's Eve

How are you going to love zero?

—*Tomorrow's Eve*, Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam 136.

How do I still love you when you become unreachable? How do I still exist when my life is no more reasonable? What kind of tomorrow will I face when all things I pursued are reduced to almost nil? Kane's *Cleansed* depicts the journey aiming to answer the questions above as the play tells the story about the characters losing their ways toward their existence, and that is, losing their abilities to love and reason. In the very beginning of *Cleansed*, Grace becomes unable to reason and love as before because her brother, Graham, commits suicide in order to escape from her incestuous love. Tinker assists Graham by selling him the fatal amount of drug, and injecting the drug into Graham's body. "Thank you, Doctor." says Graham before he dies, though Tinker has claimed, "I'm a dealer not a doctor" (107). Graham's upcoming death does not affect his desire for his being cared with reason. He hopes his death can be properly accepted in the human world, and most importantly, by his sister.

Grace shows up in "*the university sanatorium*" (112), the facility keeps her brother's body before it is burned into ashes, and she asks for Graham's clothes.

"**Tinker** enters consulting a file." It looks like he is a staff member working there.

Throughout the play, Tinker's identity is always shrouded in ambiguity since no one can be sure if Tinker is a drug dealer pretending to be a doctor, or he is really a doctor considering himself a drug dealer. Other characters in the play, however, would still call him "doctor" even when they are tortured by him in the most inhuman ways, and this persistent belief indicates how strongly and how blindly the characters desire for reasonable ways of life. Tinker tells Grace that he recycles the clothes by giving "them to someone else." "I just need to see them," insists Grace (113) for she knows the clothes are the only remnants left by her dead lover. Tinker, therefore, calls Robin to come in as he is the one taking over Graham's clothes. Grace asks Robin to take off what he wears, and she undresses and puts on her dead brother's clothes. Grace suddenly "*breaks down and wails uncontrollably.*" Tinker moves her to a bed, handcuffs her, and "*injects her*" to soothe her nerve. "**Tinker strokes her hair,**" and this sudden gentleness shows that Grace in Tinker's eyes is more than just a patient. However, Grace tells him, "Treat me as a patient." and asks him to let her stay in the sanatorium (114). Tinker realizes that the doctor-patient relationship between them is what she only desires for. She wants to stay in an environment where her body can be cared with reason, which may help her to regain her own existence. He feeds her a pill before he leaves.

"**Rod and Carl sit on the college green**" under the sunshine (109). Carl asks if

they can exchange each other's rings as a "sign" of "commitment." In a love relationship, one cannot resist desiring for a commitment from his lover because no one can tolerate being forsaken by his lover, which amounts to being deserted by his own life. Carl takes off his ring and "*puts the ring on Rod's finger*" (110). He promises he would die for Rod, and takes an oath similar to the marriage vow. "I'll always love you." says Carl, but Rod laughs at his childishness, and is unwilling to promise Carl anything. However, tired of Carl's begging, Rod puts his ring on Carl's finger, saying, "I love you now. / I am with you now" (111). Rod says he would not die for Carl, and asks Carl to "grow up." As Adam in Eden who does not expect to lose the paradise, Carl promises Rod again, "I'll never turn away from you." But just like Adam concedes his life to the serpent intruding from outside and loses the paradise, lovers' paradise is always already lost when their love is sustained by projecting themselves into their lovers existing outside of them, and that is, by abandoning their own lives.

Later, in "*the university sports hall*," Carl is "*heavily beaten*" by the gang led by Tinker (116). "Please. Doctor. Please." begs Carl, wanting to make the violence stop. But the torture continues till Carl faints. "Don't kill him. / Save him." commands Tinker, making his men stop the attack. "*He kisses Carl's face gently.*" Tinker's personality involves both brutality and gentility, and that may be why he claims that

he is not a doctor because even if he is really a licensed doctor, he does not conduct the medical knowledge perfectly. He cannot really see one's life through one's being lifeless. Tinker cannot view human beings as they are merely instruments or corpses, but he also knows well that, with humanity, human body is doomed to be used as instrumentally as possible. Therefore, with this knowledge, he cannot help to treat other characters as his experimental samples for figuring out the answer he wants to know. He gradually makes the characters unable to reason, unable to use their bodies, and unable to reach their lovers as he wants to see what the human would be when the human lose every good reason to exist.

