

THE ABUSE OF THE MACHINERY IN BOND'S LEAR AND THE BUNDLE

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ABSTRACT

Like Sigmund Freud, Bond analyses the pathology of some civilized communities. The primary symptoms of the pathology, for Freud, are those social neuroses which make life in certain civilized societies a burden and a threat, particularly war and aggression. One of these symptoms, for Bond, is technocracy. But why does technology, thought to provide happiness, manage nonetheless to make its own distinctive contribution to this pathology? This is what this paper tries to investigate .(in the plays **Lear** (1971) and **The Bundle** (1978

ملخص

موضوعه سوء استخدام الماكنة التي تتناولها مسرحيتا بوند الموسومتان : **ليير** و **حزمة** ، وفيهما يظهر بوند قلقاً واضحاً فيما قد تؤول اليه الهوية الإنسانية من تحول جراء المد التقني الهائل الذي أكتسح عالم اليوم، كما يتضمن البحث مقارنة بين مسرحية "**الملك ليير**" لشكسبير و مسرحية "**ليير**" لبوند.

شأنه شأن سيغموند فرويد، يقوم بوند بتحليل العلل في بعض المجتمعات المتمدنة. إن الأعراض الأساسية بالنسبة لفرويد هي العصاب الاجتماعي التي تجعل من الحياة في تلك المجتمعات تهديداً وثقلاً ينوء به كاهل الإنسان لاسيما الحروب والعدوانية. ولعل ابرز هذه العلل في رأي بوند هي حكم التقنيين ولكن لم تعد التكنولوجيا والتي من المفروض ان توفر السعادة، تقوم بمد هذا المرض؟ هذا ما يحاول ان يجيب عليه هذا البحث من خلال تحليل نصان لهذا الكاتب المسرحي وهما "**ليير**" (1971) و "**حزمة الحطب**" (1978).

The Abuse of the Machinery in Bond's Lear and the Bundle

Shakespeare's **King Lear** is looked upon as an image of high, academic culture to parallel the present culture. The social moral of Shakespeare's **King Lear** is to endure till in time the world will be made right, which, for, Bond is a dangerous moral for the present time¹, for one has less time than Shakespeare. Time is running out in a technological culture. This culture, with all its grandeur on the scientific level, made destruction, on a large scale, hover threateningly. Bond comments on the ulterior motives² which backed his choice of **Lear**, a play that reflects him as a dramatist, who risks³ writing a **Lear** and triggers a comparison with Shakespeare's tragedy, saying "I can only say that Lear was standing in

my path and I had to get him out of my way.”⁴ Bond also claims: “Shakespeare took this character and I wished to correct it so that it would become a viable model for me and, I would like to think, for our society.”⁵ In an interview, Bond asserts his desire to re-write the play, because society uses, the Shakespearean text “in a wrong way.”⁶ **Lear** is a suitable medium through which Bond can address contemporary society. Theatrically speaking, Shakespeare’s play is chosen not because it says something which is similar: a king-father is violently opposed by two power-hungry daughters. But there is no loving third daughter to rescue him in Bond’s play, for Bond’s Cordelia is not Lear’s daughter. In a radical change from Shakespeare, Cordelia becomes the wife of the only man who befriends a defeated Lear, but is due to the “structure in which new truth can be put.”⁶ The Gravedigger’s Boy, about whom Bond writes: “That, incidentally, was the image from which the play grew.”⁷ The continuous companionship – opposition of Bond’s couple recalls the Shakespearean king and Fool. However, Bond dramatizes the pair as an old man who grows in self-knowledge while the young man’s ghost ages and decays exactly as Arthur and George do in **Early Morning**. The more .decaying George becomes, the brighter grows Arthur in self-knowledge

Act One shows a world dominated by myth. Act Two shows the “clash between myth and reality, between superstitious men and the autonomous world. Act Three shows a resolution of this, in the world we prove real by dying in it.”⁸ Theatrically, the myth is symbolized by a wall, toward the building of which Bond’s Lear drafts his kingdom’s manpower. The wall has many levels of interpretation, but the approach intends to look at the wall as a symbol of technology. Being so, the wall stands for every negative aspect that technology creates. Bond does not set up a man-against-nature conflict, but man as part of nature against man as the slave of social devices, i.e. technological ones. Technology is a .dominant symbol of oppression through the symbol of the wall

Bond’s **Lear**, in contrast, assumes responsibility by building a wall to prevent the division of his kingdom. In both scenes, the king is misled by the political speeches of his daughters, and both scenes end on the plotting of the two disloyal daughters. Bond’s Warrington, like Shakespeare’s Kent, tries to advise the obstinate monarch. The absence of a third honest daughter means that Bond’s Lear has to work out his own .destiny

Bond’s barricade was suggested by the great earth works near Bond’s home called Flem Dyke and Devil’s Dyke, which were re-erected

hastily by “the East Anglians after the departure of the Romans to protect themselves from marauders.”⁹

A wall worker has died in an accident as the play begins. Lear suspects sabotage behind accidents, and sabotage implies a saboteur, who has to be publicly executed. A scapegoat is chosen, and King Lear orders his execution, firing the gun himself. Lear’s mythology persuades him that the wall can protect his homeland from his enemies, but he does not see that he is buying security for his country at the expense of his people. This misunderstanding of Lear’s own situation reflects his blindness: “so I built this wall to keep our enemies out. My people will live behind this wall when I’m dead.”¹⁰ Animal and human needs are closely related as far as Bond is concerned; thus, Lear as a man is in a constant process of consciousness, a consciousness manifest in the animal imagery in which the play abounds. Bond sees that animals in a technological society tend to be simple pets, or factory products, and increasing numbers of people have no sense of animals as a normal part of the environment. In his “Preface to **Lear**,” Bond writes: “Our human emotions and intellect are not things that stand apart from the development of evolution: it is as animals we make our highest demands and in responding to them as men we create our deepest human experience.”¹¹

