

Psychological Suffering in Peter Shaffer's *Equus*: Artaudian Approach

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المستخلص:

تأثر الكتاب المسرحيون بالحرب العالمية الأولى وتمردوا ضد التقاليد القديمة. بدأوا يشككون في الهياكل الاجتماعية القائمة التي زادت من الصراع العالمي. نجحوا من خلال مسرح القسوة في تحرير العقل الباطني البشري ، معاناته النفسية وكشفه لنفسه. يضع أنطونين أرتود (1896-1948) نظرية لمسرح القسوة التي تستند إلى الطقوس والخيال. يهاجم هذا النوع من المسرح العقل الباطن للجمهور في محاولة لتحرير المخاوف العميقة والقلق التي عادة ما يتم كبتها. يركز هذا المسرح على النص القصير ، الصراخ ، البكاء ، والإيماءات الرمزية من أجل صدمة الجمهور وإثارة ردود أفعالهم. إن استخدام الجسد والصوت مع الصور العنيفة والمخيفة والصادمة هو لغرض تعزيز الحقيقة. يعرض بيتر شيفر (1926) في مسرحيته *ايكوس* (1926) العنف والأحوال بطريقة تؤثر على الجمهور بشكل كبير من خلال خلق جو عنيف في العقل مع بعض جوانب رؤية أرتود للقسوة. ويصر على أن الكبت الغير الطبيعي للرغبات والغرائز في الشخص يمكن أن يسبب مرضاً عقلياً ليس بيولوجياً ولكنه شاذ نفسياً يحدده المجتمع والقيم العائلية. يكشف هذا البحث المعاناة النفسية في مسرحية بيتر شيفر *ايكوس* من منظور مسرح أنطونين أرتود للقسوة. تسلط المقدمة الضوء على تطور مسرح القسوة (1927) من قبل أنطونين أرتود ، وهو سريالي. كما أنه يوضح كيف أن المشاعر المكبوتة تدفع الإنسان لارتكاب عمل غير عقلائي وعنيف للغاية في مسرحية بيتر شافير *ايكوس*. تظهر الخاتمة أن كبت الغرائز والرغبات لا يؤدي فقط إلى مرض الإنسان العقلي وتدميره بل يحوله الى قاتل.

الكلمات الرئيسية: مسرح القسوة, نفسي, الشعور المكبوت, ايكوس, جريمة, عنف, الطاعون

Abstract

Dramatists were affected by the First World War and revolted against the old traditions. They began to doubt the existing social structures that increased the universal conflict. Through Theatre of Cruelty, they succeeded to release human subconscious, his psychological suffering and exposed man to himself.

Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) puts a theory for the theatre of cruelty that based on ritual and fantasy. That form of theatre attacks the audience's subconscious in an attempt to free the deep-rooted fears and worries that are normally repressed. This theatre concentrates on brief text, screams, cries and symbolic gestures in order to shock the audience and arouse their reaction. The use of the body and the voice with the violent, frightening and shocking images is to enhance truth.

In *Equus* (1973) Peter Shaffer (1926) presents violence and horrors in a way that affect the audience greatly through creating a violent atmosphere in the mind with some aspects of Artaud's vision of cruelty. He insists that the abnormal repression of desires and instincts in a person can cause mental illness which is not biological but psychological abnormal that is determined by society and family values. This paper explores the psychological suffering in Peter Shaffer's *Equus* from the perspective of Antonin Artaud theatre of cruelty. The introduction highlights the development of the theatre of cruelty (1927) by Antonin Artaud an early Surrealist. Also it shows how the repressed feelings push man to commit an irrational and very violent act in Peter Shaffer's play *Equus*. The conclusion shows that the repression of instincts and desires not only cause man's mental sickness and his destruction but turn him into a murder.

Key words: theatre of cruelty, psyche, repressed feelings, *Equus*, crime, violence, plague.

1. Introduction:
 - 1.1 Antonin Artaud and the Theatre of Cruelty

The surrealist movement (1920) affects many modern writers who destroyed the conventional means of artistic organization to have free association (Abrams, 1989: 167). Antonin Artaud (1896–1948), is a Surrealist, a French dramatist, actor, essayist, and theorist. During the early 1930s, Artaud, puts a theory for a Surrealist theatre called the 'theatre of cruelty' that based on ritual and fantasy. He rejects the style of Western theatre as a distortion of its intent, which he wants to be a spiritual and metaphysical experience. Though the theatre of cruelty has often been called an "impossible theatre"—vital for the purity of inspiration which it generated, but hopelessly vague and metaphorical in its concrete detail" (Tharu, 1984: 2), Artaud insists that rational discourse includes untruth and illusion.

Albert Bermel (1977:12) states that by using ritualistic act of theatre, Artaud wants the audience to be participant and not spectator only. According to Artaud, the theatre has the ability to incite change within a person and to transform a culture. He wants his audience to be moved with experience that based in ritual as he believes that the transformative authority of the theatre will be continued (Artaud, 1970: 99). Hence, many dramatists are influenced and followed his belief and way of thinking. That form of theatre attacks the audience's subconscious in an attempt to free their deep-rooted fears and worries that are normally repressed. It forces people to see themselves and their natures without the protection of civilization.