Tinker threatens Carl that he would kill him, but would not give him an easy death. He tells Carl that he would stick "a pole" into his "anus" all the way to his "right shoulder," and at the same time, "avoiding all major organs" (116), so Carl would not die immediately, but can only live as a living dead man since he is doomed to die of "starvation." "What's your boyfriend's name?" asks Tinker (117) who already knows Rod's name because this couple is well observed by him from the beginning. Tinker pushes the pole "a few inches up his anus" while teasing him, "Rodney Rodney split me in half." Carl cries for Tinker's mercy, "Not me please not me don't kill me Rod not me don't kill me ROD NOT ME ROD NOT ME." At that moment when Carl decides to sacrifice his lover, the "*pole is removed.* /

Rod falls from a great height and lands next to **Carl**.” Tinker forces Carl to make a choice about what he wants to be. If he chooses to be a loyal lover, he would be reduced to inhuman existence, and lose all the ability to maintain himself healthily and reasonably. But when Carl chooses to betray his lover in exchange for his humanity, he can never find the way back to his love, which is the paradise he used to inhabit, because his betrayal does not only result in Rod’s unforgettable sufferings, but also reveals how fragile his love is, and how unreachable his complete existence can be. No matter he chooses to live for his lover or to live for humanity, there is no way for him to escape from the condition of concentration camp. Tinker asks Carl to show his tongue, and he cuts it off. Tinker “takes the ring from **Rod**’s finger and puts it in **Carl**’s mouth,” and asks Carl to swallow it (118).

Graham visits his sister in the sanatorium. In the beginning, one cannot be sure if he is really a ghost since he is not only seen but also touched by Grace. Grace hugs him hard, and “looks closely at him” (118). She asks him to swear not to leave her again. He replies, “On my life” (119). “They look at each other.” Seeing Grace wearing his clothes, Graham comments, “More like me than I ever was.” “**Graham** dances—a dance of love for **Grace**.” Watching Graham’s movements, Grace tries to move the way he moves, and finally “she mirrors him perfectly as they dance exactly in time.” “Love me or kill me, Graham.” says Grace (120). If Grace cannot live

completely for him, and if she has to be lost forever, she would rather die. They start to make love, and they “*come together.*” While he is still inside her, and they are holding each other, a “*sun flower bursts through the floor and grows above their head.*” Graham smells the flower and says, “Lovely” (121). The magic flower smelled by the man who should be dead implies that the couple’s reunion may be nothing but an illusion fostered by Grace as she can no more reason well. How can she easily let her loved one go, especially when he is the very one to whom she devotes her whole self? How can she exist without him? Therefore, as Nietzsche concludes in the end of *On the Genealogy of Morality* that “man still prefers to *will nothingness*, than *not will*” (128), Grace does not stop loving even though she has to fantasize her lover for her to love since no one can tolerate one’s being nothing even though one’s being something has to be achieved by pursuing nothingness.

Tinker keeps pursuing love as well though he clearly knows Grace would never give up loving her brother. He visits “*the showers in the university sports hall converted into peep-show booths*” (121) to construct his fantasy world. Tinker sits in a booth, and tosses a token in the slot. The flap opens, and Tinker masturbates while seeing a woman dancing erotically behind the wall. He asks to see her face, but when the woman sits down, he rapidly looks away. “You shouldn’t be here. It’s not right.” says he, and she replies, “I know” (122). He tells her that he is a doctor, so he can

help. He says, "I'll be anything you need." He asks if they can be friends. The woman responds that their friendship is impossible for it is already too late. But he promises her, "I won't turn away from you." Though she laughs at him for he does not even dare to look at her, he promises her again, "I'll give you whatever you want, Grace" (123). The woman keeps silent, and he looks "*at her face for the first time.*" He calls the anonymous dancer Grace while knowing she is not Grace. He asks the woman to show her face since he wants to know who she is. However, the woman he wants to know is not physically in front of him but exists in his mind only. So he looks away. At last, he names the anonymous woman Grace, and gives her the commitment of love. He uses this woman to symbolize Grace, to symbolize his love object. He calls her Grace, and looks at her because he knows that, only through Grace's eyes, his complete existence can be possible.

In "*the university library*" (123), Grace teaches Robin how to write and read. "Wouldn't you wish your brother back?" asks Robin (125). Robin is in Grace's clothes since he is asked to take off the clothes he wears in the beginning. "No. No. / I don't think of Graham as dead. / That's not how I think of him." responds Grace. Graham is beside them in the library, but he can only be perceived by Grace since he only exists in her love. The words Graham says sometimes repeat others' words in sync. It is like Grace sometimes considers others identical to her brother. Grace's

desire for love resurrects her lost lover with the bodies of others for her to love him.

Robin asks Grace what she wishes to change in her life. Grace does not answer the question but beats around the bush. Robin and Graham, therefore, asks her again simultaneously as two of them are one person, “What would you change?” (126).

