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Sosnowiec

## EDWARD BOND AND VIOLENCE

I write about violence as naturally as Jane Austen wrote about manners. Violence shapes and obsesses our society, and if we do not stop being violent we have no future. People who do not want writers to write about violence want to stop them writing about us and our times. It would be immoral not to write about violence.

From the Author's Preface to *Lear*

This quotation was intended as an opening passage to Bond's preface to his fourth full-length play *Lear*, staged in 1971. The statement like this seems not only thought provoking but provocative enough to be tested against Bond's own plays. In this paper I intend to examine Bond's full-length plays in order to find out to what extent he remains truthful to his proclamation. In particular I want to discover the uses of violence and the devices which Bond employs to bring violence to the theatre. Last but not least I will be looking for his affinities with the tradition of violence in contemporary theatre. To begin with I would like to turn to the masters of violence in contemporary literature.

To write about violence is to write about the Theatre of Cruelty, Artaud, Brook, Grotowski, and Marowitz, about numerous novelists and playwrights who dwell upon bloodshed, pain and various forms of cruelty. The wave of violence has swept not only through the history of nations but has threatened everyday existence of average citizens. It has also penetrated into a great deal of TV productions and films, thus forming a part of our culture. It is generally believed that the interest in violence came from Artaud's philosophical writings, especially *The Theatre and Its Double*. Though completed just before World War II, Artaud's papers became widely known in England round about 1956, when the first complete edition of his theoretical writings came out.

For the sake of clarity I should like to refer to some statements made by Artaud, limiting myself to those which might be helpful to our understanding of Bond's plays.

Artaud's philosophy came from surrealism with which he held a kind of free lance relation. For his conception of theatre this meant an attack on drawing room plays, realism and verbalism (Artaud 1970: 31 ff.). He



was an ardent admirer of Alfred Jarry and greatly contributed to erecting the theatre bearing his name (Taylor 1970: 21). He wanted to do away with the theatre as a set form communicating mainly by the use of speech. Instead, Artaud offered a dynamic version of theatre, liberated and liberating. His theatre was to restore its ancient power of evoking acute sensations which the former theatre used to possess. Theatre was like plague (central image for Artaud)—communicable and changing people, breaking the bonds of their resistance (Artaud 1970: 15 ff.).

Theatre was to become a mirror of inner reality, a means of exteriorizing the interior. It was cruel and dark as freedom was. But cruelty always operated on consciousness. Physical violence was of little importance and gave way to mental cruelty (Artaud 1970: 79 ff.).

Artaud set principles for this renewed theatre out of which two at least seem of vital importance. He believed in the existence of physical language of the theatre:

Any true feeling cannot in reality be expressed. To do so is to betray it. To express it, however, is to conceal it. True expression conceals what it exhibits [...] For this reason an image, an allegory, a form disguising what it means to reveal, has more meaning to the mind than the Enlightenment brought about by words or their analysis (Artaud 1970: 53).

This quotation from Artaud refers indirectly to another of his ideas, namely that the theatre should operate through myth and production (Artaud 1970: 68). In order to communicate through production Artaud needed actors trained in an unconventional way (Artaud 1970: 88–95).

Apart from the considerations of general nature Artaud was primarily concerned with the idea of cruelty.

The notion of cruelty was essential for the revival of theatre. Yet it did not mean to bring back the audiences using cheap tricks. Cruelty was for Artaud an abstract idea far more than some slaughter scene:

One may perfectly well envisage pure cruelty without any carnal laceration. Indeed, philosophically speaking, what is cruelty? From mental viewpoint, cruelty means strictness, diligence, unrelenting decisiveness, irreversible and absolute determination.

From the aspect of our own existence, the most current philosophical determinism is an image of cruelty (Artaud 1970: 79).

There is no deep going affinity between cruelty and bloodshed. Artaud maintained that linking cruelty with carnal action is only the way of representing it. Theatre could rebuild itself through myth but without using the old imagery of the myth. Theatre was to draw from the very core of the myth. Here cruelty was treated as a means for transferring various meanings behind myths. Artaud relied on sensational events, love, war, crime, personal ambition. "Everything that acts is cruelty"—he said (Artaud 1970: 65). Yet in practical terms he failed to provide technical details to his theory, and the theory itself left room for queries



and re-interpretations, which proved very fruitful for contemporary stage, to mention Artaud's most famous followers and interpreters: Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, Charles Marowitz.