Being a theoretician of the Surrealist movement, Artaud attempted to replace the conventional classical theatre with the theatre of cruelty to release human subconscious and expose man to himself. For him, the dramatic presentation should be an act of initiation through which the audience will be frightened and terrified as he loses the control of his reason, "All true feeling is in reality untranslatable. To express it is to betray it. But to translate it is to dissimulate it" (Sellin, 1975: 36). He associates the theatre with danger and cruelty.

The theatre of cruelty concentrates on brief text, screams, cries and symbolic gestures in order to shock the audience and arouse their reaction. Hence, it portrays the extremes of human nature like madness and distortion on the stage. In 1933, Artaud presented his concept about the theatre of cruelty through connecting the purpose of this theatre with the cruelty that man can impose on other people. He wants to change the world by attacking man's emotions that intend to shock the spectator directly. Cruelty does not mean the physical one; Artaud creates a theatre of magic, beauty and power (Esslin, 1976: 31). He establishes this theatre as he feels that the world needs motives and reasons. He attempts to replace the classical theatre with his theatre of cruelty to liberate man's subconscious. He decides to break down the conceptions of mass theatrical elements and uses a definite notion of emotive, horrible and comprehensive theatre.

Artaud believes that "a true theatrical work disturbs the senses in response, liberates the repressed unconscious, foments a virtual revolt.....and imposes both a heroic and difficult attitude on the assembled collectivity" (Knapp, 2009: 26-30). He views the theatre and the people as a ritual to arouse the religious experience within the spectator and to expand his reality through stimulating the creative forces inside the consciousness. By determining man's actions based on myth, gestures and symbols, Artaud's plays become weapons to beat up man's illogical forces. Hence, the dramatic actions turn into personal experiences. For him, the theatre is not for enjoyment but for extension of reality that touches and affects the spectator's entire being. He views the world as being aimless, full of lies, duplicity and hypocrisy. He emphasize that to take any decision, man must face the absurdity of his life that reflects the dreadful and horrible reality of his own existence. Despite his pessimistic view, he believes that through his theatre he can change the world (Arrandale, 2007: 58).

Through the theatre of cruelty, Artaud begins to develop his own dramatic theories. This theatre attacks the senses of the people and makes them feel the silent emotions of the unconscious. Taking from his surrealist origins and his imitations from the Balinese Theatre, Artaud makes the stage rigid in construction and purpose, "The stage is measured and circumscribed and has a density in space – movements, shapes, colors, vibrations, attitudes, screams" as he states (Arrandale, 2007: 61). Therefore, he creates the theatre of cruelty in which feelings and the metaphysical are expressed through physical, mythological, symbolic and typical image associated to the world of dreams and not through language.

Nathan Gorelick (2011:263) observes that Artaud's theatre of cruelty differs in meaning as it is a practice that awakens the nerves and the hearts of the audience. One can experience the violent acts, "it inspires us with the fiery magnetism of its images and acts upon us like a spiritual therapeutics whose touch can never be forgotten". He adds that for Artaud, cruelty is:

more profoundly the unrelenting agitation of a life that has
become unnecessary, lazy, or removed from a compelling
force The Theatre of Cruelty gives expression to everything
that is 'crime, love, war, or madness' in order to 'unforgetably
root within us the ideas of perpetual conflict, a spasm in which
life is continually lacerated, in which everything in creation rises

up and asserts itself against our appointed rank (Gorelick, 2011: 264).

Artaud does not want to focus only on the psychological sufferings of man or the social struggle among people. He concentrates on the aspects of subconscious as he believes that they are the main causes of people's ill-treatment with each other as Robert Vork points out (2013:306). He reveals that Artaud does not prefer language because it is not enough to express the pain. Therefore, he chooses bare words of phonic elements, "Speech on the theatre of cruelty's stage is reduced to inarticulate sounds, cries, and gibbering screams, no longer inviting a subject into being but seeking to preclude its very existence "(Vork, 2013: 326). Also Vork states that unlike other dramatists, Artaud's characters have the ability to express things and "his play reveals emotions and experiences that we all attempt to proscribe and are unwilling to acknowledge, but which nevertheless occur" (327). Through attacking the audiences' senses, Artaud believes that the theatrical experience can help people to eradicate any destructive feelings and live happily "the theatre has been created to drain abscesses collectively" as Oscar Brockett avers (2007:420–421).