Receiving the question from her lover, Grace finally confesses, “My body. So it looked like it feels. Graham outside like Graham inside.” Tinker observes them stealthily aside as they are also the subjects of his study. Robin asks Grace to be his girlfriend, and says that he would never leave her. Grace calls him “a lovely boy” (128), but she is unwilling to be what he wants she to be. “I love you.” says Robin and Graham at the same time. Grace responds with hesitation, “I— / I love you too. But in a very particular—” (127). Grace responds to Robin and Graham with the same line containing two different explanations. For Robin, the line indicates that Grace only treats Robin as “a good friend” (128), and she only desires for friendship but not for love between them. For Graham, Grace does love him, but according to Grace’s confession, Grace does not love Graham in the normal way since she does not wish merely for her being with him, but for his being her, or her being him. She wants to realize her love in her own body, so she would not face separation again.

The more clearly Tinker realizes that Grace is impossible to respond his love, the more cruelly he treats others as his experimental samples as he is anxious to know

what he would become when his love is impossible to be achieved. Like Christ crying on the cross about his being forsaken by God, his loving father, under the rain on a “*patch of mud*” in the school, Rod accuses his lover, “You’d have watched them crucify me” (129). Carl fails to respond for his tongue is gone, so he writes his words on the mud while Tinker is observing them. When Carl finishes writing, Tinker approaches him and read the words. Then he “*takes Carl by the arms and cuts off his hands.*” Rod picks up Carl’s left arm, takes off his exchanged ring, and reads the words on the mud, “Say you forgive me.” Rod puts on his ring, and responds his fragmented lover, “I won’t lie to you Carl” (130). A rat “*begins to eat Carl’s right hand.*”

Rod . . . If he’d said ‘You or Rod’ and you’d said ‘Me,’ I wonder if he would have killed you. He ever asks me I’ll say ‘Me. Do it to me. Not to Carl, not my lover, not my friend, do it to me.’ I’d be gone, first boat out of here. Death isn’t the worst thing they can do to you. Tinker made a man bite off another man’s testicles. Can take away your life but not give you death instead. (136)

Rod knows Tinker has the power to make their lives worse than death. Tinker spares their lives, but he does not let them live humanly. So Rod says that he would rather choose to live for his love and dies, but not to survive as Carl does by tearing apart the

commitment of love. Carl tries to show “*a dance of love for Rod*,” but it is not a dreamy scene when it is still rainy and the ground is muddy (136). Seeing Carl’s “*spasmodic dance of desperate regret*,” Tinker comes out and “*forces Carl to the ground and cuts off his feet*.” “*A dozen rats*” take Carl’s feet away while Rod is laughing at Carl’s loss. Tinker cuts off Carl’s tongue shouting for love, his arms writing for love, and his legs dancing for love. He cuts off them so easily as body organs are destined to be treated so mercilessly and inhumanly. With his eyes and hands trained to observe, diagnose, and analyze others with the medical knowledge, Tinker portrays how far reason can go, and how helpless love can be. The plague of dehumanization hidden in the palace of humanity is revealed when the rats rage and care nothing about human sacredness.

Grace is lynched by a group of men severely because they cannot accept her incestuous love to her brother. She cries to her brother for help, “Graham Jesus save me Christ” (131). Graham soothes her and suggests, “Switch off your head. That’s what I did. Shoot up and switch off before the pain moves in. I thought of you” (132). Graham asks Grace to stop reasoning for and caring about her painful body, but to devote whole her life to her lover. So even though she is treated inhumanly, her existence can be procured by her loved one. The men do not stop torturing Grace, but when the “*blow comes . . . Grace’s body moves—not with pain, simply with the force*

of the blow,” and when she is raped by one of the torturers, she “*looks into **Graham**’s eyes throughout.*” Tinker leads his gang to kill all the torturers. Graham looks at his sister who looks back at him. “*Out of the ground grows daffodils,*” and they soon grow and cover the whole scene (133). Picking up and smelling a flower “*Lovely.*” says Graham as all these pains like him are only a dream. Tinker lets Grace lie on a bed, and says he would give her whatever she wants while Graham is standing beside her. “*My balls hurt.*” complains Grace (134). Graham takes Grace’s hand, and she says, “*Like to feel you here.*” Tinker notices that Grace really wishes to fulfill her love in her own body. After Grace tells him she keeps hearing some voices, it becomes reasonable for Tinker to conclude that her irrational wish may result from her damaged reasoning ability. So Tinker decides to conduct the electroshock therapy on her in order to cure her. “*An electric current is switched on. / **Grace**’s body is thrown into rigid shock as bits of her brain are burnt out. / The shaft of light grows bigger until it engulfs them all*” (135). Grace never senses her brother again after the treatment. The object of her love is really burned down with no chance to recover.