Lear is a celebration of animal imagery, and the play’s vision depends basically in its unfolding upon this aspect of the play. In Scene One, animal imagery charts both the mental landscape of the king and the changing society in which he operates. In this scene, he complains that his men are treated “like cattle” (p. 16), he tells the foreman, not because they have no freedom, but because the huts where they are kept are damp. “You waste men” (p. 16), Lear adds. His daughters’ suitors, dukes from other kingdoms, are threats: “They’ll be like wolves in the fold” (p. 20), and his people are “my sheep, and if one of them is lost I’d take fire to hell to bring him out” (p. 21). It is the imagery of a rural culture, and it is the language of a king who sees his subjects as less than human, an image of them which is deeply patronizing because Lear imagines that he loves his people. Lear’s daughters, who are the product of his own social order, represented by the Wall as emblematic of technocracy, seem to oppose their father’s ruthlessness, but only part of the First Scene Named Bodice and Fontanelle, they conspire against their father and plot to marry his enemies, the dukes of Cornwall and North. And once married, they war against Lear’s troops. Then, very soon, they turn against their husbands. At this stage of life in an unjust

society, the two women seem to contract a contagion, which is the drive
for power

The playwright demonstrates a pattern of people who involve themselves in radical violence and the building by force of a new regime, people who “are infected by the same capacity for the brutally repressive political rule which characterized their enemies.”¹² But here one has to stress the difference between Lear and his daughters. Ruby Cohn sees that “Lear’s cruelty springs from self-imposed necessity, but that of his daughters is wantonly sadistic.”¹³

The King’s offspring are in fact in the course of possessing the wall, this new social order, and not trying to overthrow their father’s regime.

This social order usurps them their emotion. Lear, it is important to note, goes through a series of transformations the major one being his change from an evil ruthless tyrant into a good caring citizen, from blindness to insight, from a child to a grown-up and from a victimizer to a victim. These changes are reflected by animal imagery. Lear creates sympathy on the part of the audience and reader alike. The contemporary critique of technological society has centred its power to alienate and isolate the individual. When he is thrown out of office, a great change starts to take place in Lear. Plunged into an agony of self-appraisal, he begins to see himself as an animal, but his self-images are self-pitying. “I am a famished dog that sits on the earth and howls.”
(p. 31)

The protagonist is a modern man who is defeated by an apparatus of his own making. He is the victim of his own evil social structure, and his subjects seem to be contaminated by the devotion of the wall. The soldiers and labourers in the First Scene are part of a machine created by Lear to protect his kingdom from attack. In doing so, he creates slaves by forcing men from their homes, families and livelihoods to build the wall. His treatment of his subjects is to parallel the situation in which modern man finds himself, where modern forces try to conquer him spiritually and physically. The modern production line, the mass and complexity of technological products, the distancing of the individuals from the control of the technological system and the anonymity of a technological urban life together conspire to separate human beings, to make altruism seem a useless gesture and community a distant dream. The wall that defends society becomes a prison wall that confines it, and this structure of oppression reaches back into history. Lear says “ I killed the fathers, therefore the sons must hate

me. And when I killed the fathers I stood on the field among our dead
 .(and swore to kill the sons.” (p.19

The hero fails to grasp that using terror to protect his people from foreign injustice and aggression simply ensures that it thrives at home. His passion for isolation is due to a fatal, sentimental misunderstanding of his own power, which he passes on to his daughters. Even before Lear asks himself the question: “Where does their vileness come (from?” (p. 23

Fontannele has already suggested the answer. As she and her sister are left alone, their plans for the overthrow of their father’s regime are (revealed: “happiness at last! I was terrified of him.” (p. 22

The brutal daughters as grotesque caricatures are revealed in Scene Four when they torment Warrington. They are the offspring of Lear’s unjust technocratic order. The sanguinary portrait of Fontanelle is complemented by the violent physicality of Bodice, who, like her sister, desires Warrington. The parallel with Shakespeare’s play is with Goneril and Regan, both in love with Edmund and both planning to annihilate each other so as to enjoy him in power. Warrington in this scene moves from being the Edmund figure to the Gloucester figure in that the women make up their minds that he is threatening their scheme and has to be silenced: “Bodice : He didn’t attack my sister’s men, so I couldn’t risk him talking about my letter. I had his tongue cut out.” (p. 26). This is due to a mutual scheme beforehand that both sisters, without the knowledge of the other, sent a letter to Warrington informing him that they had a wish to marry him after defeating their father’s and husbands’ armies: “Yer won’ ‘im done in a fancy way? (p. 27), the soldier given the job of disabling Warrington asks Bodice. “Fancy” turns out to be a very ugly word. The victim who has already had his tongue cut out is finished off by having his ears punctured by Bodice’s knitting. There is a reference to one abuse of technology when Fontannele wants the soldier to indulge in severe torture of Warrington

Fontann	Throw him up and drop him. I want to hear
:ele	.him drop
Soldier	Thass a bit ‘eavy, yer need proper gear t’
:	(drop ‘em. (p. 28

This course continues in the aberrant gratification with which both women go about the torment of Warrington. Fontannele displays

ecstatic, physical longing reveling in the production of tears and blood, instructing that his hands and feet should be killed by being stamped and jumped on. Finally, she abnormally demands his lungs to sit on.

Bond once said “ When personal freedom is frustrated by external authority it takes a very ugly course.”¹⁴ And this abnormality is due to a dull mechanistic rule of their father, which is represented by the wall, imposing itself from the first moment as a dark shadow over the action, .being the central symbol

Michael Scott comments on the play by “In **Lear** Bond creates a world where frustration is found within the ruling class itself.”¹⁵ The violence produced by this social order is real at present, and it is in fact “a much cleaned up version of the obscene events that took place in the Nazi concentration camps.”¹⁶ Being defeated, Lear is given shelter by the Gravedigger’s Boy, who survived in malady of the “Wall death” (p.

