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عدد خاص بمؤتمر الكلية الموسوم :

التحول الرقمي في المؤسسات التربوية نحو بيئة مرنة وآمنة بتاريخ ١١ -

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

كلمة المؤتمر ومجلة الكلية...

يسرني ويشرفني ، بالأصالة عن نفسي ونيابة عن عمادة كلية التربية للبنات ، أن أرحب بكم أجمل ترحيب في مؤتمر التحول الرقمي في المؤسسات التربوية نحو بيئة تعلم مرنة وآمنة ، الذي نظمته كلية التربية للبنات الجامعة العراقية ، بالتعاون مع كلية التربية جامعة الإمام جعفر الصادق (عليه السلام) ، في إطار سعي المؤسسات إلى دعم البحث العلمي ، وتعزيز مسارات التطوير التربوي والأكاديمي .

إن هذا المؤتمر يأتي استجابة لما يشهده العالم اليوم من تحولات رقمية متسارعة ، فرضت نفسها على مختلف القطاعات ، وفي مقدمتها القطاع التربوي والتعليمي ، ولم يعد التحول الرقمي خيارا تكميليا ، بل أصبح ضرورة حتمية تقتضي إعادة النظر في أساليب التعليم ، وبناء بيئات تعلم حديثة تتسم بالمرونة ، وتضمن في الوقت نفسه الأمان الرقمي وحماية البيانات.

وانطلاقا من مسؤوليتنا الأكاديمية والعلمية ، حرصت اللجنة العلمية على تنظيم أعمال المؤتمر

ضمن أربع جلسات علمية ، ضمت أربعة محاور رئيسة ، جاءت على النحو الآتي :

المحور الأول : أثر التحول الرقمي على تطور الدراسات القرآنية والشرعية.

المحور الثاني : التحول الرقمي في تعليم اللغات.

المحور الثالث : استراتيجيات التحول الرقمي في مجال التربية وعلم النفس.

المحور الرابع : استراتيجيات التحول الرقمي في الدراسات التاريخية.

ويسعدنا أن نشير إلى أن البحوث المقبولة قدمت من جامعات متعددة ، ومن محافظات عراقية مختلفة ، مثل الأنبار وسامراء وغيرها ، الأمر الذي أسهم في خلق حالة من التفاعل العلمي البناء ، وأتاح تبادل الخبرات بين بيئات تعليمية وأكاديمية متنوعة ، بما يعزز التكامل العلمي ، ويثري النقاشات البحثية.

وفي الختام ، نقدم بخالص الشكر والتقدير إلى عمادتي كلية التربية للبنات _ الجامعة العراقية ، وكلية التربية جامعة الإمام جعفر الصادق (عليه السلام) ، وإلى اللجان التنظيمية والعلمية ، والباحثين المشاركين ، وكل من أسهم في إنجاح هذا المؤتمر . نسأل الله تعالى أن يكلل أعماله بالنجاح ، وأن تكون مخرجاته إضافة علمية فاعلة تسهم في بناء تعليم رقمي متطور ، يخدم حاضرنا ومستقبل أجيالنا.

وقد توصل المؤتمر إلى مجموعة من التوصيات ندرجها على النحو الآتي :

١. استحداث وحدات إدارية في المؤسسات الأكاديمية تحت مسمى (وحدة الحوكمة والأمن الفكري الرقمي لمراقبة جودة المحتوى الرقمي).

٢. تعزيز الوعي الأخلاقي الرقمي القويم وفق المنظور القرآني في المؤسسات التربوية والأوساط الأكاديمية من خلال المناهج الدراسية والبرامج الأكاديمية ووسائل الاعلام ودمجه بالقيم الإسلامية الحنيفة.

