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Dr Nina Kane, Giving birth to 'a third world as work in common and space-time to be shared'...

Paper given at conference, 'Theatre, Performance, Philosophy: Crossings and Transfers in Contemporary Anglo-American Thought', held at Universite Paris-Sorbonne IV, 26th -28th June 2014

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Giving birth to 'a third world as work in common and space-time to be shared'. The importance of Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler to staging Sarah Kane's *Cleansed* (1998).¹

This paper draws on the findings of my doctoral research completed last year, which explored feminist and queer dramaturgies of Sarah Kane's 1998 play *Cleansed* - "F-F-Felt it". *Breathing Feminist, Queer and Clown Thinking into the Practice and Study of Sarah Kane's 'Cleansed' and 'Blasted'*.² Though a written thesis, it involved extensive practical research carried out in gallery spaces, a community artists' studio and a university drama department. The enquiry applied the ideas and practices of Luce Irigaray, Cicely Berry, Sue Morrison and Judith Butler, positing *Cleansed* as a theatrical meditation on gender and one that requires actors to develop an ethics for the performing of sex, desire and violence. The research found that Irigaray's and Butler's ideas can be usefully applied to explore and contest binary constructions of gender, and offer vital philosophical frameworks for staging sexuate difference and transgender becoming in Kane's text.³ It encodes significant lesbian aesthetics of butch-femme play and '*langueur*' in its performance structure.⁴ Its focus on sexuate difference, 'one of the major philosophical issues, if not the issue of our age' and its movement between genders is supported with dramatisations of touch and breath at key

¹ L. Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, trans. H. Bostic and S. Pluháček, London and New York, Continuum, 2002, p. 10. S. Kane, *Complete Plays*, London, Methuen Drama, 2001. *Cleansed* is reproduced in pages 105-151.

² N. Kane, "F- F- Felt it." *Breathing Feminist, Queer and Clown Thinking into the Practice and Study of Sarah Kane's Cleansed and Blasted*, PhD Thesis, University of Huddersfield, June 2013. See 'University of Huddersfield Repository', ND, <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/19287>, (accessed 20 June 2014).

³ 'Sexuate difference' is a key philosophy in Irigaray's work, and was at the centre of my thesis' particular enquiry into Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*. It is also a central concept in this paper. See *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. C. Porter with C. Burke, New York, Cornell University Press, 1985; first published as *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* by Editions de Minuit in 1977. Other key texts informing this are as follows: L. Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1985; first published in French as *Speculum de l'autre femme* by Les Editions de Minuit, 1974. L. Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. C. Burke and G.C. Gill, London, The Athlone Press, 1993; first published in French as *Ethique de la Difference Sexuelle* by Les Editions de Minuit in 1984. L. Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. G.C. Gill, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993. L. Irigaray, *To Be Two*, trans. M. Rhodes and M. Cocito-Monoc, Great Britain, The Athlone Press, 2000. L. Irigaray, *Je, Tu, Nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, trans. A. Martin, New York and Oxon, Routledge Classics, 2007. Understanding of this area of Irigaray's work was assisted by attending the following conference: *Sexuate Subjects: Politics, Poetics and Ethics*, Luce Irigaray Circle, UCL (University College London), London. 3-5 December 2010.

⁴ For consideration of '*langueur*' in connection to the cultural representation of lesbianism, see N. Hallett, *Lesbian Lives: Identity and Autobiography in the Twentieth Century*, London, Sterling, Virginia, Pluto Press, 1999, p. 188.

gestic moments.⁵ *Cleansed* discusses the nature of speech and desire - particularly female and lesbian desire - and the denial or erasure of this. It bears traces of the political histories of Britain in the 1980s and 1990s - notably through the symbol of the perimeter fence which I have argued elsewhere references two key issues of the time *vis-a-vis* the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp and English football hooliganism.⁶ Considering the oft-repeated assertion that *Cleansed* formed the second part of an unfinished trilogy on war - the first part being her 1995 professional debut piece *Blasted* - I concluded that gender forms a key site of battle fought by Kane through these texts.⁷

