

Postdramatic Aspects of Mark Ravenhill's *Faust is Dead and Pool* (*No Water*)^{*}

Lecturer Dr. Mesut GÜNENÇ¹
Assist.Prof. Dr. Ahmet Gökhan BİÇER²

ABSTRACT

This study highlights new tendencies in the contemporary theatre of Ravenhill's distinctive plays, which apply postdramatic aspects of time, space, body and media related to Hans Thies Lehmann's work, Postdramatic Theatre (2006). Introducing the aspects of postdramatic theatre, this paper examines how Mark Ravenhill's plays can be adopted to postdramatic conditions in contemporary theatre and how these aspects create time inconsistency, unspecified space, active bodies and mediatized culture. Considering these aspects, this paper analyses Mark Ravenhill's plays Faust is Dead (1997) and Pool (No Water) (2006) to show how these aspects change the form and understanding of the plays. A detailed analysis, especially using postdramatic aspects of body and media, about Faust is Dead and Pool (No Water) is carried out in this paper. This analysis opposes traditional aspects in dramatic theatre of the use of non dramatical texts, performance, active body and spectators. With these distinctive plays Mark Ravenhill deconstructs conventional rules, text, language and characters.

Keywords: Postdramatic Theatre, Mark Ravenhill, Faust is Dead, Pool (No Water), Contemporary British Drama.

Mark Ravenhill'in *Faust Is Dead Ve Pool (No Water)* Oyunlarının Postdramatik Özellikleri

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Hans Thies Lehmann'ın eseri Postdramatik Tiyatro (2006) içerisinde yer alan zaman, mekan, beden ve medya özelliklerine başvurarak Ravenhill'in aykırı oyunlarının çağdaş tiyatrodaki yeni eğilimleri vurgular. Postdramatik tiyatro özelliklerini önceleyerek Mark Ravenhill'in oyunlarının çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosu kapsamında

^{*} Substantial parts of this article are borrowed from a chapter of the first author's PhD thesis which is re-interpreted in this article with additional theoretical and argumentative frames of reference

¹ Adnan Menderes University, Faculty of Science and Letters, Department of English Language and Literature, mesut.gunenc@gmail.com.

² Celal Bayar University, Faculty of Science and Letters, Department of English Language and Literature, agokhanbicer@hotmail.com.

postdramatik koşullara nasıl adapte olabildiğini ve bu özelliklerin zaman uyumsuzluğunu, belirsiz uzamı, aktif bedenleri ve medyalaşmış kültürü nasıl yarattığını araştırır. Bu özellikler dikkate alınarak bu makale biçimin ve oyunların genel anlayışının nasıl değiştiğini göstermek için Mark Ravenhill'in *Faust is Dead* (1997) ve *Pool (No Water)* (2006) oyunlarını analiz eder. Bu çalışmada, özellikle beden ve medyanın postdramatik özellikleri kullanılarak *Faust is Dead* ve *Pool (No Water)* oyunları ile ilgili detaylı bir analiz yapılır. Bu analiz, dramatik olmayan metinlerin, performansın, aktif beden ve seyirci kavramlarını kullanmasıyla geleneksel dramatik tiyatro yapısına karşı çıkar. Bu özgün oyunlarla Mark Ravenhill geleneksel kuralları, metni, dil ve karakterleri yapı bozumuna uğratır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Postdramatik Tiyatro, Mark Ravenhill, *Faust is Dead*, *Pool (No Water)*, Çağdaş İngiliz Tiyatrosu.

I.Reflections of Postdramatic Aspects

Alongside postdramatical signs and traits, Hans Thies Lehmann analyzes postdramatic aspects of time, space, body and media in his work. Comparable to dramatic theatre, the aspect of time is analyzed in postdramatic theatre but the analysis of time in postdramatic theatre is treated differently. While unity of time, homogenous and lineal time are important in dramatic theatre, postdramatic theatre deconstructs these concepts and offers various, unclear, blurred, disorderly, and irrelevant time periods. The deconstruction of time refers to deconstruction of character, space and representation. This deconstruction creates time inconsistencies; the spectators are deliberately confused about the concept of time. Like aspect of time, space in postdramatic theatre gains autonomy and triggers changes. In postdramatic theatre, it is observed that space contains all stage units, physical and psychological movements, breath and gaze in the plays. In postdramatic space, "bodies, gestures, postures, voices and movements are torn from their spatio-temporal continuum, newly connected, isolated, and assembled into a tableau-like montage" (Lehmann, 151). Hierarchical structure of dramatic space is thus deconstructed and instead "a subjectivized space, a subject-I space" (ibid. 151) is constructed. The aspect of body is accepted as a sacred feature in dramatic theatre but body is not a theme of dramatic theatre and only forms to serve as a signifier (ibid. 162). In postdramatic theatre, body, being decentralized, is dealt with semantic aspects and has ripped God out of centre:

... postdramatic theatre gain new potentials from over-coming the semantic body (...). It required the emancipation of theatre as a proper dimension of art in order to grasp that the body did not have to content itself with being a signifier but could be an agent provocateur

of an experience without meaning, an experience aimed not at the realization of a reality and meaning but at the experience of potentiality (ibid. 162).

In this context, this potential body represents both pleasure and fear simultaneously. The postdramatic body image deconstructs the dramatic process which occurs "between the bodies" (ibid. 163). Instead of this, the postdramatic image "occurs *with/on/to* the body" (ibid. 163). The aim of postdramatic body image is to represent theatrical reality in a way that gets us to feel the existence of body and the image of agony. Postdramatic theatre represents mimesis *to* pain "when the stage is becoming like life, when people really fall or really get hit on the stage, the spectators start to fear for the players" (ibid. 166). Postdramatic theatre attempts to force spectators to experience pain through representational experience. By using suffering bodies, postdramatic theatre aims to show wild way of the world. Referring to the last aspect of postdramatic theatre, using media industries, presentations, stenographic dialogues, film, television stars, comedy sketches, news, entertainment films, videocassettes, videogames, laptops and Internet, postdramatic theatre creates a kind of a television theatre. Vivian Sobchack states that:

Television, video cassettes, video tape recorders/players, video games, and personal computers all form an encompassing electronic representational system whose various forms interface to constitute an alternative and absolute world that uniquely incorporates the spectator/user in a spatially decentred, weakly temporalized, and quasi-disembodied state... (78).

Postdramatic theatre, through media, technology, and communication, deconstructs the consistent narrative story. Instead of narrations, postdramatic theatre, benefiting from musical and technological phrases as well as elements of scenic image collage, departs from traditional stylistic features of dramatic theatre. Contrary to dramatic theatre, it is the postdramatic theatre that brings us closer to the real with the help of mediated reflection (Woolf, 40).

Because of the proliferation of media in today's culture, postdramatic writers draw influence from different literary works, social life, and the outside world: so they renounce plot structures, characters, dialogues and designated speakers.

The present article represents how Mark Ravenhill's plays *Faust is Dead and Pool (No Water)* comply with these aspects of time, space, body and media. In analyzing *Faust is Dead* as a postdramatic piece of theatre it is important to note the role that time inconsistency operates in the play. *Faust is Dead*, using chorus and

the return of a dead character, Donny, at the end of the play, includes examples of time inconsistency. Ravenhill also uses media within *Faust is Dead*; video recording, computer chatting and television shows are used in order to force spectators to actively participate in the play. Another important aspect in *Faust is Dead* is body and usage of pain and catharsis. Ravenhill highlights the body as a physical being by focusing on the physical nature of the body in different spaces. In analyzing *Pool (No Water)* as a postdramatic piece of theatre, Ravenhill portrays choreography and body-text which deconstructs hierarchy and represents physical features. With these physical features Ravenhill uses the body to represent the pain of the character that falls into a pool with no water. The other important aspect in *Pool (No Water)* is media. After seeing Nan Goldin's photos Ravenhill decided to write this play and also in the play, body and physical pain are photographed by friends of the artist and images are sent to each other as pdf files in other words they together create a mediated culture.

This paper deconstructs traditional concepts by going beyond dramatic texts and formulates relationships between postdramatic aspects and plays. In the following parts considering and analyzing postdramatic aspects, we will study in detail Mark Ravenhill's *Faust is Dead* (1997) and *Pool (No Water)* (2006).