Symbolism and Surrealism affect Artaud greatly. He believes that civilization represses man and the role of the theatre is to liberate him from these repressions. In his *Manifesto of the Theatre of Cruelty* (1932) and *The Theatre and Its Double* (1938), Artaud calls for closeness and relationship between the actor and the audience "in a charmed exorcism; sounds, gestures, unusual scenery, and lighting combine to form a language, superior to words, that can be used to subvert logical thought and to shock the audience into seeing the baseness of his world" (Artaud, 1958: 12). Therefore, the dances and gesture that are used have powerful effect like the spoken words so this theatre does not communicate through the use of spoken language. Instead, Artaud prefers to use sharp sounds and bright stage to strengthen the relation between the audience and the actors, intending to trap them inside the drama.

The theatre reflects not everyday life but a reality not polluted by philosophies of morality and culture. His theater is a double of a greater form of reality. By mentioning the word life, Artaud refers to the fragile and fluctuating midpoint that forms never reach. As a matter of fact, this theatre makes the metaphysics out of spoken language by expressing extraordinary things in new, exceptional and unfamiliar way. The main purpose of the theatre is to present physical shock and to create myths to express and form life in universal aspect in which man can find pleasure in finding out himself (Costich, 1978: 3).

Naomi Greene states that Artaud's use the word cruelty:

n the sense of an appetite for life, a cosmic accuracy, an implacable necessity, in the gnostic sense of a living whirlwind that devours the darkness; it is the consequence of an act. Everything that acts is a cruelty (1967:22).

Cruelty does not mean aggression, sadism or casing hurt. It is a violent and physical determination to shatter the deceitful and false reality. He makes the text a tyrant over meaning, using unique language and middle way between thoughts and gestures. Therefore, he describes all spiritual expressions in physical terms. Charles Marowitz defines cruelty as "the exposure of mind, heart and nerve ends to the grueling truths behind a social reality that deals in psychological crises; however, the concept of truth provides ample room for interpretation" (1966:147). So Artaud's concentration on cruelty is to cauterize the pain of everyday life, surpassing life its difficulties for restoring superiority of actual life that presents as art.

To convey his thoughts successfully, Artaud creates a dream world through using ritual, masks, tradition and unusual clothes, preferring to use symbolic objects instead of any scenery. Hence, his use of the body and the voice with the violent, frightening and shocking images is to enhance truth. His technique is used to stimulate creativity by developing the character's physical, verbal and emotional skills to make the situation real on the stage.

The connection between image, violence and thinking is very important and necessary. As the body is the main reason to incite the thinking, the physical aspect becomes very important than the psychological one. He states that "We have reached such a degeneracy, that metaphysics can penetrate into our souls only through the skin (Artaud, 1976: 87). This theatre comprises both explicit and implicit aspects of visual violence.

Artaud intends to develop a new theatrical language that is notable as a material, meaning the language of gestures and facemask expression and concentrating on its essential and magical basics to achieve the physical effect. Any change between image and text is to create a language of the body. He sees body as "passive, suffering organisms can turn into absolutely non-representative, non-productive, formless, un-made, body without organs" (Artaud, 1976: 40). Body can be seen as the most surprising investigation of man's image and Artaud has the ability to make the image active.

Artaud believes that drama must not emphasize text but the mysterious expression of sound, gesture and light. This technique is shown very clearly in his very short play, *Jet of Blood, known as Spurt of Blood* (1925) has light and begins with no description or stage directions (Artaud,1966: 74). It presents a young couple pathetically announcing their love, Young man and Young woman are the main characters. They repeat the same words in different and extravagant tones of voice that "I love you and everything is beautiful. You love me and everything is beautiful" (Artaud, 1966: 2).

After the Young man states that the world is so beautiful and well-ordered, an unexpected violent and chaotic scene arises on the stage" a storm bursts, two stars strike, and a series of legs of living flesh fall down, together with feet, hands, heads of hair, masks, colonnades, portals, temples, arcades, three scorpions, a frog, a beetle and distilling flasks" (Artaud, 1976: 71). Artaud introduces a scene where human limbs rain comprising a storm that separates them. The various things that fall from the sky start to flow slowly near the ground. This horrible scene makes the Young man and Young woman frightened and run away. Other characters enter the stage. They are the Knight wearing suit of armor, and the Nurse with huge distended breasts. In reality, they are the parents of the Young girl and they are related to Young man.

The Cenci or *Les Cenci*, a tragedy in five acts that Artaud himself adapted from Shelley and Stendhal (1935) represents the story of murder, rape, violence, and revenge. The story of Count Cenci, the late 16th century Roman nobleman, Francesco Cenci, and the torment of his daughter Beatrice, which leads to her vengeance and murder of her father, varied from the original of both Stendhal's novel and Shelley's play. He compares the difference between it and the utopian theatre of cruelty to the difference between "the unleashing by nature of a hurricane on the one hand and, on the other hand... whatever degree of [its] violence may remain in their image once it has become established" (Artaud, 1970: 7). As a matter of fact, this play presents a complete experience according to the mind, soul, and body of the audiences in order to stimulate in them a kind of personal revolution, which inspired many dramatists after him. His aim is to "return the theatre to its true path and to enable it to recapture that almost human dignity without which it can only waste the audience's time completely" (Artaud, 1970: 9).