Cleansed centres its trajectory on an investigation of clothing and bodies which implicates and indicates the gender binary as a site of contestation, violence, desire, making, unmaking, resistance and mucosity. Kane frames a dramatisation of sexual difference and binarism through clothing and bodies from scene 3.⁸ The central action of this scene is one of cross-dressing between two characters, one nominally designated female (Grace, 'Miss'), the other male (Robin, 'a nineteen year old boy').⁹ The transvestism of these characters continues for the rest of the play. Kane indicates that both Grace and Robin strip to complete nudity – instantly placing questions of anatomical recognition, determining and exposure early on and drawing attention to the actors' bodies through this. A specific code of clothing is structured by Kane into this moment. She signifies a very definite ordering of gender through the items of clothing mentioned. Robin (designated male) 'removes his underpants' whereas Grace (designated female) is wearing tights, which Robin later hangs himself with.¹⁰ The actor playing Robin is directed to strip naked by Tinker and Grace. The actress playing Grace 'undresses completely' and dress herself, first and foremost, in the underpants.¹¹ Robin, later in the same scene, dresses himself in tights.¹² The focus on genitalia (and the possibility of fluid transference from swapping underwear) asks that the actors pay attention to their own body boundaries, work instinctively and with assertion to articulate what is comfortable and what is not, and to respect others' needs when rehearsing this. Clothing, Kane suggests, reveals far more politically than is apparent on first reading and can both liberate and suffocate the wearer/player. For Robin, the tights have some connection to '*langueur*' and like Werther's blue coat in *A Lover's Discourse*, 'imprisons him so effectively that the world around him vanishes'.¹³ Kane's precise structuring of clothing exchange indicates that she saw a relevance to the transitioning of

⁵ Irigaray, *Ethics*, op. cit., p. 5.

⁶ Kane, PhD Thesis, 2013. See chapter 5.iii.

⁷ ; 'Conversation with Mel Kenyon', in G. Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me: Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 2002, p. 151.

⁸ Kane, *Cleansed*, op. cit., pp. 112-116.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 144.

¹¹ *loc. cit.*, p. 113.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 114.

¹³ R. Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, p. 128., reproduced online at <http://www.haraldpeterstrom.com/content/s.pdf/Roland%20Barthes%20A%20Lovers%20A%20Discourse%20fragments.pdf>, (accessed 1 June 2013).

clothes between people and transitioning between genders. In scene 17 she directs 'Robin takes off his tights (Grace's) and makes a noose',¹⁴ and later in the final scene (scene 20):

Grace now looks and sounds exactly like Graham. She is wearing his clothes. Carl wears Robin's clothes, that is, Grace's (women's) clothes.¹⁵

Following this stage direction, Grace is referred to as Grace/Graham. A third item of clothing referenced in the script is a shirt that Graham later removes in scene 5 to look at Grace's breasts.¹⁶ This shirt is potentially gender-neutral or perhaps gender-queer and yet it too functions to draw attention to a bodily site that undergoes transition later in scene 18.¹⁷

In scene 18, Grace and a nominally male character Carl awake, naked but for bandages, to discover that their bodies have been genitally transfigured through surgery; Carl losing, through inference, a penis, and Grace again through inference, losing her breasts. Grace gains (through explicit reference) 'stitched-on genitals' – by inference, a penis. The scene is full of breath, and is marked by repetition of the fricative consonant 'F- F- F' by Grace. The sound is eventually broken by a gestic moment at which the actress playing Grace steps out of character and speaks a stage direction which functions as a line - 'Grace: Touches her stitched-on genitals' - before returning to the utterance of 'F- F- F' which finally leads to the words 'Felt it'.¹⁸ Grace's transsexual journey implies and involves other characters in processes of gender and bodily transition and reassignment. As Selina Busby and Stephen Farrier note:

What Kane reveals in the character of Grace is a larger story about the constructedness of gender and sexual identity. Kane shows that gender and sexual identity are mutable and related to conditions of the performative.¹⁹

Francesca Rayner elaborates further on the 'resistive' quality of Kane's work in its treatment of violence and queer experience:

In *Cleansed*, the compulsion to perform one's gender or sexual role is [...] explicit throughout, as are the severe consequences for those who fail to perform gender and sexual roles correctly. The linkage between violence and the assumption of a

¹⁴ Kane, *Cleansed*, loc. cit., p. 144.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 149.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 120.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 145. The stage directions for this scene introduce Grace as having: 'tight strapping around her groin and chest and blood where her breasts should be'.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 145-146. In the Author's Note reproduced with the cast list for *Cleansed*, (p. 106) also *Blasted* and *Phaedra's Love*, Kane states that 'Stage directions in brackets function as lines'. I have argued elsewhere that these suggest a Brechtian form of intervention related to *Gestus*. Kane, PhD Thesis, 2013.