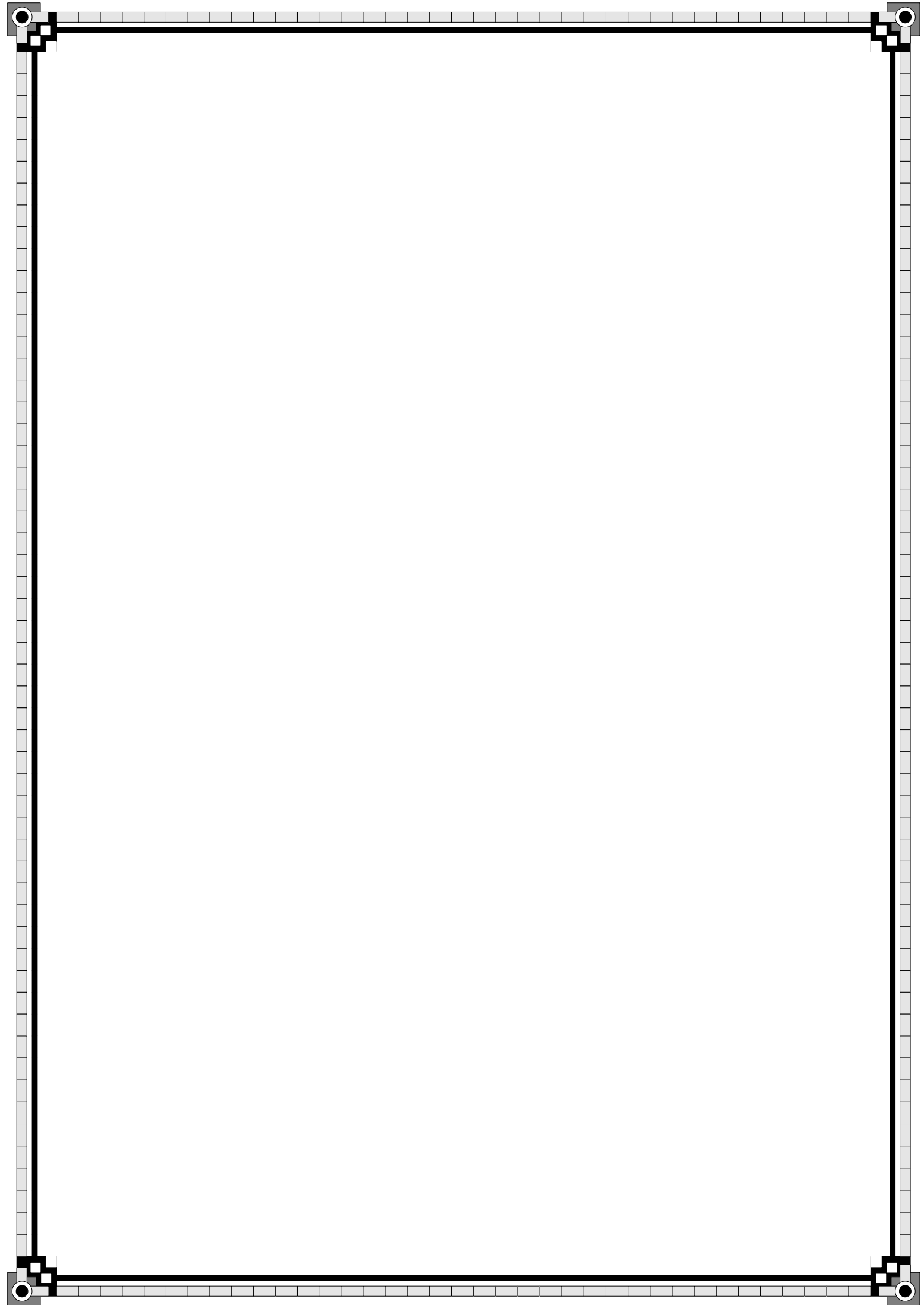
٣. تفعيل دور العلماء والدعاة والأئمة والخطباء ومدرسي المواد الشرعية في تفسير الظواهر الرقمية ونشاطاتها من منطلق قرآني ، لتقريب وتوضيح الفهم الشرعي للأجيال الرقمية.
- ٤ . تبني سياسات وطنية واضحة من قبل وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي لدعم التحول الرقمي في تعليم اللغات ، تتضمن أطرا معيارية لاعتماد المنصات الرقمية ، وضمان جودة المحتوى اللغوي الإلكتروني.
- ٥ . إعادة النظر في تصميم البرامج الأكاديمية بما يضمن توظيف تقنيات التحول الرقمي ، وتوسيع آفاق البحوث العلمية لمواكبة تطورات العصر بما يضع رؤى مستقبلية للإفادة منها في المجالات المختلفة.
- ٦ . إقرار برامج تدريب مهني مستدامة لتأهيل الموارد البشرية في المؤسسات التعليمية والأكاديمية من مدرسين وأساتذة ، موظفين ، وطلبة على الكفايات الرقمية ، واستراتيجيات التدريس الحديثة ، والاستخدام التربوي الآمن للتقنيات الرقمية ، بما يساهم في التعرف على إيجابيات التحول الرقمي ، ومخاطره ، فضلا عن رفع مستوى الأداء والإبداع بما يحقق مخرجات تعليمية كفوءة ذات جودة عالية.
- ٧ . تعزيز البنية التحتية الرقمية والأمن السيبراني في المؤسسات التعليمية والأكاديمية ، بما يضمن توفير بيئات تعلم رقمية مرنة وآمنة ، والعمل على تحديثها بما يتناسب ومتطلبات التحول الرقمي.
- ٨ . دعم البحث العلمي المشترك والشراكات الأكاديمية بين الجامعات العراقية والمؤسسات البحثية ، وتشجيع الدراسات التطبيقية التي تقيس أثر التحول الرقمي في تنمية المهارات اللغوية وتحسين مخرجات التعلم.
- ٩ . النظر إلى التحول الرقمي بوصفه فرصة للنمو ، تساعد على تحسين قدرة الموارد البشرية في المؤسسات التعليمية والأكاديمية على أداء المهام بكفاءة أكبر ، واتخاذ القرارات ، وحل المشكلات ، فضلا عن أنه فرصة لفتح آفاق جديدة ، تضمن القدرة على التكيف مع متغيرات سوق العمل.

هيئة تحرير مجلة كلية التربية للبات
كلية التربية للبات / الجامعة العراقية

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**Characters in Drama and Beyond: A Post
Humanist Reading of Hamlet and Sarah
Kane's Blasted**

**الشخصيات في الدراما وما بعد الدراما: مقارنة ما بعد إنسانية
لمسرحية (هاملت) ولمسرحية "المفجر" لسارة كين**

**Key words:charaters in Drama, A post humanist perspective,
Contemporary, Theater,Hamlet,Blasted of Sarah Kane**

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Characters in Drama and Beyond: A Post Humanist Reading of Hamlet and Sarah Kane's Blasted

