From Realism to Expressionism: The Pope’s Wedding, Saved and Early Morning by Edward Bond

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to evaluate the use of excessive violence in Edward Bond’s plays as opposed to his thematic concerns with peace and optimism in the contemporary capitalist society. The present discussion concerns itself with showing the thematic and structural problems that the paradox of healing violence with violence entails and Bond’s attempt to resolve it through a radical shift from realism to expressionism in style, characterization, image patterns and themes. This research compares the blatant, yet realistic presentation of violence in two of his early plays The Pope’s Wedding and Saved, with expressionistic depiction of violence in his later play Early Morning. The purpose of this comparison is to examine Bond’s major shift from realistic mode to the use of expressionism to resolve the paradox and to dramatize his redefinitions of the concepts of truth, justice, pacifism and democracy more concretely in his drama.

Keywords: Realism, expressionism, subversive, stylistic, paradox

Introduction

Edward Bond (1934-) is a foremost British dramatist. Each new play by him triggers off an endless debate about his use of explicit and apparently inexplicable violence on stage. He is a post-modernist, writing in a world torn by class-war, military conflicts and almost on the verge of nuclear holocaust. A wave of unbridled violence is the most marked feature of the contemporary society. Events like the two world wars, ethnic cleansing in Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechnya, Kosovo which took place throughout the last century of horrors, demythologize the claims of glorious human achievements in the modern age. The militant aggression of Talibans, Al-Qaeda, Daish, Bokoharam, civilian casualties in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and in drone attacks in 21st century reflect increasing religious and political extremism. The world especially the Third World (the South Asian countries with colonial history) and the Arab countries like Syria and Yemen seem to be ripped apart by the sectarian and regional aggression.
As violence impinges upon the rights and lives of the individuals in a variety of ways, it becomes a recurrent theme in modern literature by the writers like (Golding, 1962; Hughes, 1995; Heaney, 1998; Hemingway, 1926, 1929; Faulkner 1990; O'Neill 1922, & Miller, 1972). It is perpetrated by the state, by the politically organized communities and, ironically, even by the individual. The discrepancy that stems from the simultaneous chanting of slogans of worldwide peace, harmony, justice, equality and the suppression of the weak nations by the rich, the blind race for nuclear potential along with nuclear test ban treaties is at the heart of modern civilization. Bond’s plays are set in the mid twentieth century capitalist society. The shift from an agricultural to an industrial society is rapid around the globe. Bond, through the medium of drama, highlights a set of socio-political problems inherent in an industrial, capitalist society. Capitalism as an economic system is considered to be the most aggressive one in human history. It has bifurcated the society into two distinct groups of the possessed and the dispossessed.

In a system of prevalent injustices, selfishness and ruthlessness become the most pervasive modes of behavior. Postmodernism is a late twentieth century literary movement. As a postmodernist writer, Bond amalgamates the realism of the Victorian age with the stylistic experimentation found in the modernist literature of the early twentieth century. His experimentation from realistic to non-realistic modes of expression like expressionism sheds light on his intense and ceaseless struggle to diagnose the causes, effects and cure of aggression in modern societies.

Expressionism is a movement in art that originated in Germany in early twentieth century. The movement initiated a radical use of symbolism, dream-like elements and stark colors in paintings and literature to portray vividly the highly charged states of mind. The painters like Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), Edward Munch (1863-1944) and in literature Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936), Franz Kafka (1883-1924), August Strindberg (1849-1912), Eugene O’Neill (1888-1953) are the forerunners of this movement.

Literature Review

An overview of the existing literature on Edward Bond’s preoccupation with the theme of violence has been furnished here. Webster’s New World College Dictionary defines violence (1997) as “physical force used so as to injure damage or destroy extreme roughness of action” as well as “unjust or callous use of power, as in violating another’s rights, sensibilities, etc.” The motif of violence “forms the core of drama as the literary genre from Greek tragedy to the present day Theatre of Cruelty” (Daiches & Thorlby, 1976, p. 84). In Bond, however, it is no longer reported but enacted on the stage on linguistic, visual, physical and psychological
levels. Although Bond believes that aggression provokes more aggression yet his choice to employ it as a medium to shake and change the status quo generates a host of structural problems that this research work aims to grapple with.