Artaud presents the myth of Count Cenci, the ill-famed, incestuous and godless aristocrat who raped his daughter Beatrice. She is punished awfully for committing parricide against a man whose paternalism enforced the notorious and doomed act. He considers the myth of Count Cenci as an appropriate account to simplify his goals of intuitive influence. *The Cenci* is the first play to include sound. His characters have the ability to create chaos and disorder "This appeal to cruelty and terror, though on a vast scale, whose probes our entire vitality, confronts us with all our possibilities" (Artaud, 1958: 86). With the idea of transcendence from the proscenium to the audience then to the world, Artaud successfully breaks down the obstacle between the theatre and social conscious.

In *The Cenci*, Artaud tries the subtlety of Shelley's writings away. Through this means, he not only affects the text but the characters as well. His aim is to "give speech...not just to men but to beings, beings each of whom is the 45 incarnation of great forces, while still retaining just enough human quality to make them plausible from the psychological point of view" (Artaud, 1970: 8) as he is interested in forces more than men. He tries to create balance between beings and psychological realism. The worse image is at the end of the play when the remnants of the Cenci family are taken away to be executed. This image is stripped of its meaning if those victims are dehumanized. Hence, the text must show all inherently cruel (Artaud, 1970: 17).

Artaud associates "greediness and lust, sex and violence even innocence and swinishness" (Cardullo and Knoff, 2001: 377). Despite of having power, words are incapable of expressing. He believes that:

the theatre must make itself the equal of life..... not an
individual life that individual aspect of life in which characters
triumph, but the sort of liberated life which sweeps away human

individuality and in which man is only a reflection (Artaud, 1958: 20).

Artaud's main goal is to translate life into the universal vast form. This is the meaning of double in 'The Theatre and its Double'. The theatre is not a copy of reality. It is another kind of dangerous reality where the values of life are vanishing from man's vision. If the theatre can take the audience back "into the world of dreams and the primitive instincts, he will find himself in a world that is bloodthirsty and inhuman"(Artaud, 1958: 29).

According to him every gesture, sound, mimicry and staging choice should be cleverly planned to transform the dramatic space into a location of confusion, crisis and disorder. His metaphorical comparison to the terrors is associated with Marseille plague of 1720 in which extensive massacre and destruction caused all forms of social disorder and replaced by a "shared delirium" (Artaud, 1958: 15). His theatre is considered like the plague in the image of killing as it "releases conflicts, disengages powers, liberates possibilities, and if these possibilities and these powers are dark, it is the fault not of the plague nor of the theatre, but of life" (Artaud, 1958: 88). The plague, as an art, looks like the theatre which contains of some of mankind's great acts of assertion:

The plague ... cleanses. Like a boil, it brings whatever would have noxious, hidden, and festering to the surface--and expels it. Theatre can do likewise. It simulates the dark, un indulged passions, the abnormal feelings, of mankind (the actor is a murderer) and by expelling them at one remove, in performance, cleanses the performer and spectator alike in its collective experience (Bermel, 1977: 18-19).

In his essay *The Theatre and the Plague*, Artaud refers to the plague as images that are dormant, disorder, and suddenly spreads them into extreme gestures and pushes them to go (Artaud, 1958, 27). This reference has an exposure, meaning a call to destructive power; a theatre that "causes the mask to fall, reveals the lie, the slackness, baseness, and hypocrisy of our world, and above all a theatre that is a formidable call to the forces that impel the mind by example to the source of its conflicts and which is resolved only by death or cure" (Artaud, 1958: 124). Artaud believes that the only redemption for mankind and society is theatre so he suggests that man should think freely and ignore the hostility on the underneath. The counterpart between the plague and the vision of the theatre is seen clearly. This enhances his philosophy about the power of images, sounds and not language. He remarks that the theatre of cruelty has been created:

to restore to the theatre a passionate and convulsive conception of life, and it is in this sense of violent rigor and extreme condensation of scenic elements that the cruelty on which it is based must be understood. This cruelty, which will be bloody when necessary but not systematically so, can thus be identified with a kind of severe moral purity which is not afraid to pay life the price it must be paid (Artaud, 1958: 66).

His main goal is to bring back a theatre full of passion and life, a theatre of primitive and epic power.

Violence is an influential artistic device that can be used to positive ends. It is part of life and of art. According to Aristotle, the father of Western dramatic theory, "good art needs to imitate life and that this imitation must purify and heighten the life being mimicked" (Bellinger, 1927: 61). On the other side, Artaud considers theatre as a spiritual weapon against the crowds that align ideas of violence. The true theatre is a

plague for having the responsibility to clean the damaged structure of man. He states that "In the theater as in the plague there is something both victorious and vengeful: we are aware that the spontaneous conflagration which the plague lights wherever it passes is nothing else than an immense liquidation (Artaud, 1958: 121).