Abstract

The study investigates the essence of humanity, particularly what characters in drama & theatre disclose about the human condition. It examines the implications of discussing dramatic character, particularly how the many manifestations of humanity illuminate dramatic character and how these forms engage with critical methodologies pertaining to character. The study has a dual emphasis; yet, the human and dramatic elements are, within the scope of my project, significantly intertwined and mutually illuminating. One objective of this study is to restore the dramatic character. This process aims to restore humanist subjectivity, although in a form altered by hybrid frameworks of existence and identity shaped by posthumanist discourse. This framework allows people to be seen as both makers and created concurrently. The study theory involved in conversations that elucidate the post/humanist framework supporting this research assertions about identity, subjectivity, and contemporary dramatic character. The study asserts that it is erroneous to see the contemporary human only through a liberal humanism lens and utilises Donna Haraway's cyborg concept to illustrate and advocate for its ambiguous post/humanist identity. This study argues for an alternative post/humanist perspective on modern subjectivity by demonstrating that the portrayal of liberal humanist subjectivity as the dominant form of the modern age may be exaggerated. The study advocates for a post/humanist approach to evaluating dramatic characters, seeing them as a composition of natural and cultural elements. The study presents case analyses of the characters from Shakespeare's Hamlet (approximately 1599-1601), and Sarah Kane's Blasted (1995). Examining these two distinct interpretations of contemporary dramatic characters, thorough studies uncover evolving forms and identities within a world—both dramatic and actual—that shapes character while simultaneously being shaped by it.

الخلاصة:

يستكشف البحث معنى أن تكون إنساناً؛ وتحديداً ما تكشفه الشخصيات في الدراما والمسرح عن معنى أن تكون إنساناً. كما يستكشف معنى الحديث عن الشخصية الدرامية في المسرح؛ وتحديداً ما تكشفه أشكال الإنسان المختلفة عن الشخصية الدرامية، وكيف تتفاعل هذه الأشكال مع المناهج النقدية للشخصية. لذا، يركز البحث على محورين، وهما الشخصيتين الإنسانية والدرامية، في سياق مشروع موحد، وهما متشابهتان ومستنيرتان لبعضهما البعض. أحد أهداف هذا البحث هو إعادة تأهيل الشخصية الدرامية. بحيث يعمل على إعادة تأهيل الذاتية الإنسانية وإن كانت من نوع مُعدّل بهياكل هجينة للوجود والهوية، مستلهمة من خطاب ما بعد الإنسانية. يرى الباحث أن هذه البنية تُمكن من تصور البشر كمبدعين ووسائل للابداع في آن واحد. يتناول البحث نظرياً

مناقشات تُقدم إطار ما بعد الإنسانية الذي يدعم حجج هذا البحث حول الهوية والذاتية والشخصية الدرامية الحديثة في المسرح الحديث . يدّعي البحث أن النظر إلى الإنسان المعاصر من منظور إنساني ليبرالي بحت هو خطأ، ويستخدم نموذج دونا هارواي للسايبورغ للكشف عن شكله ما بعد الإنساني غير المحدد والدفاع عنه. ويدعم البحث سردية ما بعد الإنساني البديلة للذاتية الحديثة، كاشفاً أن تصوير الذات الإنسانية الليبرالية كشكل أرثوذكسي للعصر الحديث ربما يكون مبالغاً فيه. ويدعو البحث إلى منهج ما بعد إنساني لتحليل الشخصية الدرامية، ينظر إليها كبنية من أجزاء طبيعية وثقافية. يقدم البحث دراسات حالة لشخصيات مسرحية هاملت لشكسبير (حوالي ١٥٩٩-١٦٠١)، ومسرحية "بلاستيد" لسارة كين (١٩٩٥). بالتركيز على هاتين المسرحيتين والتي فيها من الشخصيات الدرامية الحديثة، تكشف التحليلات التفصيلية عن أشكال وهويات في طور التكوين في عالم - درامي وواقعي - يُشكل الشخصية، ويتشكل بدوره من خلال الشخصية.

1. Introduction

The study investigates the essence of humanity, particularly what characters in drama and theatre disclose about the human condition. It examines the implications of discussing dramatic character, particularly how the many manifestations of humanity illuminate dramatic character and how these forms engage with critical methodologies pertaining to character (Morton, 1989:166).

The research, thus, has a dual focus; nonetheless, the human and dramatic elements are, within the scope of my study, significantly intertwined and mutually illuminating. One of the research's claims is that explicitly linking the theory of humanity with that of character functions allows for a more exact understanding of character (Majerek, 2024:179).

This thesis examines representations of humanity in theatre and the writings of philosophers, dramatic commentators, theorists, cultural critics, historians, and scientists from the modern era, aiming to restore humanist subjectivity while advocating for the political significance of self-determination concerning the human condition. This restoration of humanist subjectivity also serves to restore dramatic character, which is another objective of the study. Nonetheless, the humanistic paradigm proposed herein diverges from the liberal humanist conception of subjectivity; rather, it is shaped by posthumanist discourse (Adler & Schlueter, 1980:272).