Bond himself comments on the loss of a closely-knit rural community that defines the relationship of the individual with the society. The precedence of money over human values has bred a sense of alienation and apathy in the modern man. In his play *The Worlds*, Bond (1980) observes that an industrial society is “characterized by a highly advanced technology, complex forms of social organizations, rapid social change and a strong commitment to economic growth” (p.109). He dramatically analyses the dehumanizing processes that result in problems like wars, crime, terrorism, poverty, interracial conflicts, psychological disorders which pose an increasing threat to the quality of life in modern industrial societies as well as to human dignity.

Fromm (1966) in his book *Marx’s Concepts of Man* describes the industrial civilization which hinders the individual to achieve self-realization through creativity. The mechanically specified nature of work denies the worker a sense of freedom, fulfillment and self-respect. The culture of manufacture and mass production obstructs individual’s active participation in the creation of his world. He defines the modern man’s experience of alienation in the following words:

> Alienation (or estrangement) means for Marx, that man does not experience himself as the acting agent in his grasp of the world, but that the world (nature, others and he himself) remains alien to him. They stand above and against him as objects… (p.44)

One of Bond’s contemporary writers, Arden (1982) and Bond are committed to diagnose the causes of human violence that lead to a cultural failure. As opposed to the absurdist dramatists as well as postmodernists such as Stoppard (1967), the works by Bond and Arden reflect that the concepts of nihilism and absurdism have no bearing on human affairs. They believe that the causes of human misery in the postmodern capitalist societies can be identified, analyzed and thereby prevented or overcome.

The following literature review further traces a vast area of research on Bond’s theatre with the evident aim of pinpointing the dramatic and structural problems on account of realism in his early plays as a research gap. Bond’s experimentation with expressionism as a way to deal with these problems has also not been engaged with in the existing scholarship on his dramatic work.
In the summary of the article entitled “On Violence and Justice in Modern Culture”, Milošević (2010) traces the similarities in the presentation of violence in the works of Bond, Harold Pinter and Peter Sellars. He highlights “the importance of personal struggle for humaneness in an inhuman and unjust world” (p.587) in Bond’s drama. His theatre presents the development of new, clearly defined goals like self-esteem, freedom of the individual and fellow feelings besides economic growth as a pre-requisite for an effective and well-organized social action. The new culture, as Bond envisions it, should provide a congenial environment for human growth and creativity.

In “Chapter v. Historicizing Performance”, Jose (2012) comments on Bond’s use of language and surrealist techniques as a subversive force to expose the corrupt status quo (p.5). Bond’s modification of Brechtian theatre and his appropriation of history to assert the political potential of drama, to reform the society, have also been commented upon.

Carney (2004) in his essay “Edward Bond: Tragedy, Postmodernity, The Woman” elaborates Bond’s concept of tragedy through the analysis of Bond’s dialectical thinking as enacted in his play The Woman. Carney argues that Bond’s techniques of epic theatre are comparable with Brecht’s dramaturgy for serving the political purpose of developing analytical thinking in the contemporary world to solve the problem of increasing violence.

Hudson (2013) traces the frequent presence of a ghost figure as Bond’s dramatization of death-in-life, in the capitalist materialism of the contemporary world. Zapf (1988) dilates on the dramatization of the socialist and Marxist goals in the plays of Bond and Brecht by comparing their concepts of a rational theatre aimed at creating an acute awareness of the exploitative socio-economic power relations. This article evaluates their theatre for enabling the audience to develop critical faculties which are needed to actively engage in understanding and solving their real life problems. Von Ledebur (1996) in his article concentrates on the gender politics, and Bond’s ambivalence towards the female characters.