II. Postdramatic Elements in *Faust is Dead*

Faust is Dead was written in 1996 and directed in 1997 by Nick Philippou. Depicted over nineteen scenes, the play focuses on illusion, reality, globalisation, Americanization, contemporary capitalism and consumerism. The title of the play refers to works of Christopher Marlowe and Goethe. *Faust is Dead* contains Alain, "a visiting French philosopher" (Kostic, 168) who wrote the postmodern work *The End of History and The death of Men*; Alain is described as "a disoriented American youth" (ibid. 168). From his book title the play signs Fukuyama's work *The End of History and the Last Man*. Aleks Sierz states that "the figure of Alain is an all too obvious a reanimated version of Michel Foucault using ideas adapted, primarily, from Jean Baudrillard's work" (Sierz, 274). The character of Pete is "the wayward son of a computer software magnate" (ibid. 134), Donny is "Pete's Internet friend, a disturbed boy, who cuts his flesh with a razor" (Kostic, 169) these two characters and the chorus represent different periods of childhood as well as the voice of an adult in the play.

Like Sarah Kane and other In-Yer-Face playwrights, Mark Ravenhill is against classical structure (time, place and action unity), literary tradition, and dramatic conventions in his plays. As mentioned above *Faust is Dead* not only contains real pain and a real world but also

represents the virtual world and hyper-reality in the structure of the play. Mark Ravenhill's play represents a form of simulation that spectators or readers question while watching or reading the play. David Barnett analyses this representation:

The postdramatic proposes a theatre beyond representation, in which the limitations of representation are held in check by dramaturgies and performance practices that seek to present material rather than to posit a direct, representational relationship between the stage and the outside world (15).

Ravenhill's work is a play beyond representation and instead of conventional mimetic representation; the play is represented with framed and separate elements. Lehmann refers to this representation as "hyperrealism that Baudrillard used to designate a non-referential, media produced, heightened resemblance of things to themselves, not the adequacy of images to the real" (117). Lehmann, referring to Baudrillard's term "hyperreal", forms postdramatic theatre beyond representation. Ravenhill uses this postdramatic aspect in his play. The interpretation of the real differs from postdramatic theatre. Lehmann clarifies this as "real conflicts of our time no longer find truth in the representational conflicts of the dramatic. The representational form drama is available but grasps at nothing when it is meant to articulate experienced reality" (ibid. 182).

One of the important postdramatic aspects in the play is the role of time. For Lehmann, postdramatic time is represented differently from traditional Aristotelian drama which "requires one time in which the opponents, agonist and antagonist, can meet at all" (ibid. 154). Lehmann clarifies this:

This linear continuum ultimately supports the unity of the subject because it lends direction and orientation to the experiences, which are radically discontinuous among themselves (...) In modernity, the subject – and with it the intersubjective mirroring through which it could continually enhance itself – loses its ability to integrate the representations into a unity. Or, to put it the other way round: the disintegration of time as a continuum proves to be a sign of the dissolution – or at least subversion – of the subject possessing the certainty of its time (ibid. 55).

Here, Lehmann points out that linear time in Aristotelian plays is conventional; his plays refer to a well prepared structure, plot and action in a significant order. With the aid of this linear continuum, spectators can follow the actions and the plot in a logical way. However, in postdramatic theatre time is handled with in a variety of ways.

This deconstruction represents different interpretations of the play; instead of combining action and plot, Ravenhill uses this

uncertain time to deconstruct dramatic action and plot structure in *Faust is Dead*.

In postdramatic theatre, time does not represent clarity. Spectators cannot be informed about time nor can they comprehend it. However in order to realize postdramatic time, spectators should have information about dramatic time structure; in postdramatic theatre, the importance of time decreases and represents an aesthetic feature for the play. Lehmann explains:

the postdramatic aesthetic of real time signifies, however, that the scenic process cannot be separated from the time of the audience. Again the contrast between the epic and the postdramatic gesture is clearly apparent. If time becomes the object of 'direct' experience, logically it is especially the techniques of time distortion that come to prominence. For only an experience of time that deviates from habit provokes its explicit perception, permitting it to move from something taken for granted as a mere accompaniment to the rank of a theme (ibid. 156).

The prologue of the play begins with the Chorus. The use of the Chorus is a distinctive example of postdramatic theatre. Ravenhill uses the Chorus to deconstruct linear time because when it starts to speak, time and characters stop. The chorus becomes part of the play and narrates the play to spectators. Today, spectators begin to hear different voices because postdramatic theatre “does not so much aim to make us hear the one voice of the one subject but rather realizes a dissemination of voices, which incidentally is by no means exclusively tied to electronically or otherwise ‘technically’ arranged fragmentations” (ibid. 148).