2. A Post/Humanist Approach

Posthumanism presents itself as a modern philosophy, asserting that the boundaries between humans and their nonhuman counterparts, particularly technology, have just lately been transgressed. Posthumanist thinkers, like N. Katherine Hayles, Haraway, and Robert Pepperell, assert that the distinguishing boundaries between humans and their conventional counterparts have just lately become unstable. The individual now

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experiences pressure, seen as having already transitioned to, or as soon to transition to, a posthuman state (Stern, 1979:79). This perspective is, however, unconvincing. Numerous contemporary plays are, undoubtedly, creations of twenty-first century contemporary writing (Heddatron and Dear's *Frankenstein*). Nonetheless, *R. U. R.* is ninety years old, but the play remains as engaged in examining the human-machine boundary and sensitive to the pressures exerted on that boundary by advancements in science and technology, akin to subsequent plays. Considering the origin of the play *Frankenstein*, derived from Shelley's almost two-hundred-year-old book (Hutchison, 2015:60). It becomes challenging to assert that posthumanist notions of identity and existence are exclusively innovative and confined to late twentieth-century technology. This research contends that humanity is not on the verge of transforming into machines; rather, it posits that, when considering the perspectives of figures such as the French physician and philosopher Julien Offray de la Mettrie (1709-1751), it becomes apparent that a historical narrative of humanity conceived as, and perpetually existing as, a machine is already established. La Mettrie posits that humans are Man-machines, composed of physical processes that are causally interconnected, including mental actions (Trojanowska, 2005:94).

In Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet* alludes to being a machine in a letter to Ophelia, dating back to the early seventeenth century. The notion that humans are not inherently ontologically 'hygienic' is neither novel nor especially exciting. This does not imply that technological advancement lacks implications for humanity; it undoubtedly does, as humans are systematically interconnected with and shaped by technology (Ziółkowski, 2005:261).

Thus, altering technology results in changes to human behaviour, communication, cognition, memory, imagination, and more. This study asserts that technological advancements have influenced the human form since the advent of clothing and spoken language. The stance taken here denies humanity any claims of innate validity or innocence. Humans have never been fundamentally natural entities, hence they cannot succumb to cultural or artificial degradation (Biden, 2016:153).

2.1 Dramatic Character And Posthumanism Critics

This study asserts that the hybrid nature and temporary structure of the posthuman originate from Renaissance humanism, namely in the writings of Pico della Mirandola as well as Juan Luis Vives. This argument, stemming from its genesis, presents a counter perspective to the common narrative of the fall and demise of the liberal humanist subject, as articulated by posthumanist pundits and dramatic characters. This study identifies a Renaissance humanist subject that is notably protean and hybrid

in nature, and far less fixed than the portrayal of the liberal humanitarian subject depicted by Antihumanists (Dunne-Howrie, 2023:451).

Consequently, this research narrative deviates from the traditional framework that suggests an ontological transition from human agent to inhuman product regarding the human and character. Instead, it posits that the humanist accountable and character have been considered post/humanist since Shakespeare's Hamlet (Okagbue, 2002:81).

This is an embodying ontological multiplicity paradoxical as it may seem—comprising physical and cultural components that function in a systemic and causally coherent manner, while simultaneously allowing for self-determination and free will. This post/humanist character is situated inside the contemporary character, which is characterised by its distinctiveness, having been portrayed by Shakespeare as alive and, thus, complicated and contradictory. This figure functions as an agency while also disclosing itself as a product from its nonhuman counterparts (Sassen, 2015:179).

2.2 Posthumanist Views of Humanism

Cary Wolfe starts his book, "What is Posthumanism?" in (2010), with detailing his Google searches for 'humanism' and 'posthumanism' (xi); he notes that the first phrase, 'humanism', produced 3,840,000 results, whilst the latter, 'posthumanism', provided a mere 60,200. Wolfe next indicates that his 'cursory examination' seemingly uncovers 'more consensus over humanism than posthumanism,' before claiming that 'most definitions of humanism resemble the following one from Wikipedia.' (Weimann, 2022:23).

This description of the humanist subject suggests a universal human nature that is logically based, together with an ability for self-determination & moral judgement. Humanism's repudiation of the supernatural (i.e., angels, monsters, and deities; in essence, any entity that cannot be logically or empirically substantiated) and its pursuit of truth serve to underscore the human faculties of reason and moral discernment as attributes that are fundamental, distinctive, and enduring (Honnacker, 2020:84).

The concluding sentence implies that solutions to human cultural and social problems must be universal, as the subject's specific material as well as historical context does not affect her form and actions. Wolfe characterises this account of humanism as largely definitive of a seemingly uniform perspective; in contrast, he asserts that posthumanism 'generates different and even irreconcilable definitions,' thereby indicating the necessity of Wolfe's book, which aims to elucidate the topic further (Druker, 2009:131).

The aforementioned humanist subject is a prevalent theme in posthumanist discourse, characterised as fundamentally free, stable, rational, autonomous (existing independently and prior to society), and

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wholly self-determining. Posthumanism positions itself in relation to this issue as it develops its many feminist and morally driven theories & analyses, which significantly draw upon the radical and critical insights of its anti-humanist forebears (Kutovyi, 2024:191).

2.3 The Liberal Humanist Subject's Rationality

A philosophical model of consciousness that Parker-Starbuck correctly calls a 'mind-body split' allows the liberal humanist liable to rationalise some humans into non- or marginalised human status as he pursues vainglorious power and immortality. Mind characterises humans in this separation. Hayles explains that 'only because the body is not linked with the self' can the liberal subject claim its famed universality, a self whose identity 'depends on eliminating signs of physical diversity, including sex, race, and ethnicity'. Neil Badmington calls this mind-body divide Cartesian. Descartes was one of 'the major builders of humanism', according to Badmington (Park, 2022:178).