Torma (2010) criticizes Bond’s presentation of innocent character types like Len and Gravedigger’s boy, being destroyed by the powerful capitalists, and considers it a major failure of Bond’s drama in conveying the message of positive change in the society. Milovic (2010), on the other hand, sheds light on the element of the extraordinary in the ordinary protagonists in Bond’s trilogy of war plays. The scholars like AL-Radaydeh (2014) engages in an investigation of Bond’s political and ideological biases in rewriting Shakespeare’s biography in Bingo, in the doctoral dissertation and Tener (1982) focuses on Bond’s use of the stylistic devices of irony and dramatic
metaphors but the question of artistic problems in Bond’s use of realism in his early plays and his dramatic use of expressionism to resolve them, remain largely unaddressed.

This literature review attempts to identify the significance of Bond’s shift from realistic to expressionistic depiction of violence in his early plays as a major research gap. It also justifies an exhaustive analysis of the stylistic and thematic implications of Bond’s experimentation in the present study. This article engages with Bond’s use of violence both as a technique and as a recurrent motif in his plays to analyze the causes of human aggression. Through, dramatically, exploiting this phenomenon, Bond pleads for a non-violent way of life as a method of solving problems, as a way to relate with his fellow beings and his environment.

Research Methodology

This qualitative research is grounded in the modernist theory of expressionism in *Early Morning* and compares it with Bond’s use of realistic framework in his early plays, *The Pope’s Wedding* and *Saved*. The comparative and analytical methodologies have been used to investigate Bond’s shift from the realistic to the expressionistic style because he continues to portray blatant violence as a subversive strategy. Spencer (1992) also discusses Bond’s ‘formal innovations’ (p.1) in her seminal book *Dramatic Strategies in the Plays of Edward Bond*, as profoundly disturbing and challenging, both for the playgoers and the critics.

The data for this research comprises of textual evidence in the form of words, quotes, images, symbols, description of particular events, episodes, historical and socio-political facts. Bond’s plays *Saved*, *The Pope’s Wedding* and *Early Morning*, as well as the theory of Expressionism, have been used to interpret Bond’s plays in question as the primary sources. Internet, research journals, books of criticism and post-war literature have been used to study the relationship between capitalism and violence as secondary sources. Following are the research questions that have been addressed in the paper to engage in a systematic and focused study of the contention:

1. Why does Bond exploit the paradox of healing violence with violence in his plays?
2. Why does the playwright use expressionistic techniques of evoking Victorian royal family drama of conspiracies and coups to address the problem of violence in the contemporary world?
3. What is the literary value of Bond’s shift from realism in his early plays to the use of Expressionism in *Early Morning*?
Data Analysis

*Bond's use of Realism in The Pope’s Wedding and Saved*

The paradox of finding a way, out of violence through violence is at its most complete in *The Pope’s Wedding* and *Saved*. Both plays are set in the contemporary capitalist world. Both plays have stylistic and thematic affinities as they depict violence in terms of its victims who belong to the proletariat. Bond uses a realistic framework in the setting, evocation of atmosphere, characterization, language and image patterns. The prevalent darkness and the bare stage in these plays indicate the darkness and barrenness of the characters’ lives. Even the countryside in which *The Pope’s Wedding* is set does not offer any solace generally associated with nature.

The characters are at their lowest, both economically and morally. Their poverty is brought out through references to the humiliation they face in order to survive. In *The Pope’s Wedding*, they fight with one another for money and beer. The materialistic aspect determines the nature of their relationships to each other. Both the family and the sensual relationships have deteriorated into cold hostility and aggression. Scopey’s euphoria of success in the cricket match, soon evaporates when he has to face the hard economic realities of life. His marital life is embittered because of such trivial rows over a bit of milk and cigarettes. During the quarrel in *Saved*, Mary threatens Harry to deprive him of ordinary household items like plates, knives, cups and a teapot, to punish him of accusing her of an illicit relationship with Len. She says, “Yer can leave my things alone for a start. All this stuff come out of my pocket. I worked for it!” (p.108).