The different voices mean that time is not only used by the characters; both spectators and the Chorus begin to use time. In the play, Ravenhill gives the voice of the Chorus to Donny and with the help of the chorus we witness a character’s development in the play. In scene sixteen we learn that the chorus is actually Pete: “Donny knew. Donny knew what he was gonna do” (Ravenhill, 134). Using chorus for this character, Ravenhill represents chronological time for the benefit of the spectators who can feel Pete’s thoughts.

Ravenhill also refers to media as a postdramatic aspect of *Faust is Dead*. In the play we see a television show, the usage of a computer and video recording. These signifiers of media hold an important place in the play. Their importance in Ravenhill’s play can be exemplified with Lehmann’s explanation:

The body or face in video is enough – for itself and for us (...) the body in theatre is a signifier (not the object) of desire. The electronic image, by contrast, is pure foreground. It evokes a fulfilled, superficially fulfilled kind of seeing. Since no aim or desire enters

consciousness as the background of the image, there can be no lack. The electronic image lacks lack, and is consequently leading only to – the next image, in which again nothing ‘disturbs’ or prevents us from enjoying the plenitude of the image (171).

What Lehmann asserts here is that postdramatic theatre, by using media imagery, aims to fulfil spectators’ desires. In *Faust is Dead*, Ravenhill uses media imagery as a catalyst to activate the spectators, as in dramatic theatre there “is no longer capable of representing the great contradictions of our “mediatised and globalised” (ibid. 183) society” (Barnett, Lehmann & Munby, cited in Woolf, 40).

Without media imagery the characters are not kept pace with normal life. “It is the postdramatic that brings” them “closer to the ‘real’, and to the ‘political’ – no longer by means of dramatic representation, but by mediated ‘reflection’” (Woolf, 40). The characters usually use media images to record their life. In the play, an example of the use of media images is highlighted in scene ten:

Alain This is beautiful.

Pete You like it?

Alain Oh yes.

This is a very beautiful place.

Pete I guess it’s okay.

I kind of prefer it on the TV.

I prefer it with a frame around it, you know?

Alain Okay.

Pete Like you know, it stretches out, there it goes, on and on – you get the point

from the TV – but when you actually see it, you know ... it’s a little scary.

Excuse me, I’m gonna have to ...

Pete *takes out the camcorder, looks through it.*

That’s better.

I kind of feel okay now.

This always works for me. Some guys it’s Prozac, but with me ...

Alain I understand (Ravenhill, 112-113).

Without a camcorder or technological devices, Pete cannot cope with life because he is addicted to technology: he immerses his life in imagery and equipment and feels the need to recording everything during the play. Ravenhill allows his character to create his own meanings and place, contrary to dramatic structure. Lehmann explains this displacement as:

... postdramatic theatre effects a displacement of theatrical perception – for many provocative, incomprehensible, or boring –

turning from abandoning oneself to the flow of a narration towards a constructing and constructive coproducing of the total audio-visual complex of the theatre (157).

Pete does not realize what happens around him in the play, and in this manner his addiction is highlighted:

Make it like on TV, okay?

(...)

That commentator. He just keeps on going.

(...)

Pete Did I come?

Alain Yes.

Pete Really?

Alain Plenty (Ravenhill, 114-115).

Ravenhill continues to use media imagery in his play. In scene thirteen, using technology and computers as well as church support, Donny meets two men in a chat room and their conversations continue in the virtual world. Pete watches Alain on a television show and decides to have a relationship with Alain. However, instead of having an actual relationship, the characters use the virtual world to have relationship with other characters. They choose this because it is the virtual world; the characters are able to separate themselves from actual events and can live as they wish in the virtual world. Lehmann draws attention to V. Sabchack's explanation regarding an alternative world from the perspective of media:

Television, video cassettes, video tape recorders/players, video games, and personal computers all form an encompassing electronic representational system whose various forms 'interface' to constitute an alternative and absolute world that uniquely incorporates the spectator/user in a spatially decentered, weakly temporalized, and quasi-disembodied state (Lehmann 2006 cited in Sabchack, 78).

The other important postdramatic aspect is the idea of body. The concept of body is very definite in *Faust is Dead*. In this context, this potential body represents both pleasure and fear simultaneously. The postdramatic body image deconstructs the dramatic process occurring "between the bodies" (Lehmann, 163). Instead of this, the postdramatic image "occurs with/on/to the body" (ibid. 163). The primary mission of the postdramatic body image is to represent theatrical reality, which reminds us to feel the existence of the body and agony.