Peter Brook described his development as director in *The Empty Space*. The reading of Marowitz's prefaces to *Macbeth* or *Hamlet* reveals his experiments in Open Space Theatre. *Towards a Poor Theatre*—Grotowski's manifesto, reveals both his method and philosophy behind it. Among others they took from Artaud his idea of myth and produced well known classics in a strikingly new way. Brook and Marowitz revived Shakespeare and Marlowe. Grotowski established himself as a leading power in contemporary theatre with the production of *Akropolis* (inspired by Wyspiański).

In England, the first step in the direction Artaud envisaged was made by John Whiting's *Devils*, staged in 1961, based on A. Huxley's novel *The Devils of Loudun*. Whiting's death in 1963 came too soon to hail him as a forerunner of British theatre of cruelty (Wood 1965: VI ff.). By the end of the sixties some young playwrights began to dwell on violence and used it as a mode of theatrical expression. Most prominent works belonged to John Hopkins, Barry England, Peter Barnes, Joe Orton, and perhaps best known of all—Edward Bond.

Comparing Bond with Artaud, a problem of linguistic nature is bound to emerge. Artaud and Brook spoke about "cruelty", while Bond uses "violence". He also links it with aggression and other acts of cruelty. He concentrates on practical realizations and not on abstract notions. Artaud considers cruelty as akin to determination, forcefulness and extreme actions. Bond deals with aggressiveness, social pressure, murder, torture, and rape (Bond 1972: V ff.). Violence has become more real than cruelty ever meant it to be. Violence is rooted in our society. It flourishes in towns for urban civilization has deprived men of their natural milieu, thus making them aggressive. The root of evil lies for Bond in the structure of society. In society people are led and controlled by means of law and order, both being instruments of social injustice.

In the same preface to *Lear*, Bond turns against social morality, which batters men and in consequence evokes violence in them. Aggressiveness in men becomes an outlet of their repressed selves, of their natural need for justice (Bond 1972: VIII ff.). The author also speaks as a man profoundly disturbed by the outbursts of violence in man. The image of violence has become a part of everyday life and also a central image of his plays. Unlike Artaud he tended to develop what the Frenchman thought less important. Unlike Artaud he also tried to minimize the impact which the acts of violence are bound to make (*Saved*: 6). He also takes up where Artaud's theory expired. For bloodshed, torture and murder are foundations of his plays. They are not mere representations but the very essence of drama.



On closer examination Bond's plays reveal yet another feature. Thematically they fall into two groups, one dealing with modern sub-culture, the other with historical past. To some extent they correspond to the considerations in Bond's preface. In the first group of plays aggression operates as the mode of existence in urban civilization. Historical (or rather pseudo-historical) plays reflect the concern with the repression of individuals and violence institutionalized.

#### VIOLENCE AS A MODE OF EXISTENCE

It is depicted in Bond's earliest play *The Pope's Wedding* and his next, *Saved*. In both plays the protagonists are young and angry. They form a group of layabouts who amuse themselves with casual sex, casual stone throwing, and occasional outbursts of aggressiveness. The language they use also invites a separate study. Apart from being colloquial it often slips into some hardly intelligible jargon. Even for this reason one may choose to welcome *Saved* as a piece marking linguistic changes on the British stage, just as M. Esslin does:

This is the final step and the ultimate consummation of the linguistic revolution on the British stage. What a distance we have come from the over-explicit clichés of the flat well-mannered banter, the dehumanized upper-class voices of an epoch which now appears positively antediluvian-although its ghost-like remnants still haunt the auditors around Shaftesbury Avenue (1969 *Bond Unbound*: 33).

If the use of language is called "revolutionary" so is the story which the play renders. In *Pope's Wedding* the audience is confronted with a group of young people who amuse themselves with intimidating a lonely man (Alen) in his own house. They either throw stones or bang on the door. Two of them have access to the man, they are: a man called Scopey and a girl Pat. She looks after Alen and Scopey, who marries her eventually, becomes obsessed with Alen's strange existence so much that he probably kills him, in order to take his place and thus complete the process of identification. However, Alen's death is only reported and not shown on the stage. Scopey admits having killed Alen to Pat. She responds to the news with a delayed cry for help which nobody is likely to hear.