Tinker goes back to the peep-show booth, asks the anonymous woman to be his friend again, and promises that he would help her. The woman replies that they can be friends if Tinker is willing to save her (130). However, it is always Grace but not the woman that Tinker tries to have the relation with, and tries to save, but Grace’s strong

desire to become her brother only lead Tinker's pursuit to a dead end. He then treats the woman brutally, and asks her to masturbate in front of him (137). He calls her Grace, and tries to control her as by this, he is able to force Grace to desire to be her brother no more. The woman begs for Tinker's help. She says, "You are a doctor. Help me." and she confesses to him that she falls in love with him (138). She asks Tinker if he also loves her, and he replies, "As you are." while still calling her "Grace."

Robin prepares a box of chocolates for Grace, and, he "*is asleep amongst a pile of books, paper and an eleven row abacus*" in the library (138). Tinker questions him about the chocolates by pulling his hair, and "*puts a knife to his throat.*" Knowing the chocolates are for Grace, Tinker opens the box, and forces Robin to eat them all. Robin cries and obeys the order. Tinker notices that Robin wets himself, and he orders Robin to clean up his urine. Robin can only use the empty chocolate box, and the pages of books to deal with the mess. Tinker gives him a box of matches, and commands him to burn all the books, which serve in the play as the bridge that connects Robin and Grace. Grace comes in, looks at the fire, and simply says, "Lovely" (141) as she cannot care less about the meaning of this destruction. Robin saves his abacus from the fire, and he eagerly shows Grace the counting skill he acquires recently. He counts from one to fifty-two, and looks at Grace several times to

see her reactions. But she responds him only with silence. Robin then hangs himself to die.

It is obvious that Robin is not at the age of child since Graham's and Grace's clothes fit him well. But he acts, thinks as a child, and cannot even write and read until Grace teaches him. That is why Robin lives in the sanatorium because he badly needs the discipline and direction like a child who simply cannot live independently in the human world. "In the case of children, primitive people, the sick, or more so still, animals, the world which they occupy . . . is certainly not a coherent system" (Merleau-Ponty 56). When children are born, they share the same quality with animals since their organs can only work as how they are designed to work. Children eat when being hungry, and drink when being thirsty. Education, therefore, is needed for children to know how to reason fluently in order to enter the human society. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11). Children have to adapt themselves to the human world by putting away their childish nature. Children have to learn how to use their eyes to read, how to move their hands to write, and how to live with reason in order to become mature human beings. Human body itself which a child is born with cannot achieve human maturity without the help of sufficient knowledge. For his childish qualities as well as his lack of the

well-developed reasoning ability, Robin, therefore, cannot find a way to live humanly by himself alone. He has to depend on Tinker who with his knowledge is able to instruct him how to live and tell him what he is, though Tinker never stops torturing him. Then Robin falls in love with Grace who does not only treat him with gentleness, but also lets him find the way out of Tinker's cruelty. By living for his love only, Robin discovers another way for him to ensure his existence. But when he knows there is a way out and he can never reach it, Robin chooses to die. He would rather die than returns to embrace his immature human existence, to live as nothing. At the last moment of Robin's life, he suddenly sees Graham trying to save him as he tries to stop Robin stepping on the same way he goes. But in the end, "**Graham sits motionless under Robin's swinging feet**" (145), and Grace does not move a bit. She looks at Robin hanging himself in her old clothes, and does not try to help him or her brother's ghost. It is like her past self is no longer her life's main goal.

Rod and Carl are surrounded by the "*sound of fire*" in "[s]corching heat," and most "*of the rats are dead*" (141). Saying, "There is only now," Rod bursts out into tears. Rod declares his argument again that one's love can never stay the same forever, but can only give one temporary satisfaction. And he decides to spend the last passion of his life on proving it. Carl kisses him and makes love with him, and Rod promises Carl, "I will always love you / I will never lie to you. I will never betray

you. / On my life.” before they come together. “**Rod** *takes off the ring and puts it in Carl’s mouth*” (142), so Carl would never lose the sign of love again. Carl and Rod “*hug tightly,*” and go asleep. When they are in their dream, Tinker “*pulls Rod away from Carl,*” and he asks, “You or him, Rod, what’s it to be?” Rod asks Tinker to kill him, so Tinker cuts his throat in front of Carl’s eyes. “It can’t be this.” says Rod before his death. Rod’s death cannot simply be the end because his death would become inseparable from Carl’s future life by resulting in Carl’s forever loss of himself, and their love can never be changed since it would be always unreachable. What Rod promises is realized in the cruelest style. Tinker commands his gang to burn the corpse as disposing an irreparable tool.