39), as he puts it. The Gravedigger’s Boy is, in Cohn’s words, “a composite of Kent and The Fool.”¹⁷ He is a simple man who hid from Lear’s conscription to the wall’s labour force. But the troops of Lear’s daughters shoot the Gravedigger’s Boy and physically abuse his pregnant wife, Cordelia. These gestures show blood as commonplace, owing to the sanguinary practices of the reigning regime. But Lear, unrecognized, is not harmed. A village carpenter, in love with Cordelia .shoots the invading soldiers

The boy being dead, his ghost accompanies Lear in an infernal decent through madness and blindness. In a crucial scene the violence of an aggressive society which Lear helped to create is vividly imaged by a huge bloodstain on a sheet as soldiers kill the Boy and rape Cordelia. This bloodstain is depicted in **Early Morning** seen on a newspaper where blood is also shown as commonplace in a sanguinary Lear is his daughters’ prisoner by Act Two and is mad. In a rule. false trial, his daughters try to set a trap for him to make him fall into self-accusation, but, like the Lear in Shakespeare’s play, he proves himself wise in madness. Then, as Lear begins his slow climb back to .sanity, his vision begins to change

Bodice gives her father a mirror to push him still further into madness in this trial scene, and although he sees his own reflection, he characterizes it as “a little cage of bars with an animal in it” (p. 49). Here Lear undergoes a process of self-realization, shifting the focus of his pity from himself to an image which mixes him with some

undefined tormented animals: “there’s a poor animal with blood on its (head and tears running down its face. Is it a bird or a horse?” (p. 49

The playwright maintains: “[a] technocracy which is not a culture, which has abilities that are not directed by adequate ideas is the worst of all barbarism.”¹⁸ Bond further adds that social institutions control, law, education, the civic force, scientific research, and son on. The control, to Bond, is deeper. It permeates the ordinary use of language, mores, customs, common assumptions and unquestioned ideas. These institutions and their reflections make up a tacitly accepted view of life in which Lear is his own victim. In the next scene, Lear’s mind evokes the ghost of the Gravedigger’s Boy. Lear has gone mad, but he can now hold the animal-image at a distance so that it begins to control the horror of his new experience: “There is an animal in a cage. I must let .(out or it will be destroyed” (p.51

Lear goes back in time when he might have changed the course of history, or, at least, of his own history in a moment of relative quietude accelerated by the fantasy appearance of Bodice and Fontannele as children. The moment of stillness gives rise to an idealistic vision of peace, in which the animal Lear finds hope: “The animal will slip out of (its cage, and lie in the fields, and run by the river.” (p. 54

But the vision is Utopian, and when the unreal daughters leave the stage, the horrible present bursts back into his imagination. Lear’s mind seems to exist with formerly innocent girls, that when they decide to leave he appears to be losing his mind. “They must go! You can’t stop them.” (p. 55), the ghost tells Lear “ But my mind! My mind!” (p. 55), responds Lear. After that, he thinks that he hears an animal scratching: “There’s blood in its mouth. The muzzle’s bleeding. It’s trying to dig. .It’s found someone.” (p. 55) and collapses unconscious

Two incidents, in a moment of relative quietude accelerated by the fantasy appearance of Bodice and Fontannele as children, may be observed to reflect the abuse of a technocratic rule. The first is the :autopsy incident in which Bond takes the Shakespearean metaphor

;Then let them anotomize Regan
”?See what breeds her heart

(III vi 72-73)

and projects it in a fantastic incident. Lear’s hands fumble, looking for the essence of her evil, from which they emerge covered with blood and viscera. The truth of such evil is not within the “womb” (p. 73), but evil

is rather found within a social structure and mood of thought which causes men to be perpetrators. As William Gaskill puts it, this scene is “a big gesture” and yet “a risky one,”²⁰ but it works in its shocking effect for the best of the play’s objective, which is the shifting of the illusion in which the audience in a well-made play lives. Lear’s animal imagery is now quite objective, and the animals themselves have changed: “She sleeps inside like a lion and a lamb and a child.” (p. 73) What is revealing in both plays is the re-childing of the king, so that we experience the long painful episode of his education. Bond emphasizes the education of Lear through a non-Shakespearean repetition of the word “pity.” In his movement from political defeat to private life to political passion to heroic action that seeks no power, he learns pity. When Lear first meets the Gravedigger’s Boy, he thinks of pity as a commodity. “I know you have no pity to sell.” (p. 31) When he is mad and on trial, he gazes in a mirror and thinks he sees an animal: “Who shuts that animal in a glass cage? O God, there is no pity in the world.” ((p. 49

Much later, on his way back to the home of the Gravediggers’s Boy, he meets a farmer’s son and exclaims: “I’d never seen a poor man: You take too much pity out of me if there is no pity I shall die of this grief.” (p. 80) The significance of pity in an unjust society is that it keeps a certain standard of balance in human beings against the abuses of a technological age. The man who pities may destroy all walls. The second event is the blinding of Lear. Lear is blinded in a clinical manner, the eyes being removed by “a soothing solution of formal dehydrate crystals” (p. 77) The incident reflects the abuse of technology by totalitarian regimes. Lear cries out in the extremity of his pain: “Aahhh! The sun! It hurts my eyes!” (p. 77) Lear’s statement manifests the clinical obscenity of power structures which force man to create such a machine. The blindness of Lear has an archetypal significance in the blinding of Tiresias and Oedipus, the blind seers of classical myth. In shifting blindness from Gloucester to Lear, this allows Bond “to push the Shakespearean action to the Sophoclean end.”²¹

The Gravedigger’s Boy remains an image rather than a character.