Bond, realistically, evokes the couple’s unfulfilled emotional needs for companionship and mutual respect in Scopey’s and Pam’s apartment in *The Pope’s Wedding* through the image of a fused bulb. In the very opening scene in *Saved* privacy seems scarce. The cramped living quarters are depicted through a few realistic details, in the proletariat dialect as Len fears, “Yer never know ‘oo ‘s poppin’ in”(p.15); and asks Pam in a humorous tone to conceal his embarrassment, “Oo else yer got knocking about? Yer ain’t stuffed yer grannie under the sofa?”(p.15).

All of them suffer from a sheer sense of loneliness precisely because of being so hard pressed together. Bond masterfully furnishes vital information about the characters and their environment, through apparently banal and pared down working class dialect. The laconicism of the language portrays them as both individuals and the representatives of a particular class of the society. However what renders their banal utterings so compelling is the bluntness and vulnerability of the characters to pain.
Into this environment of personal grievances and fears is introduced the external, objective and harsh world through a group of young, energetic boys. The abusive language and crude jokes about sex are characteristic of the groups of young men in both plays. Their attitude to sexual life is demeaning because it is deprived of love which evokes the depiction of post-war human behaviour in *The Wasteland* by Eliot (1963). Scopey and Pat, Len and Pam are the characters whose capacity to love is restricted by the economic deprivation. In *The Pope's Wedding* the group’s latent energy and robustness find release in wrestling, and also, in such meaningless activities as kicking a stone about, or snatching Pat’s bag and throwing it around.

The youth seek to establish their superiority over their counterparts by creating and maintaining pompous images of themselves. Bill’s motive is evident in *The Pope’s Wedding* when he talks about his mother aggressively, implying that no one can dominate him, “I just kicked ‘er teeth out, kneed ‘er in the crutch, set light to ‘er ‘air, an’ she died beggin’ me t’ forgive ‘er” (p.242). The casualness with which they discuss the violent events is their way of countering socio-economic pressures, which weigh heavy upon them. By pretending to be insensitive and unconcerned, the young characters try to convey a feeling of their toughness to a cruel world which does not allow them a fair chance in life. Their non-serious attitude is an attempt to make their existence bearable, and a response to the world which does not take them seriously.

These initially innocuous but highly charged activities culminate in an assault with stones on Alen’s home and on the baby, by these groups. The group in *The Pope’s Wedding* intimidates the old man by shouting abuses, banging the tins and throwing stones on his hut. Bond deepens the dramatic effect of their savagery and capacity for destruction by keeping them offstage and spotlighting on Scopey crouched in Alen’s place. In *Saved* too, the gang’s casual talk about the baby as an object of ‘the evenin’entertainment’ (p.60), suddenly takes an ominous undertone when they talk of putting the baby to sleep. They move quickly from pulling its hair, pinching and throwing burning matches on it to stoning it, encouraging each other thus turning it into a murderous game. The time of night allows them to put their childishly cruel ideas into action. Their frequent spitting portrays their disgust and deep resentment with themselves and their lives.

Whatever the boys do in *Saved*, they comment on it themselves. The objective recording of their actions obstructs their capacity to feel and think. The language intervenes between thought and action, idea and its execution. This dramatic technique serves both to control the violent effect, and adds to boys’ mounting hysteria. The restraint, maintained through a fusion of playfulness and callousness, is a device to intensify the impact of violence.
and to generate a compulsion to discover the motivation behind this inhumanity. In *The Pope’s Wedding* too, the restraint, in depicting violence, is exercised in Pat’s condemnation of boxing as a bloody game in the last scene, “Blood everywhere. Must a got splashed if yoo was sittin’ close. Waste” (p.298).