Another act of violence comes at the beginning of the play. The whole group pretends to start fighting with hitting round and kicking one another. Soon their aimless fooling turns against Pat. They start kicking her handbag until they ruin it, much to her distress. Young men grow viscous and dangerous very easily. Their reactions are those of a primitive man, they grow overexcited very easily and then, for no apparent reason, go back to their normal mood of inactivity and laziness.

All these happenings, which fall into the category of violence, are spaced throughout the play. Step by step the audience are being accu-



stomed to violence, starting with a put on fight and rounding up with murder. All these actions seem lukewarm enough, even murder reported is less impressive than the audience might reasonably expect. Unfortunately, the play is so badly constructed that there are no relations between the instances of violence and the development of the scanty plot, and none with the language or with the dramatic pattern.

Since *Waiting for Godot*, audiences all over the world have been used to scanty plots and absence of conflicts on the stage. Yet Bond is no follower of Absurd Drama, and his play should not be interpreted in this light. J. R. Taylor who analyzes the play cannot account for the breach between outward violence and the combined theme of generation gap and the fascination with withdrawal (Taylor 1972: 78-80). The doings of Scopey and Alen, with Pat as a secondary character, run their own course for which the presence of other young people seems superfluous. The subplot their activities form is a non-conclusive study of young men who are always ready for some practical jokes of varying degree of cruelty.

The faults and fortes of *Pope's Wedding* become evident when compared with Bond's next play, *Saved*. Its dramatic construction, development of the plot, characters and language make for a superbly organized drama. Modern sub-culture forms a background to the play, but protagonists include both young and middle aged characters. Within modern sub-culture certain forms of cruelty are permitted, such as kicking and throwing stones, perhaps even up to murder. But in *Saved* young men keep throwing stones at Pam's baby in the pram until the baby is dead. Pam abuses her motherly power too for she drugs the baby to sleep with some aspirin. These young men get terribly excited by the lack of response from the (drugged) baby so they pursue their amusement until they realize the baby is no longer alive. All characters are shockingly indifferent to the baby's tragic fate. It's father, Fred, comments laconically:

FRED I don't know what I'll get.

LEN Manslaughter. (*Shrugs.*) Anything.

FRED It was only a kid. (*Saved: 75*)

Relations between characters are complex (Taylor 1972: 80 ff.) and cover a wide range from acceptance to aggression. The play does not examine the nature of these relations, but offers a picture, somewhat fragmented but coherent enough, to make a lasting impression on us. Life appears both monotonous and brutal, people are both primitive and complex, their actions unmotivated or thoughtful, unventful family life coexists with violence and murder. A realistic performance is bound to bring out such everyday contradictions.

Violence is well tuned with the development of Len's character (*Saved: 5-7*). The milestones in Len's progress are: stoning the baby, Harry and Mary quarelling, Harry reporting another murder. As Len grows up



during the play and establishes relations with Harry (Mary and Pam), the importance of his former background (layabouts) diminishes, and virtually sinks into oblivion towards the end of the play. Thus the two subplots run their contrary courses in the play: from "0" to maximum, the other one from maximum to "0". They run side by side, coming close in a few scenes, such as stoning the baby and some social scenes. If stoning the baby makes the climax it also proves a turning point in the lives of several characters: Len, Fred, and Pam. In turn the murder mentioned by Harry brings him and Len together and stands for the anticlimax in the play. Harry mentions his experiences in the war, which include the shooting of a man. He recalls it with admiration and pride, as a shattering experience. Paradoxically enough such an experience singles a person out and makes him feel like a man:

Yer never killed yer man. Yer missed that. Gives yer a sense a perspective. I was one a the lucky ones (*Saved*: 118).

The *Pope's Wedding* ends with bleakness while *Saved*, according to the author, is an optimistic play (*Saved*: 5). It offers a difficult variant of optimism: "clutching at straws is the only realistic thing to do" (*l.c.*). Len is found mending a chair which means that he will stay with Pam and her parents and probably try to make it work. Seemingly he accepts the mundane and refrains from aggression. In the motto of my paper Bond is heard saying that violence destroys man. His character, Len, passed through the period of hectic life and sees his chance in doing something constructive.

These are the only contemporary plays dealing with violence Bond has written so far. In the other three plays: *Early Morning*, *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, and *Lear* his probing into the same field continued though there are marked differences between both groups. For practical purposes they could be defined as depicting another form of violence, namely in historical context.