Like Shakespeare’s Fool, he is both protective of, and protected by Lear. He is the King’s affectionate tie during his cathartic madness. He evokes sympathy thorough his visible deterioration. The couple may be compared to the Siamese twins in **Early Morning**. Two, Cordelia has fallen prey to the myth of security through power,

and she has ordered the resumption of work on the wall. Blind Lear hopes to reach her with his new insight about the futility of power. “I must stop her before I die” (p. 81). Bond writes in his “Preface to **Lear**”, Lear did not have to destroy his daughters’ innocence, he does so only because he doesn’t understand his situation. When he does understand he leaves Thomas and Susan unharmed.”²² Thomas and Susan are a couple who welcome Lear and live near the Gravedigger’s .Boy’s house

The protagonist’s globe has turned out to be a techno sphere and not, as formerly, a biosphere. Living in such a world is incompatible with basic human needs. The people of this world feel that they are misfits, and this brings into action their biological defenses like aggression. Their environment is in a state of sustained and rapid alteration that it is impossible to wait for biological solutions to develop. danger lies in the swiftness with which technological world expresses aggression, because the results can be lethal and more massive. After the final horror of blinding in Act Two, Lear once again dives through a search for meaning and begins to use nature as a yardstick against which to test his own experience: “All life seeks safety ... A wolf, a fox, a horse.” (p. 80)

With the conclusion of the play Lear turns out to be a kind of “guru, moralising in parables.”²³ . In Act Three, Lear now begins to come to terms with the experience and suffering inside his own mind, because he knows what suffering is, and how much he has caused it. He uses a parable about a bird to teach others what he has learned. The story tells of a bird trapped in a cage and later crippled by having its wings broken. The significance of this parable is that it abstracts what previously occurred to Lear. The impetus of the story derives from King .Lear’s comfort to Cordelia in Shakespeare

.Come, let’s away to prison
;We two alone will sing like birds I’th’ cage
.When thou dost ask me blessing, I’ll kneel down
.And ask of thee forgiveness

(V.iii. 8-11)

Following the anguish of the first two Acts of Bond’s **Lear**, Act Three shows a deceptive harmony, though offstage Cordelia rules the kingdom, and her government drafts labour to build the wall. When Cordelia and Lear confront one another at about the end of the play, he

at last understands where he went wrong. There is irony in his cry to the woman who is about to repeat his mistakes. "How can I make you see?" (p. 98). Blindness, as Bond himself points out, "is a dramatic metaphor for insight."²⁴ Disillusioned, Lear continues his preaching against the misfortunes brought about by the evil social order which his daughter insists on erecting. But in a power-oriented world, Lear's oasis cannot be tolerated. Cordelia arrives to inform Lear that he must be silent if he
.has a wish to live

The Ghost of the Gravedigger's Boy goes off stage When Cordelia leaves where he is attacked by his own pigs and dies a second time. It is only Lear who sees him, an previously, in a way, he represents something in Lear, something which has to die before he can find his true strength. At this moment, Lear and the Ghost parallel also to Arthur and George in **Early Morning**, where Arthur's way to freedom is impeded by George's presence. Finally, free of the dangerous compromise of the Ghost, Lear's last statement offers us a new image of himself as a thing of nature. This time he sees his whole life not like an animal, but like a tree: "I see my life a black tree by a pool, the branches are covered with tears. The tears are shining with light. The wind blows the tears in the sky. And my tears fall down on me." (p. 100)

This new perception, in which Lear sees his life as something sad and yet serene, illustrates the distance he has traveled in the play. The circularity of the image – tears blown into the air and falling back on himself – precedes a final breaking – out of the self – destructive circles
.in which his life has always moved

The concluding scene shows Lear at the wall, as in the opening scene, but acting differently. Instead of sacrificing a life to build the wall, he now sacrifices a life to unbuild it. He sees the great wall which he dedicated his career to building as the symbol of a social order based on the denial of basic human needs. Bond's image is clear: destroy the barrier of darkness in society and true freedom will prevail, and with it true justice, which Bond defines in his "Preface to **Lear**" as allowing people to live in the way for which they evolved."²⁵ As Lear goes out to destroy the wall, he will perhaps "help bequeath them [his people] a juster society."²⁶ But "changing himself does not change his society."²⁷

The playwright once commented: "I do believe in the triumph of the human spirit."²⁸ a statement that draws a line between him and the Absurdists. The end of Lear could be absurd and pessimistic had there

not been signs of hope. Though Lear is shot at the wall after shoveling down loads of dirt, he transcends not metaphorically but socially all barriers. The play's optimism lies in Lear's statement about his followers: "I cannot be forgotten. I am in their minds. To kill me you must kill them all." (p. 98). Another optimistic statement which Bond incorporates in this text is that through persistence, the truth can be perceived. Before being killed, Lear asserts this sanguine spirit. His shovel of earth will not be the last thrown from the wall. Lear will not .be the last rebel

Shakespeare's **King Lear** inspired Bond's father-daughter conflict and king-fool relationship, but the primary resemblance is in the growth of the tragic hero. Shakespeare's King Lear moves from self-pity to repentance toward Cordelia, to compassion for the Fool, to "Poor naked wretches, Where so'er you are." (III. iv. L. 28-29) and finally, to kneeling to Cordelia. Bond's Lear experiences a comparable progression. Looking at the deformed face of deaf-mute Warrington, he confronts his own morality. He lies to protect the Gravedigger's Boy, and agrees to shelter his Ghost. After the death of his daughters, he acknowledges his responsibility for their cruelties. He writes anti-wall .letters to Cordelia ,and offers asylum to deserters from the wall
The two playwrights' attitudes are "dependent finally upon divergent views of human nature."²⁹ Bond feels that Shakespeare's **King Lear** offers us an anatomy of human values which teach us how to live in a contaminated world and show us how to act responsibly in .order to change it

In his book entitled "The Tyranny of Survival, Daniel Callahan holds that "technology may exacerbate the feeling of helplessness and unrest, but it is by no means the crux of the human dilemma."³⁰ But technology remains a double-edged sword, capable of producing good .at the price of creating new evils