Bond marks out the quiet, ordinary but intense and sensitive individual in the group to be the central figure, though ironically on the fringes of the society, in his drama. He is a person who is distinctly capable of feeling, thinking, observing and learning. He is imaginative, open to experiences of life and has the capacity to change for the better. He chooses to understand himself and his situation by analyzing others. Scopey and Len are such individuals in the two plays under discussion. They attempt to make sense of their incomprehensible state of oppression through the immediacy of violent crimes, whereas Alen and Fred are not sensitive enough to evaluate their experiences. Nevertheless, the failure of Scopey and Len to satisfy their ceaseless pursuit of truth, does not take away the sincerity and significance of their quest. They stand out in their group because while others evade their situation by seeking oblivion in boozing and sex, they confront the reality seriously.

The violence—physical, psychological, verbal, gestural—in these plays also implies that these characters are alive. Violence is the only possible way to communicate when the barriers of socio-economic insecurities, moral degradation and mistrust are almost impenetrable; as in Len’s words in *Saved*, “No one tells yer anything really” (p.117). Bond questions the very values on which the western capitalism is based. The founding principles of this culture are competition and material success, at the cost of human values of compassion, self-respect and justice. The anxiety and the fragmented quality of the characters’ lives is woven into the episodic structure in *Saved* and *The Pope’s Wedding*. Scopey kills Alen and the final scene shows him to have completely lost himself in Alen’s great coat. He is the one who embraces the mystery of life rather than ignore it. In the play, when Scopey fails to break through the barrier of Alen’s silence, he mentions his desire to kill him, “Why’d I want t’ kill yoo, eh?” (p.276). Yet the revelation of his death in this play, and the baby stoning sequence in *Saved*, seem rather unexpected and arbitrary. The motivations behind such cruel acts are not realized in dramatic terms. To tackle with such thematic and structural problems, which highlight arbitrary violence more than its reasons and cure, Bond experiments with expressionism to examine and portray the motivations behind human actions, more vividly. The need to make politically aware and positive statements about the origins of violence in the post-industrial societies and the ways to address and deal with it is more pronounced in *Early Morning*. 
Use of Expressionism in Early Morning

Bond is committed unflinchingly to presenting a true picture of the modern, capitalist world. His plays carry political and social messages. He puts the violence, present at every level in the society, on stage which is his way of condemning it. By doing this he wants the audience to confront the truth about themselves and their situation. He wants to enable them to address these issues directly, interestingly, through his method of indirection. Edward Bond uses expressionism as a potential dramatic strategy to resolve the paradox of curing the modern capitalist society of pervading violence, through violence.

Bond’s plays present an ongoing struggle to invent methods to delineate the causes of a cultural failure, and also to dramatize the possibility of a just and a free society without evading or under playing violence that ‘shapes and obsesses our society’ as Bond (1978) holds in his play Lear (p. LVII). As the use of paradox is central to Bond’s dramatic purposes and craftsmanship, his experimentation with fresh dramatic forms, ranging from realistic to non-realistic modes to achieve ‘maximum clarity and expressiveness’ (Hirst, 1985,p.95) reflects his commitment to social and political goals.

Bond’s increasing preoccupation with rampant violence finds an equal freedom of expression in the plastic mode of expressionism in Early Morning. Expressionism is a European artistic movement which started in early twentieth century in reaction to realism. The expressionistic structure portrays reality in fragments which could be enlarged or squeezed according to the theatrical requirement. To Gray (1984), “Expressionist writers and painters show reality distorted by an emotional or abnormal state of mind, even by madness” (p.113). The flexible mode of expressionism allows Bond to dramatize the protagonist, Arthur’s perception of the external world and his reactions to it.

Bond’s use of expressionistic framework is a radical shift from the realistic mode which he finds inadequate to reconstruct history with imaginative freedom. The expressionistic techniques afford an opportunity of mobility in time and enable him to put the entire Victorian society on stage. Through these the limitations of time and space could be suspended shown in the scenes, set on Beachy Head and in Heaven. Alexander (1990) in her book Flights from Realism holds that the late twentieth century literature is “Wilder and extravagant and is not constrained by the commonplace and the common sense” (p.13).