By far, except the people’s destined loss, Tinker discovers nothing else apart from his destructive experiments. So he decides to create Grace’s desired body by putting away his rational thoughts. Tinker transplants Carl’s genitals to Grace’s body, and removes Grace’s breasts, so she can be Graham from outside to inside. When Grace is back to her consciousness, he takes her to a mirror, and says, “You’ll get used to him. / Can’t call you Grace anymore. Call you . . . Graham. I will call you Graham” (146). Greatly astonished, Grace touches the genitals and says, “Felt it.” Tinker confesses to her, “I am sorry. I am not really a doctor.” He can never be a qualified doctor for being willing to take this reckless surgery without following the direction

of knowledge. Tinker “*kisses Grace very gently*” before he leaves. Carl lying next to Grace is then awake, he and Grace look at each other, and Carl screams silently.

Losing himself for losing who he loves, Tinker goes to the peep-show booth desperately. The woman asks Tinker if she can kiss him, and she “*opens the partition and comes through to Tinker’s side*” (147). They kiss each other, and Tinker confesses, “I think I— / Misunderstood.” “I know. I love you.” says the woman, and they make love with each other. After he comes, they “*hold each other, him inside her, not moving*” (149).

Tinker What’s your name?

Woman Grace.

Tinker No, I meant—

Woman I know. It’s Grace.

Tinker (*Smiles.*) I love you, Grace. (149)

Tinker keeps coming back to her because she always symbolizes Grace, and she falls in love with this man who always calls her Grace. If their love blossoms from this name, then why not to keep it when love does not require the people to project themselves into reason but only into their lovers? The name, Grace, is called rightly here since it is articulated for the sake of love. When Tinker’s knowledge always shows him the ways to use human body cruelly, and he always cannot conduct this

cruelty totally, by living for love only, he finally finds the refuge from the emotion he always tries to destroy, and the answer he always tries to know is not crucial to his life anymore.

Robin, Carl, Rod, the anonymous woman, and Tinker never free themselves from the threshold between their being and non-being for they do not choose or cannot figure out any other possible ways to achieve their existence. They never give up living for who they love even at the cost of their fragmentation. Grace, however, by putting down her old self sustained by reason and love, comes up with another answer. After the surgery, Carl and Grace sit on the mud under the rain together while the rats eating their wounds. With the body cared not from the perspectives of reason and health, Grace comments on her body with ecstasy, “Body perfect. / Chain-smoked all day but danced like a dream you’d never know. / Have they done it yet? / Died. / Burned. / Lump of charred meat stripped of its clothes. / Back to life” (149-50). The body Grace desired for does profane the sacredness of human being when it accomplishes nothing reasonable or healthy. But humanity ensures its sacredness by requiring human body to be used as reasonably and healthily as possible, and human body itself would inevitably need to be treated instrumentally as a lifeless tool or even a corpse which can be used without any obstacles. The fire of human knowledge lights up the throne of human sacredness, but it simultaneously burns human body

into ashes. Grace, therefore, does not want to regain her life as the human who can only live as the living dead, but it is the resurrection of the “meat stripped of its clothes” that Grace wants to achieve, which means what she really desires for is to bring life back to her body treated as lifeless flesh. Grace by becoming her brother through the irrational surgery, and that is, by caring her body with the inoperative reason, detaches her body from any human ways of using it, and makes it naked when it is not defined by anything outside of it except by itself alone. Grace joyfully murmurs, “Felt it. / Here. Inside. Here” (150) as it is the first time that she feels her body moves. When Grace lays down her life taking part in the human world, her body would no more be used for achieving any other ends apart from itself, but would only move for its own sake. And when body’s movements are no more ignored, body cannot be dead but vibrant as what life should be.

“Here now. / Safe on the other side and here. / Graham. / (A long silence) / Always be here.” says Grace as she is soothing a new-born baby (150). She does not only welcome the new birth of her body, but also the new birth of her love she has never experienced before. After losing herself for losing her lover, Grace desires to be inseparable from love forever, so she lays down her past self who exists only for her lover, and who is lost for her lover’s death. And when Grace does not project herself into someone else, and when her life is no longer completed by relegating the life of

her body to the margins, the mechanism of concentration camp cannot be sustained because Grace really keeps herself “on the other side” and detached herself from the threshold of being and non-being. Then for being no more divided, Grace can finally be inseparable from her complete existence like her body becomes forever inseparable from her love.