¹⁹ S. Busby and S. Farrier, 'The Fluidity of Bodies, Gender, Identity and Structure in the Plays of Sarah Kane' in D. Godiwala, (ed.), *Alternatives Within the Mainstream II: Queer Theatres in Post-War Britain*, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007, p. 148.

gendered and sexed identity in the play thus resists commodification and consumerism in its savage dismemberment and re-membering of the body. Such processes are definitively queer, for they literally construct clear boundaries between male and female or homosexual and heterosexual through acts of bodily destruction and reconstruction.²⁰

The clothes-swapping activity of scene 3 references a clear indicator of lesbian culture - *vis-à-vis* butch-femme practice. Alison Eves usefully outlines the importance of butch-femme in 'establishing lesbian visibility and space' – an important point to consider when discussing butch-femme practice or reference in the theatre:

[...T]he construction of specific butch and femme subject positions are part of the construction of subcultural sites within which lesbian genders can be enacted and read in a specifically lesbian way. The status of butch/femme as the most recognisable lesbian archetype is important in establishing lesbian visibility and space which in turn can be seen as part of a claim to entitlement.²¹

In using a butch-femme aesthetic in the dramaturgy of *Cleansed*, Kane reflects her participation in emerging lesbian politics of the 1990s that sought to reclaim it positively.²² Through this she offers a 'subcultural site within which lesbian genders can be enacted and read in a specifically lesbian way', using 'visibility' to 'disrupt heteronormative hegemony', challenging casts and audience to see the characters on stage through both a lesbian and a gender-different or gender-transitioning lens.²³ Kane's work can be situated in a dual heritage of both feminist performance art and Western theatre, and competing arguments variously posit her work as being of female, lesbian, straight, transgender, male and gender-queer authorship.²⁴ In analysing Kane's writing processes through an Irigarayan lens, a placental economy can be observed that 'thinks autonomy according to a deconstructive logic of difference and a feminist ethics of generosity'.²⁵ Irigaray's work on the placental economy concords with feminist politics and interventions concerned with establishing new paradigms by which people and society can understand themselves and articulate agency. It is:

²⁰ F. Rayner, 'Written On the Body: Gender, Violence and Queer Desire in Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*', in *ex aequo* no. 20, 2009.

²¹ A. Eves, 'Queer Theory, Butch/Femme: Identities and Lesbian Space', *Sexualities*, vol. 7, issue 4., 2004, pp. 480-496.

²² J. Roof, '1970s Lesbian Feminism Meets 1990s Butch-Femme' in S. R. Munt (ed.), *Butch/Femme: Inside Lesbian Gender*, London and Herndon, Cassell, 1998, pp. 27-35.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Kane, PhD Thesis, 2013. In relation to 'multiple authorship models', also 'authorship as performance' model, see R. Dwyer, 'Believing in Fairies: The Author and the Homosexual' in D. Fuss (ed.), *Inside Out: Lesbian Theories/Gay Theories*, New York and London, Routledge, Chapman and Hall Inc., pp. 185-204.

²⁵ D. Bergoffen, 'Irigaray's Couples', in M.C. Cimitile and E. Miller (eds.), *Returning to Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy, Politics and the Question of Unity*, New York, State University of New York Press, 2007, p. 157.

ethical and political, not epistemological [...] by choosing the maternal rather than the medical paradigm of autonomy and otherness we can replace our current exploitative modes of sociality with ethical ones.²⁶

In her 'Afterword' for the *Frontline Intelligence* publication of *Blasted*, (which was published in Autumn 1994, before its professional debut at the Royal Court Theatre), Kane asserts the importance of a play's ontology, but goes beyond an accepted concept of 'the world of the play', to conjure more intensely an idea that a play has its own life, breath, lungs and voice:

Blasted now exists independently of me – as it should do – and to attempt to sum up its genesis and meaning in a few paragraphs would be futile and only of passing interest. If a play is good, it breathes its own air and has a life and voice of its own. What you take that voice to be saying is no concern of mine. It is what it is. Take it or leave it.²⁷