3. Modern Dramatic Character

Contemporary characters are often compared to those in Shakespeare's works, especially Hamlet. Fuchs delineates modern character by contrasting Shakespeare's dramatic figures with their Aristotelian counterparts: the actions of 'the great Greek tragic roles [...] do not seem directly rooted in the discernible contexts of emotional and material existence,' whereas Shakespeare's characters, in contrast, 'appear to the reader/spectator to inhabit both the dramatic narrative that animates them and the world beyond it.' (Klein, 2009:234).

Fuchs suggests that Shakespeare's characters possess psychological realism and autonomy, allowing them to be conceived as living outside the confines and specifics of the play's universe. Fuchs asserts that thinkers from the seventeenth century onwards saw Shakespeare's figures as embodying a 'inwardness for character' (Fuchs 25), which effectively set the standard for contemporary character development (Han, 2011:82).

According to John Lee, Hamlet distinctly defines the contemporary conception of character, with the Prince emerging by the early nineteenth century as the quintessential representation of what "character" signifies. Margreta de Grazia compellingly explains the rationale for Hamlet's role as a central figure in the increasing critique of Shakespeare and, by extension, contemporary character in her work, *Hamlet without Hamlet* (Miller, 2000:93).

This author sees the discourse on character as situated within the broader cultural struggle to uphold the concept of 'the contemporary' in opposition to the classical. In this context, de Grazia situates Shakespeare, namely Hamlet, inside a discourse aimed at defining Englishness and

modernity at an era when value was traditionally associated with classical elements (Mordi, 2020:26).

While Aristotle's aesthetics prevailed in dramatic theory by emphasising the significance of narrative, Shakespeare's theatre was thereafter recognised and championed for the superiority of its characters. De Grazia asserts that the proponents of modernity and Shakespeare aimed to delineate their subjects by contrasting them with classical perspectives, resulting in the emergence of alternative standards for modern drama, whereby, for instance, '[t]he predominant criterion of emotive appeal distinctly favours Hamlet.' (Hamilton, 2024:19).

Whereas a classical figure like Orestes serves just as a story device, Hamlet is a fully realised character—indeed, an individual in his own right—eliciting sympathy from readers and viewers alike. The reader's and audience's focus transitions from the importance of events to the perceptions and experiences of realistic people who are said to be evolving into self-determining (humanist) beings (Pablé, 2017:22).

3.1 The Archetype of Modern Character

Critics often allude to an individual with a unique interiority or personality when identifying contemporary character. The character of Hamlet, an icon of the contemporary character, has for ages represented the elusive prize at the culmination of character evaluation. The issue 'Who is Hamlet?' has been posed and addressed, both explicitly and implicitly, by many scholars, critics, performers, and directors throughout history and beyond (Bibi et al., 2021:281).

The inquiry presupposes that Hamlet embodies certain characteristics and attributes. It is presumed that there exists a subjective experience associated with being Hamlet. The exploration of Hamlet and the examination of Shakespearean characters as a uniquely contemporary phenomenon is often attributed to Margaret Cavendish. In 1664, Cavendish published a compilation of predominantly fictional letters, which featured an epistolary essay defending Shakespeare, wherein she preempted themes that would later dominate eighteenth- as well as nineteenth-century criticism by asserting that Shakespeare's "characters" are the source of his plays' merit (Schrader, 2016:78).

This belief that play should ideally and feasibly "express [persons] to the Life" persisted in shaping reactions to Shakespeare in England as well as continental Europe for the subsequent 250 years. Yachnin and Slights argue that any justification of Shakespearean characters presupposes that these characters be optimally recognised as mimetic representations of fictitious individuals (Chadwick, 2023:113).

Shakespeare's capacity or incapacity to develop characters—'dramatic figures with a feeling of interiority or inner life'—is seen as fundamental to the assessment of his overall accomplishment. Lee provides an additional

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perspective on the historical debate around contemporary character, linking it to Shakespearean criticism, particularly that of Hamlet, and asserting that Shakespeare's characters are most distinctly differentiated from those of other playwrights (Sá et al., 2024:189).

Lee contributes to this discourse by asserting that human nature and personality are intrinsically linked to the debate around the defence of Shakespearean as well as neoclassical character. Neoclassicists assert that character must be consistent, logical, and socially archetypal about identity. The faction advocating for this perspective on character consisted of Shakespeare's critics who favoured the works of, for instance, Ben Jonson. Thomas Rymer was an early proponent of the neoclassical character model (Delgado-García, 2015:118).

3.2 Opposing Set of Voices Shakespeare's Defenders

A contrasting group of advocates for Shakespeare posits a conception of humanity that they contend is more authentic and unique, best shown in the figure of Hamlet, whom they see as Shakespeare's most 'individual' invention. John Dryden, for instance, inscribed prepared notes for a defence on the blank sheets at the beginning and conclusion of the copy of *The Tragic stories of the Last Age* that Rymer had provided him (Bensussen, 2012:263).

In these remarks, Dryden contends that aspects outside narrative should be considered in the assessment of plays, particularly the portrayal of characters: 'For the Characters, there are neither nearly as numerous nor so diverse in Sophocles and Euripides, as in Shakespeare and Fletcher.' For Dryden, as for Cavendish, 'character' served as the criterion for initiating a defence of Shakespeare, an aspect in which Shakespeare and Fletcher surpassed the ancients (Geddes, 2021:168).