Bond, too, employs literary strategies which are often subversive like farce, black humor, parody, horseplay, soliloquies and asides as tools, to
amaze, instruct and entertain, simultaneously, in *Early Morning*. The complexity of the play stems from an amalgamation of the recognizable and the fantastic, the familiar and the grotesque. In Bond’s plays the nature of his analysis determines the structure of the play. The fact that the whole play centers around Arthur’s developing moral and political consciousness, belies its apparent structurelessness. Bond exploits the potentialities of expressionism to the utmost. But being a postmodernist writer, he exercises discipline to a certain extent on its extravagances through an economy and strictness of his style.

In *Early Morning*, Bond (1977) analyses the mechanism of the modern world by creating a historical parallel with the nineteenth century Victorian society. The game of power politics in the play is a marked feature of the capitalist society. Bond evokes a contemporary scene in the midst of nineteenth century: as Albert, while planning to overthrow Victoria, says, “We close the ports and airfields, take over the power stations, broadcast high classics and declare martial law” (p. 147). He plans, by utilizing all the modern political strategies, to exert total control through force and by manipulating means of communication and transportation.

The opening scene in *Early Morning* bears testimony to Bond’s brilliant wit and precision which lend a rare directness. Amid the atmosphere of hypocrisy and chaos, plenty of information is conveyed by showing Prince Albert conspiring against Queen Victoria. The elements of the ridiculous and the superstitious are dominant in the royal decision,

DISRAELI We don’t know all our enemies till we start. So far eight hundred and thirteen.

ALBERT Make it fourteen. People are superstitious (Bond, 1977, p. 137).

Although the scene is set in Windsor castle, Bond (1977) satirizes the modern politicians through the character of Albert. His high flown language exposes the high claims of the politicians based on falsehood and self-deception. In an effort to win over Arthur as his strong ally Albert says, “I’m not doing this because I hate your mother, Hate destroys, I want to build…. I know there’ll be crimes, but we can punish them. The good will always outweighs the bad, though I don’t believe that” (p.141).

The caricature of Albert owes its origin to a combination of the serious and the non-serious in his language. He also manipulates the surface clarity of his language of political expediency i.e. to confuse and to misguide. The rift between Albert and Disraeli appears as Albert talks to Arthur about his future plans: “Let him (Disraeli) establish the new constitution. And then
blame him for using force---because force is going to be necessary, let’s be realistic---and stage a counter revolution” (p. 140-1).

The first grotesque image in the play is that of Siamese twins. It brings in a visual sense of the ludicrous in an otherwise naturalistic setting. Bond compresses the absurdity of the situation in which father is pitched against the mother and the brother is against brother. The two dramas---family and political----are meticulously interwoven as personal grudges and grievances are unleashed through political maneuverings. Whereas this device lends structural cohesion to the play, it is also one aspect of the caricatures carried out on such a large scale. Victoria’s asides are hilarious and savagely ironic. On Florence’s appeal not to shoot Arthur for treason because George, whom she loves, will also die, Victoria, condescendingly, promises to revive George through the spiritual strength; saying,

“Shoot them both. (Aside) I shan’t resurrect him, I'll say my power is gone. Florence has only herself to blame. I can’t share her certainly not with my son. It’s worse than incest, and I am head of the church” (p.180).

As opposed to the sharply comic effect of Victoria’s asides, Arthur’s soliloquy in scene eleven is replete with horrible visions, and brings out his tragedy as a sensitive individual, "D’ you dream about the mill? They’re grinding other cattle and people and children: they push each other in...It grinds their bones, you see ...” (p.185).His dream is not melodramatic because he expresses a genuine feeling arising out of personal suffering.