The choice of **The Bundle** to represent evil in a technological society³¹ is based on well-founded evidence. As a playwright of Brechtian tendencies²³, Bond tends to robe his "contemporary social and political issues"³³ in historically remote attire. In an interview with Howard Davies, the director of **The Bundle**, Peter Hulton poses the question why Bond, in his later plays, chooses images which are at some historical remove from us. Part of the answer is that "[a]n audience going to see **The Bundle** will not say that it is an interesting

insight into seventeenth-century Japan you immediately acknowledge that it is a totally modern play.”³⁴ Then Davies proceeds in his answer, commenting that Bond

Displaces language and he displaces the image (that of the river). So he's not actually working off populist images. What he allows you to do thereby is actually to look at the play objectively and not feel that this is part of my everyday life which is dispensable.³⁵

Bond admits the existence of this Brechtian trend in his work.

Choosing this Asian setting enables him “to abstract certain social forces and show their effect in a direct and simple way.”³⁶ For him, it is also “another way of exporting [one's] ... conscience.”³⁷ One may substitute “all industrialism,”³⁸ or rather technology, for the image of the river. Bond provides a very clear-cut decision on the way one should view the play

What the play says is that unless the people who work that basic structure like the factory (as an element of technology) or the river, unless they own it, there is no way in which society is going to make that basic structure work for the good of the whole society. It is not possible. It will be used as a means of controlling society. In their society the river floods and keeps them in poverty³⁹

The writer implies that exactly as the river inflicts physical poverty which is that of hunger, technology leads to a usurpation of humanity through the lack in moral values- a “cultural poverty”⁴⁰ as Bond puts it as is clearly stated through Basho's attitude towards the child. To conclude this list of evidence, Bond discusses the role of technology and how it works on human life, in his “Note” to the play. **The Bundle** was first produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Warehouse in January 1978. **The Bundle** returns to the subject of one of Bond's earlier plays – **Narrow Road to the Deep North** (1968). The

plays take as their starting-point an incident in the life of the seventeenth-century Japanese poet, Basho, who rejects the chance to save a child's life and instead sets out a solitary journey in separate .search of enlightenment

But from the same opening, the story of **The Bundle** unfolds very differently: the child survives, not, in **Narrow Road to the Deep North**, to be a tyrant but to liberate the oppressed, achieving his aims with the help of a gang of former bandits and himself confronting the dilemma Basho confronted in pursuit of his goal. Among the things that Bond tries to do in **The Bundle** is to demystify the use of moral argument so that people cannot be blackmailed any more. In this play, he tries to demonstrate how moral concepts in general work in society, and how they have to work if people are to live rationally with their .technology

This part, as in the first part of this chapter, takes the river like that of the wall, in the first part, to symbolize or stand for technocracy. People in **The Bundle** live adjacently to a river and derive their living from it, directly or indirectly. This river floods frequently and affects the lives of the people living near in negatively. Bond, through the Brechtian technique of distancing, wants to give a picture of how life is like in the West. Bond believes that in art, distance sometimes lends clarity, and in dealing with the past, one throws much light on the present, because “[t]he past is also an institution owned by society.”⁴¹

The play is divided into two parts, and each part has five scenes. In Part One, Scene One, one traces one of the issues that concerns Bond most: it is the welfare of the child as the most susceptible element in society, and how its welfare is threatened by a technocratic way of life, as represented by the river. The child's presence on stage is suggested through a bundle which is a powerful image. In a technological age, life is an obnoxious course which is different from bygone days. In the past, family life was characterized by cosiness and coherence and giving priority to newly-born children. But in a technologically-oriented society, parents, stupified by the ennui of modern life, pay little or hardly any attention to their children. In doing so, a child, in being vulnerable, could lead a life of moral loss and jeopardy, or fall in an abyss that is difficult to rid itself of. This vision is abstracted through this Asian setting and through this old habit of leaving newly-born .babies at the rivers

The First Scene of Part One also shows a dialogue between Basho, as the symbol of all institutions, who reflects their adopted ideologies, Machiavellian policies and fallacious moralities, and the Ferryman, who stands for the usurped citizen in an age which always takes the upper-hand over him. At this moment, two sets of values are manifest.

The values the Ferryman represents are human values. The values Basho talks about are inhuman values. Basho, seeking enlightenment, stands in contrast to the Ferryman in terms of human decisions. Both see the child on the bank of the river, but Basho leaves it, since it could be a devilish sign willing to divert him from his path towards enlightenment, "it was put here to tempt me at the start of my journey."⁴² One feels immediately that, no matter how eloquently Basho talks, he is missing the point. In the end, the cleverness of Basho's language is almost manipulating him. What he is talking about is not a true interpretation of experience but an excuse for his particular situation. Basho does not bother himself with the child at all. All the time he talks about his situation, his position. His fallacious morality is shown when the Ferryman asks him the fare

:Basho .For those who suffer there is grace
Ferry Grace! Without food won't helm me row
:man .my boat

(p. 1)

Even the human condition is interpreted in terms of the river, as when
.Basho speaks

All creation seeks enlightenment as the river flows
to the sea. Does the river ask: What is the way? Men
are a dark river. We get and spend, fret and eddy,
twist into whirlpools till the water seems to devour
.itself in its frenzy

(p.1)

Bond's choice of Basho is well-founded, because the latter for him,
is a villain, in that he first sides with law and order in their negative
sense, which is when the system is totalitarian. Secondly, because
Basho sacrifices human values for false morality. Basho's poetry is not

committed, in the sense that it neglects worthier matters concerning human welfare. For instance, while the baby needs to be delivered, Basho recites some of his poetry that reflects an ivory-tower attitude

The saints' feet are hands
Washing the dust earth
On the narrow road
.That leads to enlightenment

(P. 2)