Postdramatic theatre, however, is above all familiar with 'mimesis to pain' ('Mimesis an den Schmerz' - Adorno): when the stage is becoming like life, when people really fall or really get hit on stage, the spectators start to fear for the players (ibid. 166).

When spectators watch the play, they comprehend that the character feels real pain but wonder about how the character reacts to this pain. Lehmann clarifies this reaction as: "A theatre of bodies in pain causes a schism for the perception: here the represented pain, there the playful, joyful act of its representation that is itself attesting to pain" (ibid. 166). Lehmann also portrays postdramatic theatre as representing the body as a physical thing. Spectators witness a real biological, active body instead of an evocation of it on the scene. Lehmann clarifies:

While the dramatic theatre conceals the process of the body in the role, postdramatic theatre aims at the public exhibition of the body, its deterioration in an act that does not allow for a clear separation of art and reality. It does not conceal the fact that the body is moribund but rather emphasizes it (ibid. 166).

Postdramatic theatre highlights the physicality of the body, which contains pain and catharsis. It draws attention to pain because spectators can feel the pain on the scene like their own pain; through their own physicality, they can question their own thoughts and their own world. In *Faust is Dead*, the effect of physicality is represented mordantly. Pete and Donny decide to hold a competition, which is related to cutting themselves. Here, Alain starts to record them with a camcorder:

Pete: Alright. Let's... I cut first, as I lost before. Okay?

Donny: Sure.

Pete cuts across his chest.

Pete: You getting this?

Alain: Got it all on tape. What do you feel?

Pete: Pure. Clear. True. (Hands blade to Donny.) Now you. See you win this one.

Donny: I like to win. Winning's good.

Pete: Winning's good.

Donny: And I know the way. I got the way.

Donny cuts his jugular. Collapses.

Pete: Oh sit, man. Shit.

Alain puts the camcorder down quickly and he and Pete rush to Donny.

Alain: Stop the blood. Stop the blood.

Donny is writing. They try unsuccessfully to staunch the blood. Donny dies (Ravenhill, 131-132).

Ravenhill focuses on the physicality of body in a crucial way in the scene. While Pete is searching for reality, Donny is on his deathbed. By representing both Pete's pain and Donny's death, Ravenhill aims to examine the society and their reactions.

To conclude, Ravenhill's play makes use of elements of postdramatic structure. In his play, we witness Lehmann's dialectical progress relating to postdramatic theatre. In *Faust is Dead* Ravenhill represents a postdramatic text, which is formed by postdramatic aspects, and supports conflictions between the text and acting, instead of organized relationships. This postdramatic text contains physical presence, gesture and different voices speaking different languages. These different languages refer to "polyglossia", (147) that we can find in the play: for instance Alain speaks French in some parts of the play. Ravenhill also, in deconstructing linear time, supports this deconstruction by using media imagery which causes characters to question the real and virtual world. He also analyses the physicality of the presence, body, and pain with distinctive and violent scenes, and forms his play *Faust is Dead*.

III. Postdramatic Aspects in *Pool (No Water)*

Ravenhill's most assertive and experiential play *Pool (No Water)* was staged in 2006, at the Drum Theatre, Plymouth, in cooperation with Physical Theatre Group Frantic Assembly. Ravenhill had watched other works by the Frantic Assembly and was impressed with their work because he normally writes plays for social and political theatre contrary to physical theatre which is related to Frantic Assembly. Working with Frantic Assembly, Ravenhill produces his play.

Ravenhill's distinctive play, using no real characters, brings a group of artists into the forefront. It takes place at the house of an old friend of the artists; this old friend managed to escape from art life without being noticed, becoming an inactive artist while the others are still popular. The play is similar to Martin Crimp's *Attempts on her life*; in a similar manner to Crimp's character Anne, Ravenhill refuses the central character, the artist Sally, who is almost constantly silent and is described through monologues. Both plays reject dramatic speech. Traditional dialogic structure is deconstructed with a plurality of applied voices. *Pool's* text contains features such as uncertainty and multi-perceptivity, displaying the play's relationship with postdramatic theatre in a general sense.