The homosexual relationship between the Queen and Florence stands for the distortion of political and religious ideologies. Bond (1977) has masterfully perfected the technique of historical and literary inversion and has made it his own. In the brilliant farcical episode, Bond turns Shakespeare's reference, "As flies to Wanton boys, Are we to the gods, they kill us for their sport" (King Lear, vi.i.38–9), on its head to create black humor. As Lord Mennings and Albert struggle for their lives, Victoria keeps swatting and counting the dead flies. “Victoria (swats). Twenty-four. (Lord Mennings falls). I shall pass my highest score (Albert tries to crawl away)” (p. 161)

The image of human beings as no better than insects is comically realized here as Chamberlain suggests, “Shall I put my foot on him, ma’m?.... and Victoria replies, “ I don’t like to see them linger-I’m a patron of the RSPCA. (she strangles Albert with a garter sash) (p. 16). Victoria's playfulness suddenly becomes calculated and murderous without a hint of spite. The tactic neutralizes the effect of genocide, imparting the farce the dimensions of corrosive satire. Victoria emerges as a witty and a resourceful person.
Bond uses comic and macabre inversions to extend the scope of expressionistic strategies. Florence Nightingale's role in history is also inverted. Instead of being a compassionate nurse, she appears as a hang woman and a prostitute providing sexual relief to the war wounded. The elements of the irreverential and the incongruous are predominant in Bond's treatment of historic figures. However, the presence of humor in their caricatures makes these less offensive, and provides the distance required for a dispassionate evaluation of their characters. Another comic inversion is dramatized in Bond's treatment of heaven and afterlife. He marshals wit and black humor, the materialistic and the supernatural in the scenes set in Heaven. The setting has a surreal, nightmarish quality to it, quite the opposite to religious teachings. Victoria informs Arthur, "Nothing has any consequences here- so there's no pain, Think of it- no pain..." (p. 200). The lurid picture of the people sprouting new bodies and eating each other is Bond's dramatic rendering of the industrial consumer society which consumes everything up.

The two trial scenes are also farcical, and, dramatically, present a travesty of the system of justice under capitalism. The presence of a trap during the first trial is central to this scene. It becomes alive as Len and Joyce are led through it. Their state of entrapment in a self-created situation is presented visually, rather than through dialogue. Bond exercises a measure of restraint in presenting the verbal, though graphic, details of the couple's cannibalism outside a cinema; Len describes the incident with evident relish and fluency:

LEN - So I grabs' is ears, Jerks' im back by the' ead,
she karate-chops 'im cross the front of 'is throat
with the use of 'er 'and bag, and down 'e goes like
a sack with a 'ole both ends-right? __and she starts
stabbin' im with 'er stilletos...

VICTORIA Who cut him up? ...

JOYCE I stripped him... (p. 150)

The vigor and robustness of their language correspond with their ruthless naivety. The most gruesome is the way they share pieces of the corpse with others as Len says, "Yer can't nosh an not offer round, can yer?" (p. 150). The disgusting attitude of the masses transmits a palpable sense of corruption of the entire society. The role of the mob is always significant in Bond's plays. The mass hysteria reflects and emphasizes the sheer madness of the ruling class. Their role is vastly destructive in this play. They become
uncontrollable during the revolutionary fever as Arthur says, "They'll be all right once they have lynched someone" (p. 165).

The second trial in Heaven is both culmination and consequence of the life on earth. Arthur is found guilty of motley assortment of crimes. The scene heightens the satirical force of Bond's drama as only the guilty are admitted to Heaven. In both scenes Arthur's solitary and confused figure, trying to make sense of the absurdity of the trials, stands in focus. He is able to preserve his essential humanity and moral integrity by refusing to eat, "I've tried, but I can't die. Even eating didn't kill me. There's something I can't kill-and they can't kill it for me" (p. 210). He has the capacity to love Florence even after his whole body has been devoured. He is able to create awareness in Florence too, "Perhaps I'm alive, perhaps we needn't be like this. I'm trying to think" (p. 211).

Bond's use of expressionistic framework to put forward his argument embodies certain limitations. The caricatures of reverential historic figures like Albert, Gladstone, Victoria, Florence Nightingale, and the extravagance of violent imagery are really the problematic aspects in the play. The source of the problem lies in Bond's unconventional characterization. He prefers the literary falsehood to historic truth, thereby he recreates history. The artistic truth has a far greater bearing on human life than prosaic reality.