#### VIOLENCE INSTITUTIONALIZED

The earliest in this group was *Early Morning*. It was also the play which had been banned totally by Lord Chamberlain in the sixties. It had only one clandestine performance before censorship was abolished (Esslin 1969: 25). Regular performances started after 1968, when Bond had already made his name with *Saved* and *Narrow Road to the Deep North*.

The plot of *Early Morning* is overcrowded with various acts of violence, such as rape, cannibalism, bloodshed, plenty of fighting and other instances where brutal force has been used. The play is full of blood, indeed. In the performance I recall this quality was intensified by the



pieces of raw meat thrown across the stage. Supposedly these were pieces of human flesh, as it was stated that cannibalism was a matter of everyday routine in the Victorian society that Bond showed.

Though the mixture of cannibalism, bloodshed and frequent executions sounds terrifying, yet it appears inoffensive enough on the stage. The horror is lessened owing to the plot. The protagonists are everpopular Victorian idols, such as Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, Disraeli and Gladstone. But the audience soon finds out that these characters bear no resemblance to their historical prototypes. In fact we are confronted with the utmost twisting of historical evidence in order to achieve incongruity. Thus Queen Victoria rapes Florence Nightingale and wants to be called Victor, Prince Albert keeps plotting with Disraeli to dethrone the Queen, heirs to the throne are a pair of siamese twins, Arthur and George. Owing to such incongruities the play is hilariously funny until the audience becomes tired with the repeated acts of cruelty. Yet while the action unfolds itself, an intrinsic pattern of the play emerges. This is violence institutionalized, that is to say—performed to order. No longer does it denote individual behaviour nor suppressed personality. Violence has become the will of a mad ruler who gives orders to kill and manipulates both the executioners and their victims.

The said discrepancy between historical personages and their representations in the play forms the basis for comedy. On the other hand the plot also challenges historical data or current images of Victorian respectability. Images, which the audience most probably holds.

Violence has become a universal creed for the characters to live by. They have to conform or they will be used by others (eaten up or killed). Violence spreads over to life after death, since characters keep their ignoble practices, but those eaten up feel no pain in cannibalistic heaven.

Generally speaking violence is self-contained and superimposed on the scanty plot. For this reason presumably, Martin Esslin calls the play the world of the establishment reflected in a child's consciousness (1969: 26). He also points to the presence of Freudian symbols which is revealed in the dreams about eating people. No matter how brilliant these suggestions are they do not seem very helpful for Esslin himself in getting to the core of the play. For more important seems to be the shift of interest we come across in *Early Morning*. We move from the concern with individual relations to the world of politics and the establishment. In the play in question the establishment is ridiculed and politics reduced to half witted prancing. The presented world is unreal enough to be comic and not grave. But in the next two plays Bond will be dealing with the same theme but in a different key.

*Narrow Road to the Deep North* and *Lear*, the plays that followed *Early Morning*, mark a big step forward in Bond's technical skills. Similarly to *Saved* they are neatly structured with both stories taken from



the past. *Narrow Road...* has a plot which corresponds to popular images of Japan, the country of cruelty and mystery. Shakespearian Lear plot was pruned to bare essentials and refashioned into a story of almost unsurpassing cruelty and pain.

Already in the introductory scene of *Narrow Road...* elements of cruelty come out. Basho, the poet who is about to seek enlightenment in deep north, meets a peasant couple who are going to leave their youngest baby son by the river. They report having seen several babies left (most of them dead) for people cannot feed them. They hope some wealthy people will pick them up and take care of. Basho gives the baby his food but leaves it to its fate.

Part one takes place thirty years later when Basho comes back from the North. On the same riverbank he sees the execution of prisoners ordered by Shogo, an usurper who governs the city. His favourite way of doing away with prisoners is drowning them in sacks in the river (Bond 1968: 11–12). Soon the action moves to the palace where Shogo rules. He is proud of his naive philosophy which he displays before a young priest Kiro. Shogo and Kiro come together by accident. Kiro had put a sacred pot on his head and no one could free him from it. The priests brought him to Shogo who resolved the matter immediately. He simply broke the pot with a hammer. The message of this scene is clear. Though a tyrant, Shogo is progressive enough to do away with tradition whenever it intervenes with his plans (Bond 1968: 19–21, 26). This is the only redeeming feature in the portrait of the tyrant.