In rescuing the baby, the Ferryman adopts responsibility. Thus, he creates moral values by his experience. Basho is inflicted with a technocratic virus which is loss of empathy, and he is more of a robot than a feeling human being. Part One, Scene Two begins after a span of fourteen years in which the foundling becomes the character Wang. Unlike Shogo in **Narrow Road to the Deep North**, who grows to be a tyrant, Wang is a caring citizen who makes it the self-imposed duty to liberate the oppressed. The early part of the scene is a dialogue between the Ferryman and the adopted son, Wang, about a typical capitalist state and how capitalism is perpetuated by a technocratic rule. Accordingly, as seen by Bond, the natural outcome of the union of capitalism and technology. In an answer to Wang's persistent inquiries about their poverty, the Ferryman comments: "The landowner owns the boat and the river and the fish. You could say he owns us – he owns the only way we can live" (p. 6). This is due to the perversion of technology

The playwright wrote the parable to shed light on modern times and how technology, i.e. the tools of science and intellect, have been made subservient to the most primitive and irrational parts of human nature. The result of this is a wholesome damage of the environment including human beings and waste of resources. The scene also reflects Bond as a socialist writer who seems to echo some socialist views as regards technology: "change originates from technology."⁴³ This is similar to the socialist doctrine that "revolution results from a contradiction between the forces of production and the social relations of production."⁴⁴

The most important risk Freud perceived in technology appears limited to one area only, the destructiveness of modern weapons of warfare, which enable human beings to express their aggressiveness on a far wider and more devastating scale than ever possible to earlier generations. It is possible that he failed to perceive that technology can

introduce far more hazards into life than simply modern warfare, notably the atrophy of human instincts as traced in Basho's attitude towards the baby. After his return from the deep north, Basho is still unenlightened. With his arrival to his former village, he discovers the meaning of enlightenment, admitting that "heaven has shown me mirror on my doorstep! Enlightenment." (p. 8). Basho could have attained this state of Nirvana if had saved Wang, because enlightenment could be achieved where one is, but all one needs is a responsible and committed .act

In Part One, Scene Three, people are swept by a huge spate, flooding their village and destroying all houses. The image of the flood is a perfect counterpart and suitable recapitulation of technocracy on the part of Bond, due to the range of comparison it evokes with the modern surf of technology. Repression is represented by the landowner who .owns almost the very breath of people

.Old Woman: Our houses are still underwater
.Old Man : The landowner will take us in
.Pu-Toi : He'll let us sleep in the compound
!Voices (off): Here! Here! Here

Spiritual altruism finds no echo in a technocratic society, because they lose all meaning and significance, owing to the orientation upon which this society's ideology is based, and that is the deification of machines. This is why one of the characters shouts. "No respect for the dead" (p. 12), and elsewhere this idea is apparent in the increasing voices that cry for human salvation: "Help. Help. We're drowning. the graves are falling into the water" (p.19). The significance is that more and spiritual .values are null and void in a society ruled by a senseless machine

Bond's plays follow John Osborne's **Look Back in Anger** in being primarily concerned with the social and political state of post-war Britain. Bond focuses on the problems of class divisions in society and on a variety of myths and aspirations common to the age which he sees as dangerously blinkered. His work emphasizes the diminished status of the individual. The individuals in their plays have no say in their own future and little or no control over their own actions. So often locked in sterile symbiotic relationships, they have lost the power to regenerate, to create new generations. Indeed, individuals are so intellectual and they are constantly in danger of losing their identities altogether. Dramatists like Bond and Orton "even seem, in their different ways, to

have tried to test the limit of tolerance of such supposed liberal, quasi-intellectual audience.”⁴⁵ Bond succeeds in depicting the parable of **The Bundle** when the diagnosis “the historically relative and dialectical nature of morality itself.”⁴⁶ The Scene closes off with Wang shouting “Buy me” (p. 21) in order to save his parents, thus becoming Basho’s servant for nine years.

Human consciousness is class consciousness”⁴⁷ for Bond and Wang is “one of Bond’s characters who is class-conscious in Bond’s sense of the term. Wang is able to understand his situation in a way that allows him to act and escape being the victim of history and circumstances. He is not endowed with an enlightened perspective, but comes to it through the learning process offered by the concrete experience and social relationships of the play. It is practical knowledge, not a purely conceptual one, which provides a model for action. Part One, Scene Four, commences with the author’s direction: “another part of the river and the bank. An abandoned child” (p. 22), Basho is encountered by the same test as before. He indulges in writing his verse, which is totally divorced from actual life

Bamboos flutter by the moorhen’s nest
!Army banners
She does not ask
Where the river goes
Nor where the arrow flies

(p. 22)

He does not hesitate to depict Basho before us, putting him in a sardonic light. Bond’s interpretation has contempt about it, which indicates that he . **The** is “deeply hostile to literature as an attitude or as a mere craft.”⁴⁸ **Bundle**, as a play, is influenced by a traditional Japanese dramatic form which is called NO play: **Narrow Road to the Deep North** reflects this traditional form more than **The Bundle**. The definition of the NO play may further enhance the range of comparison between the plays or show :where these two plays, i.e. the NO play and **The Bundle**, meet

NO is a short, serious, musical play, generally in two scenes, its plot derived from Japanese history, myth, or folklore. It contains dialogue and descriptive passages, the latter usually a poetic song of travel ... the typical action consists, first, of the appearance of

Buddhist priest telling of the pilgrimage he is making.

