



Sarah Kane's Theatre of Psychic Life

Theatre, Thought and Mental Suffering

Leah Sidi

"Sarah Kane's *Theatre of Psychic Life* is an incisive and eloquent account of the necessity of Kane, the necessity of theatre, and the necessity of interdependence. Sidi's book offers a persuasive argument for the fecundity of desolation." *anna harpin, Head of Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Warwick, UK*

"Though Sarah Kane's work is steeped in despair, this fascinating and compassionate book offers hope in its vision of her theatre as a place where our darkest and most intensely personal experiences are transformed into an investigation into the political and psychological landscape of our society." *Professor of Contemporary Theatre, Royal Holloway University of London, UK*

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Sarah Kane was one of the landmark playwrights of 1990s Britain, her influence being felt across UK and European theatre. This is the first book to focus exclusively on Kane's unique approach to mind and mental health. It offers an important re-evaluation of her oeuvre, revealing the relationship between theatre and mind which lies at the heart of her theatrical project.

Drawing on performance theory, psychoanalysis and neuroscience, this book argues that Kane's innovations generate a 'dramaturgy of psychic life', which re-shapes the encounter between stage and audience. It uses previously unseen archival material and contemporary productions to uncover the mechanics of this innovative theatre practice.

Through a radically open-ended approach to dramaturgy, Kane's works offer urgent insights into mental suffering that take us beyond traditional discourses of empathy and mental health and into a profound rethinking of theatre as a mode of thought. As such, her theatre can help us to understand debates about mental suffering today.

Leah Sidi is Lecturer in Health Humanities at University College London, UK. Her research focus is on contemporary theatre and mental health, with a special focus on feminist theatre and psychoanalysis. She has been the recipient of the Feminist Review Archive Award and a Wellcome/ISSF postdoctoral award at Birkbeck, University of London, UK. She has published in *Performance Research* and is a regular contributor to the Institute for Medical Humanities' *The Polyphony*.

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