Political plotting is a new element in the plot. Basho takes the Prime Minister to Commodore and Georgina, who represent colonial power (identified as British, cf. Bond 1968: 37), stationed north of Shogo's territory. A prolonged war follows. Shogo regains the city, drowns it in blood only to lose it to Commodore back again. At the end Shogo is tried, found guilty and his tortured body is shown nailed upside down to a huge placard. Seeing this Kiro performs a harakiri on the stage (Bond 1968: 56–58). When he lies dying a man emerges from the river and dries himself up completely unaware of Kiro. His appearance and behaviour may serve to prove two conflicting points. Either he represents humanity reborn and making a new start, or he is perpetuating the chain of violence by his refusal to take past crimes into account. Accepting the latter we assume that the play is non-conclusive and open ended, and that the pattern of violence can be repeated all over again.

All rulers are shown as tyrants and murderers. Shogo believes that he kills to maintain law and order. People can be reconciled with his methods because suffering forms a part of human existence:

No, life makes people unhappy, not my city. You think I'm evil. I'm not—I'm the lesser of two evils. People are born in a tiger's mouth. I snatch them out and some of them get caught on the teeth—that's what you're blaming me for (Bond 1968: 29).



British colonialists are perhaps even worse. Not only do they execute the inhabitants but also restrict their freedom (curfew) and make them all become christians. Georgina, a self appointed missionary and Comodore's mistress, thus explains political success as measured against Shogo's rule:

It didn't work, because it left people free to judge him. They said: he makes us suffer and that's wrong. He calls it law and order, but we say it's crime against us—and that's why they threw spears at him. So instead atrocity I use morality. I persuade people—in their hearts—that they are sin, and that they have evil thoughts, and that they're greedy and violent and destructive, and more than anything else—that their bodies must be hidden, and that sex is nasty and corrupting and must be secret. When they believe all that they do what they're told. They don't judge you—they feel guilty themselves and accept that you have the right to judge them. That's how I run the city: the missions and churches and bishops and magistrates and politicians and papers will tell people they are sin and must be kept in order. If sin didn't exist it would be necessary to invent it (Bond 1968: 42. The same quotation is used by Taylor 1972: 89–90).

Asked whether she believed in God, Georgina revealed her terrible obsession with evil:

Yes. But we've been talking about the devil. We must get our priorities right. We need the devil to protect people from themselves (*l.c.*).

Her sincerity as a missionary is undermined at least twice, by making her Commodore's mistress and showing how false her image of religion is.

The play consists of episodes which is a new thing for Bond. It seems that the episodes could well be reshuffled (the play starts *in medias res* and ends in a similar manner) but none of them could be taken away without doing harm to the overall idea of the play. The episodes show ups and downs of war in which the winning side is equally (or more) corrupt as the losing one. Soldiers and the army ("turned into saluting and stabbing machines"—Bond 1968: 28) go on killing opponents and civilians. The murder of five small children shows their unleashed blood-thirst (Bond 1968: 51).

In *Lear* the pattern of violence is similar though the decor differs. The action is placed in what seems to be no man's land and in equally ambiguous past. Like Bond's former rulers, Lear is depicted as a king stupid and cruel. His two daughters, Bodice and Fontanelle, compete in cruelty. Cordelia is not his daughter but the wife of a gravedigger's boy (Hamlet?) who was killed by soldiers. She was raped and lost her baby in result. Towards the end of the play she leads rebellion against Lear's daughters whilst she proves uncompromising and cruel.

Shakespearian plot is enriched with new happenings. The daughters plot against each other which leads to their downfall and the victory of Cordelia's forces. The revengers seized both sisters. They shot Fontanelle in the back and perform an autopsy on her body in Lear's presence and with his participating in the grim show (*Lear*: 58 ff.). Bodice is also



brutally killed. The rebels take out Lear's eyes and spray aerosol into his eye sockets (63). The cycle of violence ends with Lear's death, which is necessary for political reasons, and thus invites a sarcastic commentary from Lear himself:

It's strange that you should have me killed, Cordelia, but it's obvious you would. How simple! Your Law always does more harm than crime, and your morality is a form of violence (*Lear*: 85).

The plot in *Lear* is structured similarly to *Narrow Road*..., though completely devoid of humour and grotesque touches the earlier play possesses. *Lear* is an episodic drama, aiming at the display of violence and bloodshed, which are incited by everchanging tyrants. None of them nor the nameless innocent victims survive. The list is very long, indeed: a workman, Warrington, Duke of North, Duke of Cornwall, both sisters, the gravedigger's boy and Lear.