Then appears a ghost in human shape, who relates to the priest his adventures as moral (this portion constitutes the main plot). Or it may be defined as “a composite art based on the three elements of song, dance and drama.”⁴⁹

Or it may be defined as “a composite art based on the three elements of song, dance and drama.”⁵⁰

So, in both form and content, the two plays may, to a certain extent, be said to work on an even keel. **The Bundle** is divided into two acts, as the **NO** play is into two scenes. The action proceeds similarly as far as Basho, the Buddhist priest, is concerned. Wang, the hero, tends to reflect his meditation through monologue

Basho's attitude reveals “the relation between words, acts and consequences in Buddhist”⁵¹ culture. In his “Note” to **The Bundle**, Bond suggests that “members of the exploiting class deny their moral function, in practice, while claiming it institutionally.”⁵² Twice does Basho reject to rescue a baby, as in **Narrow Road to the Deep North**, Basho and the other characters are evaluated through their attitudes towards the babies in the play. Through **The Bundle**, Bond obtains the right amount of abstraction from everyday reality for his play to work as parable without raising objections in his audience's minds. It is also far enough removed in time and space, and this enables Bond to carry his complex message with more ease and conviction. Scene One in **The Bundle** parallels the “Prologue” to **Narrow Road to the Deep North**. In the “Prologue” to the latter play, Basho introduces himself to us and witnesses the abandonment of a baby by its parents on a river bank; he does nothing. When the play proper begins, it is thirty years later, whereas in **The Bundle** it is fourteen years later

The play examines in greater detail the means by which those in power legitimize the evils of an exploitative social system i.e. technocracy, and even goes on to consider the possibility of revolutionary change. According to Hinchliffe, “The Orientation is only a Brechtian device to show us familiar problems in a different light, it does not imply an understanding of Oriental thought process.”⁵³ In a comment on Basho's attitude towards the baby, Bond says: “In an ideal society he would have picked that baby up, gone off the stage and there would have been no necessity for a play,”⁵⁴ whereas Hinchliffe holds a different standpoint, commenting that Bond seems to ignore the idea that, as a pious Buddhist,

Basho would not pick up the child since it is “interfering with Karma”⁵⁵ or fate in Buddhist tradition. Bond’s objection is to Basho’s background as a whole and not only to his inhuman attitude towards the baby Wang sees a woman who is probably his own mother and confides

her with the baby, but she refuses. He, then, indulges in a sort of monologue inquiring how many babies were abandoned by the river (p. 29). He comments bitterly on the social consequences caused by the evils of an unjust social system: “All men are torn from their mother’s womb” that is the law of nature. All men are torn from their mother’s arm: that is

Then Wang reflects on his situation, being the law of men.” (p. 29) torn away by a horrible and unjust social technocratic order, symbolized by the river, when he refers to the river metaphorically as a corpse, creating a zombie-like image: “The river is a corpse that goes on (devouring even when it’s dead.” (p. 29

Technology devours people and usurps them their humanity like this river which floods and ravages people. In an interview with Bond, he maintains that “in our society we are flooded with the debris of an affluent society which keeps us in a form of cultural poverty.”⁵⁶

Towards the end of Scene Four, Wang contemplates an abandoned child and seems to address himself while speaking these words: “You don’t know! Nothing changes here. I get up – I do the same things and pretend they’re different. You don’t even have to walk. You’ve been lying there for hundreds of years.” (p. 28). For Wang, it is the suppression of his personality. That is why he throws the baby into the river. Twenty-four years ago somebody, the Ferryman, picked up a child out of that river. He, Wang, is now in the same position where he is actually looking at himself Part One, Scene Five, presents Wang, who meets a group of bandits whom he heads later. He describes them as having “the bravery of a child and scavenging on trifles.” At the description of his experience with his old master, whom he calls “a great thief” (p. 38), the gang is appalled. In depicting this image of the thief and his servant, Bond creates a parallel between this poor Japanese situation and the situation in the West, which is even poorer. Bond provides a picture of the landowner, aided by his servant the river, that stands for the new social order, which is technology

He carried it [the loot] on his back. In his pockets.
Other thieves guarded his loot – he paid them in loot.
His hands were clean. He never raised his fist. Not
even a voice. He prayed for those he sent to death.
(Give money to orphans and widows. (p. 38

This is a typical portrait of a technocratic capitalist society. Wang then further adds something about the ways that enable this thief to dominate the place

Every year this servant raids the land. Digs up the dead to steal the coins from their mouths. Eats the fields. Strips trees. Takes men's lives. Then it's the day of judgement everyday! – even when it goes back to sleep in its lair its breath stands in the fields like a white mist. What does it take: hope. What does it give: mud, to bury all things. And the people stand in their ruined fields like ghosts

(p. 38)

The river becomes a ghoulish monster that robs even the dead, like technocracy.

But now this monster rebels against its master and takes possession of all his potentialities. There is a mythological range or context implied by this river, namely that leading tribesmen of the past felt the need to leash people and control them and thus resorted to mythology, since simple people tend to be superstitious. Modern man is also gagged by some sort of myth which is technology. Technology has replaced myth in controlling the masses: It turns people into inert automata or rather “ghosts” as Wang .(puts it (p.38

In his “Introduction: The Rational Theatre” to his second volume of plays entitled **Plays: Two**, Bond suggests that the ruling class has the upper-hand over what the artist writes. This class controls even “the normative values of society by their legal and economic control of the mechanical functioning of society.”⁵⁷ This is why Basho, being an artist, is portrayed as the “tongue” (p. 40) of the emperor. For Bond, an artist should be a firm barrier standing against the surf of technocracy and any Scene Six, other phenomenon that may form a menace to people's lives. which is the first scene in Part Two, reveals a would-be revolution by Wang, who, like other Bondian heroes, learns through his “suffering” to act responsibly.”⁵⁸ Like Lear in the previously discussed part of this chapter, Wang infers that a technocratic form of government tends to create ignorance. Then he reasons about his condition: “Why should the landowner build banks? He's rich. Why? Because we're poor. Why are we (poor? Because the bank breaks and takes away all we have.” (p. 46

He believes that technocracy brings with it “Fears, flies , disease, famine” (p. 46). This sort of system keeps people in sheer ignorance, i.e spiritual and human ignorance. It is helped by the river, or rather technology, referred to metaphorically. So Wang, or rather Bond through Wang, presents a solution to fill this gap by taking possession of the river and making it belong to the people. This reflects Bond as a socialist writer, i.e. as regards the concept of the possession of the means of production. Wang joins a group of bandits, the lowest of the low. Again this is one of Bond’s images. It is rather similar to the case in **Bingo**, where the people who are the moral centre of the play are the social outcasts, a half-crazed old man and a beggar girl. But they cannot survive in the world. It is impossible for those people, those savage innocents, to survive. So, too, in **The Bundle** the bandits are the lowest of the low: they have nothing, like everybody else in that society. yet Act One ends with the fact that they at least live and have the energy to fight

There is an additional match in the two figures of Wang and Tiger.