Grace realizes herself by detaching herself from the human world, and Christ’s journey toward redemption is also completed by this detachment. Before his arrest, Christ prays to God for his disciples’ peace, and says, “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” (John 17:14). Christ knows well if his disciples follow his words, they would not be recognized as part of the world, so they would not be accepted and sometimes would even be hated by other human beings. But at the same time, when they are not recognized as part of the world, they would be freed from the condition of concentration camp which humanity and love sustain, and be no longer fragmented because they no longer stand on the threshold between being and non-being. Christ tells the people, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Christ denies his earthly life which can never stop pursuing humanity and love. He compares his body to the bread everyone can take, and his blood to the wine everyone can drink. He is even willing to lay down his

life in the human world, and does not hesitate to bleed on the cross. He accepts his being hated and being crucified as a sinner because he knows he is on the right track to bring life back to the world. The redemption Christ achieves is fulfilled by profaning the ways of life protected carefully by the people on the earth who never stop reasoning and loving, but still cannot approach Eden where their existence can be complete but not fragmented. In the end of *Cleansed*, the rain stops, and the “*sun gets brighter and brighter, the squeaking of the rats louder and louder, until the light is blinding and the sound deafening*” (151). The brightness is accompanied by the sign of plague as Grace receives her redemption by profaning the sacredness of humanity and love. But when Grace becomes the forsaken whose existence is no longer recognized by the present world as Christ shouting “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” (Matthew 27:46), she becomes tomorrow’s Eve having the paradise redeemed with her complete being which present humanity and love can never achieve.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

You have been a poor observer of life if you have not also seen the hand that, ever so gently — kills.

——*Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche 59.

Though in Kane's *Blasted* and *Cleansed*, inhuman violence tortures all the characters, the cruel plots composed by Kane do cut into core of human existence as she does not only try to answer "How do the human become human?" but also attempts to figure out, "What does this humanization cost?" through her words.

Analyzing *Blasted* with Agamben's concept of "the state of exception," the second chapter of the thesis, "*Exile and the Kingdom*," points out that peace under the regulation of law is in fact sustained by the mechanism of war. In modern democracy, the law limits the people, but at the same time, frees the people from anarchy prejudicial to people's lives and property. The people accept the regulation of law, so they can enjoy their human rights, so they can live humanly but not live dangerously as unregulated beasts. But when the law is able to restrict the people's lives, the power of law cannot be unlimited. The people, therefore, unite themselves as the State, and gives the State the power to work beyond the law in order to keep the law as what it should be. The State is given the sovereign power to work

beyond the law, and its power, of course, is fundamentally not exercising in accordance with the law, but by acting without the law being the obstacle. The State can, therefore, declare the state of exception and suspend the law to protect itself against the threat like war which the daily law cannot handle because when the people become the subjects uniting the State, to protect the State becomes no more different from to protect the people. But when the law is suspended, any human rights claim would be rendered invalid, and the people would be exposed to inhuman treatments at any time. And being also the objects governed by the State in order to enjoy the protection of law, the abused people are unable to claim their human rights by themselves but can only suffer from the State's decision. However, when the law keeps regulating the people's lives, the State must keep its power to work beyond the law in the name of people. Therefore, even not in war, each individual is still trapped in the state of exception since he can never be freed from the possibility to be regarded as the potential threat of State and to have his human rights violated. And the law defining human rights is always ready to be suspended since it must work in the hands of State which can decide to suspend the law in the name of people. Governed by the State and regulated by the law in order to live humanly, no one can be out of the state of exception, and the regulated peace one enjoys is nothing but the sugarcoated war.

So in *Blasted*, the war shows up not only abruptly but also mysteriously. The war crushes the routine peace in the smoothest style, and no characters can tell why this war breaks out, and what this war is about. The obscure rationality of war remains unintelligible for the characters because war is always lurking in the shadow of peaceful daily life. It comes as no surprise that when war breaks out, it makes its catastrophic appearance suddenly yet naturally. And the State does not take any actions to save the characters from their inhuman sufferings because the State keeps its sovereign power not by enforcing the law to secure the people's human rights, but by suspending the law and rendering human rights null and void. The State must work beyond the law, so it must practice the mechanism of war. But even in this desperate condition, Kane still makes the character, Ian, die and resurrect like Christ, so he and another character, Cate, can wait and hope together for redemption as hoping for God's Kingdom after the Last Judgment. In God's Kingdom, "all rule and all authority and power" would be "put down" (1 Corinthians 15:24), and that is, the law and State would be made inoperative. After Ian and Cate experience all the inhuman violence inflicted by the State which they protect in order to live humanly, they know the condition as God's Kingdom is what they should hope for. "[I]f to constituent power there correspond revolutions, revolts, and new constitutes, namely, a violence that puts in place and constitutes a new law, for destituent potential it is necessary to