The play provides almost no information about characters or actions; the spectators have to interpret the play through physical information. Instead of characters and dialogues, the text focuses on directing spectators to the performers' body. Ravenhill aims to observe the "physical effects on the spectators, even to such an extent that the audience can almost feel the pain and extreme demands on the voice in an absolutely direct manner" (Murray & Keefe 2007, 26). Here, Ravenhill, deconstructing traditional text and dialogue, asserts the physical effect onto the stage. In the play, the dramatic character

is totally rejected and expressed in brackets, repeating the words and three dots instead of character speeches. In postdramatic theatre, character speeches, dialogues, and communication are not used and Ravenhill's play orients itself around these postdramatic features.

Pool (No Water) contains many postdramatic aspects such as text, space, time, body, and media. The first aspect refers to "chora-graphy and body-text". In postdramatic text, chora-graphy (Lehmann, 146), deconstructs unity and hierarchy and forms a space without using them. In this space, "breath, rhythm and the present actuality of the body's visceral presence take precedence over the body" (ibid. 145). Here Lehmann highlights Julia Kristeva's "chora" which refers to physical features like breathing, rhythm, deconstructed hierarchy, casualty, and unity.

With this chorography, classical communication between the stage and spectators is no longer observed. In *Pool (No Water)* classical communication is deconstructed, because of the language, monologues, and absence of real character. Ravenhill, using physical features, represents both chorography and body text. Instead of dramatic characters, he uses "text bearers"³ (Poschmann). Ravenhill's play also refers to Corsetti's thesis, which explains that "the theatre needs the *text as a foreign body* as a world outside the stage" (Lehmann, 146). Ravenhill represents the real world outside the stage.

Postdramatic theatre also refers to the textscape which signs a theatre of voices in the part of text. This explains that postdramatic theatre does not contain the voice of one character. Instead of this it contains "*dissemination* of voices and exposition of the *physis* of the voice in screaming, groaning, animal voices" (ibid. 148-9). In the play Ravenhill highlights the physic of the voice when the housekeeper plunges into the waterless pool:

.... we didn't hear the splash. There was no splash. There was
The crack.

The cracking of her body.

The harsh crack of her body against the concrete.

(...)

Then there was her groan and her squeal and her screams of
pain. Aaaaaaggghooooowooooowooooowwwwwwww

(Ravenhill 2008b, 301-2).

Another aspect of postdramatic theatre is postdramatic space, which deconstructs the homogenous world of the stage and represents a centrifugal effect: in essence, "a space that outweighs or

³ "The text bearer has no other responsibility than to deliver text: that is, not to interpret" (Barnett 2008, p. 18).

overdetermines the perception of all other elements simply through its enormous dimensions or a space that eludes being mastered by perception because actions simultaneously take place in different locations, as in 'integrated' theatre" (Lehmann, 150). This postdramatic space contains movements, bodies, gestures and voices. Similarly, Ravenhill's play too contains these frames, and the play portrays a "tableau like montage" (ibid. 151).

In the play, we can also observe postdramatic time as one of the other aspects. In dramatic theatre, there is a linear time where story exits, "opponents, agonist and antagonists" (ibid. 154). Dramatic theatre is formed with homogeneous time. However, in postdramatic theatre this homogeneous time is disintegrated and instead of homogeneous time, representations take place at different times. Characters "get lost in particles" (ibid. 154), acting on different plateaux unrelated to each other; thus we witness crisis of time in postdramatic theatre. Ravenhill's play begins with this crisis but also refers to earlier times:

Years ago when she was in – when she was in the Group. Life and soul. And she'd always be ripping her clothes off, just ripping them off, and we'd all rip them off too – we'd follow her – and then we'd all make performance pieces or arthouse shorts or we'd just go skinny-dipping for the sheer naked fun of it (Ravenhill 2008b, 295).

However, nowadays, everything is different. Today, they discuss their performances, friendship, loyalties, and even bodies:

And each of us knows that our body is not what it was those ten years before – that there's sag and fat and lines even and even even the littlest hints of grey. Oh yes the sad sad rot to the grave has already begun (ibid. 301).