This is a generative statement and one associated with birthing and release. There is nevertheless a strong 'corps-a-corps' relationship between Kane and her texts²⁸ and her plays emerged from long processes of careful crafting, and a pattern of immersion and selection:

The first draft was about three times as long as what's there now and I don't think there's a single word in the first draft that is in the final draft, because I suppose what I was writing was sub-text – great reams of it. Everyone having these huge monologues. It started off literally with what everyone feels and thinks. The whole thing about Stella – there was fucking reams of it, absolutely reams of it, but I thought it was more interesting because it's not everybody's wife who leaves them for another woman! And I thought, 'now that I know what they think ... and then it was no we don't want any of that'.²⁹

In the 1998 interview with Dan Rebellato at Royal Holloway College, she said:

I don't like writing things you don't really need, and my favourite exercise is cutting – cut, cut, cut!³⁰

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 158.

²⁷ P. Edwardes (ed.), *Frontline Intelligence 2: New Plays for the Nineties*, Great Britain, Methuen Drama, 1994, p. 51.

²⁸ See L. Irigaray, 'Body Against Body: In Relation to the Mother (Le corps-à-corps avec la mère)', *Sexes and Genealogies*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-21. The essay was written in 1980.

²⁹ Saunders, *Love Me or Kill Me*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

³⁰ Community Audio, 'Sarah Kane Interview', [online audio recording], 3 November 1998, <http://archive.org/details/SarahKaneInterview>, (accessed 23 March 2013). See also Royal Holloway, University

Kane's plays therefore are the precisely-honed fragments of a much wider set of stories which sit underneath – invisible, deleted, out-of-reach but existing in the spaces and still, in their erasure, carrying import, meaning and 'sub-text'. The page, far from being empty or cool, is a space that has had energy, stories, dialogue and actions thrown at it; it is fat with dynamic. As this statement acknowledges, lesbian relationships exist in the dynamic subtext of *Blasted* through the figure of the absent 'witch' Stella.³¹ They can also be discerned in the unspoken, private, nurturing and tactile spaces of her screenplay *Skin*³² and in her unpublished play *What She Said* which is a dialogue between a young bisexual woman and an older lesbian.³³ This is held at the Women's Theatre Collection archive at the University of Bristol - an archive, which I have argued elsewhere constitutes something of an Irigarayan 'reserve' for Kane's work. That lesbianism is edited out, silenced, moved to the margins and to the gestural spaces of Kane's texts is something that merits deeper consideration. Lesbianism is the silent ghost in the room where Sarah Kane's work is concerned, and this manifests itself in varying ways when casts work on *Cleansed*, frequently reflected in the increasingly popular decision to have Robin played by an actress thus allowing lesbian dynamics to be enacted between Robin and Grace, and accenting features of 'languer' in Robin's poetic and unrequited love for her. Also common in recent productions is the presentation of Robin as a figure experiencing gender dysphoria and this choice by directors opens up a number of themes related to gender transitioning and also sexual orientation in *Cleansed*.³⁴ Rayner rightly notes the setting-up of hetero-normative binaries for contestation by Kane in the play. One such example of this is in the sex scenes. Recalling scene 5, the detailing of the sex act 'step-by-step' is almost ridiculously hetero-normative and prescriptive:

He sucks her right breast.
She undoes his trousers and touches his penis.
They take off the rest of their clothes, watching each other.
They stand naked and look at each others' bodies.
They slowly embrace.

of London, 'Dr Dan Rebellato' [http://pure.rhul.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/dan-rebellato\(2feeb129-f04e-4e0c-bce7-0d1eb77f3e30\).html](http://pure.rhul.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/dan-rebellato(2feeb129-f04e-4e0c-bce7-0d1eb77f3e30).html), ND, (accessed 23 March 2013) and D. Rebellato 'Sarah Kane Interview', <http://www.danrebellato.co.uk/sarah-kane-interview/>, ND, (accessed 29 May 2013).

³¹ Kane, 'Blasted' in *Collected Plays*, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

³² See the relationship between Marcia and Kath. Kane, 'Skin' in *Collected Plays*, *ibid*; *Skin*, O'Connell, 1995, [short film].