Tiger has all the animal in him that Wang has lost. There is an antithesis which says that Wang has been turned into someone who cannot act and Tiger is someone who can act. This antithesis is not right. Wang does act.

He has become a creator of his society through his experience. He combines actions with concepts, and when that happens, then things can become truly creative. Tiger has only actions and a form of opportunism. There is very little he can do. He does not have concepts that interpret his experience in the way that Wang has. Wang is a Bondian hero who embodies his author’s views. Thus, he launches into a diatribe against the old morality and stale beliefs: “You who crucify the world so that you can be good! You keep us in dirt and ignorance! Force us into the mud with (your dirty morality!” (p. 47

In Part Two, Scene Seven, thirst caused by technocracy is manifest through one of the paupers in the play, as he is awakened by his woman’s shouts: “water ... water ... water” (p. 48). That woman who wants water, but he knows that that would be ineffectual, that it would simply not alter the conditions that have her in that situation. Bond shows Wang’s control over his passion by the dramatic gesture of biting his tongue on the side, causing the blood to flow. Wang diagnoses the malady and finds the cure all: to rid his village of the hands of the owner. Talking to Tiger, Wang reaches a solution that could break the yoke of tyranny. Since “breaking a window” is futile because “it has iron bars” (p. 50), one should seek a safer means. People, as Wang notices, act out of fear, and this is the morality by which the landowner governs the people. To conquer this

landowner, people should rid themselves of the fear. Bond talks about this relation between technology and economy, where he says: "At the moment, of course, technology is being run for commercial reasons and I think that's a destructive thing."⁵⁹

In Part Two, Scene Ten, a wall is built against the river. Unlike the wall erected in **Lear** which represents an evil social order, this wall, which Bond offers as a solution, stands for a humane social order based on the search for the welfare of human beings. The play seems to present "an irreconcilable conflict between the needs of the individual and the requirements of civilization."⁶⁰ It ends on a tragic note, with the accidental death of a worker. Consequently, Wang philosophizes and contemplates the situation in which he lives and the stale morality that still governs the people. Bond comments on the present social scene :through this parable

: Wang For many years the king did not speak. Each night he laid him on the ground . Each morning he took him on his back. The man did not know that the king had died long ago. So, he carried him always and wasted his life. This is the worse story. To .carry the dead on your back

(p. 78)

Wang's speech has a deep resonance of Nietzsche's **Thus Spake Zarathustra**, which echoes a godless world. Bond suggests that old morality is incompatible with modern life. This last scene is "a post-revolutionary scene, not Utopian, but charged with a sense of the opportunities now available."⁶¹

Conclusion

Technocracy, which is the synonym for the abuse of technology, appears most of the time to be an extension of the body, in the sense that it is a natural result to the dynamics of the mind. Technology is a human attribute, for man is a technological animal that has a body which must find ways of surviving in a variety of environments. Lear's construction of the wall is nothing but a mysterious worry about the challenges of the future. Lear as a man has a brain which can think and set goals, most of which require a material manifestation represented by the wall as a symbol of technology, an imagination which can hope for some relief

from the woes of life represented by his enemies, a will which can seek welfare, and passions which can desire to build, create and improve his condition.

Technology weakens the biological instincts that characterize a human being. In **Lear** this instinct is passion, as it is clearly evidenced from his relation to Cordelia. The main problem with technology is how we are to live with it. Western culture exacerbate the technological problem, but it is our human nature, with its needs and demands, which has no choice but to create it.

Bond seems to be falling in a state of contradiction in his appreciation of technology, which is to some critics “uncritical” as manifest in ‘Note’ to **The Bundle**. His evaluation here is radically challenged elsewhere and particularly in the “Introduction” to *The Fool*. “Without technology,” Bond argues there, “there could be no abundance, (no welfare, no hope, no destruction of false myths.”¹

Technology precipitates a feeling of aggression, because it makes human beings feel like misfits and accordingly, this motivates their biological defenses as manifested via aggression. *Lear*, in this play, is Man, not restricted to a definite period of time, with no free will, for he succumbs to the calls of technology, and crashes to the stones of the real. *Lear* has fallen prey to his own fantasies which lack a real ground.

Technocracy, being a problem to Bond, finds an embodiment and an answer in **The Bundle**. As an embodiment, it is seen as a river flooding people with dirt and mud and is taken advantage of by the landlord, who is looked at within the perspective of this paper as an agent of capitalism.

As an answer, one wishes to refer to the fact that **The Bundle** is the first play in a series of plays that Bond calls ‘answer plays’. In this regard, Bond states that he has “stated the problems as clearly as [he] can – now (let’s try and look at what answers are applicable.”²

In **The Bundle**, the final scene shows a whole community living in a post-revolutionary world. Social change, here, is not intimated by individual actions, but is dramatized as a tangible reality. But the social system Bond shows is not utopian: Wang, the revolutionary leader, reminds the audience before the final curtain that: “we live in a time of (great change. It is easy to find monsters - and as easy to find heroes.”³

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³(3) Edward Bond, *The Bundle, or, New Narrow Road to the Deep North* (London: Methuen, 1978), p. 78.

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