Dryden argues that Rymer misinterprets character: "A character, which differentiates one individual from another, cannot be presumed to consist solely of a singular virtue, vice, or passion; rather, it is a synthesis of qualities that are not contradictory within the same individual: thus, one person may be both generous and courageous, but not generous and greedy." A more distinctive and intricate personality is suggested here, as Dryden differentiates his characterisation from Rymer's neoclassical perspective (ChoSookHee, 2018:259)

Nevertheless, based on the data presented by Lee, it seems that from the beginning of the character discussion, the presumption of human nature that underlies critical discourse was one of coherence. Shakespeare's realistic characters, distinct from classical archetypes due to their unique amalgamation of virtues, vices, and emotions, yet adhered to neoclassical conventions in theatrical dialogue (Curran, 2024:139). Shakespearean characters have always been associated with both real and fictional

individuals, and since Dryden, they have been conceptualised as comprising various qualities and attributes (vices, virtues, and passions), which are organised into constellations that exhibit varying degrees of harmony (Parkes, 2021:169).

3.3 Post/humanist Approach to Character

This research has articulated the post/humanist framework of contemporary dramatic character throughout this chapter and earlier ones, both explicitly and implicitly, frequently within critiques of significant traditional methodologies regarding dramatic character. Character is a malleable construct and is, thus, defined in horizontal terms, which imply that 'character change' is feasible or even probable during the duration of a play. As a character's shape is determined by the interplay of its components, altering any portion of this system inevitably changes the whole, although perhaps in subtle ways. The post/humanist perspective acknowledges contradictions, inconsistencies, and transformations in the intricate composition of this character's realistic dramatic representation (Adler & Schlueter, 1980:273).

The self and character are recognised as indeterminate and dynamic systems lacking autonomous, fixed, or centralised subjectivities. Ambiguities are acknowledged, rather than disregarded or simplified, as reflective of life; no original, stable, or definitive character is pursued, as such an entity is not believed to exist. This stands in stark contrast to the humanist approach delineated by Lee in his concept of the 'gap technique', which, in its pursuit of a conclusive response to the question, 'Who is Hamlet?', overlooks contradictions by presupposing a natural and independent essentialism of character. This does not imply that a posthumanism approach to character (Bibi et al., 2021:284).

3.4 Dynamically Intricate Interplay in The Reader's Imagination.

The post/humanist approach holds that character emerges complexly and dynamically from the interplay of its numerous aspects, which include text, reality, reader (and spectator) mind, and actor performance. None of the Hamlets are really unique or independent; all are specific and partial: Hamlet may be a result of cohesive folio and quarto editions of the play, but his distinctive forms and dramatic character originate in his re-memberment in readers' and critics' imaginations and performance situations (ChoSookHee, 2018:263)

This theory views modern character, which originated in Shakespeare's theatre, as a genuine and alive storyworld participant. As such, contemporary theatrical character portrays a conscious actor capable of purposeful action in the world. This research approaches dramatic character as an actual component of the material world as well as a realistic

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and cohesive creature with whom readers and viewers connect, following Yachnin and Slight's New Character Criticism (Dunne-Howrie, 2023:451).

Thus, character appears to create conversation and action. Thus, the conventional (humanist) question of dramatic character discourse, "Who is Hamlet?" remains valid, but it may be more accurately and usefully rewritten as, "Who is this Hamlet?" to "relocate Hamlet as an object of a particular study, framed by a particular performance, context, or set of objectives" (Han, 2011:85).

4. Moving Beyond Character in Sarah Kane's Dramatic Worlds

Sarah Kane's oeuvre is distinguished by its visceral intensity, stark honesty, and relentless examination of human pain, despair, and existential torment. Her works—such as "Blasted (1995), Phaedra's Love, Cleansed, Crave, and 4.48 Psychosis" are profoundly confronting, amalgamating severe violence, lyrical poetry, and fragmented storylines to reveal psychological and emotional distress. Kane's works are impactful, unsettling, and deeply evocative, establishing her as a pivotal playwright of late 20th-century theatre (Ablett, 2020:128).

4.1 Kane's Human Characters

Kane critiques the reduction of individuals into rigid, culturally conventional identities and positions, as previously noted. Aston's elucidation of Ian's (Kane's first play *Blasted*) narrative of Samantha Scrase illuminates the ideological ramifications of such representations of individuals. Ian characterises and situates Samantha as a specific type of individual who embodies, by virtue of her nature (depicted as a youthful, vivacious, and attractive woman), a particular role (victim), analogous to how the murderer is identified, sensationalised, and subdued by his classification as a monstrous entity (Tashkenov, 2022:338).

Aston notes that such treatments effectively create a safe separation between individuals and events by portraying them as 'other.' Kane's objective, in contrast, is consistently to immerse the viewer in the presence of the monster and the ensuing terror, reminding us that the 'other' and the 'elsewhere' are, to some degree, only conventional illusions we construct to make the world more comprehensible and secure. Indeed, as Kane articulates, the monster and the sufferer reside inside.

The characters in Kane's *Blasted* — Ian, Cate, as well as the Soldier — are unexpected and paradoxical. Cate is a naïve 21-year-old thumb-sucker that stutters when anxious; however, she exhibits resilience when she consistently confronts Ian and employs strategic intelligence to manipulate him into an attraction that culminates in her biting his penis with considerable force. The Soldier, initially characterised by Kane as an animalistic figure through his actions of urinating on pillows and subsequently raping Ian.