Artaud's use of gesture is considered as "development to echo a definite image reflecting the metaphysical cruelty of human existence" as Chingd Mei Chu observes (1996: 15). Moreover, his ideas are used in developing modern field of drama therapy and his language more rational:

Artaud was motivated by a desire for a direct and violent attack

upon the senses of his audience in order to achieve a collective purgation of the audience
.....consider[ing] the involvement of the audience in a single space the most important
step in achieving his ideal of the theatre of cruelty (Chu, 1996: 94).

By using cruelty, he wants the people to see the truth they dislike. Thus, he uses unique language that is between thought and gesture in order to describe the spiritual term into physical one. He believes that the theatre should employ "expressive breathing, animal sounds, uninhibited gestures, huge masks and puppets"(Artaud, 1958: 32) to destroy the obstruction between actors and audience and turn the latter to be participants, and bring them to a level of experience. He wants to release suppression and to purge violence, hypocrisy, and the illness of society that widespread. His attempt is to find a way that change theatre which based on text and society as well.

The theatre of cruelty exposes the immoral and social forces within man for purifying his psyche. To get rid of the hidden and dark forces, Artaud is much concerned about the audience rather than the actors, therefore, he decides to remove all the barriers between actors and the audience, theatre and life as well, "Theatre of Cruelty becomes more violent, less rational, more extreme, less verbal, more dangerous"(Brook, 1968: 49).

By cruelty, Artaud wants to liberate the people from the suffering through direct contact with the actors and through the elements of 'putting on stage'. He insists that cruelty is "not sadistic or bloody, at least not exclusively so I do not systematically cultivate horror. The word cruelty must be taken in its broadest sense, not in the physical predatory sense usually ascribed to it" (Artaud, 1958: 12).

Artaud destroys the structures and conventions governing the Western theatre for believing that this had restricted itself to a narrow path of human experience, the psychological problems of man and the social problems of the classes. He dislikes the text for making the actor immovable. The theatre also "re- forges the chain between what is and what is not, between the visible and the invisible" (Artaud, 1958: 80). Then he adds that true theatre bothers the sense' reaction, liberates the repressed unconscious, provoke virtual revolution and imposes difficult and heroic attitude (Artaud, 1958: 87). For him:

the theater invites the mind to share a delirium which exalts its energies;

and we can see, to conclude, that from the human point of view, the action of theatre, like that of the plague, is beneficial, for, impelling men to see themselves as they are, it causes the mask to fall, reveals the lie, the slackness, baseness, and hypocrisy of our world.....(Artaud, 1958: 90).

Being influenced by Balese theatre, Artaud considers gesture an important element since it works like dialogue. Also the design of the lights on the stage is very important for creating an atmosphere capable of moving the audience to disquiet, fear and eroticism. The well-designed lighting can be regarded as a force that

play on the mind of the audience due to its vibratory, used on the stage like waves, sheets or burning arrows. Therefore, the walls should be painted with olive to engross the light. The action should take place on all dimensions, meaning in depth and height in order to assault the audience. His language is to highlight man's psychological and social conflicts. His actors have the capability to free themselves of the insignificant actions and emotional simultaneity. Concerning costume, he does not prefer modern and historical dresses; instead he used to choose artificial dresses and enormous dolls.

According to Artaud, the role of the director is superior to the writer since he has the ability to bring life to the written text and creates a language better than words. Stage objects are also important since each object has specific function and meaning. Space also plays a central role in Artaud's plays as he turns the theatre into a ritual place shared by both the actors and the audiences who see their lives played on the stage. His view about theatricality identifies a performance as a transformative event, convincing the audience to confront themselves and their perceptions of reality.

Artaud is interested in creating a special language that would effectively integrate the actors' gestures with the spoken onomatopoeic sounds and lighting. The idea is to eradicate the stage so "the spectacle can spread to the entire theatre and taking off the ground will surrounded the spectator in the most physical way leaving him in a constant pool of lights, images, movements and sounds" (Artaud, 1976: 150).

Artaud has the ability to develop a vision of theatre through breaking down the theatre into naïve relationship of mimesis, dearth of stage and establishing harmony between spectator and vision in order to create " a stage space utilized in all its dimensions and, one might say, all possible planes...no point of space and at the same time no possible suggestion has been lost and there is a philosophical sense, of the power which nature has of suddenly hurling everything into chaos" (Artaud, 1958: 61). Through this he focuses on his social concerns like, crime, love, war and insanity as he wants the audiences to be shocked by what they see.

In his drama and through the actors' cruelty, the truth is revealed that the audiences do not wish to see. Hence, the word 'cruelty' becomes like a sense of a desire for life, a ruthless necessity that consumes the darkness. Everything that is enacted is a cruelty; actions of fear and suffering that happen preceding to intellectual view create complex reactive effects beyond ethical education and can be reasonably. The theatre of cruelty can be seen as using ferocious means aimed at valuable effects.