³³ I noted the importance of these plays early on in my doctoral research and read them at the Theatre Collection archive in Bristol, UK on 25 August 2009. See University of Bristol Theatre Collection 'Women's Theatre Collection', <http://www.bris.ac.uk/theatreollection/women.html>, 2002-2012, (accessed 21 March 2013).

³⁴ Kane, PhD Thesis, 2013. See interpretations by Cast-Off Drama, UK, Kamome-Za Fringe Theatre, Japan, Bare Cheek Theatre, Ireland, and RADA, UK to name a few.

They begin to make love, slowly at first, then hard, fast, urgent, finding each others' rhythm is the same as their own.

They come together.

They hold each other, him inside her, not moving.

A sunflower bursts through the floor and grows above their heads.

When it is fully grown, Graham pulls it towards him and smells it.

He smiles.³⁵

Whilst working as both stage direction and a beautiful piece of erotic prose, this is not unlike the sex advice given to young women at the time in magazines such as *Company* or *Cosmopolitan*, which would describe heterosexual sex acts along a point-by-point trajectory. The sex between Tinker and Woman appears to be caught up with a clichéd language of porn, which struggles for intimacy, and cannot yet name itself or talk to the other in difference.³⁶ The love making between the gay male couple Rod and Carl is relatively undirected by Kane. There is distance and a certain privacy given to it in the script, which heightens its tenderness, albeit with a certain wistfulness.³⁷ The lesbian subject remains the rover in the play – uncoupled, and apparently unpleasured. Her absence in the sexual schema paradoxically makes her more present, and in this way Kane does indeed contest and reveal the limits of hetero-normative binaries through this, and ask that we recognise her absence and her silence. Kane arguably 'keeps her lips closed as a positive move' and expresses a 'difference', allowing for the possibility of lesbian love, sex and desire to find itself beyond the modes of coupling witnessed (and recognised or determined) in a scopic frame.³⁸

Acknowledged but unspoken female desire are nevertheless pervasive in the play and are frequently invoked with reference to the incest taboo. Note the interruption occasioned by Tinker in the opening section of the play:

Graham. My sister, she wants – Tinker. Don't tell me.³⁹

It is a queer moment that necessarily resists foreclosure. Right from the start Kane is setting up a conflict between the articulation and naming of the object of female (or feminised) desire, and the prohibition of that desire being named and heard by the

³⁵ Kane, *Cleansed*, op. cit., pp. 120-121

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 148.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 142. Note, it does indicate that Carl takes the lead in the sexual activity, which gives a subtle direction for the actors to follow. 'Carl kisses him. He makes love to Rod'. This emphasis could suggest penetrative sex but it is not detailed explicitly or descriptively in the way that the sex between Grace and Graham is.

³⁸ Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, op. cit., p. 100.

³⁹ Kane, *Cleansed*, op. cit., p. 107.

patriarchal authority figure. We do not find out what Graham wishes to tell Tinker as the conversation moves on. But it indicates a space, an absence, a gap that needs to be understood. Kane indicates to us that we can seek to understand unspoken and unnamed desire through Grace. Kane restages the question in scene 14, and this time it is articulated directly through a nominally-female character, Woman. Again, Tinker interrupts and represses the expression of desire. He does so in an exchange of extreme violence and abuse, centred on gender:

Tinker. Open your legs.
Woman. I'm confused.
Tinker. OPEN YOUR FUCKING LEGS.
Woman. (Does.)
Tinker. Look.
Woman. (Does.)
Tinker. Touch.
Woman. (Sobs.)
Tinker. TOUCH FUCKING TOUCH.
Woman. Don't do this.
Tinker. YOU WANT ME TO HELP YOU?
Woman. YES
Tinker. THEN DO IT
Woman. Don't want to be this.
Tinker. You're a woman, Grace.
Woman. I want –
Tinker. Don't say that.
Woman. You said –
Tinker. I lied. You are what you are. No regrets.⁴⁰

In this moment, the question of 'wants' is located in a dialectical tension between Woman's desire 'not to be' something, and Tinker's assertion that she can 'only be' that thing that she desires 'not to be' – the very 'beingness' she rejects. It is also caught in a tension whereby Woman's desire to change her 'beingness' – expressed as 'I want' – conflicts with Tinker's negation of the possibility of change. The relational dialectic dramatised by Kane here centres around gender, and the central tenet of Tinker's argument is that change is not possible because Woman (who he has named Grace, something she later names herself as) is a woman: 'Tinker. You're a woman, Grace [...] You are what you are. No regrets'.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 137. This is another moment where Kane scripts the character to 'break the fourth wall' through the direction that 'Stage directions in brackets function as lines'. See note 16.