think entirely different strategies, whose definition is the task of the coming politics” (*The Uses of Bodies* 266). They do not fight to build the new State or to make the new law because they know the violence they suffer from would not stop when their lives are still under the regulation of law and State as before. They choose to wait quietly in ruin for, at that moment, they are closer than ever to the condition in which they are no longer the constituent elements of State, and regain the ability to keep the regulation of law at bay. They see the possibility that the law and State work inoperatively in front of them. And when the law and State work inoperatively, Ian and Cate can no longer be recognized as the human because their human rights are no longer protected and defined. But at the same time, the redemption of their lives arrives for Ian and Cate’s lives are finally freed from the state of exception as they are destituted from the State which tramples on the people’s lives by suspending the law in the name of people.

The second chapter shows how the people become human with human rights promised by the State and law, and also points out how human rights are relegated to the margins and violated without compunction for the same reason. With incomparable rigor, Kane’s *Blasted* captures extreme inhuman cruelty lurking in the shadow of daily peace. After the discussion of second chapter focusing on the issue between the State and the people, the third chapter, ““You Were My Death,”” with its

analysis of Kane's *Cleansed* puts its focus on the human being himself. According to Descartes, human reason should unite itself with human body by directing and using body reasonably and healthily in order to achieve humanity. But what Descartes does not emphasize is that this unification really sustains the unamendable separation between human body and reason because only when two elements are separated, they need to be united. Human reason is, therefore, always kept out of human body. And when one's simply being alive with body alone cannot satisfy humanity, and body has to be used by reason for one to live humanly, the human being really projects his life into reason, and leaves his body as dead as an instrument. That is why one can accept that his body is opened and analyzed, and his body organs are removed and transplanted like a machine which can be assembled and disassembled. In order to live healthily and humanly, one needs to treat his body instrumentally, and that is, being human itself dehumanizes one's own being. "In humanity's self-abasement to the corpus nature takes its revenge for the debasement of the human being to an object of power, to raw material" (Horkheimer and Adorno 193). When the human being treats other species merciless as they are only senseless "raw material" which can be used for him to exist humanly, his pursuit of humanity also forces himself to treat his body in the same way as something he can use but not something he can treat humanly. Humanity, therefore, is really a dream that can never be achieved, and

human existence is doomed to linger on the threshold between being and non-being.

So one would desire to love. When I love you, I exist only for you. By loving you, I feel no more fragmented as what I am when I pursue humanity because my fragmented self is pulled together when you become my life. But are you and I not different individuals with radical distinctions that can never be erased? Therefore, even with love, one still cannot be freed from living on the threshold between being and non-being since love also asks one to project his life into someone outside like humanity asks one to project his life into reason departing from his own body. And that is, I have to love you as I am dead. In *Cleansed*, by turning the university into a concentration camp, and by making the love relationship not different from a haunting nightmare, Kane keenly reveals the disastrous condition resulting from the characters' pursuit of humanity, and of their lovers. When the characters devote themselves to their loved ones, but their lovers no longer respond to their love, they are forced to recognize their lives as dead as corpses, and their existence can only be characterized as the irretrievable loss. But there is also no way for them to exist through humanity when in the play, they are lynched, raped and even dismembered, which cruelly portrays the most inhuman ways for their bodies to be used, and exposes how helpless their reason is when it can never save them from their dehumanization. Most of them, however, do not stop loving or give up living humanly since if they stop living for

their lovers or for humanity, they can only expect nothingness waiting to devour them, except one of the characters, Grace, who takes another direction.

What Grace pursues is to make all these mechanisms for the people to achieve their existence inoperative. She does not desire to realize herself through devoting her life to someone or something outside herself. Instead, she desires to be her lover from outside to inside. And it is not a rational medical treatment she takes to realize her dream. Grace has her breasts removed, and has another character's male genitals transplanted to her body, but the surgery is far from being successful as her wounds allure rats to gnaw at them. But by laying down her life existing only for her lover always outside of her, or for her humanity always unreachable for her, she finally smiles when seeing the rain stops and the sun comes out as seeing redemption from God's Kingdom. Talking about love, Christ asks his followers not to devote their lives to the particular individual so they can really feel God's love which has always already surrounded them. Talking about body, Christ asks his followers to eat his flesh as the bread and drink his blood as the wine, and tells them that whoever does what he commands would regain his life. That is because when one lays down his life existing only for his lover or for humanity, his life is no longer sacrificed by being devoted to something or someone outside. Therefore, the threshold between being and non-being would dissolve, and one is no more fragmented. He can finally live with his complete