Reviewers on *Lear* maintained that the play was unexceptionally onesided and conveyed no message the audience would not know already:

Theatrically it is monotonous largely because of its faithfulness to a vision which says that merciless people are horrible, but only the merciless survive (Holmstrom 1971: 42).

Holmstrom also questioned the philosophy of the play, stating that it gave a simplified picture of war and horror and failed to depict society. The absence of "any solid central point of reference" (Holmstrom 1971: 53) is formulated as another shortcoming of the play. Characters are merely divided into hunters or prey which makes the play oppressive instead of moving.

One cannot agree more with the critic. Yet Bond remained faithful to his promise to write about violence as a mode of existence (... as naturally as Jane Austen wrote about manners...). Ferocity which motivates his characters, the stories they take part in give opportunity for the use of brute force only.

Severity in the past differs from its contemporary equivalent. In the past it was imposed on the community. Totalitarian regimes (to use a modern term for the king's power) encouraged mass violence to suit their own ends. To-date violence results from the oppression of the individual by social norms and conditions of living. As Bond sees it, violence is a destructive power. Only in *Saved* it can be associated with purgation, as postulated by Artaud. Violence is also an integral part of social life, past and present. Modern society is exposed to minor forms of cruelty in everyday life, while historical societies were practically wiped out at the will of their rulers. The division into hunters and prey is shown most acutely in *Lear*. In the plays dealing with contemporary topics such division is less sharp, owing to the fact that an individual can choose and abstain from violence. Yet the forcefulness of modern violence is



impressive because it is realistic and casual (thus menacing). Simplicity of ways and means makes contemporary scenes in Bond very effective.

The effectiveness of Bond's dramaturgy lies in the dramatic structure of his plays, where violence is used according to varying patterns. Pruned to the bone the traditional pattern of inciting moment, climax, anti-climax was used in *Saved*. The idea of cyclic pattern proved successful to render terror and bleakness in *Narrow Road*...

Bond does not refrain from the use of naturalistic stage effects with red paint splashed lavishly on white sheets, disengaged limbs nailed to a placard, and huge chunks of raw meat substituting human flesh. His is a naturalistic performance with philosophical undertones. The message, if any, is usually veiled. It is communicated through the story and visual imagery.

Neat structure, engaging plot, visual requirements for the theatre as well as current themes sum up Bond's early success up to 1972.

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#### EDWARD BOND A OKRUCIEŃSTWO

##### STRESZCZENIE

W przedmowie do głośnego *Leara* Edward Bond stawia problem okrucieństwa w szeregu najniebezpieczniejszych fobii naszych czasów. Przemoc i gwałt wymykają się nam spod kontroli, ale absurdałna spirala terronu zamknie się samounicestwieniem człowieka.

W artykule zbadano stopień nasycenia sztuk angielskiego dramaturga wskazaną problematyką i środki teatralnego wyrazu unaoznaczające okrucieństwo.



Filozofia okrucieństwa A. Artauda i ewolucja jego teatru okazują się bardzo odległe od modyfikacji gatunku uprawianego przez Bonda. Okrucieństwo to dla angielskiego pisarza agresja, rozlew krwi, tortury i morderstwo (wszystko pod nazwą *violence*, podczas gdy Artaud mówił o *cruauté*). Bond ukazuje okrucieństwa, których dopuszcza się jednostka wyalienowana ze współczesnego społeczeństwa (*The Pope's Wedding, Saved*). Dostrzega jednakże i reakcje zbiorowe w sztukach pseudohistorycznych, gdzie okrucieństwo jest już zbrodnictwem tyranów gnębiących całe narody. Tutaj Bond daje rozstrzygnięcia pesymistyczne w odróżnieniu od wstrzemięźliwego optymizmu dramatów współczesnych. Te z kolei charakteryzuje dobra konstrukcja służąca eskalacji napięcia dramatycznego; dramaty historyczne cechują się cykliczną i luźną konstrukcją oraz stosunkowo bardziej równomiernym rozłożeniem akcentów. Akcja kreuje przeto postacie nieco schematyczne, choć nie pozbawione cech indywidualnych. Bond nie stroni od naturalistycznych realiów, które świetnie podkreślają zawarte, często tylko w formie aluzji, oryginalne interpretacje filozoficzne.

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