It is at this point where the play reflects the notion of a time crisis because of what past events the speakers refer to. In this decade, they have to deal with problems such as aids, cancer, heroin babies, and death, and "their hearts have been become poisoned towards the artist" (Graham, 22). Using the postdramatic time-concept Ravenhill highlights examples of various blurred time periods and in the final part of the play, he continues to provide information about different time periods: "and now. Years have gone. And look at these arms – no track marks – nothing. Clean. And these four here – new teeth. Beauties" (Ravenhill, 323). This changing time creates confusion among not only characters but the spectators too. Different time periods reveal jumps and digressions, which deconstructs unity of time, in the play. The linear continuum and coherent totality are ultimately deconstructed with the prolongation

of time in *Pool (No Water)* thus spectators are removed from their own concept of time and force to enter separated time periods.

The following and the most important aspect in the play is the body (postdramatic imagery of the body). Contrary to the dramatic process, postdramatic theatre occurs with/on/to the body (Lehmann, 163) and represents the image of pain. In postdramatic theatre, spectators feel this pain because the postdramatic process represents the concept of reality on the stage. In this way, spectators feel the agony of the body. In postdramatic theatre, the body is represented both as a subject and an object on the stage. In other words, the body is used as a determinant. With its movements, deformation and even injuries, the body is completely represented in the postdramatic stage. The body is a signifying material which helps spectators feel the pain as if it occurred on their own bodies.

Pool (No Water) refers to different representations about the body. The main source of inspiration for Ravenhill are photographs by the American photographer Nan Goldin because she especially focuses on physical features and violence towards the body and Ravenhill's play foregrounds movements of female body. These bodily movements and deformations are described in the play. The concept of the body begins with the housekeeper, jumping into the waterless pool. Her deformed body is shaped with her falling into the empty pool. However, the speakers hope to hear a splash as she hits the water, but there is no water and they cannot hear the splash "But we didn't hear the splash. There was no splash. There was" (Ravenhill 2008b, 301). Instead of splash there is crack: "the harsh crack of her body against the concrete / then there was her groan and her squeal and her screams of pain" (ibid. 302). After they find her deformed body, they feel both pleasure and agony; the portrayal of the body in postdramatic theatre is blatantly obvious on the stage. This portrayal also aims to highlight how spectators feel this haplessness. After witnessing the deformed body of the housekeeper, the speakers attempt to visualise this image in their minds and in turn reflect this onto the spectators:

Her body - her body is broken in our head.

A picture but not - it's a feeling you know?

And you would have thought above else an artist would –
(ibid. 305).

It is understood that the image in their heads and what they see are different and by using these speakers, Ravenhill intends for the spectators to perceive this difference. Showing this broken and deformed body, he states that public exhibition of a deformed body is necessary in order to make the spectators understand the pain of the

stage. Lehmann clarifies this exhibition comparing dramatic and postdramatic theatre:

While the dramatic theatre conceals the process of the body in the role, postdramatic theatre aims at the public exhibition of the body, its deterioration in an act that does not allow for a clear separation of art and reality. It does not conceal the fact that the body is moribund but rather emphasizes it (Lehmann, 166).

Postdramatic theatre aims to exhibit reality and the world outside the stage to the spectators. In the play, Sally's deformed body is used as a signifier to realize the experience of reality. Sally's body represents the postdramatic process occurring with the body. In the same manner as Nan Goldin's photographs, the body and its image of agony are illustrated in *Pool (No Water)*.

On the other hand, by focusing on the human body and its physicality, Ravenhill aims to emphasize the effects of physical theatre on spectators. By utilising the features of physical theatre, spectators' attention and concentration are held throughout the performance. The strength of physical theatre is clarified by Patrice Pavis:

... it is on the one hand the theatre of images, which can absorb the body and its social inscription, and on the other hand physical theatre and dance theatre, for which the concept of body and gesture belongs to a completely different model, where the body, more impetus and stimulus than gestus, is in a position to make sudden incursions and to destroy any fiction (cited in Haas, 63).

Parallel with Patrice Pavis, by ocusing on physical conditions, Ravenhill draws attention to physical theatre in his postdramatic theatre.

The last postdramatic aspect that we will analyze is media in *Pool (No Water)*. In the same manner as *Faust is Dead*, Ravenhill focuses on media imageries. In the play, characters perceive the world and connect to each other with the support of media. Women's bodies become an object of pain and satisfaction and are exploited and portrayed by media technologies. The play contains familiar images and technologies such as camera, photographs and PDF files. In the play when the artists go to the hospital, they hold a camera:

But there we are – hospital with the camera in our hand.
And we're here. We're here. We're here in the room
with the camera and the sunlight coming through the blinds
(Ravenhill, 305).