Ultimately reveals his capacity for love, connection, and anguish when he speaks of his deceased girlfriend, Col, and through his portrayal of 'smelling Ian's hair' and 'crying his heart out' during the act of rape itself. Ian, arguably the most stereotypical of the three characters, is a bigoted, alcoholic, a middle-aged divorcee and the reporter whose self-centred arrogance is apparent from his initial line: 'I've shat in better places than this.' Nevertheless, he is depicted as occasionally exhibiting unexpected moments of care and compassion towards Cate, despite his continual abuse of her.

4.2 Identities Do Not Fix People

Moreover, in regard to the political dimensions of her plays and the dramaturgy of character, it is significant that these people are malleable and adjust to their surroundings, compelling them into novel positions and relationships. Kane demonstrates that identities are not immutable and are shaped by cultural contexts; hence, altering the environment also changes individuals' identities, roles, as well as values. The significance of identity is emphasised by the extraordinary nature of the play's environment, which imposes heightened demands on the characters as they endeavour, as Greig notes, to preserve their identities, customary traits, relationships, and roles. *Blasted* propels us from the cosy confines of a hotel bedroom into a disorienting and terrifying war zone, altering relationships, roles, and values. eighty-five (Soncini, Sara, 2019:128).

This is a challenging environment that explores the influences on Ian and Cate, who begin *Blasted* in culturally recognisable roles as aspiring lover and unwilling love-object, before transitioning to rapist and victim, respectively, ultimately concluding the play with markedly different identities and roles. Ian, who previously portrayed the abuser towards Cate in the first segment of the play, is compelled to assume the position of an unwilling victim as soon as he is raped by the Soldier, who thereafter adopts Ian's former role as the abuser.

Ian perishes but, paradoxically, persists in a state of 'living,' retaining a palpable, corporeal presence onstage that serves to transform the bedroom, which devolved into a battleground, into what may be seen as a metaphysically constructed hell. Ambiguously, despite his seeming confinement in 'hell' and his resultant helplessness due to blindness, he is nourished by Cate⁸⁶, who exemplifies a poignant and optimistic act of compassion via this gesture. Cate, previously an unwilling victim of Ian's sexual advances and subsequent rape in the initial scenes of the play, has now assumed the role of victim to procure sustenance from the soldiers, while simultaneously embodying the characteristics of a courageous and resilient survivor, as well as a magnanimous benefactor to the diminished Ian (Iżykowska, 2018:94).

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According to Kane, these characters are human because they may change to fit their surroundings and, in doing so, develop into many types of humans who perform various roles. Individuals and characteristics are not static; attributes such as eye colour, accent, or birthplace do not provide any fundamentally essential insights about them, since they are intrinsically linked to their evolving circumstances and are therefore subject to change. Does this potential for adaptation imply that these figures, rather than embodying liberal humanist subjects, are fundamentally constructed as materialist objects, akin to some types of animals? This seems to be the case for many critics, including Waddington, Iball, and Ken Urban (Haydon, 2020:150).

4.3 Kane's Characters: Fundamentally, Merely Animals

By the conclusion of the play, Ian is often characterised as having transformed into an animal (see to the analyses of Urban and Iball) or as having been reduced to a physically constituted being, a postmodernist (void) subject. The human Ian, as a psychologically formed sovereign agent, is seen as having been reduced, like to Lear on the moor, to his fundamental essence and hence, according to these interpretations, to a condition that is sub- or inhuman. Is this the approach Kane is using in her handling of Ian? Has Kane converted Ian from a socially recognised person agent into a natural species of animal? This is the situation as indicated by Waddington, as previously shown in the debate. Waddington states:

“The stage directions towards the end of the final scene gradually take precedence over dialogue and centre increasingly on bodily functions: ‘masturbating’; ‘strangling himself with his bare hands’; ‘shitting’; laughing hysterically’; ‘having a nightmare’” (page: 143).

This compilation of stage directions illustrating Ian's bestial nature has, over time, become a well-known theme. These are arresting graphic representations, jarring and repugnant, poignant and darkly humorous - all depicting Ian executing fundamental physiological processes and behaviours. This series of visual snapshots suggests that the boundary separating the security and civility of peacetime Britain from the tumultuous violence of civil war is tenuous and can be breached unexpectedly (Brusberg-Kiermeier, 2020:248).

Underlying this concept is the more basic notion that the barrier between the civilised, social person and the primal, instinctual human-animal is equally tenuous. The cultural dimension of humanity is shown in this story as only a veneer, concealing individuals who are really, at their core, simply animals. Iball's nuanced analysis, employing a phenomenological perspective, suggests this view and cites King Lear to

express Ian's intrinsic nature: "Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, fork'd animal as thou" art.

Iball asserts that, at the conclusion of the play, it is the undignified and uncivilised body of Ian that has ultimately assumed prominence. Furthermore, Iball contends that the corporeal essence of Ian's character is apparent from the outset of the play, and in presenting this argument, she implicitly challenges the traditional narrative of character transformation from sovereign identity to a natural, predetermined outcome.

One need only consider Ian's initial action in the play, which involves pouring and consuming a gin, to validate Iball's assertion; Ian's subsequent line, 'I stink,' appears early in the text, and within the second page, stage directions depict him as 'coughing terribly in the bathroom.' In summary, Ian's physique and physical attributes are shown from the very beginning of the play.

By the conclusion of the play, his physical deterioration is no longer relegated to the background; instead, Ian's corporeal state is prominently highlighted as 'his naked body is subjected to scrutiny, violent penetration, and visible mutilation.' Iball indicates that any anticipation of disregarding or relegating the corporeal aspect of human existence, symbolised by Blasted's en-suite bathroom—where bodily functions and hygiene are suggested in the initial scenes yet situated out of view—is ultimately revealed, as the play prominently foregrounds the abject body.