Kane however can imagine change for her nominally-female protagonists, and I conclude briefly on this point with reference to links between *Cleansed* and *Antigone*, which frequently focus on the sex act between the character of Grace and her dead / ghost brother Graham. Judith Butler's notes that:

Antigone is one for whom symbolic positions have become incoherent, confounding as she does brother and father, emerging as she does, not as a mother but – as one etymology suggests – “in place of the mother”. Her name is construed as ‘anti-generation’ (*gone* [generation]).⁴¹

She also notes that Antigone ‘figures the limits of intelligibility exposed at the limits of kinship’ and a ‘crisis’ in ‘the representative function (and) very horizon of intelligibility in which she operates and [...] remains somewhat unthinkable’.⁴² The horizon referenced here is the Oedipal scene so favoured by classicism and structural psychoanalysis. *Cleansed* similarly troubles the boundaries of kinship through invocation of the incest taboo. In scripting a full penetrative, heterosexual sex act in scene 5 it problematises boundaries of the body and raises questions of ‘permission’ and ‘what will be or is permissible?’. The question of ‘permission’ is asked of the actors, the director, the rehearsal room, and the institutions hosting a production. On a wider scale it also questions ‘what is permissible?’ of the society and country in which the play is staged. As Butler in her discussions of Claude Lévi-Strauss’s work notes, the incest taboo:

is not exclusively biological (although partially), nor exclusively cultural, but exists rather ‘at the threshold of culture’, part of a set of rules that generate the possibility of culture and are thus distinct from the culture they generate, but not absolutely.⁴³

She also notes that Antigone for Hegel represents ‘precisely what remains unconscious within public law’ and ‘exists [...] at the limit of the publicly knowable and codifiable’. She represents also: another law [...] a law that leaves only an incommunicable trace, an enigma of another possible order.⁴⁴

Incest and its referents are most commonly raised in relation to legal discussions of queer sexualities, and indicate a history in which ‘inversion’ in its many forms, does not receive

⁴¹ J. Butler, *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, New York and Chichester, Columbia University Press, 2000, p. 22.

⁴² *ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 39.

legibility within the law and becomes associated with transgression.⁴⁵ The act of incest is queered in *Cleansed* in that it is the ghost of Graham that Grace has sex with - thus questions arise - is the sex between Graham and Grace actually incest? Is incest primarily physical or emotional? What is permissible and what not? Can ghosts be legislated for? Essentially, what are the boundaries of incest and how is it constituted and policed? In raising these questions, Kane's play indicates wider debates about incest in the philosophical, psychoanalytical, legal and political sphere. Through a dramatisation of incestuous love and the spectral sex act performed between a ghostly Graham and physical Grace in *Cleansed*, Kane signifies a desire for that other 'possible order' within law, and for change. In her final image of touch and breath in scene 20, and in her focus on transitioning bodies, where skin is marked, wounded but alive, *Cleansed* marks Kane as a highly political and radical theatre maker who uses the frame of the text to open space for possibilities and debate amongst directors and actors engaged in producing images and experience of sex and the body.⁴⁶ As such the play remains open for us to make meaning from, to extend and debate its ethical provocations through staging, and to 'give birth to work in common and space-time to be shared'.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Dr Louise Chambers argues that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transvestite, transgender, queer and intersex people share a common history of oppression - the history of inversion. I use the term in reference to that principle. L. Chambers, 'Tales of Inversion', *Gendered Intelligence Anatomy: Drawing Bodies, Drawing Sex, Drawing Gender* Project, London, UK, 9 February 2013. See Gendered Intelligence, 'GI Anatomy', <http://gianatomy.tumblr.com/post/42869550815/week-one-talks-on-the-body-in-art>, ND, (accessed 12 March 2013).

⁴⁶ Kane, *Cleansed*, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

⁴⁷ Irigaray, *Way of Love*, loc. cit., p. 10.