2. Psychological Suffering in Modern Drama

Many modern dramatists concentrate on the psychological drama, Peter Shaffer (1926) is one of them. He is a British dramatist who focuses on psychological and historical dramas that give him great fame. He is "fascinated by the endless ambiguity of the human situation, and his work is marked by the psychological intricacy of his characterizations" (Taylor, 1974: 3).

Shaffer is interested in the theatre of cruelty that is based on ritual and imagination in order to attack the audience' subconscious and to release the deep fears and worries that are suppressed. In turn, the audience will be forced to see himself and his nature without any restraints. This kind of theatre does not depend greatly on text but on screams, cries and gestures to shock the audience and arouse essential reaction (Vandenbroucke, 1975: 12). It concentrates on horrors and frights of man's mind with the sensual scenes of violence having special effect that make it a mythical place. The ways in which violence and horrors are presented affect the audience greatly through creating a violent atmosphere in his mind with some aspects of Artaud's vision of cruelty. Therefore, through this oppressive atmosphere, the audience becomes part of the crime and the cruel

action that are performed on the stage and he will be into the dark world of his psyche. In addition, the audience can realize the monster concealed deep inside his heart and mind. Hence, "theatre not confined to any fixed language or form, destroys false shadows because of this, and prepares the way for another shadowed birth, uniting the true spectacle of life around it" (Artaud, 1971: 7).

Simon Trussler (1973: 6) remarks that Shaffer has great power in visual and audio dimension in controlling his plays. In *Equus*, he increases the visual and the audio world for *Equus*. In the beginning the masks striated the horseheads in light silver wire through which the respiring and glaring faces of the actors can be seen. This technique creates two images in one form. First, it achieves the important notion of the play logically. Secondly, when the spirit of the horse escapes, "the hooves-metal comes to scrap and stamp on the wooden floor" this frightened the audience due to the dangerous sounds that the presence of Alan's sticky and minatory god creates (Shaffer, 1980: xv).

Shaffer's characters have the ability to know their inner feelings and "discover what in them also belongs to their neighbors" (Shaffer, 1980: ix) in order to reveal a fixed desire of the society and to arouse the self-realization of the audience (Shaffer, 1980: xiv).

Through his play, *Equus* (1973), which in Latin means horse, Shaffer has gained popular praise for searching the themes of worship and the conflict between loving and rational desires. This psychological drama for which Shaffer received the Antoinette Perry (Tony) Award and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award in 1975, explores the mentally based motivations of a stable young man who blinded six horses as he believes that they are gods (Taylor, 1974: 7).

Shaffer's plays represent his theatre of ritual, magic, masks and cries to convey his ideas as he believes that using words only is insufficient. Most of his works are based on myth and the psychological motivations of his characters. His use of masks, music, and dance illuminates thematic concerns and his characters have the ability to develop the conflicts (Adam, 1976: 160).

Equus is a play of two acts and sets in Rokesby Psychiatric Hospital in southern England. The characters in Dysart's office talk about past events in the life of Alan Strang, the main character in the play. The scenes of all the events vacillate between the past and the present. The basic form of the play is of Greek drama as the characters have no individual roles. They onstage comprise a chorus in order to reveal the actions in unsolidified style. The acts in Dysart's office changed into events that been taken from the characters' memories (Vandenbroucke, 1975: 129).

The story of this play concentrates on the actions of Alan Strang 17 years old who is in a psychiatric hospital after one night blinding six horses with a metal hoof pick. The mystery thing is that no one knows why he blinded the horses but Dysart, psychiatrist at the hospital feels that finding the truth is his duty.

In reality, *Equus* is based on a story which Shaffer heard from his friend James Mossman, who had heard it from a judge. The story is about a boy, who is the son of religious and unconventional parents, is seduced by a girl in a stable. He blinded twenty-six horses in order to delete their memories as witnesses of the seduction to his parents (Shaffer, 1980: xiv). After hearing the story, Shaffer decides to create "a mental world in which the deed could be made comprehensible" (Shaffer, 1977: 4). The crime of blinding the horses in a small town attracts the attention of Shaffer and encourages him to write this play which is about a psychiatrist Dysart who seeks to treat the young man who suffers from a pathological religious attraction with horses that leads him to

blind the six horses. Shaffer aims of knowing the reasons that caused this incident ignoring the details of the crime. Not only Dysart is in gesture but Alan as well because he wants to come back to the purity of perception and leave all the artificial and false thoughts. In other words Dysart decides to strip off all the social traditions (Shaffer, 1977: 15).

Dysart is dissatisfied about his work and the emptiness of his life affects his feelings and thoughts. He has difficulty with Alan who never concentrates on his questions and his replies are in a way of singing the rings to television announcements. Through his meeting with Alan's parents, Dora and Frank, Dysart finds that the father is an atheist whereas the mother is a sincere Christian (Shaffer, 1977: 30). From asking the parents, he understands that they damaged each other's authority consequently they confuse their son as they do not give him a full awareness of the world.