Iball's discourse suggests that Ian ultimately reverts to the 'poor, naked, fork'd animal' he has always really been. While Jack Tinker characterises the characters' actions as 'bestiality' (Daily Mail), Iball proposes, in her intriguing phenomenological analysis, the fundamentally inherent essence of humanity. The pictures referenced by Iball, Urban, and Waddington when designating Ian as an animal are those enumerated in scene five, located at the conclusion of the play, depicting him in a diminished condition and setting, devoid of companionship, sustenance, and comfort (Saunders, 2010:199).

They see Ian as blind and vulnerable; engaging in masturbation; attempting, but failing, to smother himself; defecating; weeping; laughing; experiencing a nightmare; seeking solace; consuming an infant; and ultimately perishing. The visuals are non-verbal and visual, depicting the allegedly fundamental human conditions, impulses, and feelings of a corporeal being devoid of any cultural supports, comforts, and instruments. Is Ian accurately described as a 'poor, naked, forked animal'? Is this really the image Kane intends to convey to us?

4.4 The Strange Actions of The Fictional Character

We need to examine just a few directions to see that the situation is not as simple as it is often perceived in Kane's discourse. Indeed, Ian defecates; yet, the subsequent stage direction states: 'And then attempting

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to mop it up with newspaper.' Ian is shown as laughing 'hysterically' (ibid). Ian's laughing, seemingly unprovoked, undoubtedly stems from a certain, maybe sardonic, self-awareness of his circumstances, potentially intertwined with feelings of despair, exhaustion, or anger. In summary, Ian laughs in spite of, because to, or amongst his misery, demonstrating an aptitude for self-objectivity. It is also said that Ian attempts suicide by strangling himself with his own hands, which, although darkly humorous, further illustrates a highly self-aware and seemingly self-directed action.

Ultimately, there exists the often referenced act of extreme savagery: the consumption of a deceased infant. What is less often documented, however, is the subsequent action: 'He replaces the remains in the baby's blanket and returns the bundle to the hole.' Having presumably reached the lowest possible point, as indicated by the subsequent stage direction, 'He dies with relief'—even this ultimate, natural act is framed in a highly self-aware manner—Ian rewraps the baby in the blanket and reinterrers it, thereby demonstrating a capacity for compassion. Although it is a minor and easily disregarded gesture of consideration, it is not accidental nor insignificant.

Ian's motive for re-wrapping the infant in its blanket and re-burying it is rather ambiguous, however it presumably stems from shame and/or a sense of empathy. This suggests that culturally imprinted values have been, or are, ingrained in his character and behavioural framework. Indeed, an examination of the play's concluding lines substantiates the perspective that Kane's protagonists, Ian and Cate, articulate a conception of humanity that is intricately intertwined with both cultural and natural elements. Ian's initial utterance in the play highlights fundamental bodily functions: 'I've shat in better places than this,' while his concluding words, 'Thank you' (page: 61), adhere to a cultural code of civility, recognising the kindness and generosity extended to him by Cate.

Conclusion

We draw the conclusion that the post-humanist perspective asks, "What is the human being?" and, by giving characters more agency (inside and outside the play), it promotes new ways of looking at ourselves and the world. This is especially relevant in a future where life-creating technology is readily available. We brought out After critiquing the humanist and postmodernist traditions as well as their respective approaches to the topic, I will first state my case for the term's revival in the fields of theatre and performance studies: character is an essential, if not an essential, component of drama. Secondly, I think it is important to understand and critique current dramatic characters as 'realistic' human beings because that is what they are: psychologically complicated agents in the world.

I contend that this kind of contemporary personality may be adequately and appropriately examined via a post-humanist lens: Viewing

character as an interconnected system of various elements, including text, performance, audience, linguistically normative presumptions and knowledges, and more, the post-humanist perspective highlights the interconnectedness of dramatic character with its constituent parts and uses them as the focal point for character analysis. On the other hand, post-humanists acknowledge that human dramatic character is fundamentally subjective and takes shape in particular instantiations, such as an actor's performance or a reader's thinking. Hamlet does not exist in and of himself; what exists are Hamlets in certain recollections that are based on particular historical contexts.

The use of a post-humanist perspective on Sarah Kane's dramatic worlds helps to illuminate Kane's political stance. When it comes to individuals and the world, Kane's art stubbornly rejects the conventional dichotomy. In light of Kane's rejection of clear boundaries and fixed identities, I contend that interpreting her work via the traditional lenses of postmodernism or liberal humanism serves to unfairly categorise people as either cultural products or free agents. This duality of thought and knowledge is what the writer is fighting against. Thus, I show that Kane's complicated character construction serves a political purpose to encourage a stronger feeling of personal responsibility for one's actions, one's place in the world, and one's own character development by taking a post-humanist stance in analysing her characters. This method also opens up her plays in a more thorough and accurate way. By avoiding the categories of "elsewhere" and "other," Kane cautions that we should all consider our own multifaceted identities and environments to see if the monster, in its more everyday but nevertheless disturbing form, may be hiding inside. Lastly, regarding Kane's *Blasted*, I think it is better to ask Ian and Cate what they are rather than who they are when trying to understand their character. This is because looking at their constitution and their beliefs about it can show us who they are, what they believe in, and how they can change themselves and the world.

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