existence which the present mechanisms of humanity and love cannot promise. And if love is for one to realize his complete existence, the inoperative way of love, by freeing oneself from existing only for his lover, would put one in the condition of love for one is in the totality by stopping giving himself away. And if one's body has to be treated as the dead for reason to use it, when humanity is no longer pursued, body's life cannot be denied because it can finally move without aiming to be used by reason and knowledge irrelevant to it, so every movement of body can only aim to present body itself alone. In the circumstances, a heart beating in chest would not be compared to a clock ticking on wall anymore. After the unsuccessful surgery, accompanied by the rats eating her flesh, it becomes impossible for Grace to find her feet in the human world. This is truly a blessing in disguise, for she is no longer obliged to devote herself to another individual. When the mechanisms of humanity and love are both rendered inoperative, she and her complete existence are no more strangers to each other because it no longer exists beyond her. As Agamben asserts, "Where a relation is rendered destituent and interrupted, its elements are in this sense in contact, because the absence of every relation is exhibited between them" (*The Uses of Bodies* 272).

In the first chapter of the thesis, it is pointed out that *homo sacer* is someone who should devote his life to God in order to save his community from catastrophe,

but still keeps alive. He cannot be accepted by God because his sacredness is profaned by his being alive, and he cannot return to his community since he is already treated as the dead by his people. Being *homo sacer*, one is both excluded from God he prays to and from the place in which he was born. By using this ancient concept existing in archaic Roman law, Agamben tries to point out “the new biopolitical body of humanity” (*Homo Sacer* 9) in the modern world. In modern democracy, the people devote their lives to the State as the sovereign power in order to evade the inhuman condition as anarchy and war. The State should be protected, so sacred human rights can be kept. But governed by the State, the sacredness of human rights is doomed to be profaned for the State preserves itself not by following the law but by suspending the law, and by violated the people’s human rights which are always believed to be sacred, and should never be profaned. However, when the individual cannot be treated humanly by the juridical system, he cannot treat himself humanly as well. Projecting life into reason in order to secure the sacred throne of human beings who should be superior to irrational species, the human being is forced to leave his own body as dead as an instrument. The sacredness of human existence is doomed to be profaned for living humanly is identical to living as the dead. The people devote themselves to the State and reason as praying to God promising salvation. But when they do not bestow redemption on the people, the people are not allowed to go back to what they were

before, and that is, to be outlaw and irrational since the outlaw should be punished or imprisoned, and the irrational should be cured or hospitalized. The irrational and outlaw cannot enjoy the normal human life, and sometimes even have to be isolated from the human world. Therefore, it is not only impossible for the human to be included in the human condition he desires, but it is also unacceptable for the human to step into the inhuman condition as Agamben argues, “The human being is thus always beyond or before the human” (*Remnants of Auschwitz* 135). Kane’s *Blasted* and *Cleansed* vividly capture this disastrous condition of human being. For sustaining their human existence, the characters are treated as *homo sacer* or treat other characters as *homo sacer*. They have their human rights and their bodies profaned, or they profane others’ bodies and rights. Kane, however, does point a way toward redemption through her works. And redemption is achieved not by destroying the mechanisms of State or humanity, and making the people suffer from unregulated violence or irrational madness, but by putting down all these mechanisms, and making them inoperative. By profaning the mechanisms protected and developed carefully and continuously in the human society, it becomes impossible for the people to be recognized as the human or inhuman for the people are no longer constituted by the mechanisms that make them human. And when the people are not recognized by the human world anymore, he can finally be freed from the deprivations resulting from

the human world. Christ on the cross cries out, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” (Matthew 27:46). On the one hand, the feeling of abandonment Christ expresses shows that he knows well that the sacredness of his life is destined to be forsaken by accepting all the inhuman sufferings before his crucifixion. On the other hand, since he acknowledges this disastrous condition of the life on the earth, he knows the redemption which should be hoped for, and that can only be achieved by forsaking the earthly life which always suffers to sustain human sacredness God promises when he makes the human the most superior existence in the world. It is because only when Christ is willing to lay down his life and be destituted from the human world, he can have the chance to take up his life in God’s Kingdom where no life would be used or governed, so he can finally be freed as himself alone. The image of Christ’s crucifixion is so similar to the redemptive scenes displayed in Kane’s plays since the characters’ redemption also arrives when they become the most forsaken existence in the world. Therefore, the blood Blasted and Cleansed sheds cannot only show the cruelty of the human society, but also reveals the way toward redemption as the blood dripping on the cross.

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