Throughout the play, Dysart discovers that reality is an illusion and with the help of Alan, he prefers to make the journey back from modern society to the clarity of perception. To achieve his purpose, Shaffer prefers to use of brave visual symbols with other elements like, music, dance, ritual and mimic to be the main characteristics of his play. These theatrical devices are combined with realism. So he mixes naturalistic speech and description with intellectual performance of the horses. Moreover, he uses vivid rhetoric and difficult characterizations (Shaffer, 1975: 129).

Shaffer makes his characters engrave "with deeper lines of professional self-doubt" (Shaffer, 1980: xv) in order to give the play new dimension. Hence, this play is both an erotic and tragic as it is not based on the conflict between right and wrong; instead it is based on the collision between two different types of right. In other words, the conflict is between Dysart's professional duties to treat a petrified young man who has committed a frightful crime and Alan's ardent ability for love (Dean, 1978: xxi).

The horses are portrayed by the actors and the set is a wooden ground. The actors are also used as a chorus to make a buzzing sound of Equus. To reflect the interactions with Alan and to expose his inner ideas, Dysart jumps back and forth saying:

Passion, how one gains passion, if one can experience passion without pain. I think it's about sexuality and what that means and what that is for someone when they're growing up. It's about what happens to you when you lack something in your life, like Dysart says he feels like he hasn't experienced real passion because he hasn't opened himself up to the worship that Alan has seen (Shaffer, 1977: 60).

In this play, Shaffer concentrates on lighting, a design process that contains communicating, learning, solving difficulties, producing art, self-examining and technical acts "in theatrical design and production, this process consists of seven steps commitment; analysis; research; incubation; selection; implementation; and evaluation. These steps compose a problem-solving model for theatrical design and productions" (Shaffer, 1977:77).

The reason for blinding the horses is that Alan believes that they are gods. Seeing the horses as representative of God, Alan complicates his love of God with sexual attraction. This enhances his suffering from delusions as Dysart confirms "Hopefully, he'll feel nothing at his fork but Approved Flesh. I doubt, however, with much passion!... Passion, you see, can be destroyed by a doctor. It cannot be created"(Shaffer, 1977:49). He adds that mental illness affects one in four people in England that causes his suffering and his use

of violence against anyone even animals. The most important thing is that the causes of mental illness are difficult to know so it is more difficult to control the violent behaviors of mentally sick people.

The combination between Alan and the horse is spiritual and the passion is illustrated through the sexual implications in Alan's riding. Through riding the horse, Shaffer makes Alan unit with his own god and become one. Now Alan feels that not his own god controls his life but he himself for having complete power. The empathy with Equus helps Alan to flee from what others expect of him and can live with complete power and passion (Carlson, 1985: 33).

The horses are regarded as the animal forces of man's unconscious and are typical images. According to Shaffer the horses:

Could suggest the cozy familiarity of a domestic animal Or worse, a pantomime horse- should be avoided..... as if the body of the horse extended invisibly behind them. Animal effect must be created entirely mimetically through the use of legs, knees, neck, face and the turn of the head which can move the mask above it through all the gestures of equine wariness and pride.the masks are put on before the audience with very precise timing the actors watching each other so that the mask has an exact and ceremonial effect (Shaffer, 1980: 400).

The horse represents power, freedom and animal desire. Alan's love of horses and riding them bare show his sense of emotional and sexual freedom. Throughout the play, the horse symbolizes opposite meaning especially when Alan calls Equus God slave, he means that the horse does not have the ability to control itself despite of being powerful. Here, Shaffer makes comparison between horse and man. Though man has the ability to be free, his condition limits his aptitude. Many factors in society like religion or economy hinder man's way in life (Shaffer, 1975: 51). It is obvious that Shaffer does not seek to present the real horse but represent the suppressed gloomy and dim forces within man.

On the other hand, Dysart does not have the ability to study into the horse's head. This makes him doubt his professional capability to deal with man's psyche living in complete darkness to fight badly for life meaning. Thus, he is considered a passive man having no control of his own life whereas; Alan is regarded as a man of violent activity which dominates Dysart's passivity (Carlson, 1985: 41).

By concentrating on the character of Dysart, Shaffer illustrates his vision into the state of modern man. He explores the torture and pain of his protagonist by having function, and through the words that extended into monologues, he reveals the narrator. These monologues with the rebuilding scenes both in and out of the Dysart's office change the audience from being observer into participant.

Moreover, through Dysart's self – awareness and Alan's ritualistic performance, Shaffer conveys his message (Plunka, 1980: xii). The new techniques he used awake his audience about the social morals' defects. He not only uses dramatic techniques but dramatic ideas as well (Shaffer, 1975: 136).

John Talyor observes that *Equus* has great effect because the audience can live through Alan's experience, "as he has experienced vicariously some of his ecstasy in naked, pulsing contact with his god, he has made his own oblation to the dark gods of his dreams" (1974: 31). Hence, the audience is like Dysart who "envies the boy for his passion; in the end it becomes his own" (Taylor, 1974: 33).