As the play progresses, the restraint and discipline are employed. The fusion of the realistic and the unrealistic gives way to an increasing outrageousness of imagery. The comedies by the Greek playwright, Aristophanes, are marked by exotic spectacles, reinforced by fantastic personifications of frogs, clouds and wasps in his plays by the same titles. In these plays, the sheer force and urgency of the central issues like war, peace and justice, introduced through dialogue and characterization, keep the audience firmly rooted in the immediate reality. The artistic balance between the fantastic and the realistic elements, a gradually rising sense of the ludicrousness in the spectacle, characterization and language make a stark and radical statement. George, holding his head covered in blood, corpses hanging on gallows, in full view of the audience; a plethora of macabre images in the scenes set in Heaven; Len chewing a leg, ragged and bloody, food hampers of human bodies are a few examples in point. In contrast to the first trial when human barbarity is only narrated, the second trial becomes a vivid manifestation of cruelty as Len wrenches a bite from the leg and 'shyly' (p. 200) offers it to Arthur. The use of extravagant displays, the physicality of Bond's language and visual images expose the ruthlessness of the capitalist society.
Victoria sums up Arthur's intrinsic spirit of freedom, and justice, and the depravity of the culture she represents, “There was peace in heaven till Arthur got here. He doesn’t belong” (p. 206). Arthur’s inner growth and maturity are encapsulated in physical change. His physical and spiritual freedom and maturity are complete as he rises above his coffin in white cloak, with long, uncombed hair and a beard. The use of a costume and physical appearance are expressionistic ways of conveying meaning other than language.

**Findings**

The article identifies Bond’s use of violence as a stylistic and thematic strategy, problematic, in the plays chosen for discussion in this research work. The findings of the study comprise of the observations that Bond’s shift from the realistic to the expressionistic mode of drama functions as his innovative solution to the problem of attracting undue criticism on the explicit depiction of violence on stage, even at the cost of his mission to promote discussion, negotiation and pacifist mindset to address socio-political, moral and individual issues at every level.

The study analyzes violence as a theme and a stylistic technique in connection with Bond’s use of realistic and expressionistic frameworks. From the realistic depiction of the destitution of the characters (from the proletariat class) turning into violence to the Victorian royal family’s lust for more power and control over others, translating into blood and death in the expressionistic framework, Bond (1977) graphically dramatizes the causes and effects of the increasing inhumanity and alienation among the modern man.

In all these three plays, Bond highlights the significance of addressing and analyzing the socio-political, moral and psychological ailments as crucial to understanding and overcoming these problems. His shift from realistic to expressionistic mode is used as a subversive strategy to expose the hypocrisies, ignorance and moral degradation found in all the classes of the society. The urgency of his commitment to use the dynamic potential of theatre, to expose the moral degeneration, and indirectly redefine the ideals of kindness, peace, justice and truth, is evident in his stylistic innovations from realistic to non-realistic modes of expression in these plays. The study explores the stylistic, structural and thematic problems and challenges that Bond’s theatre addresses.

**Conclusion**

The interplay between the comic and the tragic, the non-realistic and the realistic, the outrageous and the serious elements add a depth and sharpness to Bond’s use of expressionism. The unconventional setting, plot
and character development serve to question human assumptions about issues of cosmic concern like justice, revolution, peace, freedom and self-realization. The demythologizing of the Victorian era and celebrities in this play corresponds with the intensity of Bond’s vision to rebuild the world. He rejects fiercely, the greed and cruelty in the upper echelons of society, through the freedom and flexibility, afforded to him by the expressionistic techniques. He redefines nobility as synonymous not with monetary power but liberalism that promotes freedom of thought and action in the reconstruction of a truly “democratic socialist society” (p. 88) to put it in the words of Castillo (1986) in the conclusion of her article. The ability of Arthur to achieve self-knowledge affirms the significance of the will and courage to live respectably on individual level.
References


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