Artists not only record but also photograph her in the morning and evening and "start to arrange, start to order, start to catalogue. Start to – print with a quality of drenched colour, tone and definition" (ibid. 307). Using photos of their body and media, they present her as art. Ravenhill literally forces the spectators to

visualise the outside world, not allowing them to just sit on their seats. With the assistance of postdramatic media, direct relationships between spectators and speakers are formulated. Speakers, using camera and photographs, create an object for spectators.

In the play, Sally is photographed and recorded and in this way, Ravenhill can represent her absent character whether as a vital character or as vitality composed by media and her friends:

'Bring the camera.'

'Oh . . . no.'

'Yes. Bring the camera. I want to carry on. I'm still healing.

I'm getting stronger all the time. And I'd like to carry on recording that.'

What could we do but bring the camera? (ibid. 313).

Ravenhill, using cameras and photos and combining them with the play, tries to create a relationship between spectators and actors: using media he aims to create active spectators and portrays immanency of media in everyday life. He allows spectators to create their own synergy for the play. *Pool (No Water)*, focusing on mediated culture, creates a link between theatrical expression and human conditions in contemporary society.

In *Pool (No Water)*, Ravenhill does not identify characters. He forms long monologues instead of dialogues, deconstructs dramatic structure, and forces spectators to look and read the play with a different perspective. In the play Ravenhill, using postdramatic aspects, especially the postdramatic body, creates a strong relationship and interaction between speakers and spectators and between writer and director, thus displaying a different kind of postdramatic play.

IV. Conclusion

This article analyzes *Faust is Dead* and *Pool (No Water)* and their reference to postdramatic aspects of time, space, body and media that focuses on performance instead of text. This paper examines new realities for contemporary plays and labels Ravenhill's plays as no longer dramatic texts but postdramatic texts; according to the postdramatic aspects described above. Ravenhill's plays can be classified in postdramatic context. In this context there are new forms and plays in contemporary theatre. Both plays use elements of postdramatic theatre to allow spectators to experience deeper meanings. Both plays utilize time inconsistency, body, media and the postdramatic concept of pain in order to force spectators to analyze their own relationships and society. Without Lehmann's work, this study highlights difficulties regarding analysis of postdramatic elements. With the help of Lehmann's text, our analysis demonstrates

that dramatic texts do not concur with aspects of postdramatic theatre. These aspects, offering new possibilities for contemporary theatre, force us to take into consideration how time, space, active bodies and media change our understanding of theatre, culture and society and how these aspects deconstruct dramatic structures and provide us with active accessibility for postdramatic plays.

WORKS CITED

- BARNETT, David. (2008), "When is a Play not a Drama? Two Examples of Postdramatic Theatre Texts", *Cambridge University Press*, 24(1), p. 14-23.
- BARNETT, David, LEHMANN Hans T. and Karen Jürs, M. (2006), "Taking Stock and Looking Forward: Postdramatic Theatre", *Contemporary Theatre Review: An International Journal* 16.4, p. 483-9.
- GRAHAM, Saunders. *A Comprehensive Guide For Students (+16), teachers and arts Educationalists*, Frantic Assembly, Drum Theatre.
http://www.franticassembly.co.uk/media/media/downloads/pool_no_water_Resource_Pack.pdf.
- HAAS, Birgit. (2007), *Plädoyer für ein dramatisches Theater*. Wien: Passagen.
- LEHMANN, Hans T. (2006), *Postdramatic Theatre*. London: Routledge.
- POSCHMANN, Gerda. (1997), *Der nicht mehr dramatische Theatertext. Aktuelle Bühnenstücke 112 und ihre dramaturgische Analyse*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- RAVENHILL, Mark. (2001), *Faust is Dead, Ravenhill Plays 1*, Methuen, London.
- . (2008a), Introduction. *Pool (No Water). Plays 2*. London: Methuen Drama.
- . (2008b), *Plays 2*. London: Methuen Drama.
- SOBCHACK, Vivian. (2000), "The Scene of the Screen: Envisioning Cinematic and Electronic "Presence"", in R. Stam and T. Miller (eds), *Film and Theory: An Anthology*, Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, p. 67-84.
- WOOLF, Brendon. (2013), "Towards a Paradoxically Parallaxical Postdramatic Politics", in Jürs-Munby Karen et al (ed.), *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political*, p. 31-47.