Shaffer uses the dynamics of the victim-victimizer. At the beginning of the play, after blinding the six horses, Alan is presented as a brutal and troubled young man that makes him act in a violent and irrational way. Later, he is presented as a victimizer as Dysart has a vision that changes the view saying:

That night I had a very explicit dream. In it I am a chief priest in Homeric Greece. I'm wearing a wide gold mask I'm officiating at some immensely important ritual sacrifice..... The sacrifice is a herd of children..... As each child steps forward, they grab it from behind and throw it over the stone and with each victim, it's getting worse..... the implied doubt that this repetitive and smelly work is doing any social good at all..... and then, of course the damn mask begins to slip (Shaffer, 1977: 216-217).

This speech makes Hesther, Alan's friend, understand that from the situation of the victimizer, Alan becomes a victim and Dysart looks the slaughterer who sacrifices the disturbed young man.

Alan desires Jill, a girl who works with him at the stable. She also is interested in him and at the night of the crime, they were together. Alan feels he cannot keep her as Equus stands between them:

Alan: I couldn't... see her.

Dysart: What do you mean?

ALAN: Only Him. Every time I kissed her – He was in the way. When I shut my eyes, I saw Him at once. The streaks on his belly... ..I couldn't feel her flesh at all! I wanted the foam off his neck. His sweaty hide. Not flesh. Hide! Horse-hide!... Then I couldn't even kiss her (Shaffer, 1977: 294-295).

Therefore, Alan feels trapped between two worlds; his private with mechanisms hired from the ancient society, and the civilized world that has just become alluring to him as an ambassador. Alan's action is justified according to the ancient ritualistic sacrifice (Girard, 1972: 15). As a matter of fact, this ritualistic sacrifice is considered madness for having no sense and modern society regards Alan as a mad young man.

Shaffer's characters have the ability to reveal their own views, thoughts and concerns. Moreover, the use of mimesis is to represent the conversation between the characters. Through Hesther's efforts, Alan's reality is exposed gradually and Dysart creates his own reality by depending on Alan's (Shaffer, 1975: 61).

It is obvious that the abnormal repression of desires and instincts in a person can cause mental illness. In Alan's case, the repression of his sexuality with the nervousness made by society and his parents, cause his self-destructive and harmful actions. Through depending on suppressed memories and feelings into Alan's consciousness, Dysart begins to release his repression. In fact, Alan throughout his life has repressed his opinions, feelings and experiences. For Shaffer, the mental illness is not biological but psychological abnormal that is determined by society and family values "Insane individuals may not actually have psychological issues; rather, they may simply be reacting to the world in a way that society deemed wrong man reacts to the world in which society believed incorrect" as R. D. Laing observes (1967: 10). Moreover, Laing sees madness as an inimitable and hypothetically transformative experience whereas; society sees madness as awful illness.

At the end of the play, Dysart sees himself "standing in the dark with a pick in his hand, striking at heads" (Shaffer, 1977: 130). Here, he shows the clear association to Alan who blinded the horses by using a hoof-pick

which represents the brutality and illogicality act. The hoof-pick in Dysart's hand symbolizes the deep irrationality of modern society. Dysart as the psychiatrist treats the children that society has believed sick in a way sacrificing their individuality. In addition, striking at heads in the dark emphasizes the notion that Dysart's practice has no reason for having no solution. He feels like a doll in this evil game that makes him pay a high price. In this moment, his social mask slips and decides to leave this world.

Conclusion

As a founder of theatre of cruelty, Artaud has a great impact on the western theatre. His dramatic techniques and thoughts are an attempt to give power to the theatre that has been lost. This power can be found in the ancient rituals, the power that forces the audience to tear down the constructions of civilization. His theatre incites the unrest primitive instinctual humanity and his ideas have the ability to provoke the audience, pulling the inactive power of their souls; involving in the show through design and staging choices.

Artaud sees that both the world and the theatre need to change, therefore, his theatre is used as a means to awaken the inactive dream images of the mind. His theatre of cruelty expresses the rigor, necessity or ruthlessness of life. Also it makes the audiences see the subconscious in which crimes, sensual obsessions, barbarism, terror, and utopian sense of life can give truthful feelings.

Shaffer's aim in *Equus* is to reveal the repressed melancholy and dark power inside man. Through his new techniques that of using long monologues, screams, cries, lighting, jumping and gestures, he can stimulate the audience's main response and make him see the defects of social morals. He uses both dramatic techniques and dramatic thoughts to attack the audience' subconscious and free his suppressed terror and suspicions. Hence, man is obliged to see his nature clearly and he will be a participant in the action and not an observer only.

The suppression of instincts and desires not only cause man's mental sickness but can turn him into a murder just like in the case of Alan. His repressed sexual desires and his uneasiness with his family push him to commit a horrible act by blinding the horses, innocent animals.

More often than not, repression whether of memories, feelings or emotions affects man's psyche greatly and leads to his complete destruction. Hence, Shaffer considers mental sickness as a psychological anomaly that both society and family determine it.

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